
**PERCEPTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABOUT
HOROSCOPES IN SINDH PROVINCE, PAKISTAN**

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ABSTRACT

Horoscopes are considered as one of the important content items in the mass media. Many people perceive and believe that these Zodiac signs have an impact on their lives. That is why they check these signs on different media regularly. The purpose of this study was to determine the perception of Sindh University students about horoscope. A cross-sectional survey was conducted from 100 students of Sindh University through a close-ended questionnaire. The results concluded that girls are more interested in horoscope than boys. The sources for horoscope prediction were mainly newspapers among the Sindh University students. The students reported that they read horoscope daily to skip the pressure and try to satisfy their minds. This research is limited to the University of Sindh students. In the future, the researchers should conduct a large-scale study with a more significant population to determine the perception of the public about horoscopes.

Keywords: Astrology, Horoscopes, Prediction, Perception, University Students, Sources.

INTRODUCTION

Horoscopes are considered as one of the important content items in the mass media. Many people perceive and believe that these Zodiac signs have an impact on their lives. That is why they check these signs on different media regularly.

According to Eysenck and Nias (1982) astrology has been defined as "the study that deals with the connections believed between

the positions of the planets at the concern of someone's birth and that person's psyche, success, career, relationship and general life of events". In that context, the horoscope means "a look at the hours or to tell the time". It is a star chart that shows the setting of planets at the time of one's birth. According to astrology, the natal chart has nine planets, 12 Zodiac signs, the aspects, and the 12 houses. Likewise, the horoscopes cast variance in Vedic astrology, Chinese astrology, and Western astrology. Vedic astrology cast horoscopes based on the moon sign, while the Western astrology bases their predictions on the sun sign.

According to the history of astrology, it seems that the Babylonians were first to apply myth to astrology. They described twelve zodiac signs. After that, Egyptians followed by refining the Babylonian system of astrology. However, the Greeks shaped the modern form of astrology (Holden, 2006). However, Olson (1982) believed that the Western astrology emerges thousands of years ago in Mesopotamia in response to the needs of Sumerian religion, which was very much anxious about heaven. In early stages, astrology was very much an observationally based activity in that it sought mutual relations between celestial and terrestrial events. It was brought to Europe by Alexander the great, astrology exerted a powerful cultural influence in ancient Greece as well as the Roman Empire. Astrologer Cohen (1985) researched that in the 17th-century astrology was widely practised in Europe in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. At the end of the 17th century, Astrology held its popularity among intellectuals and with the public. In the 1990s in the western world, astrology is present everywhere, and its advice is sought for a variety of questions and problems by the general population.

Simply defined, the horoscopes are to predict favourable and unfavourable events of a person's life based on planetary positions. The different movements of the moon or planets affect our minds and emotions. It will show how particular it influences our lives to a great extent at a given time. The results may be positive or negative, but this comparison highlights the changes in our lives.

Miller (1983) highlighted the impact of horoscopes by saying that people change their behaviour after reading the horoscope. The study of Clobert, Van Cappellen, Bourdon, and Cohen (2016) concluded that the reading of positive and negative horoscope predictions have effects

on perceptions, emotions, cognitions, and creativity. According to Adorno (1957) and Svensen and White (1995), people make important decisions about their love life, their career, or their finance by reading their horoscope. People who believe in horoscope change their personalities, behaviours, and even decision-making process.

