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Sensation seeking and field of study

Kevin Huff

Sensation Seeking and Field of Study

by
Kevin Huff

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to the memory of my father, Donald K. Huff

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Abstract

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Roberta Dihoff, Ph.D.
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The Purpose of this study was to explore the possible correlation between the personality trait of sensation seeking and a student's field of study. The literature review shows the strong connection between both how personality can influence our career choice and how sensation seeking can affect multiple aspects of our lives. There were 117 Rowan University students participated and were administered a questionnaire created by Marvin Zuckerman called the Sensation Seeking Scale From-V. Total sensation seeking scores were tested to check for a correlation within students from the fields of liberal arts and science. Although the current study shows no correlation between sensations seeking and these broad categories of study there is a discussion on how to improve future analysis to sub-categorize to more precise groupings.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Personality is an aspect of a person which contributes in decision making and influences almost all aspects of a person's life. It can have an effect on the friends one chooses, area we choose to live in, places we like to go and even the careers we decide to pursue. Recently more and more jobs have been utilizing personality tests such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) to see if potential workers are a "good fit" for the job sought after. In addition some students confused about what they would like to study are directed toward taking the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) which can help direct them towards certain types of fields and careers.

There have been many theorists which studied personality and their many traits. There are different types of theorist such as trait theorists, social cognitive and psychoanalytic. Trait theorists believe in looking at different traits that make-up personality and categorizing them. Eysneck believed there were three main traits, extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. Another well known theorist is Goldberg and his "Big Five" which consist of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

Starting in the late 1970's a psychologist named Marvin Zuckerman started studying what he felt was a major trait of personality, sensation seeking. Zuckerman separates sensation seeking into 4 separate aspects, Thrill and adventure-seeking, Experience-seeking, Disinhibition and Boredom susceptibility (Zuckerman, 1979). In 1979 Zuckerman created his first test to determine levels of sensation seeking called the

Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS). Since this time it has been revised six times and the most common and valid version is the Sensation Seeking Scale-V (SSS-V) (Zuckerman, 1994).

This study will look at and discuss the possible connection between the Sensation Seeking personality and career choice.

1.1 Need/Purpose

People are in constant search for a job which best suits them. What we want to be in life determines what we will study in school. What we want to be is determined by our personality. If we are confused about what to do with ourselves or we become unsure of what may make us happier to pursue, we could look at our personality. By studying personality and which personality's best fit certain jobs can help us in our choices. When a student becomes unclear about what to study they could learn more about their personality to help guide them towards careers which suit them best. By choosing careers that best suit our personality needs we can go to both enjoy our time learning and later enjoy our career choice which in turn will make us happier in life.

Every career has its own adventures and experience levels. The subsections of the SSS-V cover these aspects of what a job may have to offer a person. By measuring a person's personality with the SSS-V it is possible to match up their sub-sections with career possibilities that most likely match or correlate to their own personality. Many confused students would be able to be guided towards a healthy and happy career choice by simply matching up their personality with jobs that correspond and have a need for people of their personality type.

This study will explore sensation seeking personality, based on the theories of personality by Marvin Zuckerman, and its relationship to career choice. The reasoning

for this study is to assist students in choosing career paths which they will both do well in and be happy in. Instead of a confused student blindly picking a field of study and not being happy with the end result while at the same time wasting their time and money, they may be able to use the SSS-V and decided on a career that matches the personality. Not every person can be successful and enjoy every career the world offers. Certain people enjoy the sciences while others enjoy the arts. Besides the enjoyment of one field of another certain people may understand a certain subject much easier than another. The separation of the arts and sciences is the first level of distinction that this study will look at in terms of personality.

1.2 Hypothesis

The question of this study is to examine if there is a connection between personality and certain fields of study. This study hypothesizes that students higher in overall sensation seeking are more likely to be categorized as Liberal Arts students. Since the sciences are founded in concrete facts and much of the arts are founded within creation of new ideas and thoughts, it seems plausible that Liberal Art students will be higher in sensation seeking. High sensation seeking shows a need for new experience and boredom susceptibility which the arts could better provide than the sciences.

Other questions will arise as part of this study and will be looked at. These include differences within each field of study and sub-categorization of sensation seeking. Different majors with-in each field will be looked at to determine if sensation seeking plays a role, such as the difference between a psychology student and a advertising student or between a physical therapy student and a biochemistry student. Sub-categorization will be looked at as well to determine if it is total sensation seeking

that correlates with the subjects field of study or if it is just one of the four sub-categories of sensation seeking.

1.3 Assumtions

This study is based on the idea that the subjects being tested have already chosen their correct field of study and will not be changing it. If subjects were not in the correct field of study the results of this study would be skewed in either direction, either in more support or less of its conclusions. To try and lower this assumtion the study will attempt to gather subjects in the latter years of their college experience.

There is also an assumption of generalization. It is assumed that this study will at the least be able to generalize to the school population. It may not go beyond that but perhaps in future studies it could.

Another assumption is that all students are willing to participate. Knowing that high sensation seekers are easily bored it will be attempted to collect data in a situation where participating is more exciting than doing nothing. Part of the data collection will include going to classrooms and asking people to participate at the beginning of class. They will not be forced to participate but when seeing two options of participating or sitting in silence it is assumed they would rather participate.

1.4 Definitions

Sensation Seeking- A personality trait in which people with higher levels are often easily bored, look for new adventures and tend to take more risks while feeling these risks are not as dangerous as they may really be.

Boredom susceptibility- “an aversion to any kind of monotonous conditions and restlessness when confined to such conditions” (Zuckerman, 2007a)

Experience Seeking- “This subscale describes seeking sensation and new experiences through the mind and the senses (music, art, travel) and through a nonconforming general lifestyle with like-minded friends” (Zuckerman, 2007a)

Disinhibition- “refer to seeking sensation through other people, a hedonistic lifestyle, "wild" parties, sexual variety, and drinking to disinhibit” (Zuckerman, 2007)

Thrill and adventure seeking-“The items in this subscale indicate the desire to engage in physical activities that provide unusual sensations and experiences, such as mountain climbing, skydiving, or scuba diving. Most of these activities are perceived as moderately risky” (Zuckerman, 2007)

1.5 What’s to Come

In the following chapters the previous research performed around this topic will be explored. Different research around personality and career choice, what sensation seeking is, the validity of the Sensation Seeking Scale, and the research of sensation seeking related to career choice will be examined. After this there will be a section explaining how the procedures of this study were set up in a way that is easily replicable. Finally, the results that come from this study will be explained as well as their implications to future research. The next section will begin with a review of personality traits and their relationship to our lives.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter past research will be explored to examine the relationship between personality traits and their possible connections to career choice. From this research no previous studies were found that connected sensation seeking to a field of study. As will be shown, there are a few studies that have looked at levels of sensation seeking differing between different types of workers in the same field, the number of these studies is rather limited. In order to understand what is known and the connections that can be made from other types of studies several facets will be looked at. First, there will be an examination of general personality traits and their connection to career choice. Second, sensation seeking will be looked at. This will be done in two parts. To start, studies about what sensation seeking is and the importance of studying it. Since sensation seeking is not commonly studied and there is only one test of measurement the second part will examine how these methods have proven to be valid. Finally, the last section of this chapter will examine some studies that have examined levels of sensation seeking between job choices in the same career path. In the summary, all of these different sections will be pulled together to better show the connection and importance of this study.

