

# The reason of people believe horoscopes

Huang Rui

Basis International School Hangzhou, Hangzhou, 310000, China

**Abstract.** Horoscopes are very popular and common discussed today in people's daily life. The purpose of this essay is to explore what types of people are more likely to believe in horoscopes since there were about 10 research paper in studying different types of people who believe horoscopes. The essay explains some reasons that people believe in horoscopes can be explained by locus of control and Barnum effect. By studying women's role in propaganda magazines, individual's education level, and the frequency of people reading horoscope forecasts, the following conclusions were drawn: young, less-educated women were more likely to believe in horoscopes than men.

**keywords:** Horoscope; Locus of control; Barnum effect; Astrology.

## 1. Introduction

Horoscopes and astrology can be found almost anywhere in the media. Reading a daily newspaper and a short snippet about what those with your sign can expect to day, month, or year. Astrology has become a common thing in all kinds of newspapers, magazines, and on the Internet. In short, horoscopes have stuck themselves in popular culture (Evans, 1996). To be specific, a horoscope is defined as a diagram of the relative positions of planets and signs of the zodiac at a unique time to predict or indicate individual character and personality traits and their future life.

Some research demonstrates that many well-educated, apparently rational, and well-functioning people read horoscopes regularly. And a certain percentage of them rely on their zodiac signs and horoscopes to help make decisions. A larger percentage find the characterization of their basic characters and personalities provided by their signs insightful. This is surprising. Why does an ancient and scientifically discredited theory appeal to educated twenty-first-century people? And, why, as has been documented, should this be truer of women than men? And why are some radical, ethnic and age groups more likely to trust horoscopes than others?

Psychologists have put forward explanations of this phenomenon. In this essay, I describe and explain the most plausible type of people tend to believe horoscopes and some effects on people's life.

## 2. The Basic Theory

### 2.1 Horoscope and Horoscopic Prediction

Astrology contains knowledge of the principle of astronomy and mathematics which can date back to the third millennium before Christ. Initially, astrology was found upon by the church and religion. But, over time, astrology's most well-known application, horoscopes, became more mainstream in individuals' life.

Before reading a horoscope, people must determine their astrological sign. There are 12 zodiac signs based on an individual's birthday. The diagram also illustrates the relative position of planets and the signs of the zodiac. Combing all of the information, the horoscope can foretell events in a person's life. The horoscopic prediction is complex since it needs information from different perspectives including constellations, astral, and so on (Gleadow, 2011).

The constellations are the twelve signs including Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius. Astral refers to planets in the universe, corresponding to real planets and virtual planets respectively. Real planets are divided into major real planets and minor real planets: major real planets for the present solar system, a total of 16, refers to the sun, the moon, seven planets (except the Earth), and seven dwarf planets (except Charon);

Secondary real planet is to point to palladium planet, female Chiron star. The virtual planet is divided into the main virtual planets and secondary virtual planets: generally, there are six main virtual planets, which refers to the orbit of the moon and the sun track two intersection ( $\Omega$   $\mathcal{U}$ , north-south node). Secondary virtual stars correspond to key locations in each of the twelve or sixteen zodiac constellations. Ordinary stars refer specifically to real stars, acknowledged in scientific astronomy (van der Waerden, 1952).

## 2.2 B. The Signs of the Zodiac

The signs of the zodiac are divided evenly into 16 celestial areas, divided into 16 signs ordered in a natural way ---usually counter-clockwise on the outer circle of the chart and then counter-clockwise on the inner circle of the chart.

## 2.3 C. Signs and Personalities

In this section, we will only give a brief example of constellations. More comprehensive information will be provided in Appendix.

(i) The Aries and its characteristics (March 21 to April 19) Aries people are very impulsive and adventurous. Their goal is always high, although they may seem immature in some cases, , they will continue to strive for this goal (Baker, 2014).

(ii) The Taurus and its characteristics (April 20 to May 20) Taurus are realistic and spiritual. They use money to buy a sense of security for themselves. Most of the time, they give people the feeling of dignity. They are aristocrats to their bones (Rogers & Glendon, 2010).

(iii) The Gemini and its characteristics (May 21 to June 21) Gemini are intelligent by nature and their minds are always full of ideas. Tired of their dull and boring lives, they create fun for themselves. They have very little theory, but not much variety. But they are not very good at keeping focusses on a given plan or task (Silverman, 1971).

## 3. Why Do People Trust Horoscopes?

So that's a synopsis of the theory. But why do modern, intelligent, educated, people believe it? Or, if "belief" is too strong, why to they pay attention to it, find it insightful and sometimes plan their day and make decisions in terms of it predictions? Psychologists have offered some explanations, drawing on some basic concepts:

### 3.1 The Barnum Effect

Fichten and Sunerton did an experiment and thought about some reasons behind the phenomenon. Their explanation relies on "the Barnum Effect, " --- also called "the Forer Effect"---, in psychology. This phenomenon that occurs when people believe that personality descriptions particularly apply to them (more than others), even though they contain information that applies to all people (Fichten & Sunerton 1983). Horoscope descriptions are very vague which may lead to people applying that unclear information to themselves.

