SENSATION SEEKING AND MARITAL COMMITMENT AMONG THE MARRIED PERSONNEL OF SAIPA AUTOMOTIVE MANUFACTURING CORPORATION

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ABSTRACT

Sensation seeking is a personality trait that can influence all stages of a person’s life, including his or her matrimonial relationships. The purpose of the present paper is to study the relationship between sensation seeking and marital commitment in married people. The present paper is a correlation study. The sample consists of all the married staff of Saipa Automotive Manufacturing Corporation in 2014. A staff of 100 men and women were chosen through random sampling. The participants were tested through the fifth form of Zuckerman sensation seeking questionnaire and the marital commitment questionnaire by Adams and Jones and the findings were studied through multiple regression analysis. The results showed that sensation seeking variable is in a positive and significant relationship with the marital commitment variable. In the present study, among the four components of sensation seeking which include experience seeking, adventure seeking, boredom susceptibility and disinhibition, only boredom susceptibility and disinhibition have a significant relationship with the marital commitment variable and the other two components, that is to say, experience seeking and adventure seeking, cannot predict marital commitment.

KEY WORDS: Sensation seeking, Adventure seeking, Experience seeking, Disinhibition

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are different from one another in terms of the basic level of brain excitation and reactivity toward environmental stimuli. The basic level of brain stimulation refers to stimulation without any environmental stimuli and reactivity refers to extent of being reactive toward external stimuli. Sensation seekers are among those who are willing to experience numerous things in order to reach optimum brain excitation (Bakhshipoor & Aliloo, 2008). Sensation seeking is a personality trait present in individuals to different extents. Some are great sensation seekers, others seek sensation to a very limited extent, and still others are situated between these two groups (Momtazi, 2002). Sensation seekers have certain personality traits that can determine their behavior in different situations (quoted in Mehrabi, 1389). Such people risk their lives constantly. They are aware that there is some danger, but they believe that a certain level of danger is necessary for happiness (Franken, 1384). They communicate with different types of people, not because they want to impress others, but because they seek stimulation (Bakhshipoor & Aliloo, 2008). A basic characteristic of the sensation seekers is inclination toward new experience and taking risks in such experiences. They always seek new stimuli in their lives and are willing to experience new things at the high cost of risking their social status and even their physical health (Schultz & Schultz, 2011).

Zuckerman has carried out extensive studies about sensation seeking and believes that sensation seeking can, as a dynamic personality structure, take different forms and intensities during an individual’s life. Individuals display this personality trait in different forms, based on their gender and experience (Zuckerman, 1994; quoted in Ghasemi, Rabi’eid&Palahang, 1390). Individuals with a high level of sensation seeking find repetitious work or familiar environments boring and seek new experience with unknown results (Gibson et al, 2009; quoted in Jalaliet al, 2013). Since different activities cannot create the desirable level of stimulation in sensation seekers once they have been experienced a couple of times, their general physiological reaction to new stimuli is more intense than others (Schultz & Schultz, 2011). That is why they seek new situations. Such people are bold and prefer free thinking instead of jumping on the bandwagon (Celine et al, 2009; quoted in Mahboubi et al, 2012). On the other hand, low sensation seekers prefer less brain excitation and can bear repetitious work easily. In general, the sensation seeking structure is related to the extent by which an individual’s nervous system (Brain and spinal cord) needs change and variety.
Zuckerman has defined sensation seeking as the desire to have varied, new, complicated and extreme experience and sensation and willingness toward physical, social, legal and financial adventures (Schultz & Schultz, 2011). According to him “the sensation seekers become dissatisfied and bored with repetitious, routine, monotonous activities which lack social, challenging and varied interactions” (Lalasz & Weigel, 2011). Studies show that it is impossible to change the level of sensation seeking in an individual, since this personality trait is determined through inheritance and the excitation level (Zuckerman, 1994; quoted in Lalasz & Weigel, 2011).