2.1 Personality and Our Careers

Personality is defined in many different yet similar ways, and one very common definition is a group of characteristics including traits, values, attitudes, beliefs, needs, and dispositions that structure a person's reactions to themselves and the world around them (Hammond, 2001). It is what makes us ourselves and structures how we feel about

things and what behaviors we exhibit. Every person has a different set of personality traits and different levels of each trait. One person may be extremely decisive and only be able to follow their own decision, yet another person may be rather indecisive and never able to make a decision for themselves. Other people do not necessarily fall strictly one way or another and may possess both sides of a trait at different times. This shows how different aspects of our personality can be at different levels making each of us unique and different. Different personality traits make us different in all aspects of our lives from career choice to music preference. A study by Delsing, Bogt, Engels, & Meeus (2008) decribes how personality can trickle down to the very music we listen to such as people that are open to experience enjoy rock and "Elite." People prefer music that reflects their personality and development (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003).

One of the ways in which different levels of personality are tested is through a test called the Five Factor Model (FFM). Hammond (2001) describes the five dimensions of the FFM as being extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Hammond lists each of these dimensions along with other similar traits that follow in the dimensions. The FFM is used to study differences in people for many different situations including career choice and career success. For this reason the FFM has been used as an aid in career counseling. Within career counseling the FFM assists counselors in understanding how people internalize experiences and possible difficulties a person may encounter within certain careers (Hammond, 2001). Certain personality traits are beneficial to certain careers and harmful in others. Sensation seeking is one aspect of a person's personality that may be helpful in certain

careers and harmful in others. For example, high sensation seekers tend to be better at coping with stressful situations (Rolison & Scherman, 2002).

Three dimensions of the FFM- neuroticism, extraversion, and consciousness- appear to be more relevant to careers than the other dimensions (Judge, Higgens, Thoresen, and Barrick, 1999). In a study by Feldt and Woelfel (2009) the FFM was used to show that 58.6% of career choice was from the five factors. The rest was attributed to anticipated career outcomes. Since such a high percent is attributed to anticipation understanding ones personality and its effects in our careers can help us to choice careers which better suit us. In turn this can enable us to become more successful and create better outcomes for ourselves. People who are high in neuroticism may have issues with negative moods (Judge, Higgens, Thoresen, and Barrick, 1999) which could hinder them in certain jobs such as a lawyer. A person may choice to be a lawyer because of the expected outcomes but their personality may not suit this so they would not become successful. Through career counseling a person in this situation can create a "treatment plan" to get them into the correct career that they can benefit from (Hammond, 2001). "The appararent relationship between personality needs and orientation has an important implication for practitioners. Personality measures such as the PRF may be useful to practitioners for assisting clients in finding careers which are most congruent with their respective personalities." (Randolph and Wood, 1999)

The FFM is not the only tool used to examine the connection between personality and career choice. Pelham, Mirenberg, and Jones (2002) performed a study examining a trait they labeled implicit egotism meaning that people prefer to do things which reflect them. For this they collected information about people within certain careers that could

have similar names related to them, for example a dentist named Dennis or Denise. The three studies they performed to relate this egotistical personality trait to career choice revealed "evidence for the idea that implicit egotism plays a role in major life decisions" (Pelham, Mirenberg, and Jones, 2002). One of their studies looked into lawyers with *La* names and dentists with *Da* names and then compared the two fields. With their analysis they revealed and almost 2-1 ratio in favor of the names matching the career.

Some people are limited to career choice based on education or lack of education. Hathaway, Reynolds, and Monachesi (1969) showed personality differences between high school dropouts and those who completed their schooling. They also used a different method of exploring personality. The MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) was used. The MMPI breaks down personality into many more dimensions than the FFM which include schizophrenia, hysteria, hypomania, and others. Hathaway, Reynolds, and Monachesi tested boys in the ninth grade and again in the twelfth grade and followed up with later careers and found that the ninth grade test showed a difference between dropouts and nondropouts. Dropout had elevated scores especially in scales 8 and 4 of the test. Traits associated with dropouts were rebelliousness and social withdrawal (Hathaway, Reynolds, and Monachesi, 1969). Being uneducated would leave these dropouts unable to get the higher paying jobs instantly, but if they could link their more positive personality traits to a career choice they would be able to better themselves even without a career.

There are several studies out there that give support to the fact that personality has a connection to career choice. Meaning that individuals are attracted to careers which meet their personal needs (Randolph and Wood, 1999). A study by Charles Elton (1967)

found personality to contribute 61% to career choice while the next highest factor was ability at 23%. Another study by Boone, van Olffen, and Roijakkers (2004) found strong support for differences in personality between the fields of study of Economics, Business Administration, Business Education, and International Economic and Business Studies. They focused on one dimension of personality in this study, locus of control. Raising the mean by one standard deviation doubled the odds of being in business education but lowering it the same showed a rise in International business. Providing students with information on personality traits that increase success in a program along with the requirements would greatly aid students with their choices (Boone, van Olffen, and Roijakkers, 2004). In addition by understanding what motivates students towards a certain field can lead to better insights (Marrs, Barb & Ruggiero, 2007) which in turn can help in the future to guiding other students in the right direction.

Noel, Michaels, and Levas (2003) compared the personality traits of students within different majors of business. They found marketing students to be more creative, easygoing, imaginative, persistent, and venturesome. Accounting majors were shown to be more concrete, overreact to perceived threats, persistent, and conformity. By knowing that certain careers are best suited for certain personality types it would seem best to re-configure programs to better suit those individual. Perhaps even matching personality traits with that of an instructor could be beneficial to teaching (Noel, Michaels, and Levas, 2003). The idea that a certain personality trait could affect both career choice and ability to learn leads the present studies goal to explore the affects of a certain personality trait, sensation seeking.

2.2 What Is a Sensation Seeker?

Some individuals prefer to engage in more risky behavior, try new things frequently and travel to new places while other people do not enjoy any of these activities. Whether or not you engage in these and other similar behaviors is part of one's personality. Those people that are higher in sensation seeking have a tendency to under estimate the potenial risks and dangers of specific activities (Rosenbloom, 2003). For more than 30 years a part of personality that controls these behaviors has been studied by Marvin Zuckerman and labeled sensation seeking. Sensation seeking is a tendency to need and seek out novel, varied, complex, and new sensations and experiences to maintain an optimal level of arousal (Jiang, Lianekhammy, Laswon, Guo, Lynam, Joseph, Gold, and Kelly, 2009; Zuckerman and Bone 1972). Individuals low in sensation seeking tend to enjoy more repetitive and familiar experience whereas a high sensation seeker would find this boring rather quickly (Jiang, Lianekhammy, Laswon, Guo, Lynam, Joseph, Gold, and Kelly, 2009). In addition Sensation seekers tend to be much less anxious in physically dangerous situations (Burkhart, Schwarz, and Green, 1978). Those high in sensation seeking tend to have a larger network of friends (Weisskirch & Murphy, 2004).

Zuckerman, Kolin, Price, and Zoob (1964) felt that individuals all differed in what was optimal arousal during their day, so he set out to create a scale to measure this. He then created his first scale in 1964 consisting of 40 forced choice items (Lambert and Levy 1972). The scale was simply called the Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS). The scale went through several changes both shortening and elongating the scale and the Sensation Seeking Scale Form 5 (SSS-V) has become the most recent variation (Zuckerman,

2007a). Zuckerman (1994) put an appendix with a copy of the most current scale in his book.

The SSS-V can be broken down into 4 sub dimensions- thrill and adventure seeking(TAS), experience seeking (ES), disinhibition (Dis), and Boredom Susceptibility (BS) (Zuckerman, 1979). TAS expresses one's desire to engage in outdoor sports, activities involving speed, and activities involving danger (Zuckerman and Bone 1972). ES shows an urge for inner experiences which are generally attained through travel, drugs, music, art, and lifestyles that are unconventional (Zuckerman and Bone 1972). Dishinibition is expressed through extraverted ideology, frequent social drinking, a "swinger" type lifestyle, and gambling (Zuckerman and Bone 1972). BS is the dislike in repetitive, routine, predictable, monotonous, dull and boring people and situations (Zuckerman and Bone 1972).

Significant relationships have been found between sensation seeking and the use of drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes as well as the behaviors of increased sexual experience and activities, preference for stimulating foods, participation of risky sports, and the preference for perceptual complexity (Birenbaum and Montag, 1986). Drug use and risky behavior is the main focus of studies involving sensation seeking. Due to the high correlation between the subsection ES and drug use it is often coined the term the "hippie" factor (Zuckerman, 1971). Very little in the field of sensation seeking has been studied outside the realm of drug use, socially unacceptable behaviors, and risky sexual behaviors. However, in the limited studies done away from these topics sensation seeking has been shown to be related to major life situations such as marriage adjustment

all the way to the little things such as music preference (Deditius-Island and Caruso 2002).

2.3 SSS-V Validity

In the beginning of the SSS there was quite a bit of debate over the validity of the test (Ridgeway and Russell, 1980). As time has passed and newer versions have emerged the question over validity has begun to fade away. Earlier studies such as Stanton (1976) showed validity by testing people that were generally thought to be higher in sensation seeking, such as volunteers, and compared them to other people, such as non-volunteers. These types of studies are still conducted today, but more focus has been put on test validity through comparison with other types of test.

Other tests have been made in the likeness of the SSS-V. The children's version, The Sensation Seeking Scale for Children (SSSC), is a parent completed form to test the level of risk taking behaviors in young children aged 2-5 (Morrongiello, Sandomierski, and Valla, 2010). Other deviations have been created but none have been as successful as the SSS-V. The SSS-V is often tested against other personality test to search for correlations and with each correlation validity is added to the SSS-V.

Correlations have been found between the SSS and the MMPI (Zuckerman and Link, 1968). It is not the MMPI in its entirety that correlates with sensation seeking but merely subgroups of the MMPI. Viken, Kline, and Rose (2005) took the questions from the MMPI that were believed to correlate with the SSS-V and created a new test they called MSS. Their study showed to have a high internal consistency along with reliability. This study helped to show both that the trait of sensation seeking is valid within the traits established by the MMPI and that the SSS-V is a valid resource in testing

for it. There have also been links to subsections within Cattell's 16 Personality Factors (Birenbaum and Montag 1986). The Big Three, the Big Five, and the Alternative 5 which are other personality questionnaires have been used and shown to have correlations within their individual subsections (Zuckerman, Kuhlman, Joireman, Teta, and Kraft, 1993). Another test used in comparison with the SSS-V is the Vando Reducer-Augmenter Scale which tests levels of stimuli-intensity. The Vando scale has been shown to highly correlate with the general score of the SSS (Kohn, Hunt, and Hoffman, 1982).

A concern for being able to generalize across cultures and genders has been of concern. In a study by Ball, Farnill, and Wangeman (1983) a male versus female comparison of sensation seeking was performed and concluded in support that the four sections of the scale hold replicable across gender. Other studies have shown an opposition to this stating that the TAS and Dis are only attributable to men (Hoyle, Stephenson, Palmgreen, Lorch, and Donohew 2002). This may be in part due to men perceiving risks at a lower degree than women do (Nicholson, Soane, Fenton-O'Creevy, and Willman 2005).

2.4 Sensation Seeking Career Choice

There are few studies out there which cover aspects of our careers related to sensation seeking. Since sensation seeking is related to stimulating experiences higher stimulating jobs like crisis intervention, pilot, divers, and firefighters are filled with people high in sensation seeking (Roberti, 2004). People better suited for risky prosocial vocations where there are often high degrees of stress are those considered to be higher sensation seekers (Zuckerman, 2007b). Van Vianen, Feij, Krausz, and Taris (2003) conducted a study relating sensation seeking to job mobility. Both job to job mobility

(turnover) as well as within job position mobility were compared. High levels of BS were related to turnover. This is due to the fact that these people are being bored with their jobs causing them to become less satisfied and less stimulated. Van Vianen, Feij, Krausz, and Taris also showed a relationship between ES and Dis compared with job position changes. The Dis component can be seen as a means to get more money in order to satisfy their need and want to attend social parties or whatever else stimulates them. This can be seen in "the manager who likes to stay in a comfortable hotel where he can find a good glass of whisky in the bar" (van Vianen, Feij, Krausz, and Taris, 2003). High sensation seekers have also been said to favor jobs characterized by unstructured activities, novel situations, and flexible approach, while the low sensation seekers favor occupations requiring attention to detail as well as order and routine (Cronin, 1995).

Studies have been done with medical students as well. Studies have shown that Emergency Room doctors are both higher in sensation seeking and are more impulsive (Hojat and Zuckerman, 2008). The higher intensity, constant changing, and quick decision making that go along with a job in the Emergency Room are viewed as ideal situations and attract those of high sensation seeking. Sensation seekers view stress as a challenge and enjoy intense and risky behaviors (Hojat and Zuckerman, 2008). Hojat and Zuckerman (2008) found that surgeons score higher on sensation seeking since surgery is viewed as more risky than primary care.

Certain careers are more attractive to sensation seekers than non sensation seekers. These types of jobs provide stimulating tasks and interesting activities but are not always in a risky environment (Roberti, 2004). Counseling is a career that can be viewed as one of these types of jobs. Women who counsel rape victims have been found

to be higher in ES and Dis (Roberti, 2004). Roberti (2004) performs a study of forensic identification students and though not directly stated shows a gender difference between men and women in sensation seeking. As was discussed above generally men find certain activities less risky than women. In Roberti's study he found men in this field of study to have lower Dis scores compared to other men whereas women had slightly elevated Dis when compared to pediatric nurses.

Gambling has been highly correlated with sensation seeking. Sjoberg and Engelberg (2009) conducted a study in which finance student were found to be high in sensation seeking and gambling. They found the students to have a low importance for money and a high concern for sensation seeking and success orientation. Gamblers tend to invest their own money as well as others money into risky situations with no real regard for the outcome (Sjoberg and Engelberg, 2009). Gambling is a highly intense thrill and adventure to the sensation seeker, but money is something that is need. A career in financing could give the sensation seeker control over a lot of money with the potential to put it in gambling type situations frequently. This career path could allow a gambling sensation seeker to live out their gambling needs over and over again day in and day out.

Vuust, Gebauer, Hansen, Jorgensen, Moller, and Linnet (2010) tested the sensation seeking levels between classical and rhythmic music students and players. As they hypothesized rhythmic students had significantly higher scores on sensation seeking than classical students. The highest differentiating factor was the BS subscale. Their data showed that rhythmic students practice less frequently and more often as a group than the classical student. Rhythmic music is highly improvisational while classical is

based on tones that play out usually over and over again (Vuust, Gebauer, Hansen, Jorgensen, Moller, and Linnet, 2010). The constant need for creating new lines of music while playing is ideal for sensation seekers. In classical music there is no creative tone to it and this would bore the sensation seeker as well as the need to practice the same lines over and over again.

2.5 Summary

Personality is a major part of each of us and can affect every little thing we do including our choice in career. There are many different aspects and levels of personality that could be looked at. Sensation seeking is one level of our personality that over the last 30-40 years has shown itself to be a valid measure of personality. The SSS-V has come a long way from its creation and since has improved and become more and more reliable and valid. Sensation seeking has already been shown to play a part in distinguishing between different aspects of a job, such as whether a musician is more rhythmically inclined or classically inclined. Differences within doctors and surgeons have been shown as well. Since sensation seeking can be used to distinguish between jobs such as these it is possible that it can be used on a larger scale between all jobs. This brings us back to the premise behind the present study of examining if there is a difference between students, in terms of sensation seeking, in different fields of study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter the methods behind the recruitment of participants, the way in which the study was performed, and the way in which the study was analyzed will be explain. With the information provided in this chapter it is the researchers hope that readers will be able to understand how this research was fully and completely performed. In addition another hope of the researcher is that future researchers interested in exploring future expansions of this study may be able to properly recreate this study.

3.1 Participants

There were 117 Rowan University undergraduate students that participated in this study. It was important not to use younger students such as Freshman or students under the age of 18 because it was this researchers believe that Freshman students have a higher likelihood to change their field of study than higher level students such as Juniors and Seniors.

The first thing that was performed was creating a master list of all the higher level undergraduate courses between the 300 and 500 level. These sets of courses were chosen for several reasons. The first reason was to gain access to students that were more set in their choice of field of study. To reach these levels of classes a student must have taken many other courses related to that field of study as prerequisites in order to gain entry. Through this process students were selected that have learned more about their field of study and can safely be said to not later change their majors. The second reason this sets of courses were chosen was to try and even out the amount of students from each field of

study. If the study was to use introduction level courses it's possible that more than half of the students could be from a different field of study than the class is directed towards.

The list of course included 519 classes. After the master list was created each class was given a random computer generated number to put them in order. Then the teachers of the first six classes on the list were emailed explaining the procedures of the study and asking permission to come ask their class to participate in the study. Teachers were given two weeks to respond to the email. Only two classes out of these first six classes allowed the researcher to visit them. After two weeks the next 5 teachers on the list were emailed. Out of these five classes, four allowed the researcher to go and visit them.

3.2 Procedure

Zuckerman's SSS-V was used to rate levels of sensation seeking in students. Zuckerman's SSS-V test sensation seeking by providing 40 force choice questions. Participants are given two statements, an a and a b, and told to choose the statement that most closely describes them. The questions not only create a total sensation seeking level, but also four subcategories. These subcategories include; thrill and adventure seeking (Tas), disinhibition (Dis), experience seeking (Es), and boredom susceptibility (Bs). An addition to the SSS-V was added to the end of the test. This addition was consisted of two questions: 1) Field of Study/Intended Career Choice, and 2) Gender. A set of directions as well as a consent description were posted at the top of each SSS-V

Before administering the test to a class their consent to participate was explained to the students and they were informed that they did not need to participate. A copy of the test was then passed out to each willing participant. The researcher remained in the

room with the students while they completed the questionnaire. When everyone had finished two empty folders were passed around for students to place their responses in. After this was done a debriefing was held to explain the extent and thesis of this research.

3.3 Analysis and Design

The current study used a correlational design to test for a relationship between different fields of study and level of sensation seeking. The two variables that were involved in this study were the level of sensation seeking which ranged from 0-40 while the second variable is field of study. For the initial analysis field of study was categorized into science and liberal arts. Later analysis first separated sensation seeking into its four subcategories and correlated each subcategory individually with field of study. Gender was also correlated with total sensation seeking.

