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SENSATION SEEKING SCALE – RESULTS OF A TEACHER RESEARCH

The antecedents of the research

The Ratio Research Group started its research work in 2017, which was established at the Faculty of Teacher Education of János Selye University with the aim of examining the circumstances and background of university students related to dropout. We carry out our longitudinal research with the help of eleven, partly self-developed and partly adapted measuring instruments, which we carry out in four Hungarian-language higher education institutions.¹

The most important feature of our research strategy is that we examine dropout in a broader context, in addition to getting to know the students' personalities, we also analyze the characteristics of the social environment. We look for connections between background factors, logical thinking, emotional intelligence, attitudes (teacher career, teacher role), teacher competencies, stress tolerance, and learning style, among others.

We continuously compare our results with the relevant indicators of the latest domestic and international studies. (Kanczné Nagy, K. - Csehi, A. 2018, Kanczné Nagy, K. - Tóth, P. 2018, Horváth, K. - Tóth, P. 2019, Nagy, Melinda et al 2019, Tóth-Bakos, A. - Tóth, P. 2018, Faria, C. et al 2012, Frey, A. et al 2014, Jungerta, T. et al 2015, Robinson K. - Aronica L. 2018, Şahin, M. 2014, Stiburek Š et al 2017, Twenge 2018, Wudu M., Getahun F. 2009)

The insecurities and fears of the students

From our preliminary research results, the present study focuses on our findings on students' personality and mental state, which, in line with international results, show that students have significant mental and emotional problems (Twenge 2018; Robinson – Aronica 2018). They are insecure in themselves, they have fears about learning, their lack of abilities, they are anxious about the failure to complete their studies and their physical-mental-emotional-spiritual world is full of contradictions.

As a result of our efforts to resolve the situation, we have included a personality development pedagogy course in the training of our students, which is an optional subject for the would-be kindergarten teacher and teacher students. The course uses the possibilities of activity- and experience-focused and experiential pedagogy that can be adapted in many ways. Our goal is to strengthen students' attachments to university and university studies, to help build different relationships (peer-to-peer and student-teacher), to help overcome learning insecurities and fears, and thus to contribute to the positive development of their personalities.

In order to increase the efficiency of the course, in the academic year 2019/2020, we included the Sensation Seeking Scale as one of our measurement tools. The psychometric features of the questionnaire allow us to obtain data on the personality traits of the participants in the study aimed at gaining intense experiences and new, varied experiences.

Presentation of the test or measuring device

“Sensory search for experience is one of countless personality traits. Yet its presence or absence is not negligible, as it affects many areas of our lives. It affects what activities we prefer, what sports we choose, what foods we prefer, how we dress, or what kind of people we feel comfortable with” (Mayer et al. 2012, p. 298.) Sensory search for experience is a personality trait from which the risk of problematic behaviours such as excessive alcohol and other pleasure consumption, illegal substance use, unrestricted sexual behaviour, uncontrolled gambling etc (Andó et al. 2009).

Our research team used the most commonly used 40-item Sensation Seeking Scale, which has excellent reliability and validity indicators (Zuckerman 1978).

The questionnaire consists of 40 pairs of statements. For each statement pair, the person completing the questionnaire should decide which member of the statement pair he or she can best agree with.

The study was conducted along 4 dimensions:

- Excitement and adventure, namely the extent to which the respondent is looking for fast and dangerous sports and activities.
- Searching for experience, namely the degree of openness to new experiences that excite the senses or the mind, travel and non-conformal lifestyle.
- The strongest factor in the dimension of unbridledness is immersion in drug and sex adventures.
- And the boredom tolerance dimension examines the extent to which repetition, routine, the presence of boring people, and invariance create tension in the person.

Thus, determining the extent of the search for experience can provide important information for a more thorough understanding of the students' personality profile and the realization of our objectives outlined above.

THE TEST SAMPLE

161 students from János Selye University took part in the research (Table 1).
(N = 161, Cronbach's Alpha: 0.754).

Distribution by specialties (%)	kindergarten teacher 67.7 teacher major 21.1 public education 11.2
Distribution by department (%)	full time student 73 correspondent 27
Distribution by place of passing the final exam(%)	Slovakia 60.9 Hungary 38.5
Distribution of graduates in Slovakia by department (%)	full time student 76.5 correspondent 23.5
Distribution of high school graduates in Hungary by department (%)	full time student 67.7 correspondent 32.3
Gender distribution (%)	men 15 women 85
Distribution by higher education (%)	no 97.5 BA 1.2 MA 1.2
Distribution by type of secondary school (%)	vocational high school 60.9 four-grade grammar school 28.6 eight-grade grammar school 5.6 adult education leading to graduation 4.3 high school for the disabled 0.6
Distribution by number of own child(ren) (%)	none 82.6

	1 child 7.5 2 children 6.8 3 children 2.5 4 children 0.6
Distribution by parents (Father) by highest level of education %	vocational training 41 vocational secondary school 37.3 grammar school 6.8 primary school 5.6 BA 4.3 MA 4.3 PhD 0.6
Distribution by parents (Mother) by highest education (%)	vocational secondary school 40.4 vocational training 24.8 grammar school 13 primary school 7.5 BA 7.5 MA 6.2 PhD 0.6

Table 1: Background data on the study participants

Research questions

- Which dimension experiences are the most common to be searched for among students?
- Are there any significant differences in relation to each dimension?

