

Debriefing Statement

Title: Validating Preference for a Consistent and Explanatory Belief System

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Thank you for participating in this study.

Prior to completing this study, you were informed that the overall purpose was to better understand the links between people's worldview, attitudes and beliefs. To be more specific, this study sought to examine the extent to which people prefer consistency in their belief system, and to test whether this need for a consistent meaning system is related to fundamentalist thinking and behavior. One purpose of this study was to validate the scale we developed to measure people's need for meaning system.

Fundamentalism usually involves strict adherence to a specific set of irreducible beliefs. Although the term is typically used to denote a theological orientation, we are also interested in exploring this mindset in the context of science and scientific thinking. The secondary purpose of the study was to validate the scale we developed to measure people's degree of scientific fundamentalism.

We also included the previously developed social-psychological scales of Social Dominance Orientation Scale (Sidanius and Pratto 2001), Right-wing Authoritarianism (Altemeyer and Hunsberger 1992), Preference for Consistency (Cialdini, Trost, and Newsom 1995), Need for Closure Scale (Kruglanski, Webster, and Klem 1993), Need for Cognition (Cacioppo and Petty 1982), Compensatory Control System (Kay et al., 2008), and Desirability of Control (Burger & Cooper, 1979) to study similarities and differences between the cognitive patterns of scientific and religious fundamentalists. By achieving a better understanding of the cognitive conditions underlying fundamentalism, we hope to offer initial evidence of its psychological predictors.

You may obtain additional information about the research project by contacting Dr. Afzal Upal (mupal@mercyhurst.edu), Phone: 814-824-2117.