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The Influence of Superstitious Beliefs On Decision Making Among Housewives and Working Women: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Superstitious beliefs remain prevalent across cultures despite being fundamentally incompatible with scientific reasoning, yet their relationship with decision-making styles remains underexplored in South Asian contexts. This study examined the influence of superstitious beliefs on decision-making styles among housewives and working women in Pakistan. A sample of 250 women (125 housewives, 125 working women) completed the Superstitious Beliefs Scale (SBS) and the General Decision-Making Style (GDMS) inventory. Pearson correlations, hierarchical regression, and MANOVA were employed to analyze the data. Results revealed that superstitious beliefs were significantly positively correlated with avoidant ($r = .34$, $p < .01$), dependent ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), and intuitive ($r = .19$, $p < .01$) decision-making styles, while showing a significant negative correlation with rational style ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$). Hierarchical regression confirmed that superstitious beliefs significantly predicted avoidant decision-making ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$) even after controlling for age and education. MANOVA found that there were significant differences between groups (Wilks $\Lambda = .824$, $p = .001$), with the housewives scoring higher on superstitious beliefs, social superstitious behavior, belief in bad luck, dependent style, and avoidant style, and working women scored higher on the rational style. The results discuss the significance of occupational roles in influencing cognitive processes and the importance of culturally sensitive interventions to support rational decision-making in Pakistani women.

Keywords: superstitious beliefs, decision-making styles, housewives, working women, Pakistan

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Introduction

Superstitious beliefs are a school of thought stuck paradox in human thought, it persists across cultures, educational standards, and even periods of history and cannot be reconciled at all with scientific thought. As irrational beliefs that define relationships of causality between events that are not directly correlated, superstitions will remain in action in defining the behavior at diverse levels of life that include everyday considerations as well as major decisions. Superstition is understood as a mental illusion, which provokes people to believe that there is a causal interrelation between things, which do not actually exist, due to human nature to notice the patterns and find diffuse links between things (Vyse, 2014). This bias, which is evolutionarily favorable in terms of learning and survival, may lead to wrongful attribution of causality that is the basis of superstitious thinking (Gomes-Ng et al., 2025).

Superstitious beliefs are related to decision-making, a topic that has been receiving more academic interest. The connotation of superstitions in the Pakistani society is especially multifaceted not only because of irrationality and illiteracy that they unavoidably entail but mainly because of religious grounds since Islam, the most widespread religion of the Pakistani people, disallows the belief in superstitions strongly. This religious ban, however, ethnographic studies on rural Pakistan state that the practices of superstitious beliefs are mainstream and commonplace, which greatly influence everyday life practices and choices of community members (Qasim et al., 2025). This trend has also been affirmed by a study carried out in rural Punjab which revealed a substantial proportion of the population believes in different superstitions, ominous dreams and other supernatural events like black magic, taweez and ghosts (Farooq & Kayani, 2012). Research in different cultural settings has always indicated females show greater levels of superstitious beliefs (Qasim et al., 2025).

The concept of the way people make decisions is crucial to researching the impact of belief systems. General Decision-Making Style (GDMS) inventory was invented by Scott and Bruce (1995): it operationalizes five different approaches such as Rational, Intuitive, Dependent, Avoidant and Spontaneous. This paradigm has undergone far-reaching testing in the population and has offered a solid basis in analyzing how corporate disparities in cognitive styles interrelate with belief systems. Studies show rational type had a focus on comprehensive search and rationality in evaluating the alternatives whereas avoidant type searches had a focus on delaying decisions, dependent type had a focus on consulting other people, intuitive type had a focus on relying on hunches and emotions, and spontaneous type had a focus on urgency (Scott and Bruce, 1995).

Occupational roles in influencing beliefs in superstition as well as decision-making process have had little empirical research. According to the recent studies carried out in Pakistan among housewives, superstitious beliefs are highly and positively correlated with the avoidant type of decision-making, and locus of control was highlighted as a highly important predictor of the intuitiveness type of decision-making (Aftab and Shakir, 2024). Additionally, the joint family housewives scored much higher on superstitious beliefs as well as on dependent decision

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relating styles than the nuclear family housewives (Aftab and Shakir, 2024). These results indicate the importance of comparative research that can analyze the role of the occupational role, especially the difference between the domestic and professional setting, in the moderating effect of belief systems and decision-making styles.

