



INFERIORITY COMPLEX AMONG CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

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ABSTRACT

Children in conflict with law (CICL) has been shunned and misunderstood by the society and the cries for their mental health being are hardly given attention by the government. To dig deeper into the minds of these children, the researcher conducted a study to determine whether there was a significant difference between the level of inferiority complex among children in conflict with the law and children without criminal records. This study used a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design to determine the results of the study. The data of this study were collected from 50 Children in Conflict with the Law residing in AKAP rehabilitation center in Sta. Cruz, Laguna, and 50 children from United Evangelical Church School, who did not have any criminal records; the respondents had ages between 10-17 years old. Data were analyzed by applying One Way Analysis Variance (Anova) and processed in the form of tables, while discussions have been made on the basis of findings and results.

Findings revealed that there was a significant difference between the level of inferiority complex among children in conflict with the law and children without criminal records. Results showed that the overall mean of CICL's level of inferiority complex was significantly higher than children without criminal records. One of the underlying factors of delinquency among children was having a high level of inferiority complex. To prevent this, the study suggested that there should be the implementation of interventions and programs that focus on understanding and tackling how to cope with inferiority complex among CICL for them to achieve their fullest potential and prevent them from engaging in criminal behaviors.

Keywords: Inferiority Complex, Children in Conflict with the Law, CICL, Delinquency, COMPIN

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INTRODUCTION

Physical characteristics can be associated with the perception of people in identifying criminals. Hancock (2021) argued that ultimately no one saw a face as neutral since certain characteristics such as a person's race, age, sex and facial features, may take on an emotional tone. In their study, they asked their participants to identify which among the following photographs of random people were convicted of a crime. What they have found out was that a person's race, age, sex and facial features did play a vital role in identifying criminals. Participants inferred criminals who looked older, more masculine, and had a darker shade of skin color and most participants have not chosen a person who looked more feminine and had fairer skin. But the most critical findings of their study were that none of their participants chose individuals who looked younger than 18 to be identified as criminals.

Children or adolescents may not be the usual facet of a criminal because they are often perceived as innocent and pure. Bühler-Niederberger (2015) stated that the innocence of a child was attributed to their lack of knowledge in the world and the pureness of their perspective on life. But the truth was, children being involved in crimes were rapidly increasing throughout the years. Hence, such crimes committed by juveniles had been increasing year by year in the Philippines and according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2018) which were based on reports of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), there were approximately 10,000 Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) who were provided services by the department annually.

Reported on the Manual in Handling Cases of Children at Risk and Children in Conflict with the Law (2016), it was reported that most of the CICL involved crimes were related to burglary, pickpocketing, and harassment. This was due to the reason that these CICL were being deprived of financial assistance, hence, most of them lived in poverty. It should also be pointed out that most cases wherein children were the ones who committed the crime, the offended party rarely files a case to the court. Therefore, a lot of children ended up getting away with their petty crimes.

The reason why inferiority complex was chosen as a variable of this study was due to Alfred Adler's (as cited in Ross, 2016) argument in which he characterized the criminal strategy that individuals committed crimes to compensate for the nagging feeling of inferiority by defeating others, and by defeating others, these individuals committed actions that may violate community feeling/social interest such as stealing, murdering, acts of lasciviousness, raping, etc. Thus, giving into these actions may compensate for their feelings of inferiority.

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Another reason was that poverty, broken families, and low educational background were linked to delinquency, as was reported in the Manual in Handling Cases of Children at Risk and Children in Conflict With the Law (2016). But it was seen that not all children living in poverty became a CICL. That was why this research also ought to know if certain levels of inferiority complex played a part in differentiating CICL and children living in poverty that did not commit crimes. Hence, once the result of this research proved that inferiority complex was linked to the delinquency committed by CICL, then this may become a basis for a specific intervention to address inferiority complex among the children.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach with the utilization of checklist and standardized test. This study is also a comparative research design in which the researcher compares two groups in an attempt to draw a conclusion on this research. Since this study aimed to differentiate the level of inferiority complex in CICL and children without criminal records. This was also to differentiate the level of inferiority complex among CICL when grouped according to their demographic profile: age, sex, family configuration and socio-economic status.

In order to establish a high internal validity, the researcher used a probability sampling method, wherein the researcher made sure that all of the CICL in AKAP Intervention Center has a known chance of being included in the sample. The researcher computed the appropriate sample size wherein a 95% confidence level was established and a 5% margin of error was considered. Thus, as for the result, out of the 60 CICL, the researcher randomly selected 50 among the population. In addition, simple random sampling was also practiced in selecting the sample size. With simple random sampling, all of the names of the CICL were listed and the researcher used the lottery method to ensure the randomness of the selection. The same method was also used in selecting random participants from the category of children with no criminal records.

