

# Exploring Sensation Seeking Behaviour among Adolescents in Tamilnadu

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**Abstract:** *Sensation seeking is the tendency to obtain new and different sensations, feelings, and experiences. Sensation seeking is a personality trait characterized by a desire for novel, intense, and diverse experiences. This study examines sensation seeking behaviour among adolescents in Tamil Nadu, specifically focusing on gender differences. The sample comprised of 75 adolescents 38 males and 37 females, and “The Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS-V)” was used for collecting data. It consists of 40 forced-choice questions to assess individual differences in optimal level of stimulation. The results indicate no significant difference between males and females in sensation seeking behaviour, suggesting equal involvement in risk-taking activities. The findings contribute to understanding the role of gender in sensation seeking among adolescents.*

**Keywords:** Sensation Seeking Behaviour, Adolescents, Gender difference.

## 1. Introduction

In many adolescents after crossing the stage of puberty they has a strong attitude towards their life. During adolescents, there are various factors that play role in the adolescents like mental, emotional, bodily changes, social alterations, excitement these can lead the adolescents to involve in the risk taking behaviour. Social influence is a type of environmental factor that leads the adolescents to take risks. Peer groups and friends around them can influence the adolescent's socialization and individuality by allowing adolescents to discover their interest and uncertainty while holding the sense of joining a group of friends. Adolescents are very much into complicated and extreme sensations and experience sake they are more involved into engaging them into taking risk and get new experience.

Sensation Seeking behaviour is known as an personality trait which is defined as new, complex, extreme level and diverse sensation and the motivation to take social, authorized, physical and economic risks. Sensation Seeking behaviour mostly involves of consuming more amount of alcohol, taking drugs, risky driving, risk-taking behaviours in the adolescents.

Zuckerman described that there are two forms of sensation seeking behaviour: “Socialized sensation seeking” and “Unsocialized sensation seeking”. In socialized sensation seeking it is non impulsive and has one sub category which is described as thrill and adventure seeking. The Unsocialized sensation seeking explains that it is impulsive and is divided into three sub category which is described as disinhibition, boredom susceptibility, and experience seeking. Zuckerman states that every individual has most promising level of Motivation. Stimulation is considered as any action or stimulation that provokes a response. The response which is produced by the stimulation is a state of

increase in he physical activity which is known as the arousal.

Sensation Seeking is conceptualized as having four distinct components: Thrill and adventure seeking, Disinhibition, Boredom susceptibility and Experience seeking. In the thrill and experience seeking behaviour, they are not motivated by the dangers , but they are more driven into the conquering of the new challenges which are ahead and want to soak up all the new experiences they wanted to enjoy. Therefore the adolescents who are more into the thrill and adventure seeking they do not fear of taking the risks which consists the activities like: gambling , mountain climbing, cliff driving, using drugs, sky diving, paragliding .etc., Followed by the Disinhibition sensation seeking which states that the adolescents sensation sensations through engagement of other people; searching for lose inhibitions by engaging in variety in drugs, alcohol, sex .etc., Experience seeking sensation is known as the stimulation through the mind and the senses the pursuit of complex environmental stimuli as through travelling or meeting any new peoples. And at the last Boredom susceptibility which is known as the tendency to get easily bored by the familiar or repetitive situations or peoples or by following any type of routine works.

Zuckerman stated that sensation-seeking must have been an adaptive trait that has an evolutionary advantage which stated that homo sapiens were the only group of early hominids to emigrate over the entire world, so humans are species are characterized by novelty and intensity seeking. Early humans who are more willing to take risks were likely to be more successful hunters, so a certain degree of risk-taking behaviour-fueled by promise of the reward may be programmed into human DNA. Zuckerman also stated that if one is taking too much risk they may die before they have a chance to spread their genes around and if they are too cautious then they may have an advantage of obtaining resources like food and water that may have some risk.

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Despite having the ability to perceive risk, adolescents have an greater tendency not to account for those perceptions in their decision making, it has been studied that in terms of relationship to abuse use, sexual risk taking, psychopathology among adolescents. It is believed that sensation seeking behaviour is to be at the peak around the age of 16.

The relationship between the sensation seeking and substance use is especially very much for the alcohol use among the adolescents. A review of studies not limited to adolescents shows a clear connection between sensation seeking and increased sexual risk taking, studies also showed a positive association between sensation seeking and sexual risk taking.

Marvin Zuckerman developed the concept of sensation seeking and it is based on individual differences in optimal level of sensation caused by biological nervous system differences. People who are high in sensation seeking are individuals who have relatively low level nervous system activation and therefore seek arousal from their external environment by looking for normal stimuli and engaged in various experiences, in contrast individual or adolescents who are low sensation seeking have naturally higher level of internal activation and does not lead to seek sensation from external sources. Zuckerman states that sensation seeking is genetically influenced because it is evolutionary adaptive.

High sensation seekers have a stronger orienting response to a new stimuli, and their physiological response is indicative of sensation seeking rather than avoidance and in addition, sensation seeking has been found to be related to levels of important brain neurotransmitters, which in turn have been found genetically influenced. Sensation seeking have been found that it is a strong predictor of such behaviours, it also indicates that the environment and experiences play important roles in the expression of behaviours such as aggression.

A recent study was done on sexual sensation seeking: scale developed and predicting AIDS risk behaviour among homosexually active man shows that they used 106 homosexually active men completed newly developed measures of sensation seeking related to sexual and non-sexual experience as well as measure of sexual compulsivity. Results show the new scales were internally consistent and time stable.

