

# Self-esteem as the predictor of Imposter Phenomenon among the students of Himachal Pradesh University

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**Abstract:** *The objective of the present research was to study the self-esteem as the predictor of imposter phenomenon among the male and female students of Himachal Pradesh University. The other objective was to study the self-esteem as the predictor of imposter phenomenon among the science and non-science students of Himachal Pradesh University. The results showed that self-esteem is the strong predictor of imposter phenomenon among female students as compared to male students. Further the results showed that Self-esteem is the strong predictor of imposter phenomenon among female science students as compared to male science students. However, Self-esteem is the strong predictor of imposter phenomenon among male non-science students as compared to female non-science students.*

**Key words:** *Imposter Phenomenon, Self-esteem, Gender, Science Student.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The destiny of India lies in its classrooms. This has been rightly said by Education Commission Report, 1964-66. This implies that teacher who is the organizer and controller of the classroom is mostly responsible for the future of India. He is building the future citizens of the country. From this point of view, a lot of responsibilities lies with the teacher to execute in his day-to-day activities, but the teachers must be properly equipped to deal with children. They should develop necessary knowledge, abilities and competencies to perform their duty efficiently and effectively.

Imposter phenomenon can be defined as a collection of feeling of inadequacy that persists even in face of information that the opposite is true. It is basically feeling that you are not really successful, competent, and smart, that is only posing such. The imposter feeling includes feeling like fake, attributing success to luck and discounting the success.

### Who is likely to have the imposter phenomenon?

The imposter phenomenon is associated with highly achieving, highly successful people. This makes imposter feeling somewhat different from the concept of low esteem because there is a discrepancy between the actual achievement and the person's feeling about the achievement that may not be present in low-esteem. People in different professions such as teachers, people in the social sciences, people in academia, actress and actors, may all have imposter feeling. It was originally associated with women but recent research indicated that men suffer in similar numbers. Attitudes, beliefs, direct messages that we received from our parents or from other significant people in our lives early on may have contributed to the development of imposter feelings. Certain family situations and dynamics tend to contribute to imposter feeling when the success and career aspirations conflicts with the family expectations of the gender, race, religion, or age of the person, families who unrealistic standards, families who are very critical, and families who are ridden with conflict and anger.

## 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:

Clance and Imes (1978) developed the term imposter phenomenon. They designated Imposter Phenomenon an internal experience of intellectual phoniness and which seemed to be particularly prevalent amongst a sample of high-achieving women (Clance & O'Toole, 1988). For this, Clance and Imes (1978) interviewed 150 highly successful women who earned their degrees and got high scores on standardized tests, or professional recognition from colleagues or organizations. They found in study that, these highly successful women still felt an internal lack of success. Clance (1985) invented the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIP). This scale is helpful to the people for measure and determine, Imposter Phenomenon characteristics of their own. Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIP) is also helpful to people as to what extent they are suffering from the Imposter Phenomenon. Cromwell et al. (1990) reported that imposters are significantly more inclined than non imposters to have irrational beliefs of high self-expectations, demand for approval, anxious over-concern, and helplessness. Ellerie (1997) conducted a research on Imposter Phenomenon among registered nurse first assistant. Ellerie sampled 109 registered nurse first assistants, by using the Harvey Imposter Phenomenon Scale (HIPS) and found that a high degree of self reported competency among the first assistants. It concluded, that imposter phenomenon did not exist to a significant extent among the subject nurses, who were trained for advance roles in the surgical area. Leary et al. (2000) argued that behaviours of

Impostors can be viewed as self-presentational strategies used to avoid negative interpersonal implications of potential failure by engaging in self-deprecating behaviours, such as discounting praise and positive feedback or denying that they are as competent as others believe. Leary et al. showed that Impostors expressed lower performance expectations than non-Impostors only when their performance would be revealed to others. Basaknejad et al. (2005) in his research showed that there was a positive correlation between the variables of fear of success, perfectionism, fear of negative evaluation and Imposter syndrome. However there was a negative correlation between self-esteem and imposter syndrome.

Hoang (2013) in her article explored the literature around Imposter Phenomenon, its impact on men and women, graduate level students, and senior student affairs practitioners in higher education. The researcher offered insights and suggestions on how to navigate Imposter Phenomenon, while working with students or colleagues. Sanford et al. (2015) in their study attempted to determine how successful women discuss the presence of the Impostor Phenomenon in their lives and resist feelings of fraudulence associated with IP. Twenty-nine women in leadership were interviewed in this qualitative study. The results indicated that majority of the participants did not experience IP, or experience it very little in their lives. Their confidence can be attributed to strong relationships with mentors, romantic partners, and other women in leadership. Two major themes were discovered i.e. the lack of presence of IP and how the respondents resist IP through relationships with mentors, other women of leadership, and romantic partners. Parkman (2016) found in his article reviewed the definition and traits associated with the Impostor Phenomenon with a focus on incidence and impact in higher education. Numerous studies and articles have been documented the prevalence of the Imposter Phenomenon in higher education. The article presents Imposter Phenomenon tendencies in a variety of student populations, in faculty and in staff members. While many perceive the college campus as an oasis of tranquility where intellectual communities strive to seek and share knowledge in a supportive environment the reality in most cases is markedly different.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- To study the self-esteem as the predictor of imposter phenomenon among the male and female students of Himachal Pradesh University.
- To study the self-esteem as the predictor of imposter phenomenon among the science and non-science students of Himachal Pradesh University.

