

# The Link of Paranormal Belief with Life Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Orientation to Happiness

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## Abstract

This paper studies theoretical relations of Belief in Paranormal with Orientations to Happiness and Life Satisfaction. Convenient method of sampling is used to select 105 respondents from the city of Faisalabad, Pakistan. Results show that Paranormal Belief predicts significant change in Orientations to Happiness ( $B=0.283$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Orientations to Happiness modify the level of Life Satisfaction significantly ( $B=0.402$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Statistical testing proves mediation effect of Orientations to Happiness in the relation of Paranormal Belief with Life Satisfaction. This work also discusses social and religious implications of the presented findings.

**Keywords:** Paranormal; Life satisfaction; Happiness

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**Tel:** 051-9255459

**Received:** November 27, 2018; **Accepted:** December 07, 2018; **Published:** January 05, 2019

**Citation:** Haider SNA (2019) The Link of Paranormal Belief with Life Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Orientation to Happiness. Ann Behav Sci Vol. 4 No. 2:7

## Introduction

Paranormal belief is a liberating system of beliefs that supports people to develop sense of serenity in life and therefore, they gather the strength and resolve to achieve their personal, professional and social goals [1,2]. One cannot experience satisfaction without living a purposeful life [3]. Seemingly irrational and impractical supernatural beliefs cause people to believe that their lives are controlled by unearthly and supernatural beings [4]. Belief in the supernatural causes people to divert their attentions towards their professional and social obligations [5]. Professional dedication and engagement contributes to increase level of financial and emotional wellbeing [6]. Increasing sense of wellbeing allows people to feel contented with their lives in the long term [7]. New theoretical dimension of the study is identification of Orientations to Happiness as a potential mediator in the relation of Belief in Paranormal with Life Satisfaction. This investigation educates social psychologists specifically about constructive influence of Belief in Paranormal on Satisfaction with Life amongst Pakistani people.

## Literature Review

Belief in Paranormal allows people to believe in extraordinary possibilities [2]. Generally, Paranormal Belief operates to promote external locus of control in people and therefore, they give up their freedom of choice in the hope of experiencing supernatural rewards [3]. There are seven dimensions of Belief

in Paranormal. Firstly, the conventional theological concepts promote the presence of afterlife, devil and God. Secondly, the concept of Paranormal Belief induces people to believe in the presence of individuals with supernatural Mental abilities that they can use to displace a physical object. Thirdly, Paranormal Belief also endorses presence of aliens on Earth. Thirdly, Belief in Paranormal establishes predictive power of omens and symbols and they can successfully forecast future of people. Fourthly, one can use magical spells and formulas to influence other person's life both constructively and destructively according to convention of Paranormal Belief. Fifthly, Paranormal Belief argues that one can use power of the spirit to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks. Sixthly, Paranormal Belief advertises presence of people with extraordinary mental strength to predict the future flawlessly. Finally, the idea of Paranormal Belief also supports existence of witches and black magic [4].

Life Satisfaction measures one's ability to consider his or her life as a significantly satisfactory and fulfilling experience [5]. Paranormal Belief motivates people to consider their lives as a spiritually dependent experience [2]. Mythical nature of the Paranormal Belief causes people to develop fear of supernatural beings and therefore, he or she may not live a satisfactory life by approaching decisions and situations very fearfully [8].

Ho: Paranormal Belief and Life Satisfaction are inversely proportionate.

Hi: Paranormal Belief and Life Satisfaction are not significantly related.

Orientation to Happiness is the personal ability to pursue pleasure in life [9]. One should prepare him or herself psychologically to experience utmost level of happiness in life [10]. Firstly, a person should pursue a meaningful profession in order to serve the society to seek happiness. Secondly, one needs to enjoy his or her social and professional role to become a lively participant in the community. Thirdly, one should perform his or her role with investing every bit of energy so that he or she does not feel professionally underutilized [7].

