

## **Neuropsychological and cognitive-perceptual characteristics of mediums and psychics**

### **ABSTRACT:**

#### **Background**

This project investigated whether variations in paranormal experiences were allied to self-reported cognitive-perceptual and neuropsychological differences.

#### **Aims**

To identify differences in paranormal experience profiles (i.e., direct encounters, self-professed abilities, and involvement) and determine how these are related to reported cognitive-perceptual and neuropsychological differences.

#### **Method**

This project employed cross sectional methods and interviews. Phase 1 and Phase 2 (Quantitative) used self-report scales. Phase 1 measured proneness to reality testing deficits, emotion-based reasoning, and belief in science, and Phase 2 executive functions (i.e., General Executive Function, Working and Everyday Memory, Decision Making, and Emotion Regulation). Both phases measure paranormal belief. Phase 3 (Qualitative) employed semi-structured interviews.

Quantitative phases used latent profile analysis, MANOVA, and correlation-based methods. The qualitative phase employed reflexive thematic analysis.

#### **Results**

Experiential profiles were associated with variations in paranormal belief and cognitive-perceptual (i.e., reality testing deficits, and emotion-based reasoning) and neuropsychological (i.e., greater reported levels of executive function disruption) differences.

Qualitative analysis showed that experiencers (e.g., lay people and paranormal professionals such as mediums and psychics) made sense of their professed abilities by attaching personal meaning to experienced phenomena.

#### **Conclusions**

Outcomes indicated that variations in experience and level of professed paranormal ability were associated with self-reported cognitive-perceptual and neuropsychological differences.

#### **Keywords**

Paranormal experiences, Mediumship/psychic ability, Neuropsychological, Individual differences, Cognitive-perceptual

### **Published Work:**

Drinkwater, K. G., Dagnall, N., Denovan, A., & Williams C. (2021). Differences in cognitive-perceptual factors arising from variations in self-professed paranormal ability. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 681520. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.681520

Drinkwater, K. G., Dagnall, N., Denovan, A., & Williams, C. (2021) Paranormal belief, thinking style and delusion formation: A latent profile analysis of within-individual variations in experience-based paranormal facets. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 670959. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.670959

Drinkwater, K. G., Dagnall, N., Denovan, A., Parker, A., & Escolà-Gascón, Á. (2022). Paranormal experience profiles and their association with variations in executive functions: A latent profile analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 778312. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.778312

Drinkwater, K. G., Denovan, A., & Dagnall, N. (2020). Lucid dreaming, nightmares, and sleep paralysis: Associations with reality testing deficits and paranormal experience/belief. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 471. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00471

Drinkwater, K., Dagnall, N., Walsh, S., Sproson, L., Peverell, M. & Denovan, A. (2022). Self-ascribed paranormal ability: Reflexive thematic analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 845283. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.845283

Drinkwater, K.G., Dagnall, N., Denovan, A., Parker, A., & Escolà-Gascón, Á. (2021). Executive functioning: Assessing the role of perceived paranormal ability. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 798283. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.798283

### **Researcher's Contacts:**

Dr Kenneth Drinkwater  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
Brooks Building, M15 6GX  
United Kingdom  
Phone: + 44 (0)161 247 2599  
Email: [k.drinkwater@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:k.drinkwater@mmu.ac.uk)