



Astrology, a psychological perspective

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Abstract. Astrology, which is a belief system predicated on the positions of the stars and celestial bodies, remains universally popular today, particularly with Gen Z. Astrology, in spite of its lack of scientific validity, continues to attract people from across the globe and cultures. This essay examines the psychological explanations for the ongoing belief based on both literature review and a small-scale survey. Main psychological principles—such as the Barnum effect, emotional comfort, and personality dimensions such as openness to experience—are explored to explain why astrology endures in a scientific era. Results indicate that astrology plays significant social and emotional roles and assists individuals in finding meaning, adjusting to uncertainty, and feeling understood.

Keywords - Astrology, Celestial bodies, Horoscopes, Zodiac signs, Belief systems

I. Introduction

Astrology, the general belief that the movements and positions of stars and planets have an effect on human life and personality, has been around for millennia. Although once combined with astronomy, astrology has been rejected by science for centuries because there is no empirical data to support it. And yet, numerous individuals still adhere to their horoscopes, download astrological apps, or declare allegiance to their zodiac sign.

Among Gen Z, astrology is not only a belief system but also a cultural trend. Apps like Co-Star and The Pattern have millions of downloads. Astrology-related content is everywhere on TikTok and Instagram. This raises a question: Why do people continue to believe in astrology, especially in a world where scientific explanations are widely accessible?

This article seeks to provide an answer to this question through examining the psychological reasons which drive belief in astrology. It centers on emotional comfort, cognitive distortions, and personality traits that predispose people toward accepting astrological explanations. A brief questionnaire was also administered to gain individual insights into how individuals connect with astrology.

Review

Astrology belief has been researched by psychologists from numerous different perspectives. The most popular explanation is the Barnum effect, a cognitive bias in which individuals interpret general or vague statements as uniquely describing them (Forer, 1949). For instance, a horoscope predicting "you sometimes feel insecure but are also capable of great confidence" can be true for almost anybody, but many find it to be intensely personal.

The need to control and feel comfortable, particularly in times of uncertainty, is another factor. Studies



indicate that individuals seek belief systems when they feel anxious, helpless, or overwhelmed (Lillqvist & Lindeman, 1998). Astrology, as with religion, provides a system that will counteract anxiety by attributing meaning to chance occurrences or personal plight.

Personality characteristics have a part in it too. Research has demonstrated that individuals with high openness to experience—a Big Five personality factor with imagination and creativity—is more likely to hold a belief in astrology (Furnham, 2009). Similarly, individuals who have emotional instability or elevated levels of anxiety (neuroticism) are likely to seek reassurance through astrology.

Finally, there are social and cultural determinants of belief. If friends, family, or influencers affirm astrology, then it becomes the norm. Astrology among Gen Z is largely mediated by digital media and online spaces, where it is constructed as entertainment and identity.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a quantitative survey method to examine the reasons why people have faith in astrology from a psychological perspective. A self-developed questionnaire was sent electronically, and 12 participants gave a response. Participants' age ranged from 15 to 65 years, with most being females. The survey contained multiple-choice items and Likert-scale items that measured participants' beliefs, behaviors, and emotional responses concerning astrology.

The most important variables that were measured were:

- Scientific belief in astrology
- Emotional dependency on astrology under uncertainty
- Identification with horoscope traits
- Peer pressure
- Ease with positive horoscopes
- Behavioral impact (e.g., making choices)
- Use of astrology through apps or daily horoscopes

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the results

Scientific Belief: 54.5% of respondents believed astrology is scientifically true; 45.5% did not.

Emotional Regulation: Mean rating for "Astrology makes me feel better in uncertain times" was 2.25 (5-point scale).

Identification: Mean rating for "My horoscope portrays me very well" was 2.83.

Social Influence: 50% mentioned their friends are believers in astrology, and 50% mentioned they are not.

Emotional Comfort: 81.8% mentioned they are comfortable when their horoscope brings them good news.

•Behavioral Influence: 16.7% only confessed to making decisions based on astrology.

App Usage: 41.7% had downloaded an astrology application; 58.3% had not.

Daily Engagement: 25% read horoscopes every day; 75% did not.

General Belief: 66.7% claimed to believe in astrology, while 33.3% did not.

III. DISCUSSION

The statistics show that while most of the respondents (66.7%) are believers in astrology, few use it as a basis for decision-making (16.7%) or for daily



readings (25%). This is an indication that to most individuals, astrology is not necessarily being used for practical or behavioral purposes but more for symbolic or emotional ones.

The affective consolation offered by astrology seems important: 81.8% reported feeling comforted when horoscopes brought positive news, validating the hypothesis that astrology can serve as a coping strategy when things go awry. This is consistent with psychological accounts of illusory control and cognitive bias, where people look for organized explanations amidst anarchic situations.

Surprisingly, acceptance of astrology as scientifically valid was nearly evenly divided, demonstrating that belief is not necessarily evidence-based, but perhaps on cultural or personal significance. The low mean rating (2.25) on emotional comfort and moderate rating (2.83) on self-description indicate mixed personal significance — individuals may believe generally in astrology without feeling strongly influenced by it.

The sex disparity (largely women) could also be a manifestation of wider cultural patterns in which women feel freer to express emotional and spiritual means of coping.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results imply that belief in astrology is more driven by emotional needs and psychological comfort rather than scientific reasoning. Astrology seems to provide a feeling of meaning, control, and emotional relief in times of uncertainty, especially for individuals who do not depend on it

every day but appreciate its positive messages.

While only a small sample claimed to make decisions using astrology, its affective appeal is still high — suggesting that belief is psychologically symbolic rather than purely functional.

Future studies could build on this by employing a larger, more representative sample and investigating deeper factors such as personality traits, cultural background, and emotional stability.

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