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Belief bias among believers of the paranormal and the pseudoscience

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Abstract

It has been shown that believers of empirically suspect beliefs (ESBs) were less analytic than the skeptics, hence they were more likely to show the belief bias in syllogistic reasoning in which the conclusion was related to the general knowledge. However, little is known whether they show the similar biases in the syllogism that the conclusion was related to their ESBs. The present study investigated whether ESB believers tended to commit the bias than non-believers, and whether the link between belief and reasoning errors was moderated by cognitive style towards analytical thinking. The results showed that the paranormal belief was negatively associated with the correct ratio of syllogistic reasoning, whereas this association was no more significant after the cognitive style and response time were controlled. On the other hand, the link between the pseudoscientific belief and the reasoning performance remained significant after the cognitive style was partialled out.