



PERGAMON

Personality and Individual Differences 36 (2004) 527–537

PERSONALITY AND  
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

www.elsevier.com/locate/paid

# Deliberation affects risk taking beyond sensation seeking

Sarah Fischer\*, Gregory T. Smith

*Department of Psychology, 115 Kastle Hall, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0044, USA*

Received 29 April 2002; received in revised form 1 January 2003; accepted 26 February 2003

---

## Abstract

We examined the effects of sensation seeking and deliberation on risk taking activities in a large sample of college students. Students were asked to indicate how many times in the past year they had engaged in a number of risk taking activities. We hypothesized that deliberation would account for a unique portion of the variance in risk taking activities with negative outcomes beyond that of sensation seeking. From the pool of risk taking items, we constructed two internally consistent scales to assess risk taking with negative outcomes and risk taking with non-negative outcomes. Sensation seeking was significantly positively correlated with both types of risk taking. Deliberation accounted for a unique portion of the variance in risk taking with negative outcomes, beyond participation in activities with non-negative outcomes and sensation seeking. Deliberation may be a protective factor against choosing risk taking activities with negative outcomes.

© 2003 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Impulsivity; Sensation seeking; Risk taking

---

Researchers have identified sensation seeking, or some variant of that trait, as a personality factor that differentiates risk-takers from non-risk takers. Zuckerman (1979) defines sensation seeking as the need for varied and new experiences, and incorporates the willingness to take risks for the sake of those experiences. Risk takers seem to be higher in sensation seeking than other members of the population (Horvath & Zuckerman, 1993). However, some risk takers experience problems as a result of their thrill seeking proclivities, while others do not. What is the difference between these two groups of people? While there may be several, we hypothesize that the personality trait of deliberation influences whether or not an individual participates in maladaptive vs. adaptive risk taking. In this study, we examined level of participation in risk taking activities, sensation seeking, and deliberation in a sample of undergraduates.

---

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1-859-257-6834; fax: +1-859-323-1979.

*E-mail address:* sfisc0@uky.edu (S. Fischer).

When conceptualizing impulsivity and sensation seeking, researchers have often not sharply differentiated between the two traits. Zuckerman placed these two traits on the same scale in a recent factor analysis of personality measures, naming the construct Impulsive Sensation Seeking (Zuckerman, Kuhlman, Joireman, Teta, & Kraft, 1993). These traits appear to have similar biological correlates (Zuckerman, 1996). However, Whiteside and Lynam (2001) recently conducted a factor analysis of several different types of impulsivity measures found in psychological literature. They reported four distinct types of ‘impulsivity’: urgency (lack of) deliberation, sensation seeking, and (lack of) persistence. The focus of this paper is on the distinction between deliberation and sensation seeking. We chose this focus because items tapping these two constructs have often been placed on scales together; there is a lack of differentiation between the two. A lack of deliberation can be described as a failure to plan ahead, or acting without thinking. Sensation seeking can be described as a tendency to seek out novel and thrilling experiences. Even though (lack of) deliberation and sensation seeking may share some common variance, there is evidence to suggest that they have distinct influences on human behavior. For example, Breen and Zuckerman (1999) found that these two traits seem to have different effects on gambling behaviors. Perhaps risk taking can be better understood by differentiating between the two constructs of deliberation and sensation seeking and investigating each one’s influence on behavior.

Sensation seeking is a common personality element among several different types of risk takers, regardless of the outcome of the activity. Individuals who participate in certain types of sports, experiment with drugs, and participate in delinquency have higher levels of sensation seeking than normative samples. Brevik (1996), Brevik, Roth, and Jorgensen, (1998) and Goma i Freixnet (1991) found that parachute jumpers and mountain climbers scored higher in sensation seeking than control groups of students and normals. Castellani and Rugle (1995) reported that pathological gamblers, alcoholics, and cocaine abusers all obtained similar scores on an excitement seeking measure. Daderman (1999) examined differences between juvenile males with and without conduct disorder. Conduct disorder males obtained higher scores on personality measures of sensation seeking and impulsivity. Levonson (1990) compared drug unit residents, rock climbers, and ‘heroes’—police officers and fire fighters commended for bravery—on the Sensation Seeking Scale, and found that each group obtained higher scores than the normative sample on different facets of the Sensation Seeking Scale.

While these groups of individuals share the personality trait of high sensation seeking, they have experienced different life outcomes. Evidence suggests that individuals who experience negative life outcomes, such as losing money, drug addiction, and being arrested, are more impulsive than normative samples. Breen and Zuckerman (1999) conducted a study in which they examined personality factors in chasing and nonchasing gambling behavior. Chasing involves continuing to bet money to cover losses while gambling. While the groups did not differ in levels of sensation seeking, the chasers had higher measured levels of impulsivity. Martin and Sher (1994) found that individuals with alcohol use disorders were lower in conscientiousness than normals, which may imply greater impulsivity. Krueger, Schmutte, Caspi, Moffitt, Campbell, and Silva (1994) conducted a longitudinal study with a large birth cohort in which they examined the relationship of personality to delinquency. In general, delinquency was associated with less self-control and constraint, and conversely, higher levels of impulsivity. Donohew, Zimmerman, Cupp, Novak, Colon, and Abell (1999) assessed a large sample of teens on sensation seeking and

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات