The Role of Self-Compassion as A Moderating Variable : Perception of Competitiveness on The Impostor Phenomenon Among First-Year College Students

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the moderating role of self-compassion on the relationship between the perception of a competitive environment and the impostor phenomenon in a sample of 215 first-year college students in Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative approach and the data were collected using an online questionnaire consisting of three measuring instruments: Perceived Competitiveness Questionnaire (PCQ), Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS), and Self-Compassion Scale (SCS). Correlation analysis and moderated regression analysis were performed to test the hypotheses of the study. This study shows that the perception of competitiveness was negatively correlated with the impostor phenomenon. Additionally, self-compassion has a significant negative correlation with feelings of being an impostor. This research also reveals that self-compassion positively moderates the relationship between the perception of competitiveness and the impostor phenomenon. These findings emphasize the importance of self-compassion as a protective factor in mitigating the negative impacts of competitive academic settings and reducing potential impostor phenomenon by empowering college students with resilience and greater confidence.

Introduction

The impostor phenomenon is an occurrence where individuals believe they do not have the capability regardless of their success, hence they feel like they are a "fraud" (Clance & Imes, 1978). The impostor phenomenon is said to arise when individuals cannot internalize their own achievements (Hawley, 2019). Individuals with impostor syndrome believe that they are not as competent as others perceive them to be, and they tend to have concerns that they will be found out as an "impostor" by others (Clance & Imes, 1978; Leary, 2000). Leary et al. (2000) mention several characteristics found in individuals who experience the impostor phenomenon: (1) individuals feel that they are an "impostor" because they believe that others view the individuals are more skilled than they are; (2) individuals tend to worry that others will find out that they are an "impostor" so they are constantly encountering fear of failure; (3) individuals have difficulty to internalize the success that the individual has achieved and have the tendency to attribute the individual's success to external factors, such as luck. The inability to internalize these accomplishments causes individuals to feel like they are a "fraud" or an "impostor," and they are likely to feel fear that others will find out that they are incompetent. As a result, these individuals become overly critical of their performance and abilities (Hoang, 2013). In attaining a goal or completing a task, individuals who experience the impostor phenomenon will doubt their skills and be skeptical of their capacities, because the individual in question regards success not due to their competence but rather to other external factors (Amoa-Danquah, 2023).

Several studies on the impostor phenomenon have been conducted within various populations and contexts. Within the scope of educational context, it is stated that the academic environment is vulnerable to the emergence of impostor experiences, where the impostor experience can significantly lower students' academic performance (Patzak et al., 2017, Canning et al., 2020). Students who have just entered college are going through a transition phase and adjustment in a new academic environment accompanied by several academic challenges and various psychological and social pressures. Students need to make adjustments to the learning process at the college level, while at the same time, they have to face pressures to adapt to the social environment. These academic challenges may lead to negative experiences for students, one of which is the impostor phenomenon. This statement is supported by a study conducted by Patzak et al. (2017), which found that 60% of students in the first academic year tend to experience the impostor phenomenon at least at a moderate level. Students who experience the impostor phenomenon tend to put pressure and criticize themselves in order to excel in academic performance (Cokley et al., 2018). Fassl et al. (2020) also proved the high prevalence of students who experienced impostor experiences. They also mentioned the importance of further investigation into the impostor phenomenon, considering its implications for students' mental health and well-being. Previous studies have also mentioned anxiety and depression can develop in individuals who experience the impostor phenomenon (Bravata et al., 2020). Liu et al. (2023) remarked that students with impostor experiences tend to exhibit symptoms of depression because they have difficulty internalizing the success they have attained and are less likely to feel positive emotions from those accolades. Academic anxiety is also related to the impostor experience because these individuals tend to question their own abilities and personal achievements, on top of feeling worried and anxious about experiencing failures (Ali et al., 2015). Moreover, the impostor phenomenon has been found to harm students' academic performances, such as decreasing student engagement, attendance, and grades in class and increasing the likelihood of students dropping out of college (Canning et al., 2020). These implications indicate the importance of further investigation into the impostor phenomenon among students, primarily related to the risk and protective factors of the impostor experience.

