

Understanding the main principles of cognitive psychology: sheep-goat effect, gen...

[Psychology](#)



According to Psychologist Dr. Erlendur Haraldsson, those people who were believing in this paranormal thing was termed “ sheep,” while those who do not believe to the existence of a non-existing creature or procedure was termed “ goat” and this term was very common in the field of parapsychology (MacIsaac, 2015). The Sheep-Goat Effect pertains to the paranormal presentation of the sheep who believes in it (the paranormal belief) and the goats who disapproved it. Considering that confusion may arise in the sheep because they merely accept the presence of the supernatural agents than those goats who totally disagree with the idea of paranormal entities (Storm, 2016).

In one study that attempts to give an answer on the psychology of believers (sheep) are more to display a wide range of guesses and thus makes a more wrong identification when it comes to presenting stimuli to them. These sheeps are also fast when it comes to making a response to some stimuli even though it is visually not clear. On the other hand, those people who do not believe on paranormal tend to be slower when it comes to reactions and become more careful and fewer errors than those of the believers (Moore, 2014).

Paranormal Belief

Paranormal belief is not as the religious belief of an individual; the former lacks some critical criteria like of that of religions especially doing some rituals. Religions say that paranormal is less rational than they are and religions are more credible and valid than those of paranormal. Although paranormal belief and religious belief may be labeled as one than those who believe in superstition because paranormal belief provides information that <https://assignbuster.com/understanding-the-main-principles-of-cognitive-psychology-sheep-goat-effect-generational-cohort-theory-and-cognitive-bias/>

tells about the very existence of human being just like religion does. Also, these two provides some answers to the questions that cannot be answered by a bare scientific evidence and people need answers as soon as possible (Cline, 2017). The paranormal belief was higher to the people who have a lower level of education, while people who have a higher level of education tend not believe to this supernatural phenomenon because of their heightened knowledge regarding higher levels of cognition, controlled emotions, and knowledge to the outcomes of the social behaviors that others act. Moreover, it is believed that obtaining a higher level of education decreases the belief in different conspiracy and supernatural beliefs. Additionally, education is a bridge to have a mind full of things that can explain and elaborate such beliefs in the society (Prooijen, 2016).

Meanwhile, Superstition and other paranormal belief have an impact on how a Filipino deal with his everyday life. Particularly, old people have a strong belief when it comes to these supernatural beings. When we are about to trace it in history, the Hindus influenced this kind of belief when we Filipinos are being colonized by them. These beliefs and faiths are the basis of a Filipino life and it is rooted in their culture. It is also the heart of how a Filipino individual decides for everything that he will be doing in his life. It also affects how a Filipino plans for what will be his next actions are.

Although Filipinos are living in the computer age, paranormal influences are now part of the mentality of every Filipino, and it runs through their blood (Daskeo, 2012). Paranormal belief especially putting trust on faith healers (Sorhano in Visayan language) gains its wide range of respect especially for the people who need a medical attention and do not have any money to

consult to a hospital. As stated, sorhanos, may provide a medicine or cure to any kinds of illnesses and can be labeled as a local medical practitioner that helps in aiding the patient's diseases (Alimen, 2016).

With the popularity of Justin Bieber's new image and the power of the preachers, millennials grow in number in believing the paranormal specifically the life after death. Also, a growing population of people who considers heavy metal music as associated with hell is also a factor in believing in the supernatural. Meanwhile, older people learned the belief in the paranormal only in churches, but as they grow older, they have less time in going to the church and with this, it weakens their belief. A decline in supporting what happens after a person dies gave rise to the usage of Ouija boards, fortune telling and other means to communicate with the dead and ask questions regarding the life after death (Brean, 2018).

With the survey on United States made by Chapman University in the year 2017, it shows that most people living there believe that advanced ancient civilizations were once appeared in human history (like Atlantis). The survey also shows that those who scored high on this paranormal belief has a tendency to have a low income. Also, the result of having a low income, living in the rural part and not frequently attending some religious activities are for females who scored high on supernatural belief.

