

Relationship between Imposter Phenomena and Interpersonal Relationship in Corporate Employees

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Imposter Phenomena (IP) is a feeling of self-doubt despite being highly capable and having previous accomplishments. Interpersonal Relationships refer to the shared social interactions that people have with others. To assess the relationship between IP and Interpersonal Relationship in corporate employees. Health care, Finance, IT and Communications employees were selected using purposive sampling technique (N=87). Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale (1985) and FIRO-B (1958) were used to measure IP and Interpersonal relationships respectively. The data was collected between August 2023 and October 2023 using Google Forms. Data were analysed through the Pearson correlation coefficient and t-test. There exists a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.133$) between IP and Interpersonal Relationships. There is a significant effect of marital status ($p=0.002$) on IP, but no effect of gender ($p=0.8$) on IP. There is no significant effect of gender ($p=0.58$) and marital status ($p=0.86$) on Interpersonal relationships. The weak positive correlation could possibly be due to the people-pleasing tendencies of a few individuals in the overall sample. The marital status's effect on IP could possibly be due to the pressure to meet multiple needs and demands of self and others post-marriage. The results can be useful for corporate, marital, and school counsellors.

Keywords: Imposter Phenomena, Interpersonal relationships, Corporate employees

The present research investigated the relationship between imposter phenomena and interpersonal relationship in corporate employees. A corporate employee is a person who works for a company that has its own legal identity, meaning it is not the same as its owners.

The impostor phenomenon (IP) is defined as "A behavioural health phenomenon described as self-doubt of intellect, skills, or accomplishments among high-achieving individuals." The term "imposter phenomenon" does not refer to a diagnosable mental illness. Rather, it is used in a limited sense to describe intelligence and achievement. It was initially identified by Clance et al (1978)^[1]. These people find it difficult to internalize their success despite objective and verifiable evidence. This keeps high achievers from feeling proud of their

accomplishments and from reaching their full potential because it causes them to experience enduring feelings of self-doubt, anxiety, melancholy, and/or fear of being exposed as frauds in their careers. Those with high expressions of IP live in a constant dread of being exposed as less intellectual or competent, and they attribute their accomplishment to chance or mistake.

Working individuals' judgments of their own abilities, organizational citizenship, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational support, each have a negative relationship with IP and impact their total self-concept. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that the IP lowers motivation to lead as well as career planning, exploration, striving, and decision-making. For leaders, feeling like a fraud can have both benefits and drawbacks. Imposters'

perfectionist inclinations can produce driven, committed workers, but they can also seriously undermine one's capacity to succeed as a leader or an employee (Gottlieb et al., 2019)^[4]. According to Rice (2020)^[9], perfectionist tendencies can result in highly motivated, meticulous workers who are appreciated by managers for their high-calibre output. However, when these traits go too far, they can also indicate potential personal and professional problems, such as an inability to take breaks or an excessive amount of criticism directed toward subordinates. Some, who view imposters as achievers, see potential for continued development and assign them additional tasks with confidence that they will be completed successfully. Lack of confidence in reproducing past performance, an external locus of control, and a failure to internalize past successes combined with increased visibility cause a great deal of fear, which is frequently linked to an emphasis on self-monitoring behaviours and impression management. Fundamentally, impostorism stems from an incapacity to evaluate one's performance with sufficient accuracy. Furthermore, impostor syndrome is known to be accompanied by low levels of self-efficacy and confidence and according to the study findings by Kananifar et al. (2015)^[5], there is a strong positive association between students' mental health (and its sub-domains) and the impostor phenomenon at Ishfana University.

Interpersonal connections are defined as the mutual willingness of individuals to communicate in a particular way, accompanied by emotions (good or negative), within the framework of shared activities and communication. However, according to Stoetzer (2009)^[12], daily interactions between coworkers, managers, and employees are constituted by interpersonal relationships at work. Social groups and communities are built on

interpersonal relationships, which can be governed by mutual consent, custom, or the law. They emerge when people interact or communicate in certain social circumstances, and they are best served by mutually agreeable and fair agreements.

These relationships with other people are essential to our general pleasure, personal development, and emotional health. Difficult interpersonal interactions at work may contribute to depression, Stoetzer (2009)^[12]. Interpersonal connections are fundamentally about people sharing their ideas, feelings, and experiences. In addition to providing company, these exchanges work as a mirror reflecting our identities and forming our sense of self. Our evolution as social creatures is fundamental to the importance of interpersonal connections. People's relationships are dynamic, they change and grow throughout time. They are made up of many different components, such as common interests, empathy, trust, communication skills, and similar ideals. External factors such as cultural norms, society expectations, and individual circumstances can significantly influence the kind and standard of our interactions.

