

## Sensation seeking among marijuana smokers

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### ABSTRACT

Sensation seeking is the degree at which an individual seeks highly stimulating experience. Marijuana smokers are those who smoke a chemical, obtained by heating a particular flower or leaf. The aim of this study is to measure the level of sensation seeking among marijuana smokers and to find the relationship of sensation seeking between male and female marijuana smokers. The participants include 30 male marijuana smokers and 06 female marijuana smokers of age range from 21 to 39 years. Snowball sampling method was employed for the data. The socio-demographic details like gender, age, occupation and the type of marijuana smoked were asked. Brief Sensation Seeking Scale developed by Ernest Barratt (1995) was administered along with separate set of structured interviews for marijuana smokers was prepared for Sensation Seeking (8 items constructed in 2019) and was separately administered to the participants. The statistical analysis used in Independent samples t-test and Pearson product moment co efficient of correlation. The findings of the study indicate that there is no significant difference found among male and female marijuana smokers. Average positive correlation found between male marijuana smokers and female marijuana smokers in sensation seeking.

**Keywords:** *Sensation Seeking; Gender Identity; Marijuana Smokers*

The definition of Sensation seeking given is “the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experience” (Zuckerman, 1979). Research evidences prove that marijuana users have higher sensation seeking than the nonuser groups (Satinder, 1984). Optimal level theory says that higher sensation seekers prefers those drugs that simulate the arousal level than those drugs that depress the arousal level (Dubey, 2008).

Spillane et, al. (2012) conducted a study on Sensation-seeking predicts initiation of daily smoking behavior among American Indian high school students. The participants taken for the study were 764 students. The results showed that sensation seeking is differently initiated in males and females. Sensation seeking did not predict daily smoking in males where as there was higher sensation seeking scores among females who smoke daily. Based

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on this review the aim of this study is to study the level of sensation seeking among male and female marijuana smokers and to find if there is a significant gender difference in sensation seeking among marijuana smokers.

The rationale behind conducting the research is to know the gender differences that can be found in sensation seeking among marijuana smokers as very few researches has been conducted on marijuana smokers and sensation seeking is recently developed trait. Also the consumption of marijuana has increased by 60 percent over the past decade according to article in Deutsche Welle, 2019 due to the increased consumption of marijuana the studies made on this will contribute to develop knowledge in this field and will open different domains for future study. Due to the less number of researches done which studies sensation seeking among marijuana smokers and the researcher's interest to conduct a study on marijuana smokers are two of the main purposes for carrying out the research.

### *Objectives*

1. To assess the level of sensation seeking among marijuana smokers.
2. To study whether there is a significant gender difference in sensation seeking among marijuana smokers.

### *Aim*

- To study the level of sensation seeking among marijuana smokers.

### *Variables*

Independent Variable: - Gender

Dependent Variable: - Sensation seeking

### *Hypotheses*

Ho<sup>1</sup>: There is no significant gender difference in the level of Sensation Seeking among marijuana smokers.

Ho<sup>2</sup>: There is no significant relationship in sensation seeking among male and female marijuana smokers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Research Design*

Research is triangulation in nature and adopts 2\*2 factorial research design.

### *Sample*

Snowball sampling method was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 36 participants, out of which 30 of them were males and 06 were females. The age range of the sample was from 21 to 39 years. All the respondents were contacted individually through social network and are from Bangalore and the data was collected using Google forms.

### *Inclusion Criteria*

1. Smokers who have been regularly smoking marijuana for more than a year.
2. Age ranges between 21-39 years. (Erikson's psychosocial development- Intimacy Vs Isolation)
3. Students and working class.

### *Exclusion Criteria*

1. Social marijuana smokers are not considered.

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2. Marijuana smokers who smoke weed for peer pressure are not taken.
3. Individuals who are currently undergoing treatment for smoking marijuana are not taken into consideration.
4. Alcoholics and cigarette smokers who also smoke weed are not considered.
5. Psychotic symptoms which are not exhibited as a result of weed smoking by an individual are not considered.

### *Tool*

#### **Brief Sensation Seeking Scale (BSSS)**

Brief Sensation Seeking Scale is developed by Hoyle et al. in the year 2002.

#### ***Reliability and Validity***

The reliability coefficient of BSSS was 0.76. The subscales of experience seeking, boredom susceptibility, thrill and adventure seeking and disinhibition were found to be 0.41, 0.54, 0.44 and 0.56 respectively, they were statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Structured Interview Schedule:** Separate set of structured interview schedule were prepared by the researcher for Sensation Seeking and was administered on the participants. The scale constructed by the researcher consisted of 08 items and was constructed in the year 2019. The researcher wanted to gain more details regarding the impact of weed smoking on sensation seeking behaviour of an individual. The open-ended and close-ended questions which were included, followed the topics that were relevant to the study. It provided a path to identify different perspectives in understanding sensation seeking among marijuana smokers. The structured interview also allowed the participants to express their views in their own terms. It majorly focused on individual urges and wants. This gives an opportunity for the researcher to further explore the responses and categorize them. The aim of the researcher is to know if smoking marijuana have any effect in the level of sensation seeking of participants.

