



## Sensation Seeking As Predictor Of Motivational Needs Of Indian Hatchback Car Consumers

\*Satheesh Varma M \*\* Dr. M Y Manjula

\* Research Scholar, Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Psychology, SDM College, Ujire, D.K, Karnataka.

\*\* Head of the Department, Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Psychology, SDM College, Ujire, D.K, Karnataka

### ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of sensation seeking traits on motivational needs related with purchase of hatchback cars. The study adopted survey design with a sample of 220 hatchback car consumers from a south Indian city. Sensation seeking Scale developed by Basu et. al. (1993) and a rating scale developed by the researchers based on Fowles version of Murray's needs were used to measure the variables. The collected data was subjected to regression analysis and the results revealed significant influence of sensation seeking traits on few motivational needs.

**Keywords :** Sensation Seeking, Murray's Psychogenic Needs, Motivational Need Appeals

### Introduction

It is a well established fact that two individuals buy similar a product for two different reasons. Sheth (1974) stated that consumers want to reach certain goal states and the products are instrumental in reaching the goals. According to him consumers compare the product classes on their ability to satisfy the basic needs.

In 1938, American psychologist Henry Murray developed a theory of personality that was organized in terms of human needs and prepared a detailed list of 28 psychogenic needs. Later Fowles (1982) adopted this concept and argued that consumers generally make a purchase to satisfy their motivational needs. He also pointed out that these needs are highly related with other personality dimensions of an individual. Sensation seeking is a well known biological personality theory which is less explored in the area of consumer behaviour. It is defined as the need for varied and complex sensations and experiences and willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences (Zuckerman, 1979).

Present study aimed at finding the influence of sensation seeking traits on consumers' purchase related motivational needs. In India purchase of a car is a major investment and involves complex decision making. With the change in the purchase power a lot of the middle class people are going in for hatchback cars. Hence the present study is restricted to only hatchback car segment.

### Method

#### Sample

The research consists of a survey with a total sample of 220 consumers from a south Indian city, who made hatchback car purchase in the last six months. A detailed description of the sample is provided in table – 1.

#### Table 1 about here

Table 1: Details of hatchback car consumers who participated in the research (N=220)

| Gender (In %) |         | Education (In %) |                  |     |              | Income (In %)       |                      |                   |
|---------------|---------|------------------|------------------|-----|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Males         | Females | SSLC             | 12 <sup>th</sup> | UG  | PG and above | <= 2.5 Lakh / Annum | 2.5 - 5 Lakh / Annum | >= 5 Lakh / Annum |
| 69.5%         | 30.5%   | 15%              | 26%              | 40% | 19%          | 14%                 | 61%                  | 25%               |

### Measures

Motivational needs in the study was conceptualized based on Fowles(1982) eighteen needs adopted from Murray's needs. For measuring the variable in the present context a five point Likert rating scale was developed with one question each for rating each need related with car purchase. The scale was validated by three subject experts in the field of psychology. A detailed list of these eighteen needs with the descriptions in the present context is given in table – 2.

| Need                 | Descriptions  |
|----------------------|---|
| Need for Achievement | Buying a car to attain a high standard in life.                             |
| Need for Acquisition | Owning a car as a great pride and considering it as a valuable asset        |
| Need for Affiliation | Buying a car to enjoy traveling with near and dear ones.                    |
| Need for Autonomy    | Buying a car to be independent and act according to convenience.            |
| Need for Cognizance  | Buying a car to explore new places, new routes, unknown places etc.         |
| Need for Deference   | Buying a car only to confirm the wishes of dear ones.                       |
| Need for Dominance   | Owning a car to increase a person's influence in society                    |
| Need for Exhibition  | Buying a car to gain others attention and excitement.                       |
| Harm Avoidance       | Buying a car to avoid traveling in hard and tiresome public transport.      |
| Need for Inviolacy   | Buying a car to keep in custom with others in the same societal status.     |
| Need for Nurturance  | Buying a car to give better comfort to family members.                      |
| Need for Order       | Buying a car to manage life and time in a better order.                     |
| Need for Passivity   | Buying a car to comfortably go for a change when drained out with routines. |
| Need for Play        | Buying a car to comfortably go for a picnic, late night parties etc.        |
| Need for Recognition | Buying a car to uplift one's prestige and recognition in society.           |
| Need for Sentience.  | Buying a car by seeing its beauty and attractiveness.                       |
| Need for Sex.        | Buying a car to create sexual attraction.                                   |
| Need for Succorance  | Buying a car to take support from dear ones at times of emergencies.        |

#### Table 2 about here

Table 2: Details of Fowles (1976) needs with descriptions in present context

Sensation seeking in the study was measured by using Sensation Seeking Scale - Form-V (Modified) developed by Basu et. al (1993). It is a 40 item forced choice inventory and are divided into four sensation seeking traits i.e. thrill and adventure seeking (desire to seek new experiences through risk taking activities), experience seeking (desire to seek new experiences through the mind and senses), boredom susceptibility (aversion for repetitive experience and routine work), and disinhibition (desire to disinhibit one's behaviour in the social sphere by drinking, partying and seeking variety of sexual partners etc).