However, in Pakistan, to the best knowledge of the researchers of this study, hardly any research is found that has focused on the perception of students, particularly university students, regarding their perception about horoscope. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to know the perception of the University of Sindh students about horoscope. That is whether they believe in horoscope or not. If yes, then how horoscope has ever influenced their lives. Further, it is to know that how do they feel, develop perceptions or cognitive skills. In the light of the above-given aim of the study, specific objectives of the study are (i) to determine the perception of Sindh University, Jamshoro students about the horoscope, (ii) to know whether the students believe or alter their behaviour after reading a horoscope and (iii) to know the sources of horoscope among the Sindh University, Jamshoro students. Following the above research objectives, research questions of the study are: (i) hat is the perception of the Sindh University, Jamshoro students about horoscope? (ii) Do the students believe and alter their behaviour after reading horoscope? and (iii) What are the sources of horoscope among the Sindh University, Jamshoro students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Across the globe, a wide range of studies have been conducted on perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, behaviour, impacts, sources of horoscopes in newspapers and magazines. In 1955, survey-based research was carried out by Gorer. The purpose of his study was to determine the behaviour of people towards horoscope. In this way, Gorer found that in his research, 5% of people said they followed the advice given in horoscope, 18% did so, and 77% said they never did (Gorer, 1955).

In 1983, a study conducted by Fitchen and Sunerton found that when partakers identified the astrological explanation of their sign, they valued their report as a more precise representation of their character than the other 11 signs specific for them. Similarly, another

researcher Miller (1983), revealed that 2% of college graduate students changed their behaviour because of horoscope.

Pawlik and Buse (1984) conducted a study to confirm that do people alter their behaviour and personality after reading the horoscope. The survey was carried out among a large sample of people 799. The questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. As a result, it was found that people alter their personality and behaviour to fit their knowledge due to self-attribution.

Further, De Robertis and Delaney (2000) surveyed 1500 students of the first year at York University. The purpose was to determine their attitude towards astrology. The results concluded that 45 per cent of art students and 37 per cent of science students, at least, know slightly of astrology principles, and 55 per cent of art students and 44 per cent of science students cannot differentiate amid astronomy and astrology as science and pseudo-science.

Furthermore, Blackmore and Seebold (2001) surveyed 46 undergraduate female (enrolled in psychology, humanities, or nursing) at the University of the West of England. The purpose of this study was to examine women's trust in astrology and their attitudes to their relationships. The study was divided into three sessions. In the first session, the questionnaire about astrology and the relationship was got completed. In the second session, the two-week latest survey about personalized horoscopes was obtained completed. Whereas, a month later, in the final session, the inquiry about the relationship once more. The result found that 72% did not think about astrology, and 78% concerned their sun signs in love for the relationship, while 15% altered their behaviours (Blackmore & Seebold, 2001).

The study of Clobert et al. (2016) described that reading positive or negative horoscopes increases interpretation of events, in particular, perception and cognitive performances. The study highlights the study of the zodiac sign of Leo, which indicates the horoscope effects on knowledge, creativity, and cognitive performances. The researchers initiated their research with fundamental questions about people's beliefs that do people consider horoscope as entertainment, or it has significant consequences upon them (Clobert et al., 2016).

The survey research conducted by Paulos (1988) and Fraknoi (1989) through the U.S Gallop polls in the United States. The results of the polls were 50% - 55% of teenagers believed in the horoscope.

The two associate professors, Dean Mather and Kelly in 1996, said that the horoscopes are mainly prone to intentionally or unintentionally shape an individual's expectations. While it is not statistically established that the position of planets has any stimulus. People continue to read the horoscope and may be influenced by the text.

Moreover, an experiment was done by King (1995), who drew up charts or astrological implications for their personality to know the relationship between personality and sun sign because most of the people recognize about the sun sign. Still, very few are aware of their complete charts. She illustrated the charts for sixty-nine people and presented them with an astrology survey, relating with sun sign, leading and entire chart. The study found weak correlations. Only fifty-two participants knew their time of birth. This study concludes that people's personality may be influenced by what they read in horoscopes (King, 1995).

In another experimental study about gambling behaviour, Bailey (1997) designed a questionnaire on spending on the National Lottery both before and after they received a personalized horoscope. In this study, 30 selected respondents were divided into three groups. One group got horoscope with a definite description that would be lucky if they take the opportunity. However, other group got horoscope with a description that they are unlucky and should avoid wasting cash on useless chases. Nevertheless, the third group confined to position to luck. Yet, the findings exhibited that only 11 per cent would change their behaviour influenced by what the astrologer said (Bailey, 1997).

