# Multidimensional Perfectionism and Academic Self-Efficacy as Predictors of Impostor Phenomenon among Undergraduate Students

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**DOI: https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1308000343**

**Received: 10 September 2026; Accepted: 15 September 2026; Published: 25 September 2026**

## ABSTRACT

The Impostor Phenomenon (IP) significantly impacts the mental well-being and academic experiences of undergraduate students; however, its complex relationship with perfectionism and academic self-efficacy remains inconsistently explored within the local Philippine educational context. This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive-predictive correlational design to examine whether the dimensions of multidimensional perfectionism (self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed) and academic self-efficacy significantly predict the intensity of the Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students in the Davao Region. The sample consisted of 185 full-time undergraduate students. Data were collected using the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS), College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES), and Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS). Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine relationships and estimate the extent to which multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy statistically predict impostor experiences. Results indicated that self-oriented perfectionism ($r = 0.382$, $p = .001$), socially prescribed perfectionism ($r = 0.297$, $p = .001$), and other-oriented perfectionism ($r = 0.159$, $p = .031$) were positively associated with the Impostor Phenomenon, whereas academic self-efficacy was negatively associated ($r = -0.253$, $p = .001$). Furthermore, self-oriented perfectionism emerged as the strongest positive predictor, and academic self-efficacy as the strongest negative predictor. These findings highlight that impostor feelings are most strongly predicted by harsh self-evaluation, underscoring the importance of fostering realistic academic standards and robust academic self-efficacy to mitigate impostor phenomenon experiences in higher education contexts.

**Keywords:** Impostor phenomenon, multidimensional perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, undergraduate students

## INTRODUCTION

The Impostor Phenomenon (IP) is a psychological phenomenon defined by individual's self-doubt and having the belief that personal achievements are underserved despite a clear evidence of competence. Globally, the prevalence of IP ranges from 9% to 82% (Bravata et al., 2020), pointing its widespread occurrence across various populations and its negative consequence on the mental wellbeing and performance in a high-achieving setting (Breit et al., 2026). Undergraduate students are particularly at risk of this phenomenon because they encounter increasing demands in school, competitive academic setting, and major life transitions (Pákozdy et al., 2024; Quimbo, 2024). And these vulnerabilities have been constantly linked the Impostor Phenomenon to depression, anxiety, poorer self-management, and reduced wellbeing (Breit et al., 2026). Empirical studies further revealed that maladaptive form of perfectionism tend to increase impostor feeling, meanwhile, self-efficacy tends to the decrease them, suggesting that both of these psychological factors are pivotal association with IP (Pákozdy et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, undergraduate students' experiences of Impostor Phenomenon are shaped not only by the demands from their academic but also by cultural values engraved in Filipino personality and from family

expectations. Filipino values such as *utang na loob*, *hiya*, and strong family expectations encourage students to perform well academically but may also increase the burden to avoid failure which makes them more susceptible to impostor feelings (Alvarez et al., 2026). Consequently, increased parental and societal expectations may serve as contributing factor to academic stress and feelings of inadequacy among Filipino students (Tan et al., 2026). However, research findings in local context regarding academic self-efficacy and impostor phenomenon remain inconsistent. Although global research generally indicates a negative relationship between self-efficacy and impostor feelings, some local research has reported a negligible and non-significant relationship among the variables (Alvarez et al., 2026).

Local studies in Mindanao have also reported substantial impostor experiences among students. Students at Sulu State College showed significant relationships with high levels of impostor syndrome, self-efficacy, and perfectionism (Abduhalim, 2025). Similarly, students at Mindanao State University-Sulu often experienced academic impostor syndrome, alongside moderate self-efficacy and above-average perfectionism. Academic self-efficacy was not significantly associated with impostor syndrome, while perfectionism showed a positive relationship with impostor experiences (Alvarez et al., 2026). These empirical findings suggest that perfectionism may be a more reliable factor in impostor experiences, while self-efficacy may be more complex.

