
IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON AND HYPERCOMPETITIVE ATTITUDE AMONG EMERGING ADULTS IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

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ABSTRACT

Impostor syndrome refers to the state that affects high achievers who are unable to internalize and accept their achievements. Hypercompetitive attitude can be defined as an indiscriminate need to compete and win at all costs which is characterized by unhealthy and aggressive behavior. The present study aims to analyse the significant difference in Impostor Phenomenon and Hypercompetitive Attitude among emerging adults in rural and urban areas. The sample consisted of 80 emerging adults of which 40 were from urban areas and the other 40 from rural areas. Sample was collected using convenient sampling. Assessment tools used in the study were Impostor Phenomenon Scale and Hypercompetitive Attitude Scale. The collected data were analysed using SPSS and was used to examine the difference between two groups. The findings showed that there exists a significant difference in Impostor Phenomenon and Hypercompetitive Attitude among individuals in urban and rural areas. Impostor Phenomenon was found to be higher among emerging adults in rural area and Hypercompetitive attitude was found to be higher among emerging adults in urban areas.

Indexed Terms- Imposter Phenomenon, Hyper competitiveness, Rural areas, urban areas, emerging adults.

1. Introduction

“Life is just too short to be lived” could be a fact and customary quote that is encountered in our day-to-day life. During this short span of life, being an adult is perceived to be the most difficult stage. Because this is often where individuals start absorbing responsibilities that were done by adults around them and thus this stage is crucial. Individuals within the age range 18-25, they're called emerging adults. This stage maybe of self-focus, instability, possibilities, choosing what they would like and who they become. They will undergo pressures and tensions on an extreme level. Here during this pivotal stage of life some may prosper and others might not, and that is completely subjective. As people enter this stage they get exposed to several opportunities and crowds that would influence their lives but at the identical time they seek to build their own individuality. And these individuals they explicitly vary in their cognition. The way they perceive and understand the world will be completely different.

Cognitive functions are an apparent part of our daily life, a number of them are known to us and a few unknown. Impostor syndrome is one such condition. Impostor phenomenon is a state that affects high achievers who are unable to internalize and accept their achievement. Psychologists Suzanne Imes and Pauline Rose Clance found this phenomenon for the first time in the 1970s. Anyone, from top executives to graduate students, can experience it. Individuals with this phenomenon live in a constant state of self-doubt and turmoil. Overtime, this can fuel a cycle of anxiety, depression, and guilt. They believe they are deceiving everyone and thus lives in the constant fear of being discovered as a fraud. Because they tend to believe that their achievements or accomplishments are solely due to luck or time rather than their hard work. Even if they're diligent, they are uncertain about their talents and abilities. They will begin to question if they belong to the positions they enthrall in their lives.

Despite objective success, the feelings of inadequacy could hold them off from being actually content about their accomplishments.

Imposter phenomenon is not encompassed as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), regardless of it being experienced by more than 70% of people at some point in their lives. The emergence of this can be attributed to personality traits and family background. Families with low support and high conflict could often pressurize individuals to be highly competent and also might lead them to doubt their self-worth and develop feelings of not being enough. And even if they do well in the school level, once they are in college or in a job, where there is an even broader spectrum of people, they will feel as if they don't slot in or belong there. Certain early studies showed that Impostor Phenomenon is greater in high-achieving women, however later studies concluded that it can occur in people of any age, gender or background. The one's mostly affected by this are minorities, coupled with a lack of representation and discrimination, the effects of imposter syndrome can feel nearly insurmountable. These feelings could result in mental as well as physical health deterioration of people and thus negatively impact your functioning. They could end up socially isolated and burned-out career-wise. Even the existence of contrary evidence doesn't let them off hold of the feeling that they're a fraud. Acknowledging achievements, bringing down comparison with others, moderate use of social media, sharing one's feelings, embracing successes could help in regulating this phenomenon.