Of the various factors that contribute to predicting the impostor phenomenon, past research mainly focused on investigating the influence of gender and impostor experience on minorities (Clance & Imes, 1978; Cokley et al., 2013; Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch, 2016; Bravata et al., 2020; Mafei et al., 2021). However, Feenstra et al. (2020) provide a new perspective on the study of the impostor phenomenon. They stated that further research not only needs to explore the relationship between the impostor experience and individual characteristics or individual identities, but also to examine the contextual factors of the impostor phenomenon, such as social, institutional, and interpersonal spheres. Within the educational environment, one of the characteristics of higher education that has the potential to cause the impostor phenomenon is a competitive environment. Canning et al. (2020) conducted a study that examines the influence of perceptions of a competitive environment on the impostor experience, which emphasized the negative impacts of a competitive classroom environment – such as engagement, attendance, grades, and dropout rates – can be explained by students' perceived impostorism. The study compared first-generation college students with non-first-generation college students and found that the relationship between perceived competitiveness and impostor phenomenon was significant for both groups, although it was stronger for first-generation students. This finding suggests that a competitive environment may be a contextual factor contributing to students' overall impostor experiences.

Higher education serves as an environment that fosters competitiveness, from the admission process for prospective students to the competitive atmosphere present during the learning process. This competitive landscape may prepare students to become valuable resources in the job market by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and qualifications (Labas et al., 2016). However, such an environment can also give rise to feelings of impostor among students (Canning et al., 2020), and potentially leading to anxiety and depression (Posselt & Lipson, 2016). When students perceive their environments and fellow learners as highly competitive, they may feel threatened and doubt their own competencies. As a result, they might view their successes as mere luck or due to chance (Hoang, 2013). This competitive climate often drives individuals to compare themselves with their peers, heightening feelings of inadequacy and increasing the worry that others might expose their perceived shortcomings (Canning et al., 2020; Leary et al., 2000). Students' struggle to internalize their achievements can ultimately jeopardize their academic performance (Hoang, 2013; Canning et al., 2020). Therefore, identifying protective factors that can lessen the detrimental effects of a competitive environment on the impostor experience is essential to help students navigate these challenges and safeguard their academic performance.

A psychological concept that has recently gained attention as one of the resilience factors for individuals struggling with impostor experiences is self-compassion. Self-compassion can be understood as the ability to be receptive and moved by one's suffering, alongside genuine care for oneself. It involves recognizing and accepting one's shortcomings and failures while acknowledging that these experiences are simply part of being human (Neff, 2003a). This compassionate outlook is fundamental during moments of failure, personal inadequacy, or when facing various challenges (Neff, 2023). Neff (2003a) further elaborates on the components of self-compassion, which include: self-kindness vs. self-judgment, which refers to the ability of individuals to be kind on oneself, rather than being overly critical; common humanity vs. isolation, which means that individuals understand that difficulties and failures are part of human experience and not something that uniquely happens to a particular individual; and mindfulness vs. overidentification, which involves of being self-aware of one's own thoughts and feelings, and not excessively absorbing those thoughts and feelings (Neff, 2003a; Wei, et al., 2020). The concept of self-compassion can support individuals with negative self-perception and may help individuals reduce their tendency to engage in excessive negative criticism toward themselves, as well as to create a sense of connection between oneself and others (Neff, 2003a; Neff, 2003b).

In recent years, a growing body of empirical studies has begun exploring the role of self-compassion in individuals with impostor experiences. For instance, a study conducted by Patzak et al. (2017) focused on how self-compassion mediates the connection between gender role orientation and impostor phenomena among first-year undergraduate students. The research proved a compelling negative correlation between the impostor phenomenon and the level of self-compassion, indicating individuals with a high level of self-compassion will be less likely to experience impostor phenomenon. Similarly, Liu et al. (2023) proved that self-compassion influences impostor experiences among college students in China. Additionally, positive elements of self-compassion, such as self-kindness, mindfulness, and common humanity, can mitigate the detrimental impacts of impostor experiences. Individuals will exhibit a greater tolerance in the face of stress associated with academic challenges and are less prone to attribute failures to internal factors. Conversely, negative facets of self-compassion, such as self-judgment, overidentification, and isolation, tend to intensify the feelings of being an impostor among college students. Individuals who experience these

negative attributes often set stricter performance standards on themselves, tend to become overly critical of one's self, and exhibit high levels of self-doubt. In addition, a recent study focused on the relationship between the impostor phenomenon and self-compassion in a population of Black female college students also supports previous findings, highlighting those high levels of self-compassion can significantly lessen individuals' impostor experience (Johnson & Plisco, 2023). Despite these valuable findings, the scope for further studies on self-compassion as an emotion regulation strategy for those experiencing the impostor phenomenon is still in the early stages, highlighting the need for more in-depth investigation on the impacts of self-compassion to support individuals facing various challenges of impostor phenomenon.