According to the convention of Paranormal Belief, one can control his or her destiny by seeking help from supernatural personalities and a person should believe in powers of external supernatural forces to earn prosperity and wellbeing [11]. Belief in paranormal induces people to follow instructions of their spiritual masters [12]. Belief in one's spiritual master takes away the fear of making a wrong decision. An individual's spiritual master may protect him or her from experiencing adverse mental consequences of choosing a seemingly wrong path in life and a follower may optimistically handle any situation due to unshakable confidence in his or her spiritual leader [13]. Paranormal Belief in one's spiritual leader enhances his or her confidence to face negative events in life and a true follower may believe in generosity of the universe and therefore, he expects good times to come in the future during very adverse present conditions [14].

Hii: Paranormal Belief increases one's ability to seek happiness.

Hiii: Paranormal Belief does not predict Orientation to Happiness significantly.

### Orientation to happiness and life satisfaction

Orientation to Happiness helps a person in extracting happiness by focusing on his or her professional responsibilities during difficult times in life [15]. One's willingness to seek happiness through meaningful professional engagement converts into a profound sense of satisfaction by generating some tangible and intangible benefits [16].

Hiv: Orientation to Happiness predicts Life Satisfaction considerably.

Hv: Orientation to Happiness does not predict Life Satisfaction considerably.

### Paranormal belief orientation to happiness and life satisfaction

Believers in supernatural improve their confidence to perform their professional duties by believing in the possibility of receiving motivational aid from spiritual leaders during challenging and uncomfortable times [12]. Consequently, Paranormal Belief enhances one's Orientation to Happiness by increasing confidence to manage difficulties in life [10]. Individuals progress in their respective fields due to mentally productive focus on meaningful spiritual connection with spiritual leaders and therefore, they can transform their professional engagement into substantial achievements of their lives to have measurable satisfaction with life [3].

Hvi: Orientation to Happiness mediates the relation of Paranormal Belief with Life Satisfaction.

Hvii: Orientation to Happiness does not mediate the relation of Paranormal Belief with Life Satisfaction.

### Demographics and outcome variables

Gender and Orientation to Happiness: Women have increasing propensity to experience happiness than males [7].

Hviii: Women are more oriented towards happiness than males.

Hix: Women and men want to experience happiness on equal basis.

**Gender and life satisfaction:** Social and professional distance between both genders is finally reducing in the society of Pakistan and therefore, females are considerably becoming part of the active workforce of the developing nation to earn more peace of mind and satisfaction [17]. Women live very interestingly and engagingly to experience more satisfaction than men [18].

Hx: Women experience more Life Satisfaction than men.

Hxi: Women and men experience equalized level of Life Satisfaction.

### Age and orientation to happiness

An aged person feels more prepared to gather happiness in the future by productively tackling professional difficulties due to his or her experience [15]. Ripened age causes an individual to gather sufficient experience in life and therefore, one becomes very confident about his or her ability to use experiential learning to fight futuristic issues and challenges [7].

Hxii: Aged persons are more oriented to happiness than younger individuals.

Hxiii: Aged person and younger individuals are equally oriented to happiness.

**Age and life satisfaction:** Youngsters experience more satisfaction from life due to their ability to adapt to professional climate of the modern technological times and they become more productive in their professions [14]. Aging produces arrogance in one's personality and therefore, he or she does not willingly learn new techniques and methods that can make him or her more productive at the job [9]. However, younger individuals tend to understand novel technologies more readily and therefore; older professionals cannot compete with the younger lot and youngsters adapt according to new professional standards very swiftly [7].

Hxiv: Youngsters earn more satisfaction from their lives than aged persons.

Hxv: Youngsters and elders experience comparative level of satisfaction from their lives.

### Methods

Control variables and standard of including and excluding subjects from the study. This paper uses age as a method of including and excluding subjects from the survey. Both male and female

Participants with at least 15 years of age are included in the study.

