

Sensation Seeking: A Comparative Study of Paragliders and Rafters

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Abstract

Background: Sensation Seekers have always drawn the attention of the world. People have climbed summit of dangerous mountains, jumped from skyscrapers, walked the ropes between high buildings and have participated in activities like paragliding and river rafting to satisfy their urge for sensation. The present study aimed at comparing the sensation seeking levels of Para-gliders with river rafters. Both paragliding (PG) and river rafting fall under the adventure sports category; it was hypothesized that there would be significant differences between their sensation seeking levels.

Methods: For the purpose of the study, 80 male subjects between the ages of 18 – 35 years were randomly chosen, 40 each from the adventurous sports of paragliding and river rafting. The Sensation Seeking Scale – V (SSS – V) developed by Marvin Zuckerman in 1971 (revised in 1996) was employed to gather the requisite data. The data was collected from Bir-Billing, Himachal Pradesh (paragliding) and Rishikesh, Uttarakhand (rafting) in India.

Result: The study found significant differences between Para-gliders and river rafters on the variable Sensation Seeking and its sub-variables disinhibition, boredom susceptibility and thrill & adventure seeking. However, no such difference was found for the sub variable experience seeking.

Conclusion: On the basis of the study, it is concluded that the sensation seeking level of Para-gliders is higher than the river rafters.

KEYWORDS: Sensation Seeking, Para-gliders, River Rafters

INTRODUCTION

The highest platform for any sportsperson to perform on the earth is 'The Olympic Games'. And the Olympic creed suggests that the most important thing is not to win but to participate, just as the most important thing in life is not the success but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well. The creed demands every sportsperson to fight to the best of his abilities without paying much heed to the outcomes of the performance. But the fact remains that the sportspersons don't want to just go there and compete at any level of competition. They participate with a mind set of winning. Rather they move a step forward and they don't just want to win but to win consistently. Athletes at the higher levels face stiff competition stress, pressure and anxiety, which sometimes have adverse effects on their performance. It is at this level of stress and anxiety, where most disciplines guide the athletes to look for new means of

sensations that can offer them the thrill and challenges, which are both soothing and satisfying. In doing so, the athletes get relief from competition stress and become sensation seekers. Nevertheless, all athletes may not have the common levels or sources of sensations. Zuckerman's (1979 and 1994) theory proposed that there were individual differences in optimal arousal and arousability level as the root of the sensation-seeking trait. Some might feel satisfied by indulging in petty things like breaking a glass or shouting in the streets. Whereas, others might drive a motor bike at a very high speed or walk on the edges of a multi story building. Still others might choose base jumping or reaching the summit of a high mountain to contend their lust for sensation. All these sensations provide them the necessary thrill to reboot their energy for future competition.

Athletes have been assisted psychologically in numerous ways to stand taller than the conditions and challenges. It has been possible due to the psychology and its different subdivisions which have provided the necessary boost and support at different levels. To find out the role of psychological traits in sports performance, researches were conducted at initial levels, which depicted the existence of a strong association between psychological characteristics and the sports performance (Morgan & Pollock, 1977 and May et al., 1985). Some other previous studies revealed that sensation seeking, a psychological trait that was most related to risk taking behavior, had a direct relation with lower academic performance at primary and secondary levels of education (Cladellas R. et al., 2017).

Zuckerman and Kuhlman (2000) opined that whenever someone was confronted with the terms like 'wait', 'consider' or 'think again', it was the beginning of a risk-taking action, might be at the primary level. They further added that the decision making process was greatly influenced by the outcome of the risk involving actions. If the outcome of a risk taking action was awarded with punishment, it would have a depressing effect on the decision making process. According to Zuckerman (2009) sensation seeking was a personality trait that derived the person to search for experiences and thoughts that were original, complex and had variety. He added that such a person was ready to take physical, social, legal and economic risks. Thomson C. J. et al. (2014) made another noteworthy attempt to describe sensation seeking. They portrayed sensation seeking as a personality characteristic, which was linked with disinhibited behaviors that included not only gambling and substance use but also high risk sports including paragliding, skydiving and skiing down the hill. Zuckerman and Kuhlman (2000) expressed that the sensation seekers and the sensation avoiders were different. There were differences in their biological characteristics as well as in their personality traits, emotions, habits, preferences and cognitive style. Cigarette smoking, drug and alcohol consumption, high-risk sexual actions, liking for unusual tricks and liking towards risky sports were the traits of sensation seekers whereas the sensation avoiders kept away from such activities.