Review of Literature

Super-stations beliefs and decision-making styles have been explored and analyzed in a multicultural setting. Scientific evidence indicates that superstitious beliefs could be a cognitive shortcut that can be applied especially in the case of uncertainty (Egorov, 2025). Superstitious beliefs could give extra information when the rational information is not sufficient or when people feel anxious on the outcomes of their decision (Rosen, and Gilovich, 2008). Research has found that rational thinking is negatively linked to superstitious beliefs as opposed to intuitive thinking which is positively linked to the cognitive biases such as the illusion of causality (Blanco et al., 2026; Vise, 2014). Superstitious Beliefs Scale (SBS) has been shown to be a culturally competent scale to study multidimensional viewpoints of superstitious such as social superstitious behavior and bad-lucky belief (Chukkali and Dey, 2020).

Effects of occupational positions on the development of superstitious beliefs have been reported in various cultural settings. A study carried out in Punjab, Pakistan, established significant disparity in the superstitious beliefs of working and non-working women with non-working women having more superstitious beliefs as compared to working women (Farooq and Kayani, 2012). According to the same study, the rural women scored greatly on superstitious beliefs compared to urban women and married women were highly superstitious compared to unmarried women (Farooq & Kayani, 2012). A comparative study on the employed and unemployed women revealed that employed women exhibited a bit more capacity to make decisions about their families implying that the occupational provisions affect decision-making (Mitchell, 1983).

The Pakistani nation is strongly dominated by superstitious beliefs that are determined by family values, religious values, and socioeconomic restraint (Jabbar et al., 2025). Islamic taboos against superstition practices are common among different societies, especially on women (Malik and Javed, 2021). In rural Sindh, the levels of superstitious beliefs were very high with 65 percent of the respondents showing greater levels of superstitiousness, although women were found to be more superstitious than men (Qasim et al., 2025). A study conducted in Pakistan has also shown that the rural and less educated population exhibits higher superstitious tendencies than urban and more educated females (Jabbar et al., 2025). It has been documented in Pakistan studies that the work of the working women is recognized since they have to manage offices and homes, and the role of the housewives is undermined by their families and society implying that the role of occupations affects a self-image and ways of thinking (Qaddos, 2023).

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Theoretical Framework

The current research paper lies on three interconnected theoretical views which together describe not only the correlation between superstitious beliefs and decision-making styles.

Dual-Process Theory. The paper can be explained as relying on the dual-process theory, which makes the distinction between two different types of thinking intuition (System 1) and analytical (System 2) processing (Kahneman, 2011). System 1 is automatic, fast and not very effortful and depends on heuristics and intuitions. System 2 on the other hand can be defined as a deliberate effortful and analytical processing that involves the use of cognitive resources. System 1 thinking can be described as highly superstitious because it is based on automatic recognition of patterns and on gut feelings instead of rational consideration of facts (Vyse, 2014). It has been shown that intuitive thinking style also correlates with such cognitive biases as the illusion of causality in a positive manner (Blanco et al., 2026). On the other hand, superstitious beliefs are negatively related to analytical thinking, because, when the person thinks systematically, he or she is less likely to interpret the occurrence of illusory causal associations (Vyse, 2014). This theoretical framework means that the relationship between superstitious beliefs and decision making styles is expected to be in these ways that superstition is relevant with the intuitive and the avoidant style and opposite with the rational one.

Superstitious Heuristic Framework. Another heuristic, yet not the only, that the study takes into consideration is the superstitious heuristic framework, and to this end the study conceptualizes the notion of superstition as a decision shortcut that occurs specifically when there exists uncertainty (Egorov, 2025). In cases where there is lack of rational information or where people are anxious about the effects of decision making, superstitious beliefs can be used to give them more information or can alleviate anxiety (Risen and Gilovich, 2008). Unlike other decision heuristics, this one is inherently based on culturally transmitted unsupported beliefs about the world that cannot be verified scientifically but on an acquired piece of knowledge or on the interaction with the surrounding environment (Egorov, 2025). The superstitious heuristic framework (explaining why people might resort to superstitious beliefs to make some significant decisions, especially when some kind of uncertainty is involved) and avoidant and dependent decision-making styles are connected with superstitious beliefs.