### Sampling technique, method of survey and response rate

The researcher uses convenience sampling to select respondents from an educational institution in Faisalabad. Additionally, the investigator also conducts in depth interviews with participants of the study to fill the questionnaires. Corresponding researcher also asks students queries about one variable at a specific time. Subsequent constructs are covered by giving the gap of at least 24 hours in order to minimize interaction effects amongst the studied concepts. Total 150 questionnaires were distributed and we received 105 completely filled instruments back (105/150=0.70).

### Measures

This study applied questionnaire developed by Tobacyk [4] to measure Belief in Paranormal (Cronbach's Alpha=0.705, items=26). The instrument devised by Peterson, Park, and Seligman, (2005) was used to quantify Orientations to Happiness (Cronbach's Alpha=0.738, items=18). The measure proposed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin [18] gauged the level of Life Satisfaction in the sample (Cronbach's Alpha=0.813, items=5).

### Analysis

This study used the model of linear regression to assess influence of independent variables over dependent constructs. Belief in Paranormal acted as an independent variable for both Orientations to Happiness and Life Satisfaction. The investigation also considered age and gender as variables that may predict levels of aforementioned dependent variables in the sample. This paper also takes help from approach of Hayes [1] to test mediating effect of Orientations to Happiness in the relation of Belief in Paranormal and Life Satisfaction. This research project obtained informed consent from parents of participants below

age of 16 years before distributing questionnaires. Additionally, respondents with ages more than 16 years were briefed about the nature of the study prior to handing over relevant questionnaires. All respondents expressed consent to participate in the study openly.

### Results

Belief in Paranormal does not exist within the personalities of the respondents very aggressively. However, mild level of such mind-set prevails in the respondents. The bandwidth of response does not touch minimal and maximal possible points in the previously mentioned category. Participants of the study appear to experience mild to higher level of emotional need to gain pleasure. Respondents showed extreme opinion about Life Satisfaction and the variable touched both extremes of responsive continuum. Belief in Paranormal and Orientations to Happiness statistically bundled whereas there is significant level of divergence present in responses about Life Satisfaction. The mean scores of Belief in Paranormal, Orientations to Happiness and Life Satisfaction are 3.07, 4.13 and 3.74 respectively. Standard Deviations of the variables are 0.3984, 0.4895 and 0.7603 in the order of mentioning.

Age and gender do not have any statistical ability to predict Orientations to Happiness and therefore, this study accepts Hxiii and Hxi respectively [2]. However, Belief in Paranormal causes 5.3% change in the level of Orientations towards Happiness (B=0.283, p<0.05). The investigation considers Hii believably truthful [5] (Tables 1-4).

Age and gender also do not predict significant level of Life Satisfaction. This study accepts Hxv and Hxi respectively [11]. Belief in Paranormal does not influence Life Satisfaction significantly and therefore, the study accepts Hi [2]. Orientations to Happiness determines 6.3% of change in level of LS (B=0.402, p<0.01).

Table 1 Demographics of the sample.

Demographics	males n=69 (%)	Females n=36 (%)	Total (n=105)
<b>Age</b>			
15-20	12 (17.4)	14 (38.9)	26 (24.76)
20-25	52 (75.4)	22 (61.1)	74 (70.48)
25-30	4 (5.8)	--	4 (3.81)
Above	1 (1.4)	--	1 (-0.95)

Table 2 Descriptive statistics.

Constructs	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Belief in Paranormal	2.13	4	3.07	0.3984
Orientations to Happiness	2.5	5	4.13	0.4895
Life Satisfaction	1	4.75	3.74	0.7603

Table 3 Orientations to happiness as a dependent variable.

