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A comparative study among superiority and inferiority complex between adolescent boys and girls

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Abstract

This study investigates the personality differences between adolescent boys and girls, with a focus on Superiority and Inferiority complexes. According to Adlerian theory, these complexes are crucial personality structures that indicate personality development. The study employs a quantitative method, utilizing a survey research design and random sampling to select 80 adolescents (40 boys and 40 girls) aged 16-18. The Adolescents Personality Test by Dr. A. Pandey, a standardized tool, is administered to measure personality traits, including Superiority Complex and Inferiority Complex. The findings reveal that adolescent girls exhibit a higher prevalence of Superiority Complex, while adolescent boys display a higher prevalence of Inferiority Complex. These results suggest that gender differences significantly influence personality development among adolescents aged 16-18. The study's outcomes contribute to our understanding of adolescent personality development and have implications for future research and interventions.

Keywords: Superiority complex, inferiority complex, adolescents, personality

Introduction

In Adler's theory of individual psychology, a superiority and an inferiority complex are tied together. He held that a person who acted superior to others and held others as less worthy was hiding a feeling of inferiority. Likewise, some people with high aspirations may attempt to hide them by pretending to be modest or incapable. In Adlerian theory, inferiority and superiority complex are personality structures that point to unhealthy development.

Adler (1918) defined inferiority feelings as basic feelings of incompleteness, helplessness, and dependency resulting from experiences in early childhood. The feeling of inferiority activates compensatory processes to overcome these negative experiences. The child compensates for the inferior feelings by creating a guiding fantasy, which develops a sense of personal non-vulnerability. Inferiority complex is an intense and deep feeling of inadequacy that individuals experience about perceiving others as more competent than themselves and not feeling ready to overcome a problem. Adler explained that many forms of human behavior, including dreams and various maladjustments, are compensations for feelings of inferiority. During such compensations, the maladjusted individual attempts to free himself from such feelings of inferiority and gain real or imagined power over others.

Before defined a complex as a group of ideas that share common emotional associations because the feelings, thoughts, or memories that make up the complex have been repressed and continue to exist in the unconscious mind. This definition implies that certain occurrences or experiences in human life are such that they become inaccessible to recall over time. In order to verify the authenticity of this observation by Adler, conducted a case study in which he found after psychoanalysis that his client was haunted by the idea of the death of his mother when he was still very young. The memory was repressed but was later revealed a night after he was interviewed. Adler believed that feelings of inferiority are not necessarily negative; they provide the motivations for subsequent adolescent and adult achievement.

In everyday usage, "superiority complex" refers to an overly high opinion of oneself. In psychology, it refers not to a belief but a pattern of behaviors expressing the belief that one is superior. According to Hall and Lindzey (1957), a superiority complex is a by-product of striving for perfection.

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This view was derived from Adler's (1932) theory of overcompensation for feelings of inferiority. He observed that the typical individual with a superiority complex is arrogant, conceited, and carries an exaggerated opinion of personal capabilities. Superiority complex is a behavior that suggests a person believes he or she is somehow superior to others, often has exaggerated opinions of himself or herself, and may believe his or her abilities and achievements surpass those of others. However, a superiority complex may be hiding low self-esteem or a sense of inferiority. The superiority complex is one of the ways that a person with an inferiority complex may use to escape from his/her difficulties. An individual with a superiority complex inflates his or her self-importance to overcome feelings of inferiority. When one has a superiority complex, one has a negative impact on others. They put others down to mask their own negative feelings about themselves.

Once the goal of superiority has been made concrete, no mistakes are made in the life style. The habits and symptoms of the individual are precisely suitable for attaining his concrete goal; they are beyond all criticism. Superiority and inferiority complex are just opposite to each other but we can see some connection between superiority and inferiority complex. For example, if we study problem children with a superiority complex - children who are impertinent and arrogant - we shall find that they always want to appear bigger than they are. We all know how children with temper tantrums try to control others. They feel inferior because they are not sure they are strong enough to attain their goal. It is as if they were constantly on tiptoes to appear bigger than they really are and thus gain success, pride and superiority.