### ***Procedure***

The participants were reached through snowball sampling for the data collection of the marijuana smoking population. The purpose of the study was explained to participants, by attaching the informed consent document with Google form. The Google form was divided into 3 sections, the first section collected the socio-demographic details. The second section contained Sensation seeking questionnaire followed by third section that contained the structured interview questionnaire for the same. The questionnaires were administered with clear instructions. Responses of the participants on each scale were scored and interpreted by referring to the scoring key and norms.

### **Ethical Issues**

1. Consent was taken from the Participant.
2. Data was used only for the research purpose.
3. Personal details collected was used for academic purpose only.
4. The research had been approved by the department review committee.
5. The participants were assured the confidentiality of the information that was provided by them.

### **Statistical Analysis**

1. Descriptive statistics
2. Mean
3. Standard deviation
4. Percentage

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### *Inferential statistics*

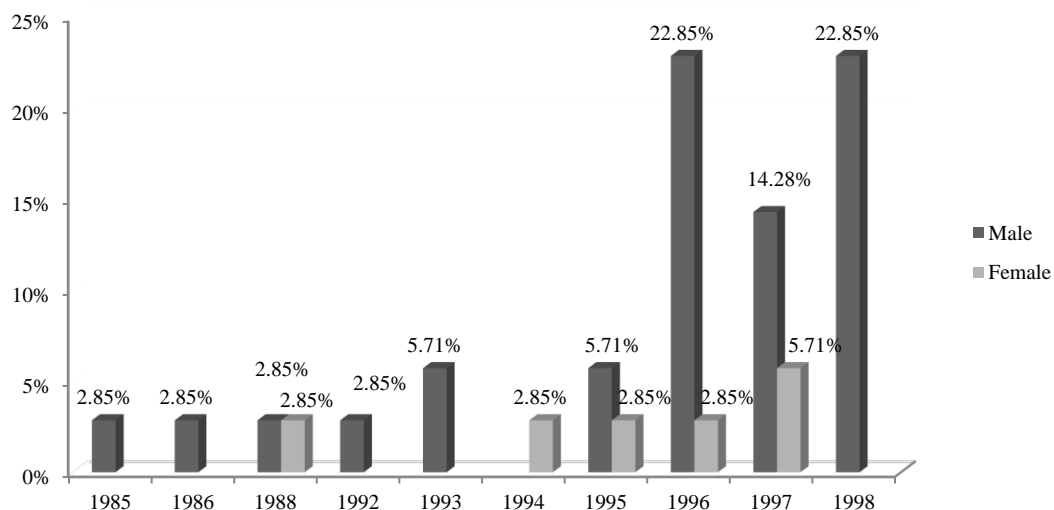
Single Samples t- test was used to find the difference between gender. The hypothesis states that ' There is no significant gender difference in the level of Sensation Seeking among marijuana smokers.'

Karl Person's Product Moment Correlation was used to find out the coefficient correlation between Sensation Seeking among male and female Marijuana smokers. .The hypothesis states that ' There is no significant relationship in sensation seeking among male and female marijuana smokers.'

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

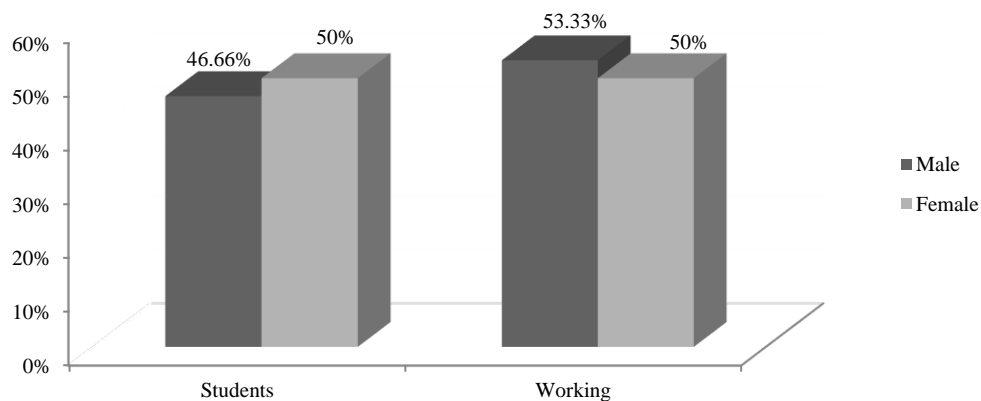
### *Demographic Profile of the Participants*

This section represents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Graphs and figures supporting the demographic details are also provided. The sample consisted of 36 participants all of who are marijuana smokers.