An interpersonal relationship in the context of an organisation is a close bond between coworkers who work together. For coworkers to perform at their highest level, they should have a unique bond. Maintaining positive interpersonal dynamics and, eventually, a positive work environment require honesty amongst one another. On the one hand, the absence of professional friendships in an organization can be detrimental since it can lead to a situation where decisions are made solely on one's own, promote monotony, and lower performance due to a lack of collaboration. Conversely, if there is a welcoming environment, that will have an immediate effect on company culture. Because one needs people and support around them, one

needs company at work. An organization is always better when its members look out for one another and ask for help from one another to achieve goals. Some employees understand the value of positive working relationships, while other egoist employees struggle to advance in their careers because other employees avoid them and managers are reluctant to give them significant responsibility because of their occasional tantrums. Workers spend a significant portion of their lives at work, therefore to make the most of this time, they should be able to interact with coworkers positively and productively. But it's a skill that can be acquired with a great deal of tact and polished demeanour. According to earlier theories of the impostor phenomenon, those who score highest on impostorism are likely to have a negative self-perception while believing that others have a positive perception of them that is, a mix of a negative self-perception and a positive reflected appraisal. Sometimes people think—whether rightly or wrongly—that other people's perceptions of them are overly positive. This might cause people to fear being exposed as a fraud. The sample in the present study showed higher levels of impostorism in married individuals, marital status is a predictor of impostor experience, Elnaggar et al (2023) ^[3] and the majority of the married individuals in the sample lie in the age group 21-35. Tan et al. (2023) ^[13] reported that there was a strong correlation between IP and those in the 21–29 age group.

It is important to study the relationship between IP and interpersonal relationships because, how a person perceives themselves can also affect how they build relationships with their co-workers and superiors. Those with IP tend to be people pleasers which might affect how they genuinely feel about a person or a situation. The perfectionist in a person who scores high on IP may also cause delays in work and

hence can face difficulties while working in groups. Hence, it is important to study if IP has a relationship with interpersonal relationships among corporate employees.

Objectives

1. To study the possible connection between Imposter Phenomena and Interpersonal Relationships among corporate employees.
2. To study the gender difference in Imposter Phenomena and the Interpersonal Relationship among corporate employees.
3. To study the marital differences in Imposter Phenomena and Interpersonal Relationships among corporate employees.

Hypotheses

- H1: There is a significant relationship between Imposter Phenomena and Interpersonal Relationships.
- H2: There is a significant difference in Imposter Phenomena based on gender.
- H3: There is a significant difference in Interpersonal Relationships based on gender.
- H4: There is a significant difference in Imposter Phenomena based on marital status.
- H5: There is a significant difference in Interpersonal Relationships based on marital status.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of 87 corporate employees, 43 male and 44 female. Out of the 87 samples, 45 were married and 42 were unmarried. The age group of the sample ranged from 21 years to 60 years. The samples were spread across South India.

Procedure

The data was collected from corporate employees from across South India. The participation in the study was completely voluntary and they were allowed to withdraw from the study anytime. It was also informed that the data collected would only be used for research purposes. The data of 87 samples were collected out of which 43 are male and 44 are female employees, using the Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale and FIRO-B scale. Questionnaires were sent via Google Forms. All the collected responses were valid and included only those who willingly consented to take part in the study. The information of the participants will be kept confidential, it will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed for commercial purposes.

Instruments Used

Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) (Clance, 1985)^[1]. It is a 20-item scale. A 5-point scale with response options ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The scale has a reliability of 0.94 using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient and as compared to the newly developed Perceived Fraudulence Scale (Kolligian et al, 1991)^[6] it was discovered that the two scales correlated similarly with other measures and had strong internal consistency. Comparing the CIPS to measures of social anxiety, depression, self-esteem, and self-monitoring provided additional evidence of discriminant validity supporting IP.

FIRO-B (William Schutz, 1958)^[12]. It is a 54-item scale, it is a 5-point scale and consists of 6 dimensions. The dimensions are as follows, Expressed Inclusion, Wanted Inclusion, Expressed Control, Wanted Control, Expressed Affection, and Wanted Affection

The scale has a reliability of 0.86. Correlation with Fielder's Least Preferred

Co-Worker Scale, MBTI, and CPI powers the validity of the scale.

