



# Superman's Overconfidence In His God Complex As Seen In *Superman: Red Son* Movie

Bagus Pratama Wijayanto<sup>1</sup>, Kusuma Wijaya<sup>2</sup>, Rommel Utungga Pasopati<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1 2 3</sup> University of Dr. Soetomo, Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>baguspwijayanto@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>kusuma.wijaya@unitomo.ac.id, <sup>3</sup>rommel@unitomo.ac.id

## Abstract

This article examines how the *Superman: Red Son* movie by Sam Liu portrays Superman's overconfidence. The movie is about another universe in DC Comics where Superman is born in Soviet Union within Cold War. It also shows how Superman is practicing his overconfidence within his God Complex as the sole legitimate ruler for his people in *Superman: Red Son*. In this movie, Superman is depicted as a very tyrannical Soviet leader. Superman also thinks that he is better than other people. He believes that all that he does is justified and bearing truth according to his own values. Through qualitative method, this article would like to explore more whether Superman's God Complex is closely related to condition of overconfidence. In analysis, Superman is proved to practice overconfidence in underestimating other people, being superior to others, and being arrogant all the time. In conclusion, it is clear that Superman's God Complex is in matter of overconfidence, especially in his superior behavior towards other people.

**Keywords:** God Complex, Overconfidence, Sam Liu, Superman, Superman: Red Son

## INTRODUCTION

Human behavior is emergent, meaning that the way several components or processes work together creates behavioral patterns (Kelso 2001). It is shaped by factors such as biology, emotions, thinking, and the environment. A person's actions can be influenced by their genetic makeup, thoughts, and feelings. Social factors, including family, friends, and societal norms, also contribute to how people behave. For instance, a person may act kindly when they feel happy, or they may behave differently in a group due to peer pressure. By understanding human behavior, we can better grasp how and why people interact with one another.

There is also a negative part of human behavior that shows people who overestimate their own accuracy are making the judgmental error known as overconfidence (Shcafer, 2004). People who have overconfidence is also lead them into a dangerous scenario where the people can sense of being superiority toward other and causes them to lose sense of reality, which frequently has negative effects such as constant need for validation, always becoming dominant in every conversation, and unwilling to admit the mistakes on the person as well as on society (Kennedy et al., 2013). Overconfident people can fail to recognize their own limitations and always set an unrealistic goal for their ambition.

*Superman: Red Son* movie is directed by Sam Liu. This movie was published on February 24, 2020 in the Blue-Ray digital media. The main focus of this study is on the Superman's overconfidence behavior in *Superman: Red Son* movie (Liu, 2020). This movie consists of 1 hour 24 minutes. The data source is taken from the speeches of Superman in *Superman: Red Son* movie directed by Sam Liu.

The researchers choose the *Superman: Red Son* movie as the subject of the research. Due to the purpose of this movie is to explain how *Superman: Red Son's* actions might be influenced by his overconfidence (Nento, 2020). Meanwhile, the researchers want to explain the factors that might support the premise that *Superman: Red Son* has overconfidence behavior in this research. Also, in this movie adaptation, Superman has a unique point of view, about how he is always born in liberal country (Darowski, 2021). In this universe, Superman was born in a communist country.

The researchers analyze how the Superman character develop overconfidence behavior toward other character throughout the story line of this movie, and how this affects in Superman every day action. Therefore, the researchers use examples from the movie by taking the speeches from the characters, as to illustrate the Superman's overconfidence.

## METHOD

This study is designed using an explorative method through qualitative type of research (Creswell, 2017). The researcher wants to analyze how Superman character shows his overconfidence in Sam Liu movie of *Superman: Red Son*. The aim of this research is found out the actualization behind Superman's overconfidence towards other character

in this *Superman: Red Son* movie. By the researchers through attentive close reading of books and journals. The journal articles are derived from earlier works that apply similarity theory to this research.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

### Superman's overconfidence in *Superman: Red Son* movie

Sam Liu as the director of *Superman: Red Son* movie talks about Superman's overconfidence action toward other character in this movie (Liu, 2020). In this movie, Superman is not depicted as a liberal American superhero but rather as a superhero who adheres to communist ideology and becomes a tyrannical leader in the Soviet Union. In this movie, Superman is also depicted as a superhero who is very arrogant towards others. This makes Superman become overconfidence and makes himself feel that he is the most right and knows everything, causing him to always belittle the existence of others (Liu, 2020).

