

Superstitions about celestial phenomena and their perceived effect on luck.

by Rod Suskin

A research project was undertaken to investigate belief in sky omens and 'superstitions' across a randomly selected set of individuals and the extent to which they attribute the influence of such omens in their lives. A questionnaire was given to a random selection of middle-class, 21st-century residents of Cape Town, South Africa, containing lists of superstitions taken from encyclopaedias, dictionaries and earlier studies and which could be viewed as true, partially true or untrue. Some were also interviewed. Respondents were asked about their behaviour in response to celestial phenomena, with a focus on questions about wishing and about perception of 'luck'. Most respondents did not believe superstitious behaviour to be effective, although most practised such behaviour nevertheless. Results supported theories about the social importance of superstition, childhood influences, beliefs about 'attunement' and Wiseman's work on luck, which suggests it is a result of intentional, pro-active behaviour.

A review of previous work on superstition shows that research has tended to concentrate on the beliefs of specific groups (e.g. women¹ or students²) or areas (e.g. a geographical state³) rather than on specific types of superstition. These studies involve the collection of beliefs, with an attempt to explain why members of such groups or regions defined in the research hold the beliefs.

The main problem affecting research into superstition lies in the difficulty in defining what superstitions are. Since superstition is often the term used to describe the beliefs of pre-literate cultures studied in anthropology, it must be noted that this research focuses on superstitious beliefs in contemporary western society.

¹ Gillian Bennett, *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today* (London: Penguin, 1987).

² Edmund S. Conklin, "Superstitious Belief and Practice among College Students," *The American Journal of Psychology* 30, no. 1 (1919).

³ Lelah Allison, "Folk Beliefs Collected in Southeastern Illinois," *The Journal of American Folklore* 63, no. 249 (1950).

Alexander Lesser considers superstitions to be survivors of earlier belief systems in which they had a context.⁴ He uses the example of the Pawnee people whose beliefs about snakes biting people who mention coyotes in summer refers to the visibility of specific stars and constellations in the sky at different times of the year. In the minds of the Pawnee “the belief is not a superstition. It involves reasoned thinking, orderly inference in terms of the Pawnee view of nature and the universe.”⁵

Alan Dundes argues that collectors of superstitions rarely categorise them, allowing anything to be defined within their domain.⁶ This makes it difficult to research the subject of superstition beyond mere collection. Many of the studies cited here and examined in the survey of previous work on superstition showed this to be true.

Dundes states that in early research superstition frequently refers to other people’s beliefs or beliefs that are not part of Christianity, Judaism or Islam. He points out that later definitions classify superstitions as beliefs that are irrational, or based on fear or taboo, while many are predicated on the criterion that superstitions are beliefs that have no objective validity in the scientific sense. This raises a number of problems, notably that scientific truth is actually relative historically and culturally, and also that the results of scientific practises are not necessarily due to the science itself – for example, the placebo effect.⁷

Dundes cites scholars that have argued for a definition which concentrates on the form the belief or practice takes rather than where it comes from or what the actual belief is. The most important idea arising from this approach is that superstitions offer two avenues to people dealing with challenging environmental conditions: the need to control outcomes or to be able to predict them.

This view is echoed by Lesser: since signs and omens are by definition beyond control, the interpretation and use of them affords people control over them and over the environment. He identifies superstitions as beliefs which are isolated from any larger belief system having a rationale – “a belief or practice which is isolated from a system of reference.”⁸

Dundes’ definition is that “superstitions are traditional expressions of one or more conditions and one or more results with some of the conditions signs and

⁴ Alexander Lesser, “Superstition,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 28, no. 23 (1931).

⁵ Lesser, “Superstition,” p. 627.

⁶ Alan Dundes, “Brown County Superstitions: The Structure of Superstition,” *Midwest Folklore* 11, no. 1 (1961).

⁷ Dundes, “Brown County Superstitions: The Structure of Superstition,” p. 27.

⁸ Lesser, “Superstition,” p. 620.

other causes.”⁹ He categorises them according to whether they are uncontrollable signs, or magical acts like divination or ritual.