Results and Discussion

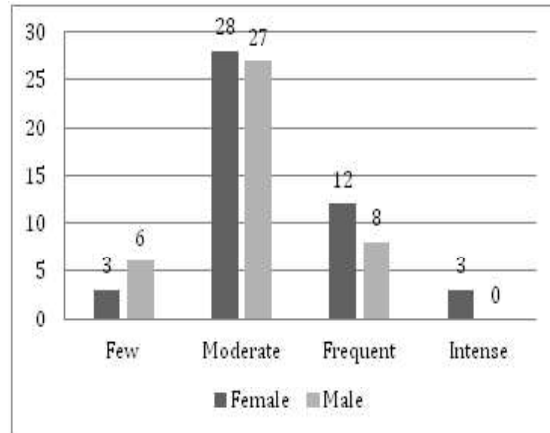


Figure 1. Imposter Phenomena based on gender

The above bar diagram (Figure 1) represents the Imposter phenomena based on gender, of those who had few imposter characteristics males were 6 and females were 3, of those who had moderate impostor characteristics males were 27 and females were 28, of those who had frequent imposter characteristics, male were 8 and female were 12 and of those who had intense imposter characteristics, male were 0 and female were 3.

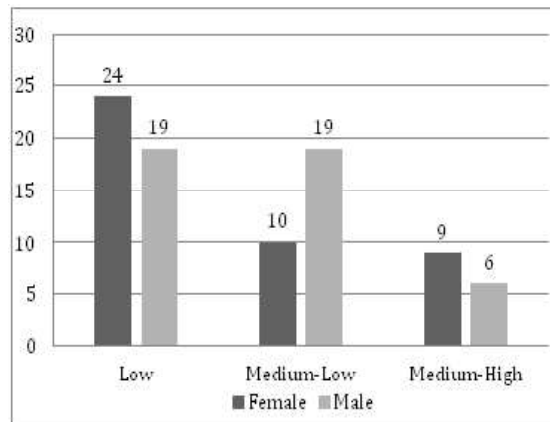


Figure 2. Interpersonal relationships based on gender

The above bar diagram (Figure 2), represents the interpersonal relationship based on gender. Of those who scored low on the social interaction index, 19 were male and 24 were female, of those who scored Medium-Low, 19 were male and 10 were female and of those who scored Medium-High, 6 were male and 9 were female.

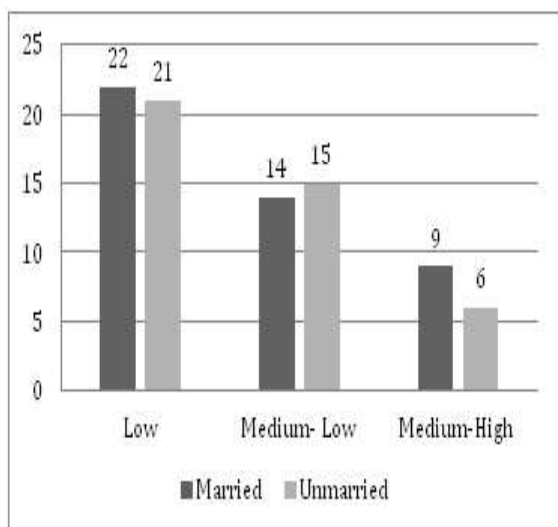


Figure 3. Interpersonal relationship based on marital status

The above bar diagram (Figure 3), represents the interpersonal relationship based on marital status. Of those who scored low on the social interaction index, 22 were married and 21 were unmarried, of those who scored Medium-Low, 19 were male and 10 were female and of those who scored Medium-High, 6 were male and 9 were female.

The above bar diagram (Figure 4) represents the Imposter phenomena based on marital status, of those who had few imposter characteristics 3 were married and 6 were unmarried, of those who had moderate impostor characteristics 23 were married and 32 were unmarried, of those who had frequent imposter characteristics 16 were married and 4 were unmarried and of those who had intense imposter

characteristics 3 were married and none of them were unmarried.

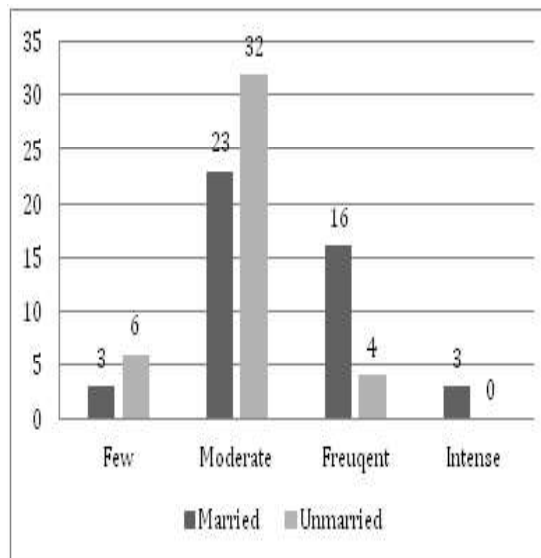


Figure 4. Imposter Phenomena based on marital status

Table 1. Relationship between Imposter Phenomena and Interpersonal Relationship

Variable	n	M	SD	r
1. Imposter Phenomena	87	54.77	13.99	.133*
2. Interpersonal Relationships	87	17.56	9.26	.133*

*p > 0.01

From Table 1, it is inferred that the Pearson's Correlation coefficient between two variables is .133. It shows that there is a weak positive correlation between Imposter Phenomena and Interpersonal relationships. Since the relationship between the two variables is weak, hypothesis 1 "There is a significant relationship between Imposter Phenomena and Interpersonal Relationship." is accepted.

