

Perceived parenting and imposter phenomenon among college students

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Abstract

The impostor phenomenon is characterized by an individual's feelings of phoniness regarding their accomplishments and an inability to internalize success. Perceived parenting style refers to the parenting approach that adolescents or children believe they received from their parents during childhood or adolescence. The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of perceived parenting style on the impostor phenomenon among college students. This quantitative study involved 189 participants, comprising both male and female college students aged 18 to 23. A random sampling method was employed for data collection. Pearson's product-moment correlation test was utilized to analyze the collected data. The instruments used in this study were Dr. Pauline Rose Clance's Impostor Phenomenon Scale and Manikandan K's Parenting Style Scale (2013). The results indicated that there is no significant relationship between perceived parenting style and the impostor phenomenon among college students.

Keywords: Perceived parenting style; Imposter phenomenon; College students; Phoniness; Accomplishment

1. Introduction

The imposter phenomenon (IP) is a psychological state in which people feel like frauds despite their accomplishments because they believe they are less clever, inexperienced, unable, or incompetent (Clance & Imes, 1978; Hawley & Paul, 2019). Sightler and Wilson (2001) claim that IP is a pervasive disorder in which people feel dishonest about their achievements and think they are not intelligent or deserving of their success. Basically, impostorism is the purposeful or inadvertent deceiving of others into believing that one is extremely successful or intelligent, which frequently results in sentiments of being an intellectual impostor or fraud (Leary et al., 2000).

According to Hawley and Paul (2019), IP is a phenomenon where people undervalue their own skills and abilities. According to Wulandari and Tjundjing (2007), intellectual property can impede people's ability to reach their full potential and maximize their performance. Because of their strong drive to succeed and stand out, people who experience this phenomenon frequently create irrational expectations for themselves (Sakulku & Alexander, 2011).

IP can have a substantial impact on a person's psychological health, affecting aspects of their life like job, education, relationships with others, and self-actualization, although not being categorized as a mental illness (Dudău, 2014). Anxiety is a common problem for people with IP, making it hard for them to uphold high standards for themselves. It's interesting to note that whilst sentiments of fraudulence typically lower academic production, moderate to high degrees of impostor feelings can actually increase output when paired with strong research self-efficacy (Wester et al., 2020).

According to Bernard et al. (2002), people with IP frequently feel anxious in a variety of circumstances. According to a study by Topping (quoted by Tangford & Clance, 1993), anxiety and the imposter phenomenon are positively correlated.

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According to Farrer et al. (2016), students who struggle with learning, procrastinate, lack confidence, experience excessive pressure to perform, or have poor time management skills are more likely to acquire generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).

For most parents, being a parent is both a wonderful and difficult experience. Their main objective is to help their kids become the best versions of themselves, which frequently results in a variety of parenting approaches. While some parents may take a more detached approach, avoiding emotional contact and having few or no expectations for their kids, others may show their kids too much love and care.

According to research by Yaffe (2021), students' social anxiety and emotions of imposter syndrome are indirectly influenced by perceived parental care, especially for mothers and fathers. Furthermore, it was discovered that, through the mediation of social anxiety, students' imposter displays were associated with perceived parental protection.

1.1. Types of parenting styles:

- **Authoritative.** An authoritative parenting style creates a predictable, safe, and secure atmosphere by setting clear norms and expectations, building a strong emotional attachment, and attentively attending to their child's needs. These environments tend to produce grounded, self-assured, and independent children. While expressive suppression has not been linked to authoritative parenting, prosocial conduct and cognitive reappraisal have (Kang & Guo, 2022).
- **Authoritarian.** Children of strict, authoritarian parents may experience mental health issues as a result of their parents' constant criticism and inflated expectations. Although there may be negative consequences to this parenting approach, such children may grow up to be aggressive, have trouble setting limits, or achieve intellectual success. Research has demonstrated that parental warmth has a greater positive effect, even among aggressive kids, than prior findings that suggest parental strictness favors aggressive adolescents (Perez, 2020).
- **Permissive.** Parents that use the "free-range" parenting style are typically careless and unfocused because they are worried about being too indulgent. Permissive parents may ignore their child's true needs in their pursuit of independence. This approach may work well for kids who are more independent, but because there aren't any clear and consistent rules, kids who need more stability, protection, and supervision may feel more anxious and uneasy.
- **Uninvolved.** With an emphasis on the mediating function of parents' memories of their parenting techniques in influencing present impostor behaviors, this study investigates how high school students' experiences of the impostor phenomenon are influenced by perceived parenting practices. In an area that hasn't gotten much empirical research, it seeks to improve knowledge of the psychological elements that mediate the impact of parental characteristics on the impostor phenomenon. This study focuses on high school students instead of college students, who are a demographic that has a high prevalence of the impostor phenomenon (Parkman, 2016).

