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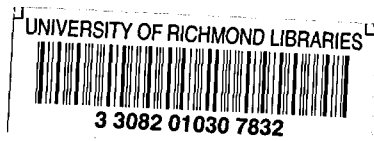


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A Correlational Analysis of Suggestibility,
Self Preoccupation, Styles of Loving, and Sensation Seeking

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A Correlational Analysis of Suggestibility, Self-Preoccupation, Styles of Loving, and Sensation Seeking

A number of personality inventories and psychometric measures have been recently introduced to the psychological literature that attempt to measure concepts that have received little empirical scrutiny. Among these are scales to measure response suggestibility (Wilson & Barber, 1976), self-preoccupation (Noles & Jaremko, 1979) and styles of loving (Lasswell & Lasswell, 1976). This paper describes a study of the interrelationships of these measures with a well established personality measure, sensation seeking (Zuckerman, 1978). It is hoped that information on the correlations of these scales will suggest possible directions for future research and theory concerning these constructs.

Response suggestibility has been defined as the degree to which a person reacts positively or responds favorably to the suggestions of an experimenter (Barber, Spanos, & Chaves, 1974). Some studies have explored the personality characteristics of suggestible people. For example, Gasiorowska, Kowalik, Mrigszewske, Martin, Leszek (1976), found no relationship between MMPI scales, TAT responses, and suggestibility. Their data suggested that the conditions in which the suggestions take place are better determinants of suggestibility than are personality characteristics. Likewise, Zuckerman

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Bone, Neary, Mangelsdorff, & Brustman (1972) found that state sensation seeking was related to suggestibility more than was trait sensation seeking. The search for different personality characteristics of suggestible people, therefore, points to the conclusion that situational variables are more predictive than are dispositional ones. We would expect, then, that a scale measuring response suggestibility would not be correlated with other trait measures.

Self preoccupation may be defined as the degree to which a person focuses on his feelings, his appearance, his needs, and the impression he is making on other people (Fenigstein, Schierer, & Buss, 1975). One might expect that a self preoccupied person would have difficulty in certain kinds of love relationships that required other-centeredness. However, the self preoccupied person may be more prone to engage in self centering types of love relationships. It is further possible that self preoccupation is unrelated to sensation seeking because of an inconsistent incidence of focusing on external stimuli. Noles and Jaremko (1979) developed a scale to measure self preoccupation that can be used to test these assertions.

The measurement of love has been a much neglected area of psychological research (Rubin, 1973). Lasswell and Lasswell (1976) developed a scale that purported to measure different definitions of love. Included in this measurement are: storgic love (life-long friendships), agape (other-

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centered), manic love (dependent and possessive), pragmatic love (practical and sensible), ludic love (playful and self centered), and erotic love (romantic). The person's responses supposedly indicate the ways in which he or she defines love. Given this schema, one might expect that a high sensation seeker would be characterized by manic, ludic, and erotic types of love. This assertion can be defended because of the external stimulus seeking properties seemingly apparent in these types of love relationships.

The present study undertook a correlational analysis of the above speculations by using psychometric instruments designed to measure each construct. In this way, data bearing on these speculations and information about the construct validity of these scales could be obtained.

Method

Subjects were fifty undergraduates who received course credit for participating. After signing a consent form, three of the personality scales were administered in individual sessions. The order of administration was alternated uniformly among the fifty subjects and produced no significant differences. The sensation seeking scale (Zuckerman, 1978) is a seventy-two item, forced choice questionnaire that yields scores for the following factors: general experience seeking, boredom susceptibility, thrill and adventure seeking, and disinhibition. The creative

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imagination scale (Wilson & Barber, 1976) consists of two parts: first the subject listens to a tape of instructions to imagine that various mental and physical experiences are happening to him or her. The instructions are designed to elicit maximum "involvement in imaginings." Next the subject rates the extent to which he or she was able to experience the suggestions. Wilson and Barber (1976) present data showing that this is a reliable and valid measure of hypnotic suggestibility. The self-analysis scale was developed by Noles and Jaremko (1979) to measure different types of trait self preoccupation. It is a fifty-item Likert-type questionnaire that is still experimental. Some preliminary reliability and validity data are provided by Noles and Jaremko (1979).