As for the distribution of respondents, there are thirty-five male participants (70%) and fifteen female participants (30%) among CICL. Whereas the gender distribution among Children without criminal records are equally divided with twenty-five males (50%) and twenty-five females (50%).

In order to measure the level of inferiority complex of the CICL, the researcher used the Inferiority Complex Scale (COMPIN), a 5-point Likert Scale to assess a person's general feelings of inferiority. This test has been developed by Đorđe Čekrlija, Dijana Đurić & Biljana Mirkovic.

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The COMPIN scale consists of 40 items that described the permanent feelings of inferiority, passivity, regression, lack of courage, fatalistic reaction and personal sense of lack of happiness. Hence, since the test that was developed by Čekrljija et. al, (2017) were designed for Westerners, the researcher has constructed a Tagalog Translation for COMPIN and has established validity and reliability. In addition, a checklist was also given to the participants to know the information in their demographic profile, such as their: socio-economic status, family configuration and age.

The following are the statistical treatments that were used in this study. First, the researcher considered the use of frequency and percentage to define the demographic attributes of the selected participants in terms of socio economic status, family configuration and age. Second was the mean and standard deviation to assess participant’s level of Inferiority Complex. Third was One Way analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to assess the significant difference in the level of Inferiority Complex of participants when grouped according to socio economic status and family configuration and lastly was Independent T-test to determine if there was a significant difference between CICL and Children with no criminal records in terms of their Inferiority Complex.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This is consisted of the problem, table/thematic chart followed by discussion, interpretation/reflection, and supporting literature.

Problem 1: What are the demographic attributes of the selected participants in terms of:

A. Socio-economic Status

Table 1.1

Demographic Attributes of the Selected Participants in terms of Socio-economic Status

Indicators	CICL		Children without criminal records		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Poor	42	84			42	42
Low income	8	16			8	8
Middle-middle			10	20	10	10
Middle			7	14	7	7
Upper Middle			20	40	20	20

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Rich			13	26	13	13
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

Table 1.1 shows the demographic attributes of the selected participants in terms of Socio-economic Status. There were 42 (84%) Poor respondents and eight (16%) low income respondents. A total of 50 (100%) came from the CICL. On the other hand, 10 (20%) middle-middle, seven (14%) Middle, 20 (40%) Upper Middle and 13 (26%). A total of 50 (100%) from the children without criminal records. It denotes that most of the CICL respondents are poor or has lower income. While the children without criminal records comes from middle class and rich.

Although it should also be noted the result from the study of Parackal and Panicker (2019) conducted a study in which they found out that not all delinquents came from a low-income family. There have also been cases where they came from middle- and high-income families but, as for the settlement of the court, their judgment may be bias and thus favor those delinquents that came from families who sat highly on top of the pyramid.

B. Family Configuration

Table 1.2

Demographic Attributes of the Selected Participants in terms of Family Configuration

Indicators	CICL		Children without criminal records		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Incomplete	35	70	38	76	73	73
Complete	15	30	12	24	27	27
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

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Table 1.2 shows the demographic attributes of the selected participants in terms of Family Configuration. There were 35 (70%) CICL with incomplete family and 15 (30%) with complete family. Whereas there were 38 (76%) Children without criminal records with complete family (76%) and 12 (24%) with incomplete family. The result implies that most CICL has an incomplete family, which means these children are living with just one of their parents due to separation or death of one's parent. Whereas children without criminal records mostly live with both of their parents.

The result was supported by the study of Park and Lee (2016) wherein they have stated that family structure that differed from nuclear families, like single-parent households or broken families were blamed for a variety of social problems, including delinquency; since these children often felt that they felt less secured and less guided by their family.

C. Age

Table 1.3

Demographic Attributes of the Selected Participants in terms of Age

Indicators	CICL		Children without criminal records		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
10	5	10	4	8	9	9
11	3	6	4	8	7	7
12	4	8	5	10	9	9
13	8	16	5	10	13	13
14	4	8	8	16	12	12
15	6	12	11	22	17	17
16	5	10	4	8	9	9
17	8	16	9	18	17	17
18	7	14	0	0	7	7
Total	50	100	50	100	100	100

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Table 1.3 shows the demographic attributes of the selected participants in terms of age. There were 5 (10%) 10 years old CICL, three (6%) 11 years old CICL, four (8%) 12 years old CICL, eight (16%) 13 years old CICL, four (8%) 14 years old CICL, six (12%) 15 years old CICL, five (10%) 16 years old CICL, 8 (16%) 17 years old CICL, and seven (14%) 18 years old CICL.