3.4 Summary

Through a correlational analysis this study assesed the relationship between sensation seeking and field of study. The 117 Rowan undergraduate students were tested for levels of sensation seeking. Students were chosen based on a random selection of higher level undergraduate classes. The analysis of correlation consisted of several different levels. First, general sensation seeking was compared to general field of study, sciences and liberal arts. Other analysis consisted of separating sensation seeking into sub categories.

Chapter 4

Results

In this chapter, the result of the study will be discussed and shown. First, the different means and numbers of each category will be explained. After this the results of the tests that were run will be explained. Finally, at the end will be a very brief explanation of what the results mean, they will further be explored in Chapter 5. For all the groups a Pearson correlation was run to look at relationships and their significance. There were a total of 117 subjects. There were 48 students in the Science field and 69 students under the Liberal Arts category (see Table 1).

Table 1

Field of Study Frequencies

	Degree	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total	Science	48	19.63	6.187	.893
	Arts	69	20.90	6.362	.766

4.1 Group Statistics

Before breaking down the students into groups, it was seen that the total sensation seeking was seen almost throughout the entire scale. However, it was largely centered around the mid-point of 20 as seen in figure 1. Once the subjects scores were categorized into the science and arts categories it was possible to see a comparison side by side of where sensation seeking scores totaled in comparison to each other, as seen

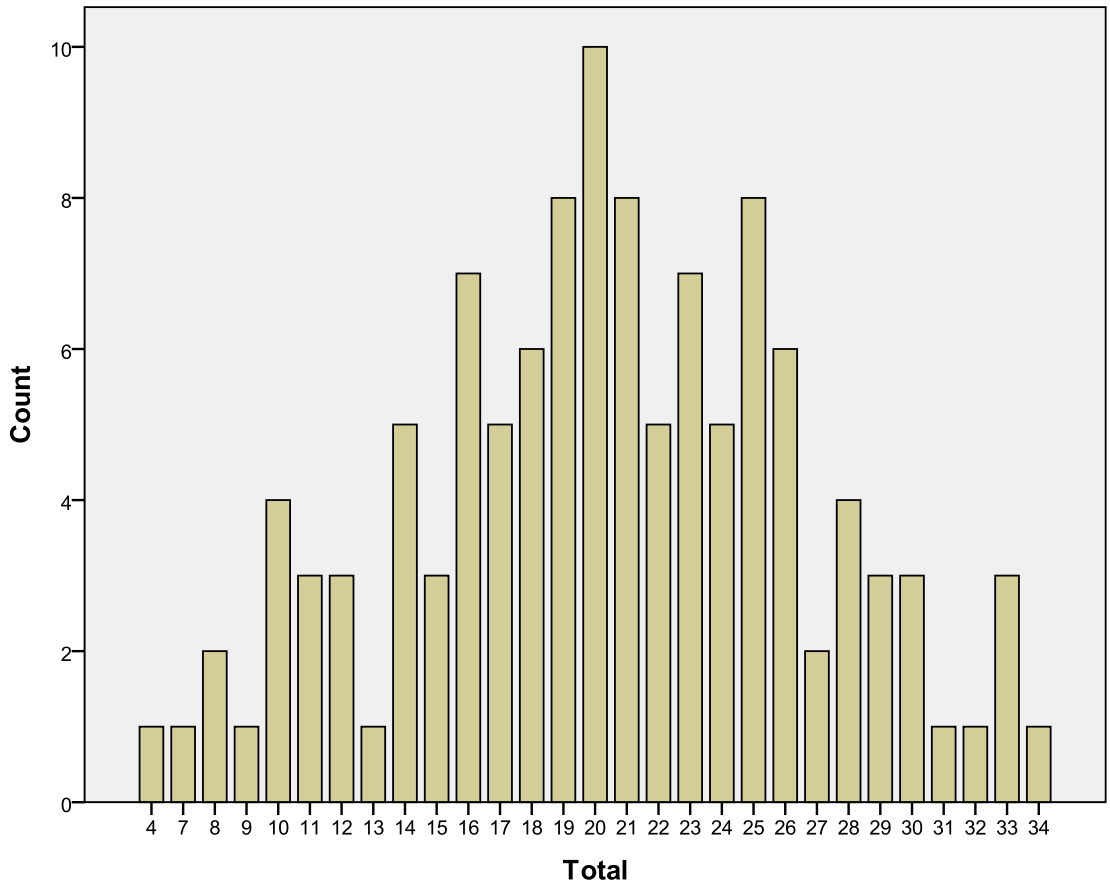

Figure 1: Sensation Seeking Totals

in Figure 2. The two groups showed a similarity between their levels of total sensation seeking. Where the outliers fell they had very similar amounts and toward the center the science students were just below the liberal arts students. The average score of the science students was 19.63 with a standard deviation of 6.187. The liberal arts students had an average score of 20.90 and a standard deviation of 6.362 (Table 1). Before running any test it appeared as if there would be no connection between sensation seeking and field of study.