An independent sample t-test was performed to determine whether there is a significant difference between gender and marital status among the variables used in the study.

Table 2: Difference in Imposter Phenomena and Interpersonal Relationships based on gender and marital status

Variable	Gender/Marital Status	n	M	SD	Std ErrorMean	t	p
Imposter Phenomena	Male	43	52.16	11.78	1.79	1.75	.8
	Female	44	57.31	15.39	2.32	1.75	.8
	Married	45	59.15	15.14	2.25	3.2	.002*
	Unmarried	42	50.07	10.72	1.65	3.2	.002*
Interpersonal Relationship	Male	43	18.11	8.92	1.36	.55	.58
	Female	44	17.02	9.64	1.45	.55	.58
	Married	45	17.73	9.56	1.42	17	.86
	Unmarried	42	17.38	9.02	1.39	.17	.86

* $p < .05$

From the above table we can see that, only marital status ($p = .002$) affects Imposter Phenomena, where $p < .05$.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to assess the relationship between impostor phenomenon and interpersonal relationship, the participants of the study had different job responsibilities according to their area or specialisation, for example, those in health care had to diagnose illness, conduct surgeries along with a team in the operation theatre, provide timely physical and psychological assistance. Those in the finance sector had to prepare financial statements, file tax returns and audit the financial statements of their clients, and those who work in the IT and Communication sector, develop new software, develop applications and maintain databases for data storage and retrieval. After computing the data of the participants from different corporate backgrounds, the analysis revealed that there was a weak positive correlation between impostor phenomenon scores and interpersonal relationship scores ($r = 0.133$). The weak positive correlation could possibly be due to the people-pleasing tendencies of a few individuals in the overall sample and

the fear of failure or fear of success present among individuals with high imposter phenomena that can even cause interpersonal guilt. However, it's also possible that most individuals in our study were able to manage their imposter feelings effectively without impacting their interpersonal relationships. From the findings of hypothesis 2, it was found that there was no significant difference between gender and Imposter Phenomena, which supports the findings of Kuppusamy et al. (2022)^[7], which states that no correlation was noted between gender and impostor syndrome. Likewise, from the findings of hypothesis 3, it was found that there was no significant difference between gender and Interpersonal Relationships and it goes in parallel with the study results of Sayed et al. (2023)^[11], which concludes that there was no significant gender difference in interpersonal needs of men and women. From the findings of hypothesis 4, it was found that there exists a significant difference between marital status and Imposter Phenomena, married people in the total sample have a higher Imposter Phenomenon than the unmarried people in the same sample, amongst them, only married females had intense imposter phenomena. The

present study is in line with the studies of Elnaggar et al. (2023)^[3] and Naser et al. (2022)^[8]. This may be the result of several things such as growing responsibilities, difficulties in balancing family and career and more demands from the spouse or the family as a whole, and the need to provide for oneself emotionally, physically, and financially. There was no significant difference found between marital status and interpersonal relationships, according to hypothesis 5's findings. This finding could be explained by several factors, including the general trend in society toward greater openness and tolerance, the growing value placed on dual incomes as a result of rising living expenses, and the fact that both men and women are actively involved in their careers and in social situations.

The present research aims to study the relationship between Imposter Phenomena and Interpersonal Relationships in Corporate Employees. The sample consists of 87 corporate employees working in the different fields of Healthcare, Finance, IT, and Communication. Out of the total sample, 43 were Male and 44 were female, 45 were married and 42 were unmarried. The tools used for the study were the Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) by Clance, 1985 and Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation - Behaviour (FIRO-B) by William Schutz, 1958 Data were collected using Google Forms and analysis was performed using SPSS 20.0 software. The statistical tests used in the study were correlation and t-test.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found a weak positive relationship between imposter phenomenon and interpersonal relationship in the specific sample, which indicates that there is a relationship between IP and interpersonal relationship amongst corporate employees. Usually, those with IP are prone

to be people pleasers and hence, end up having an effect on their relationships with their co-workers and superiors. They can also experience problems such as procrastination trying to achieve perfectionism in their work, however, such problems affect their quality of job and their co-workers if in case of an interdependent nature of work. Overall, the relationship between IP and Interpersonal relationship is weak and there is an effect of Imposter Phenomena on marital status. However, there is no significant effect of gender and marital status on Interpersonal relationships.

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