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Predicting Thrill Seeking Behavior

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2018

Predicting Thrill Seeking Behavior

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Dr. Jacqueline Eastman

Predicting Thrill Seeking Behaviors

An honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the department of Marketing

By
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Under the Mentorship of *Dr. Jacqueline Eastman*

Abstract

Extreme sports, sports characterized as involving speed, height and danger, have become an increasingly popular pastime around the world and have grown into a \$250 billion industry. As a result of the inherent risks of taking part in these extreme sports, the most common participants are thrill seeking, risk taking, and often reckless. Known as the type-T personality type, these extreme sensation seeking individual's constantly seek out new experiences that will stimulate their mind and frequently find their thrill by participating in extreme sports. The goal of this study is to determine various factors that will influence an individual's thrill seeking behaviors by analyzing how the variables of risk aversion, status consumption, innovativeness, and social media use affect an individual's adventure seeking tendencies.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Recent growth of extreme sports industry.....	4
Extreme sports media.....	5
Defining the type-T personality.....	6
Literature Review.....	9
Influences on type-T personality.....	9
Behaviors of the Type-T Personality and Risk Homeostasis Theory..	10
Risk Aversion.....	11
Innovativeness.....	12
Status Consumption.....	13
Social Media Usage.....	13
Methodology.....	14
Participants.....	14
Survey.....	15
Survey Scale Items.....	18
Results.....	21
Discussion.....	28
References.....	34

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Introduction

Millennial consumers are becoming increasingly interested in the sports industry as a whole, including many relatively new non-traditional sports such as electronic sports or extreme sports (Singer, 2017). Singer (2017) explains that while the number of millennial viewers grew by two percent for sports including NFL, NBA, NHL, and MLB during 2016, the ratings of these sports actually decreased because viewers tastes are changing. Instead of watching broadcasts of full games, viewers are starting to favor short highlight clips so they can simply catch up on the most action packed moments (Singer, 2017). As a result of this trend, many viewers are now interested in watching more fast-paced sports than in the past (Singer, 2017). As the popularity of sports grow, subcultures of athletes have developed each in search of a different sensations (Self, 2007). One subgroup, which will be the focus of this study, is known as extreme sports or “vertigo games.” These sports are for the most fearless consumers who seek thrills and are willing to risk “speed, acceleration, change of direction, and/or exposure to dangerous situations while the individual generally remains in control” (Kenyon 1968, p101). Extreme sports are a range of leisure activities that has grown exponentially in popularity in most western societies since the mid-1970s, defined in the

literature as “sports featuring speed, height, and danger,” (Self, 2007, p177). Over 40 extreme sports have been identified including bungee jumping, canyoning, skydiving, snowboarding, and surfing (Self, 2007). The name vertigo games originally stems from the sensation of dizziness or in some cases a feeling described as self-transcendence and/or loss of self most directly caused by adrenaline (Self, 2007). Despite the inherent risks involved in these sports, novices with no experience and masters of the sports alike are increasingly seeking out thrills by participating (Palmer, 2002). The growth in popularity offers countless opportunities for marketing in the new segment of experience seeking consumers (Palmer, 2002).

Recent growth of the extreme sports industry: The size of the global extreme sports industry is made up of roughly 58 million people between the ages of 10 and 24 who either actively watch extreme sports media or participate in a sport personally (Zhang, 2003). Zhang (2003) estimates that in total, consumers with an interest in extreme sports possess a combined \$250 billion in buying power. Palmer (2002) discusses a primary aspect of the extreme sports industry called, “adventure travel,” where tourists incorporate extreme sports into their travel itinerary. Locations such as Interlaken, the self-proclaimed “adventure capital of the world,” the Himalayas, and Switzerland have grown increasingly popular as adventure tourist destinations to take part in thrills such as canyoning, mountain biking, and paragliding. These

adventure tourists account for a large part of the demand for local industry as explained by Palmer (2002). She also explains that adventure tourists open an opportunity to market backpacking packs, hiking shoes, bikes, and countless other products to participants because of “the centrality of specialized equipment and associated paraphernalia to adventure sports (Palmer, 2002, p324).” Beyond selling products directly related to the sports, Palmer (2002) also discusses how the rise in popularity have lead these sports to have an active role in mainstream media being used to sell a variety of products and paraphernalia entirely unrelated to the sports themselves. Extreme sports media is now being used to sell a range of mainstream commodities such as sunglasses, soft drinks, watches, and even alcoholic beverages (Self, 2007).

