Psychic Ability Essay, Research Paper

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to prove that the human mind has telepathic ability. To prove this, the subjects were asked to guess the suit of each card from a standard playing deck. The subjects were tested in a cozy, quiet environment inside their house. The first data recorded were the percentage of cards the subjects would randomly guess right. There are 52 cards in a deck and thirteen of each suit, so that would give someone a 13 out of 52 chance of merely guessing right or one-fourth. During the test, the subjects were instructed to take time and concentrate before giving an answer. The idea was that if the subject concentrated hard enough, the suit of the card would be revealed by the psychic ability of the mind. The results of the study showed that telepathic ability just might be a reality

Background

Psychic ability has been a subject that has interested me every since I saw the movie Maverick. In the movie, the main character, played by Mel Gibson, believes that if he thinks of a card and concentrates hard enough then he will draw that card. He starts out thinking of the card he needs. The character played by Gibson thinks long and hard to the point of almost exhaustion. He then draws the card, hoping that the card he is thinking of will be the card he draws. It never quite works out for him because I believe that he is not concentrating hard enough. At the end of the movie, however, when he is in the finals of a poker tournament, he tries it again. This time, his mind is in the zone, and it works.

I have never been one to believe in telepathy, but one time I tried to give it a chance. One time, I was home alone and extremely bored, so I decided to try out what I had learned from Maverick. I was alone in my room, and I sat and thought about the ace of spades for what seemed like fifteen minutes. Concentrating and thinking only of the ace of spades, I drew a card and held it so I couldn’t see it. I said to myself, over and over again, this is the ace of spades. When I finally turned the card around, it was none other than the ace of spades! Right then and there, I began to believe in the power of telepathy. I have performed this action three other times and have failed only once, when I was in the company of several people that I felt distracted me.

There are two types of psychic ability: psychokinesis and ESP (extra-sensory perception), also known as anomalous cognition. Psychokinesis is when one physically manipulates the environment through unknown means. Anomalous cognition is when one acquires information through unexplainable means, which is what the study focused on. Anomalous cognition is then further divided into two categories: clairvoyance (information that comes in real time and not from another person) and precognition (only obtained from knowledge of the future) (Utts webpage).

The Test

To produce the data, I took a standard deck of 52 cards and situated the subject in a comfortable part of the house of each of the ten subjects. I then took the top card off the deck and laid it aside. The subject would then stare at the card for as much time as needed. This was repeated until I went through the deck once. The idea was that deep concentration would cause the powers of telepathy to take over and enable the subject to ascertain the suit of the card. After the subject answered what was believed to be the suit of the card, the answer was marked, and then the actual card was written down without the subject knowing his/her success or failure. This was done so the subject would not become frustrated at wrong answers. The right answers were counted and then the proportion of correct answers were tabulated and compared to the one-fourth chance that the suit could be merely guessed right.

Analysis of Study Using the Five-Step Hypothesis Testing Process:

1. State Hypothesis

The alternative hypothesis for this experiment was that telepathy is possible. To prove this, the number of correct answers from the card were compared with the figure that a person would get right if they were to merely guess (.25). This would then make the Ho: Pr = .25 and Ha: would be Pr \* .25.

2. Determine level of significance. Is it a one-tail or two tail test?:

I decided to make a = .05 for the test, which was only a one-tailed test because Pr must be greater than .25.

3. Choose a Test Statistic

I used the formula for a sample proportion versus a known standard. P was .25.

4. Determine a Critical Value

Using .05 as a, the critical value used was 1.64.

5. Calculate the Test Statistic

Pr = .42 which resulted in the test statistic being 1.21, which is lower than the critical value of 1.64. Therefore, the null hypothesis would be accepted.

Critique

It has been thought that psychic ability is not present in everyone. And, interestingly enough, one of the subjects tested scored significantly better than the others. For him, Pr = .59, making the test statistic 1.42.

There were a couple of factors that might have aided in causing the sample to be biased. The type of sampling that was used was a forced-choice type. For this reason, the subjects probably got a higher percentage of cards right because they only had four choices to choose from. I also noticed that as the study went on, the subjects would begin to get more cards right. Perhaps, a warm-up was required to get the mind flowing, instead of going right to the sample.

The experiment had several variables involved. The explanatory variable was the psychic ability used to identify the card correctly. This variable could have been manipulated by several factors. The fact that the brain might not have been warmed-up when the experiment started has been discussed, but some of the subjects may have become tired or bored in the latter stages of the experiment. These factors also likely influenced the response variable, which was the amount of cards identified correctly.

There were a couple of confounding variables that might have biased the results of the experiment. The place in the house that the test took place, and the amount of background noise could have increased or decreased the performance of the subjects. The surroundings and colors of each room might have some effect on the flow of the brain.

Randomization took place in the way the subjects were picked. The population was the town of Savanna (pop. 852). This could have hurt the experiment because the subjects might have been uninterested and apathetic toward the experiment. Therefore, their brains would not have been properly tuned to achieve best performance.

The main strength of the experiment was that it shows that telepathy could definitely be possible. Even though the alternate hypothesis was not proven at the .95 confidence level, a difference of 17 percent is definitely a big jump. With a larger study, the alternative hypothesis might have been proven.

There were obvious weaknesses in the study. The experiment was no doubt too small. The environments in which the test took place were not appropriate for the subjects to give complete concentration. The test was almost too simple. The forced-choice aspect makes the jump in percentage a little less exciting. The many other factors that have been listed that could have biased the data were not taken into account.

Conclusion

The study failed to prove my hypothesis, but I still believe that a 17 percent difference in the number of correct answers is something worth looking into. With a larger experiment, under the right circumstances, telepathy might someday be proved to be a reality.

Source Consulted

Utts, Jessica. “An Assessment for the Evidence of Psychic

Functioning.” 1995. Internet:

http://anson.ucdavis.edu/~utts/air2.html.

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