The ethnic group of Aetas were considered the first inhabitants to the archipelago of the Philippines and also one of the ancestors of Filipinos with planting crops as their primary source of livelihood. Nevertheless, the belief on supernatural chants, paranormal beings and unexplainable illnesses

<https://assignbuster.com/understanding-the-main-principles-of-cognitive-psychology-sheep-goat-effect-generational-cohort-theory-and-cognitive-bias/>

caused by some supernatural agents were also observed to them. This presence of supernatural beliefs to their community is not different to the Filipinos belief, because Aetas and modern Filipinos share the same culture and tradition when it comes to believing and providing an answer to the unexplainable phenomenon that needs something to be accused with (Grey, 2016).

Believing in superstitions affects how an individual thinks and behaves. Superstitions also influence an individual's future actions that affect how his/her mind is processing the information. Superstitions affect how a person thinks and processes information in a way that a certain belief promotes the good luck of a person, on the other hand, it helps the person in avoiding bad luck. Also, a person who strongly believes in superstition may impede his/her decision-making. For example, a person delays the day of operation because it is Friday the 13th and he/she believes that something bad might happen. Superstitions may become a problem if they cause you no benefits at all (Colino, 2016). Personally constructed beliefs, religious and spiritual beliefs are one of the most important aspects in human culture, thus interventions like psychotherapy and another way of treating one's illnesses should also consider his/her beliefs and how he/she perceives a certain phenomenon (Agoratos, 2014).

On the contrary, a higher number of females believe that paranormal exists and its other related categories such as witchcraft, precognition, superstition, spiritualism and the likes. However, females are less likely to be believers of extra-terrestrial (aliens) than most males (Wilson, 2018). Even

before the arrival of the Spaniards, Filipinos has their own belief about the supernatural. In fact, early Filipinos were polytheistic or the belief in many gods and worshipped them. When the Spaniards came to the archipelago, they changed the belief of the Filipinos into Christianity, so to easily get their faith, Spaniards changed the figures of Anitos to the figures of different saints, so that invading wouldn't be hard for them. Fast-forward to today's belief of Filipinos, the Catholic church was mixed by charms, amulets and different objects that believed to be a protection from bad omens and illnesses. This kind of faith is a mixture of ancient belief of Filipinos to the supernatural and the teachings of Christianity to the Filipinos in order to easily acquire the country (Fojas, 2017). If a certain belief was considered as right and was practiced, then it will be embedded in the cognition of a person, environmental factors may also contribute to the level of belief that an individual holds. Beliefs contribute to the decision mechanism of an individual and depend on how relevant a certain belief to their cognition is. This results to how a person sees the world with a consistent faith on a certain belief that supports their perceptions. These beliefs affects how a person decides for his future actions, because it helps him visualize what are the consequences of his/her behavior (Connors, 2015).

Iglesia ni Cristo only believe to the God who creates heaven, earth and all the things inside it thus believing that Jesus is a God's way to save and mediate with Him. The Bible may speak of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit but as interpreted by the INC, is not God nor a multiple person inside God (Iglesia Ni Cristo). Once a person has obtained education in a higher level, the deterioration on joining and affiliating himself/herself to the

<https://assignbuster.com/understanding-the-main-principles-of-cognitive-psychology-sheep-goat-effect-generational-cohort-theory-and-cognitive-bias/>

religious groups was observed. (Hungerman, 2013). The ethnic group of Aetas were considered the first inhabitants to the archipelago of the Philippines and also one of the ancestors of Filipinos with planting crops as their primary source of livelihood. Nevertheless, the belief on supernatural chants, paranormal beings and unexplainable illnesses caused by some supernatural agents were also observed to them. These presence of supernatural beliefs to their community is not different to the Filipinos belief, because Aetas and modern Filipinos share the same culture and tradition when it comes to believing and providing answer to the unexplainable phenomenon that needs something to accused with (Grey, 2016).

Cognitive Bias

Cognitive bias is defined as the influence of people around you to the choice that you are going to make. Cognitive biases work as a tool in making a simplified version of processing how information is taken up by the brain. Because our environment has tons of information to process that's why our mind do some mental shortcuts to understand well the knowledge that can be seen from our surroundings. What psychologists view about cognitive bias is not always as bad as what others think about it, because cognitive bias serves as the quick processing of information especially when a person is facing a hazardous event in his or her life. Cognitive bias sometimes misunderstood with logical fallacies, the latter talks about the mistakes or errors that occur in the valid argument, while the former talks about the errors in memory, and mental mistakes such as attention and attribution (Cherry, 2018).