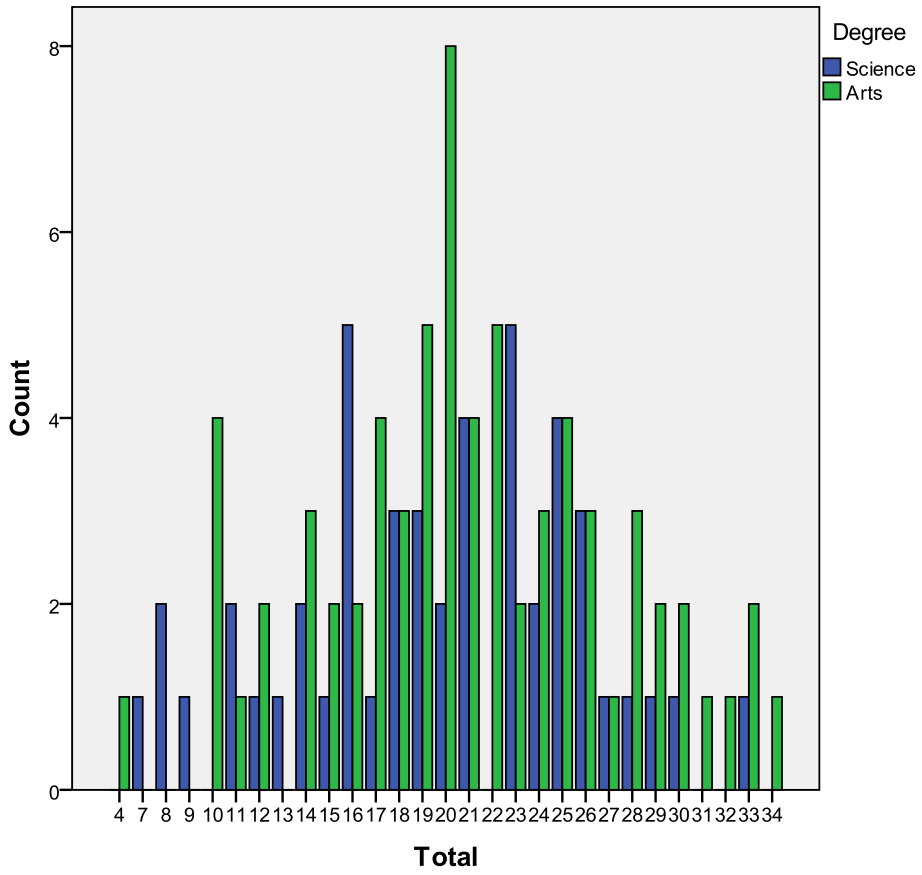

Figure 2: Science and Arts Side by Side Total Sensation Seeking

4.2 Sensation Seeking vs. Science and Liberal Arts

The first test that was run was a correlation using Pearson's R to check for a relationship between the total of the sensation seeking personality trait and the fields of study, science and liberal arts. In this analysis Pearson's R was .100 with a significance of .284 (see Table 2). These results show a non-significant relationship. There appears to be no direct link between the total sensation seeking and a student's choice in field of study. An independent sample t-test was also used resulting in a t of -1.077 with a significance of .284.

Table 2

Correlation of Sensation Seeking and Field of Study

		Total	Degree
Total	Pearson Correlation	1	.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.284
	N	117	117
Degree	Pearson Correlation	.100	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.284	
	N	117	117

There are four sub-categories within sensation seeking that were also analyzed to see if there was a correlation between each individual sub-scale and field of study. View figures 3,4,5,& 6 to see the means and standard deviations of each sub-scale. There was no correlation found between any of the subscales and field of study. Es had a Pearson's R of .142 and a significance of .127, Dis had a Pearson's R of .060 and significance of .518, Tas had a Pearson's R of -.044 with a significance of .638, and Bs had a Pearson's R of .156 with a significance of .093 (Table 7).

An attempt to further break down the results and test individual fields of study, such as psychology, advertising, and teaching etc., failed to occur or show any mentionable results due to the large discrepancies in the number of subjects in each category. As Table 8 shows there were certain subjects in which there were 10 or more subjects while many others only had 1 or 2 subjects. There could be no validity in the results shown through analyzing these individual subjects so there was no test run on this data.

Table 3

Boredom Susceptibility

	Degree	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Bs	Science	48	2.83	1.767	.255
	Arts	69	3.42	1.897	.228

Table 4

Thrill and Adventure Seeking

	Degree	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Tas	Science	48	6.56	2.287	.330
	Arts	69	6.33	2.769	.333

Table 5

Dishinibition

	Degree	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Dis	Science	48	5.27	2.735	.395
	Arts	69	5.61	2.793	.336

Table 6

Experience Seeking

	Degree	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ES	Science	48	4.96	2.010	.290
	Arts	69	5.54	1.990	.240

Table 7

Sub-Scales Correlation

		ES	Dis	Tas	Bs
Degree	Pearson Correlation	.142	.060	-.044	.156
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.127	.518	.638	.093
	N	117	117	117	117

Table 8

Sub-Fields of Study Frequencies

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Biology	10	8.5	8.5	8.5
	Pharmacy	2	1.7	1.7	10.3
	Medicine	6	5.1	5.1	15.4
	Physical Therapy	1	.9	.9	16.2
	Elementary Education	8	6.8	6.8	23.1
	High School Education	10	8.5	8.5	31.6
	American Studies	3	2.6	2.6	34.2
	School Psych	1	.9	.9	35.0
	Accounting	15	12.8	12.8	47.9
	Public Relations	10	8.5	8.5	56.4
	Radio	2	1.7	1.7	58.1
	Humanities	1	.9	.9	59.0
	Business	1	.9	.9	59.8
	Writing	4	3.4	3.4	63.2
	Advertising	1	.9	.9	64.1
	Psychology/sociology	32	27.4	27.4	91.5
	Law	6	5.1	5.1	96.6
	Communications	2	1.7	1.7	98.3
	Human Resources	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	117	100.0	100.0	

4.3 Gender and Sensation Seeking

In order to rule out the possibility of gender influencing the results of this study an analysis was also performed on gender. There was nearly an equal amount of male and female participants. There were 59 females and 58 males in this study. Two correlational analyses were performed looking at gender compared to field of study and total sensation seeking. In neither case was a correlation seen. Compared to sensation seeking gender had a Pearson's R of .268 with a significance of .004 (see Table 9). Field of study yielded a Pearson's R of .028 with a significance of .767. Figure 3 shows that between genders total sensation seeking remained relatively even across the spectrum. With no shown correlation between gender and sensation seeking or field of study it seems presumably safe to say gender did not sway the results of the earlier analysis's that were performed.

Table 9

Correlation of Gender and Sensation Seeking

		Degree	Total
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.028	.268**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.767	.004
	N	117	117

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.4 Summary of results

The purpose of this study was to test any possible relationship between sensation seeking and field of study, science and liberal arts. The results of this study showed there