Edward Conklin asserts that superstitions are frequently held by adolescents and college-students.¹⁰ He found that an overall 82% of respondents held or had previously held superstitious beliefs.¹¹ He asked students to report the source of their beliefs and found that most (47%) cited social reasons and 22% learned the belief from their elders. About 15% of them acquired them as social practices while another 15% reported an intuitive or spiritual type of reason.

Beckwith argues that superstitions in educated cultures are a form of play that functions as social interaction and participation as well as a connection to past traditions.¹² Not only are they isolated from earlier beliefs, they have even become isolated from being any kind of “belief” at all.

However, Bennett asserts that believers in “folk religion” number a substantial minority that shows no sign of abatement.¹³ Citing two previous studies showing up to 30% of the population as holding such beliefs, she states “it would seem from their results that quite a substantial proportion of the population, of all ages and social classes, share these ancient traditions.”¹⁴

Evidence that these beliefs are actually held rather than merely practised as a tradition lies in Bennett’s research into women’s beliefs which showed “very large numbers” of her respondents believing in some form of foreknowledge.¹⁵ She argues that the fact that counter-arguments to foreknowledge exist is proof that it is an active belief system. Nevertheless, she still agrees that “individuals adapt traditional ideas to their own values and needs.”¹⁶

The vast majority of superstitions about celestial phenomena deal with the increasing of good or bad luck. Despite the social and traditional reasons offered as the contemporary motivation for superstitious behaviour, the need to influence luck may remain a strong motivator for such behaviour. Richard Wiseman asserts that “luck exerts a dramatic influence in our lives.”¹⁷ Defining luck as the effect of chance events in our lives, he nevertheless demonstrates that there are those who

⁹ Dundes, “Brown County Superstitions: The Structure of Superstition,” p. 28.

¹⁰ Conklin, “Superstitious Belief and Practice among College Students.”

¹¹ Conklin, “Superstitious Belief and Practice among College Students,” p. 87.

¹² Martha Warren Beckwith, “Signs and Superstitions Collected from American College Girls,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 36, no. 139 (1923).

¹³ Bennett, *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today*.

¹⁴ Bennett, *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today*, p. 25.

¹⁵ Bennett, *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today*, p. 122.

¹⁶ Bennett, *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today*, p. 130.

¹⁷ Richard Wiseman, *The Luck Factor* (London: Arrow Books, 2004), p. 11.

repeatedly benefit from good luck and those who repeatedly suffer through bad luck.

Wiseman's research shows that people who describe themselves as unlucky believe in luck-related superstitions and rely on their effect more than twice as often as those who don't believe in superstitions.¹⁸ On the contrary, people who describe themselves as lucky (and who appear to have an unusual number of lucky chance events in their lives) generally engage in pro-active behaviours to influence their luck. These are: noticing and acting on opportunities, acting on hunches and intuitions, maintaining positive expectations about future opportunities, and responding to unlucky experiences by taking a positive approach and taking steps to change the outcome or prevent a similar outcome in the future. In addition, he finds that lucky people tend to be open to new experiences, create networks of opportunities and take a relaxed attitude to life. He also found that lucky people frequently use meditation or contemplation to improve their intuition or return to a problem later and asserts that luck can be improved through the deliberate application of these behaviours.¹⁹

No previous research that examined the category of celestial phenomena in isolation could be located, although all of the collections included them in their findings.

In this paper, the selection of beliefs or practices which are in response to celestial phenomena allows for the examination of the extent to which people believe outcomes are affected by the sky, for whatever reason they deem. Furthermore, the outcome is specified as "luck," which is by far the most common outcome intended in the variety of superstitions surveyed here and which will allow for investigation of the issues of belief and of influencing luck, which tends to be ignored by collectors and those who assert social and traditional reasons for behaviour.

Methodology

A questionnaire was designed to survey whether respondents practise or believe superstitions that are derived from visible celestial phenomena, namely the appearance of stars and meteorites (shooting stars), the moon, the sun, rainbows and the weather.

