



RESEARCH ARTICLE

PREVALENCE OF SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIAL COMPLIANCE AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION SECTION, AL-QASSIM UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims to explore the prevalence of superstitious beliefs and their relationship with social compliance among a random sample of female students from the Faculty of Science and Art at Al-Qassim University. The researcher has adopted the descriptive approach in the present study which consists of (100) female students from the primary education section, level seven, scientific and humanitarian track. The researcher selected (50) female students for each track. The scale of the superstitious beliefs consists of (22) items, while the social compliance one consists of (24). Having designed the scales, they have been applied on the sample and the data have been treated statistically. The study outcomes have shown that –firstly, there is a significant difference towards superstitious beliefs among students. Secondly, there are no statistically differences in the degree of superstitious beliefs among students related to the academic scientific and humanitarian track. Thirdly, there is a significant difference towards social compliance. Finally, there are no statistically differences between the two tracks in the degree of social compliance. The statistical analysis which has been done by using Pearson correlation coefficient has shown that there is a relation between the students degrees on the superstitious beliefs scale and social compliance one, which equals (0,34). After using T-test for two correlated samples, the value of T is (8,52), which is a statistically significant at the (0.05) level. This means that the relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

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INTRODUCTION

To begin with, the prevalence of superstition among human societies is neither restricted to a specific nation nor subject to a specific place classification as the western or eastern regions. However, literature has shown that tendency to superstition which stems from the desire to discover the unknown is intuitive. In fact, TV programs which are related to people life, such as marriage, happiness and work, the superstition of number 13 and the suspension of amulets and charms on the bodies and doors of houses are examples that show the prevalence of superstition among people. For example, In a study conducted by Galston, a scientist of plants physiology at Yale University, he called for the intervention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science to prevent the prevalence of scientific superstition among students. He adds that about 30% of his students at the university believe that the plants can be sad and angry. In addition, addressing them by people in a special manner can increase their growth and productivity. He argues that the students' beliefs emerge from Baxter writings on the plants potential of showing emotionalism. To prove his argument, Galston has requested a

committee of botanist and zoologist to re-do Baxter experiments on plants, where the same circumstances and conditions had to be used. After conducting many recurring experiments, the results have revealed that plants have failed to show emotions as mentioned by Baxter. In light of the outcomes, Gallstone has recommended that universities should combat and refute false superstitions by Empiricism, (Jamail, 2011; <http://www.almarefh.net>). In many countries, superstitious beliefs may affect people life. For example, in the United States, the Friday business losses, which coincides with the thirteenth of the month, are estimated one billion dollars annually, (Roach, 2004). In china, suicide rates among women are more than men as they believe that death transfers them to another new life, (Zhany and Xu, 2007). Moreover, (Case and *et al.*, 2004), have stated that superstitious beliefs are practiced by all economic and social levels as well as educated people in many societies. However, James River defines superstition as a belief or pattern of beliefs which is based on a supernatural causality, not on a reason or knowledge. Accordingly, superstition is a set of beliefs that is usually obtained from external sources without any criticism (as cited in Al-Esawy, 1984). (Karmer and Blok, 2008) define superstitious beliefs as a contradiction with nature laws and mental beliefs (Johada, 1969) explained that superstitious beliefs can be seen as going back thousands of years. The superstitious belief can

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be made by many ways such as learning methods, imaginary stories and fairy tales that are told in childhood stage. Unimpeded Knowledge that is given to students play a critical role in the blind acceptance of false concepts, which in turn leads to automatic believing of what have been said. Automatic believing is one of the reasons that make an individual ready to believe myth and listen to people without leaning on reason as well as logic. Compliance is considered as one of the ways that is used by individuals to cope with stress and anxiety. Compliance helps individuals come to an agreement with others for the purpose of gaining the approval of society members. Compliance involves many complications as it consists of a series of successive operations that starts with providing an instant response without preceding thinking of a need which may be instant and ineffective, and without predicting the outcomes that may arise from such need, (Bickman,1974,p.266H). In this case, individuals are affected by the group behavior in order to deal with positive expectations of individuals. Compliance creates an apparent change, whereas the acceptance makes a profound change among individuals. A study that is conducted by (Festinger, 1980,p,82), asserts that negative consequences of compliance appear when they are strong enough to make people comply with falseness and evilness. In attentive societies big evils result from individuals compliance to tiny evils. The prevalence of superstitions among youths, mainly university students represents the largest harm. We hope that educational institutions, particularly universities will exploit all their abilities to educate students how to deal with changeable conditions surrounding them. In addition, universities should recognize that a number of hindrances stem from the society nature as well as the educational philosophy; therefore, getting rid of problems requires promotion of all educational elements: textbooks, teachers, learning environment and techniques of assessment. Prevalence of superstitious among university students is an indication of cultural and social imbalances at present and future. Thus, the researcher seeks to explore the prevalence degree of superstitious beliefs and their correlation with social compliance among female students of Al-Qassim university for the aim of helping decision makers develop university education in light of the outcomes of the current studies.