#### Data 1

*I didn't run because I was afraid of them. I ran because I was afraid to hurt them.* (00:02:06 - 00:02:09)

Superman, runs through the wheat field to hide from the bullies who want to pick on him (Liu, 2020). He runs to escape the bullies not because he is afraid of being bullies. Instead, he keeps his distance from them because he is afraid of hurting them. Superman realizes that he has superpowers that may hurt others.

#### Data 2

*A young man I have come to look upon as both a great Soviet hero and a son.* (00:06:23 - 00:06:25)

Premier Stalin, here gives a praise to Superman in front of the Soviet people because he is thankful to him (Liu, 2020). The Soviet Union can thrive as it does today, and it is because of his efforts that their country has become a highly regarded nation. With that achievement, Premier Stalin gave the nickname "Son" to Superman as a symbol and as a hero of Soviet Union pride.

#### Data 3

*I am no hero. I'm merely a servant of the state who seeks, as you do, to better the lives of our citizens.* (00:07:07 - 00:07:09)

In his speech in front of the Soviet people, Superman said that he is not someone worthy of being called a hero. Because Superman considers himself just a servant who serves his country just like everyone else. He can become a hero like he is now (Liu, 2020). That is because he only wants to improve the lives of the people in his country.

#### Data 4

*Yes, I work to protect them, perhaps inspire them in some small way.* (00:07:17 - 00:07:20)  
*But make no mistakes, I didn't build this dam.* (00:07:22 - 00:07:24)

During his speech, Superman says he honestly works only to protect his people (Liu, 2020). And perhaps inspire them in some way. Superman emphasizes to the Soviet people not to misunderstand him. It is because Superman is not the only one who builds this dam. Superman also hopes that the Soviet people can appreciate themselves (Liu, 2020).

#### Data 5

*Until I was 12 years old, Mrs. Lane, I was as human as you are.* (00:11:43 - 00:11:45)

Superman explains to Mrs. Lane that until he is 12 years old, he is just like any other person. However, as he grows older, Superman realizes that he is not like any other people (Liu, 2020). He begins to notice the changes happening to him. This was said by Superman when Mrs. Lane felt that he was not an ordinary human like most normal people around them.

#### Data 6

*This planet is the only home I've ever known. And I would sacrifice anything to protect her.* (00:11:48 - 00:11:51)

Superman tells Mrs. Lane that he considers Earth to be the only place he can call home (Liu, 2020). And he is willing to sacrifice everything to protect planet Earth such as he will eliminate all aliens who want to take over the Earth and oppose anyone who dares to attack the area where he lives. And he might not hesitate to carry out extermination if necessary because Superman always considers Earth as his home.

#### Data 7

*My savior* (00:18:28 - 00:18:29)

Until the end of her life, Svetlana will always believe that Superman was the savior of her life because she was convincing that there would be no one other than Superman who would be willing to save and give new hope to those whose freedom had been taken away by Stalin, as she already experiences (Liu, 2020). This sentence was said by Svetlana when she finally met Superman again after many years. And she felt that she had been saved after years of suffering in the gulag that she had experienced all this time. That is what made Svetlana acknowledge Superman as her savior.

**Data 8**

*Now you must save all of us.* (00:18:56 - 00:18:59)

In the final moments of her life, Svetlana asks Superman to save the innocent people who are still victims of Stalin's cruelty in other labor camps (Liu, 2020). Svetlana stated this because she believes that only Superman is capable of saving them. Svetlana is very sure that with all the abilities Superman possesses, he is capable of saving everyone in the gulag.

**Data 9**

*We deeply regret the loss of life today. Even a single death is a tragedy.* (00:25:07 - 00:25:10)

Superman feels regret because of his inability to stop the war sooner. If he could have stopped the war sooner (Liu, 2020). He believes that there would have been no casualties from the war because for him, even one death is already a tragedy.

**Data 10**

*That man is gonna change the world.* (00:27:12 - 00:27:16)

Mrs. Lane tells Agent Olsen that she believes Lex Luthor, her husband, is the only man capable of changing the world with his own abilities (Liu, 2020). This is later showing the overconfidence of Superman to defeat Lex Luthor. This was said by Mrs. Lane because she is very sure that whatever Lex Luthor is currently working on will definitely bring about a major change that will shake the world.

**Data 11**

*And so, we turn to the only person who could shift the balance of power.* (00:27:43 - 00:27:48)

Mr. President confidently tells all the reporters and media present in his speech that there is only one person who is genius enough and capable of being an equal opponent to the Soviet Superman. That person is none other than Lex Luthor, who will become the hope for the people in the United States to protect them from the threat posed by Superman (Liu, 2020). This action later triggers Superman to get involved in defeating the United State of America.