Evolutionary history of human behavior advocates that cognitive biases play a role in paranormal belief because of human's attempt to alert himself to the possible threat that he may experience later and became a genetical behavior that passed through the succeeding generations. Culture and religion also contribute to the increasing number of these kinds of belief in every human. The most common cognitive bias that contributes to this paranormal belief of humans is the confirmation bias. Confirmation bias talks about the way we like a thing to be true, so if we think that life-after-death is true, then we will accept it as true without any supporting details (Webb, 2015). A study of SWPS University in 2013, individuals who are experiencing stress were likely made decisions that are based on using cognitive shortcuts and this was strong to men (Wichary, 2013).

Humans make decisions, and it can either be based on the evidence of what they saw, or they make decisions just because it is what they think of. Most people believe that they are reliable enough to make decisions well, in fact, they do not have some evidence to show. In this situation, a person relies more on what he or she believes is true, and this arouses the thinking error or what psychologists termed as Cognitive Bias. Cognitive bias makes danger when engaging yourself in a decision-making activity because when making a decision, biases unconsciously distract a person to make a rightful judgment and result to a failure. To lessen the bias people must be vigilant enough and don't just trust what we hear or see, keep in mind that we must research more when tackling things so that we can avoid being fooled by the bias (Douglas, 2017).

College students see their future after graduation as being hired by companies making it their most important goal in life. Also, these students have a positive foresight regarding the job that they are applying after getting their bachelor's degree. Moreover, college students also thought of adding more knowledge to their mental capacity for the competition in the real world (Hart Research Associates, 2015). As an individual grows old, changes in his/her cognition occur. One of the observable changes is the decline in processing decision making and their working memory (Murman, 2015). Younger and older adults both show being flexible in minimizing biases over the given trials. Grown-up adults demonstrated a decrease in the bias-driven alternatives. Whereas younger adults display a more flexible behavior than older adults (Wilson, C. et. Al, 2017).

Superstition is a comforting belief that supports our belief is true and correct. This process of believing to superstition has something to do with a person's ability to retrieve memories based on an individual's past experience.

Believing on superstition doesn't mean a person is stupid, it is just the natural behavior of a human in comforting himself (Resnick, 2016).

Individuals who are cognitive, emotionally and physically sound also recognize that superstitions were not the basis of life. There also shows that a person whose intuitions are high and has a less rational thinking may become more superstitious and believes more on the magical and supernatural belief (Risen, 2015). As the person sees that there is a separation between the body and the mind, the more he/she thinks about it and instill it into his/her mind making it now a believer of a belief. And as it becomes strongly infused with the type of mindset that a person has,

<https://assignbuster.com/understanding-the-main-principles-of-cognitive-psychology-sheep-goat-effect-generational-cohort-theory-and-cognitive-bias/>

believing that a person's mind and body are not identical with each other, therefore a belief that life will continue even after death now called spirits (Willard, 2013). Young people, when they are experiencing the effects of anxiety, they engage themselves in safety behaviors this engagement has the same way with adult people. The act of using safety behaviors by individuals contributed to the maintenance of holding anxiety (Baker, 2015).

Generational Cohort Theory

Generational Cohort is defined by the scientist as the change in the cultural events that happened in a certain era. These changes affect the behaviors of each generation that was born in a certain time and how they control the events that are happening in their life (Drew, 2015).

Those people who are born from the year 1946-1964 are called Baby Boomers, they were characterized as one of those people who bring change in the society for they are very competitive individuals and a very hard working person, this generation also the start of female dominating the profession that males do. Generation X people are born from 1965 to 1980 and that time, divorce is at a high number that's why most of the Gen X'ers are more independent and rely mostly on their selves. Millennials are people who were born in the year 1981 to 2000, they are the people whom are very indulged in technology and being self-centered individuals. Millennials also seek for a quick satisfaction, they were lesser religious than the previous generation and cannot stay in a job. People born in the year 2000 up to present are called the Generation Z, they find social media as the way on how they express their selves, social media is also their source of happiness

and popularity in which impacting them to build their self-esteem
(Dangerfield, 2017)