Despite the growing body of literature on impostor phenomenon, important research gaps remain. Although international studies have established associations between perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and impostor feelings, local findings regarding these relationships remain inadequate and inconsistent. Moreover, studies conducted in the Philippine context have often examined multidimensional perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and IP independently rather than examining their predictive relationships within a single quantitative model. Furthermore, limited empirical evidence has examined these variables among undergraduate students in the Davao Region. Therefore, the present undertaking explores whether multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy significantly predict the Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students in the Davao Region. The findings may contribute to a more contextually grounded understanding of factors associated with impostor feelings and provide empirical evidence that may inform student-support initiatives aimed at strengthening academic confidence and psychological well-being in higher education contexts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Impostor Phenomenon

The impostor phenomenon (IP) was first defined by Clance and Imes (1978), refers to an internal experience of intellectual dishonesty in which students struggle to recognize their academic accomplishments despite evidence of competence. Instead of directly manifested in academic performance, the IP appears to be more closely related to how students evaluate and perceive their own abilities.

In a study conducted by Pákozdy et al. (2024), university students with higher levels of IP did not generally differ from their peers in objective academic grades but reported lower self-efficacy and happiness. This finding implies that impostor feelings are associated with negative self-perception rather than actual academic inadequacy. Furthermore, the prevalence of IP can vary across different academic programs. Alzahrani et al. (2026) revealed that students in administrative and humanities colleges reported higher IP scores than those in sciences and health disciplines. Meanwhile, within healthcare education, the IP experience remains highly observed. Khalil et al. (2024) reported that severe impostor classifications were highly prevalent among undergraduate nursing students, while Rice et al. (2023) found that 97% of medical students in their sample reported moderate to intense impostor feelings. These findings highlight that while IP is prevalent, its severity alters across different educational contexts.

### Multidimensional Perfectionism

Multidimensional perfectionism defines as the tendency to set high standards and evaluate one's performance against them. According to the Hewitt and Flett (1991), perfectionism consists of three dimensions: self-oriented perfectionism (SOP), other-oriented perfectionism (OOP), and socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP). And

these dimensions trigger different psychological effects depending on how the standards are experienced by individuals (Pannhausen et al., 2022).

The influence of these dimensions was empirically observed within the Asian context. Among Filipino university students, Tan et al. (2026) found that SOP was associated with both adaptive and maladaptive consequence, including active coping and perceived stress. In contrast, SPP was associated with poorer well-being and less adaptive coping strategies which highlights how pivotal to distinguish the three dimensions of perfections rather than defining it uniformly as maladaptive. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Luo and Liu (2019), they reported that adaptive perfectionism was associated with higher self-efficacy, whereas maladaptive perfectionism correlated with lower self-efficacy. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that perfectionism is a complex and multifaceted construct that shows varying academic consequences.

**Academic Self-Efficacy**

Academic self-efficacy refers to students' beliefs in their ability to successfully perform academic tasks and achieve their desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Schulze, 2020). As a context-specific cognitive belief, it affects students' resilience, effort, and behavioral responses to academic demands. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy develops through verbal persuasion, mastery experiences, and the interpretation of biophysiological states which transforms dynamic belief over time (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016).

Recent findings revealed different baselines of academic self-efficacy across population of students. Alvarez et al. (2026) found moderate academic self-efficacy among Filipino senior high school STEM students, while Abduhalim (2025) reported distinctly high self-efficacy among students from Sulu State College. Beyond a student's academic baseline, Alzahrani et al. (2026) found that self-efficacy positively correlated with subjective happiness and a sense of belonging, suggesting that higher self-beliefs influences positive psychological and social experiences in higher education.

**Interrelations Between Perfectionism, Self-Efficacy, and Impostor Phenomenon**

The relationships among perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and the Impostor Phenomenon (IP) are complex and vary across student populations. Pákozdy et al. (2024) and Pannhausen et al. (2022) found that maladaptive perfectionism and perfectionistic concerns were associated with stronger impostor experiences. Findings on self-efficacy and IP, however, remain inconsistent, with negative relationships reported by Pákozdy et al. (2024), Alzahrani et al. (2026), and Haghighi and Ghorbali (2022), a positive relationship reported by Abduhalim (2025), and a non-significant relationship found by Alvarez et al. (2026). Research on perfectionism and self-efficacy similarly indicates that their relationship differs between adaptive and maladaptive forms (Luo & Liu, 2019; Huang et al., 2023).

Despite these findings, limited research has examined perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and IP together, particularly within local educational contexts. The inconsistent findings, especially regarding self-efficacy and IP, suggest that these relationships may vary according to student characteristics and educational settings. Thus, further research is needed to clarify how these three variables interact among undergraduate students, which the present study aims to address.