This study aims to examine the relationship between perceptions of a competitive environment and the impostor phenomenon, while also examining the moderating role of self-compassion. Specifically, this research will analyze the effects of perceptions of a competitive environment on the impostor experience among first-year college students. Canning et al. (2020) have conducted one of the pioneering works on how a competitive environment can strengthen students' feelings of being impostors, particularly within STEM fields while also comparing impostor experiences between first-generation college students and non-first-generation students. However, further research is still necessary to support previous studies regarding the relationship between perceptions of a competitive environment and the impostor phenomenon among college students. This research hypothesizes that perceptions of a competitive environment have a significant positive relationship with the impostor experience across the broader student population, particularly among college students. Higher education institutions inherently create environments in which students are susceptible to developing feelings of being an impostor. This vulnerability is often due to the evaluative and competitive nature of the academic environment, which may intensify feelings of inadequacy and concerns about being perceived as incompetent by others (Patzak et al., 2017).

Furthermore, this study aims to investigate intrinsic factors that may mitigate the implications of a competitive environment. This study is one of the first to explore the critical role of self-compassion in moderating the relationship between competitiveness and the impostor phenomenon. While previous studies have examined self-compassion and competitiveness separately, this research highlights the potential of self-compassion in addressing the challenges posed by high competitiveness and the feelings of fraudulence that often accompany it. Recent research on the impostor phenomenon has identified self-compassion as a psychological concept that can assist individuals experiencing the impostor phenomenon. Thus, this study seeks to further explore the role of self-compassion in students who are dealing with the impostor phenomenon, particularly within the context of a competitive environment, which may heighten feelings of being an impostor. It is hypothesized that the influence of the competitive environment and the impostor phenomenon will be weaker in individuals with high levels of self-compassion. Conceptually, although students may perceive a challenging and competitive academic setting, it is assumed that individuals who possess self-compassion can recognize that their peers share similar academic experiences and pressures, as well as anxieties about failure. Therefore, self-compassion encourages individuals to engage in self-care and to reduce excessive self-criticism or doubts about their capabilities compared to their peers. In this regard, self-compassion is expected to serve as a protective factor that may lessen the impact of a competitive environment on an individual's impostor experience. This study offers new insights into the existing literature by challenging assumptions about competitiveness and

impostor phenomenon, while highlighting self-compassion as a key resilience factor. By focusing on first-year college students, this research addresses a crucial gap in understanding how they cope with academic pressures and impostor experiences, with implications for mental health support in higher education.

Research Method

This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to examine the relationship between perceptions of a competitive environment and impostor phenomenon among college students, as well as the role of self-compassion as a moderator. Participants included in this study are first-year of college students aged 18 years and above who were studying for their first year of higher education (semester 1 or 2). Data collection was conducted via an online self-report questionnaire and administered through communication network broadcasts and various social media platforms. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: an informed consent section, demographic data, measurement instruments, and a debriefing page providing detailed information about the research, in which participants were informed about the purpose of the research, were assured that their participation was voluntary, with their data remaining confidential and used solely for research purposes.

The final sample included 215 first-year university students in Indonesia, comprising 57 men and 158 women. The age range of participants was between 18 and 22 years (M = 18.94, SD = 0.86). All participants are currently enrolled in their first year of higher education and come from diverse academic backgrounds; 39.53% (n = 85) have backgrounds in Science and Technology, while 60.47% (n = 130) have backgrounds in Social Sciences and Humanities.

Three measuring instruments were utilized in this study. First, the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) by Clance (1985) consists of 20 items and was adapted into Bahasa Indonesia by the researcher to measure the level of impostor phenomenon. Second, the Perceived Competitiveness Questionnaire (PCQ) by Murayama and Elliot (2012), also adapted into Bahasa Indonesia by the researcher prior to the study, assessed perceptions of a competitive environment. This measuring instrument consists of 5 items. Lastly, the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) by Neff (2003), was adapted into Bahasa Indonesia by Sugianto et al. (2020). The measuring instrument consists of 26 items that measure six dimensions, including: Self-Kindness, Self-Judgment, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness, and Over-Identification. All of the measuring instruments employ a 4-point Likert Scale, which ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The research data were analyzed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical analysis and correlation between the research variables were conducted to provide an overview of the participants and variables. Then, Pearson correlation analysis and moderated regression analysis were performed to test the hypotheses of the study.