Study Questions & Objectives

The study seeks to answer the following questions :

First Question: To what extent superstitious beliefs spread among the students of the primary education at Al-Qassim University?

Second Question: Are there statistically significant differences between means of superstitious beliefs degree among the students of primary education at Al-Qassim University contributed to the scientific, humanitarian tracks ?

Third Question: To what extent social compliance spreads among the students of primary education at Al-Qassim University?

Fourth Question: Are there statistically significant differences contributed to these scientific and humanitarian tracks between means of social compliance degree among the students of primary education at Al-Qassim University?

Fifth Question: Is there a statistically significant correlation between means of superstitious beliefs and social compliance degree among the students of basic education at Al-Qassim University?

Study Significance

The study importance arises from the following reasons:

- The significance of the target group who will be educators and mothers, and who will bring hope to their nation through their contribution to the development of local societies in light of the latest social, cultural, economic and technological advances.
- The significance of the sample and its role as forthcoming teachers in educating and preparing students of the primary stage.
- The serious effects of superstitious beliefs on individuals and society. In addition, rareness of studies which take into account the variables of the current study.
- Exploring the phenomena of superstition among students helps responsible people in the educational institutions design educational programs that may address such a problem.
- The researcher hopes that the outcomes of the current study will benefit and add to the field of educational research which is concerned with superstitious beliefs and social compliance in general and the prevalence of superstitious beliefs among university students in particular.

Study Terms

Belief: linguistically, is to believe and have faith in something, it is derived from the verb "believe". Believe in something means that you are convinced with and that the truth of the belief is proved and accepted by the members of society. Ibin Manzur confirms that religious beliefs differ from other kinds of beliefs in the sense that they assert supernatural powers, (Ibin Manzur, 1992). English, and English, 1958,p.46) defines belief as an emotional acceptance of an issue or news that is possible to be true based on the reasons and evidences that an individual has. Evidences of belief are often difficult to be checked and they involve varying degrees of self-certainty, that is, differ in terms of their applicability. Terminologically, is to believe in something definitively – certainty and faith are the highest degrees of belief, and they are based on assertive trust that does not accept any form of suspicion and mistrust. It is not necessary that each belief comes from a logical evidence, (Khalefah, 1992)

Superstition: Nedal, Almousawi (2002:197), defines superstition as any behavior that contradicts with scientific thinking or logical thinking. Moreover, it expresses belief on unreasonable or non-objective things such as belief in the magic effect, usefulness of amulets, palmistry, astrology, horoscope and alike behaviors that people lean on to bring benefit, avoid harmful things or see the unknown.

Superstitious beliefs: assertive trust in an idea or something that contradicts constantly with reality. This kind of belief concerns with pessimism, optimism, health, illness, magic and undesirable patterns of behavior.

The procedural definition of beliefs is the total degree that the responder gains according to his response on the scale of superstitious beliefs.

Social Compliance: Festinger, 1980, p.88 defines belief as a process of regular compulsion practiced through ways that contradict with beliefs of an individual.

The procedural definition of social compliance is the total degree that the responder gets according to his response on the scale of social compliance.

Primary Education: A university program that prepares students to be teachers for the scientific track in the primary stage (science & math) and humanitarian one (language & social studies). The program lasts for four years and grants students a bachelor degree in one of the primary educational tracks.