**Statement of the Problem**

This study aims to determine whether multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy significantly predict the intensity of the Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students in the Davao Region. Specifically, this study aims to achieve the following:

1. Determine the level of multidimensional perfectionism among the undergraduate students in terms of:

    1.1 Self-Oriented Perfectionism
    1.2 Other-Oriented Perfectionism
    1.3 Socially Prescribed Perfectionism

2. Determine the level of academic self-efficacy among the undergraduate students.
3. Determine the level of the Impostor Phenomenon experienced by the undergraduate students.
4. Analyze the significance of relationship of perfectionism and academic self-efficacy with Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students.
5. Examine whether multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy significantly predict the Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students.

**Hypotheses of the Study**

The following null hypotheses ($H_0$) are formulated to address the research objectives and will be tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

$H_{01}$: There is no significant relationship between individual domains of multidimensional perfectionism and Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students

$H_{02}$: There is no significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students.

$H_{03}$: The dimensions of multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy do not significantly predict the Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on three theoretical frameworks that provide a comprehensive understanding of perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and the Impostor Phenomenon.

The *Cognitive-Behavioral Theory of Aaron Beck (1976)*, explains that impostor feelings originated from having a maladaptive belief of oneself and cognitive distortions. Individuals with high perfectionistic standards tend to base their self-worth on perfect performance which led them to interpret failures as evidence of incompetence. They also minimize their achievements and put their success to external factors which reinforces their feelings of fraudulence (Al Lawati et al., 2025). Thus, this theory explains how multidimensional perfectionism contributes to the impostor phenomenon through distorted thinking and negative self-appraisals.

Building on this cognitive perspective, *Albert Bandura's (1986) Social-Cognitive Theory* emphasizes the role of academic self-efficacy in shaping how students react and behave to academic challenges. Students with high academic self-efficacy perceive difficult academic demands as manageable and trust their abilities, whereas those with low self-efficacy are more likely to doubt their competence which led them to experience impostor feelings (Bandura, 1997; Pákozdy et al., 2024). Therefore, academic self-efficacy serves as a protective factor against the impostor phenomenon.

While these theories explain the independent roles of perfectionism and self-efficacy, *Self-Determination Theory* integrates both of these constructs by highlighting that impostor feelings happen when the psychological need for competence is not satisfied. Maladaptive perfectionism undermines perceived competence through unrealistic standards, while low academic self-efficacy reflects reduced confidence in their own abilities. Overall, these factors increase vulnerability to the impostor phenomenon, particularly in competitive academic environments (Neufeld et al., 2023). Consequently, this theory provides the overarching framework linking multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy to the impostor phenomenon among undergraduate students.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the predictive relationships between multidimensional perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and the Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students.

Multidimensional perfectionism comprises self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism, which, together with academic self-efficacy, serve as the independent variables. Impostor Phenomenon serves as the dependent variable.

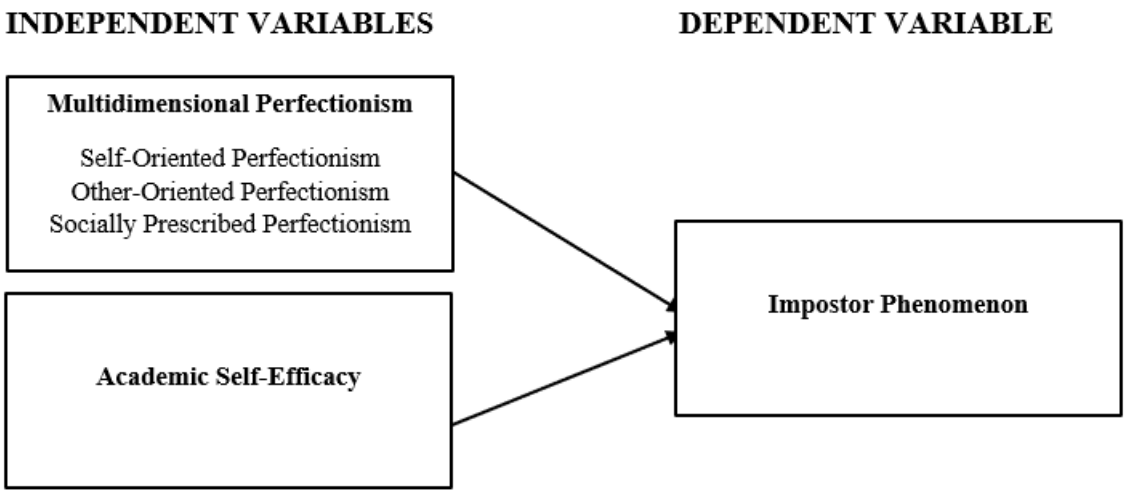


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Relationship Between Multidimensional Perfectionism, Academic Self-Efficacy, and the Impostor Phenomenon Among Undergraduate Students