**Zuckerman considers sensation seeking as constituted by four components**

**Adventure seeking**
Desire to engage in physical activities that have not been experienced before and are full of speed and risk.

**Experience seeking**
Including the search for new experiences through travel, music, arts or leading lifestyles which are not compatible with the lifestyle of those who have similar inclinations.

**Dis inhibition**
The desire to have insouciance in following disinhibited social activities; desire to be impulsive and to be rebellious against social norms; the preference of unpredictable situations, so as to free oneself from social inhibition which is part of the normal lifestyle of people.

**Boredom Susceptibility**
Aversion of repetitious experience, normal work and predictable people in order to escape the daily routine. In the early days of their partnership, the husband and wife have a feeling of permanent commitment toward one another. But in some cases, it is not like that; since personality traits play an important role in the relationships between spouses (quoted in Hosseini et al, 2013). Individual differences have great influence on thoughts, emotions, opinions and the behavior of couples.

Sensation seeking as a personality trait situated in the emotional range, is one of the characteristics that has obvious results and undeniable outcomes in interpersonal relationships, specifically that of couples (Kajbaaf et al., 1995). It is one of the most important factors that can determine marital commitment (Goodfriend & Agnew, 2008). Marital commitment is an important factor in the relationship between couples. It is the strongest and the most stable factor that can predict the quality and the stability of marriage. The more the commitments and the bonds of marriage are, the less the tensions of marriage will be, and the higher the level of morality will become (Moscow, 2009). Ariaja and Agnew define marital commitment as the extent by which an individual is willing to permanently protect his or her marriage and remain faithful to one’s spouse, family and values. Commitment has different dimensions and includes specific personal and ethical reasons that commit someone to continue remaining faithful to his or her marriage (quoted in Shahbaw et al, 2013). Members of committed families not only dedicate themselves to the family’s comfort and well-being, but also attempt to help other members improve and prosper (Harris, 2006). Commitment enables the couples to be effectively flexible about each other’s needs and demands (Peterson, 2002; Azar Kish, 2011). On the other hand, risky social behavior (Rozenbloom, 2003), desire to constantly change one’s activities and sexual partners (Seyyed Mohammadi, 2011), desire to have numerous sexual relationships and experiences, the desire to have risky sexual behavior (Heville, 2000; Mehrabi, 2010) and promiscuous activities that are the result of excitation are witnessed in people with a high level of sensation seeking more than others (Apter, 1994; Mehrabi, 2010). These are all factors that can destabilize familial commitment and sustainability.

Results of the study carried out by Shirdel (1995) shows that variety seeking and sensation seeking are among the most important factors because of which married people become willing to have illegitimate sexual affairs; this, in itself, leads to a lack of commitment and instability in marriage. Also, results of the study carried out by Arji (2008; Karimian et al, 2011) show that those with a high level of sensation seeking are more likely to have different sexual partners; a fact that is in contrast with marital commitment. Attari et al (2006) found out in their study that the level of sensation seeking in husband and wife (regardless of similarity and dissimilarity in the object of their sensation seeking) has a negative influence on marital adjustment.

In the study carried out by Ebrahim Nezhad Zarandi (2002; Sar Abadani, 2003) titled “the analysis of the relationship between sensation seeking in couples and marital adjustment”, the results showed that disagreement, instability and lack of commitment in marriage can be influenced by the level of sensation seeking in couples. Lalasr et al (2011) in their study, and Lalasr (2013) in another study, have found out that couples who have the personality trait of sensation...
seeking, are more willing to involve in extra marital relationships due to experience seeking, adventure seeking and boredom susceptibility; a fact that can, in itself, prepare the ground for a lack of commitment.

The study carried out by Henderson et al (2005) showed that individuals who have a high level of sensation seeking in marriage are more likely to start romantic relationships with partners other than their own spouse compared to those who are low sensation seekers; since they seek new experiences due to their desire for adventure seeking, experience seeking and the monotony of married life. Such new experiences underlie instability and lack of commitment in relationships.

