



A Study to Assess Impact of Imposter Syndrome on Self Esteem of Young Adults

¹**Srishti Rai**, *Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University Noida, Uttar Pradesh (AUUP), India*
srishti02rai@gmail.com

²**Dr. Annie Khanam Singh**, *Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University Noida, Uttar Pradesh (AUUP), India*
aksingh16@amity.edu

Abstract: The existing study examined the connection among imposter syndrome and self-esteem among young adults. Imposter syndrome is characterized with the aid of persistent self-doubt and problem internalizing achievement, while self-esteem reflects a character's standard sense of self-worth. A quantitative correlational study design was employed with a sample of a hundred and forty young adults aged 18–30 years from the Delhi NCR area, selected through purposive sampling. statistics have been amassed the usage of the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Descriptive records indicated moderate stages of imposter syndrome and self-esteem among participants. Pearson's correlation evaluation found out a substantial negative relation between imposter syndrome and self-esteem ($r = -.569$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher imposter feelings are related to lower self-esteem. The findings spotlight the mental relevance of imposter syndrome in young adulthood and its effect on self-evaluative procedures. The study contributes to restricted studies within the Indian context and emphasizes the want for consciousness and interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem and lowering imposter emotions among teenagers.

Keywords: *Imposter Syndrome, Self-Esteem, Young Adults, Psychological Health*

1. Introduction

Young maturity is a formative developmental stage marked via transitions in education, career, relationships, and identity. for the duration of this period, people revel in extended obligation and common self-evaluation, making them psychologically prone (Arnett, 2014). research shows rising degrees of stress, tension, and melancholy among young humans, highlighting developing concerns approximately mental fitness on this age group (Brody et al., 2024; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2025).

This degree is often characterized by educational competition, career uncertainty, monetary stress, and the want to show oneself, all of which make a contribution to emotional stress. research continuously show a hyperlink among academic pressure and reduced mental wellbeing amongst students (Barbayannis et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2023). on the same time, young adulthood also represents a length of boom and opportunity, with studies for the duration of this phase shaping lengthy-time period intellectual fitness trajectories (Copeland et al., 2025). Proof from India displays comparable styles, with research reporting vast ranges of strain, anxiety, and depression among university students (Sarkar et al., 2017). overall, younger adulthood is a essential period marked via heightened self-scrutiny, social evaluation, and stress to succeed. inside this context, know-how mental methods which includes self-esteem and imposter syndrome is essential, as they impact how individuals understand themselves and manage emotional challenges.

Self-esteem refers to an person's ordinary sense of self-worth and competence. it's far an extraordinarily strong mental assemble that affects emotional health, resilience, and coping (Orth & Robins, 2014). for the duration of younger maturity, self-esteem performs a crucial function in identity formation and adjustment to life challenges.

High self-esteem is related to confidence, powerful coping, and an advantageous outlook, while low self-esteem is related to pressure, anxiety, and self-doubt (Mann et al., 2017). studies suggests that self-esteem maintains to broaden at some point of younger maturity and is fashioned by means of achievements, social comparison, and perceived competence (Orth et al., 2018).

In the Indian context, instructional strain and societal expectancies significantly have an effect on self-esteem. research suggest that lower self-esteem is regularly associated with pressure and emotional difficulties amongst college students (Kumar & Dixit, 2014; Deb et al., 2015).

Imposter syndrome refers to chronic feelings of self-doubt and perceived fraudulence irrespective of intention success (Bravata et al., 2020). people experiencing it often attribute

success to outside elements including good fortune whilst internalizing failure, important to a cycle of self-doubt.

This phenomenon is specifically not unusual in younger maturity because of immoderate expectancies, transitions, and social evaluation. It has been linked to tension, melancholy, and decreased self-notion (Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch, 2016). Present day research spotlight its prevalence amongst university students and its affiliation with perfectionism and mental misery (Hill et al., 2025; El-Setouhy et al., 2024). Indian studies additionally indicates comparable trends, with imposter emotions associated with lower self-esteem and elevated strain amongst students (Sawant et al., 2023; Naser et al., 2022). Research always demonstrates a negative dating among imposter syndrome and self-esteem. People with robust imposter emotions generally tend to enjoy lower self-worth and more self-doubt (Naser et al., 2022; El-Setouhy et al., 2024).