Moreover, in a survey designed by Svensen (1990) to determine the impact of horoscope reading on women's relationship, 46 females sampled and made two groups. Although, one group got the horoscope with optimistic essential advice. However, the other got with unbiased love advice. In the end, the findings showed that as 13 per cent told they would refer the astrologer before getting married. Nevertheless, only 15 per cent supposed they would alter their behaviour because of the content that they read in horoscopes (Svensen, 1990).

Besides, Van Rooij (1994) showed that people having the sun in an optimistic zodiac sign (Aries, Gemini, Leo, Libra, Sagittarius, Aquarius) were extroverted. However, the people having the sun in an undesirable zodiac sign (Taurus, Cancer, Virgo, Scorpio, Capricorn,

Pisces) were introverted. Nevertheless, in a survey conducted by Bauer and Durant (1997), with 2000 sampled populations of British people showed that 44 per cent of respondents told they read a horoscope often. Though, only 6 per cent claimed to take it seriously what it described.

Also, Fichten and Sunerton (1983) conducted a study about horoscope reading habits, trustworthiness, and validity of daily and monthly astrological based personality descriptions. The study examined the influence of recognizing the zodiac sign on the understanding of the effectiveness of horoscope predications and the validity of astrological build personality descriptions. The findings of this investigation of 366 pupils of the college specified that women were more likely to read their horoscopes. Astrologically grounded character and behaviour metaphors were found to have to mark scores of horoscope content, utility, and accurateness of personality images (Fichten & Sunerton, 1983).

In the same way, Glick, Gottesman, and Jolton (1989) suggested that the public is keen to match their lives rendering to the content found in their daily horoscope. They said that they observed many cases that people, after knowing their horoscope, automatically build particular hopes concerning their forthcoming day, and they try to understand events or consistently behave with their expectations. This expectancy effect demonstrates predictions develop real, not through magic, but because people act and reason accordingly with the forecast (Glick et.al., 1989).

According to a study conducted at the University of Baltimore by Snyder and Glick (1986) and published in "The Humanist," people vigorously pursue forecasts that appropriate in their horoscope. However, they disregard the predictions that do not match. People who read their horoscope daily were more likely to behave more impulsively or show indulgent if their zodiac sign was negative. Beall (1976) stated that people read horoscope only for fun. In another perspective, it is elaborated that people make significant decisions about their love life, their career, or their finance by reading their horoscope. People who believe in horoscope change their personalities, behaviours, and even decision-making process according to the astrological predictions, as said by Adorno (1957) and Svensen and White (1995).

In the context of horoscopes, a quick search in the Bulgarian National library catalogue reveals the availability of 615 materials items on astrology and 244 on horoscopes. Horoscopes have become one of the significant features of modern popular culture suggested by Evans (1996) and Tandoc Jr and Ferrucci (2014). In the United States, 90 per cent of the press publishes horoscopes, and 30 per cent to 60 per cent of the people do trust in horoscopes. Similarly, in a survey of Gallup, Bauer and Durant (1997) revealed that astrology columns in newspapers and magazines are extensively read. In 1984, the committee for the scientific investigation of claims of Paranorma campaigned for the American newspapers and magazines to bring a disassociation together with the astrology column informing that they were to be read for entertainment determinations only and had no basis in scientific fact.

Tandoc Jr and Ferrucci (2014) conducted a textual analysis of three women magazines. In this study, more than four hundred horoscopes were analyzed. As a result, the three emerged dominant themes were love, money, and work. In electronic media, most privately-owned radio stations and TV channels broadcast daily or weekly horoscopes for their audiences. The most crucial search engine Google yields about 140,000,000 results of the word 'Horoscope'. Horoscope applications are also available on most popular social websites like Facebook and Twitter.

