



Belief in luck and luckiness: Conceptual clarification and new measure validation [☆]

Edmund R. Thompson ^{a,*}, Gerard P. Prendergast ^{b,1}

^aSchool of Management, University of Bath, Bath BA2 7AY, United Kingdom

^bSchool of Business, Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 20 January 2012

Received in revised form 4 September 2012

Accepted 20 October 2012

Available online 11 December 2012

Keywords:

Belief in luck

Luckiness

Conceptualization

Measurement

Scale validation

Personality

ABSTRACT

Research on the dimensionality and measurement of luck beliefs has yet to produce a clear conceptual and metrical consensus. This research theorizes a bidimensional model of luck beliefs that is tested through a series of studies (total $n = 1205$) validating the new Belief in Luck and Luckiness Scale. Unlike existing conceptualizations and measures, this new model is applicable to both believers and non-believers in luck, and reveals belief in luck and personal luckiness to be discrete, uncorrelated, and respectively unidimensional constructs.

© 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Personality researchers have devoted increasing theoretical, empirical, and measurement attention to irrational beliefs about luck (André, 2006; Bridgstock, Marais, & Sturges, 2011; Darke & Freedman, 1997a; Day & Maltby, 2003; Maltby, Day, Gill, Colley, & Wood, 2008; Wiseman & Watt, 2004; Young, Chen, & Morris, 2009). As this research interest has grown, so too have disparate conceptions about the dimensionality of luck beliefs and the means to measure these. For example, Darke and Freedman (1997b) propose a unidimensional conceptualization and measure, while André (2006) proposes a 6-dimensional, and Maltby et al. (2008) a 4-dimensional, conception and measure.

Despite these developments in theoretical and metrical nuance, luck beliefs research has still to produce a clear conceptual and measurement consensus. Moreover, Maltby et al. (2008) hint that the precise nature of luck beliefs' dimensionality may yet be obscured by two limitations in existing measures: (a) items possibly producing artifactual components unreflective of true underlying constructs and (b) unexplored potential differences between luck believers and disbelievers.

We build on existing research by proposing and examining a new bidimensional conceptualization and measure of luck beliefs designed to reduce potential artifactual components and to account for both luck believers and disbelievers. Unlike prior studies, ours finds support for just two discrete dimensions, *belief in luck* and *personal luckiness*, that are each themselves unidimensional, uncorrelated, and differently correlated with personality and individual difference variables. Our systematically theorized and validated new measure contributes a parsimonious tool to investigate the separate effects of, respectively, belief in luck and personal luckiness constructs on psychology and behavioral differences that have hitherto been examinable only with measures that either erroneously conflate or spuriously subdivide these two distinct luck constructs.

2. Conceptualizations and measures of luck beliefs

2.1. Belief in good luck

Darke and Freedman (1997b) propose a unidimensional conceptualization of irrational belief in luck, running from belief that good luck deterministically favors particular people at one end of a continuum, to the view that luck is simply random chance at the other. To capture this conceptualization they developed the often-cited 12-item Belief in Good Luck Scale (BIGLS; 1997b). However, they found that their scale both fails to distinguish between those believing themselves lucky or unlucky (1997a), and produced a multidimensional rather than unidimensional solution when factor analyzed (1997b, p. 493, fn.3). Prendergast and

[☆] The authors thank Colin Cooper and two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments and suggestions.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +44 (0) 1225 386742; fax: +44 (0) 1225 386473.

E-mail addresses: e.r.thompson@bath.ac.uk (E.R. Thompson), gerard@hkbu.edu.hk (G.P. Prendergast).

¹ Tel.: +852 3411 7570; fax: +852 3411 5586.

Thompson (2008) confirmed this multidimensionality and additionally found the scale's two predominant and psychometrically usable sub-scales, a general belief in the existence of deterministic luck and a belief in being personally lucky, are uncorrelated and differently predict criterion variables.

2.2. Multidimensional beliefs about luck

André (2006), noting both the multidimensional nature of Darke and Freedman's scale and other luck-related constructs like illusion of control (Wiseman & Watt, 2004), developed an 18-item 6-dimensional measure exploring positive and negative luck beliefs. While she finds good and bad luck beliefs are empirically discrete, she also finds they correlate relatively highly, suggesting their conceptual closeness. This also suggests the possibility that their empirical separation may stem from the tendency of positively and negatively worded items sometimes to produce artifactually separate components even when conceptually discrete underlying constructs do not exist (Spector, Van Katwyk, Brannick, & Chen, 1997).