Study limitations

The present study is restricted to a sample of graduate female students which has been selected from the primary education section, seventh level, faculty of Science and Art at Al-Qassim University in the academic year 2017/2018. The study is also restricted to the available instruments of reliability and validity that are related to the superstitious beliefs scale and social compliance one.

Literature Review

Superstitious beliefs

A study which was conducted by (Damisch, Mussweiler and Stoerger, 2010) revealed that belief in good luck helps participants successfully shoot the golf ball. The researchers examined 28 university students by using the scale of superstitious belief. After performing the experimental task, 80% of participant sex pressed their belief in good luck. The researchers divided participants randomly into experimental group and control one. They told the participants that the ball is called the luck ball. Then, they requested the participants of the experimental group to shoot the golf ball ten times. On the other hand, they requested the participants of the control group to do the same task without telling them anything about the ball. After doing the task, the outcomes showed that the performance of the experimental group (who were informed that the ball brings luck) was better than the performance of the control group. A study which was conducted by Wafa, Zaghah, 2007 aimed to explore the correlation between critical thinking, superstitions and scientific misconceptions held by Jordanian university students, and the role of gender and specialization (scientific & humanitarian). The sample study consisted of (481) male and female students who were enrolled at the Jordanian universities in the academic year of 2005/2006. Data were collected from five randomly selected universities in Amman city. Three measures were used to collect data:

- 1) Cornell Critical Thinking Test (level, Z) to detect critical thinking among university students.
- 2) A superstition scale designed by the researcher, reliability and validity of the scale were deemed satisfactory.

- 3) Scientific misconception scale which was built by the researcher and was found to be valid and reliable.

The outcomes showed that there was a negative correlation between student's scores on the critical thinking test and the superstition scale. The outcomes also showed that there was a positive correlation between students' scores on the superstition and scientific misconception scale. Further, the study revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the sexes and specialization on the critical thinking scale contributed to social type, in favor of males and scientific specialization. No interaction between gender and specialization was detected. Moreover, there were statistically significant differences between the sexes and specialization on the scientific misconception scale contributed to social type and major, in favor of the female students as well as humanitarian track. There were statistically significant differences on the superstition scale contributed to specialization, in favor of the humanitarian track. No interaction between gender and specialization was found. There were no statistically significant differences contributed to the variable of social type. (Peltzer, 2003) conducted a study which aimed to investigate the relationships between magical thinking and paranormal beliefs in an African population, and to test whether similar relationships are found as those previously reported in previous studies with American students. The sample included 504 black African students: 260 Grade 11 and 244 first year social science university students. Results indicated that generally university students were greater disbelievers in magical ideation than secondary school students.

Social Compliance Studies

A study which was conducted by (Maktouf *et al.*, 2008) aimed to measure Level of the emotional intelligence among university students, level of conformity among university students, expounding the relation between emotional intelligence and conformity and expounding the relation between emotional intelligence and conformity according to the following variables: gender (male, female), field of study (scientific, humanity) and study grade (first grade, fourth grade). A random sample of (1100) male and female students from the 1st and 4th grade in scientific and humanity studies was selected. The students were distributed among (6) colleges in the University of Mosul. The researchers lean on two scales namely the EI Scale (Al Nash 2005) and the Social Conformity Scale (Al Asdi 2004). The quasi-validity of the scales was achieved by presenting them to a group of arbiters while the validity and the differentiation capability of the scales were achieved by iteration of tests. The results were statistically significant and were treated by the SPSS package revealing the following results. 1. College students show high EI. 2. College students show high social conformity. 3. A statistical significant correlation exists between EI and social conformity. 4. A statistical significant correlation exists between emotional intelligence and conformity according to the following variables: gender (male, female), field of study (scientific, humanity), and study grade (first, fourth). The significance correlation was in favor for females, humanity studies, and 1st grade students. Stemming from the results, the researchers recommend the following: 1. Establishing training and instructing courses to expound the importance of EI in our social life and in work. 2. Emphasizing on noble commitment and conformity to social standards and norms among students.