Results and Discussion

This study will examine the correlations between variables and the moderating effects of self-compassion. First of all, the correlations among study variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviations, and correlations between study variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Competitiveness	2.73	.78							
2. Impostor	1.97	.52	-.32**						
3. Self-Compassion	3.01	.44	.41**	-.69**					
4. Self-Kindness	3.08	.62	.21**	-.18**	.65**				

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5. Self-Judgement	2.14	.63	-.42**	.71**	-.73**	-.11			
6. Common Humanity	3.18	.58	.26**	-.25**	.67**	.63**	-.25**		
7. Isolation	2.03	.69	-.28**	.74**	-.73**	-.14*	.68**	-.23**	
8. Mindfulness	3.16	.57	.16*	-.18**	.65**	.80**	-.15*	.67**	-.11
9. Over-identification	2.14	.71	-.32**	.70**	-.69**	-.09	.72**	-.13	.74**

Notes. **. Significance level $p < .01$

Based on the results presented in Table 1, it is found that the perception of the competitive environment is negatively correlated with the impostor phenomenon, which differs from the initial hypothesis of a positive correlation between these two variables. This finding suggests that the more likely an individual perceives the academic environment to be competitive, the less likely they will encounter an impostor experience. Self-compassion was also found to be negatively correlated with the experience of the impostor, which means the higher self-compassion levels that an individual has, the less likely they experience the impostor phenomenon. Furthermore, the analysis of the correlation between each dimension of self-compassion and the impostor phenomenon revealed that the dimensions of self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness were negatively correlated with the impostor experience. In contrast, the dimensions of self-judgment, isolation, and overidentification were positively correlated with the impostor phenomenon.

Table 2. Regression analysis for moderating effect of self-compassion on the relationships between perception of competitiveness and impostor phenomenon

	B	SE	t	p-value	R^2
Direct Effects					
Competitiveness (X)	-.547	.230	-2.378	$p < 0.05$	
Self-Compassion (M)	-1.248	.208	-6.003	$p < 0.01$	
Moderating Effects					
Competitiveness * SC (X*M)	.165	.072	2.272	$p < 0.05$	.0125

The researcher conducted a linear regression test to examine the direct relationship between the predictors of the impostor experience. The perception of a competitive environment is initially assumed to have a positive relationship with the impostor experience. However, it is found to negatively predict the impostor phenomenon ($b = -.547$, SE = .230, p = .026). This shows that an increase in individual perception of a competitive environment is associated with a decrease in the likelihood of experiencing the impostor phenomenon. Additionally, the self-compassion variable was confirmed to negatively predict the impostor experience ($b = -1.248$, SE = .208, $p < 0.01$). This finding indicates that an increase in self-compassion is associated with a lower level of impostor experience. Furthermore, the analysis examined the moderating effect of self-compassion on the relationship between perceptions of a competitive environment and impostor experiences. The results demonstrated a significant positive interaction, indicating that self-compassion strengthens the relationship between perceptions of a competitive environment and impostor experiences ($b = .165$, SE = 0.072, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that higher levels of self-compassion may enhance the negative correlation between perceptions of a competitive environment and the experience of impostor phenomenon among individuals.

This study attempts to investigate the relationship between the perception of a competitive environment and self-compassion as predictors that interact to influence students'

impostor experiences. Previous research has proven the influence of both variables in various contexts and examined the impact of impostor experiences on individuals. However, investigations regarding the protective and risk factors influencing impostor experiences are still relatively early. This study hypothesized that the perception of a competitive academic environment may lead to impostor experiences among college students, as previously proven by Canning et al. (2020). Contrarily, this study found a negative relationship between the perception of a competitive environment and impostor experiences. Considering the competitive environment may potentially act as a motivational trigger and also enhance learning strategies (Elliot et al., 2018; Nawaz et al., 2022). Moreover, the impostor phenomenon, specified by the attribution theory, happens when individuals attribute failure to internal factors and success to external factors (Lyden et al., 2002; Hutchins, 2015). Hence, this present study shows when first-year college students are faced with failure or difficulty, it is presumed that they are able to attribute the competitive environment as the external factors that caused their failure, which contrasts with the typical mindset of individuals experiencing impostor feelings.

