**mmPsychology 1A Article Report 2. F 20. Milligan, PhD Due Date: 11/3**

**Titles: 1.** Damisch, L., Stoberock, B. and Mussweiler, T. Keep your fingers crossed! How superstition improves performance. (2010) Psychological Science, 21(7) 1014-1020.

**2.** Wargo, E. The many lives of superstition. (2008) Observer, 21(9) 1-5

**1. a.** What is the main idea of Title 1? Cite a piece of research from Title 1 which supports the main idea and say how it does so.

1) Superstitions benefit performance.

Experiment 1. When participants putted after being told they were using a “lucky ball”, they putted better than participants who did not use the “lucky ball”.

Experiment 2. When participants were given a good luck saying, they did better on a motor dexterity task than a control group.

Experiment 3. Participants who used their own lucky charms performed better on a memory task than participants who were deprived of their lucky charms.

2) Superstitions also increase self-efficacy/self confidence.

Experiment 3. Participants who used their lucky charms reported higher levels of confidence that they would do well on the memory task.

**b.** What is the main idea of Title 2? Cite a piece of research from Title 2 which supports the main idea and say how it does so.

Superstitions arise from humans’ attempts to control events which are unpredictable, uncertain and difficult, if not impossible, to control. “It appears to be human nature to believe our thoughts, our words, our rituals can influence remote outcomes.”

1. Rozin and Nemeroff: People are reluctant to wear sweater worn by people who suffered misfortune or disease, e.g., HIV
2. Voodoo hex research. People believed sticking pins in a doll caused a headache
3. Research with blindfolded basketball player. People believed their visualizations aided the player.
4. Wegner and Wheatly research: People believed their thoughts stopped a computer cursor
5. “Tempting fate” research (as in Item 7 below)
6. Schipper and Lange research: superstitious behavior in top athletes positively correlates with importance of game and negatively correlates with control athlete feels.
7. Kienan research: the more stress, the more superstitious behavior.

ALL OF THE ABOVE RESEARCH SHOWS PEOPLES’ ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL EVENTS WITH THOUGHTS AND/OR IRRELEVANT BEHAVIORS.

**2.**

1) Throughout his career, Michael Jordan wore his college shorts underneath his Bulls uniform.

CONDITIONOING AND LAW OF CONTAGION

2) Detroit octopus tossing.

CONDITIONING AND LAW OF SIMILARITY

3) Never talking about a no-hitter during a baseball game.

TEMPTING FATE

**. 3. a.** From Titles 1 and 2, what are the benefits of superstitions? (1)

Title 1: 1) enhanced performance on physical and cognitive tasks

2) increased self-efficacy

Title 2: 1) stress reduction

**b. From Title 2,** what is a negative consequence of superstition?

Wargo suggests that the “law of contagion” may cause people to avoid contact with people who have suffered misfortune, e.g., an amputation.

c. State any other negative consequences you can think of. NOTE: I believe there are many possible answers. Here is one I offer you: Superstitious thinking and behaviors may prevent us from exploring rational ways to improve performance and/or avoid negative consequences in life.

**4.** From our class, especially Unit 2, what are ways, other than superstition, to enhance exam performance?(1)

Active Responding

Elaborative rehearsal

Reinforcement for studying

Overlearning

Taking measures to avoid primacy and recency

Distribution of practice

Please Note: You may have other ways as well.

**5. a.** Superstitious behaviors, for examples, in sports, politics and exams, are on what schedule of reinforcement?

VARIABLE RATIO

**b.** From Title 1: “Superior teams, as well as superior players within a team, exhibit more superstitious behaviors … this suggests that … superstitious thoughts and behaviors result in” (i.e., cause) “performance benefits.” What logical fallacy is involved here? (DRAWING CAUSE FROM CORRELATION; I will accept FALSE CAUSE. also) From a behaviorist point of view, what is an alternative explanation? SUPERIOR PLAYERS PRACTICE MORE

**6. a.** State two overgeneralizations from each Title.

Title 1. 1) “Throughout history and across cultures, many people engage in superstitious thoughts and behaviors.”

2) “Eye opening anecdotes abound.”

3) “It is not surprising that superstitious beliefs are particularly prevalent in two groups . . .”

Title 2. 1) We’re nearing the end of a campaign where every factor under the sun has come into play.”

2) It appears to be human nature to believe our thoughts …can influence remote outcomes.”

**b.** From Title 1: “.. . activating a superstition indeed leads to superior performance because it elevates participants’ self-efficacy. . .” (i.e., Researchers are suggesting self-efficacy **causes** superior performance.) What logical fallacy is involved here? (Please Note: “self-efficacy means self-confidence.) FALSE CAUSE

**7.** With any five people (excluding students in my two Psychology 1A classes), do the following, separately for each person:

1. Read aloud, “Jon and Jan, who are twins, both applied to graduate school at Stanford University. Their mother sent each of them a Stanford University t shirt before Jon and Jan heard whether they were accepted or not. Jon put the t-shirt on as soon upon receiving it; Jan put the shirt in a drawer while waiting to hear Stanford’s decision.” When you finish reading, ask the person if Jan or John is more likely to be accepted. If the answer is “yes”, ask the person who is more likely to be accepted.

2. Read aloud, “Bill and Belle, who are twins, are both taking a class in which the instructor randomly calls on a student to discuss assigned reading. Bill has not done the reading; Belle has done the reading.” When you finish reading, ask the person if Bill or Belle is more likely to be called on. If the answer is, “yes”, ask the person who is more likely to be called on.

Write down the person’s gender and age and the person’s answers to the questions.

**Please Note:** Items 1, 3, 4, and 7 above are each worth ½ point; items 2, 5, and 6 are each worth 1 point for a total of 5 points for Article Report 2. The optional questions below are worth a total of ½ point.

**Optional:**

From Title 1:

**a.** Independent Variable in Experiment 1?

**b.** Independent Variable and Dependent Variable in Experiment 2?

**c.** Independent Variable and Dependent Variables in Experiment 3

**Format: Upper right hand corner: Name, Psychology 1A, Section Number, F 14. Title: Article Report 2.**

**Please do not include the questions in your report. Number your answers. Please bring two printed copies of your report to class on the due date. Please do not use folders of any kind.**