# METHODOLOGY

## Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive research design with predictive analysis. A descriptive approach was used to systematically document the levels of multidimensional perfectionism and the Impostor Phenomenon among the target demographic (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Furthermore, the predictive correlational aspect of the design was applied to determine whether the variance in the dependent variable (Impostor Phenomenon) could be statistically explained and predicted by the independent variables without manipulating the study environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This design was appropriate for examining the predictive strength of specific cognitive traits on psychological outcomes in natural academic settings.

## Research Respondents

The target population for this study comprised undergraduate students enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) within the Davao Region. Given practical constraints in accessing an overarching administrative registry of all regional institutions, the accessible sampling frame was delimited to full-time undergraduate students enrolled across selected programs and departments at participating HEIs in the region. A multistage sampling approach was utilized. Participating academic programs across key college disciplines (such as Health Sciences, Teacher Education, Arts and Sciences, and Business Administration) served as primary strata to ensure representation across different undergraduate majors. Within these strata, specific class sections across year levels (1st Year to 4th Year) were randomly selected to form the operational sampling frame. The standardized survey battery was created and administered digitally via Google Forms, with link distribution targeted directly to the enrolled students. A total of 215 eligible students across the selected class sections were invited to participate by accessing the Google Form link. A total of 200 submissions were retrieved. Following data cleaning to exclude partial, duplicate, or invalid entries, 185 complete responses were retained, yielding a net valid response rate of 86.0%.

Respondents were included if they: (1) were 18–26 years old; (2) were full-time undergraduate students enrolled in a higher education institution within the Davao Region; (3) could understand and respond to the English-language research instruments; and (4) voluntarily provided informed consent.

Respondents were excluded if they: (1) were graduate, vocational, or non-degree students; (2) were on leave, had withdrawn, or were not actively enrolled during data collection; (3) were enrolled part-time; or (4) submitted incomplete or invalid survey responses.

**Research Instruments**

The study utilized three standardized psychological instruments to measure multidimensional perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and the Impostor Phenomenon.

1. *Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS).* The Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) developed by Hewitt and Flett (1991) will be used to measure multidimensional perfectionism. The instrument consists of 45 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). It comprises three 15-item subscales: Self-Oriented Perfectionism, Other-Oriented Perfectionism, and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). The MPS has demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with studies reporting Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.80 or higher across its three dimensions, supporting its reliability and construct validity among university students (Smith et al., 2022). In the current study, for the present sample (n = 185), the subscales demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients $\alpha = 0.83$ for Self-Oriented Perfectionism, $\alpha = 0.73$ for Other-Oriented Perfectionism, and $\alpha = 0.72$ for Socially Prescribed Perfectionism.

2. *College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES).* Academic self-efficacy will be measured using the College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES) developed by Owen and Froman (1988). The instrument assesses students' confidence in performing a wide range of academic tasks commonly encountered in college, including studying, taking examinations, participating in class, and completing course requirements. Respondents rate their confidence using a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater academic self-efficacy. Previous studies have demonstrated that the CASES possess good internal consistency and construct validity, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically exceeding 0.90, making it a reliable measure of academic self-efficacy among college students (Owen & Froman, 1988). In the current study, the CASES exhibited high internal consistency with a sample Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.92$.

3. *Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS).* The Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) developed by Clance (1985) will be used to measure the Impostor Phenomenon. The instrument consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Not at All True) to 5 (Very True). It assesses the extent to which individuals experience impostor feelings, including self-doubt, fear of failure, and difficulty internalizing success (Clance, 1985). The CIPS is one of the most widely used measures of the Impostor Phenomenon and has demonstrated excellent psychometric properties, including high internal consistency and predictive validity. Recent studies have reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding 0.85 among undergraduate populations across different cultural contexts (Mak et al., 2019). For the current dataset, the CIPS demonstrated strong reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.94$.

