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2022

Parenting Styles and the Impostor Phenomenon: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

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Recommended Citation

DiFazio, A. (2022). Parenting Styles and the Impostor Phenomenon: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy. Retrieved from <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/130>

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Abstract

Introduction: The Impostor Phenomenon (IP) refers to the emotions, cognitions, and behaviours of objectively successful individuals who often attribute their achievements to external factors or errors instead of themselves. The development of the IP has been correlated with differing parenting styles utilized by a mother and father respectively when rearing a child. Although parenting styles may play a role, it is highly improbable that they are the sole explanation as to why some individuals report IP feelings. Instead, other variables such as self-efficacy are likely also involved. The current study aims to explore what mediational role, if any, self-efficacy has in the relationship between parenting styles and the IP in undergraduate students.

Methods: Data was collected through convenience sampling from 80 undergraduate university students via a self-report survey containing demographic questions and measures of parent style, self-efficacy, and IP.

Results: Mother care showed indirect partial mediation where the indirect path was significant ($ab = -.14$, 95% CI = $-.30$ to $-.01$) and the direct path was insignificant ($c' = -.08$, 95% CI = $-.46$ to $.29$). Father overprotection showed competitive partial mediation where the indirect path was significant ($ab = .14$, 95% CI = $.01$ to $.29$) and the direct path was insignificant ($c' = .39$, 95% CI = $-.03$ to $.81$).

Conclusion: This research contributes to understanding the development of the IP in relation to differing parenting styles and differing levels of self-efficacy in undergraduate students. Results increases awareness of the IP and potentially aids in creating more IP-related resources on university campuses.

Keywords: Impostor Phenomenon, self-efficacy, parenting styles, mother care, mother overprotection, father care, father overprotection, mediation