Frank et al (1990) Attari et al, 2005) have found in their study that there is a negative relationship between sensation seeking and marital commitment. In other words, if one of the couples gains a high score in the sensation seeking scale and the other one a low mark, it means that the former one sees the latter as a boring narrow minded person; the possibility of a lack of commitment in such a relationship is a lot. Findings of the study carried out by Khal’atbari et al., (2014) have it that sensation seeking influences the adjustment, satisfaction and stability in a relationship.

Since commitment and fidelity in marriage is considered as a really important factor in our culture, identification of factors that are influential in marital commitment, specifically analysis of the compatibility of personality traits is an important issue. Identification of these factors can help increase satisfaction, adjustment and commitment in couples and prevent unpleasant family tensions. Taking into account the above issues, sensation seeking can have a powerful influence on individual life, and consequently, on marriage. Therefore, knowing about the sensation seeking variable and its components can be considered as an important step toward analyzing marital commitment. The hypotheses presented in the present study are as follows:

1st Hypothesis: we can predict marital commitment based on sensation seeking.

2nd Hypothesis: we can predict marital commitment based on the components of sensation seeking.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
The present study is a descriptive, correlation one.

The sample and the sampling method
The sample of the present study includes all the married personnel (men and women) working in Saipa automotive manufacturing corporation in 2014, 100 of whom were chosen using the random sampling method. After data correction and dispensing with digressed data, the data collected from 97 individuals was analyzed.

Study tools
Zuckerman Sensation seeking questionnaire- the fifth form with cultural related changes:
This questionnaire was designed by Marvin Zuckerman in 1978 as a scale for individual differences, in order to measure the desirable level of excitation and stimulation. It includes 40 clauses and 4 components of experience seeking, adventure seeking, boredom susceptibility and disinhibition. The highest mark is 30 and the lowest, 0. Marks more than 15 shows a high level of sensation seeking (Soltani et al., 2009). In the study carried out by Soltani et al (2009) Alpha Croenbach for the whole questionnaire was 0/74 and for the components, respectively 0/61, 0/53, 0/67 and 0/61. Also, the reliability of this questionnaire was reported 0/85 by NikKhoo (2007) who had used Kuder Richardson-21.

The variable for the internal consistency of the questions of Zuckerman sensation seeking test, was 0/86 Alpha coefficient.

Adams and Jones marital commitment questionnaire (DCI)
This questionnaire has been designed by Adams and Jones (1997) and includes 44 questions and 3 sub-scales including commitment to spouse, commitment to marriage and the feeling of commitment. The scoring of the questions is through a 5 degree Likert scale (I Strongly agree, I strongly disagree). Reliability of the present questionnaire in Iran has been calculated as 0/85 through Alpha Croenbach by Shah Siah, Bahrami and Mohebbi (2009). Alpha Croenbach for the subscales of commitment to spouse, commitment to marriage and the feeling of commitment was calculated as, respectively, 82/79, 0/0 and 0/84 which shows an acceptable level of reliability.

In the present study, the internal consistency coefficient for the questions of Adams and Jones marital commitment test was 0/78 of Alpha Croenbach.
RESULTS
In the present study, the Pearson correlation coefficient and the multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis. These methods were chosen, taking into consideration the nature of the measuring scale which is of spatial type and also the research hypotheses.

Table 1: The descriptive indices of the scores of participants in the sensation seeking test (4 components) and marital commitment test (N=97)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>components</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking</td>
<td>Experience seeking</td>
<td>14/51</td>
<td>1/89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adventure seeking</td>
<td>15/57</td>
<td>4/80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boredom susceptibility</td>
<td>15/13</td>
<td>2/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disinhibition</td>
<td>15/37</td>
<td>1/64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensation seeking (Total)</td>
<td>60/59</td>
<td>6/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td>137/61</td>
<td>16/33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to examine the research hypotheses, Pearson correlation coefficient test was used to analyze the predictive and the criterion variables (table 2).

