

# Self Esteem and Impostor Syndrome Among University Students

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## Abstract:

The aim of this study is to understand the relationship between Impostor Syndrome and Self-esteem. Impostor Syndrome can affect anyone, regardless of job or social status, but high-achieving individuals often experience it. Impostor Syndrome is the experience of feeling like a phony—you feel as though at any moment you are going to be found out as a fraud—like you don't belong where you are, and you only got there through dumb luck. Even when the person achieves an important milestone, they may be unable to recognize their accomplishments. Thus, it may be possible that Impostor Syndrome may cause to have low Self-esteem. The study was conducted on a sample of 100 college students within the age group 18-24 comprising of 50 males and 50 females from Delhi NCR. Impostor Syndrome Questionnaire and Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale was administered. Using Pearson Correlation, it was found out that a positive correlation exists between Impostor Syndrome and Self-esteem.

**Keywords:** Perceived Stress, Impostor Syndrome, Self-esteem

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the perception of one's own worth and value in psychology. It's influenced by factors like how they compare themselves to others, feedback they receive, and their personal achievements. Self-esteem is a crucial part of human psychology because it shapes a person's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour. Research has shown that Self-esteem has significant implications for a range of outcomes, including academic achievement, mental health, and relationship satisfaction. Self-esteem is closely linked to an individual's sense of identity and sense of self. It involves evaluating oneself based on one's beliefs and perceptions of one's own worth. People with high Self-esteem tend to view themselves positively, believing they have strengths and abilities that are valued by others. Conversely, individuals with low Self-esteem tend to have a negative self-image, perceiving their weaknesses and limitations as a hindrance to their worth compared to others. They are more likely to avoid challenges and opportunities, feeling uncertain about their ability to succeed.

### 1.2 Impostor Syndrome

Impostor Syndrome is when someone feels inadequate and doubts their abilities, even when there are signs that they are competent and successful. It is a fear that they will be discovered as fraud, even though

evidence shows that they are not. Individuals with Impostor Syndrome often attribute their accomplishments to luck, timing, or external factors, rather than their own abilities. In 1978, psychologists Pauline Clance and Suzanne Ime's came up with the term "Impostor Syndrome" to describe a feeling experienced by successful women who believed that they did not deserve their accomplishments.

## 2. Review of Literature

*Adam, Lisa & Ken (2020)* surveyed 113 management doctoral students to ascertain the prevalence of symptoms for two common mental illnesses, depression, and anxiety, as well as experiences of Impostor Syndrome and perceived sources of social support.

Empirical findings from the first phase of our research suggest that management doctoral students are at greater risk than the general population of experiencing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and feelings of being an Impostor .

*Battaglioli, Sebok-Syer, Kalantari et.al (2019)* conducted a literature search of nine databases for any articles on IS among physicians (practising or in training) published prior to January 2019. Most studies utilised the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale and cited rates of IS ranging from 22% to 60%. Studies found that gender, low Self-esteem, and institutional culture were associated with higher rates of IS, whereas social support, validation of success, positive affirmation, and both personal and shared reflections were protective.

*Jonathan (2019)* conducted Interviews and a survey that showed that the majority of participants experienced Impostor phenomenon, and that many of those feelings related to the participants feeling academically-unprepared, including concerns related to reading, writing, and discussing academic work. This article explores the connection between Impostor phenomenon and participants feeling like they lacked sufficient academic skill sets to succeed in their programmes. The results build a case for doing literacy work to address Impostor phenomenon among postgraduate students.

*Akerman (2018)* considers third space professional staff and invisibility within institutions and the possibility of Impostor Syndrome. The binary profession perspective of individual institutions is compounded by the sector itself, which fails to recognise the unique identity of the third space professional in higher education, impeding career progression through an unnecessarily rigid adherence to an overly traditional approach to describing requirements for more senior roles in institutions.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

**AIM:** To study the relationship of Impostor Syndrome on Self - esteem among male and female university students.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To study the relationship between Impostor Syndrome and Self - esteem among university students.

### HYPOTHESES:

- There will be significant relationship between Self-esteem and Impostor Syndrome among university students.

### SAMPLE AND TOOLS

100 college students within the age range of 18-24 made up the study's sample. Data was gathered from 50 male and 50 female students in various universities across India.

Impostor Syndrome Questionnaire by Suzanne Mercier and Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale by Morris Rosenberg were used.

#### 4. RESULT

Correlation between Impostor Syndrome and Self-esteem among college students

VARIABLES	N	r	p
SELF ESTEEM	100	-0.447	Sig***
IMPOSTOR SYNDROME	100		

#### 5. DISCUSSION

The present study titled ‘Self-esteem and Impostor Syndrome among University Students’ was conducted to examine the relationship between two variables under study i.e. Impostor Syndrome and Self-esteem. For this purpose, 100 college/university students were asked to fill the survey. The scales used for the data collection were the Impostor Syndrome scale by Suzanne Mercier and the Rosenberg Self-esteem survey. To comprehend relationship between the variables, Pearson’s Correlation was used. A significant correlation between the two variables taken under research for the college students was revealed from the results.

The results in table shows that there is a significant negative correlation between Impostor Syndrome and Self-esteem (correlation coefficient = -.447). In other words, persons with higher degrees of Impostor Syndrome had lower levels of Self-esteem. *Jonathan (2019)* study also states that Impostor phenomenon, and that many of those feelings related to the participants feeling academically-unprepared leading to low self-image in post graduate students. That can be comprehended as if a student has high Impostor Syndrome, they will have low Self-esteem and the other way round. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis there will be a significant relationship between Self-esteem and Impostor Syndrome among university students.

In conclusion, the research underscores the significance of addressing Impostor Syndrome and Self-esteem among university students and highlights the interconnected nature of these constructs. By elucidating the impact of Impostor feelings on Self-esteem and examining their correlation, the study provides valuable insights such as providing accessible counselling services, positive feedback by professors and peer support network for promoting student well-being and academic success in higher education settings.

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