**Fig 1 Age range of male and female marijuana smokers**

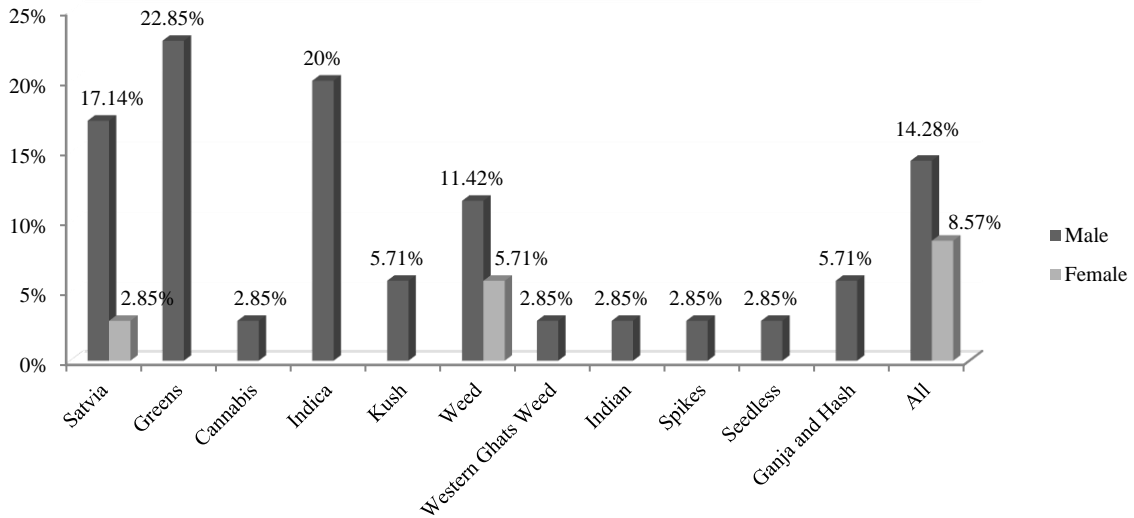
As shown in figure 2, the percentage of weed smoker participants of the study between the age range of 21-39 indicates that most of the female and male participants come under the age of 1996. The number of female marijuana smokers are high in the year 1997.



**Fig 2 Occupation of male and female marijuana smokers**

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As shown in figure 3, participants of the study indicates that most of the smoker participants are female students and working class. The rate of smoking among male in working class is higher.



**Fig 3** Types of marijuana smoked by male and female marijuana smokers

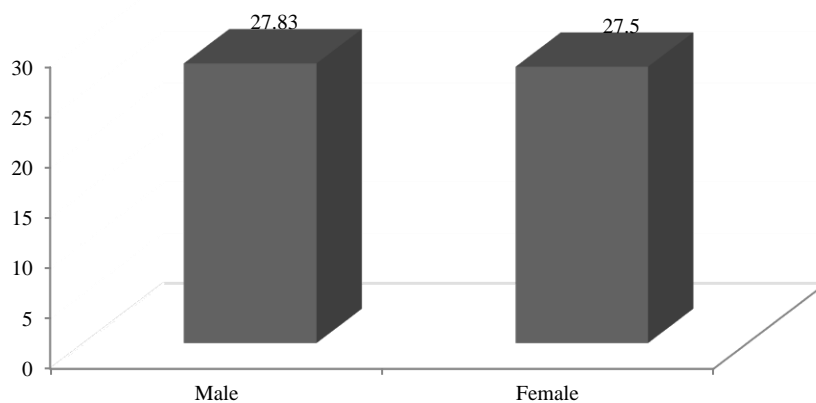
As shown in figure 4, participants of the study indicated that most of the participants smoke greens and majority smoke all kinds of marijuana. Comparatively cannabis, seedless, western ghats weed, Indian and spikes are smoked less. The rate of female marijuana smokers are less compared to male although most of the female smokers in the sample smoke all kinds of marijuana.

#### Single Sample 't'-test

The hypothesis which states that there is no significant gender difference in the level of sensation Seeking among marijuana smokers, was tested.

**Table 1:** Mean, standard deviation and t value of sensation seeking among marijuana smokers

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Male	30	27.83	4.457	29	34.202	0.001
female	6	27.50	4.806	5	14.015	0.001



**Fig 4** Mean scores of sensation seeking among male and female marijuana smokers

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The hypothesis which states 'there is no significant gender difference in sensation seeking among marijuana smokers' was tested using the Single Sample t-test. The obtained t-value of male is 34.202 and female is 14.015, at significance level of 0.001 which rejects the hypothesis stating that 'there is no significant gender difference in sensation seeking among marijuana smokers'. The mean scores indicate that sensation seeking is seen similar among both male and female. However male shows slightly higher sensation seeking as compared to female. The results of the present study considering the mean scores is supported by a research conducted by Cross et al (2013) on "Sex differences in sensation-seeking: a meta-analysis" the results of which showed that the difference in male and female scores can be seen in sensation seeking among both the gender.

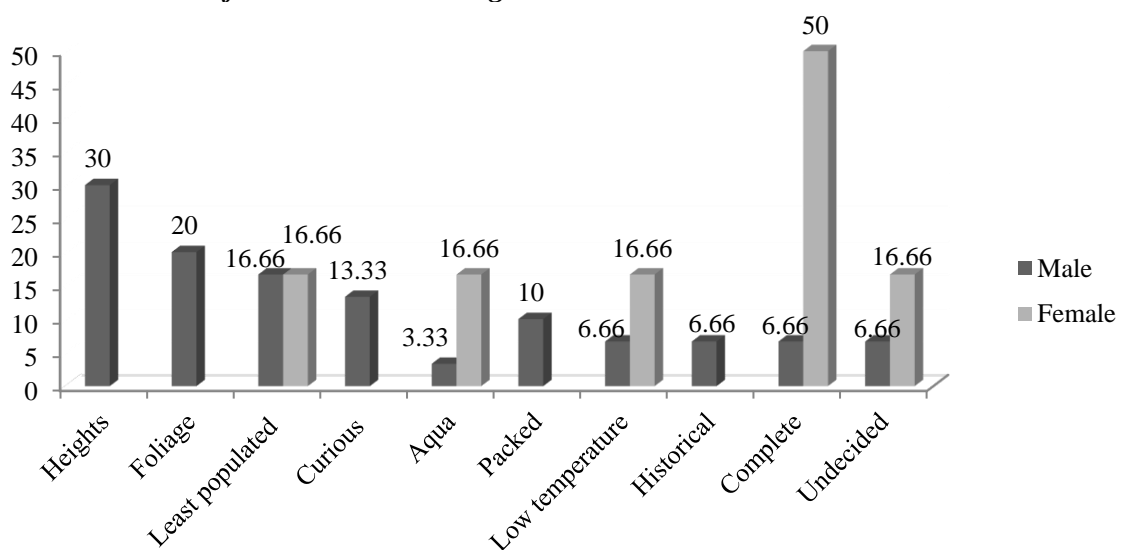
#### Karl Pearson's Co-efficient of Correlation