Cultural Psychology Perspective. The theoretical framework also integrates cultural psychology orientation attitudes whereby collectivistic values and social norms, especially in the South Asian contexts influence belief systems and thinking processes. Belief formation and maintenance is largely affected by the interdependence of the self, which is a feature of collectivist cultures (Vyse, 2014). The Pakistani culture is rooted in superstitious beliefs which are upheld by the family traditions, their norms and social expectations (Jabbar et al., 2025). This dimension is captured in the Social Superstitious Behavior subscale of the SBS, which reflects the beliefs that are strengthened by family expectations and community norms

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(Chukkali and Dey, 2020). This cultural outlook can describe the reasons why housewives who operate mostly in domestic and community expanse might be more prone to superstitious beliefs than women working outside of their homes and operating in business environments.

Significance of the Study

The current research has a significant theoretical, practical, and cultural relevance. It introduces a crucial gap in cross-cultural psychological research theoretically by showing that superstitious beliefs are systematically related to particular decision-making styles in a context of the Pakistani culture. In practice, the conclusions can be used to develop culturally sensitive interventions that would help delineate the rational decision-making by housewives and reinforce rational orientations in existing among working women, which would be applied to the mental health workers, educators, and policymakers in Pakistan. The study culturally adds to the wider discussion regarding the relationship between religion, culture and psychological functioning by recording an occurrence of superstitious beliefs among Pakistani women despite Islam prohibitions, and the impact of social reinforcement in social expectation with family and community pressures. Moreover, through the SBS and GDMS inventories when used in a comparative Pakistani sample, the study has offered a replicable methodological model to study in similar cultural contexts in the future and adds to the literature of occupational psychology and women empowerment within South Asian contexts.

Research Gap

Although superstitious beliefs and decision-making have become more popular in recent times (Tahir et al., 2018), a number of gaps still exist. To begin with, no study has again assessed housewives and working women at the same time on both constructs in the same Pakistani sample, although studies have reported that non-working women possess much higher levels of superstitious beliefs than working women (Malik and Javed, 2021). Second, the Superstitious Belief Scale (SBS) is also a validated measurement tool that has not been commonly practiced in Pakistan but in India (Dey and Chukkali, 2020). Third, the moderating effect of occupational status in the correlation between superstitious beliefs and decision-making styles is not studied, especially when it comes to the collectivistic cultural context in which the tension in the family and social norms have been identified to mediate the relationship between superstitious beliefs and decision-making styles (Tahir et al., 2018). Fourth, the current literature focuses primarily on the West (Damisch, 2008), disregarding South Asian contexts where people are heavily influenced by the superstitious beliefs embedded by cultural practices and religious explanations (Tahir et al., 2018; Bukhari et al., 2002). Fifth, there is limited research on the possibility of the superstitious beliefs as the predictors of particular decision-making styles, considering the demographic factors of age, education, and family system (Malik and Javed, 2021). The gaps discussed in the present study impact in to the nature of decision making of housewives and working women in Pakistan using the measures that are culturally oriented to explain how occupational role affects the belief-cognition interaction.

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Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H_1: Superstitious beliefs will show a significant positive correlation with the Avoidant and Dependent decision-making styles.
- H_2: Superstitious beliefs will show a significant negative correlation with the Rational decision-making style.
- H_3: Superstitious beliefs will show a significant positive correlation with the Intuitive decision-making style.
- H_4: Superstitious beliefs will significantly and positively predict the Avoidant decision-making style, even after controlling for age and education.
- H_5: Housewives will score significantly higher on overall superstitious beliefs than working women.
- H_6: Working women will score significantly higher on the Rational style, whereas housewives will score significantly higher on the Dependent and Avoidant styles.
- H_7: Housewives will score significantly higher than working women on the Social Superstitious Behavior and Belief in Bad Luck factors.