**Procedure**

Initially a list of consumers fulfilling the research criteria was identified and later they were contacted personally. All the research tools were administered to the participants and the data was collected back and tabulated for further statistical analysis.

**Results and Discussion**

Descriptive details of study variables are provided in table -3a and 3b.

**Table 3 and 3b about here**

**Table 3a: Descriptive details of sensation seeking traits among sample consumers**

| Variables                    | Mean  | SD   |
|------------------------------|-------|------|
| Total Sensation Seeking      | 19.78 | 6.79 |
| Thrill and Adventure Seeking | 5.51  | 2.23 |
| Experience seeking           | 5.55  | 2.21 |
| Boredom susceptibility       | 5.50  | 2.29 |
| Disinhibition                | 3.66  | 1.92 |

**Table 3b: Descriptive details of motivational needs among sample consumers**

|                         |      |      |
|-------------------------|------|------|
| Need for Achievement    | 6.08 | 2.55 |
| Need for Acquisition    | 6.01 | 2.59 |
| Need for Affiliation    | 5.68 | 2.80 |
| Need for Autonomy       | 6.13 | 2.36 |
| Need for Cognizance     | 5.65 | 2.63 |
| Need for Deference      | 5.29 | 2.63 |
| Need for Dominance      | 5.42 | 2.62 |
| Need for Exhibition     | 5.68 | 2.79 |
| Need for Harm Avoidance | 5.54 | 2.98 |
| Need for Involucy       | 5.39 | 2.59 |
| Need for Nurturance     | 5.65 | 2.69 |
| Need for Order          | 4.63 | 2.92 |
| Need for Passivity      | 5.47 | 2.76 |
| Need for Play           | 5.28 | 2.63 |
| Need for Recognition    | 4.30 | 2.50 |
| Need for Sentience      | 2.97 | 2.57 |
| Need for Sex            | 2.90 | 2.60 |
| Need for Succorance     | 2.72 | 2.51 |

The collected data was initially subjected to a simple linear regression analysis where consumers' total sensation seeking scores were taken as predictor variable and motivational needs as criterion variable. Details of the analysis are provided in table -4.

**Table 4 about here**

| Motivational Needs      | Beta  | R <sup>2</sup> | 't' Value |
|-------------------------|-------|----------------|-----------|
| Need for Achievement    | 0.01  | 0.04           | 0.26      |
| Need for Acquisition    | 0.01  | 0.07           | 0.26      |
| Need for Affiliation    | -0.05 | 0.01           | 0.81      |
| Need for Autonomy       | 0.08  | 0.01           | 1.18      |
| Need for Cognizance     | 0.34  | 0.34           | 5.48**    |
| Need for Deference      | 0.05  | 0.01           | 0.78      |
| Need for Dominance      | -0.03 | 0.01           | 0.44      |
| Need for Exhibition     | 1.96  | 0.02           | 0.05      |
| Need for Harm Avoidance | 0.07  | 0.01           | 1.17      |
| Need for Involucy       | -0.11 | 0.01           | 1.67      |
| Need for Nurturance     | -0.11 | 0.01           | 1.74      |
| Need for Order          | -0.03 | 0.01           | 0.50      |
| Need for Passivity      | 0.44  | 0.20           | 7.39**    |
| Need for Play           | 0.47  | 0.23           | 8.05**    |

|                      |       |      |        |
|----------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Need for Recognition | -0.19 | 0.03 | 2.94** |
| Need for Sentience   | 0.08  | 0.01 | 1.32   |
| Need for Sex         | 0.05  | 0.01 | 0.87   |
| Need for Succorance  | 0.01  | 0.12 | 1.92   |

Table 4: Details of regression analysis on total sensation seeking and motivational needs

\*\* = 'p' value < 0.01 level, \* = 'p' value <0.05 level

The results indicate that, need for cognizance; passivity, play, and recognition are significantly influenced by the total sensation seeking traits of the customers.

With the first level confirmatory results of the influence of sensation seeking traits on few motivational needs a second level multiple regression analysis was conducted between the sensation seeking effected needs and different specific sensation seeking traits. The details of the analysis are given in table -5.

