

Introduction

Astrology is continually discredited as an illegitimate pseudoscience. Most scholars and laypeople agree upon that position. The focus of this study will be to determine whether or not knowledge of astrology, more specifically, the twelve signs of the zodiac have any socializing effect on the population. Most people are at least casually acquainted with the "properties" of their particular zodiac sign. It is possible that even those who do not accept astrology as legitimate can be affected by their awareness of particular astrological tendencies. It is unclear to what extents in which our zodiac signs have had a socializing impact on us. This study will examine General Social Survey data collected between 1978 and 1998 to analyze four variables. The independent variable in this study will be the Zodiac sign of the respondent. Three dependent variables will be analyzed in terms of the independent variable (zodiac sign of respondent). The dependent variables are all nominal level variables, though not of particular significance in and of himself or herself, but for the purpose of this study they are variables that have to do with aspects of an individual's personality. The purpose of this study is not to legitimate or delegitimize astrology, but to explore what

affect, if any it has upon peoples' opinions on three topics.

Literature Review

Sociological literature on the topic of astrology was scarce to non-existent. Sociological studies on the subject were non-existent. Every study available on the topic save one was on from the discipline of Psychology. The only remotely relevant sociological literature was an article discussing a theoretical critique of astrology conducted by Theodore Adorno. The Adorno literature was merely theoretical and did not contain a qualitative or quantitative study. The five studies encountered were not methodologically rigorous enough to be of any real value. Due to flaws in sample size and representation, each study's results cannot be generalized, and thus the results and findings of these studies are of little value.

The one study that even had a sample that was generalizeable was conducted in Germany, and consisted of 1,700 subjects that were called to participate in a study of the validity of astrology (E. Wunder 1785). The subjects were representative of German society (E.Wunder 1785). The flaw in the sample was that the participants volunteered to participate in order to receive a personalized horoscope (E.Wunder 1787). The aim of the

study was to see what effect the favorableness of an astrological description of one's personality had on a subject's acceptance of that description as accurate. They were unable to find any significant relationship.

A large scale study was done by Peter Hartmann, Martin Reuter and Helmuth Nyborg to determine a relationship between date of birth and individual differences in personality and general intelligence (Hartmann et al.) The study used two samples; the first had 4,000+ subjects, and the second 11,000+ subjects. The sample sizes were certainly large enough, however they was flawed due to the fact that data was collected from Vietnam veterans and young people who had taken the ASVAB test. They were unable to find a significant relationship in the study.

Three other studies were conducted of similar intent, yet they utilized convenience sampling of first-year psychology students. Margaret Hamilton conducted two of these studies, and found a significant relationship between the favorableness of astrological personality description and a person's belief in the legitimacy of astrology (Hamilton 895). However, due to the samples she used, and other questions about the experimental conditions used in the study, the study is of essentially no significance.

Dave Clark et. al. studied astrological signs as determinants of extroversion and emotionality (Clark et. al.). Their sample was flawed because it was also a convenience sample of first-year psychology students. They found no significant relationship.

Gaps in Available Literature

A truly viable scientific study involving astrology has not been conducted. Due to sampling error in terms of representation and/or sample size, all previous studies that were remotely similar to the design of this study are essentially void of value. Where this study succeeds in is utilizing the General Social Survey, an in-person survey with an 85% response rate. The GSS sample is a legitimate random probability sample, and therefore the results are generalizable to the population. The sample contains 2,500 participants in the GSS from the years 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, and 1998. In addition, no study has addressed what influence a respondent's zodiac sign has on social issues, values, and beliefs. This study will be the first to analyze these specific issues with an appropriately generalizable sample.

Specifically, this study will attempt to determine whether or not there is any significant relationship between zodiac sign and political party affiliation, stance

on the legalization of marijuana, and belief in life after death. It is anticipated that there will be no significant relationship found between any of the variables. The three hypotheses of the study are as follows:

H1: There is no significant relationship between zodiac sign and political party affiliation;

H2: There is no significant relationship between zodiac sign and stance on the legalization of marijuana;

H3: There is no significant relationship between zodiac sign and belief in life after death.

Research Design

This study will succeed where others have erred by using the General Social Survey to gain a random probability sample. The GSS data that will be used is secondary in nature and will span use each survey from the years 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, and 1998 for a total number of respondents of 2,500. The GSS is an in-person survey with a response rate of 85%. Each variable being studied was at the nominal level of measurement. The appropriate statistical test conducted for each variable was a bivariate chi square test, and SPSS software was used to conduct all statistical computations. The variables were recoded to eliminate any missing responses. The wording of the questions on the GSS in regards to each variable was

very simple due to the fact that each variable chosen was of nominal level of measurement. The questions on the survey merely asked respondents to identify their response to each question. On the question of zodiac sign, they were asked to identify which of the 12 zodiac signs was appropriate to them; responses of don't know, no answer, and not applicable were also offered. These last three responses were recoded out of the variable to exclude missing cases. The variable political party affiliation offered responses that ranged from strong democrat to strong republican, other party, don't know, and no answer. These last two responses were recoded out of the variable to exclude missing cases. Subjects were asked whether the use of marijuana should be made legal or not. The responses offered were should, should not, don't know, no answer, and not applicable. The last three responses were recoded out to eliminate missing cases. Subjects were asked if they believe in life after death. The responses offered were yes, no, undecided, no answer, and not applicable. Once again, the last three responses were recoded out of the variable to ensure a more accurate study, which was the same goal of recoding each of the other variables.

The main strength of the study was the sampling method, which provided a random probability sample. The weakness of the study is the possibility of the results of the study being inaccurate due to the influence of another variable. The variables that could be controlled to ensure a more accurate study are income and level of education. A regression analysis that controls for these two variables would provide a more accurate picture of the influence of the zodiac variable.

Findings

Univariate analysis of each variable was conducted to ensure that all missing cases were excluded from the study. This technique ensures a more accurate study.

Univariate Analysis Table I

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percent
Political party affiliation		
Strong Democrat	361	14.5
Not Str Democrat	561	22.5
Ind,Near Dem	307	12.3
Independent	339	13.6
IND, Near Rep	206	8.3
Not Str Republican	445	17.8

Strong Republican	254	10.2
Other Party	21	.8
Should marijuana be made legal		
Legal	446	23.8
Not Legal	1430	76.2
Belief in life after death		
Yes	1599	78.8
No	430	21.2

These univariate statistics were recoded to exclude missing cases. They were then each independently bivariate tested with the variable zodiac using a chi square test.

Bivariate Analysis Tables

Chi Square Tests

H1: There is no significant relationship between zodiac sign and political party affiliation.

Value Degrees of Freedom Significance

84.021	84	.479
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H2: There is no significant relationship between zodiac sign and stance on the legalization of marijuana

Value Degrees of Freedom Significance

Works Cited

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