Methodology

Research Design: The current research has used a quantitative, cross-sectional research design that has a comparative aspect. A cross-sectional research design was deemed to be suitable because data was sampled at a single site in time to test the relationships that existed between superstitious beliefs and decision-making styles and to compare housewives and working women on these variables. The research employed a correlational research design to test the relationship between superstitious beliefs and decision-making styles and then, hierarchical regression analysis to measure the predictive value of superstitious beliefs predictive of avoidant decision-making style when demographic factors have been assessed. Others, a comparative design was used in order to analyze the differences between groups of housewives and working women based on Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and further univariate analyses.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample included 250 women; 125 housewives and 125 working women who were recruited in different urban and semi-urban locations in Pakistan. The research subjects were aged between 25 and 55 years and were well educated at least at the second level. Housewives were described as women not involved in any form of formal jobs but mostly worked at home.

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Working women were defined as those who worked full time with formal employment in schools or colleges, health facilities or government offices.

Participants were recruited using a purposive method. Housewives were of include criteria based on the following details: married, not involved in the formal employment, had at least one child. Working women that were married and had finished two years of full-time formal work accompanied by having at least one child were included in the inclusion criteria. The participants were chosen by way of community centers, schools, hospitals, and companies. To ensure that the data would be collected in a format that is preferred by the participants, data was collected online (using Google Forms) and using a paper-pencil to ensure participants could choose their format. All participants were informed about receiving informed consent before the actual data collection worked and promised confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Instruments

Data were collected by use of two measures on participants:

Superstitious Beliefs Scale (SBS). Superstitious beliefs were measured using the Superstitious Beliefs Scale that was created and validated by Chukkali and Dey (2020) and employed the Scale to determine the extent of superstitious beliefs among participants. The scale has 17 items to measure six factors of Popular Belief (3 items), Belief in Good luck (3 items), Belief in Bad luck (3 items), Belief that Luck can change (3 items), Personal superstitious behavior (3 items) and Social superstitious behavior (2 items). The respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point Likert scale between 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). High scores are scored between 17 and 85 whereby the higher the score, the higher the beliefs held on superstitiousness. The scale has proven to be psychometrically sound on the Indian context (Chukkali and Dey, 2020), with Cronbach alpha values of between .70 and .87 across the subscales. In the current research, the scale had good internal consistency reflected by Cronbach's alpha =.87 of the total scale and subscale alpha (ranging between 0.64 and 0.82).

General Decision-Making Style (GDMS). The General Decision-Making Style inventory, developed by Scott and Bruce (1995), was used to assess decision-making styles. The scale has 25 items that represent five styles of Decisions-Rational, Intuitive, Dependent, Avoidant, and Spontaneous with 5 items representing each subscale. Respondents answered in accordance with a 5-point Likert scale with end points of 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree. The scale has undergone extensive testing among various groups of people and in a variety of cultural situations (Spicer & Sadler-Smith, 2005), which leads to good psychometric characteristics. In the current study, subscales of GDMS showed a good internal consistency as their Cronbach's alpha ranged between 0.74 and 0.81.

Procedure

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The three months of data collection took place. Ethical approval was gained before data collection by the institutional review board concerned. The participants were contacted via community centers, institutions of learning, and hospitals. The participants that accepted to be included in the study were given an information sheet spelling out the aim of the study, voluntary nature of the study and how the responses given by the participants would remain confidential. All the participants were informed and given consent to fill the questionnaires. They were all told to give the items a thorough read and answer frankly. The questionnaires required a period of 15-20 minutes. After the completion, participants were informed of the aim of the research and were thanked to take part in the research.

Data Analysis Plan

The SPSS version 27.0 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used in preliminary analysis to investigate how the data were distributed, and the normality of the data. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to analyze internal consistency reliability. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated to test the correlations between superstitious beliefs and decision-making styles. The hierarchical multiple regression analysis was done to test the hypothesis that superstitious beliefs after age and education control, were predictors of avoidant decision-making style. One-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to analyze differences between housewives and working women on the composite dependent variables. Follow-up univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were carried out to determine certain group differences. Partial eta squared (η 2) values were used to report the effect sizes with.01 said to be small, .06 said to be medium, and.14 said large (Cohen, 1988). All analyses were done with a significance level of $p < .05$.

