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## A study of superstitious behaviors between players of different combat sports

**Manoj Bhardwaj and Baljinder Singh Bal**

### Abstract

According to psychology, superstitious behavior arises when "the delivery of a reinforcer or punisher occurs close together in time with an independent behavior." For this purpose around Thirty-Three (N=33) Players of 18-25 years of age group were chosen to act as subjects. Further sliced into three groups (N1= 11 Boxing players, N2= 11 Judo players and N3 =11 fencing players). The superstitious Behaviour Questionnaire (Bleak and Frederick 1998) was used as a tool in this study. One Way Analysis of Variance was employed to compare the three groups. Where 'F' values were found significant, Scheffe's Post-hoc test was applied. The level of significance was set at 0.05. Based on the above findings, the following conclusions have been drawn: Significant differences were observed between Boxing, Judo, and Fencing Players on the sub-variables; Fetish and Team Ritual. Were as no significant differences were found regarding the sub-variables; Clothing and Appearance, Preparation, Game/Competition, Prayer, and Coach.

**Keywords:** Superstitious behaviors

### Introduction

Superstitious beliefs are a common occurrence. Many superstitions have strong cultural roots, such as considering black cats to be a bad omen or avoiding walking under ladders, but others - the so-called personal superstitions - are more idiosyncratic: sports fans treasure "lucky" objects, as do students who carefully avoid visiting "unlucky" spots for the duration of exam sessions. These beliefs can be thought of as an incorrect interpretation of incoming events: a fictitious association is perceived as being linked by a cause-effect relationship, and this conviction prompts repetition of the involved behaviour. Throughout history, superstitions have served as a foundation for decision-making. These beliefs play an evolutionary role in humans' ability to explain ostensibly dangerous events over which they have no control (Rozin and Nemeroff, 2002) <sup>[1]</sup>. Similarly, sports fans experience negative emotions and suspense while watching a game because of their uncertainty and limited ability to influence the outcome for their team (Knobloch- Westerwick *et al.*, 2009) <sup>[2]</sup>. Fans may experience psychological and physiological stress as a result of their lack of control over the outcome of a sporting event. One way to deal with uncertainty is to engage in repetitive behaviour before and during an event, such as professional athletes do (McDonald and Karg, 2014) <sup>[3]</sup>. This lack of control and the subsequent repetitive behaviour intended to generate control, combine to form the uncertainty assumption, which states that the outcome of an event is the result of a combination of controlled and uncontrolled forces. Burger and Lynn (2005) <sup>[4]</sup> discovered that athletes who believed in the impact of uncontrollable forces on the outcome also believed in the power of superstition and its ability to change the outcome significantly more than athletes who believed they had control over the outcome. The connection between superstitions and consumerism should be highlighted in this context. According to Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>, actively choosing an object and conforming to social norms can contribute to superstitious behaviour. In this context, sports fans can buy clothes or scarves for their favourite team, or they can adopt certain behaviours that are common in sports fandom. In the Block and Kramer (2009) <sup>[6]</sup> study, for example, the researchers investigated Taiwanese consumer superstitious behaviour and demonstrated that local beliefs about lucky colours and numbers of influence purchase decisions.

In another case, the Hamerman and Johar (2013)<sup>[7]</sup> study on conditioned superstitions claims that sports fans can connect two seemingly unrelated events, such as drinking a specific beverage brand and winning the game. This linkage results in conditioned behaviour in which the fan continues to buy the same brand because he believes it will improve the performance of his favourite team.

### Sample Size

For this purpose of selection of the subjects, around Thirty-Three (N=33) Players of 18-25 years of age group were chosen to act as subjects. The entire group of players were further sliced into three groups which include (N1= 11 Boxing players, N2= 11 Judo players and N3 =11 fencing players). The major aim of this sampling technique was to formulate the objectives of the study. The chosen subjects volunteered to participate in the study.

**Table 1:** Details of Selected Subjects.

Sr. No.	Group	No. of Players
1.	Boxing Players	11
2.	Judo Players	11
3.	Fencing Players	11
Total		N = 33

### Description of the Tests

The outcome of the test will adequately measure the Superstitious Behaviors of the subjects. This tool in the form of a questionnaire was used in this study.

**Table 2:** Selection of Tools.

Tools	Author's	Year
Superstitious Behaviour Questionnaire	Bleak and Frederick	1998

### Statistical Technique

One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to compare the three groups. Where 'F' values were found significant, Scheffe's Post-hoc test was applied to find out the direction and degree of difference. For testing the hypotheses, the level of significance was set at 0.05.

### Results

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions have been drawn: Significant differences were observed between Boxing, Judo, and Fencing Players on the sub-variables.

### Fetish

Since the (Sig.) = .014 and F-value = 4.913 so, the means of the following pairs are significantly different.

### Team Ritual

Since the P-value (Sig.) = 0.030 and F-value = 3.930 so, the means of the following pairs are significantly different.

**No significant differences were found with regard to the sub-variables**

### Clothing and Appearance

Since the P-value (Sig.) = 0.798 and F-value = 0.227 so, there is no significant difference between the means of any pair.

### Preparation

Since the P-value (Sig.) = 0.954 and F-value = .047 so, there is no significant difference between the means of any pair.

### Game/Competition

Since the P-value (Sig.) = 0.043 and F-value = 3.515 so, there is no significant difference between the means of any pair.

### Prayer

Since the P-value (Sig.) = 0.113 and F-value = 2.344 so, there is no significant difference between the means of any pair.

### Coach

Since the P-value (Sig.) = 0.334 and F-value = 1.138 so, there is no significant difference between the means of any pair.

### Superstitious Behaviour (Total)

Since the P-value (Sig.) = 0.610 and F-value = 0.502 so, there is no significant difference between the means of any pair.

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