### 3.2 B. Locus of control

Locus of control refers to the extent to which people feel that they have control over the events that influence their lives (Lefcourt, 1991). The locus of control can be divided into two sections: internal locus of control and external locus of control.

Internal locus of control tends to attribute outcomes of events to their own control. These people are fairly confident of their own ability to control what happens to them. For example, Fichten et al. recorded how many times people may take the initiative to see the daily forecast. For instance, people may see the daily forecast about their own personality description 1.09 times per week since they believe in horoscopes. The outcome shows that people tend to believe in their own ability instead of some external factors like horoscopes.

Those with an external locus of control tend to attribute outcomes of events to some situational variables influenced more by the outside environment than by oneself such as the reliability of forecasts and personality descriptions and the role of knowledge of zodiac sign and previous experience. In Fichten et al. (1983) experiment, they rated psychology students' forecast predictions of 12 zodiac signs the day before and asked others to rate their predictions of the previous month. Rating from 1 to 10 points to show whether contexts are useful or not (whether match their own situations). The first external locus of control, daily and monthly forecasts were correctly matched only at chance levels, on average 4.12 of the personality descriptions matching correctly by 17 subjects. For the second external locus of control, subjects rated the personal use of forecasts indicated that the forecast of their own sign was no more personally useful than the forecasts for the other 11 signs when the zodiac sign was unknown. However, subjects rated the forecast for their own sign as more personally useful than the forecasts for the other signs.

### 3.3 Differences in gender, age, and ethnicity

Are there any differences in horoscopes belief between men and women? Young and old? Previous findings have already shown that well-educated women are more likely to be influenced by horoscopes than men (Trzebiatowska & Bruce 2012). Besides to the common reasons discussed in the preceding part, there is another factor that enhanced women's belief in horoscopes.

The development of magazines and the convenience of magazines led to the development of women. The spread of printing techniques and the enhanced role of women in the society leads to their belief in horoscopes. Women's magazines gave specific targeting readers and the name is based on the gender. Thus, it's the perfect place to examine women's preferences and interests and also serves as a platform for women to communicate ideas and values. Also, magazines are worked for defining women's roles (Prusank, 2007, p. 162). For example, the popular *Seventeen*, a magazine for adolescence girls, has been studied in terms of the myths it propagates about girlhood (Carpenter, 1998; Davalos, 2007). Young girls' adolescent development is always influenced by women's magazines. This is especially so considering that teenage girls are attracted to these magazines at an important stage of identity and social development (Firminger, 2006). Therefore, the actions, decisions, and thoughts of young women are easily influenced by women's magazines, both trivial and important (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1984; Van Zoonen, 1994). Especially for the horoscope context in teen magazines, the content of astrology is demonstrative and superficial, and easy to understand, trying to emphasize a feminine power (Jacques, 2004)

Indeed, there are still some different target audiences for different magazines. However, women's magazines, in particular, have a few potential target audiences for Black women (Tandoc & Ferrucci, 2014). For example, they examined a year's worth of horoscopes from <Essence, Glamour and teen Vogue> magazines and found that most targets are the same demographic of women read by White women. Here comes a question: can we just say that Black women are influenced less by horoscopes prediction? Yes. The explanation is the Blacks remained under-depicted; as Jewell has argued, Black women have been stereotyped and underrepresented in the media, including in magazines. In contrast, there is one opposite example. Black women were also influenced by Neptune (planet) for a long time. For example, in the interview with Margaret Walker, she said "I've been fooled with astrology for forty years." Margaret Walker was an American poet and writer (Williams, S. 2017) Her notable works include <For My people> which won the Yale Series of Younger Competition, and the novel *Jubilee*, set in the South during the American Civil War (Freibert & Walker 1987). After Walker graduated from Northwestern University, she lived in a major Northern urban center where the folk occupies were readily being repacked and marketed to a newly arrived black migrant population willing to invest in horoscopes, dream books, talismans, and other technologies. Margaret Walker was a well-educated black woman and she was influenced more by the external locus of control.

There is another reason why women trust horoscopes more than men. Women's greatest interest in astrology may be in trying to take a passive stance to escape the pressures of recent academic and professional results. Women often feel relatively helpless in life.

Overall, young, white women can be influenced more by horoscopes and astrology than men dose.