Extreme sports media: Zhang (2003) discusses how media coverage of action sports events has increased considerably over the last few years with organizations such as ESPN picking up on the demand for extreme sports content. ESPN now airs over 900 hours of extreme sports content yearly including an annual broadcast of the X-Games (Zhang, 2003). NBC has two similar broadcasts called the Gravity Games and the Gorge Games, which Zhang (2003) states are meant to target the market of young sports consumers. Extreme sports enthusiasts have become so intrigued with adventure media that as a result, participants have produced an interesting byproduct, “adventure sagas” (Palmer, 2002). Many extreme sports participants tend to write extremely detailed

accounts of their experiences in the form of articles, books, and personal memoirs, typically in order to fund their next adventure. Palmer (2002) states that these sagas are especially common among mountaineering and backcountry sports such as backpacking or canyoning, because participants tend to be relatively highly educated and articulate.

Considering the plethora of media and products closely surrounding extreme sports, marketers have a variety of opportunities to tap into the segment of thrill seeking consumers known as experiencers, or type-T personalities.

Defining the type-T personality: Farley (1986) coined the term type-T in 1986 to refer to individuals who are “thrill seeking, sensation seeking, and risk taking.” Synonymous with “experiencers” or “thrill seekers,” the type-T personality has been defined as “an extreme type of experienter personality that comes in many varieties, but is generally identified by seemingly thrill seeking and sometimes almost reckless behavior,” (Self, 2007, p 76). Self (2010) explains how many view this personality type as a near disability because of the high chance of experiencers achieving their thrills through negative behaviors such as alcoholic tendencies or drug abuse; however, people have found positive outlets to fulfill their need for a thrill through extreme sports.

Documentation of the idea of thrill and sensation seeking is as old as 3000 BC and has been the subject of research ever since (Self, 2010). The first evidence of the concept of a thrill seeking personality is from Ayurvedic

medicine (in India) where they recognized the “*Vata*, or type of person who is enthusiastic, impulsive, and good at starting things,” (Self, 2010, p24). Hippocrates (400 BC) and Galen (150 AD) also recognized a similar personality type that they referred to as the “Sanguine” personality type (Self, 2010). Described as optimistic and open to experience, both ancient scholars found the personality type to be one of the primary personality types they observed (Self, 2010).

While vast research has been conducted to characterise the thrill seeking tendencies of type-T personalities, this study aims to increase understanding of what individual difference variables predict extreme sports behavior (Prochniak, 2017). In this study, a survey has been constructed to better understand what impacts adventure seeking behavior in order to gain a better understanding of the type-T personality. The goal of this research is to determine various factors that will influence an individual’s thrill seeking behaviors by analyzing how the variables of risk aversion, status consumption, innovativeness, and social media usage affect extreme sports behaviors by focusing on the following research questions:

RQ1: Does the construct of risk aversion impact an individual’s
adventure seeking tendencies?

RQ2: Does the construct of innovativeness impact an individual’s
thrill seeking tendencies?

RQ3: Does the construct of motivation for status impact an individual's adventure seeking tendencies?

RQ4: Do those millennials with adventure seeking tendencies utilize social media differently?

This research makes a contribution to the sports marketing literature as having a thorough understanding of the type-T personality segment will allow marketing experts to more accurately target this segment with their marketing efforts and tap into the global extreme sports market worth \$250 billion (Zhang, 2003). The analysis will look deeper into sports literature of the type-T personality by analyzing the effects on the type-T personality of marketing variables not typically used in sports literature including risk aversion, innovativeness, status consumption, and social media use in order to determine if these variables may be used to predict thrill seeking behavior. While many other variables were tested, these aforementioned variables are the only ones analyzed in the results. The studies literature review will break down the influences on, and resulting behaviors of the type-T personality type before delving into the marketing constructs being analyzed with the survey results. Following the literature review, a methodology establishes the reliability of the survey items used before sharing the results of the analysis.

Literature Review

Influences on type-T personalities: There are many factors that influence an individual's level of sensation seeking including biochemical and external factors that all play a role in the personality type (Self, 2010). An individual's chemical balance plays a large role in their thrill seeking tendencies. Farley (1986) concluded that elevated levels of testosterone can amplify risk-taking behavior meaning that men are much more likely to be thrill seekers than women, and that risky behaviors tend to trail off with age due to decreasing testosterone levels. Additional studies have also found a connection between experiencers and a deficiency in monoamine oxidase (MAO), a protective enzyme that regulates neurotransmitters including dopamine and serotonin (Zuckerman, 2000). Due to these natural imbalances, sensation seekers tend to require more thrilling activities to reach the same levels of excitement and arousal as low-sensation seekers. Women naturally have higher levels of MAO than men, and presence of the enzyme increases with age, as a result it is hypothesized that the demographics of the type-T segment will be predominantly young males.

