

Role of Imposter Phenomenon in Quality of Life among Nursing Students in Kerala

Neema Nasrin

Department of Psychology, DAV PG College, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India,

Author Email: neemanasrin6080@gmail.com

Abstract— The study aims to assess the role of the imposter phenomenon in the quality of life among nursing students in Kerala. 120 B.Sc. nursing students (60 male and 60 female) were selected from different colleges of Calicut city in Kerala using the sampling technique of purposive random sampling. Data collection was done using The Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) and The World Health Organisation Quality of Life Questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF) along with the interviewing questions of personal data schedule. The rationale of the study stems from the importance of understanding the psychological challenges faced by nursing students in Kerala. It explores how self-doubt affects the well-being of healthcare professionals and provides insights for interventions to enhance their education and mental health. This research is essential to promote academic success and quality of life among nursing students in Kerala. The results revealed a significant correlation between imposter phenomenon levels and quality of life among nursing students in Kerala, highlighting the detrimental impact of imposter feelings on their overall well-being. It was found that there is a significant difference between the imposter phenomenon with the psychological, environmental and overall quality of life among nursing students. In conclusion, this study highlights the need for further research to determine the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing the impact of the imposter phenomenon on nursing students.

Keywords: Academic success, imposter phenomenon, mental health, nursing students, quality of life, self-doubt, well-being.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Imposter Phenomenon (IP) involves persistent feelings of intellectual fraudulence and fear of incompetence despite contrary evidence (Clance & Imes, 1978). Research by Clance and Imes introduced the concept of the impostor phenomenon, emphasizing its prevalence among high-achieving individuals. The imposter phenomenon, characterized by feelings of intellectual fraudulence and self-doubt despite evident success, poses a significant challenge to individuals across various professions, including nursing. Among nursing students, battling with the demands of rigorous academic training and clinical practice can worsen these feelings of inadequacy, potentially impacting their quality of life and overall well-being. Understanding the implications of the imposter phenomenon on nursing students is crucial for developing targeted interventions to support their mental health and academic success. This study measures the role of the imposter phenomenon in the quality of life among nursing students in Kerala, India.

Previous studies have explored the prevalence and impact of the imposter phenomenon in diverse academic and professional settings. However, limited research has specifically examined its effects on nursing students, particularly in the context of Kerala. The primary objective of this research paper is to investigate the role of the imposter phenomenon in influencing the quality of life of nursing students in Kerala. By assessing imposter feelings and quality of life indicators among a sample of nursing students in the region, this study seeks to clarify the relationship between these factors and provide a deeper understanding of the psychological hurdles faced by aspiring healthcare professionals.

Intense training often leads to stress and burnout, with risk factors including the imposter phenomenon and compassion fatigue (Clark et al., 2022). In this study, mental health professionals who experience burnout and compassion fatigue were found to be more likely to experience the imposter phenomenon, while those who experienced compassion satisfaction were less likely to experience it. A scoping review conducted by Peng et al. (2022) delved into the prevalence and impact of the impostor phenomenon among nursing students and nurses, shedding light on the complexities of this phenomenon within the healthcare profession. This review highlighted the need for further research to explore the implications of the impostor phenomenon on the well-being and professional development of nursing students and nurses. A systematic review and meta-analysis reported that nursing students and nurses are prone to negative psychological problems, such as stress, anxiety, and depression (Al Maqbali et al., 2021). According to a systematic review, the imposter phenomenon is widespread among students of psychology, medicine, dentistry, nursing, and pharmacy, at all levels of their education (Parkman, 2016).

A study by Sacco et al., (2015) on 'Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue among Critical Care Nurses' aimed to investigate the levels of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue among the critical care nurses. The study found that critical care nurses experienced varying levels of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. Factors such as supportive work environments, access to resources, and self-care practices were associated with higher levels of compassion satisfaction. A study by Poghosyan, L et al., (2009) on the Factor Structure of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in Nurses analysed the factor structure of burnout among nurses from eight different countries using data from large-scale cross-sectional surveys. The study revealed variations in the factor structure of burnout among nurses from different countries, indicating that the experience of

burnout may be influenced by cultural, organizational, and contextual factors. Imposter feelings are common among trainees in rigorous medical programs due to high standards for entry, which can lead to self-doubt and psychological distress (Henning et al., 1998). According to King and Cooley (1995), females tend to experience stronger imposter feelings when associated with achievement behaviours compared to males. This study also suggested that the gender differences found may have been due to the narrow definition of achievement behaviours in the study, which focused primarily on academics. Cozzarell and Major (1990) reported that females are more prone to the imposter phenomenon than males measured on the impostor phenomenon scale. The imposter phenomenon can be caused by several factors, such as having a high achievement orientation and perfectionism (Clance & O'Toole, 1988).

Clance and Imes (1978) were the first researchers, who conducted a study on the imposter phenomenon by taking high-achieving professional females. The researchers conducted the study using the experiences from the Imposter Cycle. This cycle begins with worrying, self-doubt, and intense fear of discovery which then leads to either procrastination or over-preparation.