Whereas there were four (8%) 10 years old Children without criminal records, four (8%) 11 years old children without criminal records, five (10%) 12 years old children without criminal records, five (10%) 13 years old children without criminal records, eight (16%) 14 years old children without criminal records, 11 (22%) 15 years old children without criminal records, four (8%) 16 years old children without criminal records and nine (18%) 17 years old children without criminal records. Result implies that most of the CICL in AKAP Center are ages 13 and 18 years old. Whereas children without criminal records are mostly 11 years old. There were no 18 years old among this category since the school that they come from, does not cater to Senior High School students.

Llamas and Marinaro (2020) supported the result in which they have stated that adolescents under the age of 18 years old, were considered to have a slower developing prefrontal cortex and thus, this has been linked to the difference in cognitive capacity. They also stated that this age range was susceptible to coercion and exploitation by adults. And children living in poor neighborhood were more exposed to gangs, slums, cliques, and criminal neighborhood as a whole. Therefore, children living in a neighborhood in poverty were more exposed to criminal engagement.

Problem Number 2. What are the levels of inferiority complex of CICL and children with no criminal records?

Table 2
Level of the Participant's Inferiority Complex

Indicators	CICL		Children without criminal records	
	\bar{X}	VI	\bar{X}	VI
I often think that I will fail because of previous failures.	3.40	A	2.26	D
I look less capable compared to others.	3.46	A	2.90	D
Fear of failure sometimes stops me at the very beginning.	2.96	N	2.62	N
I am less confident than most of people I know, because of my previous life.	3.44	A	2.34	D
I fail because I cannot manage things	3.16	N	1.98	D
I would often ask for help but I don't because I do not want to bother others.	3.24	N	2.84	N
When people criticize me, I think: I have done wrong again.	3.24	N	2.56	D

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I think that others have more competences than I do.	3.52	A	2.20	D
I do not know how to use my competences at the right moment	3.04	N	2.32	D
I give up easily, even when others think I am doing fine.	3.14	N	2.18	D
I often give up even if others support me.	3.26	N	2.20	D
I do not know my own value.	3.56	A	2.26	D
I am not difficult to beat in a discussion, because my arguments are mostly weak.	3.40	A	2.54	D
I know that I underestimate myself, but I cannot deal with it.	3.34	N	2.52	D
I am not good in things that other people manage easily.	3.98	A	3.32	N
When I work with others it seems that I am not good as them.	3.42	A	2.28	D
Usually my performance is under average because I do not like to be intrusive.	3.00	N	2.34	D
I cannot express myself and keep the people I love by my side.	2.94	N	2.32	D
When I have to show my competences I most often fail.	3.8	A	3.06	N
I do not do well, because I do not know how to make an effort.	3.44	A	3.14	N
During work I keep telling myself: I won't make it, so it would be better if I didn't start at all.	3.16	N	2.54	D
I often feel that I will not be able to do what is expected.	3.42	A	3.10	N
I like to do one task at a time, because I make mistakes if I have to deal with two things simultaneously.	3.08	N	2.62	N
I would change a lot of my characteristics	3.56	A	2.26	D
I do not see things as I would like to, because I have no luck.	3.18	N	1.88	D
Sometimes I feel very small and helpless.	3.54	A	2.40	D
I do not like to make life experiments, because I rarely manage to do anything at all.	3.20	N	2.40	D
I will never get even close to my idols.	3.20	N	2.58	D
I am easily inhibited by failure and I find it difficult to go on.	3.42	A	2.42	D
I often leave a bad impression, although I would like to change that.	3.16	N	2.60	N
It is harder to notice my virtues than my weaknesses	3.44	A	2.52	D
There are many things that are beyond my reach.	3.42	A	2.44	D
I often feel that I am not ready for things that I have to do.	3.12	N	2.50	D
I underestimate my abilities.	3.40	A	2.38	D
I do not respect myself enough.	3.72	A	2.42	D
I am not self-confident.	3.06	N	2.24	D
I never talk to people first because I do not know how to do it.	3.04	N	2.32	D
When somebody compliments me, I know it is just good manners.	3.04	N	2.36	D
I cannot say no even when it is necessary.	3.54	A	1.90	D
I tend to attribute my failures to various circumstances.	3.58	A	2.32	D
Composite	3.33	N	2.46	D

