

The Impact of sensation seeking on Depression among Civil Service Aspirants

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Abstract

Sensation seeking is a personality trait defined by the need for varied, novel and complex sensational experiences and the willingness to take physical, social and financial risk for the sake of such experiences. Most of the human beings seek sensation to some extent that affords the experience within their threshold. But high sensation seekers prefer extremity for sensations in whatever activities they engage. Deprivation of sensation among high sensation seekers leads to frustration and make them deviated from social norms. No challenges and compulsion to continue a routine pattern of work in the profession may cause depression to the high sensation seekers which negatively affects how they feel, the way they think and how they act. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed. Sensation seekers are preferable to perform jobs that are deviated from normal routine which require different dimensions. Civil service is one such profession that requires people who are equipped to be multifaceted which is different from the normal monotonous job. Civil servants form the stable structure and support of administrative system. There are many external and internal factors that induce the thirst to become civil servants. But the success in their career depends on the intrinsic factors and personality traits like sensation seeking is one such factor. This study attempts to study the level of sensation seeking among civil service aspirants and analyse the relationship between sensation seeking and depression.

Key words: Sensation seeking, Depression, Civil servants, Profession

Introduction

Sensation seeking is the propensity to prefer exciting, optimal and novel stimulation or arousal (Kalichman, 1994). For the sake of such experiences, high sensation seekers engage in activities that serve the threshold of providing desired level of stimulation. They need high stimulation for arousal due to the increase in the electrical activity of the brain and hormone levels. The level of sensation seeking is contributed by genetic biological and environmental factors. The sensation seekers find normal situation to be boring; they

need high stimulation to get aroused. They prefer for profession that provides platform to explore experiences which is varied and uncertain. Many of the challenging professions like Military, Police, Disaster management, etc. need high sensation seekers to sustain and to be productive. Most of the unexplored areas were discovered by constructively motivated sensation seekers. But sensation deprivation in sensation seekers may lead to frustration which in turn leads to depression. Depression is a mood or emotional state that is marked by feelings of low self-worth or guilt and a reduced ability to enjoy life. A person who is depressed usually experiences several of the following symptoms: feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or pessimism; lowered self-esteem and heightened self-depreciation; a decrease or loss of ability to take pleasure in ordinary activities; reduced energy and vitality; slowness of thought or action; loss of appetite; and disturbed sleep or insomnia. Civil service is one such profession which requires people who are equipped to be multifaceted which is different from the normal monotonous jobs. Civil servants form the stable structure and support of administrative system. There are many external and internal factors that induce the thirst to become civil servants. But the success in their career depends on the intrinsic factors and personality traits like sensation seeking. The person with high sensation seeking works for their own novel experience and they seldom influenced by the external factors. Intrinsic motivation is one of the major factor for success in any profession and in civil service, it is the basic factor which keeps our administrative system effective

Literature review

Fornaro M¹ et al.,(2013) studied sensation seeking in major depressive patients to find the relationship to sub-threshold bipolarity and cyclothymic temperament with 280 currently depressed cases of MDD and 87 healthy controls, they were screened using the Zuckerman's sensation seeking scale-Form-V, the Hypomania Check List-32-item (HCL-32), the Temperament Evaluation of Memphis, Pisa, Paris and San Diego Auto-questionnaire-110-item, the Barratt Impulsivity Scale-11-item, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory modules and the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV axis-I disorders. Cases were divided into HCL-32(+)(sub-threshold bipolar)/HCL-32-("true" unipolar depressed) depending on the HCL-32 total score. Upon correlation and multivariate regression analyses, the HCL-32(+) patients showed the highest levels of SS, higher

prevalence of cyclothymic temperament, and higher rates of multiple lifetime axis-I comorbidities, including SUD.