Sensation seeking may also be regarded as thrill seeking, fearlessness, or stimulus seeking. People enjoy the thrill by participating in different types of activities. Such activities can be risky and dangerous. This sense of risk or danger gives them the kick to indulge in such activities.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The comparative study was conducted with the objective to explore the differences between Para-gliders and river rafters on the psychological variable of sensations seeking. It was hypothesized that the Para-gliders would score higher than the rafterson the variable sensation seeking and all its sub-variables.

METHODOLOGY

SELECTION OF SUBJECTS:

SUBJECTS				
Game	Age group (In Years)	Level of Participation	Gender	Number of Participants
Paragliding (PG)	18 – 35	National	Male	40
River Rafting	18 – 35	National	Male	40
TOTAL				80

SELECTION OF TEST SCALE: The researchers went through the literature and decided to adopt the following test scale in the form of questionnaire for measuring sensation seeking level of the subjects.

S. No.	Variable	Name of the Test	Constructed/ Developed by	Year
1	Sensation Seeking	Sensation Seeking Scale – V (SSS – V)	Marvin Zuckerman	1971 (Revised –1996)

COLLECTION OF DATA: Data from the Para-gliders was collected during the Paragliding World Cup held at Bir-Billing, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India from October 23 – 31, 2015. Data from the river rafters was collected from Rishikesh and Haridwar in Uttaranchal, India in the month of May 2016.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED

The primary data for the study was collected using the questionnaire. The following statistical tools and procedures were adopted to meet the objective of the study. The analysis was completed using the following:

1. The 't – Test' was applied for the comparison of means of the two samples on each variable. The level of significance was set at 0.05 levels.
2. One way ANOVA was used.
3. Cross bars

The data has been represented using the tables and bar charts.

Results of the Study

The results of the psychological variable Sensation Seeking of Para-gliders and rafters have been presented in the succeeding tables. The interpretations of the tables have been specified accordingly along with the tables. The graphical exemplification has also been presented for the sub-variables of sensation seeking for the mean comparison.

Sub-variable: Disinhibition

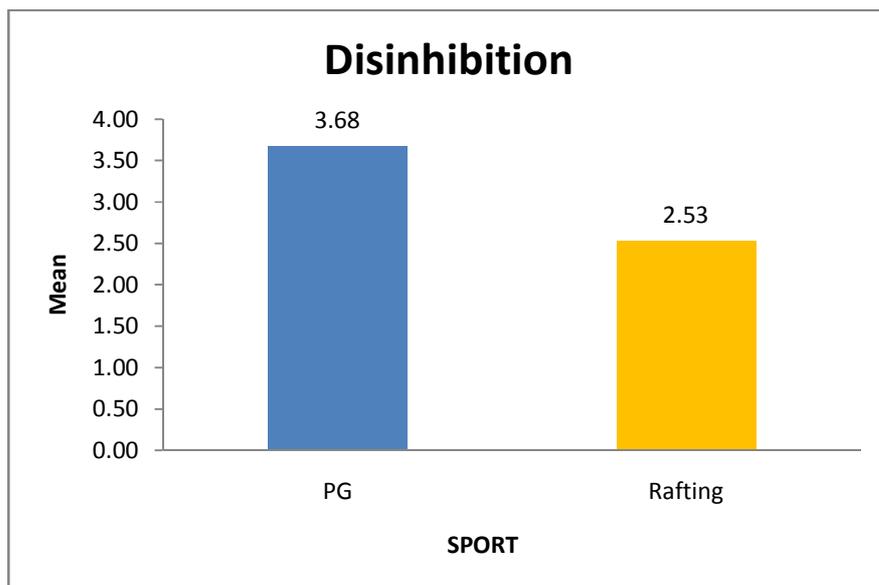
Table 1
Differences between Para-gliders and Rafters on the sub-variable Disinhibition

	N	PG		Rafting		t-value	p-value
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Disinhibition	40	3.68	1.73	2.53	1.57	3.114	.003**

* Significant at 0.05 level

The above table presents the mean values (\pm SD), t value and the p value of Para-gliders and rafters with respect to the sub-variable disinhibition. The Para-gliders group, when compared to the rafters group, exhibited statistically significant differences with respect to the sub-variable disinhibition as the p value was found to be less than the alpha value ($p < 0.05$). The graphical exemplification of the same has been presented below.