It is known that individual differences persist in personality traits, and with that kept in mind the next topic of this research is introduced, which is hyper-competitiveness; it can be defined as an "indiscriminate need to compete and win at all costs." This is characterized by unhealthy and aggressive behaviour. They could easily go from verbal to physical aggression. These individuals tend to turn even a silly game into a high-spirited competition. Genesis of this concept was on Karen Horney's theories on neurosis. Relationship commitment and satisfaction, however, are not correlated with hyper-competitiveness (Ryckman et al., 2002). Even in activities that doesn't have winning or losing constructs hypercompetitive people are likely to compete and even the co-players won't be aware of this. Hostility and narcissism are important personality traits of these individuals.

Hyper competitiveness has an evolutionary point of view too, which points out that lack of resources might have contributed to competitive behaviour. This trait can also affect their interpersonal behaviour and these people does find it hard to maintain romantic as well as other social relationships. They're likely to be possessive, jealous, mistrusting, low in emotional support in a relationship. Findings suggest that people exhibit hyper-competitiveness as a means of maintaining and enhancing their self-worth. Hyper-competitiveness was positively associated with loneliness, depressive symptoms, and interpersonal difficulties (Thornton, Ryckman& Gold, 2011). Individuals with hyper-competitiveness often overestimate their capacity, and undertake unachievable goals or tasks, and on the event of not being able to finish these tasks they derange themselves. Parental controls or overprotectiveness are also said be to related to aggression and hostility in these individuals. Not enough recognition and acceptance as a child might have been a contributing factor to this cause as well. As a means to cope with the negative parent-child relationship, these people could become overcompensating adults. This overcompensation could cause anxiety and general psychological distress. These people seek external validation and care for that more than internal factors. While competitiveness is a human nature which helps them get the things they desire, if in an extreme level that might cause harm to them and those around them too.

While discovering these topics like impostor phenomenon and hyper-competitiveness, it is understood that both these phenomena are often experienced by emerging adults as they move forward in their lives. Impostor phenomenon is a state seen in high achievers and is the inability to internalize one's own success and thus living a life of anxiety, depression, and turmoil. Regardless of contrary evidence they believe that their success is just due to luck. More that 70% people have experienced this at least ones in their lives irrespective of age, gender, or background. Hyper competitiveness is a need to compete and win at any cost as a means of maintaining or enhancing

one's own self-worth. These individuals have high levels of aggression and hostility, and often have poor psychological well-being. They could face a lot of problems in relationships, romantic or otherwise. Early bleak relationship with parents among other factors could cause them to cope with hypercompetitive attitude as adults. Although self-doubt and competitive behaviour are normal, if they're on a maximal level it can be unpleasant.

2. Methodology

2.1 Objective

The objective of the study is to assess significant difference in impostor phenomenon and hypercompetitive attitude among emerging adults in rural and urban areas.

2.2 Hypotheses

2.2.1 There will be significant difference in impostor phenomena between emerging adults in rural and urban areas.

2.2.2 There will be significant difference in hyper competitiveness between emerging adults in rural and urban areas.

2.3 Variables and Operational Definition

2.3.1 Impostor Phenomenon

Impostor phenomenon refers to the state that affects high achievers who are unable to internalize and accept their achievements.

2.3.2 Hypercompetitive Attitude

Hypercompetitive attitude can be defined as an indiscriminate need to compete and win at all costs which is characterized by unhealthy and aggressive behavior.

2.3.3 Emerging Adults in Rural Area

Emerging adults living in Areas lying outside population centres (towns or cities), possessing low population density and small settlements.

2.3.4 Emerging Adults in Urban Area

Emerging adults living in area which can be characterized by a combination of dense population, complex social and economic activities.

2.4 Sample

2.4.1 Sample size of the study

The sample consists of 80 emerging adults of which 40 were from rural and the other 40 from urban areas who fall under the age group of 18-20. The participants were from different colleges across Kerala, India. Sample was collected using Convenient sampling.

2.4.2 Inclusion criteria

Emerging adults of the age group between 18-20 in rural and urban areas whose average academic scores ranges between A + to B are included in the study.

2.4.3. Exclusion criteria

Emerging adults of other than age group 18- 20 and who has scored below average academic scores are excluded.