Carton et al., (1992) investigated sensation seeking and depressive mood among 108 hospitalized depressed subjects to know the relations between dimensions of depressive mood and sensation seeking. Globally, depressed subjects have lower scores of sensation seeking than normal subjects (paired by age and sex); but the weakness of sensation seeking is not proportional to the intensity of depression (Hamilton Depressive Scale) and to the intensity of anxiety (Covi Brief Anxiety Scale). Interesting relations appear with the emotional dimensions of depressive mood, which are consistent with previous studies of sensation seeking in psychology and psychopathology. On the general sample of depressed subjects, the more the subjects stand on the emotional deficit side, behavioural (affective observed monotony, lack of affective expressiveness and responsiveness) and subjective (anhedonia, affective global indifference for pleasant *and* unpleasant events), the lower is sensation seeking. Conversely, emotionally expressive hyper subjects, on the side of impulsivity and irritability, score high on sensation seeking.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to find whether the high sensation seeking is the factor for the civil service aspirants choose this profession. During aspiration the platform for sensational experience is not as much as they expect. So this study also attempts to study whether the monotonous classes without challenging task other than reading may lead to depression.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant difference between in Sensation-seeking and Depression with regard to male and female civil service aspirants
2. There is a significant relationship between sensation-seeking and depression among civil service aspirants

Sampling Design

In this study the investigator used purposive sampling technique and collected data from 70 civil service aspirants from the District of Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu, India. All aspirants were in the age group between 19 and 25 and finally 68 valid data were used for the study.

Tools used

Sensation seeking scale – Form V (1996) developed by Marvin Zuckerman was used to assess the sensation seeking. It consists of 40 items under four domains: thrill and adventure seeking, experience seeking, disinhibition, and boredom susceptibility. Each domain has 10 items. Beck's Depression Inventory (1996) was used to assess depression developed by Aaron Beck was used to assess depression. It consists of 21 items which measures from 0 to 63.

Analysis and Discussion

The level of Sensation Seeking among civil service aspirants

Sensation Seeking	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	64	94.1	94.1
High	4	5.9	100.0
Total	68	100.0	

Table 1. The level of Sensation Seeking among civil service aspirants

Table 1 reveals that more than 94% of the respondents show low level of sensation seeking.

Level of depression among civil service aspirants

Depression	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mild	35	51.5	51.5
Moderate	18	26.5	77.9
Severe	15	22.1	100.0
Total	68	100.0	

Table 2. Level of depression among civil service aspirants

Table 2 shows that more than half of the respondents show mild depression, 26.5% moderate depression and 22.1% severe depression.



Gender difference with respect to sensation seeking and Depression

Variable	Gender				‘t’ Value	P Value
	Male		Female			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Sensation seeking	1.06	0.232	1.08	0.246	0.199	0.039 ^{S*}
Depression	1.78	0.866	1.63	0.751	0.779	0.144 ^{NS**}

Table 3. Gender difference with respect to sensation seeking and Depression.

*S- Significant **NS – Not Significant.

In table 3 the 'p' value 0.039 for sensation seeking shows that there is a significant difference between male and female with regard to sensation seeking and the 'p' value 0.144 for depression shows that there is no difference between male and female with regard to depression.

Correlation between sensation seeking and depression

Variable	N	Correlation	p
Sensation seeking	68	0.324	0.79
Depression	68		

Table 4. Correlation between sensation seeking and depression

The correlation 'r' value of 0.324 from the table 4 shows that there is a mild positive correlation between sensation seeking and depression.

Conclusion of Findings

1. There was a significant difference between male and female pertaining to Sensation seeking among Civil service aspirants.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female with regard to Depression among Civil service aspirants.
3. There is a mild positive correlation between sensation seeking and depression among civil service aspirants.

Implications

Civil service is the sub-division of government without which the government cannot function. The civil servants should have the ability to handle multifaceted task and at the same time which requires more perseverance and tolerance. So it is mandatory to equip

the civil service aspirants in such a way and to govern their depression level while handling such tasks.

Civil services play an important role in the administration, policy formulation and implementation. For this to be effective in the current scenario the sensation seeking of the civil service aspirants can also be assessed and if properly channelised, their nature of exploring novel ideas and readiness to take risk at the cost of their own may contribute to the development of our country.

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