Ethical Considerations

Data analysis was conducted as per the APA code of ethics. Approval was also sought to the concerned institutions before collection of data. All participants gave informed consent once they were given a detailed explanation on the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of the study. Students were informed not to participate in the study, without any form of punishment, in case they wanted to pull out. Confidentiality and anonymity of responses were ensured by not collecting any identifying information. It was ensured that data were kept under lock and key and could only be accessed by the research team. The debriefing was conducted after the questionnaires were filled out and contact details were given to the participants in case they had questions or concerns over the study.

Results

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics and Normality for All Study Variables

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Variable	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Superstitious Beliefs	54.82	9.79	0.18	-0.41
Social Superstitious Behaviour	15.92	3.44	0.22	-0.35
Belief in Bad Luck	15.47	3.35	0.16	-0.29
Rational Decision-Making	14.46	2.84	-0.12	-0.38
Intuitive Decision-Making	12.53	2.84	0.09	-0.44
Dependent Decision-Making	11.58	2.94	0.31	-0.26
Avoidant Decision-Making	10.96	3.02	0.28	-0.33
Spontaneous Decision-Making	11.22	2.87	0.14	-0.40

Note. N = 250. Skewness and kurtosis values within ±2 indicate univariate normality was not violated (George & Mallery, 2010). M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

The average superstitious belief (M = 54.82, SD = 9.79) indicates that the sample has moderate levels of superstitious beliefs. Rational style had a high mean (M = 14.46) and Avoidant the lowest (M = 10.96). The skewness and kurtosis values were all within the acceptable ±2 range, which does indicate that the data did satisfy the assumption of univariate normality to be used in the parametric tests.

Table 2.

Internal Consistency Reliability (Cronbach's α) for All Scales and Subscales

Scale/Subscale	No. of Items	Cronbach's α
Superstitious Beliefs Scale	17	.87
Popular Beliefs	3	.78
Belief in Good Luck	3	.74
Belief in Bad Luck	3	.70
Belief that Luck Can Change	3	.64
Personal Superstitious Behaviour	3	.73
Social Superstitious Behaviour	2	.82
Rational Decision-Making	5	.79
Intuitive Decision-Making	5	.76
Dependent Decision-Making	5	.81
Avoidant Decision-Making	5	.78
Spontaneous Decision-Making	5	.74

Note. N = 250. Cronbach's α values ≥ .70 indicate acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). The Belief that Luck Can Change subscale (α = .64) fell slightly below the conventional threshold, warranting cautious interpretation.

Internal consistency of all the scales was good to excellent with Cronbach 0.70 to 0.87 with the exception of Belief that Luck Can Change subscale (0.64) which had marginal consistency. Social Superstitious Behavior subscale (α =.82) and Superstitious Beliefs Total (α =.87) had a high degree of reliability.

Table 3.

Pearson Correlations Among Superstitious Beliefs and Decision-Making Styles

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Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Superstitious Beliefs	—					
2. Rational Decision-Making	-.25**	—				
3. Intuitive Decision-Making	.19**	.08	—			
4. Dependent Decision-Making	.28**	-.17**	.14*	—		
5. Avoidant Decision-Making	.34**	-.22**	.05	.31**	—	
6. Spontaneous Decision-Making	.07	.11	.18**	.09	.12	—

*Note. N = 250. *p < .05. **p < .01 (two-tailed).*

Findings showed that superstitious beliefs significantly showed positive relationships to dependent decision-making (r = .28, p < .01) and avoidant decision-making (r = .34, p <.01). The relationship between superstitious beliefs and rational decision making was strongly negative (r = -.25, p <.01) whereas with intuitive decision making there was a positive relationship (r=.19, p <.01). The association with spontaneous decision-making was not significant (r =.07, p >.05).

