

# Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem as the predictors of Imposter Phenomenon among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University

Dr. Romesh Chand<sup>1</sup>, Ajay Kumar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor, Former Dean & Chairperson, Department of Education, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Education, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla

E-Mail - ajayresearchshimla@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *The objective of the present research was to study relationship of Imposter Phenomenon with Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University. The other objective of the study was to indentify Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem as the predictors of Imposter Phenomenon among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University. It may be said from the results that there was a significant relationship between the Imposter Phenomenon with Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem and Self-Concept is the best predictor of Imposter Phenomenon as compared to Social Support and Self-Esteem among university science students.*

**Key Words:** *Imposter Phenomenon, Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

21<sup>st</sup> century is about the management of the knowledge and information generation and value addition given to it. The students must be given the skills with which they find a way through the sea of knowledge that has been created and continue with long learning. Through technology, really and truly the student can be taught to become lifelong learner. Education is considered as a great moral enterprise. Its creative force enables to reshape and remodel a society in the desired way. It also contributes to social change by altering and restricting values and attitude of people towards newness. It prepares an individual with healthy and creative mind. It throws wide open the closed door of mind and endeavours to prepare one for life not mere for living.

Education, however, today has become mechanical with the development of science and technology. A dangerous trend of sharp decline in human values has started, threatening the very existence of man. Knowledge is expanding at an exponential rate. Television and computers have already crossed the ambit of classroom. There is provision for video counselling. Internet services are introduced to make knowledge, including library material, available lying anywhere in the world. Formal education plays a vital role in one's life. However, it has been observed that despite earned degrees, scholastic honours, high achievement on standardized tests, the students do not experience an internal sense of success.

The Imposter Phenomenon (IP), a term coined by psychologists Dr. Pauline Clance and Dr. Suzanne Imes in 1978, describes a collection of behavioural characteristics some individuals routinely exhibit in every aspect of their lives (Clance and Imes, 1978; Cusack, et al., 2013; Hutchins, 2015).

Clance (1985) referred Imposter Phenomenon to an "internal experience of intellectual phoniness" (Matthews and Clance, 1985) in individuals who are highly successful but unable to internalise their success. Clance believed that the Imposter Phenomenon is not a pathological disease that is inherently self-damaging or self-destructive (Clance, 1985), rather, it interferes with the psychological well-being of a person. A high level of Imposter Phenomenon limits the acceptance of success as an outcome of one's own ability and influences feelings of self-doubt and anxiety.

## 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:

Clance (1985) developed the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIP) to 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. Clance and O'Toole (1988) conducted a study on those people who experienced Imposter Phenomenon. They often felt emotions or thoughts of being discovered as incompetent. They attributed their success to hard work and luck. Further they attributed their success to knowing the right people and being in the right place at the right time, or through interpersonal assets such as charm and adaptability. The persons who had Imposter Phenomenon tendencies found difficulty in accepting the praise or recognition for their accomplishments or positive feedback. They constantly dwelt or focused on negative feedback as a reason for their deficits, mistakes, or failures. While fixated on their flaws, those with Imposter Phenomenon were afraid of shame and humiliation associated with failure and the feelings of foolishness. Finally, those with Imposter Phenomenon tendencies overestimated others intellect and competence, while comparing their weaknesses with the strengths of others.

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 relationship of Imposter Phenomenon with Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University.
- To identify Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem as the predictors of Imposter Phenomenon among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University.

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

- There will be no significant relationship between Imposter Phenomenon with Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University.
- Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem have no significant role in predicting the Imposter Phenomenon among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University.

### **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**

Himachal Pradesh University is comprised of different faculties. Seven faculties were selected randomly from the eleven faculties. Further, out of twenty eight departments under these faculties, fourteen departments were taken randomly and purposively. From whole of this population, subjects for the present study who were present on the day of data collection in each department were contacted and included in the sample. A total sample of 320 students was taken.

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

For the present study correlation, regression and prediction methods of research were used.

#### **6.3 TOOLS USED**

- 1.) To study the imposter phenomenon only two tools are available which have been standardized on foreign population. It was, therefore thought worthwhile to develop a scale which is applicable to the Indian

population. Thus the Imposter Phenomenon Scale (IPS) is constructed and standardized by the investigator himself.

2.) A Self-Esteem Scale is constructed and standardized by the investigator himself.

In order to study the relationship between each of the independent variables with the dependent variable, Pearson's product moment coefficients of correlation were calculated between dependent variable Imposter Phenomenon with independent variables Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem among the students of Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. The analysis of the relationships is given below:

**Pearson's product moment coefficients of correlation between independent variables with the dependent variable among the Science students of Himachal Pradesh University**

The correlations between independent variables i.e. Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem with the dependent variable i.e. Imposter Phenomenon among the science students are given below in Table 1.

**Table 1**

**Correlation matrix: showing the correlation between Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem with Imposter Phenomenon**

| Variable            | Imposter Phenomenon | Self-Concept | Social Support | Self-Esteem |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| Imposter Phenomenon | 1.00                | 0.24**       | 0.16**         | 0.19**      |
| Self-Concept        |                     | 1.00         | 0.13*          | 0.08        |
| Social Support      |                     |              | 1.00           | 0.05        |
| Self-Esteem         |                     |              |                | 1.00        |

\* Significant at 0.05 level

Table Values- (0.05 Level = 0.11)

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

(0.01 Level = 0.14)

- **Correlation between Self-Concept and Imposter Phenomenon**

Table 1 shows that correlation between Imposter Phenomenon and Self-Concept is +0.24, which is positive as well as significant at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, it is said that Self-Concept is positively and significantly related to Imposter Phenomenon.