Independents	B	R2	Change in R2
Age	-0.040 (ns)	0.002	--
Gender	0.094 (ns)	0.01	0.008
Belief in Paranormal	0.283*	0.063	0.053
***=p<0.001	**=p<0.01	*=p<0.05	--

**Table 4** Life satisfaction as a dependent variable.

Independents	B	R2	Change in R2
Age	-0.031 (ns)	0.001	--
Gender	0.099 (ns)	0.004	0.003
Belief in Paranormal	0.269 (ns)	0.024	0.02
Orientation to Happiness	0.402**	0.087	0.063
Testing mediation effect indirect effect of paranormal belief on life satisfaction			
Independents	Main effect	Lower bound of CI	Upper bound of CI
Orientation to Happiness	0.111	0.0054	0.3231
***=p<0.001	**=p<0.01	*=p<0.05	CI=Confidence Interval

Belief in Paranormal increases Orientations to Happiness (B=0.283, p<0.05). Orientations to Happiness enhances one's Satisfaction with Life (B=0.402, p<0.01) However, Belief in Paranormal does not predict notable statistical changes in Life Satisfaction. Compound mediatory effect of Orientations to Happiness is statistically larger than the relation of Paranormal Belief with Life Satisfaction (0.402\*0.283=0.1138). The product of two effects lies within the subscribed confidence interval of 0.0054, 0.3231. This paper accepts mediation hypothesis as well [1].

## Discussion

Age does not affect level of Orientations to Happiness. One should respond to increased degree of responsibility independent of his or her age while not earning sufficient opportunity to seek pleasure during the experience of living [19]. Organizations particularly remain unsuccessful in terms of offering pleasurable and engaging professional experiences to employees. Boring jobs and routinized tasks contribute to decrease one's ability to find pleasure and happiness [6]. Men and women develop equalized professional roles in the society of Pakistan [15]. Both genders do not consider their organizational roles as sufficiently challenging and therefore, element of boredom develops to produce similar level of Orientations to Happiness in males and females equivalently [18].

Poor socioeconomic situation of the country causes masses to emphasize on physical survival [3] However, Pakistani population does not experience psychological satisfaction with life because of professional and social difficulties [10]. People expect negative events to transpire in the future due to compromised situation of national security [8]. They cannot mentally relax to appreciate their blessings to develop considerable degree of satisfaction with life. Pakistani males and females go through similar challenges of life due to collaborative social and familial responsibilities [19]. They also remain uncertain about their economic perspectives due to increasing unemployment in the society [11]. Uncertainty about one's socioeconomic future influences satisfaction with life comparatively regardless of gender and age [19].

## Conclusion

Belief in Paranormal is a purely psychological construct [4]. However, Satisfaction with Life is dependent on practical aspects

of one's personal and professional life [14]. Belief in Paranormal does not affect the level of Life Satisfaction directly and the concept operates through the channel of Orientations to Happiness and it trains the mind to imagine optimistically about one's future [2]. A true believer holds that supernatural factors can help him or her in fighting challenges of life [7]. A believing individual's tendency to live optimistically increases manifold and therefore, he or she becomes highly capable of searching happiness and pleasure [3]. A willing person to experience happiness does not focus on negative features of his or her life [5]. Instead, he or she treasures positive elements of his or her existence to increase satisfaction [3].

## Social and Psychological Implications

Elders, social and clinical psychologists should stimulate Belief in Paranormal to prepare the next generation for facing challenges of life. Belief in Paranormal can be used as a motivational source to make professional progress possible. Belief in Paranormal allows one to consider extreme possibilities of nature plausible and therefore, they develop utter confidence to achieve difficult and perceived impossible goals [3]. However, Belief in Paranormal converts into significant efforts and struggles to influence Satisfaction with Life. Paranormal Belief does not affect Life Satisfaction directly due to pure psychological nature [5]. Paranormal Belief permits one to realize his or her potential for professional and social growth that operates to increase Satisfaction with Life. Life Satisfaction cannot increase without sincere efforts to grow and evolve as a better professional. Better professional earns more joy and happiness in order to experience increased level of wellbeing and satisfaction.

## Limitations of the Study

This investigative effort does not produce nationwide findings and sample is not larger in order to generate generalized recommendations.

## Future Directions for Research

Future researches should consider Belief in Paranormal as socially divisive element that may cause religious and social divide to increase in the society. Scholars need to identify Paranormal Beliefs that particularly and specifically offer significant and general psychological benefits.

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