**Table 2: Karl Pearson's Correlation of sensation seeking among male and female marijuana smokers**

Sensation seeking		
	r-value	p-value
Male marijuana smokers	1	.289
Female marijuana smokers	.521	

The hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between sensation seeking and impulsivity among male marijuana smokers was tested using the Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The obtained result indicates that there is a average positive correlation between sensation seeking and impulsivity ( $r=0.521$ ) which is not significant at 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted which states 'there is no significant relationship between sensation seeking and impulsivity among male marijuana smokers'. No concrete studies have been previously done which correlates both sensation seeking and impulsivity among male marijuana smokers.

#### Structured interview for sensation seeking

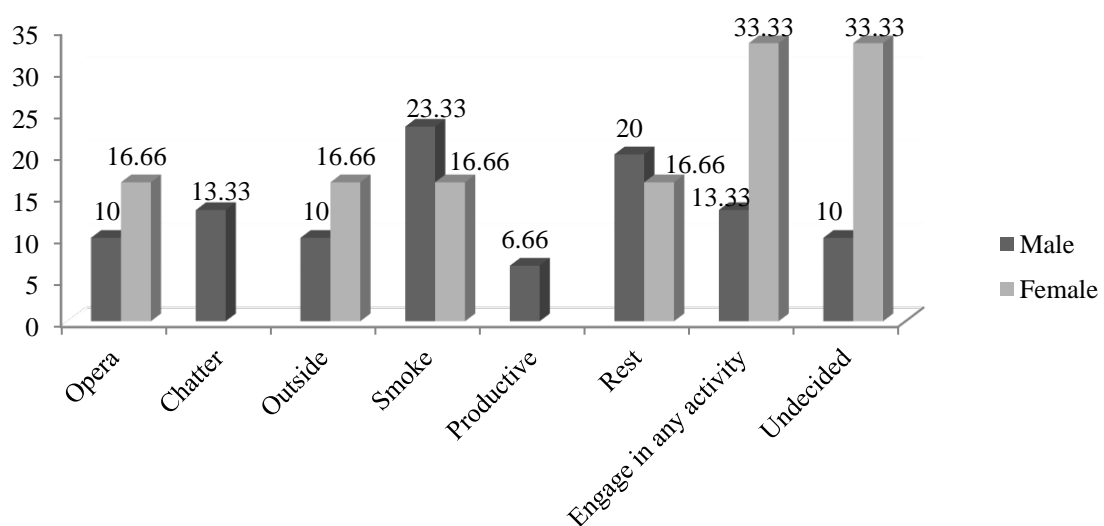


**Fig 5 Percentage of individuals indicating the kinds of places they like to explore**

The question was formed by the researcher to know the preferences of the participant. Themes were formed based on the responses given by the participants. The themes formed are applicable for both the gender. The first theme formed is 'heights' which means places

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above the ground level. The percentage of male who like to explore places in height are greater than any other places. Second theme formed is 'foliage' which means a collective place of green leaves. Responses like 'nature, natural forest, green nature' and others was categorised under this theme. The participant under this theme are all male. Third theme formed is 'least populated' which means places that consist of less number of people. Responses like 'people less place, any place with less people' and few other come under this theme. The number of participants who like to explore such places are equal in both male and female. Fourth theme formed is 'Curious' which means those places that makes an individual eager towards something. Responses like 'places with secrets, spooky places' come under this theme. The participants who prefer to explore such places are mainly males. The fifth theme that is formed is 'aqua' which means places with water. Responses like 'seaside, beach side' come under this category. The participants who prefer aqua are more of female as compared to male. Sixth theme formed is 'packed' which means places full of people. Responses like 'crowded places, hotel and pub' come under this category. The participant under this theme are all male. The seventh theme formed is 'low temperature' which means places that are filled with coldness and are chilly. Responses like 'all the cold places in the world, cold places' fall under this category. The number of female respondents preferring such place are more compared to male. Eighth theme formed is 'historical' which means places that are old and have a story behind them. Responses like 'archaeological sites, any place with rich history' fall under this category. The participant under this theme are all male. The ninth theme formed is 'complete', which means that the participants wants to explore all the places that is there, it can be legal or illegal. Responses like 'all kinds: popular, unpopular, explored, unexplored; I want to explore the world ' come under this category. Female participants majorly prefer to explore all kinds of places as the results show. The last theme formed is 'undecided' where the participants are not sure as to which kinds of places they would want to explore. Responses like 'anything that calls me, place which I don't know anything or anyone' come under this category. The number of female responses is more compared to male.