Figure 1
Mean Score of sub-variable Disinhibition of Para-gliders & Rafters



Sub-variable: Boredom Susceptibility

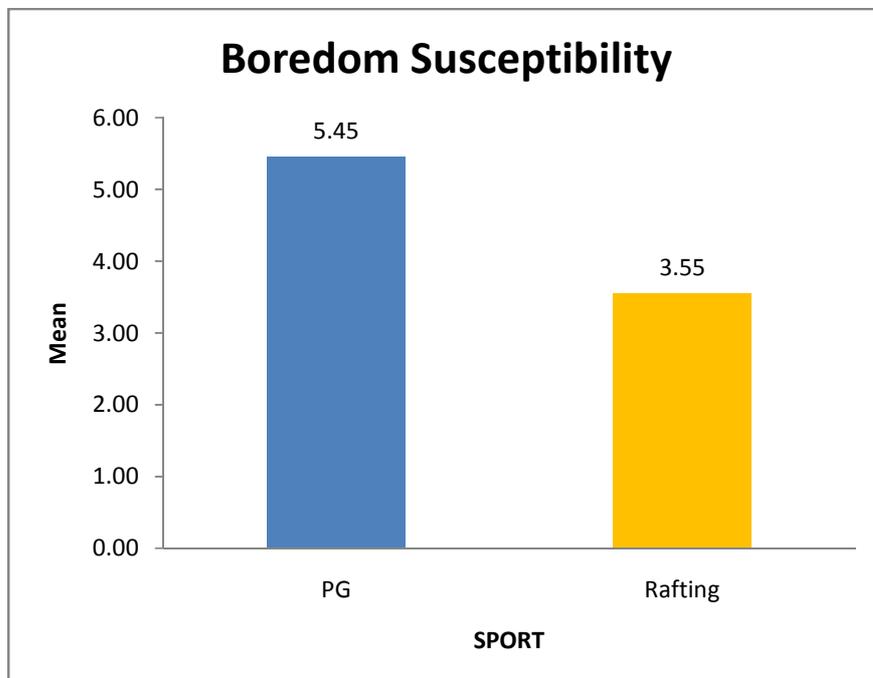
Table 2
Differences between Para-gliders and Rafters on the sub-variable Boredom Susceptibility

	N	PG		Rafting		t-value	p-value
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Boredom Susceptibility	40	5.45	1.85	3.55	1.96	4.455	.0001* *

* Significant at 0.05 level

The above table presents the mean values (\pm SD), t value and the p value of Para-gliders and rafters with respect to the sub-variable boredom susceptibility. The Para-gliders group when compared to the rafters group exhibited statistically significant differences with respect to the sub-variable boredom susceptibility ($p < 0.05$). The graphical exemplification of the same has been presented below.

Figure 2
Mean Score of sub-variable Boredom Susceptibility of Para-gliders & Rafters