Besides, the researchers suggested the following: 1. Conducting similar studies to expound the relation of emotional intelligence with other variables including (social responsibility, self-esteem, and social interactions) for the same population or other. 2. Conducting similar studies to expound the relation between social conformity and psychological and social harmony. 3. Establish an educational program to develop emotional intelligence among students in other study grades.

Study Procedures

Study Methodology: the researcher adopted the descriptive approach as it suits the nature of the present study.

Study Variables:

- Independent Variable: superstitious belief.
- Intervening variable: Academic track (scientific & humanitarian)
- Dependent variable: Social compliance.

Population and Sample of Study

The sample of the study selected randomly (100) out of (185) graduate female students of the primary education, level seven, who are enrolled in the faculty of science and Art at Al-Qasim University in the academic year 2017. The sample of the study which consisted of (100) students was selected randomly from the population of the faculty which was (185) students in both science and humanitarian tracks. (50) students for each track, as shown in Table(1).

Table 1. Population & sample study distributed according to Academic Track Variable

No	Track	Population	Sample
1	Scientific	113	50
2	Humanitarian	72	50
Total		185	100

Study Instruments

Superstitious beliefs Scale: After reviewing the previous studies and getting the student's opinions, the initial form of the superstitious beliefs scale was designed which included 23 items on a five point Likert type as follows: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree. The relative weights of positive items should be coded as: (5,4,3,2,1) and for the negative items (1,2,3,4,5).

Validity Indexes of Superstitious Beliefs Scale

Face Validity

Face validity related to superstitious beliefs scale was achieved after being reviewed and assessed by a group of education and psychology experts. Accordingly, 22 items which given 85 % of approval were accepted and items which given less than 85% were rejected.

Reliability Indexes

Reliability of superstitious beliefs was calculated by two ways:

1-Split- Half Reliability (Internal Consistency): The value of correlation coefficient was (0.77). After being examined by Spearman-Brown correlation coefficient, it reached (0.86).

2- Test-Re Test : it is known as the stability coefficient of the test. The researcher calculated reliability by applying the test on the reliability sample which consisted of (20) students who did not participate in the current study. After (15) days, the test was applied on the same sample, where Pearson correlation reached (0,77), as shown in Table(2).

Table 2. Reliability Coefficient of Superstitious Beliefs test

Method	Reliability coefficient
Split- Half	0.86
Test-Re Test	0.77

Social Compliance Scale: Reviewing the previous studies and leaning on Fistenger scale of compliance (1980), the researcher formulated the test items which consisted of (26) initial items. The students responded on a five point Likert type as follows: always, often, sometimes, seldom, never. The relative weights of positive items should be coded as: (5,4,3,2,1) and for the negative items (1,2,3,4,5).

Validity Indexes

Face Validity

Face validity related to social compliance scale was achieved after being reviewed and assessed by a group of education and psychology experts. Accordingly, 24 items which given 85 % of approval were accepted and items which given less than 85% were rejected.

Reliability Indexes

Reliability of social compliance was calculated by two ways:

1-Split- Half Reliability (Internal Consistency): The value of correlation coefficient was (0.71). After being examined by Spearman-Brown correlation coefficient, it reached (0.84).

2-Test-Re Test: The value of correlation coefficient was (0.79) as shown in Table(3).

Table 3. Reliability Coefficient of Social Compliance test

Method	Reliability coefficient
Split- Half	0.84
Test-Re Test	0.79

Final Application

Having finished designing the research instruments, the researcher applied the two tests on an applied sample consisted of (100) female students from the scientific and humanitarian tracks at the primary education section.

Statistical Means

To address the data of the current study, the researcher used the following means:

1. A one-sample t-test to measure the superstitious beliefs as well as social compliance scales.
2. Independent two-sample t-test to determine the differences between the superstitious beliefs variable and social compliance one in accordance with the academic tracks variable (scientific, humanitarian).
3. Pearson Correlation Coefficient to detect the research scales reliability, and by using Test-Retest as well as Split-Half methods. In addition to determine the relation between superstitious beliefs and social compliance.
4. Spearman-Brown split-half to check the reliability coefficient of the two instruments.
5. T-test of Pearson correlation coefficient of two-correlated samples to detect the significant correlation between superstitious beliefs and social compliance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is dedicated to discuss and explain the outcomes and recommendations.