Legend: 4.20 -5.00 Strongly Agree (SA) / Very High Inferiority Complex
3.40 – 4.19 Agree (A) / High Inferiority Complex
2.60 – 3.39 Neutral (N) / Neutral Inferiority Complex
1.80 – 2.59 Disagree (D)/ Low Inferiority Complex
1.00 – 1.79 Strongly Disagree (SD) / Very Low Inferiority Complex

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Table 2 shows the participants level of inferiority complex. The composite mean of CICL WAS 3.33 and interpreted as Neutral Inferiority Complex. Whereas, children without criminal records obtained a composite mean of 2.46 which was interpreted as Low Inferiority Complex. This implies that CICL may or may not develop an Inferiority Complex and thus, shows that children who engage in delinquent acts do not necessarily have an inferiority complex. Whereas, children without criminal records HAVE Low Inferiority Complex which means that these children seldom experience discouragement or failure. They also show signs of high self-esteem and self-worth.

This supported the study of Schmideberg (1947 as cited in Basra & Pathmanathan, 2017) in which he stated that due to the experienced inferiority, juvenile delinquents may develop an impaired sense of reality, lacking care for one's future, and denying that he/she would have an unpleasant future. Sultana and Kabir (2018) also supported this result since they argued that the psychological factor that underlay an individual's criminal behavior, could have been explained by inferiority complex. They found that most delinquents that came from poverty and had a disruptive family mostly suffered from high level of inferiority complex.

Problem Number 3. Is there a significant difference between CICL in terms of their inferiority complex when grouped according to their demographic attributes (socio-economic status, family configuration and age)?

Table 3
Test of Significant Difference between CICL in terms of their Inferiority Complex when Grouped according to their Demographic Attributes

Variables	P value	Remarks	Decision
Socio-economic Status	.086	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Family Configuration	.002	Significant	Reject Ho
Age	.000	Significant	Reject Ho

Table 3 shows the test of significant difference between CICL in terms of their Inferiority Complex when grouped according to their demographic attributes: Socio Economic Status, Family Configuration, and Age. In terms of Socio-economic Status, there was no significant difference

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on the inferiority complex of the CICL respondents when grouped according to this demographic attribute. As shown in P-value of .086 which was greater than the level of significance at .05%.

This implies that not all CICL living in poverty suffered from inferiority complex and thus, possessed Neutral Inferiority Complex. Which means that some CICLs who do not receive enough financial support still have a sense of adequacy and security among themselves. They may or may not possess a sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

The result for this research has contradicted the study of Roker and Coleman (2018) in which they found that children living in chronic poverty were more prone to committing crimes which they have also explained that the reason may lie in the children's negative emotions that they have mustered up since day one and these children may try to take revenge on society as they grew up. That was why acts of delinquency such as robbery, theft and stealing may be a form of satisfaction among the children, because in such acts, they were able to gain money to meet their necessities in their daily lives and they also took it as revenge to society. This also contradicted the study of Shong et al. (2018) in which they explored the juvenile delinquents in Malaysia where they found that the major crime-enhancing theme on delinquency was due to the child experiencing extreme deprivation of physical and emotional needs and those who were experiencing poverty throughout their life.

In terms of Family Configuration, the result shows that there was a significant difference when the scores of the participants are grouped according to their family configuration. As shown with a P value of .002 which was less than the level of significance at .05%. This implies that most CICL with incomplete families are suffering from High Inferiority Complex. This means that CICLs with broken families often suffer from low self-esteem, self-worth, and constant feelings of inadequacy.

The result for family configuration was supported the study of Maciver (2017) in which the researcher argued that children who grew up without being adequately supervised by their parents or guardians were prone to have an inferiority complex and the greatest risk of becoming delinquents.

In terms of Age, the result also shows significant difference in the scores of CICL when they are grouped according to their age. With a P-value of .000 which was less than the level of significance at .05%. This indicates that older children tend to have a high inferiority complex. This means that the older the CICL get, the higher chance that they may develop inferiority complex.

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This supports the study of Dharma (2019) in which they gathered 250 students in Manonnaniam Sundarar University and they found out that there was a significant difference in inferiority complex of students in regard of their age. They observed in their results that students with ages 15-20 showed higher inferiority complex than younger students. One of the factors that the researchers saw was that this age range, they tended to compare themselves to young adults who found success at a young age. And thus, this also greatly affected their academic performance and outlook in life. The reason behind this may lie in the social environment, family atmosphere, and the person himself.