An individual's social environment is important to consider when examining feelings of inferiority, as the feelings can result from negative social comparisons. Adolescence is a pivotal stage in human development marked by profound physical, psychological, and social changes. During this period, individuals grapple with the complexities of identity formation, self-esteem and social comparison. Among the myriad psychological phenomena that shape adolescent behavior, superiority and inferiority complexes are significant factors influencing self-perception and interpersonal dynamics. Superiority and inferiority complexes represent extreme ends of the spectrum of self-esteem, each manifesting in distinct behavioral patterns and coping mechanisms. The superiority complex involves an exaggerated sense of self-importance, often accompanied by feelings of entitlement and a tendency to belittle others. Conversely, the inferiority complex is characterized by pervasive feelings of inadequacy, unworthiness, and a constant need for validation from others.

While research has extensively explored these complexes in various demographic groups, comparatively less attention has been devoted to understanding their nuances within adolescent boys and girls. This study seeks to bridge this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of superiority and inferiority complexes between conducting a comparative analysis of superiority and inferiority complexes between adolescent boys and girls. Many factors, including biological, psychological, and sociocultural dynamics, influence adolescent development. Gender, in particular, plays a significant role in shaping the experiences and expressions of superiority and inferiority complexes. Traditional gender norms, societal expectations, and cultural pressures can exacerbate or mitigate these complexes in unique ways

for boys and girls.

Moreover, adolescence is a period marked by heightened peer influence and social comparison. Adolescents often evaluate themselves about their peers, developing complex hierarchies and dynamics within social groups. Understanding how superiority and inferiority complexes manifest within these social contexts can provide valuable insights into the developmental trajectories of adolescent boys and girls. By exploring the similarities and differences in the manifestation, prevalence, and correlates of superiority and inferiority complexes among adolescent boys and girls, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of Superiority and Inferiority Complex of Adolescents in gender-specific psychological dynamics during this critical stage of development.

Literature Review

Here are some literature Review on related Research area:

In a study it was found that the main effect of gender and birth order were significant in Inferiority Complex, while the main effect of birth order was significant in Superiority Complex (Sumeyye Derin & Ekrem Sedat Sahin, 2023) ^[4].

A study show a strong and positive relationship between inferiority complex and social interaction inferiority complex should be distinguished from personality constructs such as neuroticism and self-esteem, that correlate with mental health problems superiority could be linked to maladaptive or aggressive behaviors with others.

Inferiority complex is an intense and deep feeling of inadequacy that individuals experience in relation to perceiving others as more competent than themselves and not feeling ready to overcome a problem (Adler, 1964). This complex prevents the expression and development of the existing potential.

The problem of Inferiority Complex among Adolescents is becoming increasingly alarming. Teenagers are the prime years of bearing the burden of inferiority feelings.

Adler argued that only if women were given the same opportunities as men could they deal successfully with their sense of inferiority.

Striving for superiority is a positive striving for perfection. Healthy people strive for superiority however they do not develop a superiority complex to mask true feelings of inferiority.

Despite existing literature on gender differences, the correlation between superiority and inferiority complexes among adolescent boys and girls remains understudied. Therefore, the present study aims to provide a fresh perspective on the relationship between superiority and inferiority complexes and compare their prevalence among adolescent boys and girls. By exploring this under examined area, this research seeks to contribute new insights to the field and enhance, understanding of the complex dynamics between gender, self-perception, and psychological well-being during adolescence.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to study the Superiority and Inferiority Complex of adolescent boys and girls. This study aimed to examine the comparison between adolescent boys and girls in perspective of their personality difference. The specific objectives include:

1. To examine the Superiority Complex among adolescents boys and girls.
2. To compare the Superiority Complex between

adolescents boys and girls.

3. To examine the Inferiority Complex among adolescents' boys and girls.
4. To compare the Inferiority Complex between adolescents boys and girls.

Hypotheses

Based on the above objectives, the following null hypotheses were developed:

- There is no significant difference between Superiority Complex of adolescent's boys and girls.
- There is no significant difference between Inferiority Complex of adolescent's boys and girls.

Methodology

In the present study, 80 adolescents in the age range of 16 to 18 years were selected as a sample by random sampling technique. The adolescent Personality Test by Dr. A. Pandey was administered to selected girls and boys (40-40). The scoring of the scale was done accordingly. Statistical analysis was carried out to find the results. The obtained results were analyzed using the Mean and S.D.

Results and Discussions

The present study aims to understand the relationship between superiority complex and inferiority complex among adolescents in the age group of 16 to 18 years. The study also looks into the gender differences between boys and girls with respect to superiority complex and inferiority complex.

