

# **Imposter Phenomenon and Its Association with Self Efficacy and Perfectionism Among High-Achieving Aspirants**

**Ms. R. Rajaswathy<sup>1</sup>, Ms. S. Dhatchayani Devi<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department Of Psychology, Rathinam College Of Arts And Science, Coimbatore- 642 021, Tamil Nadu, India.

<sup>2</sup>Postgraduate Student In Applied Psychology, Department Of Psychology, Rathinam College Of Arts And Science, Coimbatore- 642021, Tamil Nadu, India.

## **Abstract**

This Research Work Attempts To Unravel The Complicated Interrelation Of The Impostor Phenomenon (Ip), Self-Efficacy, And Perfectionism In High-Achieving Aspirants. Through A Sample Of 150 Individuals Acknowledged For Their Academic Or Professional Excellence, The Research Utilizes Three Well-Known Psychometric Instruments: The Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (Cips), The General Self-Efficacy Scale, And The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Fmps). The Process Of Data Collection Is Meticulous, And The Data Obtained Is Analyzed Using Spss. The Results To Be Discovered Point To A Situation Where The Feeling Of Being An Impostor To A Great Extent Is Accompanied By Low Self-Efficacy And High Perfectionistic Tendencies, Thus Uncovering Significant Psychological Patterns Of People Who Are Striving For Success At The Top Level. The Present Study Intends To Equip Educators, Counselors, And Organizational Leaders With The Means To Facilitate The Mental Health And Performance Of High-Achieving Individuals. Suggestions For Targeted Interventions Are Supposed To Emerge From The Observed Complex Associations, Thus Making A Contribution To A More Supportive And Understanding Environment For Aspirants At The Summit Of Accomplishment.

## **Introduction**

Highly Driven Individuals Frequently Operate Under Intense Expectations, And These Pressures Can Contribute To Significant Psychological Strain. Among These Is One Of The Most Frequently Encountered—The Impostor Phenomenon (Ip) Referring To A Recurring Sense Of Not Deserving One's Accomplishments, Despite Clear Evidence Of Competence Or Success (Clance & Imes, 1978). This Paper Argues That The Aspiring Stage Is The Most Sensitive To The Negative Interaction Between Ip, Self-Efficacy, And Perfectionism, Contrary To The Common Belief That High Achievement Automatically Leads To Confidence And Capability. To Be More Accurate, Ip Is Not An Independent Factor; Its Extremity Is Affected By A Person's Self-Efficacy (The Faith In One's Success) And Is Often Strengthened By Particular Aspects Of Perfectionism. Most Current Studies Treat These Issues As Separate Ones And Often Only Focus On People Who Are Already Established High Achievers. Therefore, This Conceptual

Paper Aims At Developing A Single Model That Explains The Complex, Predictive, And Possibly Cyclical Relationships Between The Three Factors In The Context Of High-Achieving Aspirants, A Context That Is Not Only Crucial But Also Largely Overlooked By Existing Studies. The Following Parts Will Review The Relevant Theories, Point To The Existing Conceptual Gaps, And Propose A New Model That Is Supposed To Advance Both Scientific Theory And Practical Interventions.

### **Background And Conceptual Framework**

The Necessity For This Conceptual Research Is Determined By The Unique Psychological Features Of High Achievers. The Characteristics Of This Group, Which Usually Involve A Heavy Orientation Towards Future Achievements And A Strong Dependence On The Approval Of Others, Can Paradoxically Lead Not Only To Great Success But Also To Self-Doubt. The Pressure-Filled Environment, An Inevitable Companion Of The Pursuit Of Top Elite Positions, Results In The Development Of A Form Of Perfectionism In Which Individuals Focus More On Preventing Mistakes Than On Developing Their Abilities, Often Making Achievement Feel Contingent On Flawlessness (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). When These Perfectionistic Demands Are Inevitably Challenged, The Person Experiences The Impostor Phenomenon (Ip), Seeing Their Current Achievements As Fraudulent Or Attributing Them To Luck. This, In Turn, Leads To Self-Efficacy Depletion.

So Far, Existing Models Have Not Fully Explained This Path To Vulnerability, A Pattern Through Which Rigid, Self-Imposed Expectations Create Vulnerability To Impostor-Related Thoughts, Which Subsequently Undermine One's Confidence In Handling Future Tasks. Understanding This Particular Chain Of Events Is Crucial For The Development Of Targeted Interventions That Would Address The Root Causes Of Psychological Distress In This Group Instead Of Merely Dealing With The Symptoms.

### **Review Of Literature**

**Alderton Et Al. (2024)** Studied Dental Hygiene Students And Found That The Core Element Of The Impostor Phenomenon, The Feeling Of Inadequacy, Was More Closely Related To An Increase In Students' Stress Level Than To Their Perfectionist Behavior. The Authors Suggested That Recognition Of Students' Achievements Could Alleviate Stress And Increase Academic Self-Efficacy.