**Data 12**

*Nothing wrong with a good diversion... with the right partner.* (00:31:53 - 00:31:56)

Wonder Woman tells Superman that there is nothing wrong with having sex with the right partner (Liu, 2020). However, it is only a sole desire of Superman's arrogance towards a woman like her. This shows that Superman is indeed a person who has always been someone who likes to belittle women. It is because he believes that the status of men is above everything else.

**Data 13**

*If you're asking me if I'm worried, no.* (00:32:27 - 00:32:30)

Wonder Woman asks Superman if he has any concerns towards the people from the United States' government (Liu, 2020). He has no worry at all because he believes that he can destroy any enemy. Superman has great faith in the power he possesses; he feels confident that there is no obstacle or barrier that can stop him. Including the threats made by the American side against him, Superman is not afraid at all.

**Data 14**

*Our Intelligence reports indicate that this so-called Superior Man is flawed. Incomplete and inoperable.* (00:32:30 - 00:32:35)

Superman tells Wonder Woman that the clone of Superman being developed by the Americans is still incomplete and inoperable (Liu, 2020). Superman justifies himself that he can be the number one in competition with the clone made by the Americans.

**Data 15**

*Not all men.* (00:46:15 - 00:46:17)

Superman tells Wonder Woman that not all men are crazy like Batman because he feels that he is not like other men (Liu, 2020). Superman said this to Wonder Woman with the intention of making her believe that there is still a man who can be trusted, and that man is Superman himself.

**Data 16**

*You, I swear to you, Diana, his day will come.* (00:46:22 - 00:46:24)

Superman swears to Wonder Woman that the day of reckoning. Where Batman and his terrorist forces will be punished for the cruel act (Liu, 2020). They will surely come and only I myself will punish Batman and his terrorist forces. Superman said this when he was already very angry due to the mass murder committed by Batman. This is what makes Superman feel that he must take direct action to pass judgment on them.

**Data 17**

*For all your power, you've underestimated the greatest weapon of all... the human mind.* (00:53:58 - 00:54:04)

Superman believes that he cannot be defeated by Batman because Batman is an ordinary human who does not possess any superpowers, whereas he is a figure with unbeatable superpower (Liu, 2020). However, Superman forgets one thing. Batman is a clever person who can use his mind to create traps to defeat Superman even without any superpower.

**Data 18**

*Destroyed the Gulags.* (00:55:57 - 00:55:58)

Superman believes that by destroying the gulag, he already freed the people from the oppression that is happening in the Soviet all this time. He believes that he already gives them a new hope for a better life in the future. However, in reality, that did not happen as Superman already hoped (Liu, 2020). The lives of the people he has freed did not improve, but rather the opposite happens because of his selfish behavior.

**Data 19**

*Game's over Batman.* (00:58:05 - 00:58:08)

Superman believes that he has managed to defeat Batman in his own trap (Liu, 2020). He believes that he also succeeds in dominating the resistance which was done by Batman to overthrow him from his position as leader. When he declared the game over to Batman, Superman felt that he had success in defeating and dominating Batman.

**Data 20**

*Don't worry, I'm not going to hurt you.* (00:58:17 - 00:58:21)

Superman believes that he is the only one capable of helping Batman (Liu, 2020). It is done so that Batman can be freed from his resentment towards Superman. It is Superman who has the righteousness to change Batman into a better person according to what he demands.

**Overconfidence and Its Relation with God Complex**

God Complex is always identified as arrogance, extreme self-centeredness, a great need to be loved and admired by other people, with illustrations of fantasies as well as envy and anger, lack of interest and empathy for other people (Zara & Özdemir, 2018). The impact of God Complex can make people believe that they have superior qualities, abilities, or influence, and often resulting in a sense of right, dominance, or control over other people. This term is often used in a psychological sense, though it is not a formal diagnosis in psychiatry. The impact of people having a God Complex can be wide, affecting not just the individual but those around them. People who have a god Complex always believes that many others should fear and kneel down to the people who have God Complex behavior. It is because people who suffer a God Complex frequently believe they are on equal footing with God.

Overconfidence is a part of people negative behavior, which is usually indicated by the opposite of confidence in people behavior. This behavior can lead to a dangerous scenario where the people can sense of being superiority toward other and causes them to lose sense of reality, which frequently has negative effects such as constant need for validation, always becoming dominant in every conversation, and unwilling to admit the mistakes on the person as well as on society (Kennedy et al., 2013). Overconfident people can fail to recognize their own limitations and always set an unrealistic goal for their ambition.