### **4. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

- Self-esteem will be the strong predictor of Imposter Phenomenon among male students as compared to female students.
- Self-esteem will be the strong predictor of Imposter Phenomenon among female science students as compared to the male science students.
- Self-esteem will be the strong predictor of Imposter Phenomenon among female non-science as compared to the male non-science students.

### **5. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The present study was delimited only to the students of Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla.

### **6. METHODOLOGY**

In order to accomplish the objectives of the present study the Descriptive method of research was used.

#### **6.1 SAMPLE**

Random sampling was used for the study. Himachal Pradesh University is comprised of different faculties. A list of students of science and non-science stream was prepared. Researcher took the total sample of 360 male and 316 female students of Himachal Pradesh University for the present study.

#### **6.2 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE USED**

For the present study percentage method and ANOVA (2x2x2) was used to analyze the data.

#### **6.3 TOOLS USED**

- The Imposter Phenomenon Scale of Clance (1985) is adopted by the investigator with her prior permission. The scale is constructed and standardized according to the Indian situation of the study by the investigator.
- A Questionnaire to measure the self-esteem is constructed and standardized by the investigator himself.

### **7. IMPOSTER PHENOMENON OF STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR GENDER, STREAM AND SELF-ESTEEM:**

In order to study the main effects of gender, stream and self-esteem on imposter phenomenon of students along with their interactional effect, statistical technique of analysis of variance (2x2x2 factorial design involving two

levels of gender i.e. male & female, stream i.e. science & non-science and self-esteem i.e. high self-esteem & self-esteem) was applied on the means of imposter phenomenon. The mean scores of students are given in table 1.1.

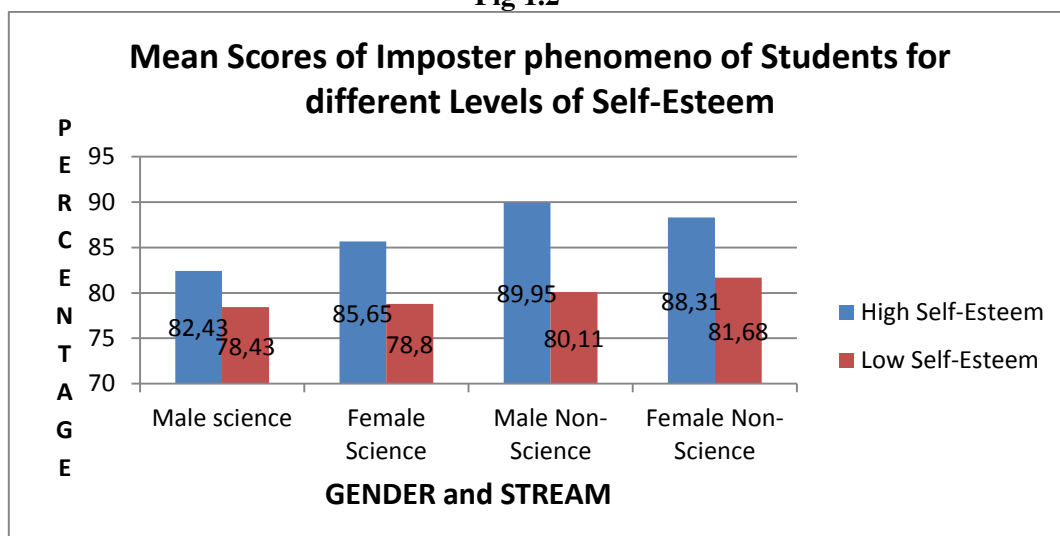
**Table-1.1**  
**Effect of Gender, Stream and Self-Esteem on Imposter Phenomenon**

	Measures	Male		Female		Combined Mean
		Science	Non Science	Science	Non Science	
<b>High Self Concept</b>	Means	82.43	89.95	85.65	88.31	86.59
	SD	11.36	9.76	10.52	10.52	
<b>Low Self Concept</b>	Means	78.43	80.11	78.80	81.68	79.76
	SD	12.71	10.99	12.87	11.72	
<b>Total Mean</b>		80.43	85.03	82.23	84.99	

From 1.1 table shows that the total means of high and low self-esteem of male science students is 80.43 percent and 82.23 percent of female science students, which is higher than that of male science students. This shows that self-esteem is the strong predictor of imposter phenomenon among female science students as compared to male science students. In other side total mean of high and low self-esteem of male non-science students is 85.03 percent and 84.99 percent of female non-science students, which is slightly lower than that of male students. It indicates that self-esteem is the slightly stronger predictor of imposter phenomenon among male science students as compared to female science students.

