



Ego Strength And Self-Concept Among Teenagers: A Study On Gender Differences

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between ego strength and self-concept among teenagers, with special focus on gender differences. Ego strength refers to an individual's capacity to maintain emotional stability, resilience, and self-control under stress, while self-concept reflects one's perception and evaluation of the self. The sample consisted of 200 adolescents (100 males and 100 females) aged 13–18 years, selected from various schools through stratified random sampling. The Barron's Ego Strength Scale and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) were used for data collection. Results indicated a significant positive correlation between ego strength and self-concept, suggesting that adolescents with stronger egos tend to have a more positive self-concept. Gender analysis revealed that girls scored significantly higher in self-concept, while boys exhibited marginally higher ego strength. The findings highlight the need for balanced emotional and self-development programs in schools to strengthen adolescents' personal identity and psychological resilience.

Keywords: Ego strength, Self-concept, Teenagers, Gender differences, Adolescent psychology

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical period of identity formation characterized by emotional turbulence, social pressure, and cognitive growth. The way teenagers perceive themselves — their self-concept — and their ability to handle internal and external conflicts — their ego strength — play crucial roles in shaping their mental health, decision-making, and interpersonal behavior. Ego strength, a concept rooted in psychoanalytic theory (Erikson, 1968), represents the individual's inner capacity to manage impulses, tolerate frustration, and adapt to changing environments. It is a measure of emotional resilience and self-regulation. Self-concept, on the other hand, is the mental image a person holds of themselves — encompassing self-esteem, self-identity, and perceived abilities (Rosenberg, 1979). Both constructs are deeply intertwined. A teenager with strong ego strength is more likely to have a stable and positive self-concept, while one with a fragile ego may struggle with self-doubt and emotional instability. Understanding these constructs and their gender differences can help educators, counselors, and parents nurture healthier adolescent development. Review of Literature several studies have explored ego strength and self-concept as predictors of psychological well-being. - Erikson (1968) identified ego strength as a key outcome of successful resolution of psychosocial crises during adolescence. - Block and Block (1980) found that adolescents with higher ego control and ego resilience displayed better adaptability and emotional balance. - Rosenberg (1979) and Marsh (1990) emphasized the significance of self-concept in academic motivation and social adjustment. - Chadha and Agarwal (1992) observed gender differences in self-concept, noting that female adolescents

reported more concern for social approval and self-image. - Bajaj and Pande (2016) established that ego strength contributes significantly to coping strategies and stress tolerance among adolescents.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between ego strength and self-concept among teenagers.
2. To compare ego strength between male and female adolescents.
3. To compare self-concept between male and female adolescents.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant positive correlation between ego strength and self-concept among teenagers.
2. There will be a significant gender difference in ego strength among teenagers.
3. There will be a significant gender difference in self-concept among teenagers.

Methodology

Research design

A quantitative co relational research design was adopted to explore relationships and gender differences between ego strength and self-concept.

Sample

The study included 200 teenagers (100 boys and 100 girls), aged 13–18 years, studying in secondary and higher secondary schools in Kerala, India. Stratified random sampling ensured gender balance and representation from both urban and rural schools. **Instruments**

1. Barron's Ego Strength Scale (ESS)- Measures ego-strength in dimensions such as emotional control, perseverance, and frustration tolerance
2. Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) - Assess various aspects of self concept, including physical moral social, and personal self image.

Both tools are standardized and validated for Indian populations, with reliability coefficients above 0.80.

Procedure

After obtaining permission from school authorities and consent from participants, the questionnaires were administered in group settings. Data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and t-test. To examine relationships and gender difference.

Results and Interpretation

1. Relation ship between ego strength and self concept

variable	N	r - value
ego strength and self concept	200	0.62

2. Gender Difference in ego strength

Mean	SD	t-value	p- value
142.5	18.4	1.98	< 0.05
137.2	17.9		

3. Gender differences in Self concept

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Male	100	172.8	20.1	2.45	< 0.05
Female	100	181.6	21.7		

A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) was found between ego strength and self-concept, confirming that higher ego strength is associated with a more positive self-concept. Boys scored slightly higher on ego strength, while girls exhibited significantly higher self-concept scores, suggesting gender-based variations in emotional and self-perceptual development.

Discussion

The findings support the hypothesis that ego strength and self-concept are positively correlated among teenagers. Adolescents with stronger ego strength demonstrate better emotional stability, which reinforces a positive view of them. This aligns with Erikson's theory of ego identity development, where balanced ego strength fosters a coherent self concept. Gender differences indicate that while boys tend to show higher ego strength, girls report a more positive self-concept. This may be attributed to socialization patterns – boys encouraged towards independence and control, whereas girls are often guided towards emotional expression and relational sensitivity.

This findings echo those of Marsh (1990) and Bajaj & Pande (20216) who found that self concept and ego resilience vary by gender and cultural factors.

Conclusion

The study concludes that ego strength and self-concept are strongly related constructs influencing adolescents' personality development. Gender differences exist — boys display greater ego strength, while girls show a more positive self-concept. Educators and counselors should design programs that foster emotional resilience and self-perception in both genders.

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