



Modernity, Self-concept and Ego-strength between Alienated and Normal Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted on 100 alienated and 100 normal respondent selected from urban Patna using purposive sampling. It was intended to examine the difference between alienated & normal adolescents in terms of their modernity, self-concept & ego-strength respectively. Besides these, it was intended to examine the relationship among the variables. For the purpose, attitudinal modernity scale by Amar Kumar Singh and differential personality scale by Arun Kr. Singh & Ashish Kumar Singh were used to measure dependent variables. Alienation scale by Singh was used to measure alienation. The obtained data were treated using *t*-value & Pearson 'r' to verify the hypotheses that there will be significant difference between alienated & normal groups in terms of their (i) modernity, (ii) self-concept and (iii) ego strength. Further, to verify the link of alienation with (iv) dependent variables and (v) independent variables. It was found that normal group excelled over alienated group in terms of (i) modernity (ii) self-concept and (iii) ego-strength respectively. Significant negative correlation of alienation were reported with modernity, self-concept & ego-strength respectively. Further, a significant correlation was reported among dependent variables. Thus, it was concluded that alienation is significant contributor to modernity, self-concept & ego-strength respectively.

KEY WORDS

Modernity, Self-concept, Ego-strength, Alienated, Normal Adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage where individuals undergo significant psychological, emotional, and social transformations. These transitions are influenced by a variety of factors, one of the most significant being the concept of modernity. Modernity, characterized by rapid technological advancements, urbanization, changing family structures, and shifting cultural norms, profoundly impacts adolescent identity formation. During this phase, adolescents are in the process of developing their self-concept how they perceive and understand themselves—and strengthening their ego, which helps them navigate the challenges of life and maintain a sense of coherence and stability.

One of the most noticeable challenges that modern adolescents face is alienation. Alienation can manifest as a sense of disconnection from society, family, or even oneself, often resulting in feelings of confusion, loneliness, or frustration. Alienation in the context of modernity may arise due to the rapid societal changes, conflicting cultural values, and the overwhelming pressure to conform to external expectations. In contrast, adolescents who are not alienated typically experience a stronger sense of ego strength and a clearer self-concept. Ego strength refers to an individual's ability to maintain psychological resilience, self-confidence, and a coherent identity in the face of adversity and stress.

The tension between alienation and the development of a healthy self-concept and ego strength can be observed in how adolescents respond to the pressures of modern life. While alienation can contribute to feelings of insecurity and instability, a lack of alienation and a solid ego can foster a sense of personal agency, well-being, and stability. Therefore, understanding how modernity shapes adolescent self-concept and ego strength, and how these factors play out in the context of alienation, is crucial for both psychological theory and practical intervention.

Modernity brings forth numerous challenges for adolescents as they try to establish their identities. The digital age, for example, plays a significant role in reshaping how young people perceive themselves and relate to the world. Social media platforms, with their emphasis on curated images and lifestyles, often create unrealistic standards of beauty, success, and happiness. As a result, adolescents may struggle to reconcile their personal identity with societal expectations, leading to feelings of alienation. The constant comparison to others on social media can undermine adolescents' self-esteem and hinder the development of a positive self-concept.

Moreover, family dynamics, cultural shifts, and societal pressures in modern times add complexity to the adolescent experience. Traditional family structures are often redefined, with more single-parent households, blended families, and increased divorce rates. This can lead to a destabilizing effect on adolescents' sense of belonging and security. As these changes unfold, adolescents may feel disconnected from their families, further exacerbating their sense of alienation. In some cases, this alienation might give rise to an identity crisis, where adolescents struggle to understand their place in the world.

On the other hand, adolescents who are better able to cope with modern challenges tend to exhibit stronger ego strength. Ego strength in adolescence refers to the capacity to handle stress, setbacks, and the inevitable confusion that arises when navigating the complex landscape of modernity. Those with high ego strength demonstrate resilience in the face of adversity, maintain a clear sense of self, and are more likely to have a cohesive and stable self-concept. Such adolescents tend to have positive self-esteem, a clearer understanding of their personal values, and a more optimistic outlook on their future.

The balance between alienation and a strong ego is not fixed; rather, it is fluid, influenced by a variety of internal and external factors. For instance, adolescents who develop a strong support network, whether through family, friends, or community engagement, are better equipped to deal with the pressures of modern life. Additionally, adolescents with access to mental health resources, positive role models, and opportunities for personal growth are more likely to experience lower levels of alienation and develop a stronger, more resilient ego.

In conclusion, modernity significantly impacts adolescent development, especially in relation to their self-concept and ego strength. As adolescents navigate a world that is often marked by change, uncertainty, and alienation, those who are able to develop a strong sense of self and resilience are better prepared to face the challenges of growing up in the contemporary world. Understanding the dynamics between alienation, self-concept, and ego strength is essential for creating supportive environments that foster healthy adolescent development. This understanding also has important implications for psychological interventions, educational practices, and the broader societal support systems that aim to nurture the well-being of young people in a rapidly evolving world.