Scores on the SAMPLE love scale (Lasswell & Lasswell, 1976) were available for twenty-five of the fifty subjects in the study because of another project that was ongoing at the same university. The SAMPLE scale is a fifty-item, true-false questionnaire that yields scores for six styles of loving. Lasswell and Lasswell (1976) and Rosenman (1978) present preliminary psychometric information on this device.

Results

Table 1 is a correlation matrix of the four scales and their subscales. The means and standard deviations of each scale are also presented. The table shows that the disinhibition factor of sensation

seeking positively correlates with the manic, ludic, and erotic styles of loving. It negatively correlates with storgic love. Thrill and adventure seeking is also positively correlated with erotic love. General sensation seeking correlates with agape and erotic love. The creative imagination scale is negatively correlated with ludic love. Several other correlations approach significance ($p < .10$)

Discussion

For the most part, the creative imagination scale did not correlate with the other trait measures. However, it did correlate negatively with measures of manic and ludic styles of loving. As will be seen later, perhaps these two love styles are not conducive to prolonged focused attention, something which seems important in the creative imagination scale format.

These two styles of loving were positively correlated with the self-preoccupation measure. This result was expected and makes sense because of the self-centered nature of manic and ludic styles of loving. Self preoccupation was not correlated with sensation seeking nor was such a result expected.

Two consistent findings emerged with regard to sensation seeking and styles of loving. First, manic, ludic, and erotic loving styles were positively correlated with sensation seeking in general and in

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specific (thrill and adventure seeking and disinhibition). This finding is reasonable because both sets of constructs involve excitement, novelty, and intense experiences. Secondly, storgic and pragmatic love were negatively correlated with sensation seeking (general and disinhibition). This finding is also understandable in terms of the long-term, practical nature of storgic and pragmatic love styles. Finally, it is difficult to understand why an agape style of loving would be associated with general sensation seeking. Such a result may be due to chance.

One of the most obvious suggestions for future work on these constructs is in the experimental analysis of certain styles of loving. By manipulating various aspects of self preoccupation and sensation seeking, one could determine the manner in which ludic lovers interact, for example. Future research could also expand the present findings by exposing self-preoccupied people to romantic-type interactions (cf. Bryson, 1977) and determine if different reactions ensue. The results presented here suggest that self preoccupation and sensation seeking are related to styles of loving. Determination of the exact nature of those relationships awaits further research.

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Table 1
Correlations Among the Scales and Subscales

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Experience Seeking(SSS)	8.00	3.34													
Freedom Susceptibility(SSS)	5.85	2.79	.44*												
Thrill and Adventure Seeking(SSS)	9.50	3.46	.34*	.49*											
Inhibition(SSS)	5.52	3.36	.43*	.36*	.36*										
General Sensation Seeking(SSS)	11.50	3.93	.71*	.53*	.52*	.51*									
Imaginative Scale	22.62	5.80	.14	-.01	.08	.07	.01								
Self Analysis Scale	213.44	22.22	.14	-.08	.09	.18	.02	.02							
Organic	6.09	1.44	-.27	.08	-.25	-.57*	-.35**	.14	.23						
Open	5.86	1.68	-.08	-.11	-.05	.07	.44*	.05	.19	.21					
Non	3.24	1.81	-.06	-.18	-.10	.40*	.13	-.32**	.36*	.07	.18				
Agmatic	3.86	2.39	-.15	-.20	-.13	-.34**	-.33**	.11	-.06	.34**	.76*	.15			
Idic	3.71	1.81	.12	.17	.13	.37*	.05	-.62*	.36*	.30	.10	.19	.27		
otic	3.10	1.55		-.02	.43	.50*	.42	.26	-.05	.40*	.40*	.31	.02	.22	

< .05

< .10