2.3. Beliefs around luck

Maltby et al. (2008) observe that André's (2006) measure encapsulates only some of the beliefs around luck contained in Darke and Freedman's scale. To address this, they developed a 22-item scale and found empirical support for a 4-dimensional model: general belief in luck; rejection of belief in luck; being lucky; and being unlucky. However, they note their own 4-dimensional model 'provides only a reasonable fit to the data', forms two closely conceptually related pairs, and may be 'attributable to an artifact of scoring' (2008, p. 659). This latter suggestion is plausible because many of their scale's positive and negative items are duplicative except for the positive/negative valence of one or a few words (e.g. good/bad or lucky/unlucky), a circumstance likely to produce 'item direction factors' (Spector et al., 1997, p. 661). Additionally, Maltby et al. (2008) suggest their model's particular dimensionality could simply reflect their sample comprising both luck believers and disbelievers. They accordingly advise that 'some definitive studies are needed to test this explanation' (p. 659), hinting that alternative models with fewer than four dimensions may exist.

3. A new bidimensional model: belief in luck and luckiness

3.1. Belief in luck

We propose that one clear unidimensional component of luck beliefs is whether individuals believe or disbelieve in the existence of luck as a deterministic phenomenon in the first place.

We conceptualize belief in luck as encompassing both good and bad luck. This accords with Maltby et al. (2008) finding no support for their proposition that discrete belief in good luck and belief in bad luck constructs exist. Hence, with irrational belief in luck (good and bad) at one end of a bipolar continuum, the conceptual issue becomes what should be at the opposite end. Conceptualizing, as Darke and Freedman (1997b) do, the antithesis of belief in luck to be recognition of random chance's existence is illogical: Keren and Wagenaar (1985) found individuals can irrationally believe in deterministic luck while concurrently recognizing the separate existence of random chance. We hence conceptualize belief in luck to have the straightforward bipolar opposite of *disbelief* in luck. In this we accept that the empirically discrete separation of a general belief in luck and a rejection of belief in luck Maltby et al. (2008)

found is indeed likely the scoring artifact they suggest it might be. We therefore hypothesize:

H1. Deterministic luck is something individuals believe or disbelieve in to greater or lesser degrees on a unidimensional continuum.

3.1.1. Construct validity with personality and individual differences

3.1.1.1. *Personality.* Maltby et al. (2008) found no association between the five-factor personality model and acceptance or rejection of belief in luck. However, because belief in luck is irrational and irrationality correlates with neuroticism (Hart & Hope, 2004), we expect luck belief may positively correlate with neuroticism.

3.1.1.2. *Locus of Control (LoC).* Darke and Freedman (1997b) found belief in good luck was positively related to the chance and powerful others dimensions of LoC. Maltby et al. (2008) found internal LoC correlated positively with rejection of belief in luck and negatively with general belief in luck. Hence, we expect luck belief may correlate positively with chance and powerful others, but negatively with internal LoC.

3.1.1.3. *Wellbeing.* Internal LoC and emotional stability (neuroticism) are suggested to form part of a higher order construct of core self- and life-evaluation broadly constituting wellbeing (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002). We therefore expect luck belief may negatively associate with wellbeing.

3.1.1.4. *Demographics.* André (2006) found a negative relationship between some luck beliefs and age. Accordingly, we expect belief in luck may negatively correlate with age. No prior luck belief research has examined sex differences. However, educational achievement is found likely to be attributed to luck more by males than females (Stipek & Gralinski, 1991), hence we expect males may believe in luck more than females.

3.2. Personal luckiness

We propose a second component of luck beliefs is personal luckiness, but that its dimensionality may differ depending on whether or not individuals believe or disbelieve in luck to begin with. Our proposition here accords with self-consistency (Nail, Misak, & Davis, 2004) and cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) theories. These suggest, respectively, that individuals seek to maintain congruence between their beliefs and to avoid the adverse psychological effects of holding incompatible beliefs.

3.2.1. Luck believers

Only if individuals have an irrational belief in deterministic luck in the first place is it reasonable, in line with self-consistency and cognitive dissonance theories, to suppose that they might also believe themselves personally to have deterministic luck in some degree. Because Maltby et al. (2008) found no support for discrete constructs of beliefs in, respectively, good and bad luck, luck believers are unlikely to assess discretely their personal good and bad luck. The correlations between the discrete personal good and bad luck components André (2006) and Maltby et al. (2008) each found support for this supposition, as does the possibility that artifactual scoring effects alone produced their discrete personal luckiness components. Hence we hypothesize:

H2. For luck believers, belief in personal luckiness will form a unidimensional continuum running from lucky to unlucky.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/10440483>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/10440483>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)