

# The Impact of Adlerian Group Counseling on Inferiority Complex for Academic Success of Public Junior High School Students

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## The Impact of Adlerian Group Counseling on Inferiority Complex for Academic Success of Public Junior High School Students

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### ABSTRACT

Inferiority complex is expected to have an acceptable mechanism of encouragement. Therefore, this research was carried out to overcome the inferiority complex of 10 class VII students at Public Junior High School 8 at Malalayang, Manado, North Sulawesi in Indonesia. It was conducted quantitatively using the quasi-experimental method through Adlerian group counseling. The self-confidence was measured with the same questionnaire before and after treatment, and different analysis results were obtained. The results showed that the calculated t-value and t-table were 6,369 and 1,633, respectively, indicating a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. The usefulness of Adlerian counseling in overcoming inferiority was also discussed, and the students were able to obtain academic achievement. In conclusion, Adlerian group counseling was effective in overcoming inferiority and increasing self-confidence. As a recommendation, school counselors should acquire a proper and profound understanding of encouragement in feeling an inferiority complex in order to alter students' self-commitment lifestyles in order to achieve academic success.

**Keywords:** Adlerian Group Counseling, overcoming the inferiority of students

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### Introduction

The "individual psychology" of Adler, which emphasized childhood memory and consciousness, showed that students should strive for power and superiority in overcoming initial states of inferiority and understanding lifestyle. "Social emotion" will be used as a lens through which people will be evaluated. Therefore, they are filled with a social atmosphere that requires recognition from others and society.

From infancy, children have experienced an uphill battle that most adults would consider trivial. These include the difficulty in crawling to change seats, locating support to stand up, and obtaining items from tables, and the difficulties of attaining development demands struggle and courage. Adler (1929) explained, feelings of inferiority can trigger a person's hard work and growth. Therefore, the struggles of children need encouragement from adults or parents. The confidence to act with the ability to avoid the risk of falling and withstand the pain of failing is necessary.

Furthermore, this action is based on the failure experience and changes the lifestyle to approach success. The views become the starting point of Adlerian counseling, changing individuals' inferiority to superiority. The aspirational target of all human activity is nothing less than the achievement of supremacy. It presents great meaning by uniting personality and making all behavior understandable when the ultimate goal is achieved. Furthermore, this can strengthen the self-confidence to interact socially in society. The description explains the importance of struggles to change the feelings of inferiority to become superior through self-commitment. This entails being personally and socially effective and significant, enabling healthy, objective interaction and creative thought to realize oneself. Adler (1964) argued that there is a force behind the action as a struggle to progress, such as the hope of success or superiority felt.

However, unchecked technology can be a distraction and a time-waster in the pursuit of



constructive knowledge application. This can be seen in some students who show low self-control since self-awareness is lost by game and TikTok addiction on smartphones. Affected students show a failed lifestyle when this condition is not discussed. Therefore, they cannot be awarded an opportunity to eliminate the inferiority complex. These conditions can be demanding and elusive, and they often trigger a struggle for improvement. The inferiority complex is seen as a problem of lack of self-confidence to prepare oneself for interactions with others, specifically in the classroom.

Individuals might receive appreciation and recognition as a result of their accomplishment. However, when it becomes difficult to eliminate the inferiority complex, the expected things, which are also psychological needs, cannot be fulfilled. According to Maslow (1978), failure to fulfill the need for recognition and appreciation is included in low self-esteem as a basic need. Harter in Heaven & Josep (2005) and Vialle et al. (2005:40) found that failure to answer the needs of self-esteem will present inferiority feelings, hence, the inability to reach expectations. Furthermore, William (2011) reported that low self-esteem had become a heavy burden, and may lead to hopelessness and can be a debilitating neurotic. According to Haugen (2014), Adler explained that when individuals are desperate, they can act in unhealthy competitive ways, withdraw, or give up. Giving up behavior also allows one to be trapped in an inferiority complex with low self-esteem. Furthermore, Perry (2005) explained self-confidence enables individuals to overcome new challenges, believe in difficult situations, overcome obstacles, complete things yet to be achieved, operate talents and abilities to the fullest, without worrying about failure. Therefore, it raises the courage to face challenges and achieve goals. Amilin (2016) showed that self-confidence is

an important aspect of school development and essential for success.

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Furthermore, Wilbum (2005) reported that children who do not receive encouragement and support would behave inappropriately to compensate and choose the wrong lifestyle. Therefore, feelings of inferiority occur excessively, and hopelessness can lead to depression. Lack of self-awareness in the effort to eliminate the inferiority complex with a lifestyle that allows individuals to join the sphere of prosperity is the root cause of the problems. Adler (1964) reported that the individual should demonstrate self-responsibility by making a self-commitment for lifestyle achievement to become significant in life. Furthermore, according to Roger, every individual has self-responsibility to solve problems. Based on the description above, this research was carried out to overcome the inferiority complex of 10 class VII students at Public Junior High School 8 at Malalayang, Manado, North Sulawesi in Indonesia.