**Chatterjee (2024)** Focused On Imposter Syndrome, Self-Efficacy, And Success-Related Behavior, Demonstrating That Individuals Who Feel Like Impostors Often Question Their Abilities. The Research Highlighted The Key Role Of Self-Efficacy In Mediating How Individuals Perceive Their Skills And Manage Imposter Thoughts, Hypothesizing That Imposter Syndrome Acts As A Barrier To Essential Success Behaviors (E.G., Persistence, Risk-Taking).

**Grubb And Grubb (2021)** Analyzed College Students And Revealed That A Strong Ethical Climate Intensified The Correlation Between Imposter Feelings And Perfectionistic Traits, Especially The Fear Of Making Mistakes. This Suggests That The Organizational Context Can Significantly Impact The Experience Of The Impostor Phenomenon.

**Kumar And Jagacinski (2006)** Examined College Students And Found That Imposter Fears Were Accompanied By Test Anxiety And A Lack Of Confidence. The Study Also Identified Gender-Based Differences, Noting That In Women, These Fears Were Linked To Seeking Ability Based Success And A Fixed View Of Intelligence, Whereas In Men, They Led To The Avoidance Of Challenges.

**Lee Et Al. (2021)** Explored Academically Gifted Undergraduates In Competitive Honors Programs, Finding They Were More Likely To Report Imposter Experiences Due To Socially Prescribed Perfectionism (The Feeling That Others Expect One To Be Perfect). The Study Positioned Perceived External Pressure As A Significant Determinant Of Higher Imposter Scores.

**Maji Et Al. (2025)** Studied High-Achieving Engineering Students And Found That Social Comparisons Related To Ability Significantly Mediated The Harmful Effects Of Imposter Feelings On Mental Health. This Points To The Necessity Of Interventions Focused On Competitive Academic Environments.

**Raoo (2023)** Investigated First-Year Engineering Students And Found That Imposter Feelings Were Positively And Significantly Correlated With Both Self-Oriented And Socially Prescribed Perfectionism. This Denotes That Internal Pressures As Well As Perceived External Expectations Stimulate Imposterism.

**Sheveleva Et Al. (2024)** Supported Previous Findings, Showing That Lower Self-Esteem And Certain Personality Traits Were Related To Stronger Impostor Feelings Among Russian College Students, Suggesting That The Psychological Mechanisms For Impostorism May Transcend Cultural Barriers.

### **Conceptual Framework**

To Address The Issues Found, This Paper Presents A Better Conceptual Model Based On Clear Definitions And Aspects Of Interaction. The Impostor Phenomenon Is Described As A Lasting Feeling Of Being A Fraud Intellectually, Along With Not Accepting One's Own Success. Self-Efficacy Is The Belief That Someone Can Do What Is Needed To Achieve A Goal In A Particular Situation. The Key Part Of This Model Is Maladaptive Perfectionism, Especially The Anxiety Caused By High, Unrealistic Standards Set By Others. We Suggest That Maladaptive Perfectionism Is A Major Reason For The Appearance And Strength Of The Impostor Phenomenon, Which Then Lowers Self-Efficacy. This Drop Acts As A Way The Person Becomes Vulnerable: As Self-Efficacy Decreases, The Person Feels Less Ready To Face New Challenges, Leading To More Self-Doubt And Continuing The Cycle Of Feeling Like An Impostor. The Conceptual Model Shows This Ongoing Interaction Visually, Showing That Self-Efficacy Is Not Only Connected To The Impostor Phenomenon But Also Might Help Explain How Perfectionism Affects The Intensity Of The Impostor Phenomenon, Offering A Key Point For Creating Interventions.

### **Implications**

The Model Has Big Importance In Many Areas. From An Academic Point Of View, It Changes How We See The Impostor Phenomenon From Being Just A Psychological Trait To A More Dynamic Process That Is Influenced By Mental Resources Like Self-Efficacy And Coping Strategies Like Perfectionism. This Gives A Clearer Understanding Of The Basic Processes That Make People Vulnerable To The Impostor Phenomenon. In Practice, The Model Shows That Helping High-Achievers Should Go Beyond Just Dealing With Feelings Of Being An Impostor; It Should Also Focus On Changing Unhealthy Parts Of Perfectionism And, Importantly, Build Specific Self-Efficacy Through Real Experiences Rather Than Just General Confidence. For Future Research, The Model Provides Testable Ideas, Especially The Need For Long-Term Studies To Check If Self-Efficacy Actually Mediates The Effect Of Perfectionism On The Impostor Phenomenon And The Direction Of The Relationships Among These Three Factors In High-Achieving Groups.

## Conclusion

To Sum Up, This Paper Suggests Looking At The Impostor Phenomenon From A More Connected Point Of View, Especially For High-Achievers, And How It Links With Self-Efficacy And Perfectionism. We Introduced A Model That Shows How Self-Efficacy Drops Both Because Of And Because Of The Connection Between The Impostor Phenomenon And Perfectionism. This Model Helps Improve Our Understanding Of Academic Theories And Guides Better Psychological Treatments. In The Long Run, Reducing The Stress From The Impostor Phenomenon Needs A Full Plan That Addresses The Unrealistic Demands Of Perfectionism And Builds Up The Belief That People Can Succeed.

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