

Enhancing Hit Rates on Psi Tests with Optimal Levels of Transliminality

Results:

Houran and Lange (in press) reanalyzed data from two different studies (I Ching and haunt experiences) that examined transliminality and anomalous experiences simultaneously to determine if there was an “optimal level” of transliminality for putative psi. Transliminality and Sex effects on anomalous experiences were identified in one dataset, as indicated by statistically significant variation in subjects’ experiential response hierarchies. Next, these differential effects were identified also in the other dataset at the behavioral level as indicated by subjects’ performance on an I Ching task. Results suggest that putative psi was best facilitated in women with high Transliminality scores and men with low Transliminality scores. As a cross-check of this heuristic, Houran and Lange (in preparation) explored experimenter effects in an experiment with the Chinese book of divination the I Ching, which contains 64 hexagrams (6-line structures) and associated readings. Three coins are thrown six times to generate one of these hexagrams. Participants and Experimenters (N = 120) were recruited based on scoring patterns on Transliminality and Paranormal Belief to produce four experimental groups (N = 15 pairs each) of varying levels of Paranormal Belief and Transliminality: High/High; High/Low; Low/High and Low/Low. Participants selected 16 of 64 hexagram-descriptor pairs, based on their emotional or cognitive states of mind. A “hit” was observed when 1 of the 16 choices would come up ($P_{mce} = .25$). It was predicted that the hit rate of the High/High group would be significantly greater than chance, the High/High group would score significantly higher than the three control conditions (High/Low, Low/High, Low/Low) and that the three control conditions would score similarly. It was further expected that Transliminality, Paranormal Belief and Sex would show main and interaction effects for hit rate on the I Ching task. The hit rate on Hexagram 1 was 28 out of 60, or 46.7% which far exceeds the 25% chance level and the High/High group did have the highest raw score hit rate, but there were no significant main or interaction effects of Transliminality, Paranormal Belief or Sex. These surprising findings suggest that the specific differences in experimental protocols between the present study and past research are partly responsible. The two main differences involve (i) the notion of spontaneity and ambiguity related to the task and (ii) treating psi outcomes on the I Ching as a Rasch-trait variable rather than as independent observations.

Published work:

- Houran, J. (2007). Entropy and environmental mystery: A parapsychological perspective. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 105, 688-690.
- Houran, J., & Lange, R. (in press). Searching for an optimal level of transliminality in relation to putative psi. *Journal of the Society for Psychological Research*.
- Houran, J., & Lange, R. (2012). I Ching outcomes from experimental manipulations of transliminality and paranormal belief. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 12(1), 39-58.

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