To what extent superstitious beliefs spread among the students of the primary section at Al-Qassim University?

The mean scores for the applied sample was (103.3), the standard deviation (16.03), whereas the assumed mean (84). By employing a one-sample t-test, it was detected that t-calculated value (8.4) is bigger than t-tabulated (2.00), which is statically significant at level of (0.05). This showed that a significant degree of superstitious beliefs was found among students, as Table (4) shows:

Table 4. T-test of significant differences between mean and assumed mean of the superstitious beliefs test

Sample	Mean	Standard deviation	Assumed mean	T-calculated value	T-tabulated value	Significance degree
100	103.3	16.03	84	8.4	2.00	0.05

Table 5. Superstitious beliefs comparison in accordance with academic track variable

No	Track	sample	Mean	Variance	T-calculated value	T-tabulated value	Significance degree
1	scientific	50	105.2	350.8	2.53	2.00	0.05
2	humanitarian	50	102.8	150.5			

Table 6. T-test of significant differences between mean and assumed mean of the social compliance scale

Sample	Mean	Standard deviation	Assumed mean	T-calculated value	T-tabulated value	Significance degree
100	82.74	9.36	72	8.13	2.00	0.05

To interpret the above mentioned result, one can say that in the developing tribal societies, the most key factors that play a role in forming the female students beliefs are: family strong relationships, respecting elders, tribal commitment and abiding to values and habits, mostly by females

Are there statistically significant differences between means of superstitious beliefs degree among the students of basic education section at Al-Qassim University contributed to the tracks (scientific, humanitarian)?

The mean scores of the scientific track sample on the scale of superstitious beliefs (105.2), variance of (350.8), whereas the mean of the academic track on the same scale (102.8), variance of (150.5). By employing independent two-sample t-test, it was detected that t-calculated value (0.53) is smaller than t-tabulated (2.00), which is not statically significant at level of (0.05). This showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the two tracks, as shown in Table (5) shows:

Based on the result, one can say that there were no statistically significant differences between the two tracks for the reason that the strong impact of community culture on students.

Third Question: To what extent social compliance spreads among the students of the primary education section at Al-Qassim University?

The mean scores for the applied sample (82.74), the standard deviation (9.36), whereas the assumed mean (72). By employing a one-sample t-test, it was detected that t-calculated value (8.13) is bigger than t-tabulated (2.00), which is a statically significant at level of (0.05). This showed that a significant degree of social compliance was found among students, as Table (6) shows:

To interpret the above mentioned result, one can say that compliance takes place within an individual as he needs to be loved and accepted by others. In general, people have a tendency to like those who share them the same attitudes as well as behaviors. Moreover, one way to socialize with others and be alike is to show similar views, and this becomes more effective in friendly communities like the community of the sample study. However, there is another sort impact which is the customary social impact which forces an individual to keep up with a group of people for the purpose of gaining its approval, (passer & Ronlad, 2001, p.503). This kind of effect is defined by Kassim (2001:557), as

the social compliance. Wallace and Jeffery (2001:494), state that society leans on social compliance to prove its presence and without it people life becomes chaotic.

In fact, establishing effective social relations with other students during university years becomes a necessity and increases gradually, as a result, students acquire the proper behavioral methods and learn a lot about themselves as well as their partners.

Table 7. Compliance comparison in accordance with academic track variable

No	track	sample	Mean	Variance	T-calculated value	T-tabulated value	Significance degree
1	scientific	50	82.2	109.62	0.73-	2.00	0.05
2	humanitarian	50	83.2	69			

Table 8. Correlation between superstitious beliefs and compliance among the study sample

Correlation type	Correlation coefficient	T-calculated value	Significance degree
superstitious beliefs and compliance	0.34	8.52	0.05

Fourth Question: Are there statistically significant differences between means of social compliance degree among the students of basic education section at Al-Qassim University related to the track (scientific, humanitarian)?