While chemical makeup plays a role in extreme type-T personalities, external factors have a strong influence on how an individual will choose to satisfy their thrill seeking needs (Self 2010, Zuckerman 2000). Self (2010) describes environmental stimulation, whether it is positive or negative, as being a primary factor in how an individual will

express their sensation seeking needs. For example, peer pressure (even from peers that individuals are not familiar with) is an extremely powerful motivator for sensation seekers, because this type of pressure has a much higher effect on high-sensation seekers than low-sensation seekers (Self 2010). Self (2010) also states that those who have experienced childhood abuse, neglect, or other traumatic experiences are also at a much higher risk of alcoholism, illicit drug use, smoking, suicide attempts, sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancies; however, with positive stimulation and exposure to productive thrill seeking outlets such as extreme sports, type-T personalities are also capable of being highly creative, innovative, abstract thinkers, and leaders of social change.

Behaviors of the Type-T Personality and Risk Homeostasis

Theory: All type-T personalities share a propensity to seek thrills and extreme sensations; however, there is a large spectrum of ways that these experiencers express their need for a thrill. One theory that attempts to explain why people take or avoid risk is the risk homeostasis theory (Self 2010). This theory states that each individual has their own preferred or acceptable level of risk and that they will take steps to maintain a level state of risk in their environment, and as a result an individual's perception of the severity of risk is the differentiator between high-sensation seekers and low-sensation seekers (Wilde, 1994). Self (2010) explains that this is the reason for fatality rates in extreme sports remaining constant despite new advances in safety equipment. New safety devices lower the

perceived risk resulting in participants being more willing to take other risks to maintain risk homeostasis.

Risk Aversion: Risk Aversion has been defined by Qualls and Puto (1989, p180) as an individual's "preference for a guaranteed outcome over a probabilistic one having an equal expected value," a definition which has since been understood to mean a decision maker's attitude toward taking risks (Mandrik and Bao, 2005). Risk Aversion will likely have a strong impact on an individual's adventure seeking tendencies. Taking part in adventure/extreme sports requires an individual to accept and overcome risk in the face of unpredictable circumstances on a regular basis (Self, 2007). In many cases these risks are potentially life threatening and as a result having high risk avoidance will cause consumers to be wary of extreme sports. Self (2007, p76) identified type-T personalities with "seemingly thrill seeking and sometimes almost reckless behavior," which is not characteristic of an individual with a high level of risk aversion. Peacock (2017) describes the concept of risk in extreme sports (especially adventure tourism) as a paradox because participants make purchases to actively seek risk and uncertainty while tour operators try to minimize risk and emphasize safety in order to entice as many participants as they can. This is where the theory of risk homeostasis explains the tendency of each participant to take steps to take risks and alter their own experience to reach their desired level of risk (Wilde, 1994).

Thus, I predict the following hypothesis: individuals who have high levels of adventure behavior will also show a high level of risk aversion.

Innovativeness: Innovativeness is defined as “the degree to which an individual is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than the average member of his social system,” (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, p27). While time is an important aspect of the concept of innovativeness, Goldsmith and Hofacker (1991) explain that measures of innovativeness that take a specific time-of-adoption approach run into problems because there is no way to evaluate their reliability and validity, and therefore cannot be compared across studies. Vandecasteele and Geuens (2010) outline four dimensions that innovativeness scales use to measure the construct which include a hedonic (pleasure) based innovation, an attraction to functional or useful new products, innovation for status, and cognitive innovation or “the desire for new experiences with the objective of stimulating the mind,” (Venkatraman & Price, 1990, p294). Self (2007) describes type-T personalities as having similar tendency to desire experiences that are new and stimulating, and fond that they are capable of being highly creative, innovative, abstract thinkers, and leaders of social change. Extreme sports are also relatively new to popularity and therefore would attract innovators who want to take part in a sport that relatively few others participate in compared to traditional team sports (Self, 2007). Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis: participants who score high in adventure behavior, will also have a high level of innovativeness.

