

Development and implementation of a comprehensive survey of secular American mediums

ABSTRACT:

Background

Previous research with mediums can only be generalized to specific belief system- and geographically-associated populations. The subset of American mediums not associated with any formal organization and who hold no organized belief system are the majority in the US but their general demographics and other characteristics have not been specifically assessed.

Aims

This study aimed to gather novel data regarding demographic, cognitive, psychological, physiological, and phenomenological characteristics of self-identifying mediums in the US.

Method

This study used established survey development and piloting methods to create novel web-based instruments and included quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods and computerized text analysis techniques. The survey used standard questionnaires and newly developed items. Data was collected from 1,068 non-mediums and 316 mediums.

Results

The medium and non-medium participants showed no significant differences in age, race, gender, education, or income. Mediums demonstrated statistically significantly higher psychological well-being, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, fantasy proneness, disease burden, childhood trauma, and environmental sensitivities. Roughly 97% of medium respondents reported being able to tell the difference between communication from the deceased and psychic information about the living. Quantitative differences in the two experiences included social and perceptual processes and insight. Qualitative analyses demonstrated that psychic information about the living comes from various sources including the deceased.

Conclusions

Secular American mediums have unique psychological, personality, cognitive, and experiential characteristics; descriptions of mediumistic and psychic experiences are quantitatively different; the current language used to discuss mediumship does not accurately reflect the actual phenomenon; and pluralist methods can be used to study mediumship.

Keywords

Medium, Survey, Quantitative, Qualitative, Computerized text analysis

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Published Work:

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