Table 2: Outline of the results of Pearson correlation coefficient test between the variables (N=97)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Marital commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience seeking</td>
<td>0/120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom susceptibility</td>
<td>**0/375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disinhibition</td>
<td>-0/070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking (total score)</td>
<td>*0/252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** significant at 0/01 level  * significant at 0/05 level

The 1\textsuperscript{st} hypothesis: marital commitment is predictable based on sensation seeking.

Table 3: outline of regression analysis for the prediction of marital commitment based on sensation seeking predictors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>predictors</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Durbin Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>96/839</td>
<td>16/155</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>**5/994</td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>1/934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>0/673</td>
<td>0/265</td>
<td>0/252</td>
<td>*2/537</td>
<td>0/013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*F= 6/436 ; $R^2= 0/054$ adjusted ; $R^2= 0/063$ ; R= 0/252 
**significant at 0/01 level ; * significant a 0/05 level

The 1\textsuperscript{st} hypothesis: we can predict marital commitment based on sensation seeking. Based on Durbin Watson statistic which is 1/934 and is situated in the allowable distance between 1/5 to 2/5 in the last column of the table above, the assumption for a lack of consistency between the errors is not rejected; that is to say, the errors are not consistent and regression can be used. As can be seen in the table above, $R^2$ is known (0/063). It means that 6/3 percent of the variance of marital commitment variable is explained through sensation seeking variable. The value of R (0/252) also shows that the linear regression model can be used for prediction. Also, the calculated F (6/436) is significant in the minimum confidence level of 95 percent. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a significant correlation between the sensation seeking and the marital commitment variable. Therefore, we have enough evidence to accept the main hypothesis of the research. With reference to t statistic and the significance levels, we can conclude that the sensation seeking variable is in a significant correlation with the marital commitment variable. The calculated $\beta$ coefficient showed that the sensation seeking variable has appositive and significant correlation with the marital
commitment variable. Finally, taking into account the above explanations and the calculated coefficient, we can write the regression equation based on the standardized regression coefficients:

\[(\text{Marital commitment}) Y = 96.839 + 0.252 \times (\text{sensation seeking})\]

The exclusive hypothesis: we can predict marital commitment based on sensation seeking components

**Table 4: Outline of regression coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(\beta)</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>VIF</th>
<th>Durbin Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>92/834</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>2/064</strong></td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1/819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience seeking</td>
<td>0/367</td>
<td>0/043</td>
<td>0/434</td>
<td>0/665</td>
<td>0/967</td>
<td>1/034</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure seeking</td>
<td>0/085</td>
<td>0/025</td>
<td>0/241</td>
<td>0/810</td>
<td>0/856</td>
<td>1/168</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom susceptibility</td>
<td>2/398</td>
<td>0/367</td>
<td><strong>2/615</strong></td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>0/902</td>
<td>1/109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disinhibition</td>
<td>0/120</td>
<td>0/012</td>
<td>0/115</td>
<td>0/909</td>
<td>0/857</td>
<td>1/137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**F=3/841 ; adjusted \(R^2=0/106\) ; \(R^2= 0/143\) ; R= 0/378**

**significant at 0/01 level**

Taking into account Durbin Watson statistic which is 1/819 and is situated in the allowable distance from 1/5 to 2/5 in the last column of the table above, the hypothesis for a lack of consistency between the errors is not rejected; that is to say, the errors are not consistent and regression can be used. The tolerance values in the table above show that none of the tolerances are close to 0, therefore there will be no problems in regression analysis. Values of the inflation factor of variance tolerance show that none of the indices are more than 2; but they are close to it. So, there are no problems in using linear regression.