Sub-variable: Thrill and Adventure Seeking

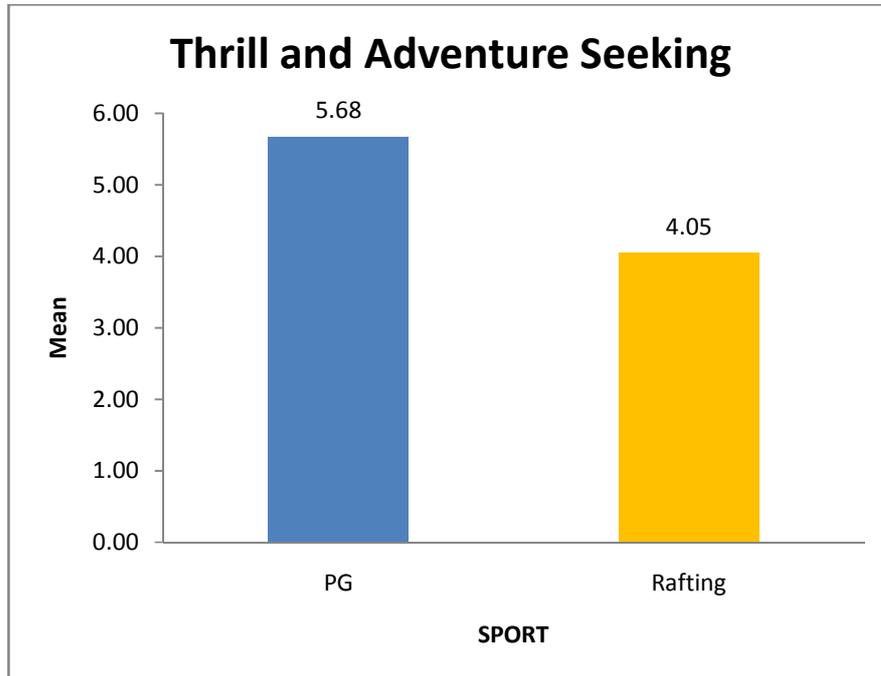
Table 3
Differences between Para-gliders and Rafters on the sub-variable Thrill & Adventure Seeking

	N	PG		Rafting		t-value	p-value
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Thrill and Adventure Seeking	40	5.68	1.70	4.05	1.74	4.226	.0001* *

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table3 clearly shows the mean values (\pm SD), t value and the p value of Para-gliders and rafters with respect to the sub-variable thrill and adventure seeking. Statistically significant difference has been found ($p < 0.05$) between Para-gliders and rafters on the sub-variable thrill and adventure seeking. The results have been graphically exemplified in the below table.

Figure 3
Mean Score of sub-variable Thrill and Adventure Seeking of Para-gliders & Rafters



Sub-variable: Experience Seeking

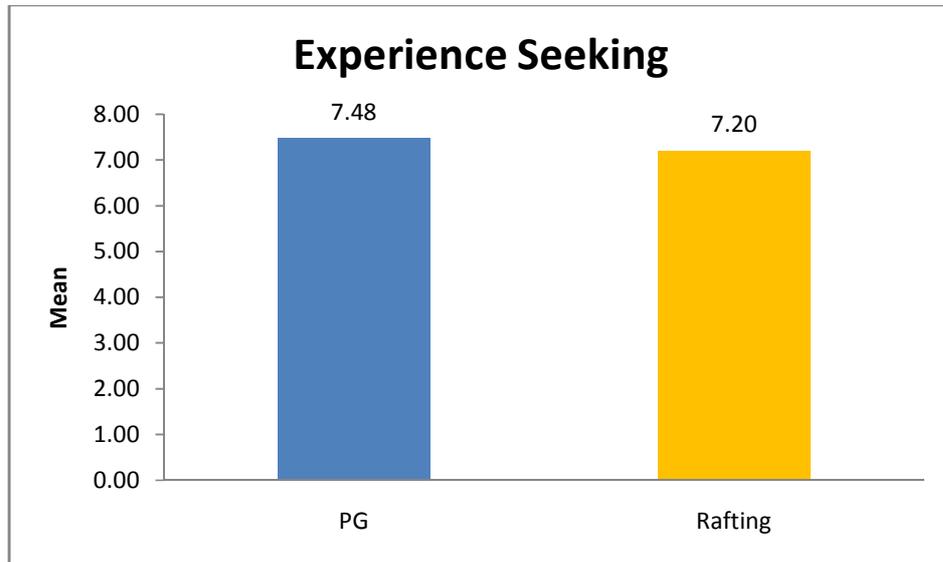
Table 4
Differences between Para-gliders and Rafters on the sub-variable Experience Seeking

	N	PG		Rafting		t-value	p-value
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Experience Seeking	40	7.48	2.12	7.20	1.83	.621	.537

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 depicts the descriptive statistics for PG and rafting for the sub-variable experience seeking. The mean value for the PG group is 7.48 whereas it is 7.20 for the rafting group. No statistically significant difference has been found between Para-gliders and rafters with respect to the sub-variable experience seeking ($p > 0.05$). Graphical representation of the results has been presented in figure 4 below.