Review of Literature

Erik Erikson's² (1968) outlined the crisis of "identity vs. role confusion," which occurs during adolescence. According to Erikson, adolescents are tasked with forming a stable self-concept, and failure to do so can lead to confusion and alienation. His theory suggests that successful identity formation requires a balance between individual values and societal expectations, a process which is increasingly complicated in the context of modernity. Anthony Giddens³ (1991) explored how rapid social changes, technological advancements, and globalization create a sense of disconnection in individuals. He suggests that alienation arises when people feel detached from societal institutions, communities, and traditional sources of identity. This disconnection can be particularly pronounced in adolescents, who are navigating complex societal and familial expectations. Valkenburg and Peter¹¹ (2011) explored the role of social media in shaping adolescents' self-concept. They argue that platforms like Facebook and Instagram provide opportunities for self-expression but also expose adolescents to unrealistic ideals of beauty, success, and relationships. This exposure can lead to feelings of alienation and low self-esteem, complicating the development of a healthy self-concept and ego strength. Laurence Steinberg's⁹ (2001) emphasized the importance of family dynamics in shaping adolescent identity. He argues that modern family structures, such as single-parent households and divorced families, can influence adolescents' sense of stability. Family conflict or disconnection may contribute to feelings of alienation, while strong familial support fosters the development of a robust self-concept and ego strength. Rutter⁷ (1985) focused on the ability of adolescents to cope with stress and adversity. He highlights that adolescents with high ego strength demonstrate better psychological adaptation to challenges, including those arising from the pressures of modernity. His research suggests that adolescents with strong coping mechanisms are less likely to experience alienation, as they are able to integrate societal challenges into a coherent sense of self. Mickelson⁵ (1995) suggested that feelings of disconnection and isolation during adolescence are strongly correlated with higher rates of depression. Adolescents who struggle with alienation may experience emotional distress, which undermines their self-concept and reduces their ego strength. The study highlights the importance of addressing alienation in promoting mental health during adolescence. Jean Phinney⁶ (1990) identified in adolescents underscores how cultural factors shape self-concept development. Phinney emphasizes that the diverse cultural landscape of modern societies can lead to identity confusion, especially among adolescents from minority backgrounds. This confusion can contribute to feelings of alienation if adolescents are unable to reconcile their ethnic identity with mainstream societal norms. Laursen and Hartup⁴ (2002) explored the importance of peer relationships in adolescence. They argue that peer acceptance and social integration play a critical role in developing a positive self-concept. Alienation from peers can severely affect self-esteem and ego strength, as adolescents may internalize feelings of rejection and struggle to form a coherent identity. Jean Twenge¹⁰ (2017) suggested that smartphones and social media have reshaped how adolescents construct their self-concept. She argues that the constant presence of digital devices can lead to a fragmented sense of identity, with adolescents experiencing alienation as they struggle to reconcile their online and offline selves. The implications for ego strength are significant, as the pressure to conform to digital standards can undermine self-esteem. Cohen and Wills¹ (1985) investigated the relationship between social support and psychological well-being. Their research highlights that a lack of social integration and alienation leads to poor mental health outcomes, including depression and anxiety. In contrast, adolescents with strong social support systems develop

better self-concept clarity and stronger ego strength, which help them manage the pressures of modernity. Schwartz and colleagues⁸ (2011) examined the role of education in adolescent identity development. They suggest that adolescents who engage in educational environments that promote critical thinking, self-reflection, and personal growth are more likely to develop a strong self-concept. Conversely, educational systems that impose rigid standards can contribute to alienation, as adolescents struggle to meet expectations, undermining their ego strength.

These studies collectively shed light on how modernity, alienation, self-concept, and ego strength interact in the context of adolescent development. They highlight the complexity of this developmental stage, where societal changes, digital media, family dynamics, and peer relationships all contribute to shaping an adolescent's psychological well-being.

Objectives

It was intended to compare alienated and normal groups in terms of (i) modernity (ii) self-concept & (iii) ego-strength. Further, correlation of alienation with dependent variables were to be examined. Finally, coefficient of correlation among dependent variables to be examined.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that alienated and normal groups of adolescents will differ significantly from one another in terms of (i) modernity, (ii) self-concept, (iii) ego-strength, (iv) there will be significant correlation of alienation with modernity, self-concept & ego-strength and (v) there will be significant correlation among dependent variables namely modernity, self-concept and ego-strength.

Method of Study

Sample Used: 100 alienated and 100 normal adolescents were selected from urban Patna using purposive sampling. They were matched so far as practicable other than the conditions of the research.

Design : Between group design was used.