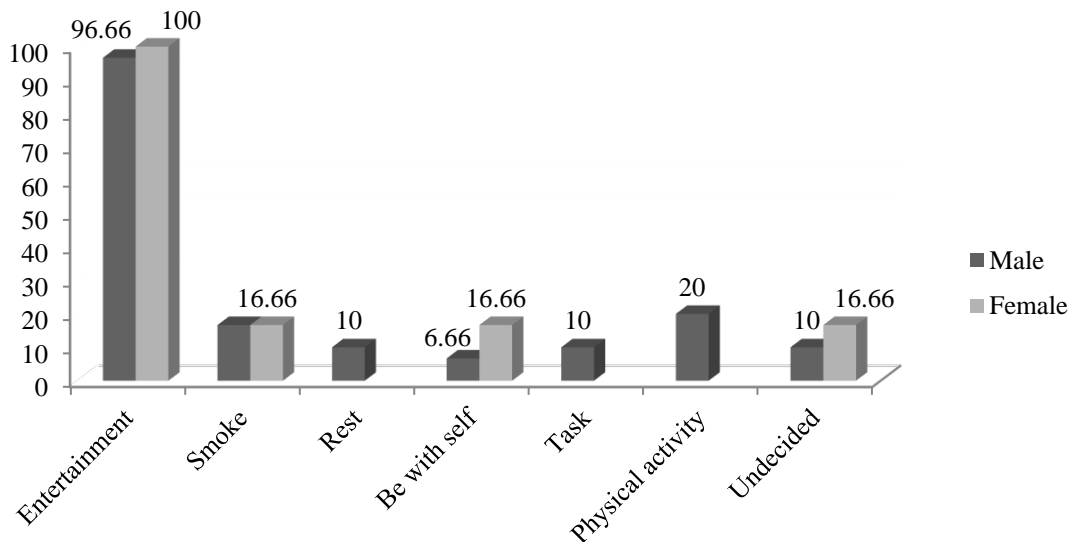


**Fig 6 Percentage of individuals indicating the things they do when they are restless**

The question was formed by the researcher to know the things participants do when they are restless. Themes were formed based on the responses given by the participants. The themes formed are applicable for both the gender. The first theme formed is 'opera' which here means dramatic works in music. The percentage of female who like to listen to music when

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they feel restless are greater than males. Second theme formed is 'chatter' which means participants like to speak to others during the time they feel restless. Responses like 'make calls, hangout with friends' are categorised under this theme. The participants under this theme are all male. Third theme formed is 'outside' which means participants like to visit go out from the present place. Responses like 'go out somewhere, take a walk' come under this theme. The number female of participants are more compared to male. Fourth theme formed is 'smoke' which means they like to take a puff of smoke when they feel restless. Responses like 'I smoke, smoke pot, take a spliff' come under this theme. The participants who prefer to smoke while they are restless are mainly males. The fifth theme that is formed is 'productive' which means doing something useful that has a positive outcome. Responses like 'I watch lots of videos on quantum mechanics, work' come under this category. The participants under this theme are all male. Sixth theme formed is 'rest' which means cease work in order to take a moment to relax. Responses like 'sleep or eat ice cream, take rest, breath in breath out' come under this category. The participants following this theme are majority male. The seventh theme formed is 'engage' in any activity which means doing things that a helps individual divert their mind. Responses like 'sports, play games, TV show' fall under this category. The number of female respondents preferring such activities are more compared to male. Eighth theme formed is 'undecided' which means unsure of what they want to do when they are restless. Responses like 'not sure, look for a way to engage myself' fall under this category. The number of female responses are more compared to male under this theme.



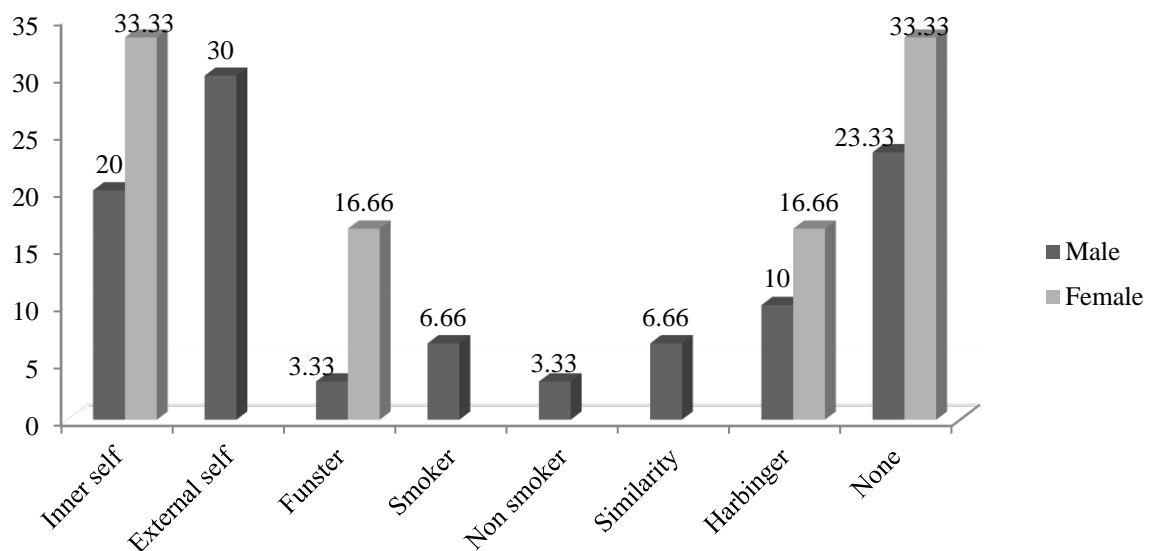
**Fig 7 Percentage of individuals engaging in activities when they are bored**