**Research Procedure**

The data gathering procedure commenced upon approval from the institutional ethics review committee to ensure compliance with psychological research and data privacy standards. Following administrative approval from the selected universities in the Davao Region, potential respondents were approached and provided with informed consent forms detailing the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of their data. The standardized questionnaires were administered either physically in controlled classroom settings or digitally through a secure online survey platform, depending on institutional protocols. Upon completion, the collected data were systematically extracted, encoded, and cleaned to remove incomplete or invalid responses before being processed using statistical software.

## Data Analysis

The encoded quantitative data was analyzed using *Jamovi*. The following specific statistical tools will be employed to address the research objectives:

*Mean and Standard Deviation:* These descriptive statistics will be utilized to assess and describe the current levels of multidimensional perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and the Impostor Phenomenon among the undergraduate respondents.

*Pearson Product-Moment Correlation:* This inferential statistic will be employed to determine the direction and significant relationship between the three dimensions of multidimensional perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and the overall intensity of the Impostor Phenomenon.

*Multiple Linear Regression:* This predictive statistical treatment will be utilized to determine the predictive ability of the independent variables and identify exactly which dimensions of multidimensional perfectionism (self-oriented, other-oriented, or socially prescribed) and academic self-efficacy serve as the most significant predictors of the Impostor Phenomenon among the target population.

## Interpretation of Means

To describe the levels of multidimensional perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and the Impostor Phenomenon among the respondents, numerical parameter intervals were established using standard equal-width interval calculations (Best & Kahn, 2006; Pimentel, 2019). The parameter boundaries, descriptive levels, and interpretations for both the 5-point and 7-point Likert scales are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Range of Values and Interpretations for Study Variables**

| Variable/Scale | Range of Mean | Descriptive Level | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Academic Self-Efficacy & Impostor Phenomenon | 4.01 – 5.00 | Very High | Demonstrates very strong efficacy / intense impostor feelings |
| | 3.01 – 4.00 | High | Demonstrates high efficacy / frequent impostor feelings |
| | 2.01 – 3.00 | Moderate | Demonstrates moderate efficacy / moderate impostor feelings |
| | 1.01 – 2.00 | Low | Demonstrates low efficacy / few impostor feelings |
| | 0.01 – 1.00 | Very low | Demonstrates minimal efficacy / minimal impostor feelings |
| Multidimensional Perfectionism | 6.15 – 7.00 | Very High | Perfectionistic standards are exceptionally high |
| | 5.29 – 6.14 | High | Perfectionistic standards are frequently high |
| | 4.43 – 5.28 | Moderately High | Perfectionistic standards are moderately high |
| | 3.57 – 4.42 | Moderate | Perfectionistic standards are moderately expressed |
| | 2.71 – 3.56 | Moderately Low | Perfectionistic standards are slightly expressed |
| | 1.86 – 2.70 | Low | Perfectionistic standards are rarely expressed |
| | 1.00 – 1.85 | Very Low | Perfectionistic standards are almost never expressed |

## Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical principles set forth by the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) Code of Ethics (2022). Throughout the research process, the researchers upheld the principles of honesty, integrity, respect for persons, beneficence, and confidentiality to protect the rights and welfare of all respondents.

Respect for the Rights and Dignity of Respondents. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Respondents had the right to decline participation or withdraw at any point without penalty or negative consequences. They were treated with respect regardless of their gender, age, academic program, year level, or personal background.

Informed Consent. Before data collection, respondents received an informed consent form explaining the study's purpose, procedures, estimated completion time, potential risks and benefits, data protection measures, and their rights as research respondents. Only those who voluntarily provided informed consent were included in the study.

Beneficence and Nonmaleficence. The study involved minimal risk, as respondents completed standardized self-report questionnaires. However, some items may have prompted reflection on personal academic experiences and emotions. Respondents were informed that they could skip any question they were uncomfortable answering or discontinue participation at any time. The researchers took measures to minimize potential psychological distress or harm.

Confidentiality and Data Privacy. The privacy of all respondents was strictly protected. No personally identifiable information, such as names or student identification numbers, was collected. Responses were coded using numerical identifiers and stored securely, with access limited to the researchers. The data were used solely for academic purposes and reported in aggregate form to protect respondents' identities.

Data Integrity and Responsible Reporting. The researchers ensured that data were collected, analyzed, and reported accurately and honestly. No data were fabricated, altered, or intentionally omitted. Findings were presented objectively, including results that did not support the proposed hypotheses. All sources were properly acknowledged to uphold academic integrity and prevent plagiarism.