I.I. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

In light of prior research studies, this comprehensive study endeavours to explore the nuanced interplay between the imposter phenomenon and the quality of life among nursing students of selected colleges in Kerala. Nursing professionals are an essential component of modern healthcare, serving as the backbone of the healthcare system. However, the nature of healthcare exposes nursing students to patients with complex traumatic histories, life-threatening conditions, and chronic illnesses, which can take an emotional toll, compromising their professional functioning and diminishing their quality of life. By employing rigorous methodologies, this study aims to identify strategies to improve the quality of life of nursing students by exploring the relationship between the imposter phenomenon and quality of life. The findings of this research have the potential to inform the development of interventions that promote resilience, self-confidence, and overall satisfaction among nursing students as they navigate through their academic and professional journey.

I.II. OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the relationship between imposter phenomenon and quality of life among nursing students.
2. To find out the contribution of the imposter phenomenon to the quality of life among nursing students.

I.III. HYPOTHESES

1. The imposter phenomenon will be related to the quality of life among nursing students.
2. The Imposter phenomenon would predict the quality of life of nursing students.

II. METHOD

II.I. RESEARCH DESIGN

A correlational design was used in this study. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to examine the relationship between imposter phenomenon and quality of life. Further, to assess the relative contribution of the imposter phenomenon in explaining the criterion variable quality of life and its dimensions, regression analysis was used.

II.II. SAMPLE

In light of prior studies, the present study aims to assess the role of the imposter phenomenon in the quality of life among nursing students in Kerala. The study was conducted on 120 B.Sc. nursing students (60 male and 60 female) selected from different colleges in Calicut city of Kerala. The participant's age ranges from 18-24 years. The purposive random sampling technique will be used to select participants. The inclusion criteria of this study were nursing students from the Kerala district and the students who don't belong to the district of Kerala can be excluded from this study.

II.III. MEASURES

1. Personal Data Schedule
The Personal Data Schedule is prepared to collect information about participants' personal characteristics and family backgrounds. This will include data such as age, class, caste, sex, religion, state/city, educational qualification, rural/urban status, present position, number of siblings, sibling position, family type, father's and mother's education, occupation, and income.
2. The Imposter Phenomenon Scale (Clance, 1985)
The Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale is a 5-point Likert scale (1 = 'Never or rarely', 5 = 'Very often') consisting of 20 items. The scale has demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency and reliability (e.g., French et al., 2008; Cronbach's α in current study = 0.895).

3. The World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF, 1995)
The World Health Organisation Quality of Life Questionnaire (WHO QOL-BREF) will be used to assess the quality of life of the participants. The WHO QOL-BREF is a short version of the original instrument (WHO QOL-100) that contains 26 items and evaluates the quality of life of individuals in four domains; namely physical health (7 items), psychological health (6 items), social relationships (3 items), and environment (8 items). Additional 2 items measure the overall quality of life scores.

II.IV. PROCEDURE

The present study uses the Google Forms method for the data collection procedure. Data collection was carried out through online mode. Data were collected after securing permission from authorities of educational centres and consent from the nursing professionals and nursing students. The purpose of the research was explained to the respondents and the personal data was collected from each respondent using the personal data schedule. Subsequently, data on the other two instruments; the imposter phenomenon scale and the quality-of-life questionnaire were collected from the participants and scored using respective manuals.

II.V. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The statistical analysis was done by using Pearson product-moment correlation and Linear regression analysis with the help of the statistical package of the SPSS 20.0 version.

III. RESULTS

III.I. CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS

Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to investigate the relationship between imposter phenomenon and quality of life among nursing students.

Table 1. Summary of the Correlation coefficient between Imposter Phenomenon on Quality of Life among nursing students (N= 120).

Variables	Mean	S.D	Imposter Phenomenon	QOL Physical	QOL Psychological	QOL Social	QOL Environmental	Overall QOL
Imposter Phenomenon	62.52	12.71	1					
QOL Physical	19.11	2.23	-0.13	1				
QOL Psychological	18.5	2.47	-0.59**	0.06	1			
QOL Social	18.43	1.58	0.14	0.39**	-0.15	1		
QOL Environmental	20.01	2.51	-0.48**	0.05	0.52**	-0.11	1	
Overall QOL	75.97	4.71	-0.55**	0.32**	0.77**	-0.05	0.79**	1

NOTE: ** = Significant at 0.01 level of significance, QOL= Quality of Life, S.D= Standard Deviation