Table 4.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Avoidant Decision-Making From Age, Education, Superstitious Beliefs

Model/Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Step 1					
Age	-0.04	0.03	-.08	-1.34	.182
Education	-0.21	0.13	-.10	-1.62	.107
Step 2					
Age	-0.03	0.03	-.06	-1.08	.281
Education	-0.17	0.13	-.08	-1.31	.192
Superstitious Beliefs	0.10	0.02	.32	5.35	<.001

Note. N = 250. Step 1: R^2 = .018, ΔR^2 = .018, F (2, 247) = 2.27, p = .105. Step 2: R^2 = .116, ΔR^2 = .098, ΔF (1, 246) = 28.62, p < .001. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient.

Hierarchical multiple regression was undertaken to assess the prediction of avoidant decision-making with the use of superstitious beliefs, holding age and education constant. There was no prediction significance with age and education in predicting avoidant decision-making at the Step 1. The introduction of superstitious beliefs in the model (new Step 2) enhanced the model and explained an extra 9.8% of the variance. Avoidant decision-making depended on superstitious beliefs with a lot of significance and positivity (= 32, p < 001).

Table 5.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) for Group Differences Between Housewives and Working Women

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Effect	Wilks' Λ	F	df	p	Partial η²
Group (Housewives vs. Working Women)	.824	5.22	6, 243	<.001	.114

Note. N = 250 (125 housewives, 125 working women). Dependent variables: total superstitious beliefs, rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making styles. Wilks' Λ = .824 indicates that 17.6% of the variance in the combined dependent variables was accounted for by group membership.

The MANOVA produced a large multivariate effect that has a medium size of effect (Wilks Lambda =.824, partial eta 2 =.114). This indicates that there is a big difference between the results of housewives and working women based on the combination of belief and decision making variables. Accounting 11.4% was group membership.

Table 6.

Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs) Comparing Housewives and Working Women on All Study Variables

Variable	Housewives M (SD)	Working Women M (SD)	F	p	Partial η²
Superstitious Beliefs	58.34 (9.72)	51.30 (9.86)	32.32	<.001	.116
Social Superstitious Behaviour	17.02 (3.42)	14.82 (3.46)	25.56	<.001	.093
Belief in Bad Luck	16.51 (3.27)	14.43 (3.42)	24.15	<.001	.089
Rational Decision-Making	13.78 (2.82)	15.13 (2.86)	14.12	<.001	.054
Intuitive Decision-Making	12.72 (2.91)	12.34 (2.76)	1.12	.291	.005
Dependent Decision-Making	12.37 (3.02)	10.79 (2.86)	18.04	<.001	.068
Avoidant Decision-Making	11.83 (3.14)	10.09 (2.89)	20.78	<.001	.078
Spontaneous Decision-Making	11.35 (2.91)	11.09 (2.83)	0.51	.476	.002

Note. N = 250 (125 housewives, 125 working women). Degrees of freedom for all ANOVAs were (1, 248). Post-hoc comparisons were not required as the independent variable contained only two groups. Significant group differences were observed for all variables except intuitive and spontaneous decision-making, which did not differ significantly between groups.

The univariate analyzes of variance (ANOVAs) were performed to compare the group difference between working women and housewives. Housewives scored significantly higher than working women on superstitious beliefs, $F (1, 248) = 32.32$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .116$; social superstitious behavior, $F (1, 248) = 25.56$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .093$; belief in bad luck, $F(1, 248) = 24.15$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .089$; dependent decision-making, $F(1, 248) = 18.04$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .068$; and avoidant decision-making, $F(1, 248) = 20.78$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .078$. Working women scored significantly higher on rational decision-

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making, $F(1, 248) = 14.12$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .054$. No significant differences were found for intuitive decision-making, $F(1, 248) = 1.12$, $p = .291$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, or spontaneous decision-making, $F(1, 248) = 0.51$, $p = .476$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$.

Overall Results Summary

On the whole, the results showed that superstitious beliefs had a strong connection with some of the decision-making styles. The increased superstitious beliefs were linked with the dependence and avoidance of decision-making and reduced reliance on rational decision-making. Another positive correlation was that superstitious beliefs were linked to an intuitive decision-making process. In addition, the superstitious beliefs were significantly better predictors of avoidant decision making even upon correction with age and education. There were group comparisons wherein housewives reported higher reported overall superstitious beliefs, social superstitious behavior, belief in bad luck, dependent decision making, and avoidant decision making, and working women reported higher levels of rational decision making.