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#### **Adlerian Counseling with Encouragement**

Adlerian counseling is based on the view of the inferior complex problem. Individuals with this problem are expected to obtain counseling services. As a result, counselees may become more reflective about the significance of their difficulties, more appreciative of the meaning of a hard-won existence, and evaluate a successful lifestyle. Individuals who experience painful failure cannot obtain appreciation and recognition as a need for self-esteem. Counselees obtain assistance with encouragement and reflection techniques through the counseling process. They are given hope and a relaxed, comfortable space to work to their advantage, producing more objective responses, when an encouraging atmosphere is created through the use of positive words. According to Adler in Watts R.E (1917), Wong,



Y.J. (2015), Carns, M. R., & Carns A. W. (2006), it elevates the value and dignity of every human being to have an optimistic outlook, allowing individuals to create, decide and take action for change.

encouragement can be understood as a technique and an Adlerian therapeutic intervention. Furthermore, it is a technique to build a relationship with counselees that allows attitude skills. The process focuses on helping and building hope for success by showing concern, listening actively and empathetically, communicating respectfully, and placing trust. Focusing on strengths and resources can assist counselees in finding self-perception and alternative solutions. This demonstrates behavior as an effort to determine the humor in life experiences (Carlson, Watts, & Maniaci, 2006; Dinkmeyer, 1972; Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987; Watts, 2003, Watts & Phillips, 2004; Watts & Pietrzak, 2000).

Counselees are directed by providing encouragement and reflecting on the struggles experienced to optimize abilities and improve success. The Ansbachers (1956, p. 341) stated that a therapeutic atmosphere could overcome the feelings of inferiority, stimulating social interests into adequate development. Furthermore, Steger (2006) found that people having a picture of life's meaning can better their ability to cope with challenges. In addition, Kiang & Fuligni (2009) reported a positive correlation between the search for meaning and self-esteem through academic success and the relationship between the variables.

Motivated students are more likely to make significant academic gains, since their desire to do well correlates positively with the desire to study. These successful behaviors include being active in the learning process to solve problems by completing school assignments as part of the academic success criteria. An active lifestyle develops discipline and

analytical skills, which are essential for problem-solving and choice-making. Self-control, as defined by Calhoun and Aocella (1990), involves the management of physiological, psychological, and behavioral responses. This opinion views self-control as a management ability needed to shape behavior patterns, including physical, psychological, and behavioral self-regulation.

Tangney, Baumeister & Boone (2004) suggested that self-control is an ability to determine behavior based on specific standards such as morals, values, and societal rules. Chaplin J.P (in Aisyah Lubis et al. 2017) stated that it is the ability to guide behavior and suppress or inhibit impulses. Adler research stated that self-control is closely related to self-commitment. The struggle to eliminate the inferiority complex zone requires selecting and sorting out failed and successful lifestyles. Furthermore, it decides which ones can lead to positive satisfaction. An upbeat outlook on life and a determination to better oneself are the foundations of mental health that Adlerian counseling works to strengthen. Positivity is useful in assessing cognitive performance, making lifestyle decisions, and keeping up with regular learning. This can provide the ability to reject a failed lifestyle and strive to demonstrate a successful living (Brooks, R. L. & Noy Van, M. 2008, Rill et al. 2009: 112). The important aspects described above are implemented in the counseling process by following the Adlerian counseling stage.

The stage begins with building an appropriate counseling relationship by creating intimacy, and the goals of the second stage can be realized, such as gathering information. Counselors are obligated to investigate the root causes of continued low self-esteem in the context of personal and interpersonal relationships and academic success. Adler (1929) stated that in the legitimate quest for excellence, failure is a necessary part of



learning and evaluating what has to be altered or updated in one's lifestyle. William (2011) viewed low self-esteem as an inferiority complex that reveals a serious problem. Obtaining complete and accurate data allows the counselor to move on to the next stage of reflection, which is the development of self-understanding. Related to the views by Adler (1929) and William (2011), counselors should use supportive language to make counselees aware of a way of life that could leave them mired in an inferiority complex. Therefore, counselees need to self-evaluate and analyze their lifestyle for success.

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Millar A. (2007) showed that motivation is a multi-faceted process and is an important ingredient in all effective Adlerian practices. 3  
Encouragement reflection as a process shows that it is not only a technique at certain stages but is continuous in the counseling process. 2  
Nasheeda A. (2008) showed that one of the counselors' main tasks is to restore the hope patterns, which occurs when assistance is rendered through encouragement. 2  
Campbell & Brigman (2005) found that the critical factors for behavior change in the Adlerian counseling model lie in reflection and encouragement.

