

Penny for your magical thoughts

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Times Higher Education:

We can't resist investing in karma and bargaining with fate, say researchers. Matthew Reisz reports

Anyone awaiting the results of a job application, a court case, a medical test – or even a submission to the research excellence framework – knows what it's like for important decisions to be completely beyond their control.

But to cope with this uncertainty, we tend to “invest in karma” by, for example, dropping a few coins in a collection box as if we believed that “the universe punishes sin and rewards virtue”.

That is the claim of a paper published in the latest issue of *Psychological Science* and written by Benjamin Converse, assistant professor of public policy and psychology at the University of Virginia, Jane Risen, associate professor of behavioural science at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, and her postdoctoral research associate Travis Carter.

Read the whole story: [*Times Higher Education*](#)