Status Consumption: Status consumption is the tendency of an individual to seek to purchase goods for the status it holds, regardless of their income or social class level (Eastman et al, 1999). The concept of conspicuous consumption (also called the Veblen Effect), or consumption for the sole purpose of standing out to others through public displays of wealth (Eastman and Eastman, 2015), is extremely relevant to extreme sports due to the necessity of owning expensive equipment in order to be able to participate. The expense of participation also makes extreme sports athletes relatively few in number which appeals to consumers who seek uniqueness or rarity as a sign of exclusivity, a concept known as snob appeal (Liebenstein, 1950). As a result, having a tendency toward status consumption is likely to make an individual more willing to participate in extreme sports. Many athletes who participate in extreme sports consider themselves to be an “elite” form of athlete because of both the risks that must be faced on a regular basis and the technical skill required to handle them safely (Palmer, 2002). As a result, I hypothesize consumers who are likely to make purchases for status and have thrill seeking tendencies, will be drawn to extreme sports as a form of status consumption.

Social Media Usage: Zhang (2003) states that many traditional sports broadcasting channels are concerned because of decreasing television viewership despite the increasing popularity of sports as a whole. While more people than ever watch sports media on a regular

basis, they choose to find the content on online streaming websites such as YouTube and social media more frequently than on television (Zhang, 2003). He explains that younger consumers are more interested in viewing short highlights with high intensity rather than a full length, live broadcasts (Zhang, 2003). Ephemeral social media, or media that is auto-deleted after a certain time period such as Snapchat, has become one of the most popular avenues for sports fans to share and watch highlight clips (Wakefield, 2018). With consumers spending only seconds catching up on their sports interests rather than hours, they have much less exposure to the marketing surrounding sports (Wakefield, 2018). As a result, individuals with high thrill seeking tendencies (who score a 4 or 5 on the Adventure Behavior Seeking Scale) also very likely to be more active on platforms that allow them to easily share media such as Instagram. Thus, I propose the following hypothesis: participants who scored a 4 or 5 on the Adventure Behavior Scale will spend noticeably more time per week using social media.

Methodology

Participants: The survey was distributed using a convenience sample of 291 students who took the survey voluntarily and are currently enrolled in the Georgia Southern College of Business where the survey was distributed. Of the sample of 291, 10 participants did not complete the

survey fully and another 37 failed to select the correct response for the attention check item of correctly identifying a prompted response for a single item. This leaves a total of 244 valid submissions of the survey for testing the hypotheses. The demographics of the survey sample were split nearly even between males and females, with just over 50% of the participants being female. The distribution of participants is predominantly caucasians (66.8% of participants) in the age range of 21 - 23 (67.2% of participants). The age range present in the sample is due to distributing the survey on a college campus. The survey participants were also a large majority of seniors in the Georgia Southern College of Business, due where the survey was distributed.

Survey: The survey used to collect data for this study was distributed online via Qualtrics, and utilizes established scales to measure a number of different variables including adventure seeking behavior, risk aversion, innovativeness, status consumption, and social media use. Each item is presented as a multi-item scale on a 5 point likert scale from “strongly agree,” to “strongly disagree.” Due to problems with reverse coded items, all items which required reverse coding have been removed in order to properly analyze the results. The survey items appear in table 1 in the same manner as they appeared in the survey that was distributed.

The Adventure Seeking Behavior Scale (ABSS) was developed by Piotr Prochniak (2017) to assess an individual's highly stimulating behavior in a natural environment. The ABSS is an 8 item scale that

determines an individual's willingness to engage in a variety of action sports and thrill seeking activities. Prochniak used two groups of individuals in his study, one group of avid adventure seekers who took part in a variety of outdoor activities, and a control group of people without such experiences. The results concluded that having previous experience with adventure sports makes an individual much more likely to score high on the ABSS scale and that the scale is highly related to sensation seeking. The internal consistency of the scale was found to be 0.80 (Prochniak 2017).

The Risk Aversion Scale utilized in the survey was developed by Mandrick and Bao (2005) in order to produce a scale to measure general risk aversion rather than domain-specific risk aversion like the scales from the past. Mandrick describes the problem with domain-specific scales risk aversion scales being that their general applications for consumer research are limited because they do not typically address important issues such as construct validation or issues of reliability (Mandrick and Bao, 2005).