Figure 4
Mean Score of sub-variable Experience Seeking of Para-gliders & Rafters



VARIABLE: SENSATION SEEKING

Table 5
Differences between Para-gliders and Rafters on the variable Sensation Seeking

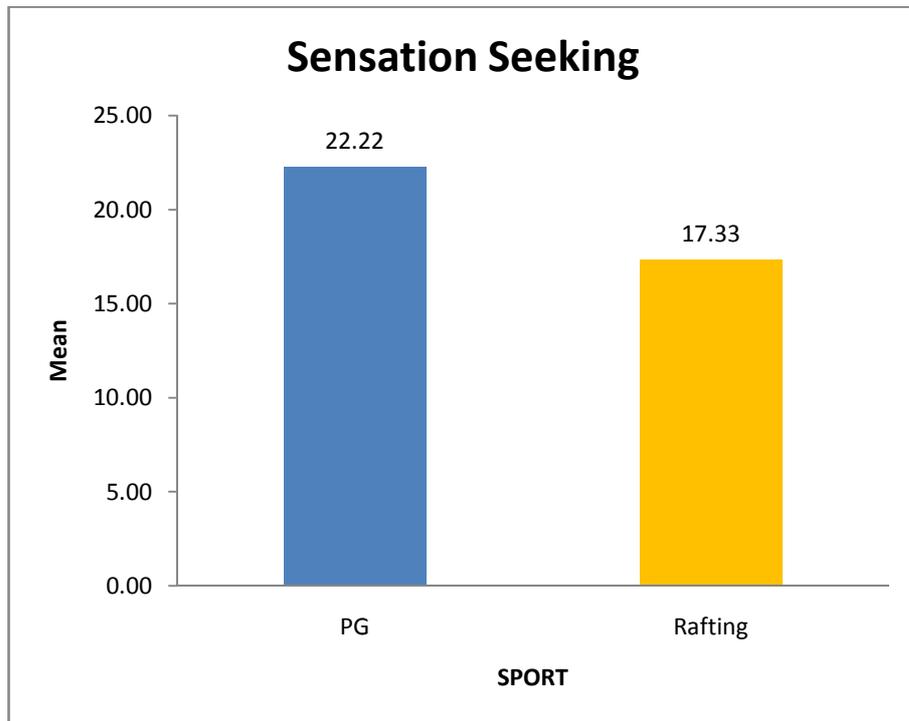
	N	PG		Rafting		t-value	p-value
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		

			Deviation		Deviation		
Disinhibition	40	3.68	1.73	2.53	1.57	3.114	.003**
Boredom Susceptibility	40	5.45	1.85	3.55	1.96	4.455	.0001* *
Thrill and Adventure Seeking	40	5.68	1.70	4.05	1.74	4.226	.0001* *
Experience Seeking	40	7.48	2.12	7.20	1.83	.621	.537
Sensation Seeking	40	22.28	3.94	17.33	4.07	5.528	.0001* *

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 5 evidently presents the mean values (\pm SD), t value and the p value of Para-gliders and rafters with respect to the variable Sensation Seeking. The Para-gliders group when compared to the rafters group exhibited statistically significant differences with respect to the variable Sensation Seeking as the p value is less than the alpha value ($p < 0.05$). The graphical exemplification of the same has been presented below.

Figure 5
Mean Score of Variable Sensation Seeking of Para-gliders & Rafters



Conclusion:

On the basis of the above study it is concluded that there existed significant differences between Para-gliders and rafters with respect to the psychological variable of Sensation

Seeking. Significant differences were found between Para-gliders and rafters on the sub-variables disinhibition, boredom susceptibility and thrill & adventure seeking. However no significant difference was found for the sub-variable experience seeking between the two groups. The results are in line with the findings of Verma et al. (2017) and Glicksohn et al. (2018) as they found that the involvement in higher risk taking activities increased the level of sensation seeking among participant. The results of the study are also supported by Baretta D. et al. (2017) as they suggested that sensation seeking could predict the performance of high-risk activities.

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