## RESULTS

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of the data gathered from the undergraduate student respondents in the Davao Region. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and Multiple Linear Regression to address the study's specific objectives.

**Table 2. Level of Multidimensional Perfectionism, Academic Self-Efficacy and Impostor Phenomenon among Undergraduate Students**

| ***Variables*** | ***n*** | ***Mean*** | ***SD*** | ***Interpretation*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-Oriented Perfectionism | 185 | 4.46 | 0.811 | Moderately High |
| Other-Oriented Perfectionism | 185 | 3.68 | 0.689 | Moderate |
| Socially Prescribed Perfectionism | 185 | 4.19 | 0.697 | Moderate |
| Academic Self-Efficacy | 185 | 3.48 | 0.545 | High |
| Impostor Phenomenon | 185 | 3.72 | 0.683 | High |

Table 2 presents the levels of multidimensional perfectionism, academic self-efficacy, and Impostor Phenomenon among the 185 undergraduate students in the Davao Region. The results show that Self-Oriented Perfectionism was interpreted at a moderately high level (M = 4.46, SD = 0.811), while Other-Oriented Perfectionism (M = 3.68, SD = 0.689) and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism (M = 4.19, SD = 0.697) were interpreted at moderate levels. Academic Self-Efficacy obtained a high level (M = 3.48, SD = 0.545), while Impostor Phenomenon was also interpreted at a high level (M = 3.72, SD = 0.683). Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents demonstrated relatively strong self-oriented perfectionistic tendencies, high academic self-efficacy, and high levels of Impostor Phenomenon.

**Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix for Multidimensional Perfectionism, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Impostor Phenomenon**

| *Variables* | **Impostor Phenomenon** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ***Pearson's r*** | ***p=value*** | ***Decision on $H_0$*** | ***Interpretation*** |
| Self-Oriented Perfectionism | 0.382 | 0.001 | Reject $H_{01}$ | Significant |
| Other-Oriented Perfectionism | 0.159 | 0.031 | Reject $H_{01}$ | Significant |
| Socially Prescribed Perfectionism | 0.297 | 0.001 | Reject $H_{01}$ | Significant |
| Academic Self-Efficacy | -0.253 | 0.001 | Reject $H_{02}$ | Significant |

Table 3 presents the relationship of multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy with the Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students in the Davao Region. The results show that Self-Oriented Perfectionism has a significant positive relationship with Impostor Phenomenon ($r = 0.382$, $p = 0.001$). Similarly, Other-Oriented Perfectionism has a significant positive relationship with Impostor Phenomenon ($r = 0.159$, $p = 0.031$), while Socially Prescribed Perfectionism also demonstrates a significant positive relationship with Impostor Phenomenon ($r = 0.297$, $p = 0.001$). In contrast, Academic Self-Efficacy has a significant negative relationship with Impostor Phenomenon ($r = -0.253$, $p = 0.001$). Thus, the null hypotheses were rejected, indicating that the three dimensions of multidimensional perfectionism are significantly and positively associated with Impostor Phenomenon, whereas academic self-efficacy is significantly and negatively associated with Impostor Phenomenon among the respondents.

**Diagnostic Tests for Regression Assumptions**

Prior to interpreting the multiple linear regression model, standard diagnostic tests were conducted to verify regression assumptions. Multicollinearity was assessed using Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) and Tolerance values. VIF values ranged from 1.06 to 1.16, well below the conservative threshold of 5.0, and Tolerance values ranged from 0.864 to 0.945, confirming the absence of multicollinearity among the predictor variables. Cook's distance values indicated that individual observations did not exert undue influence on the model parameters (*Mean = 0.0056, Max = 0.0907*), well within the standard limit of < 1.0. Although the Shapiro–Wilk test indicated minor variance in residual normality ($W = 0.982$, $p = .018$), multiple linear regression remains robust to slight non-normality given the sample size ($N = 185$).

**Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Impostor Phenomenon from Multidimensional Perfectionism and Academic Self-Efficacy**

| ***Predictor*** | ***Estimate*** | ***SE*** | ***95% Confidence Interval*** | | ***t*** | ***p*** | ***Std. Estimate*** | ***VIF*** | ***Decision on $H_0$*** | ***Interpretation*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ***Lower*** | ***Upper*** | | | | | | |
| *Intercept* | 2.563 | 0.4022 | 1.7689 | 3.356 | 6.37 | < .001 | | | | |
| Self-Oriented Perfectionism | 0.339 | 0.0550 | 0.2302 | 0.447 | 6.16 | < .001 | 0.402 | 1.16 | Reject $H_{03}$ | Significant |
| Other-Oriented Perfectionism | 0.157 | 0.0634 | 0.0317 | 0.282 | 2.47 | .014 | 0.158 | 1.11 | Reject $H_{03}$ | Significant |
| Socially Prescribed Perfectionism | 0.191 | 0.0612 | 0.0700 | 0.311 | 3.12 | .002 | 0.195 | 1.06 | Reject $H_{03}$ | Significant |
| Academic Self-Efficacy | −0.495 | 0.0807 | −0.6546 | −0.336 | −6.14 | < .001 | −0.396 | 1.13 | Reject $H_{03}$ | Significant |

$R = 0.580$, $R^2 = 0.337$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.322$, $F(4, 180) = 22.80$, $p < .001$

Table 4 presents the multiple linear regression model examining the predictive capacity of multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy regarding the Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students in the Davao Region. The overall model was statistically significant, $F = 22.80$, $p < .001$, with an $R^2 = 0.337$, which

indicates that 33.7% of the variance in the respondents' Impostor Phenomenon can be accounted for by Self-Oriented Perfectionism, Other-Oriented Perfectionism, Socially Prescribed Perfectionism, and Academic Self-Efficacy. This model can be expressed as: Impostor Phenomenon = 2.563 + 0.339 (Self-Oriented Perfectionism) + 0.157 (Other-Oriented Perfectionism) + 0.191 (Socially Prescribed Perfectionism) − 0.495 (Academic Self-Efficacy).

Among the predictors, Self-Oriented Perfectionism significantly predicted Impostor Phenomenon (B = 0.339, SE = 0.055, t = 6.16, p < .001, β = 0.402), while Other-Oriented Perfectionism also significantly predicted Impostor Phenomenon ($B$ = 0.157, $SE$ = 0.063, $t$ = 2.47, $p$ = .014, β = 0.158). Similarly, Socially Prescribed Perfectionism significantly predicted Impostor Phenomenon ($B$ = 0.191, $SE$ = 0.061, $t$ = 3.12, p = .002, $\beta$ = 0.195). In contrast, Academic Self-Efficacy significantly and negatively predicted Impostor Phenomenon ($B$ = −0.495, SE = 0.081, $t$ = −6.14, p < .001, $\beta$ = −0.396). Thus, $H_{03}$ was rejected, indicating that the dimensions of multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy significantly predict Impostor Phenomenon among the respondents. The results indicate that all four predictors contribute significantly to explaining Impostor Phenomenon, with Self-Oriented Perfectionism showing the strongest positive standardized predictive effect, while Academic Self-Efficacy showed the strongest negative standardized predictive effect.

# DISCUSSION

### Multidimensional Perfectionism and Impostor Phenomenon

Among the three dimensions of perfectionism, Self-Oriented Perfectionism (SOP) emerged as the strongest positive predictor of the Impostor Phenomenon (IP). This suggests that students who impose demanding standards on themselves and evaluate their performance critically may be more vulnerable to impostor feelings. This finding is consistent with previous research linking perfectionism with IP (Pákozdy et al., 2024; Pannhausen et al., 2022). However, SOP should not be viewed as inherently maladaptive, as high personal standards may also support achievement. Rather, its relationship with IP may become more problematic when high standards are accompanied by excessive self-criticism, concerns about failure, or doubts about one's performance.

Socially Prescribed Perfectionism (SPP) was also positively related to IP, indicating that perceived expectations from significant others may be associated with greater impostor feelings. Other-Oriented Perfectionism (OOP), in contrast, demonstrated the weakest relationship with IP. This pattern is broadly consistent with the multidimensional framework of Hewitt and Flett (1991), which distinguishes perfectionism directed toward the self, perceived expectations of others, and expectations imposed on others. However, the present finding that SOP was the strongest predictor differs from Pannhausen et al. (2022), who found that SPP showed the strongest association with IP, while SOP was also related to IP and OOP demonstrated a weaker association. This difference may reflect variations in sample characteristics, academic contexts, or cultural environments.