The Innovativeness Scale utilized in the survey was developed by Goldsmith and Hofacker (1991) with the goal of assigning consumers to a single adopter category such as innovator, early majority, late majority, or laggard to name a few (Goldsmith et al, 1991). Categorizing consumers in this manner allows researchers to examine the relationship between their measure of innovativeness and other variables, which was previously

impractical due to the fact that the measures used in the past were criticized for a lack of reliability and validity. Goldsmith and Hofacker (1991) explain that the primary reason for the unreliability is the centrality of time-of-adoption to the previous measures. Despite the fact that time-of-adoption is an aspect of the definition of innovativeness, the segments used for measures based on time-of-adoption are arbitrary and therefore makes it nearly impossible to apply the same measure for a variety of product domains reliably (Goldsmith et al, 1991). Goldsmith and Hofacker (1991) introduced this short, flexible scale and subjected it to a variety of psychometric tests where it was found to be highly reliable and valid.

The Status Consumption Behavior scale was developed by Eastman, Goldsmith, And Flynn (1999) to measure status consumption (the tendency to purchase goods and services for the social prestige that they confer on their owners) as an internal, motivating force within consumers. This self-report scale is comprised of five items with a reliability of 0.86 (Eastman et al, 1999), and measures status consumption as an individual difference construct distinct from social class or materialism. Many extreme sports athletes consider themselves “elite” sports people and as a result their purchasing behavior may trend toward making regular status driven purchases.

The Social Media Usage scale was based on the items developed by Eastman, Smalley, and Warren (2018) that measures the amount of time an individual spends on various social media platforms including

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. The scale contains 5 levels of social media usage per week for possible responses range from “not applicable” (meaning 0 hours of usage per week for a specific social media platform or than the respondent does not use that platform) hours per week to “more than 30” hours per week.

Survey Scale Items

Table 1: survey scale items item	source	
Adventure Behavior Seeking Scale Coefficient Alpha: 0.841 Overall mean: 2.881 Standard deviation: 0.806	Próchniak, Piotr. "Adventure Behavior Seeking Scale." Behavioral Sciences (2076-328X), vol. 7, no. 2, June 2017, p. bs7020035. Scaled: (5 point scale) Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree Mean: Std. Deviation:	
1. I would swim far from the shore.	2.76	1.418
2. I would try to check how long I could stay underwater.	3.55	1.310
3. I would jump off steep slopes into water.	3.25	1.463
4. I would climb high trees.	3.08	1.397

5. I would go for a hike.	4.12	1.118
6. I would go out for outdoor recreations even when it's cold or there's a strong wind.	3.39	1.271
7. Mud and dust don't put me off trekking.	3.51	1.261
8. I would jump into cold water without preparation.	2.82	1.290
<p>Risk Aversion Scale</p> <p>Coefficient Alpha: 0.773 Overall Mean: 3.036 Standard Deviation: 0.738</p>	<p>Carter A. Mandrik and Yeqing Bao (2005) , "Exploring the Concept and Measurement of General Risk Aversion", in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 32, eds. Geeta Menon and Akshay R. Rao, Duluth, MN : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 531-539.</p> <p>Scaled: (5 point scale) Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agreee nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree</p> <p>Mean: Std. Deviation:</p>	
1. I do not feel comfortable about taking chances.	2.26	1.012
2. I prefer situations that have foreseeable outcomes.	3.51	0.960
3. Before I make a decision, I like to be absolutely sure how things will turn out.	3.27	1.050
<p>Innovativeness Scale</p> <p>Coefficient Alpha: 0.796 Overall Mean: 2.356 Standard Deviation: 0.941</p>	<p>Goldsmith, R. E., & Hofacker, C. F. (1991). Measuring consumer innovativeness. <i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>, 19(3), 209-221</p> <p>Scaled: (5 point scale) Strongly</p>	

	Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree
	Mean: Std. Deviation:
1. Compared to my friends, I do little looking for new trends in extreme sports.	3.13 1.197
2. In general, I am the last in my circle of friends to know the names of the latest extreme sports athletes.	3.26 1.281
3. I know more about new extreme sports before other people do.	2.38 1.171
4. If I heard about new extreme sports gear that is available through local stores, I would be interested enough to buy it.	2.20 1.132
5. I will consider trying a new extreme sport, even if I have not heard of it yet.	2.88 1.238
Status Purchase Behavior Coefficient Alpha: 0.849 Overall Mean: 3.134 Standard Deviation: 0.889	Eastman, J. K., Goldsmith, R. E., & Flynn, L. R. (1999), "Status Consumption in Consumer Behavior: Scale Development and Validation," <i>Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice</i> , vol 7, pp. 41-52 Scaled: (5 point scale) Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree Mean: Std. Deviation:
1. I would buy a product just because it has status.	3.20 1.127
2. I am interested in new products with status.	3.46 0.981