- **Correlation between Social Support and Imposter Phenomenon**

Table 1 reveals that correlation between Imposter Phenomenon and Social Support is +0.16, which is both positive and significant at 0.01 level of significance. This means that Social Support is positively and significantly related with Imposter Phenomenon.

- **Correlation between Self-Esteem and Imposter Phenomenon**

Table 1 shows that correlation between Imposter Phenomenon and Self-Esteem is +0.19, which is both positive and significant at 0.01 level of significance. Thus from the above analysis it can be said that Self-Esteem has positive and significant relationship with Imposter Phenomenon.

- **Correlation between Self-Concept and Social Support**

Table 1 indicates that correlation between Self-Concept and Social Support is +0.13, which is positive and significant at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is significant positive relationship between Self-Concept and Social Support.

- **Correlation between Self-Concept and Self-Esteem**

Table 1 further reveals that correlation between Self-Concept and Self-Esteem is +0.08, which is positive, but not significant even at 0.05 level of significance. Thus it may be inferred that there is a positive, but non-significant relationship between Self-Concept and Self-Esteem.

- **Correlation between Social Support and Self-Esteem**

Table 1 further shows that correlation between Social Support and Self-Esteem is +0.05, which is positive, but not significant at 0.05 level of significance. From this it may be stated that there is positive non-significant relationship between Social Support and Self-Esteem.

From the above analysis it may be interpreted that the hypothesis number 1 i.e. "there will be no significant relationship between Imposter Phenomenon with Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University" was rejected.

To identify Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem as the predictors of Imposter Phenomenon among the students of Himachal Pradesh University, the stepwise multiple regression was used. The results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of Imposter Phenomenon as criterion variable and predictor variables namely Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem are provided as under:

## Stepwise Regression Analysis between Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem and Imposter Phenomenon among Science Students

Table 2 shows the results of Imposter Phenomenon being predicted by Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem among science students.

Table 2

### Stepwise Regression Analysis: Predictors of Imposter Phenomenon among Science Students (N = 320)

| Variables      | Order of Entry | r    | Regression Coefficient | Beta Weight ( $\beta$ ) | t      | R <sup>2</sup> | R <sup>2</sup> Change | F       |
|----------------|----------------|------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------|----------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Self-Concept   | 1              | 0.24 | 0.24                   | 0.24                    | 4.44** | 0.06           | 0.06                  | 19.70** |
| Social Support | 2              | 0.16 | 0.30                   | 0.13                    | 2.38*  | 0.09           | 0.03                  | 11.09** |
| Self-Esteem    | 3              | 0.19 | 0.33                   | 0.18                    | 3.33** | 0.11           | 0.02                  | 5.68*   |

\*Significant at .05 level Table value(t):- 0.05 level = 1.97 Table value (F) :- 0.05 level = 3.87

\*\*Significant at .01 level 0.01 level = 2.59 0.01 level = 6.72

Among the predictors of Imposter Phenomenon, Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem contributed significantly. Table 2 depicts that in the order of entry, Self-Concept was entered first and explained the highest variance of 6 percent in Imposter Phenomenon with R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> change = 0.06, Beta weight = 0.24 and F-ratio being 19.70 which is significant at 0.01 level. The t-value that gives the significance level for regression coefficient (0.24) is 4.44 which is significant at 0.01 level for Self-Concept.

With the addition of the next variable i.e. Social support the R<sup>2</sup> increased to 0.09. The R<sup>2</sup> change is 0.03 explaining 3 percent of variance in Imposter Phenomenon with Beta weight = 0.13 and F-ratio being 11.09 which is significant at 0.01 level. The t-value (significance level for regression coefficient) for Social Support is 2.38, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Both of these predictor variables i.e. Self-Concept and Social Support taken together have explained 9 percent of Imposter Phenomenon.

Further, Self-Esteem contributes 2 percent of variance in Imposter Phenomenon. The R<sup>2</sup> has increased to 0.11 and R<sup>2</sup> change is found to be 0.02. The F-ratio showing the significance level of R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> change is 5.68 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The Beta weight is found to be 0.18 and the t-value that gives the significance level for regression coefficient is 3.33 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

From the above analysis it may be inferred that:

- There is a significant relationship between the Imposter Phenomenon with the Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University.
- Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem as predictor variables contribute eleven percent of variance in Imposter Phenomenon among science students of Himachal Pradesh University. However, Self-Concept alone contributed Six percent of variance, three percent of variance by Social Support and remaining two percent of variance by Self-Esteem.
- Self-Concept is the best predictor of Imposter Phenomenon as compared to Social Support and Self-Esteem among university science students.

Hence the hypothesis number 2 “Self-Concept, Social Support and Self-Esteem have no significant role in predicting the Imposter Phenomenon among the science students of Himachal Pradesh University” was rejected.

## REFERENCES:

1. Basaknejad, Soudabeh, Mehrabizadeh, Honarmand (2005). Studying the simple and multiple relationships of fear of success, self-esteem, perfectionism and fear of negative evaluation and imposter syndromes among graduate students of Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz. *Journal of educational sciences and psychology*, 12, (3).
2. Cusack, C. E., Hughes, J. L., and Nuhu, N. (2013). Connecting gender and mental health to imposter phenomenon feelings. *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*, 18 (2), 74-81.
3. Clance, P.R., and Imes, S.A. (1978). The impostor phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 15(3), 241-247.
4. Clance, P.R. (1985). *The impostor phenomenon: Overcoming the fear that haunts your success*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree.
5. Clance, P. R., and O'Toole, M.A. (1988). The impostor phenomenon. *Women & Therapy*, 6(3), 51-64.
6. Clance, P. R., Dingman, D., Reviere, S. L., and Stober, D. R. (1995). Impostor phenomenon in an interpersonal/social context: Origins and treatment. *Women & Therapy*, 16(4), 79-96.