Frequency of experiences in the four dimensions

We began to examine the frequency of experience search in dimensions by summarizing students' responses. We then percentage the students' choices per dimension in each of the 10-10 statement pairs. In the following, we examined the choice rates of the experience-seeking statements. Quantitative categories of experience search frequency were determined in the following based on research methodological considerations. If the respondents chose the statement of the pair of statements expressing the search for a sensory experience to be less than 20%, the degree of search for experience is low, if the choice was more than 60%, the degree of search for experience is high.

The distribution of the selection rate of 10-10 pairs of statements measured in four dimensions is illustrated in Figure 1.

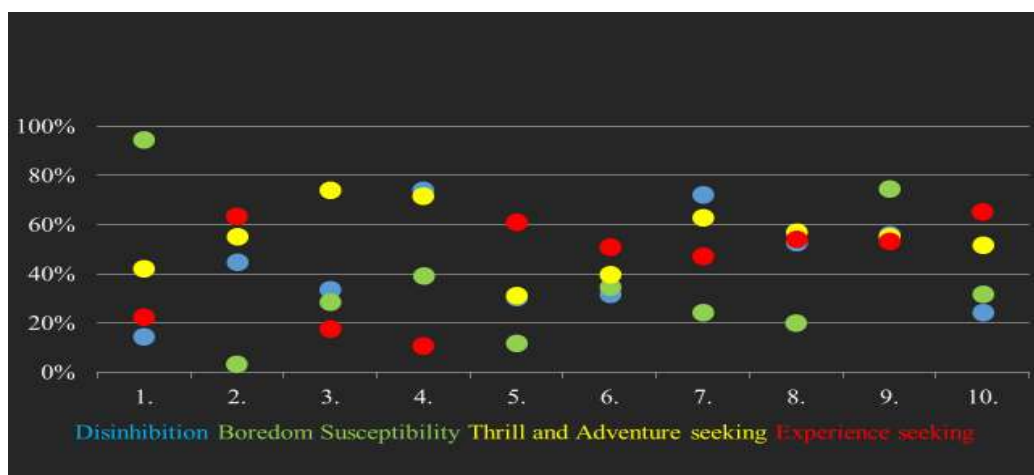


Figure 1: Distribution of the choice rates of the 10 question pairs belonging to each dimension

Based on the responses, it can be concluded that high frequency is present in a higher proportion among students than low frequency. High-frequency responses occur in all four dimensions, while low-

frequency responses occur only in the Boredom Susceptibility and Experience seeking dimensions. Table 2 illustrates the percentages of high-frequency statements and their remarkable content.

Statements:	Dimension:	Choice rate:
For the sake of the God, i would not even watch a movie I have seen before.	Boredom tolerance	94,4%
I love people who honestly state what they think even when it's sometimes hurtful.	Boredom tolerance	74,50%
I love having new, exciting experiences, even if they're a little scary, unusual, or illegal.	Unbridledness	73,90%
I would love to learn to water ski.	Excitement and adventure	73,90%
It would be advisable for everyone to have the right amount of sexual experience before marriage.	Unbridledness	72%
I would love to try wind sailing.	Excitement and adventure	71,40%
Everyone has to dress in their own way, even if it sometimes makes a special impact.	Experience search	65,20%
I am happy to embark on a journey of discovery alone in a foreign city or part of town, even if I get lost.	Experience search	63,40%
I would love to try sky diving.	Excitement and adventure	62,70%
I like trying foods I have never tasted before.	Experience search	60,90%

Table 2: Incidence rate of high frequency responses

Comparison of dimensions

To examine each dimension, we revealed the differences in the choice rates between the members of the statement pairs (referring to experience search or refusing to search for experience). For each pair of statements, we calculated the difference between the members of the pairs in terms of the choice rate. The closer the difference is to zero, the more divided the respondents in judging the statement pairs, as this means that 50% of the respondents chose one member of the statement pair and 50% the other. The closer the difference is to 100, the greater the consensus among respondents, as this means that one member of the statement pair was chosen by no or very few, while the other member was (almost) chosen by everyone. The differences in the selection rate of the 40 pairs of statements in the four dimensions are illustrated in Figure 2. The figure shows well that students are most divided in the Thrill and Adventure seeking, and the greatest agreement among them is in the Boredom Susceptibility.