The first hypothesis of this study predicted that There is no significant difference between Superiority Complex of adolescents boys and girls. In order to test this hypothesis, scores obtained by the two groups of subjects (40 girls and 40 boys) were first computed and the data were analyzed by using Mean and Standard Deviation. Here are the results present in form of Table and Graph.

Table 1: Comparative analysis of Superiority Complex between Adolescent Boys and Girls of same age group

| Group | No. of Sample | Mean | S.D. |
|-------|---------------|--------|-------|
| Boys | 40 | 19.375 | 3.939 |
| Girls | 40 | 21.025 | 5.717 |

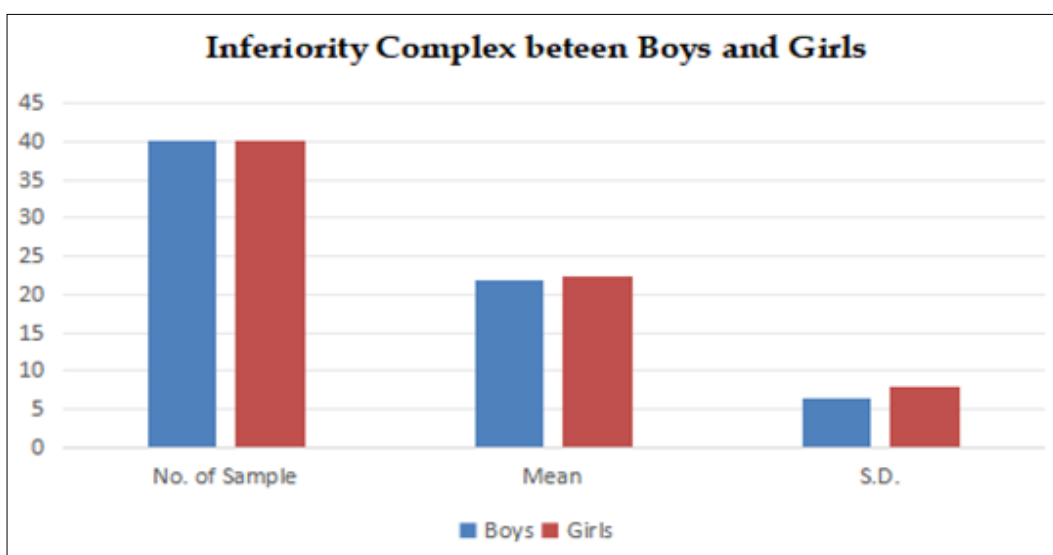


Fig 1: Inferiority complex between boys and girls

The result obtained shows that adolescent girls had more Superiority Complex in Comparison to Adolescent Boys.

The second hypothesis of this study posited that There is no significant difference in the levels of Inferiority Complex between adolescents boys and girls. To test this hypothesis, the scores obtained from the two groups of subjects, comprising 40 girls and 40 boys, were computed and analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation. The results are presented in the form of a table and graph, which are as follows.

Table 2: Comparative analysis of Inferiority Complex between Adolescent Boys and Girls of same age group

| Group | No. of Sample | Mean | S.D. |
|-------|---------------|--------|-------|
| Boys | 40 | 24.76 | 7.40 |
| Girls | 40 | 22.875 | 6.405 |

This Research explores the relationship between superiority complex and inferiority complex among adolescent boys and girls, with a specific focus on gender differences within the 16-18 year age range. The study comprises two groups of 40 participants each, consisting of boys and girls. The findings reveal a significant difference in the levels of inferiority

complex between the two groups, with adolescent boys exhibiting a higher prevalence of inferiority complex compared to adolescent girls.

Conclusion

This study sought to investigate and contrast the prevalence of superiority complex and inferiority complex among adolescent boys and girls, with a particular focus on examining the relationship between these complexes and personality differences. The research aimed to explore whether significant disparities exist between adolescent boys and girls in terms of their Superiority and Inferiority complex tendencies, and how these complexes intersect with individual personality traits.

By examining the complex dynamics between gender, personality, and self-perception, this study aimed to contribute to our understanding of the psychological factors that shape adolescent behavior, Personality and social interactions. The findings of this research can inform strategies for promoting healthy personality development, self-awareness, and emotional well-being among adolescents, while also highlighting potential gender-specific

considerations for interventions and support programs.

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