

Introduction

Belief in the supernatural takes many different forms from belief in beginners luck to belief in crystal healing to belief in a higher power. Belief in the supernatural can be seen in the types of media we watch as well from long island medium to a game of thrones there are many different representations of the supernatural in media. From palm readers to horoscopes to T.V. shows and movies the supernatural is a billion dollar industry however in more extreme cases it can also cost people their lives (i.e. faith healers instead of medicine). Previous research suggests that there is a relationship between belief in the supernatural and scientific literacy (Singer & Benassi, 1981).

Methods

The present study examined the relationship between belief in the supernatural and the genres of media that people like, namely: science fiction (i.e. Star Trek), fantasy (i.e. Game of Thrones), reality (i.e. American Idol), and science fiction reality shows (i.e. Long Island Medium).

Methods

Participants (N=304) were recruited from Stephen F Austin State university and asked how often they watched common shows (i.e. ghost hunters) on a five point Likert scale (1 never watch, 5 watch often) and whether they believed in different supernatural constructs also on a five point likert scale (higher power, faith healing, etc; 1 do not believe in to 5 strongly believe in). Additionally, participants were asked what supernatural events they had experienced personally and what their friends and family had experienced.

Results

Correlation Matrix of Belief, Experience, and Average Watching of T.V. Shows							
Correlation Matrix	Belief in the Supernatural Total	Experience with the Supernatural Total	Friends & Family Experience Total	Fantasy TV and Movies Average	Reality Average	Scifi Average	Scifi Reality Average
Belief	1	.39**	.21**	.30**	.20**	.03	.34**
Experience	.39**	1	.63**	.12	.12	.02	.10
F&F Experience	.21**	.63**	1	.12	.08	.02	.12
Fantasy	.30**	.12	.16	1	.17	.48**	.27**
Reality	.20**	.12	.08	.17	1	.06	.30**
Scifi	.03	.02	.02	.48**	.06	1	.21**
Scifi reality	.34**	.10	.12	.28**	.30**	.21**	1

Belief and Scifi Reality

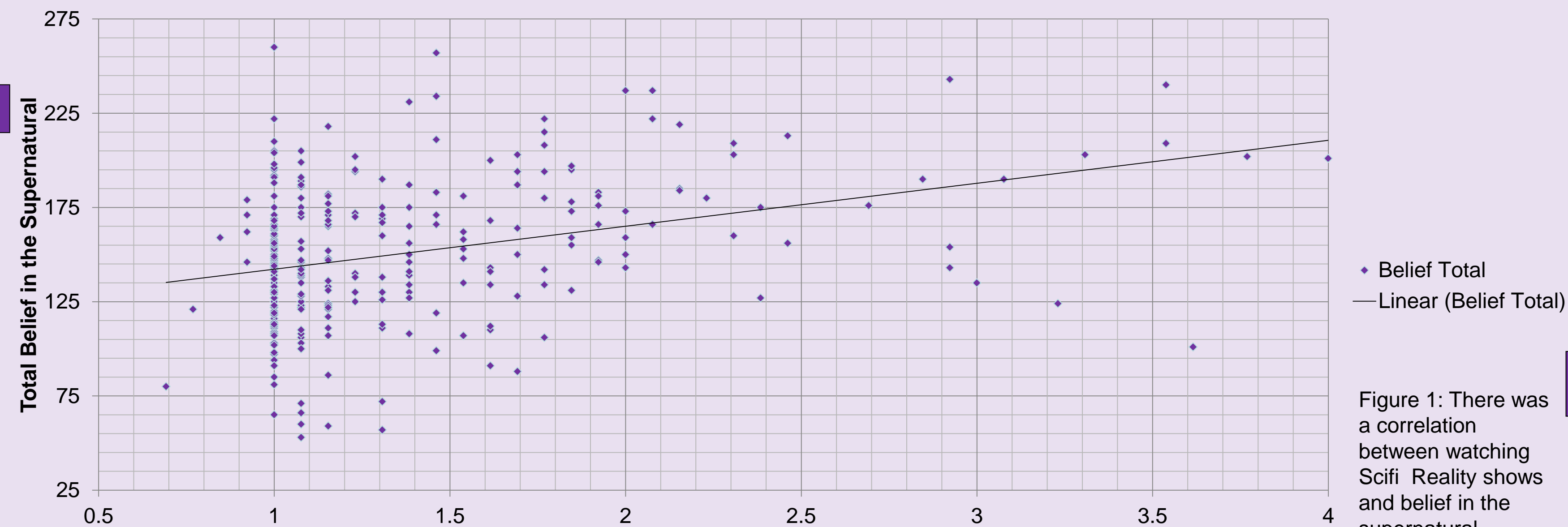


Figure 1. Average watching of Scifi Reality Shows

Figure 1: There was a correlation between watching Scifi Reality shows and belief in the supernatural.

Conclusion

- The results of a correlation analysis suggest that total experience with the supernatural is positively correlated with total belief in the supernatural.
- Similarly, friends and family experience with the supernatural was positively correlated with total belief in the supernatural.
- Belief was also positively correlated with how often the participants watched common fantasy shows as well as science fiction reality shows.
- However, science fiction shows were not correlated with belief in the supernatural despite being strongly correlated with fantasy shows.

References

Singer, B., & Benassi, V. A. (1981). Occult beliefs: Media distortions, social uncertainty, and deficiencies of human reasoning seem to be at the basis of occult beliefs. *American Scientist*, 49-55.

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