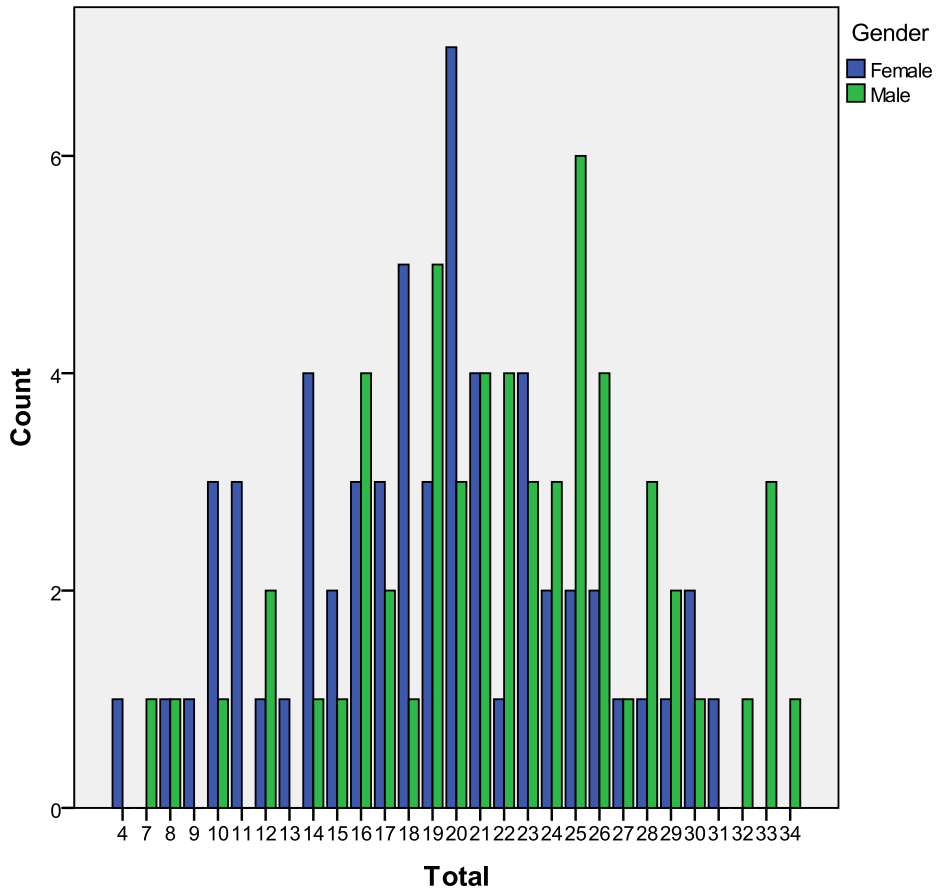

Figure 3: Total Sensation Seeking Scores of Gender

was no significant correlation between sensation seeking and field of study. Tests were performed on total sensation seeking and the sub-scales of sensation seeking with no significant correlation being found. Tests on individual subjects that fell under the major categories of science and liberal arts were not performed due to a lack of subjects within each subject. Finally gender was tested against sensation seeking to see if it skewed the results of the earlier tests. Once again no significant correlation was found showing gender did not interfere with the different correlation tests that were performed earlier.

Chapter 5

Discussion

As noted in Chapter 1 the purpose of this study was to determine if there is a connection between sensation seeking and field of study. The hypothesis was that students that fall under the category of liberal arts would be higher in sensation seeking than that of the science students. Since personality seems to play such a large role in our everyday choices it is sensible that personality affects our field of study and later career choice. It was shown in the review of literature that sensation seeking is not only a valid trait but that it also does affect different aspects of our lives such as alcohol and drug use as well as the music that we listen to. The current study looked to see if this one trait based on experience seeking, boredom susceptibility, thrill and adventure seeking, and dishinibition could play a larger role in the decision of our field of study. However, the results of the study showed there to be no connection between the personality trait of sensation seeking and whether or not a student pursued a liberal art or science based field of study.

5.1 Findings and Conclusions

Throughout chapter 2 the past research regarding personality and sensation seeking and their relations to career choice were addressed. Both were shown to be influential on all aspects of our lives from music to friends to hobbies and even career. Although there had never been extensive research exploring sensation seeking to career choice the ones that did showed differences in different positions within the same field. The current study used this information to address the question of whether or not

sensation seeking was influential between choosing a field of study of either the liberal arts or the sciences.

The results of this study showed there to be no correlation between sensation seeking and the field of study. In addition between each of the sub-categories of sensation seeking there was also no relationship. Gender was looked at to explore any possible gender difference in either the field of study or the total sensation seeking. The lack of relationship between gender and sensation seeking and field of study was useful to eliminate the possibility of gender changing the outcome of the results. It showed that there wasn't one gender higher in sensation seeking and at the same time that that neither gender dominated one field. This eliminates the possibility of thinking that maybe if the other gender had been more represented in a field there may have been a difference.

Although personality traits have been shown to correlate to certain career choices no such correlation was found in this study. The literature has discussed jobs in the liberal arts field to be higher in sensation seeking such as law enforcement and counseling. However, one study by Hojat and Zuckerman (2008) also showed a science based career of the surgeon to correlate with high sensation seekers. Perhaps sensation seeking may still correlate to certain fields of study such as surgeons and pilot regardless of the lack of correlation between general fields of study.

The lack of analysis within the realm of specific fields of study may be the weakness of this study. There were not enough subjects in similarly related study programs to sub-categorize. If this had been a possible situation and these analysis were run this study may have been able to support earlier research that individual situations in the same field could be different. For example, looking back at the study by Vuust,

Gebauer, Hansen, Jorgensen, Moller, and Linnet, (2010) there was a difference within musicians based on the type of music they performed.

The findings of this study indicated, first, that sensation seekers do not lean more toward or away from fields of study in the liberal arts field. Secondly, they hint toward the idea that perhaps looking at liberal arts versus the sciences is too broad of categories for studying in terms of what pushes people toward certain fields and possible careers. This by no means unjustifies the idea that sensation seeking may play a role in field of study but more simply that it needs to be looked at in more detailed situations. However, what this study does show evidence against is that men are higher in sensation seeking than women. Although there was a close correlation between the two the significance was far from showing any real connection. As noted in Chapter 2 many studies showed a connection between men having higher sensation seeking, but currently this study essentially showed there to be no connecting. The last figure in Chapter 4 showed a side by side comparison of the total sensation seeker between men and women and they were near equal the whole length of the scale with roughly half a dozen men above the highest woman's score.

5.2 Limitations

Limitations of this study include the low number of participants, the lack of teacher responses, and the large categories of students. There were 117 students that participated in this study. However, this may not have been enough to be considered good enough for generalization. Even in its own school setting there were only 48 science majors and 69 liberal arts majors which could be consider very small. This is less than 1 percent of the schools population. Perhaps doubling, tripling, or even quadrupling

the amount of student could have made the results of the study change. It is possible that through random selection those students who do not fit the norm for their study could have become the participants.

Similarly the first batch of teachers that were asked to allow the researcher into the classroom rarely responded. This could potentially have the same effect that was just stated about in the last limitation. A different grouping of students could have changed the entire outcome of the study or perhaps it may not have changed at all.

The final limitation to discuss was the large categorization of students. The students were grouped largely into liberal arts and science which was needed in answering the hypothesis however, this is not what is meant as a limitation. When looking at what subject students came from just about half of the liberal arts students were psychology majors. The field of the sciences was more rounded than the liberal arts were. The large category or psychology students within the study may have affected the results as well. Perhaps psychology student do not fall into the norm for the other liberal art programs in the scheme of sensation seeking. Yet if half of the participants fall into this category the result will show a large curve in favor of the psychology participants.

5.3 Future Implications

This study showed no significant correlation between sensation seeking and the fields of science and liberal arts, however, there are now new theories to explore in future studies. Is there a difference in sensation seeking between certain study topics like psychologist compared to law and justice or perhaps a marketing major compared to a human resource student? Perhaps even that may be too broad of a study and it could be

looked at on an even more finite level such as, within psychologist is there a difference between students studying for counseling versus one in forensic psychology?