2.5 Assessment Tools

2.5.1. Impostor Phenomenon Scale (IPS)

A 20-item instrument assess the internal experience of phoniness, theoretically a result of an inability to internalize successful experiences (Clance). Scores ranges from 20 to 100, and a higher score indicate more intense experiences of the impostor phenomenon.

2.5.2. Hypercompetitive Attitude Scale (HAS)

A 26-item scale designed to measure hyper competitiveness -the need to compete and win at any cost as a way of maintaining self-worth. The HAS is scored on a 5-point scale with the total score being the sum of all item scores. The following items are reverse-scored: 3, 5, 6, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18-20, 24-26. Higher scores indicate stronger hypercompetitive attitudes.

2.6 Research Design

Descriptive research design was employed to study the impostor phenomenon and hypercompetitive attitude among emerging adults in rural and urban areas. Questionnaires were used to reach this goal

2.7 Data Collection Procedure

The tools for the data collection were finalized and data was collected by directly giving the questionnaires for the sample. For data collection permission was taken from respective authority of the College. The questionnaire was distributed by reaching the concerned department's classrooms. Rapport was established as well as confidentiality of the participants' response was assured and consent of the participant was taken. The participants were informed with how to fill the questionnaire. The data were collected and analysis of the data was made using SPSS.

2.8 Statistical Technique

Analysis of the data was done using SPSS. Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze significant difference between two independent groups.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 3.1

Mean Rank, U-value and p-value of Imposter Phenomenon among Emerging Adults in Rural and Urban Areas.

Variable	Group	N	Mean of Rank	Sum of Ranks	U-value	P-value
Imposter Phenomenon	Rural	40	45.9	1838.5	581.5	0.05*
	Urban	40	35.0	1401.5		

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 3.1 indicates Mean Rank, U-value and p-value of Imposter Phenomenon among emerging adults in rural and urban areas. Mean of rank for rural areas is 45.9 while urban areas is 35.0. Sum of ranks of rural and urban areas are 1838.5 and 1401.5 respectively. The u-value is 581.5 and p value is 0.05.

Table 3.2

Mean Rank, U-value and p-value of Hyper Competitiveness among Emerging Adults in Rural and Urban Area.

Variable	Group	N	Mean of Rank	Sum of Ranks	U-value	P-value
Hyper Competitiveness	Rural	40	33.52	1341	521	0.01**
	Urban	40	47.48	1899		

**Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3.2 indicates Mean Rank, U-value and p-value of hyper competitiveness among emerging adults in rural and urban areas. Mean of rank for rural area is 33.52 and of urban area is 47.48. The Sum of ranks of rural and urban area are 1341 and 1899 respectively. The U-value is 521 and p value is 0.01.

Discussion

The study aims to determine significant difference in the imposter phenomenon and hyper-competitiveness between emerging adults in rural and urban areas. From the table 3.1, it is evident that there exists a significant difference in the imposter phenomenon among emerging adults in rural area and urban area which is significant at a 0.05 level. Hence the hypothesis is accepted. It was found that the imposter phenomenon is higher among emerging adults in rural area than urban area. From this, it can be inferred that due to their reduced self-esteem and inferiority complexes as a result of their social and economic status in society, emerging adults in rural areas may experience higher rates of the imposter phenomenon. Additionally, barriers like the absence of timely support from both within and beyond the community for the emerging adults of rural communities cause them to feel and experience an inner inhibition to excel.

From table 3.2, it can be inferred that there exist a significant difference in hyper competitiveness among emerging adults in rural and urban area which is significant at a 0.01 level. Hence the hypothesis is accepted. Young adults in metropolitan areas were shown to be more hypercompetitive than those in rural areas. Emerging adults in urban areas may exhibit hypercompetitive behavior due to societal influences rather than their own personal interests. For example, peer pressure that drives local residents to compete with one another or with their surroundings or a population's tendency to conform to modern era norms may be to blame.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the study is to find out the difference between imposter phenomenon and hyper competitiveness among emerging adults of rural and urban areas. From findings it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the imposter phenomenon and hyper-competitiveness between emerging adults in rural and urban areas. Imposter phenomenon was found to be high in emerging adults in rural areas whereas hypercompetitiveness was found to be high among emerging adults in urban areas.

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