The question was formed by the researcher to know the things participants do when they are bored. Themes were formed based on the responses given by the participants. The themes formed are applicable for both the gender. The first theme formed is 'entertainment' which here means an action that provides enjoyment. Responses like 'watching movies, Pub G' are categorised under this theme. The percentage of female who like entertainment when they are bored are greater than males. Second theme formed is 'smoke' which means participants like to take a puff of smoke when they are bored. Responses like 'I smoke, smoke cigarette' are categorised under this theme. The percentage of participants who like to smoke when bored is equal in both male and female. Third theme formed is 'rest' which means cease work in order to take a moment to relax. Responses like 'take a nap, sleep' come under this



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theme. The participant under this theme are all male. Fourth theme formed is 'be with self' which means they like spend time with themselves and be alone. Responses like ' ride alone and eat something, be alone with thoughts' come under this theme. The number of female respondents preferring such activities are more compared to male. The fifth theme that is formed is 'task' which means a piece of work to be done or undertaken. Responses like ' fill survey forms, work ' come under this category. The participants under this theme are all male. Sixth theme formed is 'physical activity' which means bodily movements performed during any time of day or night. Responses like ' play cricket, play with dog' come under this category. The participants following this theme are all male. The seventh theme formed is 'undecided' which means unsure of what they want to do when they are bored. Responses like ' based on situation' fall under this category. The number of female respondents preferring such activities are more compared to male.

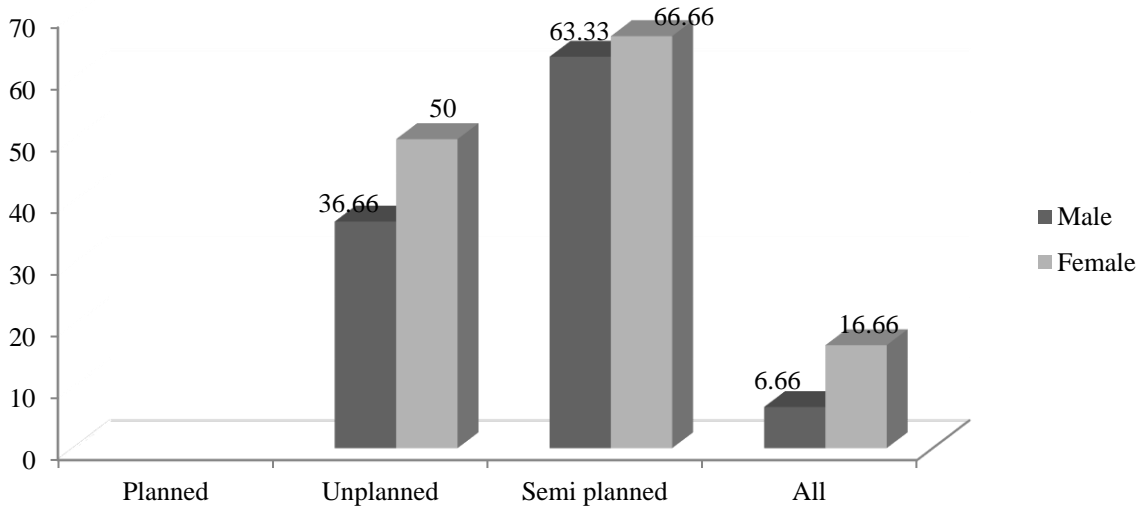


**Fig 8 Percentage of individuals looking for attributes while making friends**

The question was formed by the researcher to know the things participants look for when they make friends. Themes were formed based on the responses given by the participants. The themes formed are applicable for both the gender. The first theme formed is 'Inner self' which here means a person's own uniqueness based on their inner mind, soul and nature. Responses like ' good heart, honesty ' are categorised under this theme. The percentage of female who look into the inner self are greater than males. Second theme formed is 'external self' which means how the individual portray themselves. Responses like ' straight forward attribute, attitude ' are categorised under this theme. The participants under this theme are all male. Third theme formed is 'funster' which means people who are humorous and cracks jokes. Responses like ' fun, humour ' come under this theme. The number of female respondents who look for the attribute of funster are more compared to male. Fourth theme formed is 'smoker' which means participants expects their friends also to be smokers. Responses like ' the smoke weed ' come under this theme. The participants under this theme are all male. The fifth theme that is formed is 'non smoker' which means participants expects their friends not to be smokers. Responses like ' the person should not smoke ' come under this category. The participant under this theme are all male. Sixth theme formed is 'similarity' which means having similar beliefs, values or idea of fun. Responses like ' same mentality, similar lifestyle ' come under this category. The participants following this theme