Respondents were asked to indicate their knowledge of or belief in a variety of common beliefs generally regarded as superstitions about these celestial phenomena. These beliefs were culled from earlier papers as well as from a

¹⁸ Wiseman, *The Luck Factor*, p. 155.

¹⁹ Wiseman, *The Luck Factor*.

dictionary²⁰ and an encyclopaedia²¹ of categorised superstitions. They were able to select whether a belief was not true, occasionally true, sometimes true or always true, or to indicate that they did not know the belief or whether it was true. They were also offered the opportunity to list beliefs or practices that were not mentioned in the questionnaire.

In addition, specific questions were asked as to whether respondents made wishes when they observed celestial phenomena and whether they believed these wishes had had an effect on their lives or behaviour. Most of the questions focused on the simple principle of whether 'luck' was affected by these practices. Space was provided for people to elaborate.

It was initially planned to approach random individuals in a popular recreational area of Cape Town. Unseasonal heatwaves during the weekend of questionnaire distribution led to the park being unusually empty. The questionnaire was then made accessible on the 'SurveyMonkey' website and invitations to complete it were sent to 78 people randomly selected by a computer from a list of 2,046 email addresses of acquaintances of the researcher. Respondents were free to share the website address of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire also made provision for people to indicate willingness to undergo a personal follow-up interview via Skype or telephone. Five respondents were selected for follow-up interviews in order to sample the reasons for the different types of responses shown above. Thus, the interviewees were classified as: one total non-believer (responded negatively to all questions); one who responded to signs although she did not believe them; two who believed them although they produced no results; and finally one who believed that they did produce results.

The results were collected using collating tools provided on the SurveyMonkey website. For clarity, all levels of 'true' answers were summed to identify all people who thought the beliefs were at all true.

Results

There were 73 respondents to the survey, 62 of whom completed all the questions. Fifty-three of the respondents indicated a willingness to be interviewed.

The findings show that a large proportion of people acknowledged at least some behaviour or superstitious response to celestial phenomena. The most common practise was to respond to the appearance of a shooting star by making a

²⁰ Iona Opie and Moira Tatem, *A Dictionary of Superstitions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

²¹ E. Radford and M. A. Radford, *Encyclopaedia of Superstitions*, ed. Christina Hole (London: Hutchinson, 1961).

wish. Although 54 people have wished on stars, only 18 believed the wish came true and another 28 that such a wish might have come true. This is similar to the number of people who answered 'yes' or 'maybe' when asked if the sky, stars, moon or sun influence luck (47).

However, when asked whether the listed superstitions about stars improving luck are true, only 33 people indicated that they believed wishing on them produced luck while an additional two people thought that merely seeing them was enough to increase luck.

Respondents were asked whether they believed that they had ever gained an advantage, knew what was going to happen or were forewarned of disaster by signs in the sky. Forty-three said they had or might have, with only nineteen reporting that they never had.

While 16 people indicated they did not believe that the sky influences luck in any way, only half of those said they had never actually made a wish on a star or rainbow. However, when presented with a list of 24 common superstitions just three respondents indicated that they believed none of them and had never practised them.

The following table summarises the results of questions asked directly about celestial superstitions and luck. The percentages are derived from the total number who answered that question. A complete summary of results, including responses to the individual superstitions listed, can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1: Summary of responses to questions

Question about celestial phenomena practised as a superstition / influencing luck	Yes	No	Maybe/ Don't know
Has wished on stars/shooting stars/rainbows	54 (85.7%)	8 (12.7%)	1 (1.6%)
Believes such a wish came true	18 (28.6%)	17 (27%)	28 (44.4%)
Believes celestial phenomena influence luck	29 (46%)	16 (25.4%)	18 (28.6%)
Believes superstitious practices based on sky signs have influenced luck	16 (25.8%)	25 (40.3%)	21 (33.9%)
Believes superstitious practices based on sky signs have successfully forewarned of disaster	8 (12.9%)	40 (64.5%)	14 (22.6%)
Has stopped a course of action because of one of these signs	11 (17.7%)	45 (72.6%)	6 (9.7%)