On top of that, this finding proposes that other factors may contribute to the differences in how students perceive and process competitive environments. Students' perceptions of the competitive settings and their effects on feelings of impostorism may be affected by other constructs. There are several concepts that are often misconstrued as being similar to the impostor phenomenon, such as self-comparison, self-doubt, and self-esteem. Nonetheless, these concepts have also been shown to be related with impostor phenomenon. For instance, individuals with a strong self-comparison orientation will have a tendency to compare themselves to others so that they will be vulnerable to impostor experiences (Fassl et al., 2020; Canning et al., 2020). Likewise, self-esteem was proven to be positively correlated with impostor experience (Cokley et al., 2018). Thus, future studies should conduct an in-depth analysis of the mechanism between perceptions of a competitive environment and impostor experiences, particularly by exploring other constructs that may explain this relationship.

The next finding supports the evidence of previous study research regarding the relationship between self-compassion and impostor experiences (Patzak et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2023; Johnson & Plisco, 2023), in which self-compassion was proven to be negatively correlated with the impostor experiences among first-year college students. Self-compassion plays an important role in fostering the resilience of individuals who experience feelings of impostor (Patzak et al., 2017). Those who struggle with the impostor phenomenon often doubt their abilities, despite how accomplished they are. They are also likely to feel uncertain in regards to whether their skills played any part in their achievements. Feelings of being an impostor are usually followed by pervasive self-doubt and pertain to internalized fear of failure, causing the individuals to fixate on their perceived shortcomings (Parkman, 2016). Individuals who have gone through impostor experiences tend to engage in harsh self-criticism and are less likely to demonstrate feelings of kindness towards themselves. This highlights the negative relationship between impostor experiences and self-compassion. Individuals with higher levels of self-compassion are able to recognize both their strengths and weaknesses, without reflecting too deeply on their negative feelings or thoughts (Neff, 2003a; Neff, 2003b). The results of this study have a similar pattern of findings with the previous research by Liu et al. (2023), which indicates that the positive aspects of self-compassion, such as self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness, were negatively correlated with the impostor phenomenon. In contrast, negative dimensions of self-compassion, such as self-judgement, isolation, and over-identification, show a positive

relationship with the impostor phenomenon. These findings are in accordance with the indications that have been mentioned, namely that individuals who experience feelings of being an impostor have difficulty extending kindness towards themselves (self-kindness) and are overly critical of their own failures (self-judgment). Also, lack of sense of common humanity is presumed to be common among those experiencing impostor phenomenon in which they consider that their weaknesses and struggles were only experienced by them, hence they often feel disconnected when faced with difficulties or obstacles (isolation). Moreover, individuals who experience the impostor phenomenon tend to have low mindfulness, meaning they have a distorted perception of their strengths and weaknesses, as they tend to fixate on their failures and shortcomings (over-identification).

This study aims to prove that self-compassion can moderate the relationship between perceptions of a competitive environment and impostor experiences. Based on the results of the analysis, self-compassion was found to have a positive moderating effect on the relationship between perceptions of a competitive environment and the level of impostor phenomena. Baron and Kenny (1986) explained that moderator variables can affect the intensity or direction of a relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable. In this case, an increased level of self-compassion appears to strengthen the negative correlation between the perceptions of a competitive environment and impostor experiences. Essentially, when an individual possesses a high level of self-compassion, they are less likely to experience impostor phenomenon even if they view their surroundings as highly competitive. This finding is consistent with the previous studies that have successfully proven that self-compassion can weaken the positive relationship between interpersonal shame and impostor experiences among the Asian American community (Wei et al., 2020). This present study clearly shows the importance of self-compassion as a crucial resilience factor for students. Those with strong self-compassion are more likely to maintain a positive outlook and are less susceptible to feelings of inadequacy in spite of the academic challenges and competitive environmental pressures that they experience. Self-compassion has been proven as a buffer against challenging and negative experiences among students, such as psychological distress and academic burnout (Cheraghian et al., 2016; With et al., 2024). In this case, the intrinsic characteristics of self-compassion may assist students who encounter stressors in a competitive environment and also minimize the impacts towards the impostor experience the students might feel (Neff, 2003a; Liu et al., 2023). Self-compassion directly counters the negative attitude and mindset that individuals with impostor experience tend to have. They have the tendency to be overly critical towards one self, have self-doubt, and constant fear of failure and also fear of being exposed as an impostor. On the other hand, self-compassion promotes kindness towards one self and individuals are able to acknowledge their own strengths and also perceive signs of weakness or failures with care instead of judgement. When individuals perceive there is academic competitiveness, self-compassion helps students to navigate through those challenges so it will reduce self-criticism tendencies while also normalising the feelings of inadequacy as something that can be experienced by other students as well. Additionally, instead of feeling anxious and worried about one's own capabilities compared to other competitive individuals, self-compassion also encourages students to have a growth mindset and acknowledge mistakes as part of the learning process. All in all, self-compassion aids students against the effects of the competitive environment and potential risks of the impostor phenomenon by reducing harsh self-criticism tendency, encouraging realistic self-assessment, fostering emotional resilience, and also acknowledging the importance of being kind towards oneself.