3. I would pay more for a product if it had status.	3.31	1.061
4. The status of a product is irrelevant to me.	2.92	1.033
5. A product is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal.	2.71	1.108
Social Media Usage	Scaled: (5 point scale) N/A, 1-10, 11-20, 21-30, >30	
	Mean:	Std.
	Deviation:	
1. How many hours per week do you spend on Facebook?	2.14	0.887
2. How many hours per week do you spend on twitter?	1.93	1.034
3. How many hours per week do you spend on Instagram?	2.50	1.054
4. How many hours per week do you spend on Snapchat?	2.58	1.204
Demographics	Scaled: (2 item nominal scale) 1=male, 2=female	
	Mean:	Std.
	Deviation:	
Gender?	1.52	0.500

Results

Testing the hypotheses relating to the relationships of gender and social media usage to an individual's level of adventure behavior, included running two individual T-tests to test the two relationships specifically. The results of the T-test specific to gender analysis can be found in table 2, while the social media usage results are located in tables 7 and 8. In order

to test the hypotheses regarding risk aversion, innovativeness, and status consumption, a regression analysis was performed including the correlation statistics relating each of these concepts to the adventure behavior scale. Table 3 through tables 6 can be referenced for the results of the regression analysis.

H1: The demographics of the type-T segment will be predominantly young males.

The Type-T personality has been found to be heavily influenced by the chemical balances of an individual and as a result, the genetic differences between men and women offer the potential to produce varying degrees of thrill seeking behavior. Due to naturally higher levels of testosterone (Farley, 1986) and lower levels of MAO (Zuckerman, 2000), it is hypothesized that men are more likely to be thrill seekers than women. In order to test the influence of gender on the likelihood of an individual taking part in extreme sports a T-test assuming equal variances was performed. The test yielded a mean of 3.0886 on the adventure seeking scale with a standard deviation of 0.7978 for men, while women scored a mean of 2.7090 with a standard deviation of 0.7770. This means that males scored an average of roughly 0.3 points higher on the Adventure Behavior scale, and are more likely to seek thrills through extreme sports than females.

Table 2			
Independent Samples Test			
		t-test for Equality of Means	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)

Adventure Behavior	3.667	232	.000
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H2: Individuals who have high levels of adventure behavior will also show a high level of risk aversion.

Risk Aversion was hypothesised to have a strong influence on thrill seeking behavior as a result of the inherent risks and uncertainties involved with taking part in activities such as extreme sports. In order to test this hypothesis a regression analysis was performed yielding a correlation coefficient of -0.321 (as seen in table 3). The correlation indicates that there is a somewhat strong relationship between risk aversion and thrill seeking tendencies. In this relationship, as an individual's risk aversion rises, there thrill seeking tendencies will decrease as signified by the negative value. Thrill seekers must be prepared to regularly take risks in the pursuit of a thrill and as a result, it is clear that participants will typically have a low level of risk aversion.

H3: participants who score high in adventure behavior, will also have a high level of innovativeness.

In order to determine the influence of innovativeness on the construct of thrill seeking behavior, performing a regression analysis showed a correlation coefficient of 0.373. The analysis of innovativeness' affect on thrill seeking behavior showed a somewhat strong relationship between the two constructs which coincides with the hypothesis that innovativeness will strongly affect thrill seeking behavior. In the relationship, an individual is more likely to participate in extreme sports the

higher their level of innovativeness. Innovators often have a desire for new experiences which will stimulate the mind, a very similar tendency to type-T personalities who desire experiences which are new and stimulating.

H4: Consumers who frequently make purchases for status, will score higher in adventure behavior.

