

Appendix 2

Personal Need for Structure (PNS)

Several psychologists including Abelson (1981), Markus and Zajonc (1985), Fiske and Taylor (1991), and Neuberg and Newsom (1993) have researched the personal need for structure. This construct has several different components including that structure suggests a simplification of information, generalization of previous experience, and the organization of information into fewer complex categories. Research also suggests that the need for structure is positively correlated with the preference for abstract conceptualization. In other words, people with a high need for structure have a reluctance to cross boundaries and a disinclination to change established ways of behaving, thinking, or attitudes.

Research into PNS is also associated with variables such as stereotypes and prejudices. The high personal need for structure is characterized by the need for fast, easy, and accurate answers, to avoid feeling uncomfortable and insecure.

According to research by Neuberg and Newsom, "Personal Need for Structure" also refers to an individual's desire for clarity, simplicity, and predictability in their environment, which can impact their creativity depending on the level of structure provided in a given situation. People with a high need for structure may perform better on creative tasks when given clear guidelines, while those with a low need for structure might be more comfortable with ambiguity and generate more novel ideas in open-ended situations.

Further information:

Thompson, M. M., Naccarato, M. E., Parker, K. C. H., & Moskowitz, G. (2001). The Personal Need for Structure (PNS) and Personal Fear of Invalidity (PFI) scales: Historical perspectives, present applications, and future directions. In G. Moskowitz (Ed.), *Cognitive social psychology: The Princeton symposium on the legacy and future of social cognition* (pp. 19-39). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

See also Thompson et al.'s (2001) *Personal Fear of Invalidity* as well as Webster and Kruglanski's (1994) *Need for Cognitive Closure*.