

## **INFERIORITY COMPLEX- A THREAT IN STUDIES AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Inferiority complex is a feeling of inadequacy stemming from either real or imaginary sources. While the emotions are often subconscious, it often compels its victims to overcompensate their performance. This can take the form of either outstanding achievement or severe antisocial antics or in severe cases the individual can fluctuate between the two extremes. The sample of the study comprised of 250 high school students in Tirunelveli educational District. The survey method was employed for collecting the data and was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. It is found that there is significant difference in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to student's age, gender and type of school. There is significant association in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to father's education.

**Key words:** Inferiority complex, inadequacy, stemming, overcompensate, antisocial, antics, fluctuate.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Inferiority complex is a deep feeling of inferiority that leads to pessimistic resignation and an assumed inability to overcome difficulties. Unlike a normal feeling of inferiority, which may act as an incentive for achievement, an inferiority complex is an advanced state of discouragement, often resulting in a retreat from difficulties. On the other hand, an inferiority complex can lead to successful overachievement accompanied by self-imposed social ostracism, as the individual is pushed to extremes to overcompensate for their perceived inferiority while believing that others see them only in terms of that inadequacy. According to Adler, “if the child failed to meet certain life challenges during his/her act of compensation then he/she will develop an inferiority complex. Every child has a feel of inferior but not everyone develops inferiority complex which only affects those who failed to compensate correctly”.

According to Adler, the feeling of inferiority typically begins in childhood. Children may have developed feeling of inferiority on the basis of real shortcomings or from misinterpretations about their physical factors or their social relationship with their environment. The children of age 14 might be worried about these changes and might develop inferiority complex. A fictional goal of superiority is set higher and will be adhered to more efforts tenaciously, the longer and more clearly the child perceives his/her insecurity the more he/she suffers from actual physical or mental impediments and the more intensely he/she feels being neglected. So the inferiority complex is considered as a threatening factor among school students.

A primary inferiority feeling is said to be rooted in the young child’s original experience of weakness, helplessness and dependency. It can then be intensified by comparisons to siblings. (Kangata, 2017). Individuals with inferiority complex are prevented from being able to solve or overcome problems. Indeed, Hertha Orgler in Alfred Adler: The Man and His Work (1993) wrote that Adler defined the inferiority complex as an “inability to solve life’s problems”.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To find out the level of inferiority complex among high school students.

2. To find out the significant difference, if any, in inferiority complex among high school students with regard to selected background variables viz., age, gender, type of school, father's education and mother's education.

3.

### **HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

There is no significant difference in inferiority complex among high school students with regard to a) Age, b) Gender, c) Type of School, d) Father's Education e) Mother's Education.

### **METHOD OF STUDY**

The survey method was selected to estimate the inferiority complex among high school students. A sample of 250 high school students was selected by simple random sampling technique. The data was collected using one of the dimensions of the tool 'Adjustment Neuroticism' namely Self Esteem- Self Inferiority developed by Ram Nayan Singh and Mahesh Bhargava(1999). This three point scale consists of 15 items. The reliability coefficient of the dimension used was 0.74.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

Percentage analysis, Independent sample t-test for large groups and one-way ANOVA were used to analyse the collected data.

Table: 1

Level of Inferiority Complex of High School Students

Low		Moderate		High	
N	%	N	%	N	%
40	16	165	66	45	18

From the above table, it is understood that three-fourth of high school students have moderate level of inferiority complex.

Table: 2

Significance of Difference in Inferiority Complex of High School Students with regard to Age

Age	N	Mean	SD	t- value	P Value
14	92	33.15	14.514	3.548	0.000**
15	158	39.99	14.791		

\*\*Significant at 1% level

The above table shows that since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is not accepted at 5% level of significance. It shows that there is significant difference in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to age. The mean scores show that the students of aged 15 years have high level of inferiority complex than those of aged 14 years.

Table 3

Significance of Difference in Inferiority Complex of High School Students with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t- value	P Value
Male	154	39.48	13.236	2.556	0.011*
Female	96	34.25	17.110		

\*Significant at 5% level

From the above table it is understood that since the p-value (0.011) is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is not accepted at 5% level of significance. It shows that there is significant difference in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to gender. The mean scores show that male students have high level of inferiority complex than female students.

Table 4

Significance of Difference in Inferiority Complex of High School Students with regard to Type of School

Type of school	N	Mean	SD	t- value	P Value
Government	122	35.10	16.056	-2.453	0.015*
Government Aided	128	39.73	13.659		

\*Significant at 5% level

The above table shows that since the p-value (0.015) is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is not accepted at 5% level of significance. It shows that there is significant difference in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to type of school. The mean scores show that the students who are studying in government aided school have high level of inferiority complex than those who are studying in government school.

Table 5

Significance of Association of Inferiority Complex of High School Students with regard to Father's Education

Source	Sum of squares	of Degrees of freedom	Mean Square	Calculated 'F' value	P Value
Between	1523.598	2	761.799	3.439	0.034*
Within	54708.706	247	221.493		
Total	56232.304	249			

\*Significant at 5% level

From the above table it is understood that since the p-value (0.034) is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is not accepted at 5% level of significance. It shows that there is significant association in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to father's education. The further analysis is made using post hoc test.

Table 5 (a)

Father's Education	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
College Education	14	30.00	
School Education	204	37.24	37.24
Illiterate	32		42.25

The Scheffe test shows that the students of fathers who have no education have high inferiority complex than those of school/college educated.

Table 6

Significance of Association of Inferiority Complex of High School Students with regard to Mother's Education

Source	Sum of squares	of Degrees of freedom	Mean Square	Calculated 'F' value	P Value
Between	2117.221	2	1058.611		
Within	54115.083	247	219.084	4.832	0.09 <sup>NS</sup>
Total	56232.304	249			

In the above table since the p-value (0.09) is greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. It shows that there is no significant association in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to mother's education.

## FINDINGS

1. More than three- fourth students of mothers who are self employed workers have moderate level of inferiority complex.
2. More than three- fifth students of age 14 has moderate level of inferiority complex.
3. There is significant difference in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to student's age. The students of aged 15 years have high level of inferiority complex than those of aged 14 years.
4. There is significant difference in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to gender. Male students have high level of inferiority complex than female students.
5. There is significant difference in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to type of school. The students who are studying in government aided school have high level of inferiority complex than those who are studying in government school.

6. There is significant association in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to father's education. The students of fathers who have no education have high inferiority complex than those of school/college educated.

7. There is no significant association in inferiority complex of high school students with regard to mother's education.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Parents of children of age 14 should spend more time with their children and try to become friends with them. By sharing their experiences and ideas about the confusions and feelings which rise in the age of 14, parents can prevent their children not to involve in any wrong deeds. Mothers possess a vital role in the development of good psychological thoughts in their children of age 14. By mingling with them, they can make positive thoughts in their children. Mothers of children of age 14 should have concern and show their interest in their children's academic sides. This might make their children to share their feelings about their academic activities, which are of interest to them. Parents should respect the opinions of their children of age 14 and take into account, their thoughts and feelings. It might make the children to know that their parents do have concern for them.

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