1.2. Need and significance of the study

This study focuses on college students between the ages of 18 and 24 in order to investigate the connection between perceived parenting methods and the impostor phenomenon.

This demographic is particularly vulnerable to experiencing impostor syndrome, which can adversely affect their mental health, psychological well-being, and overall outlook on life. Maintaining mental health requires a sense of peace, strength, purpose, and control over one's circumstances, all of which contribute to feelings of competence and capability. A positive mindset and sound psychological health are essential for managing life's challenges effectively.

Understanding how the impostor phenomenon influences students' self-efficacy is crucial, as these individuals represent the future foundation of society. This research aims to help students recognize the effects of perceived parenting styles on their experiences and encourage them to take proactive steps to alleviate these impacts, ultimately leading to more fulfilling lives.

2. Method

2.1. Objectives

- To find the relationship between authoritative parenting style and impostor phenomenon among college students.

- To find the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and imposter phenomenon among college students.
- To find the relationship between permissive parenting style and imposter phenomenon among college students.

2.2. Hypothesis

- Ho: There is no significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and imposter phenomenon among college students.
- H1: There is significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and imposter phenomenon among college students.
- Ho2: There is no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and imposter phenomenon among college students.
- H2: There is significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and imposter phenomenon among college students.
- Ho3: There is no significant relationship between permissive parenting style and imposter phenomenon among college students.
- H3: There is significant relationship between permissive parenting style and imposter phenomenon among college students.

2.3. Research Design

In order to fulfil the requirement of current empirical research work correlational research design was followed.

2.4. Participants

In this study, 189 undergraduate students from the Kerala district who were enrolled in ordinary colleges participated. Purposive sampling techniques were used to choose these participants. The pupils range in age from 18 to 23 years old. Potential participants were chosen based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to guarantee a uniform and homogeneous sample. This age group is particularly significant since it is associated with emotions of inadequacy and self-doubt, which are frequently connected to the imposter phenomenon. It is essential to comprehend these connections in order to create assistance plans that work for students who are struggling.

2.5. Sample

Sample size was be 189 college students, all of Indian nationality. Convenience sampling was used.

2.5.1. Inclusion Criteria and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- Students with age level 18 to 23 years
- Regular students or the students not attending distant education
- Students residing in Kerala

Exclusion Criteria

- Distant education or open education students
- Part-time job students
- Samples of abnormality were excluded.

2.6. Tool Description

This study utilized questionnaire measures to collect data. Specifically, it employed established instruments with proven reliability and validity to assess perceived parenting style and the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale. The sociodemographic profiles of the subjects were also gathered using a personal data sheet.

2.6.1. Personal data sheet

The personal data sheet, designed by the researcher, collected essential socio-demographic information from participants. This included details such as name, age, gender, educational background, and place of residence.

- Perceived Parenting Style: The three dimensions of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles were assessed using the Perceived Parenting Style Scale, which was created by Divya and Manikandan (2013). A five-point Likert scale is used to measure answers to the 30 items on this scale. This scale has a stated reliability of 0.86.
- Clance IP Scale: Clance developed the Clance imposter Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) in 1985 to measure the imposter phenomenon, which is the perception that people who seem capable to others may not consider themselves successful. This scale assesses how much an individual's life is impacted by the imposter phenomenon. High consistency is indicated by the CIPS's reported reliability of 0.92. Higher scores on this scale indicate that the imposter phenomenon interferes with a person's life more frequently and significantly.