People read a horoscope because they want to lighten up themselves. Life is like a test, and they want to pass the test by knowing the future ahead. Horoscope serves people as a guide. It allows them to plan their daily life according to the predictions provided horoscope so they can achieve maximum success—some people read horoscopes as they want to know about their love life and marriage life.

All this research and survey suggest that personalities of people may be influenced by what they read in the horoscope. Primarily women behaviour is more influenced by reading horoscope. Though, studies showed that the sources of horoscope are palmistry, tarot cards, newspapers, magazines, TV, programs, websites, Emails, etc. Nevertheless, the horoscopes in newspapers are one of the most-read sections by readers. The popularity of horoscopes is designated through their consistent manifestation in daily newspapers. That is

why it has proved as one of the significant genres of the in the print media. This genre seems worth researching for several reasons.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study is based on a cross-sectional survey approach. One of the purposes of selecting a survey approach was as it allows for a significant sample to be collected, in contrary to interviews or other forms of data gathering (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005). The survey is used because it provides the main idea about the research topic and is based on a questionnaire that is provided to respondents to collect their answers.

The population of this study was students of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. It is one of the oldest universities in Pakistan. Further, the study employed an opportunistic sampling technique. Accordingly, the students who were accessible and willing to fill the questionnaire were selected. In this way, arbitrarily, a total of 100 students belonging to various departments of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro was sampled for data collection. The demographic details of the respondents are given below in the analysis and results section.

The questionnaires consisted of closed-ended questions. It was grouped into two sections, one covering the demographic profile and others to gather information and seek opinions related to horoscope. The survey instrument took between five to ten minutes to complete. Finally, data collected with questionnaires were coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version) for descriptive analysis to produce frequency distributions and percentages, which were then put in tables for summary presentation and discussion.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE-1
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SURVEYED STUDENTS

Variable	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Department		
Media and Communication Studies	20	(20.0)
Sociology	20	(20.0)
Economics	20	(20.0)
International Relations	20	(20.0)
English	20	(20.0)
Total	100	(100.0)
Degree programme		
B.S	63	(63.0)
M.A	37	(37.0)
Total	100	(100.0)
Gender		
Male	40	(40.0)
Female	60	(60.0)
Total	100	(100.0)
Parents Occupation		
Government Employee	24	(24.0)
Private Job	34	(34.0)
Personal Business	34	(34.0)
Unemployed	8	(8.0)
Total	100	(100.0)

The data presented in Table-1 shows the demographic characteristics of those students who participated in this survey study. In this way, first, in the context of the department, it was found that the surveyed students belonged to five various departments of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. Moreover, out of the total of those five following departments that is the Department of Media & Communication studies (20.0%), the Department of Sociology (20.0%), the Department of Economics (20.0%), the Department of International Relations (20.0%) and the Department of English (20.0%) each had a proportion of one fifth (20.0%) of the students. The second subject to the degree programme it was observed that the proportion of over three fifths (63.0%) of the surveyed students was

enrolled in B.S 4-year degree programme. Whereas, the remaining proportion of little less than two fifths (37.0%) of them mentioned that they were enrolled in M.A 2-year degree programme. Third, from the perspective of the gender of the surveyed students, the data revealed that the proportion of three fifths (60.0%) was female. However, against it, the remaining proportion of two fifths (40.0%) of them was male. Fourth, regarding the occupation of the parents, it was seen that one proportion of slightly over one third (34.0%) of the parents of the students was in private jobs. Added the second proportion of similar size that is little over one third (34.0%) of the parents of the surveyed students had personal business. However, the third proportion sizing almost one fourth (24.0%) of the parents of the students was in a government job. Finally, the remaining proportion of less than one-tenth (8.0%) of the parents was unemployed. Summarily, it was observed that the surveyed students belonged to five various departments of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. However, the majority proportion of them was enrolled in B.S four-year degree programme. Moreover, it was found that the majority of the surveyed students were female. Regarding the occupation of their parents, it was observed that some of them were in a private job, some in government jobs, and others had personal business.