To perform these types of studies the same format used here could be used. However there would be to be a much larger sample size to ensure more students within each sub-category of study. Instead it may be more useful to create separate list of possible subject based on the types of classes and use a certain amount from each category.

The major concern with doing any further research on this topic would be getting a more rounded group with larger numbers in each sub-category. With all that sensation seeking has been shown to influence in our lives there could still be a connection between it and career choice. Future research on this topic may still reveal important connections between sensation seeking and field of study it just needs to be looked at in a closer way with more sub-categories.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to examine if there is a connection between personality type and field of study. The research is being conducted by Kevin Huff of the Psychology Department, Rowan University, in partial fulfillment of his M.A. degree in School Psychology. For this study you will be given choices between two scenarios and asked to pick the one that best describes yourself. Your participation in the study should not exceed 15 minutes. There are no physical or psychological risks involved in this study, and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Your standing within your class and at your school will not be affected in any way due to your participation in this survey. Your responses will be anonymous and all the data gathered will be kept confidential. By taking this survey you agree that any information obtained from this study may be used in any way thought best for publication or education provided that you are in no way identified and your name is not used.Participation does not imply employment with the state of New Jersey, Rowan University, the principal investigator, or any other project facilitator.If you have any questions or problems concerning your participation in this study, please contact Kevin Huffat (908) 489-0105, or his faculty advisor, Dr. Roberta Dihoff, dihoff@rowan.edu.

Directions: Each of the items below contains two choices, A and B. Please indicate (circle) on your answer sheet which of the choices most describes your likes or the way you feel. In some cases you may find items in which both choices describe your likes or feelings. Please choose the one which better describes your likes or feelings. In some

cases you may find items in which you do not like either choice. In these cases mark the choice you dislike least. Please try to answer each item

1. A. I like "wild" uninhibited parties
   B. I prefer quiet parties with good conversation

2. A. There are some movies I enjoy seeing a second or even a third time
   B. I can't stand watching a movie that I've seen before

3. A. I often wish I could be a mountain climber
   B. I can't understand people who risk their necks climbing mountains

4. A. I dislike all body odors
   B. I like some for the earthly body smells

5. A. I get bored seeing the same old faces
   B. I like to comfortable familiarity of everyday friends

6. A. I like to explore a strange city or section of town by myself, even if it means getting lost
   B. I prefer a guide when I am in a place I don't know well

7. A. I dislike people who do or say things just to shock or upset others
   B. When you can predict almost everything a person will do and say he or she must be a bore

8. A. I usually don't enjoy a movie or play where I can predict what will happen in advance
   B. I don't mind watching a movie or a play where I can predict what will happen in advance

9. A. I have tried marijuana or would like to
   B. I would never smoke marijuana

10. A. I would not like to try any drug which might produce strange and dangerous effects on me

    B. I would like to try some of the new drugs that produce hallucinations

11. A. A sensible person avoids activities that are dangerous

    B. I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening

12. A. I dislike "swingers" (people who are uninhibited and free about sex)

    B. I enjoy the company of real "swingers"

13. A. I find that stimulants make me uncomfortable

    B. I often like to get high (drinking liquor or smoking marijuana)

14. A. I like to try new foods that I have never tasted before

    B. I order the dishes with which I am familiar, so as to avoid disappointment and unpleasantness

15. A. I enjoy looking at home movies or travel slides

    B. Looking at someone's home movies or travel slides bores me tremendously

16. A. I would like to take up the sport of water skiing

    B. I would not like to take up water skiing

17. A. I would like to try surf boarding

    B. I would not like to try surf boarding

18. A. I would like to take off on a trip with no preplanned or definite routes, or timetable

    B. When I go on a trip I like to plan my route and timetable fairly carefully

19. A. I prefer the "down to earth" kinds of people as friends
    B. I would like to make friends in some of the "far out" groups like artists or "punks"

20. A. I would not like to learn to fly an airplane
    B. I would like to learn to fly an airplane

21. A. I prefer the surface of the water to the depths
    B. I would like to go scuba diving

22. A. I would like to meet some persons who are homosexual (men or women)
    B. I stay away from anyone I suspect of being "gay or lesbian"

23. A. I would like to try parachute jumping
    B. I would never want to try jumping out of a plane with or without a parachute

24. A. I prefer friends who are excitingly unpredictable
    B. I prefer friends who are reliable and predictable

25. A. I am not interested in experience for its own sake
    B. I like to have new and exciting experiences and sensations even if they are a little frightening, unconventional, or illegal

26. A. The essence of good art is in its clarity, symmetry of form and harmony of colors
    B. I often find beauty in the "clashing" colors and irregular forms of modern paintings

27. A. I enjoy spending time in the familiar surroundings of home
    B. I get very restless if I have to stay around home for any length of time

28. A. I like to dive off the high board
    B. I don't like the feeling I get standing on the high board (or I don't go near it at all)

29. A. I like to date members of the opposite sex who are physically exciting

    B. I like to date members of the opposite sex who share my values

30. A. Heavy drinking usually ruins a party because some people get loud and boisterous

    B. Keeping the drinks full is the key to a good party

31. A. The worst social sin is to be rude

    B. The worst social sin is to be a bore

32. A. A person should have considerable sexual experience before marriage

    B. It's better if two married persons begin their sexual experience with each other

33. A. Even if I had the money I would not care to associate with flight rich persons like those in the "jet set"

    B. I could conceive of myself seeking pleasures around the world with the "jet set"

34. A. I like people who are sharp and witty even if they do sometimes insult others

    B. I dislike people who have their fun at the expense of hurting the feelings of others

35. A. There is altogether too much portrayal of sex in movies

    B. I enjoy watching many of the "sexy" scenes in movies

36. A. I feel best after taking a couple of drinks

    B. Something is wrong with people who need liquor to feel good

37. A. People should dress according to some standard of taste, neatness, and style

    B. People should dress in individual ways even if the effects are sometimes strange

38. A. Sailing long distances in small sailing crafts is foolhardy

    B. I would like to sail a long distance in a small but seaworthy sailing craft

39. A. I have no patience with dull or boring persons

    B. I find something interesting in almost every person I talk to

40. A. Skiing down a high mountain slope is a good way to end up on crutches

    B. I think I would enjoy the sensations of skiing very fast down a high mountain slope

Demographics

Field of Study/Intended Career Choice_____

Gender_____

THANK YOU!!!!