2.7. Procedure

Participants were selected based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. They were provided with a Google Form that contained an overview of the study's purpose, a personal data sheet, and the relevant questionnaires. Participants were encouraged to take their time while completing the questionnaires. The sample comprised students aged 18 to 23 years.

2.8. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using various statistical tests. The analysis focused on the Perceived Parenting Scale and the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale. Pearson's product-moment correlation was employed to investigate the relationships between different parenting styles—authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive—and the impostor phenomenon. This analysis aimed to uncover how these parenting styles correlate with impostor feelings among college students.

3. Results and Discussion

This study's main objective was to evaluate how perceived parental practices affected college students' imposter syndrome. 189 participants, including both male and female students, were given standardized psychometric assessments pertaining to perceived parenting styles and the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale in order to accomplish this goal. After calculating descriptive statistics from the data gathered, independent sample correlation analyses were performed. The tables below show the findings.

Table 1 Summary of descriptive statistics of authoritative parenting style and imposter phenomenon

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Authoritative parenting style	35.22	6.968	189
Imposter phenomenon	60.37	10.429	189

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for authoritative parenting style and the impostor phenomenon. The sample consisted of 189 respondents, representing a diverse group of regular college students from Kerala. The mean score for authoritative parenting style was found to be 35.22, with a standard deviation of 6.968. In contrast, the mean score for the impostor phenomenon was 60.37, accompanied by a standard deviation of 10.429.

3.1. Statistical Analysis and Discussion

Table 2 Summary of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Test

		Authoritative	Imposter phenomenon
Authoritative	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.020
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.878
	N	189	189
Imposter phenomenon	Pearson Correlation	-0.020	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.878	
	N	189	189

The statistical analysis results will be discussed in detail below, highlighting the implications of these findings in relation to the perceived parenting styles and their influence on the impostor phenomenon among college students.

An overview of the findings from the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test, which looked at the connection between college students' imposter syndrome and authoritative parenting, is given in this section.

For the research sample (N=189), the correlation between authoritative parenting style (M = 35.22, SD = 6.968) and the impostor phenomenon (M = 60.37, SD = 10.429) was calculated to be -0.020, which is considered negligible. This suggests that there is no significant correlation between authoritative parenting style and the impostor phenomenon among college students in Kerala. Given that -0.020 is a negligible value ($p \sim 0$), the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the results indicate that the data collected do not reveal a significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and the impostor phenomenon among college students in Kerala.

3.2. Results of Analysis of Descriptive Statistics for Authoritarian Parenting Style and Impostor Phenomenon

Table 3 Summary of the descriptive statistics for authoritarian parenting style and the impostor phenomenon

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Authoritarian parenting style	26.05	6.276	189
Imposter phenomenon	60.37	10.429	189

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for authoritarian parenting style and the impostor phenomenon. The sample consisted of 189 respondents, representing a diverse group of regular college students from Kerala. The mean score for authoritarian parenting style was 26.05, with a standard deviation of 6.276. In comparison, the mean score for the impostor phenomenon was 60.37, with a standard deviation of 10.429.

Table 4 Summary of the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test for authoritarian parenting style and the impostor phenomenon among college students.

		Authoritarian	Imposter phenomenon
Authoritarian	Pearson Correlation	1	0.205
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.119
	N	189	189
Imposter phenomenon	Pearson Correlation	-0.205	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.119	
	N	189	189

For the research sample (N=189), the correlation between authoritarian parenting style (M = 26.05, SD = 6.276) and the impostor phenomenon (M = 60.37, SD = 10.429) was calculated to be -0.205, which is considered negligible. This suggests that there is no significant correlation between authoritarian parenting style and the impostor phenomenon among college students in Kerala. Given that -0.205 is regarded as a negligible value ($p \sim 0$), the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, the results indicate that the data collected do not reveal a significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and the impostor phenomenon among college students in Kerala.

3.3. Results of Analysis of Descriptive Statistics for Permissive Parenting Style and Impostor Phenomenon

The following table presents the descriptive statistics for permissive parenting style and the impostor phenomenon.