As can be seen in the table above, \(R^2 (0/143)\) means that 14/3 percent of the variance of marital commitment variable is explained through the four components of experience seeking, adventure seeking, boredom susceptibility and disinhibition. The calculated \(R (0/378)\) shows that the present linear regression model can be used for prediction. Also, the calculated \(F (3/841)\) is significant in the minimum confidence level of 99 percent. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a significant correlation between the sensation seeking and the marital commitment variable. Therefore, we have enough evidence to accept the main hypothesis of the research. However, with reference to the statistic and the significance levels, we can conclude that the sensation seeking variable is in a significant correlation with the marital commitment variable. The calculated \(R^2\) coefficients showed that the two boredom susceptibility variables have positive and significant correlations with the marital commitment variable. Finally, taking into account the above explanations and the calculated coefficient, we can write the regression equation based on the standardized regression coefficients:

\[(\text{Marital commitment}) Y = 92/834 + 0/367 \times (\text{boredom susceptibility})\]

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the present study is to predict marital commitment based on the personality trait of sensation seeking of the married personnel (men and women) who work in Saipa automotive Manufacturing Corporation. The results of Pearson correlation test showed that sensation seeking variable has a positive and significant correlation with marital commitment and can be an appropriate predictor of marital commitment. Therefore, the first hypothesis which says that we can predict marital commitment based on sensation seeking was verified. Taking into account the second hypothesis which says that marital commitment can be predicted based on the components of sensation seeking, we have to mention that among the 4 components of sensation seeking including experience seeking, adventure seeking, boredom susceptibility and disinhibition, only the two components of boredom susceptibility and disinhibition have a significant correlation with marital commitment. Therefore, we do not have enough evidence in the present study based upon which we can verify the hypothesis which says that the components of experience seeking and adventure seeking have a positive relationship with marital commitment. Previous studies concerning the effect of sensation seeking on marital commitment, have often arrived at similar conclusions. In his analysis of the role sensation seeking plays in...
Individuals have different sensation seeking levels and it seems that the cognitive and affective systems of every individual are organized base upon this personality trait. Therefore, there has to be a consistency between the sensation seeking levels of men and women who want to marry, so that both can move in one direction and with one purpose. So, it is expected that those with an intense or a mild level of sensation seeking be willing to marry individuals like themselves. In other words, similarity between husband and wife in terms of this personality trait is one of the factors that can bring about stability and commitment to marriages. Dissimilarity in the level of sensation seeking between the couples can be a source of dissatisfaction, lack of commitment, conflict and finally collapse of marriage (Kajbaaf et al., 2006). It seems that sensation seeking can, on the one hand, increase the risk people take in order to enjoy life more and get away from monotony, to the extent that they may endanger their physical and mental health. On the other hand, spouses of such individuals always feel uneasy and are worried about the lack of commitment from their partner’s side. As was previously explained, sensation seeking in couples and the different levels of it between them can have great influences on their relationship and their commitment. The present study showed that among the four components of sensation seeking, two factors of boredom susceptibility and disinhibition can have greater effects on marital commitments and do not feel guilty of not meeting their commitments for the sake of more interesting things (Frankel, 2002; quoted in Shams Esfand Abad, 2008). Since marriage is a long term commitment after which couples are faced with more commitment and limitations, the sensation seekers cannot easily accept marriage and they cannot display the required level of adjustment, satisfaction and commitment (Attari et al, 2006).

Several limitations of the present study were: first, the sample consists of the personnel working in Saipa automotive Manufacturing Corporation. So, generalizing the findings of this study and using them for other groups should be taken into account with great care. The present study is a section of correlation research, a fact that makes it difficult to arrive at a causal conclusion. Considering these limitations, and taking into account the fact that personality traits of individuals, such as sensation seeking, influences couples’ commitment, it is recommended that the present study be carried out for other social groups and with a linear method. Also, using other research tools such as interview for arriving at a deeper understanding can be taken into account in further studies. The findings of the present study can be used to prevent the marriage of individuals with different sensation seeking levels. Premarital counseling can help identify these personality traits in individuals. Also, couple therapy sessions can be used for couples with different levels of sensation seeking, so that they can have more positive relationships with one another. It can be achieved through emotional focused treatment (ELT).

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