This study presents several theoretical and practical implications. Based on the theoretical standpoint, this study seeks to enrich the existing literature on the internal and external factors influencing the impostor phenomenon among college students, especially regarding the perception of a competitive environment and self-compassion. The first result shows that the perception of competitiveness was negatively correlated with impostor phenomenon, which contradicts the previous findings. Therefore, this discovery can serve as a foundation for future research to examine the relationship between the two variables. This study also supports the findings of previous studies, regarding the relationship between self-compassion and the impostor phenomenon, in which there is a significant negative relationship between self-compassion and the impostor phenomenon and also indicates correlation between both the positive and negative dimensions of self-compassion and the impostor phenomenon. And finally, this study has proved that self-compassion significantly moderates the relationship between the perception of competitiveness and impostor experience. It shows the importance of self-compassion to lower the effect of impostor experience when students perceive a competitive environment. Overall, the results of this study provide evidence of how self-compassion is a crucial factor in supporting individuals who have impostor experiences. Hence, from a practical standpoint, methods and strategies related to the concept of self-compassion could be implemented by counselors or educational institutions to develop intervention programs aimed to support students who have the potential to experience the impostor phenomenon. Counselors in higher education can play a pivotal role in helping college students effectively manage academic pressures and feelings of impostors by developing constructive self-compassion strategies. Additionally, they can collaborate with the faculty to promote healthy competition and empower educators to identify and address signs of impostor phenomenon among students. Moreover, parents also play an essential role in children's emotional development and supporting them through academic challenges. Parents need to recognize the signs of the impostor phenomenon, especially in first-year college students facing new pressures. By openly discussing personal challenges and sharing healthy coping strategies, parents can provide valuable emotional support and foster a sense of self-compassion in their children.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the perception of competitiveness was negatively correlated with the impostor phenomenon among first-year college students. The results of the study also show that self-compassion has a significant impact on decreasing the feelings of being an impostor. Additionally, the positive facets of self-compassion were negatively correlated with the impostor phenomenon, while the negative facets of self-compassion were positively correlated with the impostor phenomenon. This research also reveals that self-compassion positively moderates the relationship between the perception of competitiveness and the impostor phenomenon, which proves self-compassion's role in weakening the negative implications of the competitive environment and reducing the potential risks of the impostor phenomenon.

Recommendation

Based on the results and conclusions of this study, here are a few suggestions related to future studies: (1) Further research needs to re-examine the relationship between perceptions of a competitive environment and the impostor phenomenon among students considering that there are inconsistent findings with the previous studies; (2) Further research needs to consider other constructs, such as self-esteem, self-doubt, self-comparison, or other

constructs that may explain the process of the relationship between perceptions of a competitive environment and the impostor phenomenon; (3) Further research needs to explore self-compassion's role as a resilient factor in other contexts, especially relating to the perception of competitiveness and the risks of the impostor phenomenon. For example, how these variables are applied in the workplace environment; (4) Counselors or educational institutions need to consider the prevalence of impostor experience among students and should strategize or implement intervention programs based on the conceptualization of self-compassion. (5) Parents need to be involved in shaping students' self-perception, emotional resilience, and their ability to tackle academic challenges. Parents can help their children by offering support, encouragement, and effective strategies to navigate impostor experiences and manage academic pressures.

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