The next stage, reorientation and reeducation promote reflection in making new choices. At this level, counselors should assist the

counselees in entering the reorientation phase by constructing education elements for development, success, and rebuilding their dream. Moreover, counselees are required to determine the right alternative lifestyle with self-commitment and risk. Adler (in Boeree, 2006) emphasized that the single criterion for "success" is manifested in the extent to which individuals have "social interests". This concept describes the ideal state of individual mental health, referred to as "character". 3  
The concept of being part of society by Adler (1964b) as a healing process reduces neurotic feelings such as solitude and separation. The Gemeinschaftsgefuehl concept allows each individual to learn a lot related to self-improvement, cooperativeness, healthier living with self-control, positive thinking, and a consistent lifestyle to interact socially. According to Adler (1964a), social interest allows individuals to strive for superiority by healthily adjusting themselves.

Besides education in the family environment where individuals are raised, Adlerian counseling also teaches social interests. These are very useful in (1) character formation and development, (2) developing social awareness and cooperative living to contribute to the good of others, and (3) promoting each other to strive for success, mutually reinforcing, appreciating, or contributing, for personal and common interests.

## METHOD

The research method used was Quasi Experiment with Pre-Post-test Design described as follows.

Pre-test Treatment Post-test

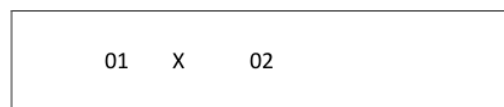


Figure 1. Pre-Post-test Design (Sugiyono, 2015)

Note:



O1: Initial measurement of self-confidence, the pre-test will be given before receiving treatment. Measurements are made by giving a confidence scale. Therefore, this pre-test collects data to capture confident students who have not received treatment.

X: Treatment given (Group Counseling Adlerian Service) to students who still experience an inferiority complex at Public Junior High School Manado.

O2: Giving a post-test to measure students' self-confidence or inferiority complex after being given treatment (X). The post-test is obtained from the treatment data of the counseling action that increases self-confidence or changes the inferiority feelings to an atmosphere making students superior or successful. In this case, changes toward a significant increase in self-confidence can be determined.

### Research Subject

The research subjects were 10 students of class VII, Public Junior High School 8 Manado, who had inferiority or low self-confidence, obtained through the scale distribution. The results demonstrated the therapeutic value of Adlerian group counseling with positive reinforcement, and this includes the freedom to learn and develop new skills. Furthermore, Millar A. (2007) explained that "encouragement is an essential principle in the overall implementation of Adlerian counseling. This is because all treatment operationalizes encouragement to frame the counseling process".

### The score of the measuring self-confidence results before and after the Transactional Analysis Counseling Group Treatment

No	Name	Score Before	Score After	Differences
1	M R	98	123	25
2	D K	97	115	18
3	F H	95	119	24
4	F K	94	119	25
5	Y M	88	120	22
6	L P	116	126	10
7	L Is	110	128	18
8	R M	82	99	17
9	P T	103	119	16
10	S P	110	122	12

The results are classified into data description and hypothesis testing through paired t-test or different pre-test and post-test self-confidence tests. The data are obtained through Adlerian counseling indicating the difference between the conditions of each student. The results showed that the calculated t-value and t-table

are 6.36 and 1.633, respectively. Therefore, the analysis results obtained a t-value of  $9.352 > 1.633$ , meaning there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. This showed a significant effect on the use of Adlerian counseling in overcoming inferiority complexes or increasing self-confidence.



The results showed that counseling (1) contributes significantly to counsees' awareness in developing self-confidence, eliminating inferiority complex by developing positive thinking patterns, and (2) the process of Adlerian counseling promotes counsees to channel an acknowledged strength into meaningful and satisfying form. Meanwhile, all problem encountered can bring counsees to personal growth.

### Implication

Adlerian group counseling can increase awareness of the life meaning of selecting a behavior that allows success. Furthermore, counselors can help counsees realize the default lifestyle, self-understanding, and self-problems related to mindsets that are inconsistent with goals.

Expanding the application to previously undeveloped psychological dimensions and gaining a deeper insight into the meaning and well-being of adolescents can both be grounded in the effectiveness

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process. Adlerian counseling as an educational implication can be used in this situation to complete development across all domains. However, this means becoming meaningful individuals in the education development in society. Adlerian counseling allows self-meaning to emerge in the family and community environment, and the emergence transmit the responsibility of assisting others. It concerns self-acceptance, the crucial meaning of life, commitment to personal life satisfaction, and psychological health.

### Conclusion

This study concludes that Adlerian group counseling effectively overcame inferiority for academic success. As a recommendation, school counselors should obtain a correct and in-depth understanding of encouragement to assist students experiencing an inferiority complex.

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