Another study was done on Sensation seeking and risk taking behaviour, it was measured by giving choice questions to 180 males under the age of 18-50 years from three different occupational groups which involves of physical risk (e.g., fireman, mountain rescue squad ) sports man (e.g., mountain climbers, car drivers ) and non-risk controls. On the results both risk groups have higher risk professionals and sportsman have higher scores on the given scale. This study concluded that people who are involved in high risk activities manifest a higher need of stimulation.

A study was done on sensation seeking as a predictor of positive and negative risk behaviour among adolescents shows that there are two types of risk taking namely positive and negative risk-taking behaviour, positive risk behaviour

includes activities like climbing, rafting etc. and negative risk taking behaviour includes activities like crime, drug use etc. For this research 360 adolescents between 12-16 years old were taken for this research and the results shows that a strong relationship between sensation seeking and both types of risk behaviour.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the Sensation Seeking Behaviour present among the adolescents in Tamil Nadu, with a focus on gender differences. The study aims to determine if there is a significant difference in sensation seeking behaviour between male and female adolescents in the region.

### **Significance of the study:**

Understanding sensation seeking behaviour among adolescents is crucial for developing interventions and strategies to promote healthy behaviour. By examining gender differences in sensation seeking behaviour, this study contributes to the existing literature on adolescents' risk-taking and provides insights for parents, educators, and policymakers in Tamil Nadu.

## **2. Methodology**

### **Sample**

Participants were adolescents of age 12 to 21 of Tamil Nadu. 75 students participated in this study. In these 38 were males and 37 were females have participated. The participants are from various regions in Tamil Nadu like Chennai, Kanyakumari, Madurai, Tuticorin, Thenkasi, Ramnathapuram, Nagapattinam, Tirunelveli.

### **Materials**

The present study included The Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS). The SSS consists of 40 items. The SSS assesses the 4 categories of Experience seeking, Thrill and adventure seeking, Disinhibition, and Boredom susceptibility.

### **Procedure**

Participants are provided consent form, demographic information and SSS questionnaire in Google forms. At the start of the study, the participants reviewed the research consent form and those who are willing to take part in the study proceeded by filling the given demographic details and filled the SSS questionnaire. After completing the 40 questions they submitted the form. Snowball technique is used to collect the data.

### **Design**

The study uses a quantitative approach by involving two sample groups, namely male and female. The data analysis technique in this study uses Independent Sample T-test used to determine whether two unrelated have significant differences.

## **3. Results**

The analysis in this study was to determine the sensation seeking behaviour among the male and female Adolescents students of Tamil Nadu. The research results can be explained as follows:

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation among male and female

Gender	N	M	SD
Female	37	16.27	3.892
Male	38	16.11	4.683

Based on the output table it is known that the amount of data on 38 male has a mean value of 16.27 and standard deviation of 3.892, while 37 females received a mean value of 16.11 and standard deviation of 4.683.

**Table 2:** Independent sample test  
**Measure of Sensation Seeking Behaviour among adolescents in Tamil Nadu**

	Levene's Test for equality of variances			t-test for equality of means			
	F	sig.	t	df	sig.	Mean difference (2-tailed)	Std. Error difference
Equal variances assumed	.289	.592	.166	73	.869	.165	.996
Equal variances not assumed			.166	71.256	.869	.165	.996

Based on the Independent sample T-test output showed that there is no significant difference in means between the two groups, regardless of whether equal variances are assumed or not. The Levene's test for equality of variances also showed a non-significant result with a high p-value of (0.592).

Thus, according to the Independent sample t-test it is concluded that there is no significant difference between males and females in the sensation seeking behaviour.

#### 4. Discussion

Sensation seeking behaviour is mostly observed in all of the adolescents. The present study sought to clarify that the sensation seeking behaviour does not have an impact on the male and female gender. Moreover the results provided a great deal of insight into the sensation seeking behaviour among the adolescents in Tamil Nadu. In this study it states that the male and female are equal both in the sensation seeking and risk-taking behaviours. Before the study there was a hypothesis (H1) stating that there can be a significant difference between the male and female as the male may have high amount of sensation seeking behaviour but the results states that there is no significant difference between the male and female participant.

Sensation seeking Behaviour consist of activities involving alcohol intake, drug usage, mountain climbing, paragliding, etc, and it is mostly considered as males are more involved in taking the risks and women are not into taking risk as some of them are restricted from involving in those activities but nowadays women and male are equally standardized therefore women are taking risk as equal to men as they want to have more experience involving in those activities.

Adolescents are mostly involved in the sensation seeking behaviour as they have more courage and willingness towards risk taking behaviour they are more into involving in and exploring different kind of experiences which provide them a great exposure towards their life. They want to experience these kinds of activities to fulfil their life needs.

In a resent study a boxes test was conducted which showed a higher risk appetite than women. Of the questioners, only the DOSPERT benefited scale yielded a similar result and other test showed no gender differences. The frontal theta asymmetry was not significantly related to the number of

boxes selected in the sample a positive corelation was evident only among women. It is more likely that both the activity of this brain region and risk-taking are influenced by hormone levels such as testosterone.

Therefore, the neurotransmitters in the brain and the level of hormones are mostly responsible for the sensation seeking behaviour in adolescents and the sensation seeking behaviour is common and equal among the both genders of male and female.

#### 5. Limitation

This study possesses small sample size. In addition, only adolescents from Tamil Nadu are targeted. Only Sensation Seeking Behaviour is taken as a variable.

#### 6. Conclusion

This study provides insights into sensation seeking behaviour among adolescents in Tamil Nadu. The findings suggest that there is no significant difference between males and females in their propensity for sensation seeking. Both genders demonstrate an equal willingness to engage in intense and risk-taking behaviours. These results challenge and traditional notion that males are more inclined towards sensation seeking. Further research is needed to explore the factors influencing sensation seeking behaviour adolescents and to develop targeted interventions to promote positive behaviours and reduce potential risks.

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