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TABLE-2
ZODIAC SIGN OF THE SURVEYED STUDENTS

Sign	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Aries	9	(9.0)
Taurus	5	(5.0)
Gemini	12	(12.0)
Cancer	6	(6.0)
Leo	10	(10.0)
Virgo	11	(11.0)
Libra	7	(7.0)
Scorpio	4	(4.0)
Sagittarius	8	(8.0)
Capricorn	12	(12.0)
Aquarius	8	(8.0)
Pisces	8	(8.0)
Total	100	(100.0)

Data presented in Table-2 about the zodiac signs of the surveyed students showed that the first highest proportion (12.0%) of the surveyed students had Gemini as their zodiac sign. Similarly, the other highest proportion of similar size (12.0%) had a zodiac sign of Capricorn. Further, the second-highest proportion of the students (11.0%) mentioned that their zodiac sign was Virgo. Added the third-highest proportion (10.0%) of the students were of Leo zodiac sign. Whereas, the remaining number of the students belonged to other various zodiac signs as follow Aries (9.0%), Taurus (5.0%), Cancer (6.0%), Libra (7.0%), Scorpio (4.0%), Sagittarius (8.0%), Aquarius (8.0%), and finally Pisces (8.0%).

TABLE-3
FREQUENCY OF RECEIVING HOROSCOPE INFORMATION

Time	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Daily	32	(32.0)
Weekly	29	(29.0)
Monthly	12	(12.0)
Rarely	27	(27.0)
Total	100	(100.0)

Data in Table-3 shows findings of the frequency of receiving horoscope information by the surveyed students. In this way, it was observed that the first highest proportion of about one third (32.0%) of the students said that they receive the horoscope information of their zodiac sign daily. However, the second-highest proportion of over one fourth (29.0%) of the students mentioned that they received the horoscope news of their zodiac signs every week. Added the third-highest proportion that is also greater than one fourth (27.0%) told that they received horoscope knowledge of their zodiac signs rarely. Whereas, the remaining proportion of 12.0% of the students revealed that they received the horoscope information of their zodiac sign monthly. Thus overall, it was found that the highest proportion of the surveyed students was interested in receiving the horoscope information of their zodiac signs daily.

TABLE-4
SOURCES OF GETTING HOROSCOPE PREDICTIONS

Source	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Newspaper	35	(35.0)
Magazines	22	(22.0)
Television	9	(9.0)
Internet	33	(33.0)
Email	1	(1.0)
Total	100	(100.0)

Data in Table-4 about the sources of receiving horoscope predictions show that the proportion of over one third (35.0%) of the surveyed students received the horoscope predictions of their zodiac signs from newspapers. The other proportion of one third (33.0%) of the students said that they received horoscope predictions by the Internet. The third proportion of over one fifth (22.0%) of the students mentioned that they got horoscope predictions of their zodiac sign by magazines. Added the second last proportion of slightly less than one-tenth (9.0%) viewed television programme to get the horoscope predictions. Whereas, the remaining proportion of 1.0% of the students told that they received horoscope predictions by email. Thus overall, it was observed that the highest proportion of the students read newspapers for receiving horoscope predictions of their zodiac signs.

TABLE-5
BELIEF IN HOROSCOPE PREDICTIONS

Variable	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Strongly Believe	22	(22.0)
Moderately Believe	26	(26.0)
Less Believe	35	(35.0)
Not at all	17	(17.0)
Total	100	(100.0)

Data in Table-5 regarding the level of belief in the predictions of scopes, it is mentioned that the proportion over one fifth (22.0%) of the students strongly believed in the predictions of horoscope. The other proportion of a little higher than a quarter (26.0%) said that they moderately believed in the horoscope predictions. Added to that, it was found the third proportion of over one third (35.0%) of the

students surveyed in this study showed that they believed in the horoscope predictions but at a lesser level. Whereas, the last proportion of almost one fifth (17.0%) of the surveyed students told that they not at all believe in the horoscope predictions. In this way, overall, it was observed that though the majority of the students had belief in the horoscope predictions. However, their level of trust was varying. As some of the students had a strong faith, however, some believed moderately. Whereas some proportion of the students accepted but less.