Table 5 Summary of descriptive statistics for permissive parenting style and the impostor phenomenon

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Permissive parenting style	22.32	7.293	189
Imposter phenomenon	60.37	10.429	189

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for permissive parenting style and the impostor phenomenon. The sample consisted of 189 respondents, representing a diverse group of regular college students from Kerala. The mean score for permissive parenting style was 22.32, with a standard deviation of 7.293. In comparison, the mean score for the impostor phenomenon was 60.37, with a standard deviation of 10.429.

Table 6 Summary of the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test for permissive parenting style and the impostor phenomenon among college students

		Permissive	Imposter phenomenon
Permissive	Pearson Correlation	1	0.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.521
	N	189	189
Imposter phenomenon	Pearson Correlation	0.085	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.521	
	N	189	189

For the research sample (N=189), the correlation between permissive parenting style (M = 22.32, SD = 7.293) and the impostor phenomenon (M = 60.37, SD = 10.429) was determined to be 0.085, which is considered negligible. This suggests that there is no significant correlation between permissive parenting style and the impostor phenomenon among college students in Kerala. Since 0.085 is regarded as a negligible value ($p \sim 0$), the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the results indicate that the data collected do not reveal a significant relationship between permissive parenting style and the impostor phenomenon among college students in Kerala.

Significant findings

The objective of this study was to explore how Keralan college students' perceptions of parenting styles relate to the impostor phenomenon. The Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale and the Perceived Parenting Scale were administered to 189 literate participants aged 18 to 23. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized to analyze the data.

The first hypothesis states that there is no significant correlation between authoritative parenting and the impostor phenomenon. This hypothesis was rejected since the results showed no link between these two variables. Likewise, the second theory, which suggested no link between authoritarian parenting and the impostor phenomenon, was likewise shown to be false. The final hypothesis, which concluded that there would be no meaningful connection between the impostor phenomenon and lax parenting practices, was also disproved.

4. Conclusion

The imposter phenomenon and perceived parenting style among college students did not significantly correlate, according to the study. Children who thought their parents were indulgent, dictatorial, or authoritative were less likely to suffer from the imposter syndrome. Parents, teachers, mental health professionals, and students should all take note of the findings, which emphasize the importance of treatments that support mental health, academic achievement, and self-worth. The study's correlational approach, which cannot prove causation, and its small sample size are among its drawbacks. A longitudinal study in the future might overcome these drawbacks and improve the findings' generalizability.

4.1. Implications of the study

Parenting practices have a big impact on how people view themselves as adults. When working with college students, parents, teachers, and mental health specialists should understand the significance of parenting style and how it relates to the imposter problem. Imposter syndrome can be avoided and healthy mental health outcomes can be encouraged with the assistance of mental health professionals. For college students to succeed, it is essential to comprehend the impact of perceived parenting approaches. The study emphasizes how critical it is to understand how parental behaviors affect adolescents' academic and personal success. To better assist children, educators and mental health specialists need to pinpoint the causes of the imposter phenomenon. All things considered, the study has significant ramifications for college students, parents, teachers, and mental health professionals. They can create interventions to

enhance college students' self-esteem, academic achievement, and mental health outcomes by comprehending the impact of parenting methods.

4.2. Limitations

The results of the current study cannot be generalised because they may have been influenced by sampling error as a result of a sample that was not fully representative of the population. The study was exclusively conducted on residents of Kerala. In addition, the small sample size demonstrates the study's constrained scope. The study solely included regular college students in Kerala. Atypical samples were excluded. Students working part-time and those pursuing distance education were not taken into account.

4.3. Recommendations for Future Research

For the upcoming studies it would be desirable to take into account a larger population that covers more geographical locations for a more generalised outcome. A comparative study among different genders or any other community classification could also be considered, with learning impairments, ADHD, and other abnormalities, as well as those who may have experienced trauma or abuse, can be considered. Students of the age below 18 can also be studied as it the time period where most of the children goes through imposter studies can be done among twins also. Furthermore, students working part-time and pursuing distant education can be included. It can also take into account the classifications of married, unmarried, divorced, and widowed people. Students could be used as the population since they are the easiest group for the changes to be executed in.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

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Statement of informed consent

Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose and procedures, with guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

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