Tools used

- (i) Personal Data Sheet was used to seek the background information of the respondent.
- (ii) Hindi Adaptation of Alienation Scale by Singh was used to measure alienation.
- (iii) Attitudinal Modernity Scale by Amar Kumar Singh was used to measure modernity of the respondents.
- (iv) Differential Personality Inventory by Arun Kumar Singh was used to measure self-concept & ego-strength of the respondents.

Results and Interpretations

Table 01: Showing comparison between alienated and normal adolescents on modernity self-concept and ego-strength

| Variables | Alienated (N=100) | | Normal (N=100) | | t-ratio | df | P |
|--------------|-------------------|------|----------------|------|---------|-----|------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | | |
| Modernity | 69.56 | 5.14 | 72.71 | 5.22 | 4.32 | 198 | <.01 |
| Self-concept | 10.34 | 5.37 | 13.03 | 4.39 | 3.56 | 198 | <.01 |
| Ego-strength | 11.86 | 5.38 | 14.28 | 5.22 | 3.27 | 198 | <.01 |

The results displayed in table-01 clearly indicates the significant effect of alienation on modernity ($t = 4.32$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$), self-concept ($t = 3.56$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$) and ego-strength ($t = 3.27$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$) of the respondents respectively. The normal respondents showed superiority over alienated counterparts in respect of the psychological characteristics under study. Normal adolescents typically exhibit better social integration, self-esteem, and openness to change, which foster acceptance of modern values, technologies,

and progressive thinking. Their active engagement with peers, media, and education enables them to adapt to evolve societal trends. In contrast, alienated adolescents often feel disconnected, mistrustful, and resistant to societal norms, limiting their exposure to and acceptance of modernity, and making them less receptive to change and innovation. Normal adolescents typically exhibit better social integration, self-esteem, and openness to change, which foster acceptance of modern values, technologies, and progressive thinking. Their active engagement with peers, media, and education enables them to adapt to evolving societal trends. In contrast, alienated adolescents often feel disconnected, mistrustful, and resistant to societal norms, limiting their exposure to and acceptance of modernity, and making them less receptive to change and innovation. Normal adolescents tend to excel over alienated adolescents in ego strength because they usually experience healthier social connections, emotional support, and self-acceptance. These factors contribute to stronger self-identity, confidence, and emotional resilience core components of ego strength. In contrast, alienated adolescents often feel isolated, misunderstood, and disconnected from others, which weakens their sense of self and ability to cope with challenges, resulting in lower ego strength.

Table 02: Pearsonian ‘r’ showing relationship of alienation with modernity, self-concept and ego-strength respectively

| Variables | N | r | df | P |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--------|-----|------|
| Alienation Vs Attitudinal Modernity | 200 | -0.406 | 198 | <.01 |
| Alienation Vs Self-concept | 200 | -0.422 | 198 | <.01 |
| Alienation Vs Ego-strength | 200 | -0.427 | 198 | <.01 |

The results displayed by table-02 clearly revealed the significant negative correlation of alienation with modernity ($r = -0.406$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$), self-concept ($r = -0.422$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$), and ego-strength ($r = -0.427$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$) The findings are very much consistent with the findings of table-01. Alienation is negatively and significantly related to attitudinal modernity, self-concept, and ego strength because alienated individuals often feel disconnected, powerless, and isolated from societal norms and relationships. This sense of detachment hinders openness to modern values (attitudinal modernity), weakens self-perception and confidence (self-concept), and reduces psychological resilience and adaptability (ego strength) Consequently, higher alienation corresponds with lower levels of these psychological and attitudinal qualities.

Table 03: Showing co-efficient of correlation among modernity, self-concept and ego-strength of the respondents

| Variables | N | r | df | p |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|-----|------|
| Self-concept Vs Ego-strength | 200 | 0.395 | 198 | <.01 |
| Self-concept Vs Modernity | 200 | 0.408 | 198 | <.01 |
| Ego-strength Vs Modernity | 200 | 0.411 | 198 | <.01 |

The results displayed in table-03 confirmed the consistency of the findings given in table-01. [Self-concept Vs Ego-strength : $r = 0.395$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$] [Self-concept Vs Modernity : $r = 0.408$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$] and [Ego-strength Vs Modernity : $r = 0.411$; $df = 198$; $p < .01$]. The findings are in agreement with the findings of table-(1) and table (2) respectively. The interpretation remained the same.

CONCLUSIONS

- (i) Normal adolescents manifest comparatively higher degree of modernity than alienated group of adolescents.
- (ii) Alienated adolescents manifest comparatively poor self-concept than normal adolescents.
- (iii) Normal adolescents possess stronger ego than alienated group of adolescents.
- (iv) Scores on attitudinal modernity, self-concept and ego-strength yield significant negative correlation with alienation score.

(v) Self-concept, ego-strength and modernity all are found significantly and positively correlated.

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