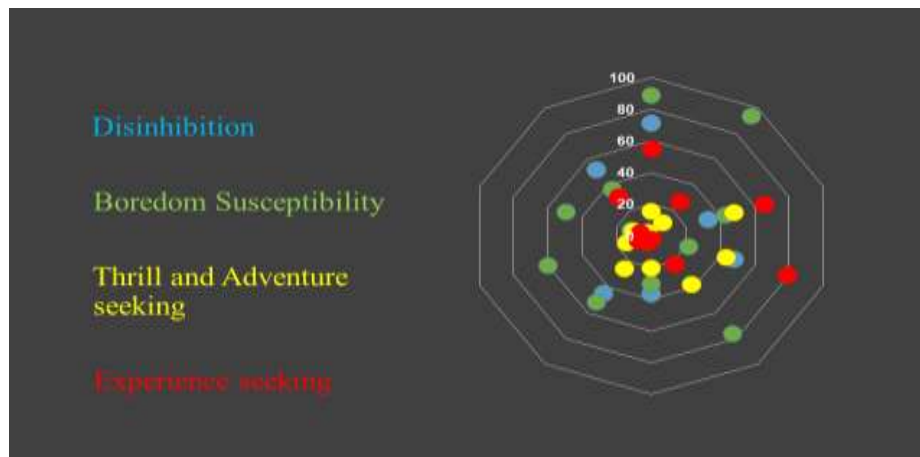


Figure 2: Differences in the choice rate of question pairs in the four dimensions examined

The degree of division and agreement was determined as follows: in the case of a difference of 0-15 percentage points, the division is strong, and between 50-100 percentage points there is an agreement, the strength of which increases to 100. We revealed the greatest division in the Thrill and Adventure seeking, as here 5 statements are below 15 percentage points, or around. (Figure 3)

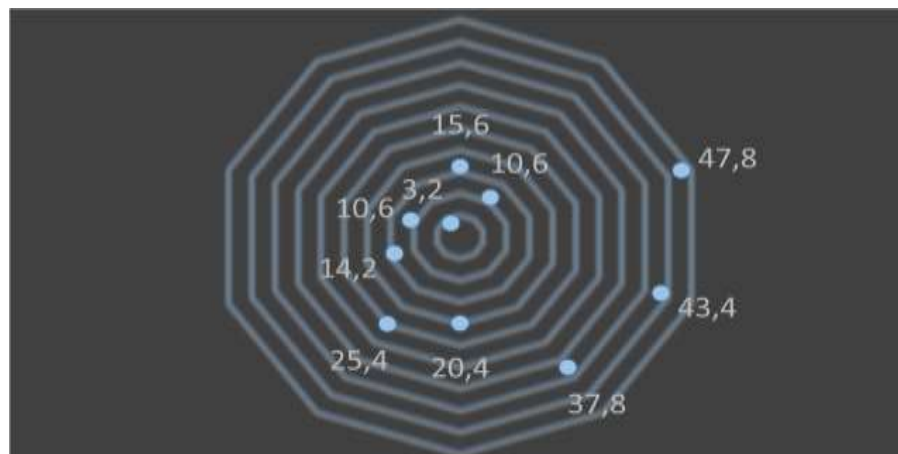


Figure 3: Differences in the choice rate of the 10 question pairs in the Thrill and Adventure seeking dimension

The statements of the statement pairs sharing the students are summarized in Table 3.

Statement pairs:	Choice rate:
<input type="radio"/> I would love to try bungee jumping. <input type="radio"/> It repels the feeling of me jumping from a height. I don't even approach places like this.	57,1% 42,9%
<input type="radio"/> Sensible people avoid dangerous activities. <input type="radio"/> Sometimes I like doing things that are a little scary.	44,7% 55,3%
<input type="radio"/> Downhill skiing on a steep mountain slope is a great way to find yourself in plaster. <input type="radio"/> I think I could really enjoy a quick descent down a steep mountain slope.	48,4% 51,6%
<input type="radio"/> I would love to be a climber. <input type="radio"/> I can't understand why some risk their lives climbing	42,2% 57,8%
<input type="radio"/> It is reckless to sail far with a light small sailboat. <input type="radio"/> I would like to sail far into the sea with a light but well- built sailboat.	44,7% 55,3%

Table 3: Strongly divided pairs of statements in the Thrill and Adventure seeking dimension

We found the greatest degree of agreement among respondents in the Boredom Susceptibility dimension. Here 6 statements are above 50 percentage points. (Figure 4)