Status Consumption is hypothesized to have a strong influence on thrill seeking behavior because of the expense of participating and the idea that extreme sports athletes often consider themselves “elite” athletes because of the risks and danger involved. The correlation that resulted from the regression analysis showed a correlation coefficient of 0.071 for the relationship between status consumption and adventure behavior. This result suggests that the relationship between status consumption and adventure behavior is not as strong as had been hypothesized. Instead, the analysis did not support the hypothesis and showed that status consumption has little effect on an individual’s level of adventure behavior

Correlations					
		Adventure Behavior	Risk Aversion	Status Consumption	Innovativeness
Pearson Correlation	Adventure Behavior	1.000	-.321	.071	.373
	Risk Aversion	-.321	1.000	.095	-.204
	Status Consumption	.071	.095	1.000	.213
	Innovativeness	.373	-.204	.213	1.000

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.870	3	10.290	19.629	.000 ^b
	Residual	121.620	232	.524		
	Total	152.490	235			

Model Summary								
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2
1	.450 ^a	.202	.192	.72403	.202	19.629	3	232

Coefficients^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial
1	Adventure Behavior (Constant)	3.025	.281		10.768	.000		
	Risk Aversion	-.283	.066	-.259	-4.280	.000	-.321	-.271
	Status Consumption	.026	.055	.029	.472	.637	.071	.031
	Innovativeness	.269	.053	.314	5.097	.000	.373	.317

H5: Participants who scored a 4 or 5 on the Adventure Behavior

Scale will spend noticeably more time per week using social media.

Thrill seeking personalities have been hypothesized to have drastically different habits for social media usage. Most type-T personalities seek to find more exciting ways to spend their time than using social media and as a result will not spend as much time on these platforms. In order to test the hypothesis, a 2- tailed T test assuming equal variances was performed in order to compare the social media usage of individuals with low thrill seeking tendencies (scoring < 4.00 on the Adventure Behavior Scale) against the social media usage of individuals with high thrill seeking tendencies (scoring ≥ 4.00 on the Adventure Behavior Scale). The results indicate that while there social media habits are very similar, individuals who scored high on the Adventure Behavior Scale actually use social media slightly more (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat) than those who scored low . This difference is extremely small; however, it does indicate that marketers can effectively reach thrill seekers using social media.

Table 7:					
Social Media: Group Statistics					
	Adventure Behavior	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How many hours per week do you spend on Facebook?	≥ 4.00	19	2.11	.737	.169
	< 4.00	217	2.08	.824	.056

How many hours per week do you spend on Twitter	>= 4.00	19	1.89	1.100	.252
	< 4.00	217	1.88	.983	.067
How many hours per week do you spend on Instagram?	>= 4.00	19	2.53	.964	.221
	< 4.00	217	2.45	1.027	.070
How many hours per week do you spend on Snapchat?	>= 4.00	19	2.74	1.195	.274
	< 4.00	217	2.55	1.205	.082

Table 8			
Independent Samples Test			
	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
How many hours per week do you spend on Facebook?	.114	234	.909
How many hours per week do you spend on twitter?	.061	234	.951
How many hours per week do you spend on Instagram?	.324	234	.746
How many hours per week do you spend on Snapchat?	.654	234	.514

Discussion

Upon completing a comprehensive literature review, I drew the hypotheses that the consumer constructs which will have the most impact on an individual's level of adventure behavior are risk aversion, innovativeness, and status consumption. The gender demographics and social media use of thrill seekers were also analysed using separate tests. The goal of studying the effects of these constructs is to determine if marketing variables that are not typically associated with sports marketing can be utilized to predict an individual's level of adventure behavior and their likelihood of participating in extreme sports. I established 5 hypotheses based on the literature, 4 of which were supported by the results of the survey.

The first hypothesis established states that the demographics of the type-T personality type will be a majority young males. Farley (1986) discovered that elevated levels of testosterone can amplify risk-taking behavior which means that men are much more likely to display high levels of adventure behavior. Testosterone levels also naturally decrease with age, which helps lead to the conclusion that thrill seeking behaviors tend to trail off as an individual gets older (Farley, 1986). Zuckerman also found a connection between low levels of MAO (monoamine oxidase), an

enzyme that regulates neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin. Women naturally have higher levels of MAO than men, reinforcing the theory that men are much more likely to have thrill seeking tendencies (Zuckerman, 2000). The results of this study showed that men consistently scored higher on the adventure behavior scale and supports the established hypothesis.

The hypothesis regarding the positive relationship between risk aversion and adventure behavior (H2) was reached based on the research of Self (2010, p 76), who's findings defined the type-T personality as "an extreme type of personality that comes in many varieties, but is generally identified by seemingly thrill seeking tendencies and sometimes almost reckless behavior." Because thrill seekers frequently take risks, individuals who have high levels of adventure behaviors will also display low levels of risk aversion. Risk aversion is a decision maker's attitude toward taking risks and as a result, individuals with low levels of risk aversion will not be deterred by the risks and dangers involved with extreme sports. The results of my study support this hypothesis and showed that the participants who scored high on the adventure behavior scale will also display low levels of risk aversion.