The combined mean of male science and non science students is 86.59 percent and in case of female it is 79.76 percent. It is clear from this that self-esteem is the strong predictor of imposter phenomenon among the male students as compared to female students.

**Fig 1.2**



**Fig 1.2 Showing the Mean Scores of Imposter Phenomenon of Students for different Levels of Self-Esteem**

Summary of the results are given below in table 1.3

**Table-1.3**  
**Summary of Analysis of Variance**

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	F
<b>Gender</b>	425.756	1	3.31
<b>Stream</b>	1380.625	1	10.71*
<b>Self Esteem</b>	5917.056	1	45.91*
<b>Gender*Stream</b>	4.556	1	.04
<b>Gender*Self Esteem</b>	70.225	1	.55
<b>Stream* Self Esteem</b>	68.906	1	.54
<b>Gender*Stream*Self Esteem</b>	93.025	1	.72
<b>Error</b>	81448.63	632	
<b>Total</b>	4476484.00	640	

\*at 0.05 level of significance

## 8. MAIN EFFECTS:

### Gender

The computed value of 'F' for the main effect of gender on imposter phenomenon of their social support, for df 1 and 632, came out to be 3.31, which is less than the table value (3.85) even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the Hypothesis i.e. "Self-esteem will be strong predictor of imposter phenomenon among the male as compared to female students of Himachal Pradesh University students was rejected". It may be interpreted that boys and girls do not differ significantly in their overall imposter phenomenon.

### Stream

The computed value of 'F' for the main effect of stream on imposter phenomenon of their social support, for df 1 and 632, came out to be 10.71, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the Hypothesis that "Self-esteem will be strong predictor of imposter phenomenon as the male students as compared female students of Himachal Pradesh University students was accepted". It may be interpreted that science and non-science students differ significantly in their overall imposter phenomenon.

### Self-Esteem

The computed value of 'F' for the main effect of social support on imposter phenomenon of their social support, for df 1 and 632, came out to be 45.91, which is significant even at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be interpreted that high self-esteem among male science, non-science, female science and non-science students is the predictor of imposter phenomenon.

### Gender\*Stream

The computed value of 'F' for the main effect of stream on imposter phenomenon of their social support, for df 1 and 632, came out to be 0.34, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be said that the differences in the means of overall imposter phenomenon scores of boys and girls are not same for different levels of stream i.e. science and non-science. It may be interpreted that gender and stream do not interact significantly on imposter phenomenon.

### Gender\*Self-Esteem

The computed value of 'F' for the main effect of stream on imposter phenomenon of their self-esteem, for df 1 and 632, came out to be 0.55, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be said that the differences in the means of overall imposter phenomenon scores of boys and girls are not same for different levels of self-esteem i.e. high and low. It may be interpreted that gender and social support do not interact significantly on imposter phenomenon.

### Gender\*Stream\* Self-Esteem

The computed value of 'F' for the main effect of stream on imposter phenomenon of their social support, for df 1 and 632, came out to be 0.72, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it may be said that the differences in the means of overall imposter phenomenon scores are not same for gender, stream and Self-Esteem. It may be interpreted that gender, stream and Self-Esteem do not interact significantly on imposter phenomenon.

## 9. CONCLUSION:

On the basis of analysis of data and interpretation of results, following conclusions were drawn

- Self-esteem is the stronger predictor of imposter phenomenon among female students as compared to male students. Further, total mean of high and low self concept of male students is higher than that of female students. This shows that self esteem is the slightly stronger predictor of imposter phenomenon among female students as compared to male students.
- Self-esteem is the strong predictor of imposter phenomenon among female science students as compared to male science students. Thus the hypothesis "Self-esteem will be the strong predictor of Imposter Phenomenon among male science as compared to the female science students" is accepted.
- Self-esteem is the strong predictor of imposter phenomenon among male non-science students as compared to female non-science students. Thus the hypothesis "Self-esteem will be the strong predictor of Imposter Phenomenon among female non-science as compared to the male non-science students" is rejected.
- However it was higher in case of non-science male students as compared to the female science student.
- Gender and stream do not interact significantly on imposter phenomenon. There was also no significant difference between gender & self-esteem and stream & self-esteem.
- It may be revealed from the study that, there was no significant difference between gender, stream and self-esteem.

## 10. SUGGESTION FOR THE FURTHER STUDY:

The present study was delimited to only certain aspects of Imposter Phenomenon on the students of Himachal Pradesh University. Similar study should be undertaken on the students and teachers of the other universities of Himachal Pradesh in public sector or private sector also. Students and teachers of schools may also be included in the study.

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