The mean scores of the scientific track sample on the scale of social compliance (82.2), variance of (109.62), whereas the mean of the humanitarian track on the same scale (83.2), variance of (69). By employing independent two-sample t-test, it was detected that t- calculated value (0.37-) is smaller than t-tabulated (2.00), which is not statically significant at level of (0.05). This showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the two tracks, as shown in Table(7) shows: To interpret the result, one can say that people always try to make a comparison between their own views and others in order to determine the extent to which their views are accurate and acceptable to other people. Festinger called this behavior as social comparison. In addition to, people always like doing social comparison to examine their beliefs and views more than doing it to reach accurate ones. The absence of differences may indicate that the impact of society is bigger than the effect of the university in terms of the formation of students beliefs.

Fifth Question: Is there a statistically significant correlation between means of superstitious beliefs and social compliance among the students of the primary education section at Al-Qassim University?

The statistical analysis which was done by employing Pearson correlation coefficient showed that the correlation between students degrees on the superstitious beliefs and their degrees on the social compliance one was (0.34). After employing t-test of Pearson coefficient for two-correlated samples, the result showed that the t-calculated value (8.52), which is statistically significant at level of (0.05). This implies that the correlation between the two variables is significant as well as positive, as shown in Table(8).The outcome explains the tendency of the group to accept a new member who have common attitudes and beliefs and the rejection of those who contradict with the group's beliefs. In addition, an individual achieves his identity through the group he belongs to for the reason that such groups play a vital role in the psychological, social growth of individuals personality, particularly in the stage of university learning.

Recommendations

In light of the study outcomes, the researcher recommends:

- Offering university courses to develop scientific thinking skills and use critical thinking in solving

problems that students face during their life, mainly problems that are related to habits and traditions.

- Designing social, scientific and educational programs that allow students to be aware of the negative effects of superstitious beliefs.
- Conducting more research on various cultural and social classes that address the reality of superstitious beliefs and their role in building individuals beliefs and views.

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Index (1) Final compliance scale

Dear student,

I would like you to give your response on the following items. Your answer is confidential as it is used for research purposes. Please, response to all items honestly.

Items	always	often	sometimes	Seldom	Never
I try to make my opinion well-matched with my family views					
I allow conditions that need challenge to defeat me					
I am very capable to cope with others					
I abide to social and customary controls					
I have the a ability to make critical I					
I do not oppose views of the group I belong to					
I do not fell anxious due to problems that I may face					
People describe me as a peaceful and obedient person					
I try to avoid leader role in situations that require to be a leader					
I feel sad when people stay away from me					
I initiate providing service to others even if they do not request me to do that					
I perform what others want because of embarrassment					
I feel embarrassed from people who are in a high position and I do what they request .					
I am so thoughtful to those who are not thoughtful to me					
I initiate giving my opinion even if I am not requested to do that					
I seek to gain the heartiness of the group I belong to					
I do not apologize to others even if I am wrong					
I do not provide help to others when it is above my potential					
Adventurous stories affect me , mainly when they include pains					
I have the ability to keep up with others					
I observe behavioral reaction of others to be in consistence with them					
I have no doubt of my academic qualifications					
I feel shy when I face an odd situation					
I avoid any action that may insult others					

Social Compliance Scale Items
Index (2) Final Superstitious Beliefs Scale

Dear student,

I would like you to give your response on the following items. Your answer is confidential as it is used for research purposes. Please, response to all items honestly.

Items	Strongly agree	agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Magic may cause success and failure					
You may be affected by charm if the sorcerer gets the dress of the enchanted person					
I believe that there are people whose faces bring good and evil to others					
Being injured on the day of the competition caused by envy					
Treatment by fire is a successful method for the majority of diseases					
Interests of affected person by charm are constantly broken down					
Having a shower in the evening is hated as fairy appear at this time					
Broken things demolish evil					
Looking at people too much is a sign of envy					
There are houses which have ominous doorsteps					
Red color brings happiness					
A flicker of right eye is good, but he left is evil					
Men and women can fall in love because of the magic effect.					
Charm may lead to divorce of couples					
Hanging blue eye o neck can protect against charm.					
Some students may fail because of envy					
Crow standing at the house walls indicates that a disaster will happen					
Seeing black cats evokes pessimism					
Pouring water behind a traveller makes his trip comfortable					
Laughing too much brings sadness					
Some houses doorsteps are bad luck for the residents					
It is likely that some of us may be hurt by fairy					