Hypothesis 3 states that participants who score high in adventure behavior, will also have a high level of innovativeness. Innovativeness is defined as "the degree to which an individual is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than the average member of his social system,"

(Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, p27). Venkatraman and Price (1990) discovered an aspect of innovativeness known as cognitive innovation, or “the desire for new experiences with the objective of stimulating the mind.” Self (2007) describes type-T personalities as having a similar propensity to seek experiences that are new and stimulating. These findings lead to the established hypothesis and the results found in this study supported my hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4 deals with the relationship between status consumption and adventure behavior, and states that consumers who frequently make purchases for status, will score higher in adventure behavior. Defined as the tendency of an individual to seek to purchase goods for the status they hold, regardless of their income or social class level (Eastman et al, 1999). Eastman and Eastman (2015) discuss the concept of conspicuous consumption (or Veblen Effect), which is the idea of consumers buying products solely for the purpose of standing out to others through public displays of wealth. Participating in extreme sports could be a form of conspicuous consumption because of the sheer expense of owning the equipment necessary for participating in such activities. These findings were the basis for the hypothesis and while the effect of status consumption was not as strong as expected, the results of this study still support the hypothesis.

The final hypothesis predicts that participants who scored a 4 or 5 on the Adventure Behavior Scale will spend noticeably more time per

week using social media. As a result of social media becoming one of the most popular methods of sharing and viewing extreme sports media, many thrill seekers are likely to spend more time using social media than consumers who score low in adventure behavior (Zhang, 2003). The reason these platforms are so popular for extreme sports media is that thrill seekers are more interested in watching short clips highlighting only intense action rather than spending time watching a full length, live broadcast of an event (Wakefield, 2018). The results of this study support this hypothesis and display that individuals who score high in adventure behavior do in fact spend more time on social media than those who had low scores for adventure behavior.

Managerial Implications

The goal of conducting this study is to provide marketing professionals with an improved framework by which to accurately predict an individual's level of adventure behavior using marketing variables that are not typically associated with sports literature. By determining which marketing variables will have the strongest relationship to thrill seeking tendencies, marketers can predict which consumers will be the most likely to participate in extreme sports and more accurately target them with marketing campaigns. The results of the study established that risk aversion has a strong influence on adventure behavior because having less of an aversion for taking risks, makes an individual much more likely to willing to accept the risk involved with taking part in extreme sports. As

a result of these inherent risks, many extreme sports athletes also consider themselves to be “elite” athletes which strongly appeals to many consumers who are drawn to status consumption. While status consumption did not have as dramatic of an effect on adventure behavior as was hypothesized, it was found that innovativeness is a much stronger indicator. The similarities between the tendencies of type-T personalities and cognitive innovators to both seek new and stimulating experiences results in a strong correlation between these two variables. Thus marketers know that innovators are likely to participate in extreme sports as a method for finding these new experiences. In order to accurately target thrill seekers, marketers have an effective avenue utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram or Snapchat as these platforms are becoming increasingly more popular as a method of sharing and viewing extreme sports media. The results of this study indicate that individuals with high levels of adventure behavior tendencies consistently spend more time on social media than those who scored low in adventure behavior. Finally, marketers should keep in mind that due to natural chemical balances, males are much more likely to participate in extreme sports. While some females do exhibit thrill seeking tendencies, marketing budgets will be used more efficiently if marketing campaigns primarily focus on the male portion of the type-T personality demographic.

Future Research

If the study were to be continued, several simple improvements could be made to increase the amount of information learned about the type-T personality and thrill seeking behavior. The survey sample was relatively small and homogenous, which limits the accuracy of the analysis. As a result of being distributed solely on the Georgia Southern University campus, almost all of the respondents are college students who are studying in the college of business. Diversifying the survey sample to include a wider range of ages and interests would drastically increase how well the results truly reflect the general consumer. Getting participants who are known to have high levels of adventure behavior would also help the results, because this group could act as a control group and offer a point of reference with which to compare the results. There are also several scale items which would be helpful to include in future research. Including a scale to measure various aspects of personality and including YouTube in the social media scale would also be beneficial because it the primary platform over which extreme sports media is published. As a result, it is likely that type-T personalities spend more time on YouTube than other online platforms.

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