### **3.4 Horoscopes and educated people**

Are individuals who believe horoscopes more likely to be well-educated or less well- educated? Tony Glendening and Steve Bruce illustrate that better-educated women are much more likely to engage with holistic practices associates with well-being. A minority of younger, less well-educated women are more likely to have found horoscopes,

astrology, fortune-telling, and Tarot important in their lives. However, there are some exceptions in the society just like Margaret Walker mentioned in the preceding context (Williams, S. 2017). In addition, Nick Allum did an experiment to show how many people think horoscopes are scientific or not. The measurement has five different scales from very scientific to not at all scientific. There are three measurements in the middle including slightly scientific, neutral, slightly not scientific. In addition, he compared the horoscopes with other scientific subjects. There is 57 percent of people believe that horoscopes are not at all scientific and only 7 percent of people believe that horoscopes are very scientific (Allum, 2011). Overall, most well- educated people do not tend to believe horoscopes. However, there are still some exceptions that are influenced by an external locus of control such as family circumstances or religious staff.

### **3.5 Horoscopes' effects on people's decision**

Following the preceding context, we can make sure that horoscopes affect people more or less. But, how? In what areas? (Blackmore & Seebold 2001). There was a previous study that did some research on how signs influenced people's luxury consumption. He first summarized the personalities of all twelve signs. The results show that Aquarius is much more likely to buy luxury goods and second place are Leo and Libra (Kizgin, 2013). However, I deem that there are some limitations in this research that we can improve more. For example, It may not be clear whether it is the horoscope itself that already represents people's personality or whether it is the effect of reading the horoscope article on their behavior. In addition, there may have some other situational variables influencing luxury consumption such as income, advertisements, their own values and so on. Thus, they have the ability to do the experiment twice: the first one without reading materials and the second one with it.

## **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the reason most people believe in astrology is the Barnum effect and Locus of Control. Most of the believers are young less-educated women rather than men. Of course, there are individual exceptions, but more affected by external factors. Are these well-educated astrological women influenced by their behavior for other reasons, reminding themselves that they were aware of issues they weren't aware of, or are they just being fun? Reading astrological signs can also influence a person's behavior or decisions. In general, astrology remains a less scientific field of scientific study. People are complex and changeable, so more research is needed to be done in the future. What religion and astrology have in common are religious people more likely to believe in astrology?

### **Appendix: remaining signs**

(iv) The Cancer and its characteristics (June 22 to July 22) Cancers are very emotional, very sensitive, care about other people's feeling and thoughts. God knows how much they are hurt inside, perhaps crying all day long without showing it. Their hearts are sensitive, especially in the face of family and love (Argo, Pinelli, Marini & Lewis, 2021). (v)The Leo and its characteristics (July 23 to August 22) A Leo is very confident, perhaps too confident. They love control more than anything, as long as they can clearly see what is expected. But as soon as something goes wrong and gets out of control, they start to freak out, get disappointed and hit rock bottom (Kwak, Jaju & Zinkhan,2015).

(vi) The Virgo and its characteristics (August 23 to September 22) Virgos are always wise. They plan wisely and then carry their plan: they are natural rational agents. Their pursuit of perfection, no matter for things or people, has become their strength and weakness.

(vii) The Libra and its characteristics (September 23 to October 23) The Libra's greatest weakness is indecisiveness. They are good at understanding other people's point of view, even people very different from themselves. This leads to catering to many different masters, and this leads to problems. They play an elegant role in life; they are courteous and polite. Interpersonal communication is one of their strengths, perhaps at time caring too much about friendship. (Kwak, Jaju & Zinkhan,2015).

(viii) The Scorpio and its characteristics (October 24 to November 22) Scorpions are vengeful, but not easily provoked because they store their resentments in memory for later. Also, don't fall in love with Scorpio too quickly; their hearts are elusive. They are very serious about their relationship (Kwak, Jaju & Zinkhan,2015). However, when it comes to love, they are too possessive and sometimes make the other feel overwhelmed.

(ix) The Sagittarius and its characteristics (November 23 to December 21) Sagittarius people are straightforward and are definitely manly. What they pursue and enjoy most is freedom and lack of restraint. They hate feeling constrained (Kwak, Jaju & Zinkhan,2015).

(x) The Capricorn and its characteristics (December 22 to January 19) Capricorn people are very responsible for their own lives. They want to rely on their own hands to create a good future for themselves. In addition, they give are very reliable, doing things very responsibly. This is their biggest advantage (Kwak, Jaju & Zinkhan,2015).

(xi) The Aquarius and its characteristics (January 20 to February 18) Aquarius' favorite thing is to make friends. When faced with difficulties, they will try their best to help their friends. When facing strangers, they are very friendly. In life, Aquarius likes to be independent and have their own ideas (Kwak, Jaju & Zinkhan,2015).

(xii)The Pisces and its characteristics (February 19 to March 20) Pisces people seem to be lively and cheerful, good at finding the good in life, even the difficult things, they will be open and accept. But in reality, they are sentimental and always like to complain to their friends and make jokes about how weird things are today (Kwak, Jaju & Zinkhan, 2015).

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