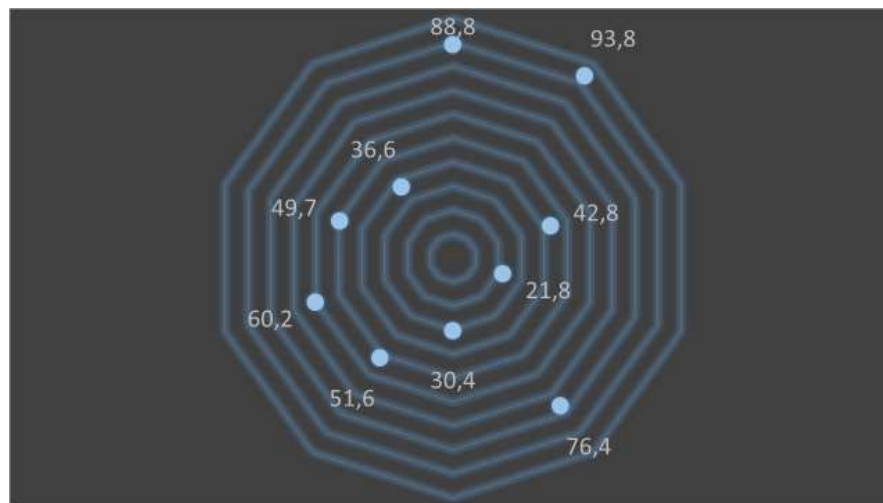


Figure 4: Differences in the choice rate of the 10 question pairs in the Boredom Susceptibility dimension

In the dimension of Boredom Susceptibility, consensus there was not always in the sensory experience search. (Table 4)

Statement pairs:	Choice rate:
○ I get bored when I have to see the same old faces.	3.1%
○ I like the comfortable acquaintance of old friends.	96.9%
○ There are movies that I like to watch twice or even three times.	5.6%
○ For the sake of the world, I wouldn't even watch a movie I've seen before.	94.4%
○ I enjoy watching photos or movies of my trip at home on Facebook or Instagram.	88.2%
○ It is terribly boring when the hosts show travel pictures or movies to their guests.	11.8%
○ The main sin in social contact is rudeness.	80,1%
○ The main sin in social contact is when someone is bored.	19,9%
○ I like spending my time at home in a familiar environment.	75,8%
○ I will be restless if I have to sit at home for a long time.	24,2%
○ I like people who honestly state what they think even when it is sometimes hurtful.	74,5%
○ I don't like people who take pleasure in hurting others.	24,8%

Table 4: Agreed statement pairs in the Boredom Susceptibility dimension (highlighted in bold: statements concerning sensory experience)

Summary

Our research team used the most commonly used 40-item Sensation Seeking Scale.

The study was conducted along 4 dimensions:

1. Thrill and Adventure seeking (SSS-TAS), namely the extent to which the respondent is looking for fast and dangerous sports and activities.
2. Experience seeking (SSS-ES), namely the degree of openness to new experiences that excite the senses or the mind, travel and non-conformal lifestyle.
3. The strongest factor in the dimension of Disinhibition (SSS-DIS) is immersion in drug and sex adventures.
4. And the Boredom Susceptibility (SSS-BS) dimension examines the extent to which repetition, routine, the presence of boring people, and invariance create tension in the person.

The Research questions:

- Which dimension experiences are the most common to be searched for among teacher candidates?
- Are there any significant differences in relation to each dimension?

The Test sample: 161 students from J. Selye University took part in the research.

Based on the responses, it can be stated that high-frequency responses occur in all four dimensions, while low-frequency responses occur only in the Boredom Susceptibility and Experience seeking dimensions. The statements with the highest frequency are: 1. "I would not watch a movie I have ever seen for the world. 2. "I love people who honestly say what they think even when it is sometimes hurtful" 3. "I love having new, exciting experiences, even if they are a little scary, unusual, or illegal. "Students are most divided in the Thrill and Adventure seeking dimension. The greatest agreement is in the Boredom Susceptibility dimension. The enjoyment of extreme sports mostly shares their opinions (average rate: 55% ; 45%) In the dimension of Boredom Susceptibility, consensus there was not always in the sensory experience search. The security of the usual old friendly environment is important and not boring for 96,9% of the respondents. 80.1% like to spend time with friends.

The main motivation of our study presented here was to obtain information about the personality traits of teacher candidates seeking sensory experience. Based on the obtained results, it can be stated that we have obtained informative data on the personality traits of our students, and that the percentage of students seeking and demanding experiences with significant intensity can be demonstrated.

We continue our study in the framework of a comparative study, where we intend to examine the emotional intelligence of pedagogical students and compare its results with the results of the present study. By intending to explore the personalities and professional needs of students, we intend to apply procedures that help them to successfully complete their university studies, on the one hand, and to train properly trained personalities to the labor market, on the other.

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