Successfully anticipated or predicted something due to such a sign	16 (25.8%)	41 (66.1%)	5 (8.1%)
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Discussion

Many earlier findings were confirmed. The number of people who indicate that they practise wishing on stars irrespective of whether they are true or not (54 respondents or 85.7%) is similar to Conklin’s finding that 82% of respondents indicated that they do or have in the past practised superstitions.²² Only 33 respondents (52.4%) indicated belief in this superstition. The conclusion may be drawn that superstitious practice is not necessarily a function of control, prophecy or belief systems, but may also be related to habits, behaviours learned in childhood, nostalgia for childhood or something else.

More than half of the superstitions that were known or believed were related to shooting stars. In addition, beliefs about the full moon causing madness or affecting growth were much more common than beliefs related to luck; and beliefs that rainbows or rain on sunny days foreshadowed good fortune were well known. Other superstitions, by comparison, had far fewer believers. This, and the high number of respondents indicating that they did not know a superstition, shows that traditional superstitions about the sky are on the decline. Considering Lesser’s theory of superstitions as isolated beliefs or based on a specific rationale, it is likely that weakening of superstitious beliefs is related to either the ascendancy of mainstream belief systems or the decline of belief systems in general and the dominance of scientific rationalism.

From the space offered for comments it emerged that although the wish appears to come true frequently, there may be other reasons why they come true. These results seemed to closely follow what Gillian Bennett experienced in her research, that belief can be strong while other possibilities are accepted.²³

The respondents offered a variety of explanations for their superstitious behaviours or beliefs that was similar to those suggested in the earlier papers. Those that professed belief in the outcome of these wishes usually believed there was a spiritual source of any success rather than as a result of ‘wishing’ alone. Some respondents mentioned God, Goddess or angels as the reason, while interviewee Catherine suggested that it may be due to wishes acting like prayers, or for some other reason she didn’t understand.

Catherine stated that there were three distinct occasions when wishing on a star came true. She shared one of these:

²² Conklin, “Superstitious Belief and Practice among College Students.”

²³ Bennett, *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today*.

Catherine: Larry said goodbye to me when I left, and I knew he had malaria at the time. Then, I went back to Cape Town and he just never called. He disappeared. People told me that he had left, he wouldn't call me. I kept having terrible dreams about him being in hospital. Then I saw a shooting star and wished for him to call. Two days later, he did. He had been in a coma with the malaria. That's why he didn't call. But he woke up after the wish.

When Catherine was asked how she knew the wish was responsible, she said that although she didn't believe in God, she still prayed because "these things are unknown so maybe they do have an effect."

Interviewer: Who received the wish?

Catherine: Prayers or wishing are talking internally to an outer being that you hope is bigger than you.

Hayley thought that wishes worked because they invoked a form of magic: "I would call it magic at some level. Nature is presenting itself to me. And I take that opportunity." She added that she would "certainly have a wish ready" should she see a shooting star that night, and that if her young son were present she would say to him, "Listen, this is the time to make the wish, you could do it now." This confirmed her very strong belief in a magical system, especially since she believed wishes came true "a good 80% of the time."

Hayley had admitted in her questionnaire that omens had never helped her avoid disasters or be forewarned. When asked why she thought this was, she said "if I knew more of what these lores...were then I would heed them," suggesting that it was her failure to observe the correct signs that was at fault.

Both these believers are examples of the definition types that earlier collectors of superstitions had attempted. Catherine showed evidence of a belief that was isolated from any known system, while Hayley saw celestial signs as part of a much bigger magical system of which she was ignorant, but which would allow for a large amount of both prophecy and control if known.

It is also evident from the results that a large number of people engage in superstitious practices even though they may not believe them. Both interviewees who indicated this said that the beliefs were something they learned in childhood and the practice of superstitions is a remnant of childish behaviour, or is attached to memories of childhood or parents and so continue out of habit.