Discussion

The current research project has investigated the role of superstitious attitudes in decision making among the housewives and the working women. All the seven hypotheses have received a good support based on the findings that illustrate significant relationships between superstitious beliefs and maladaptive decision-making patterns and there is also a significant group difference between housewives and working women.

Superstitious Beliefs and Decision-Making Styles: In line with H1, H2, and H3, the superstitious beliefs showed significant relationships with various decision-making styles. The greatest association was found to be with avoidant decision-making ($r = .34$, $p < .01$), and then dependent decision-making ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). Such results are consistent with a number of past studies that have shown that superstitious beliefs have a significant and positive correlation with avoidant decision-making style in housewives (Ins Aftab, & Shakir, 2024). People with more superstitious attitudes seem to delay decisions or pass them on to others perhaps because of increased uncertainty and fear of an adverse event, which has been previously revealed as the motivating factors of superstitious behavior (Risen and Gilovich, 2008; Vyse, 2014).

It has been demonstrated that anxiety, especially trait anxiety, is useful in the development of superstitious behavior and avoidant attachment styles predict superstition (Arad, 2014). Evidence of the relationship between superstitiousness and decision avoidance is furthered by the support that superstitiousness leads to risk-seeking in gains and risk avoidance in losses (Dong and Labroo, 2018). Magical thinking research showed that when people practice superstitious rituals, they tend to procrastinate in making a decision to cope with uncertainty (Subbotsky, 2024).

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The correlation with rational decision-making is negative ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$), which can be interpreted as indicating that superstitious beliefs are opposed to the logical, systematic information processing. This is all in accordance with studies that suggest that the projection of luck may destroy rational decisions (Zigrino, 2025). Research has demonstrated that the higher rational thinking, the lower the reported superstitious beliefs with the reverse being true in the current research (Fletcher et al., 2011). The fact that the correlation with positive responses ($r = .19$, $p <.01$) is positive further confirms the idea that superstitious people depend on their feelings and intuition, but not on rational thought. This is consistent with the literature showing that the intuitive thinking style has a positive relationship with the belief of superstition (Fletcher et al., 2011; Maqsood et al., 2018).

Interestingly, the insignificant association with spontaneous decision-making ($r =. 07$, $p >.05$) indicates that the superstitious beliefs do not relate to the impulsive and snap decisions. This is the key difference, because it signifies that the tendencies of superstitious decision making are avoidant and dependent, not hasty. Past studies have also concluded that superstitious cognition is more to be associated with reflective avoidance and not impulsive action (Risen and Gilovich, 2008).

The hierarchical regression (H 4) indicated that the superstitious beliefs were a significant predictor of avoidance decision-making after age and education were controlled ($\beta =.32$, $p =. 001$) with a further 9.8 percent of the variance explained. The result determines the predictive strength of superstitious beliefs that are not based on demographic variants. Other studies in the past have also concluded that superstitious beliefs are highly predictive of the avoidant decision-making style and the locus of control and superstitious beliefs are the predictors of decision-making styles among the housewives (Aftab and Shakir, 2024). Research has also found that even demographic factors like age and education cannot fully explain individual differences in decision-making and superstitious beliefs are disengaged psychological predictor (Scott and Bruce, 1995; Wiseman and Watt, 2004).

Group Differences Between Housewives and Working Women: The results of the MANOVA (H 5, H 6, H 7) indicated that there was a significant multivariate group difference with a moderate value of influence (Wilks 5B =.824, partial eta2 =.114). Housewives had a higher score in terms of total superstitious beliefs, social superstitious behavior, belief in bad luck, dependent decision-making and avoidant decision-making. Working women, on the other hand, rated much higher on rational decision making.

These results are consistent with the existing studies that report the association between occupation and superstitious beliefs. Locus of control studies have also revealed that the stronger the external locus of control, the stronger the paranormal and superstitious beliefs (Malik et al., 2024; Sagone and De Caroli, 2014). Social and cultural contexts have been observed to be important in the preservation of superstitious beliefs and dependent decision-making styles as housewives living in joint family systems were found to score significantly higher on the former (Aftab and Shakir, 2024).