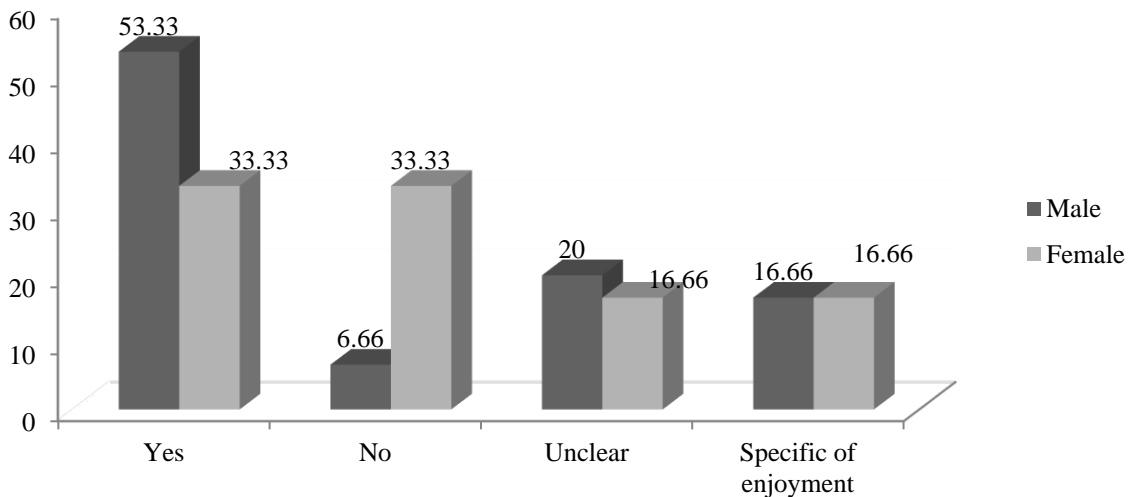
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are all male. The seventh theme formed is 'harbinger' which means a sense of feeling connected or getting good vibe from another. Responses like 'same vibe, vibe ' fall under this category. The number of female respondents preferring such attributes are more compared to male. The eighth theme formed is 'None' which means participants do not look into any attribute specifically before making friends. Responses like ' I don't know, nothing like that' fall under this category. The number of female respondents preferring such attributes are more compared to male.



**Fig 9 Percentage of individuals based on preference of trips**

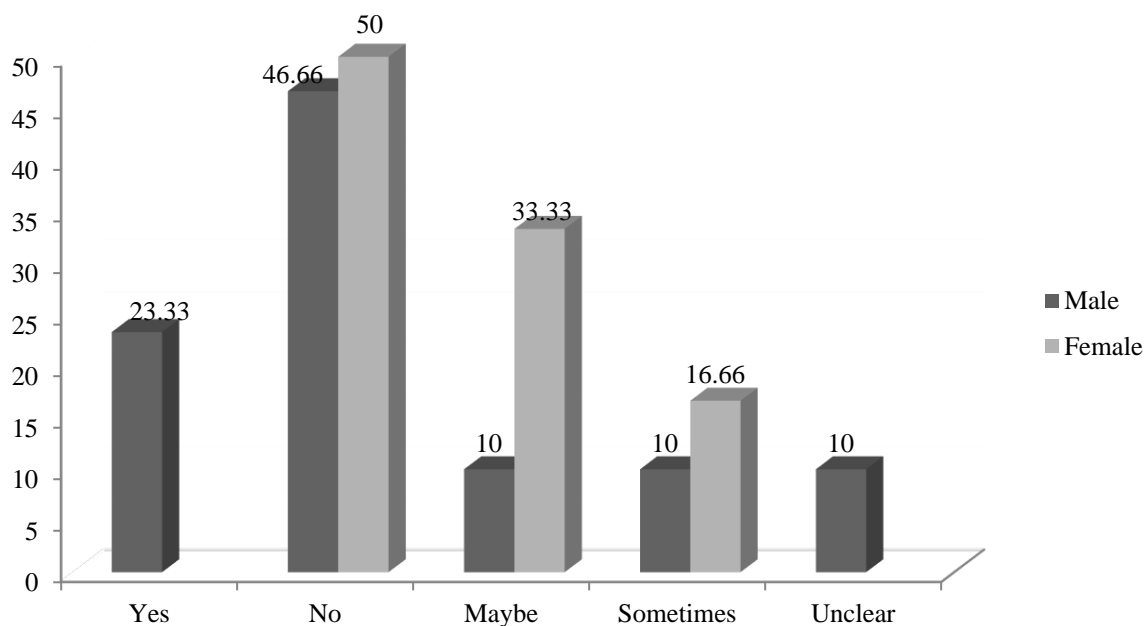
The question was formed by the researcher to know how the participants prepare for trips. Themes were formed by the researcher before the collection of responses by the participants. The themes formed are applicable for both the gender. The first theme is 'planned' which neither male or female prefer while planning their trip. Second theme is 'unplanned', the results of which show that females prefer more number of unplanned trips. Third theme is 'semi planned', the results of which shows that female prefer semi planned as similar to that of males. Fourth theme is 'all', the results show that more number of females prefer trips which are planned, unplanned as well as semi planned.