Martha explained this in her questionnaire response: "I don't believe in any of these things. I only really enjoy seeing the first star at night, a shooting star, a rainbow, etc. I am sure my enjoyment is due to the remnants of the superstitions that still hung around in America when I was born."

Abby, in an interview, explained that the superstitions came from her mother or childhood servants, but that they strengthened her relationship with the sky.

Abby: I have an innate response to the sky ...I am very moon driven – I feel the pull of the moon. I never know whether it’s an intuitive response to nature or if I just made it important to me. I look for the sky every night.

She defined her response to celestial events as “an active response to nature, not just a passive one” and added that superstitions were a way of “attuning yourself to nature.”

The notion of these superstitions as traditional practices that connect them with their ancestors is very clear in both interviewees and questionnaire explanations of why they believed them.

Ronnie admitted to knowing and practising many superstitions despite not believing in any of them, and understood the strongly ingrained reasons for doing so:

Ronnie: I grew up in a community that was filled with fear and the need of divine intervention (*his parents were European Jews during the World War II period.*) My parents were traditional [but] secular .. they still had lots of thoughts and sayings that they got from their parents who were traditional. In a way I was fed that, almost in a religious way, that there are things like ‘if you do this then that’s going to happen.’ My parents came from Europe ... all of a sudden their whole worlds were turned upside down. When they came to Israel, they couldn’t let go of the fear and the sense of ‘how come I survived and all my family is gone?’ This looks so quiet, all of a sudden something will come and burst the bubble and we will be killed.

According to Ronnie, the superstitious practices were necessary to control this uncertain future and often aroused fear in him as a child. When asked why he continued to practise them if this was the case, he said that the traditions were important. “They brought all the rich European culture with them, of how we stand with respect to nature, and why bad things happen to good people.”

Yet Ronnie refused to teach these beliefs to his own children, stating that he didn’t want to create any fears for them by making them think there were “forces” around them, but rather “I will expose them to the bigger beauty of the universe without necessarily the causal, almost religious aspect...I’m not comfortable with causality. It is not help or intervention, it’s the bigger picture which includes nature and the universe.”

A variety of other responses were offered in the questionnaire which suggested that people believed they were merely ways of connecting with nature or acknowledging it, but not related to anything spiritual.

There were only three responses which indicated total disbelief in all superstitions and celestial effects, one of whom, Sam, admitted to having wished on stars “as a reflex action, like a tradition.”

In an interview, Sam described himself as “rational and atheistic,” and saw superstitions as “things to appease the gods” that were necessary in prehistoric

times. He also thought he was subject to some inner part of himself that wanted to connect to that ancient way of doing things. "I have a sculpted cat that faces the driveway. I like it because it makes me feel safer. It makes me feel like I've acted on the wish to feel safer. [Wishing is] like that. I mean, even though technically it's a meaningless gesture."

With respect to producing luck from the wish, Sam said, "I don't give any credence to good luck, bad luck."

Interviewer: So you don't consider yourself lucky if you don't believe in luck?

Sam: Well, I'd consider myself fortunate... many terrible things that could have happened to me, didn't happen to me. But luck implies that something other than the random is at work.

Interviewer: Do you believe people can improve their luck?

Sam: Well they can improve their behaviour. By not driving drunk you improve your luck of not getting arrested.

A number of respondents also equated their superstitious practice and the positive results of wishing with deliberate attunement to natural cycles. Some equated this with astrology, or argued that superstitions about the sky were a simpler form of astrology and therefore they were not irrational. This indicated an assumption on behalf of these respondents that astrology was some form of sky observation other than those defined in the questionnaire as superstition, and may also be evidence of response effects, particularly the deference effect, occurring "when informants tell you what they think you want to know, in order not to offend you."²⁴