**Superman's Overconfidence in Sam Liu's Movie of *Superman: Red Son***

This section examines Superman's overconfidence toward the other characters in Sam Liu's movie of *Superman: Red Son*. The aspect is explained in down below:

In **Data 1**, this dialogue illustrates Superman's overconfidence that can fail to recognize their own limitations and always set an unrealistic goal for his ambition (Kennedy et al., 2013). Superman shows this behavior to Svetlana because he feels that he possesses physical strength unlike ordinary humans. Superman believes that his strength can hurt others, so he prefers to run and hide rather than fight back against the bullies who have been bothering him.

In **Data 2**, this text, Premiere Stalin shows his overconfidence by showing his arrogance toward his own citizens (Kennedy et al., 2013). This statement makes Superman feel proud of himself because he feels that he is always needed by his country and his nation. He feels proud of the title *SON* gave to him by Stalin, as it is a special honour for

him. With this, Superman became a superhero who was very overconfident in all the powers he possesses. And makes him feel like he can do everything on his own.

In **Data 3**, this text shows Superman overconfidence by making a statement to everyone by making them believe that he is a servant of the country, not a hero. He wants to validate himself only as a tool to prosper his country, not as a savior (Kennedy et al., 2013). Here, Superman also expresses his arrogance by wanting to make people believe that with his abilities, he can prosper all life in his country on his own without anyone's help.

In **Data 4**, this sentence indicates Superman's overconfidence by showing his arrogance by telling everyone that he is defending the country by protecting everyone in his own way. Superman did all of that so that the citizens of his country would acknowledge him as their leader (Kennedy et al., 2013). Superman even made a sweet promise that he wanted to inspire everyone to be like him. In reality, Superman only wants to use his values to deceive everyone into submitting and obeying all his commands.

In **Data 5**, this sentence, Shows Superman overconfidence by making a statement to Mrs. Lane that he is no longer an ordinary human like every other human being. Superman wants to validate himself as a superhuman, unlike any other human (Kennedy et al., 2013). He basically wants recognition from everyone so that he can feel that he is a true hero.

In **Data 6**, this text explains that the figure of Superman is someone who is overly confident, showing his arrogance by claiming that he is the only one who will maintain peace on Earth. He made such a statement because he felt that Earth was the only place he could acknowledge as the place where he was raised (Kennedy et al., 2013). Superman wants to justify any means to maintain peace on Earth, even if he has to use inhumane violence to ensure security and peaceful on the planet.

In **Data 7**, this quote explains the overconfidence of Superman towards the last hope of Svetlana so that Superman can become a saviour for everyone by showing the unrealistic side of that desire (Kennedy et al., 2013). Those words move Superman to take action so that he could stop the suffering experiences by Svetlana. He believes that by becoming a saviour for everyone, he could stop all the misfortunes that befall humanity. He is very confident that he can stop all forms of evil on his own without anyone's help with his own abilities.

In **Data 8**, this dialogue explains how Superman shows his arrogance and becomes a hero who has no compassion for others, making him a person with overconfidence in himself. He felt very entitled to save people who had a fate similar to Svetlana's. And also, that Superman can receive recognition from the people oppressed by Stalin that he is indeed the savior they have needed all along (Kennedy et al., 2013). So that without them realizing it, they have become dependent on the figure of Superman.

In **Data 9**, this quote shows Superman overconfidence as if Superman is showing deep sorrow due to the war, but in reality, he is only doing it for hidden motives. That is, Superman wants to show his arrogance by saying that if he could have realized the war sooner, he might have been able to save the people who have already become victims (Kennedy et al., 2013). And it would make him respected as a savior, so Superman could install his values in those people, so that in the end, they would be willing to follow Superman's path and glorify that the Soviet Union should be the leader above all.

In **Data 10**, this sentence says that Lex Luthor is the only one who can defeat Superman with all his abilities and cunning. This can provoke Superman's overconfidence because he will consider Luthor as just one of the many people who want to disrupt his perfect plan to create a peaceful world without conflict and social classes (Kennedy et al., 2013). So, Superman will begin to feel arrogant, considering that Lex Luthor is not someone worthy of being regarded as an opponent. It is because Superman will always solve problems using violence and his strength.

In **Data 11**, this dialogue explains when the President of America made a statement that Lex Luthor is the only one capable of countering the negative influence of Superman. This could provoke Superman's anger because he feels that he is more dominant and that no one besides him should hold a position of world leadership. Superman is overconfident that the Soviet Union should be in the top position, even surpassing the United States (Kennedy et al., 2013). Superman believes that a liberal country like the United States is a representation of an imperfect nation because in America, there are still social classes among its people. He believes that if the world were led by him, there would be a better future. However, in reality, it is not like that because what will happen on the contrary, because there is no balance among humans.