**Fig 10 Percentage of individuals who enjoys parties**

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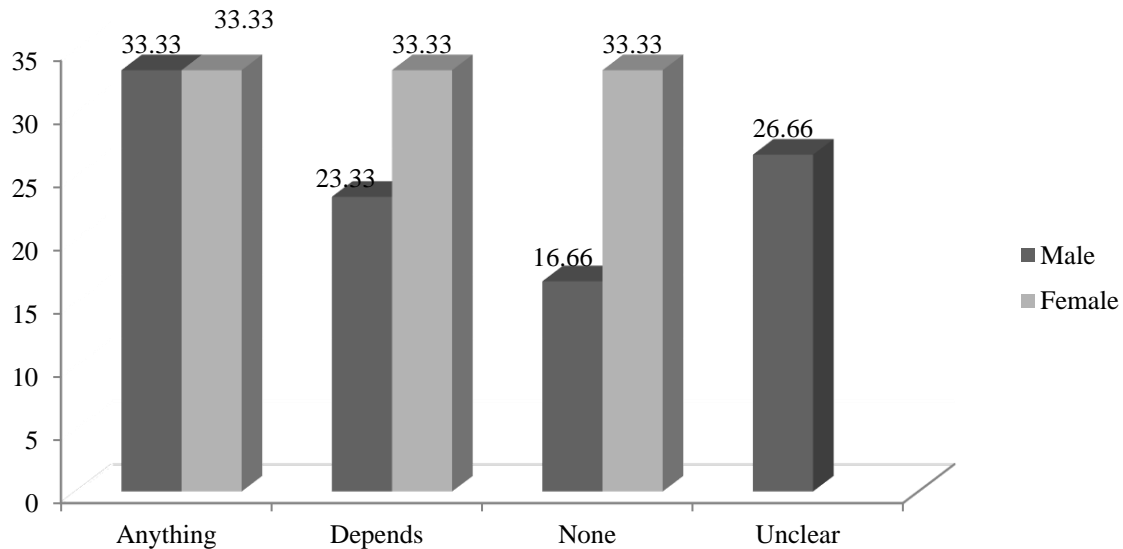
The question was formed by the researcher to know if the participants enjoy parties. Themes were formed based on the responses received by the participants. The themes formed are applicable for both the gender. The first theme is 'Yes', most male enjoy going to parties as compared to female according to the responses the reasons given are like ' I enjoy partying with people I know and trust, I do enjoy parties. A way to relax and leaving my troubles behind ' and few others. Second theme is 'No', most female do not enjoy going to parties as compared to male according to the responses the reasons given are like ' No. Not a party person. I'm too ugly to be in one, I don't like so much crowd' and few others. Third theme is 'unclear', the most male are not clear if they enjoy going to parties as compared to female according to their responses. The responses given are like ' Memories, Parties are exhausting. I want to get rid of the bubbling energy in me' and few others. Fourth theme is 'specific of enjoyment', the results show that few of both male and female are specific as to why they like or dislike parties. Responses given are like ' I enjoy parties if it's of only weed. Not alcohol or other synthetic drugs; I enjoy parties with my people, not a fan of crowded places' and others.



**Fig 11 Percentage of individuals who can risk life to gain thriller experience**

The question was formed by the researcher to know if the participants can risk life to gain thriller experience. Themes were formed based on the responses received by the participants. The themes formed are applicable for both the gender. The first theme is 'Yes', all male can risk life to gain a thriller experience. Second theme is 'No', most female will not risk their life to gain a thriller experience as they think life is very precious. Third theme is 'maybe', the many female may or may not risk their life to gain thriller experience as they say it 'depends on a lot of factors'. Fourth theme is 'sometimes', the results show that more number of females are ready to risk their life as compared to males. Fifth theme is 'unclear', the results show that many male are not clear in indicating whether they are ready to risk their life to gain thriller experience or not in their responses. The responses given were like ' time, weed is illegal in India. To smoke weed is nothing but risking our life over cops not health. weed is necessary to each one in the world'.

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**Fig 12 Percentage of individuals who can go to extreme conditions to get satisfaction in what they do**

The question was formed by the researcher to know if the participants can go to extreme conditions to get satisfaction in what they do. Themes were formed based on the responses received by the participants. The themes formed are applicable for both the gender. The first theme is 'anything', both male and female are equally ready to go to extreme conditions to gain satisfaction in that they are doing. Second theme is 'depends', most female are ready to go to extreme conditions to get satisfaction in what they do depending on what the situation is. Third theme is 'none', the many female do not go to extreme conditions and prefer to go with the flow even if it does not give them satisfaction in what they do. Fourth theme is 'unclear', the results show that more number of males are unclear of the extremities they would go to and also few of them did not understand the question clearly. The responses given were like 'I don't know, not clear' and few others.

### CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of gender in sensation seeking. Results strongly suggest that there is no dissimilarity in the way male and female strive for seeking sensation as shown by them. However, more and in-depth research is needed. The obtained result of this study, which is on sensation seeking, has been contradictory to the results that are drawn by other researchers, it needs to be further explored. More research needs to be done to further examine the variables affecting sensation seeking in order to have a better understanding of the same. Further research can be made to find the differences found between marijuana and non-marijuana smokers by using various methodologies and measures.

### Implications

1. This research can be implied to study the recent trends that are developing in the areas of sensation seeking.
2. Based on this research it can be implied that female marijuana smokers are on par with male marijuana smokers in their level of sensation seeking.
3. It can be implied that gender and sensation seeking does not have a correlation between them.

*Scope for further studies*

1. Further research can be done with a larger population.
2. The study can be extended to diverse geographical locations and a comparative study can be done based upon different cultures.
3. The study can be further expanded by doing a comparison study on weed and non-marijuana smokers.
4. A pre-test and post-test analysis can be initiated to observe the influence of interventions given to assess level of sensation seeking, to study its influence on the personality of marijuana smokers.
5. Sensation seeking could be studied with other personality traits.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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