Table 1. indicates the significant negative correlation between the imposter phenomenon and the overall quality of life ($r = -0.55$, $p < 0.01$). The imposter phenomenon has a significant negative correlation with the physical dimension of quality of life ($r = -0.59$, $p < 0.01$), and also with the environmental dimension of quality of life ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.01$). The imposter phenomenon is negatively correlated but has no significant correlation with the physical quality of life ($r = -0.13$, $p = \text{NS}$) and a positive correlation with the social quality of life ($r = 0.14$, $p = \text{NS}$) but has no significant difference. The physical dimension of quality of life ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$) has a significant positive correlation with the overall quality of life and a significant negative correlation with the social dimension of quality of life ($r = -0.39$, $p < 0.01$). The physical dimension of quality of life has a positive correlation with the psychological dimension of quality of life ($r = 0.06$, $p = \text{NS}$), and the environmental dimension of quality of life ($r = 0.05$, $p = \text{NS}$), in which both are not significant. The psychological dimension of quality of life has a significant positive correlation with the environmental dimension of quality of life ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$) and with the overall quality of life ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.01$). The psychological dimension of quality of life negatively correlates with the social dimension of quality of life ($r = 0.15$, $p = \text{NS}$) but has no significant difference. The social dimension of quality of life has a positive correlation with the overall quality of life ($r = 0.05$, $p = \text{NS}$) and a negative correlation with the environmental dimension of quality of life ($r = -0.11$, $p = \text{NS}$), in which both are

not significant. The environmental dimension of quality of life has a significant positive correlation with the overall quality of life ($r= 0.79, p<0.01$).

III.II. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the relative contribution of the imposter phenomenon on quality of life and its dimensions. Linear regression analysis was used to assess the impact of the predictor variable on the criterion variable.

The variables for which the correlation coefficients were significant, were entered into the regression model.

Table 2. Regression analysis with Imposter phenomenon as a predictor and Psychological dimension of Quality of life as criterion variable among nursing students (N= 120).

Predictor/Criterion variable	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	β	F-ratio
Imposter Phenomenon/Psychological QoL	0.589	0.347	0.341	-.589**	62.649**

NOTE: ** = Significant at 0.01 level of significance

Table 2. indicates that the association between the imposter phenomenon and psychological dimension of quality of life ($\beta = -.589; p<0.01$) was found negatively significant with 34.7% of total variance [$F = 62.649; p<0.01$] in explaining the psychological dimension of quality of life.

Table 3. Regression analysis with Imposter phenomenon as a predictor and Environmental dimension of Quality of life as criterion variable among nursing students (N= 120).

Predictor/Criterion variable	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	β	F-ratio
Imposter Phenomenon/ Environmental QoL	0.483	0.233	0.227	-.483**	35.846**

NOTE: ** = Significant at 0.01 level of significance

Table 3. shows that the association between the imposter phenomenon and the environmental dimension of quality of life ($\beta = -.483; p<0.01$) was found significantly negative and 23.3% of total variance [$F= 35.846; p<0.01$] in explaining the environmental dimension of quality of life.

Table 4. Regression analysis with Imposter phenomenon as a predictor and Overall Quality of Life as criterion variable among nursing students (N= 120).

Predictor/Criterion variable	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	β	F-ratio
Imposter Phenomenon/ Overall QoL	0.553	0.306	0.3	-.553**	51.943**

NOTE: ** = Significant at 0.01 level of significance

Table 4 indicates that the association between the imposter phenomenon and overall quality of life ($\beta = -.553; p<0.01$) was found significantly negative and 30.6% of total variance [$F= 51.943; p<0.01$] in explaining the overall quality of life. The association between the imposter phenomenon and the physical dimension of quality of life, and the association between the imposter phenomenon and the social dimension of quality of life were not significant.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results shown in the tables exhibit a comprehensive investigation of the relationship between imposter phenomenon (IP) and various dimensions of quality of life (QoL) among nursing students. This elucidates how these variables interact and influence each other.

Table 1 provides a valuable understanding of the correlation between imposter phenomenon and overall quality of life. The negative correlation between the imposter phenomenon and overall quality of life suggests that as feelings of imposterism strengthen, overall quality of life tends to decrease. This underscores the dangerous impact of the imposter phenomenon on various aspects of well-being among nursing students. Furthermore, the negative correlations between the imposter phenomenon and specific dimensions of quality of life, such as the psychological and environmental dimensions, highlight the prevalence of imposter feelings, affecting multiple aspects of students' lives.

Regression analyses presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4 address the predictive power of the imposter phenomenon on specific dimensions of quality of life. The negative beta coefficients indicate that higher levels of imposter phenomenon are associated with lower scores in psychological, environmental, and overall quality of life. These findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions aimed at alleviating imposter feelings among nursing students to improve their overall quality of life.

V. CONCLUSION

This study sought to address the role of the imposter phenomenon in the quality of life among nursing students. The results of this study emphasize the importance of addressing the imposter phenomenon among nursing students to enhance their quality of life and promote psychological well-being. Interventions targeting the imposter phenomenon could include psychoeducational programs, mentoring initiatives, and support networks aimed at building students' self-efficacy and resilience. Additionally, fostering an inclusive and supportive academic environment may help mitigate the pressures contributing to imposter feelings, ultimately benefiting the overall quality of life of nursing students.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Kamaluddin Sheikh, Rt Assistant Professor at DAV PG College, Varanasi, for his invaluable guidance, unwavering support, and insightful mentorship throughout this research. And thanks to the participants of this study for their willingness to share their experiences and insights, without which this research would not have been possible.

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