Comments in the responses showed that many respondents were aware the researcher is an astrologer and assumed that the research was about astrology. In response to the question as to whether other sky superstitions were known, one wrote "I am a textbook example of a Cancerian", one went into technical detail about astrological events in her personal horoscope, and another simply wrote "astrology." Given that this assumption existed, other comments in the final question requesting comments can be understood in the light of the deference problem: "Sorry...seems like I'm a bit of a party pooper on this one," "the bigger question [is] belief in the influence of the stars...it's mainly Rod Suskin that makes me interested in that." Catherine, in her interview, stated, "I thought I wasn't being helpful because there weren't enough 'yeses' in my answers. I felt ignorant - I do feel like I am a spiritual person. I tried to be honest but I thought you would think I was an idiot." This may imply that some respondents gave

²⁴ H. Russel Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology*, Second ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994), p. 231.

more positive answers than they would have had they not known of the researcher.

Despite these answers, the large proportion of people who practise some form of sky-related superstition, despite a considerably smaller percentage actually believing that they get results related to luck, coupled with the responses discussing some form of deliberate attunement to something seems to indicate the importance of Wiseman's findings about lucky people and the capacity to improve luck through deliberate behaviours and attitudes. Furthermore, this attunement is more frequently achieved through stars or shooting stars than other celestial phenomena. In her comment, Mary wrote:

When I really enjoy these things I experience my life as 'lucky.' Luck just means feeling positive and drawing positive experiences. Luck isn't a separate force. I don't believe in luck. I do believe that when something brings you joy like a rainbow or a shooting star, you open your heart and many possibilities are then possible.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Ronnie when he explained why he continued the superstitious behaviours inherited from his parents even though he knew their origin and meaning.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to discover the extent to which sky superstitions were practised and the extent to which people attributed the influence of these in their lives. Previous work found or postulated reasons based on social activity, the need to control and the need to predict. The answers given by respondents in this paper indicate that such reasons still exist, and tradition and upbringing play an important part in developing them.

It is also apparent that the practice of superstitious behaviour is frequently a method used to increase a sense of attunement to nature in order to increase luck, similar to methods found by Wiseman. Superstitious behaviour in response to sky omens can be seen as a positive approach to the environment with the expectation that positive results will follow. It is worth noting that, given that many respondents' beliefs that these practices allow the alignment of their intention with nature, these practices may still be defined in terms of the rational relationship with how they view the world described by Lesser, and thus are not necessarily isolated from a larger belief framework.

Rather than the traditional passive or ritualistic approach which may relate to earlier views, and the belief that observation and wishing are sufficient to influence luck, this research reveals the possibility that superstitious behaviour in response to celestial phenomena today is frequently a form of a pro-active,

intention-based effort to benefit from awareness of and connection to the natural environment and to modify behaviour to effect a more beneficial outcome.

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Appendix: Questionnaire and Responses

1. What is your age?

Under 18	2.7%
19-25	5.5%
26-35	8.2%
36-45	34.2%
46-55	38.4%
56 or over	11.0%

2. What is your gender?

Female	58.9%
Male	41.1%

3. Are you prepared to be interviewed if I feel your answers to the survey can help me further with this research?

Yes	72.6%
No	27.4%

4. If you are willing to be interviewed, please provide contact details. All data will be kept confidential and your name will not be released to anyone without your permission.

5. Have you ever made a wish when seeing a star, shooting star, rainbow or other sign in the sky?

Yes	85.7%
No	12.7%
I don't remember	1.6%

6. Do you believe such a wish ever came true?

Yes	28.6%
No	27.0%
Maybe	44.4%

7. Do you believe the sky, sun, moon or stars influence your luck in any way?

Yes	46.0%
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7. Do you believe the sky, sun, moon or stars influence your luck in any way?	
No	25.4%
Maybe	28.6%

8. The following are some common beliefs about the meanings of different signs in the sky. Please rate to what extent you think or experience these to be true.