TABLE-6
RELATING HOROSCOPE PREDICTIONS WITH DAY'S INCIDENTS

Variable	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Yes	33	(33.0)
No	31	(31.0)
Sometime	36	(36.0)
Total	100	(100.0)

Data in Table.6 regarding relating the day's incidents with horoscope prediction mentioned that when it was asked from the surveyed students that did they describe their day's incidents with the horoscope prediction of their zodiac signs they received. Then in answer, the proportion of one third (33.0%) of the students responded that "yes" they did relate the horoscope prediction of their zodiac signs with the incidents they encountered in a day. However, against it, the proportion of a little less than one third (31.0%) said that they did not relate. Whereas, the remaining proportion of over one third (36.0%) of the surveyed students mentioned that they referred the horoscope prediction of their zodiac sign with the day's incidents with encountered, however "sometimes". In this way, overall, it was observed that the majority of the students (69.0%) related to the horoscope prediction of their zodiac signs with the day's incidents they encountered. However, the highest proportion (36.0%) of them said "sometimes," and the proportion of the size of one third (33.0%) said that they significantly related the horoscope prediction of their zodiac signs with their day's incidents.

TABLE-7
MAIN PURPOSE TO RECEIVE HOROSCOPE PREDICTION

Purpose	Frequency	Per cent (%)
For fun	46	(46.0)
To pass time	40	(40.0)
Relating prediction with incidents	14	(14.0)
Total	100	(100.0)

Data in Table.7 presents the findings of the primary purpose of the students to receive horoscope predictions. In this way, it emerged that the proportion of over than two-fifth (46.0%) of the students responded that their primary purpose of receiving the horoscope predictions was to have fun. The other proportion of exactly two-fifth (40.0%) of the students mentioned that they received horoscope predictions to pass their time. Whereas, the remaining proportion of higher than one-tenth (14.0%) of the students said that their intention of receiving the horoscope predications was to relate them with their day's incidents.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to know the perception of the students at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan. For that purpose, 100 students were sampled. The students belonged to five departments namely Media and Communication Studies, Sociology, Economics, International Relations and English mostly in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The majority of the students were enrolled in the B.S.four-year degree programme and were female by gender. Whereas, in the context of the occupation of the students it was observed that the majority of their parents was either in a private job or personal business.

Regarding zodiac signs of the students, it was noted that they had various 12 zodiac signs. However, a significant number of them were Gemini, Capricorn, or Virgo. Added the findings mentioned that the majority of the students received or accessed the horoscope predictions of their zodiac signs either or weekly. In this way, such results show that the students were much interested in reading or receiving the horoscope predictions. Whereas, it was also known that the two

primary sources to obtain the horoscope predictions for the surveyed students were newspapers and the Internet.

Moreover, the majority of the students were found as believers in the horoscope predictions; however, their level of belief in the horoscope prediction was varying from 'strongly believe' to 'less believe'. Therefore, when they received the horoscope predictions of their zodiac signs, then they related to those predictions with their day's various incidents that they encountered. Nevertheless, against it, in the end, one contradiction was observed in the opinion of the students that despite believing in horoscope predictions and relating to those horoscope predictions with their day's incidents the majority of the surveyed students told that their key purpose to receive the horoscope predictions was either to have fun or passing the time. This research is limited to the University of Sindh students. In the future, the researchers should conduct a large-scale study with a more significant population to determine the perception of the public about horoscopes.

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