This dating may be explained through maladaptive attribution styles fulfilment is attributed to outside elements, at the same time as failure is internalized—preventing the development of strong self-esteem (Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch, 2016). Factors which includes perfectionism and fear of negative evaluation in addition reinforce this hyperlink (Hill et al., 2025). Conversely, higher self-esteem acts as a protective issue, lowering the intensity of imposter emotions and enhancing mental resilience (Orth & Robins, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2019).

1.1 Need for the Present Study

Regardless of growing studies, maximum research on imposter syndrome and self-esteem recognition on Western populations or specific expert companies consisting of scientific college students. Constrained studies has tested this relationship among fashionable teenagers, especially inside the Indian context.

In India, elements together with instructional pressure, own family expectations, and social comparison might also uniquely affect self-belief and psychological well-being. Current studies propose a terrible affiliation between imposter syndrome and self-esteem, however broader and more inclusive studies is wanted (Naser et al., 2022; Sawant et al., 2023). Therefore, the prevailing observe ambitions to observe the connection among imposter syndrome and self-esteem amongst young adults, addressing present gaps and contributing to a higher knowledge of mental health in this populace.

1.2 Research Gap

Current research mainly focuses on precise groups inclusive of clinical or professional students, with restrained attention to preferred younger person populations. In India, studies

continue to be constrained and regularly forget broader socio-cultural influences. There may be a need for research analysing the connection among imposter syndrome and self-esteem amongst various teens throughout specific backgrounds, as cultural factors consisting of social evaluation, family expectancies, and academic strain may also play a giant role.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

A quantitative, correlational design changed into used to examine the connection among imposter syndrome and self-esteem. This non-experimental technique allowed size of variables and evaluation of their association with out manipulation.

2.2 Variables of the Study

Independent Variable: Imposter Syndrome

Dependent Variable: Self-Esteem

2.3 Operational Definitions

Imposter syndrome refers to persistent self-doubt and trouble internalizing success, measured using the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS). Self-esteem refers to an individual's average sense of self-worth, measured the usage of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES).

2.4 Population of the Study

The study targeted on teens elderly 18–30 years from the Delhi NCR location.

2.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample consisted of one hundred forty individuals selected the usage of purposive sampling.

2.6 Inclusion Criteria

- Teenagers aged 18–30 years
- Individuals capable of recognise English
- Students and working teens
- Members inclined to provide informed consent

2.7 Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals below 18 or above 30 years
- Incomplete responses
- Unwilling participants

2.8 Tools and Instruments

Data were collected using standardized scales:

Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS): A 20-item scale measuring imposter experiences (scores range 20–100).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): A 10-item scale measuring global self-esteem (scores range 10–40).

2.9 Procedure of Data Collection

Contributors had been approached in educational and public settings in Delhi NCR. After informed consent, they completed a questionnaire together with demographic details, CIPS, and RSES. Responses had been amassed right now to ensure completeness.

2.10 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, confidentiality and anonymity have been maintained, and members could withdraw at any time.

2.11 Statistical Analysis

The results were analysed the usage of SPSS. Descriptive facts and Pearson's correlation were used, with significance set at $p < .05$.

3. Results

3.1 Data Screening and Preparation

A complete of 140 responses had been amassed and screened for completeness. No incomplete facts have been located. ratings have been computed as in keeping with standard guidelines, along with reverse scoring for RSES, and analysed using SPSS.

3.2 Demographic Characteristics

The sample consisted of one hundred forty teenagers aged 18–30 years from Delhi NCR and was treated as a single analytical organization.

3.3 Descriptive Statistics

The imply imposter syndrome rating changed into 63.40 (SD = 14.64), indicating slight to high ranges. The imply self-esteem score was 27.59 (SD = 5.10), indicating mild tiers. Table 1 offers the descriptive records for the observed variables.

Table 1: *Descriptive statistics*

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Imposter Syndrome Score	140	25	100	63.40	14.635
Self-Esteem Score	140	10	39	27.59	5.100
Valid N (listwise)	140				

3.4 Inferential Analysis

Pearson's correlation discovered a substantial negative relation among imposter syndrome and self-esteem, $r(138) = -.569$, $p < .001$, indicating that higher imposter emotions are associated with lower self-esteem.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between Imposter Syndrome and Self-Esteem

Correlations

		Imposter Syndrome Score	Self-Esteem Score
Imposter Syndrome Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	140	140
Self-Esteem Score	Pearson Correlation	-.569**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	140	140

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.5 Summary of Findings

The findings suggest strong relationship of imposter syndrome and self-esteem, with a significant negative correlation among the 2 variables, supporting the hypothesis.