	Not true at all	Occasionally true	Usually true	Always true	I don't know	Total all true
When you wish on a shooting star the wish will come true.	34.9% (22)	36.5% (23)	11.1% (7)	4.8% (3)	12.7% (8)	52.4% (33)
Seeing a shooting star means you will be lucky.	36.5% (23)	25.4% (16)	17.5% (11)	12.7% (8)	7.9% (5)	55.5% (35)
Counting stars brings bad luck.	82.5% (52)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17.5% (11)	0% (0)
Pointing at stars brings bad luck.	84.1% (53)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	15.9% (10)	0% (0)
Pointing at the moon brings bad luck.	82.5% (52)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17.5% (11)	0% (0)
Turning the coins in your pocket during full moon will bring luck.	69.8% (44)	0.0% (0)	3.2% (2)	1.6% (1)	25.4% (16)	4.7% (3)
Wishing on the first star at night brings good luck.	46.0% (29)	22.2% (14)	14.3% (9)	3.2% (2)	14.3% (9)	39.7% (25)
Seeing a rainbow brings good luck.	46.0% (29)	19.0% (12)	15.9% (10)	11.1% (7)	7.9% (5)	41.3% (29)
Cutting hair at the new or full moon affects the growth of the hair.	41.3% (26)	7.9% (5)	11.1% (7)	9.5% (6)	30.2% (19)	28.6% (18)
Warts can be cured by rubbing them in direct moonlight.	61.9% (39)	12.7% (8)	4.8% (3)	1.6% (1)	19.0% (12)	19% (12)
The full moon can cause symptoms of madness.	31.7% (20)	28.6% (18)	17.5% (11)	9.5% (6)	12.7% (8)	55.5% (35)

8. The following are some common beliefs about the meanings of different signs in the sky. Please rate to what extent you think or experience these to be true.

Wishes on the new moon will come true.	50.8% (32)	19.0% (12)	6.3% (4)	3.2% (2)	20.6% (13)	28.6% (18)
Moving home at new moon brings luck.	44.4% (28)	9.5% (6)	12.7% (8)	3.2% (2)	30.2% (19)	25.4% (16)
New moon on a Saturday brings bad luck.	79.4% (50)	1.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	19.0% (12)	1.6% (1)
Full moon on a Sunday brings bad luck.	76.2% (48)	1.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	22.2% (14)	1.6% (1)
Pointing at the sun is unlucky.	82.5% (52)	0.0% (0)	1.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	15.9% (10)	1.6% (1)
Being born at sunrise brings good luck.	52.4% (33)	11.1% (7)	3.2% (2)	4.8% (3)	28.6% (18)	19% (12)
It is good luck for the sun to shine on a bride.	52.4% (33)	12.7% (8)	7.9% (5)	3.2% (2)	23.8% (15)	25.4% (16)
Being outdoors during an eclipse brings bad luck.	77.8% (49)	3.2% (2)	1.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	17.5% (11)	4.6% (3)
Rain while the sun shines brings good luck.	52.4% (33)	17.5% (11)	9.5% (6)	7.9% (5)	12.7% (8)	34.9% (22)
Red sky at night brings good weather	27.0% (17)	14.3% (9)	20.6% (13)	4.8% (3)	33.3% (21)	23.8% (15)
Red sky in the morning brings bad weather.	27.0% (17)	12.7% (8)	19.0% (12)	3.2% (2)	38.1% (24)	34.9% (22)
The second full moon in a month is lucky.	49.2% (31)	3.2% (2)	9.5% (6)	7.9% (5)	30.2% (19)	22.2% (14)
The second full moon in a month brings bad weather.	52.4% (33)	4.8% (3)	1.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	41.3% (26)	6.3% (4)

If you have a belief or practise involving the sky, weather, rainbow, sun, moon or stars that is not listed above please mention it here:

9. Do you believe you have ever experienced any advantage or luck due to observing one of these signs in the sky?

Yes	25.8%
No	40.3%
Maybe	33.9%

10. Do you believe you ever avoided a problem or disaster because of being forewarned by one of these signs?

Yes	12.9%
No	64.5%
Maybe	22.6%

11. Have you ever successfully anticipated or predicted something because of one of these signs in the sky?

Yes	25.8%
No	66.1%
Maybe	8.1%

12. Have you ever stopped a course of action because of one of these signs?

Yes	17.7%
No	72.6%
Maybe	9.7%