In **Data 12**, this sentence explains that Superman is a person who is dominant over the existence of others. This can be an indicator that Superman has overconfidence within himself. It is because when there is someone like Wonder Woman close to him, Superman feels that his presence is more dominant than Wonder Woman, who is actually a female superhero (Kennedy et al., 2013). Superman always believes within himself that the existence of a man is always above that of a woman. Therefore, Superman will always show that women will ultimately always become objects for the satisfaction of a man like himself.

In **Data 13**, this dialogue clarifies Superman overconfidence by showing his arrogant side because Superman felt that the threat posed by the Americans to him was just a minor tremor (Kennedy et al., 2013). Superman believes that if they want to attack him with all their might. The American side will not win at all because Superman believes that he himself cannot be defeated by anyone. He told Wonder Woman that the opposite would happen, where he could annihilate the entire continent of America in the blink of an eye. And she will not let the people who dared to oppose her live.

In **Data 14**, This sentence is about Superman overconfidence by showing his arrogant and haughty side to others, who are none other than Wonder Woman. With his belief that the American effort to create a fake Superman is a futile endeavor (Kennedy et al., 2013). Superman believes that he cannot be matched by anyone or anything. He dares to belittle the American side because he feels very confident that, in his opinion, they are not a threat that should make him feel afraid. Or even make him have to bow down before the American parties.

In **Data 15**, This quote shows that Superman is a man who wants to be validated by others, especially Wonder Woman, as being different from Batman. This can show Superman's overconfidence because he feels that he is better or even the best among all the men on earth (Kennedy et al., 2013). He really wants to be acknowledged by Wonder Woman because Superman feels that all his actions so far are more humane than the actions taken by Batman and his crew. In reality, everything Superman has done for others is actually worse compared to the anarchic actions carried out by Batman.

In **Data 16**, This dialogue provides an explanation that Superman made a promise in front of Wonder Woman with the ambition that when the time comes, he will surely take revenge for all the deeds Batman has done to all the people who have ever been victims of his cruelty (Kennedy et al., 2013). Superman shows his overconfidence by displaying his superiority to Wonder Woman, claiming that only he has the right to punish Batman for all the sins he has committed against innocent people.

In **Data 17**, This dialogue says that Superman is a hero who enjoys belittling others with the power he possesses. He feels that ordinary humans like Batman should have been wiped out long ago (Kennedy et al., 2013). Superman, with his arrogance, feels that the thinking ability of ordinary humans is not comparable to all the abilities he possesses. He also feels that his existence as a Superhuman is more dominant compared to Batman, who is just an ordinary human. Superman belittles Batman with the aim of being seen as a better person than Batman in the eyes of others.

In **Data 18**, This quote explains that Superman's ambition to advance life in his own country was completely unsuccessful because his desire was too ambitious (Kennedy et al., 2013). He was too confident that he already liberated his country from misfortune. However, in reality, all of Superman's actions were nothing but a waste. Due to his overconfidence, Superman believes that he has succeeded in making good progress for his country. In reality, Superman actually made the situation even worse.

In **Data 19**, This dialogue explains how Superman's superior nature is demonstrated, where he feels that with all the power he possesses. Superman feels capable and entitled to help others in his own way (Kennedy et al., 2013). In this case, Superman feels that he is very much needed to help Batman so that Batman can become a good person and, in the future, Batman will not revert to being a criminal like he is now. Superman here also shows his dominant nature to Batman, making Batman feel threatened and cornered, and eventually, Batman will fall into Superman's grasp. And Superman can finally change and control Batman to be what he wants.

In **Data 20**, This text explains how Superman feels that he can win against his enemies without using violence. It is because Superman believes that he is more dominant than all his opponents (Kennedy et al., 2013). He always believes that by using his only arguments, he feels overconfident that he can defeat anyone who wants to oppose his leadership positions. In the end, Superman will always feel victorious over all his enemies including Lex Luthor as well. However, in reality, it is not like that because in the end, Superman will always use violence to defeat his opponents.

## CONCLUSION

*Superman: Red Son* by Sam Liu is a movie that explores Superman overconfidence behavior. The researchers want to explain how Superman's overconfidence, which he shows to others in this storyline, is a form of his high regard for the existence of others. As a form of his underestimating other people, being superior to other people, and being arrogant to those who are considered inferior by Superman. Overconfidence in Superman's behavior can lead Superman to his downfall.

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