4. Discussion

The take a look at discovered a strong negative correlation among imposter syndrome and self-esteem, indicating that people with higher imposter emotions generally tend to report lower self-worth.

4.1 Interpretation of Findings

The findings suggest that persistent self-doubt and problem internalising achievement may also weaken self-esteem. people with imposter tendencies regularly attribute achievement to outside factors along with luck while internalising failure, leading to bad self-evaluations. over time, those patterns can also contribute to a faded feel of competence and self-worth. additionally, the developmental context of young maturity, characterised by using identity formation and social comparison, may also further intensify those studies.

4.2 Comparison with Previous Research

The effects are consistent with current literature, which has repeatedly demonstrated an inverse relationship between imposter syndrome and self-esteem throughout populations. previous research also indicate that individuals with more potent imposter feelings experience extra mental distress and decreased confidence. but some variations in findings propose that factors including resilience and environmental influences may additionally have an effect on the strength of this relationship.

4.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings assist cognitive and social assessment perspectives, emphasizing the position of maladaptive self-beliefs and comparison strategies in shaping self-esteem. they also align with developmental theories that highlight younger adulthood as a crucial period for self-idea formation, wherein continual self-doubt can also interfere with the development of a strong identity.

4.4 Limitations of the Study

The take a look at used purposive sampling, which might also limit generalizability. The reliance on self-record measures introduces the possibility of reaction bias. additionally, the multi-sectional design no longer allows for causal interpretations, and other applicable variables consisting of resilience, persona, and environmental elements, have not been tested.

4.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Studies ought to consist of larger and more diverse samples to improve generalizability. Longitudinal studies are needed to observe causal relationships over the years. similarly research has to additionally explore additional variables which include resilience, perfectionism, and social contrast. Intervention-based research focusing on lowering imposter feelings and improving Self-esteem might also be beneficial.

5. Conclusion

The existing study tested the connection between imposter syndrome and self-esteem among young adults and determined a giant bad association between the two variables. individuals with better imposter emotions tended to report decreased stages of self-esteem, indicating that persistent self-doubt and difficulty internalising success can also negatively impact self-worth.

These findings are consistent with present studies and spotlight the importance of self-evaluative processes in expertise mental well-being in the course of young adulthood. The results advise that imposter syndrome isn't merely a transient experience but a significant mental situation that could affect how individuals perceive themselves.

The study also contributes to the constrained body of studies in the Indian context, mainly among general young grown-up populations. standard, the findings emphasise the need for extra cognisance, early identity, and interventions aimed toward decreasing imposter feelings and strengthening self-esteem to aid intellectual fitness and personal development.

References

- Arnett, J. J. (2014). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Barbayannis, G., et al. (2022). Academic stress and mental well-being among university students. *Journal of American College Health*, 70(8), 2309–2317.
- Bravata, D. M., et al. (2020). Prevalence, predictors, and treatment of impostor syndrome: A systematic review. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 35(4), 1252–1275.
- Deb, S., et al. (2015). Academic stress and mental health among Indian students. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 37(3), 247–252.
- El-Setouhy, M., et al. (2024). Imposter syndrome and self-esteem among medical students. *BMC Medical Education*, 24(1), 142.
- Hill, P. L., et al. (2025). Perfectionism and impostor syndrome: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 210, 112–121.
- Kumar, S., & Dixit, V. (2014). Self-esteem among college students in India. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 2(3), 88–96.
- Mann, M., et al. (2017). Self-esteem and mental health outcomes. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 59, 1–12.
- Naser, S., et al. (2022). Impostor phenomenon and self-esteem in students. *Medical Teacher*, 44(3), 301–307.
- Neureiter, M., & Traut-Mattausch, E. (2016). Impostor phenomenon and workplace outcomes. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 821.
- Nguyen, T. T., et al. (2019). Self-esteem and mental health outcomes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 117(5), 1030–1043.
- Orth, U., & Robins, R. W. (2014). The development of self-esteem. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23(5), 381–387.
- Orth, U., et al. (2018). Self-esteem development across the lifespan. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 114(3), 465–482.

- Sarkar, S., et al. (2017). Depression, anxiety, and stress among Indian undergraduate students. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 59(3), 354–359.
- Sawant, N., et al. (2023). Impostor phenomenon among Indian medical students. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 12, 88.
- Tan, J. B., et al. (2023). Mental health challenges among university students: A systematic review. *Psychiatry Research*, 325, 115218.