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It has been found that housewives are more superstitious than other professions (Malik and Javed, 2021). Literacy/ superstition studies have revealed that lesser education attainment, and lesser exposure to workplace conditions explain higher levels of superstitious beliefs (Wiseman and Watt, 2004). Superstitious thinking might be more prone to housewives whose exposure to organized work settings where rational decisions need to be made is lower (Malik et al., 2024).

Of particular interest is the higher score of housewives in the belief of bad luck (M = 16.51 vs. 14.43) and social superstitious behavior (M = 17.02 vs. 14.82). These subscales represent superstitions that are culturally instilled, and rituals transmitted through family. The kind of connectedness of the self, which is a trait of collectivistic cultures, could be an influential factor in belief formation and maintenance (Rotter, 1966; Chukkali and Dey, 2020). Scientists have found that social reinforcement (mainly that of the family and the society) also plays a significant role in the upholds of the superstitious behaviors (Vyse, 2014; Subbotsky, 2024).

The result of no huge group differences between intuitive and spontaneous decision-making indicates that these styles are not very varied between occupational contexts and might also be more dispositional in their nature. It aligns with studies indicating that the intuitive and spontaneous styles are more characteristic whereas rational and avoidant styles are more contingent (Scott and Bruce, 1995; Maqsood et al., 2018).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The current research contributes in a number of ways in terms of its theory. It develops superstitious beliefs as an important construct of psychology that are systematically related to avoidant, dependent and intuitive decision making styles and inversely related to rational decision making. The results indicate the possibility of superstition as a coping mechanism based on uncertainty which may also influence the decision in delaying or passing on the decision to another person. Also, the research aids the interpretation of the influence of occupational functions on cognitive mechanisms because housewives proved to have more superstitious attitudes and less rational attitudes than working women who negotiate within the occupations that maintain a structured thinking pattern. The validation of Superstitious Beliefs Scale in a comparative Pakistani setting also responds to the necessity of culturally-relevant assessment measures, especially due to the fact that superstitious beliefs have become rather common practices within the Pakistani culture and that the culture and family dynamics shape them.

In practice, the implications of the findings are on interventions that can ensure rational decision-making. Housewife programs can be based in the community where critical thinking skills can be developed and dependence on superstitious heuristics can be avoided. Training of working women in the workplace will further foster the rational orientation they have. Mental health practitioners are advised to examine superstitious beliefs in the face of women reporting difficulties in decision-making, and cognitive-behavioral therapeutic approaches can be

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modified to tackle the maladjusted superstitious thinking styles. Policymakers and educators could incorporate critical thinking courses in the curricula of women to enable them to make rational decisions.

Limitations and Future Directions

It has a number of limitations. Cross-sectional design does not allow inferences of causes; the sample used was selected in one cultural background, which limits the generalization. The use of self-report measures leads to social desirability mistakes and the study involved only women and thus cannot represent the male population. The Belief that Luck Can Change subscale has shown marginal reliability and other factors which may be of interest, like the socioeconomic status or religious beliefs, have not been evaluated.

Future studies ought to use longitudinal research designs so as to determine causality, consider a diverse cross-cultural sample in order to generalize and use of qualitative research to provide deeper insight into the context. Research might involve male participants to test the difference in genders and make a refinement of the Belief that Luck Can Change subscale. Further psychological factors like the locus of control and levels of anxiety ought to be identified as the possible moderator, and experimental or intervention-based research might be conducted to examine the effects of causality and assess the success of the programs planned to reduce the levels of superstitious beliefs and enhance rational decision-making.

Conclusion

The current research reveals that the avoidant, dependent, and intuitive styles of decision making have been substantially linked with the superstitious beliefs, whereas they have a negative association with rational decision-making. The degree of superstitious beliefs and associated decision-making patterns is greater among housewives than the working women, who are more rational. These results emphasize that cultural and job-related factors have a significant influence on the cognitive processes, and that culturally appropriate interventions are essential to ensure rational decision-making.

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