Llamas and Marinaro (2020) made a discovery in which they found that disadvantageous decision making and risky behavior often led to juvenile delinquency were considered to be related to the slower developing prefrontal cortex. And thus, this has been linked to the difference in cognitive capacity among rational adults. Therefore, adolescents should be in an environment where they would not be exposed to the chaotic and dysfunctional environments. The brain of these children were still maturing and easily be molded by the people around them. Thus, if these children were exposed to such environments, they will be susceptible to coercion and exploitation by adults. If they were coerced to do something illegal, there was a high probability that they will engage in it. In addition, poverty and malnutrition also played a role in juvenile delinquency, since Llamas and Marinaro (2020) also stated that malnutrition in childhood may also affect the development of the human brain and its cognitive abilities

Problem Number 4: Is there is a significant difference between CICL and Children with no Criminal Records in terms of their inferiority complex?

Table 4

Test of Significant Difference between CICL and Children with No Criminal Records in terms of their Inferiority Complex

Variable	t-Test	P value	Remarks	Decision
Inferiority Complex	8.202	.000	Significant	Reject Ho

Table 4 shows the test of significant difference between CICL and Children with no criminal records in terms of their Inferiority Complex.

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Since the P value .000 was less than the alpha level of .05, the null hypothesis was rejected and thus concluded that there was a significant difference between the level of inferiority complex among CICL and Children with no criminal records.

This was supported by the study of Chitra et al. (2015) wherein they argued that an inferior child may become delinquent in order to compensate for his inferiority and to assert himself before others. They argued that there were two forms of expression of an inferiority complex. Direct Expression was where the child will feel that he was hopeless and thus did not exert any effort in improving his assumed inferiority or deficiency. His personality may become timid, unassuming and unsatisfied with his life. And the child may also have the tendency to lapse into delinquency. He may resort to easy forms of stealing, truancy, vagrancy, and the like. Another expression would be the Compensatory reaction in which the child will resort to a "masculine protest". The child will attempt to protect his ego by involving himself in delinquency. Because he will feel like a "hero" in the eyes of the people who saw himself as inferior when he successfully committed thefts, damaged properties, and so forth.

In terms of prevention, Ross (2016) had also shown in his research the key to preventing delinquency. They found out that that building up self-esteem and treating one's inferiority complex prevents children in committing delinquent acts and that development of social interest can also take a role in preventing delinquency.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following were drawn.

1. That the profile of the respondents shows that most of the CICL are living in poverty or belongs to a low income cluster. Whereas children without criminal records mostly come from a family of middle to rich class. In terms of the participants' family configuration, most CICLs have an incomplete family which means that their parents are either separated or one has passed away. On the other hand, most of the children without criminal records live with complete family. In terms of ages, most CICLs are in the age range of 16-17 years old. Whereas children without criminal records are mostly 17 years old.
2. That the score of CICL in their COMPIN Scale interprets as having Neutral Inferiority Complex. And Children without criminal records interprets as having Low Inferiority Complex.

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3. That In terms of Socio-economic Status, there was no significant difference on the inferiority complex of the CICL respondents when grouped according to this demographic attribute. As shown in P-value of .086 which was greater than the level of significance at .05%. In terms of Family Configuration, the result shows that there was a significant difference when the scores of the participants are grouped according to their family configuration. As shown with a P value of .002 which was less than the level of significance at .05%.
4. That there was significant difference between CICL and Children with no criminal records in terms of their Inferiority Complex as shown by the P value .000 was less than the alpha level of .05.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. The promotion of open communication and a harmonious relationship between the family members and CICL may be encouraged. Giving lots of support, love, attention and understanding to the CICL would enable them to confront life's difficulties and avoid temptations of going back to their usual vices.
2. Construction of programs or interventions that would boost the CICL's self-esteem, self-importance and self-worth may be promoted. And also let the CICL be aware of the reason why they choose such inappropriate means such as committing crimes to be the solution in their life problems. Moreover, CICL should also be trained to have social interest to prevent them from committing crimes and become better members of their families and especially the society.
3. The Legislative Department may provide the CICL with activities such as community service and livelihood projects so that the respondents would submerge themselves further in the society, to also grow their worth as members of the society.
4. Future researchers may conduct similar studies in order to solidify the current study's findings. Expand the number of respondents to a hundred plus and use random sampling in gathering respondents. Try to differentiate other CICL facilities if the children also show neutral to high level of inferiority.

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