**Table -5 about here**

**Table - 5: Details of multiple regression analysis conducted between selected motivational needs and specific sensation seeking traits**

|                              |                |         |       |           |
|------------------------------|----------------|---------|-------|-----------|
| Need for cognizance          |                |         |       |           |
| Predictor traits             | R <sup>2</sup> | F Value | Beta  | 't' Value |
| Thrill and adventure Seeking | 0.18           | 11.93** | -0.06 | 0.61      |
| Experience seeking           |                |         | 0.39  | 4.37**    |
| Boredom susceptibility       |                |         | 0.11  | 1.39      |
| Disinhibition                |                |         | -0.05 | 0.79      |
| Need for Passivity           |                |         |       |           |
| Predictor traits             | R <sup>2</sup> | F Value | Beta  | 't' Value |
| Thrill and adventure Seeking | 0.46           | 14.52** | 0.24  | 2.60*     |
| Experience seeking           |                |         | 0.07  | 0.87      |
| Boredom susceptibility       |                |         | 0.18  | 2.15*     |
| Disinhibition                |                |         | 0.02  | 0.44      |
| Need for Play                |                |         |       |           |
| Predictor traits             | R <sup>2</sup> | F Value | Beta  | 't' Value |
| Thrill and adventure Seeking | 0.23           | 16.56** | 0.15  | 1.67      |
| Experience seeking           |                |         | 0.20  | 2.27*     |
| Boredom susceptibility       |                |         | 0.16  | 2.05*     |
| Disinhibition                |                |         | 0.06  | .95       |
| Need for Recognition         |                |         |       |           |
| Predictor traits             | R <sup>2</sup> | F Value | Beta  | 't' Value |
| Thrill and adventure Seeking | 0.06           | 3.59*   | -0.20 | 1.93      |
| Experience seeking           |                |         | -0.01 | 0.08      |
| Boredom susceptibility       |                |         | 0.08  | 0.96      |
| Disinhibition                |                |         | -0.15 | 2.14*     |

\*\* = 'p' value < 0.01 level, \* = 'p' value <0.05 level

Results in table -5 indicate that even though need for cognizance was successfully predicted by all the predictors collectively (18% variance) only experience seeking emerged as a major predictor (with 39% variance) (refer R2 and beta value in table-5) . Further it was also evident from the results that experience seeking is directly proportional to need for cognizance. This indicates that high experience seekers are found to buy a car mostly to satisfy their need to explore new places, new routes, unknown places etc.

The results also indicate that need for passivity also was successfully predicted by all the predictors collectively (46 % variance). In this model thrill and adventure seeking (24% variance) and boredom susceptibility (18 % variance) emerged as significant predictors. Both of these traits were found to be directly proportional to need for passivity. This indicates that high thrill and adventure seekers and boredom susceptibility consumers are found to be purchasing a car mainly to comfortably go for an outing or change when they are drained out with their routines.

Analyzing the influence of predictors on need for play it was found that 23% of variance on dependent variable was collectively contributed by all the predictors in which experience seeking (with 20% variance) and boredom susceptibility (with

16% variance) emerged as major predictors. The direction of the relationship was also found to be direct i.e. high experience seeking and boredom susceptible customers are found to be buying a car to satisfy their need to have fun activities like going for a picnic, late night parties etc.

On analyzing the effect of sensation seeking traits on need for recognition it was found that the traits are significantly contributing with 6 % variance with disinhibition as the only significant contributor (15 % variance). The direction was found to be inversely proportional i.e. consumers with high disinhibition trait was found to be considering car as not an icon of recognition in society.

#### Conclusion

The results revealed the significant influence of sensation seeking traits on few motivational needs. With the finding we

can affirm that sensation seeking is one major factor motivating consumers to make a purchase. It would be highly beneficial for marketers and product developers if they pay attention to this human personality trait in their product development and marketing process.

#### Limitations:

The study is also bound with few limitations. The self concept is a complex process influenced by various other psycho socio demographic factors like, cultural values, gender, age, income, education, user status etc. For e.g. disinhibition is a highly culture, gender and age sensitive factor. Comparatively low mean score of this trait may be because of the effect of these extraneous factors. Proper control of these factors is not done in the study.

#### REFERENCES

Basu, D., Varma, V. K., Malhotra, S., & Malhotra, A. (1993). Sensation Seeking Scale- Indian Adaptation. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 155-158. | | Fowles, J. (1982). Advertising Eighteen Basic Appeals. *Et Cetera*, 19(3), 273-290. | | Sheth, N. (1974). The Future of Buyer Behavior Theory. In J. N. Sheth, *Models of Buyer Behavior*. New York: Harper & Row. | | Zuckerman, (1979). *Sensation Seeking: Beyond the Optimal Level of Arousal*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. |