### Academic Self-Efficacy and Impostor Phenomenon

Academic Self-Efficacy demonstrated a significant negative relationship with the Impostor Phenomenon (IP). This finding is theoretically consistent with Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory and empirically supported by previous research showing an inverse relationship between self-efficacy and IP (Pákozdy et al., 2024; Alzahrani et al., 2026).

While these findings are consistent with several recent studies (Pákozdy et al., 2024; Alzahrani et al., 2026), the broader literature remains mixed. However, findings are not entirely consistent. Abduhalim (2025), for example, reported a significant positive association between impostor syndrome and self-efficacy among students at Sulu State College, contrasting with the negative relationship observed in the present study and in Pákozdy et al. (2024).

The coexistence of high Academic Self-Efficacy and high IP in this study is particularly notable. It suggests that a student's confidence in executing academic tasks does not automatically translate into internalizing the

resulting success. For example, a student might be fully confident in their ability to complete a complex research project, yet still doubt whether they truly deserved the high grade they received.

Ultimately, while Academic Self-Efficacy serves as a vital protective factor against IP, it does not completely eliminate it. Students can possess the capability and confidence to perform exceptionally well, while still struggling to accept their achievements as proof of their genuine competence.

**Predictive Contributions of Perfectionism and Academic Self-Efficacy**

Regression analysis revealed that all three dimensions of perfectionism and Academic Self-Efficacy significantly predict the Impostor Phenomenon (IP). Self-Oriented Perfectionism (SOP) emerged as the strongest positive predictor, while Academic Self-Efficacy was the strongest negative predictor. This highlights the critical role that a student's personal performance standards and self-perceived capabilities play when evaluated together.

The strong predictive power of SOP aligns with recent studies (Pákozdy et al., 2024; Pannhausen et al., 2022) and a meta-analysis by Breit et al. (2026), which found that perfectionistic concerns show a stronger association with IP than perfectionistic strivings. This suggests that impostor feelings do not stem simply from a desire to achieve excellence, but rather from excessive self-criticism, fear of failure, and the perceived gap between one's standards and actual performance.

Conversely, Academic Self-Efficacy's role as the strongest negative predictor reinforces Bandura's (1997) theory. Students with strong efficacy beliefs approach challenges with greater confidence and are more likely to interpret academic setbacks as temporary or task-specific hurdles, rather than evidence of fundamental inadequacy.

Overall, the regression model explained 33.7% of the variance in IP. While this provides a meaningful explanation of impostor experiences, the remaining variance points to the influence of other factors. As Quimbo et al. (2024) identified, elements such as grade dissatisfaction, social comparison, lack of validation, and university transitions also contribute to IP. Thus, the Impostor Phenomenon remains a complex, multidimensional experience that extends beyond just perfectionism and academic confidence.

**Integration of the Findings**

Taken together, these findings indicate that the Impostor Phenomenon (IP) is deeply tied to how students evaluate themselves and their capabilities. Self-Oriented Perfectionism (SOP) served as the strongest positive predictor, showing that demanding internal standards and excessive self-criticism increase vulnerability to IP. Conversely, Academic Self-Efficacy emerged as the strongest negative predictor, acting as a crucial buffer against impostor feelings.

This dynamic aligns perfectly with the study's foundational frameworks. Beck's (1976) Cognitive-Behavioral perspective explains how unrealistic standards are associated with feelings of inadequacy, while Bandura's (1997) Social-Cognitive Theory illustrates how strong capability beliefs help students navigate academic challenges. Additionally, Self-Determination Theory (Neufeld et al., 2023) underscores the vital role that perceived competence plays in mitigating impostor feelings and supporting overall psychological well-being.

Ultimately, these results confirm that impostor experiences do not reflect a genuine lack of ability. The coexistence of high Academic Self-Efficacy and high IP highlights a critical distinction: students can be highly capable of executing tasks, yet still struggle to feel deserving of their success. Therefore, addressing IP requires more than just boosting academic skills. Future interventions must focus on helping students set realistic standards, minimize self-criticism, and cultivate healthier ways to internalize their achievements

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that multidimensional perfectionism and academic self-efficacy are significantly related to and predictive of Impostor Phenomenon among undergraduate students in the Davao Region. All three dimensions of perfectionism were positively associated with IP, with Self-Oriented Perfectionism showing the strongest relationship and predictive contribution. Academic Self-Efficacy was negatively associated with and predicted IP, indicating that stronger academic confidence is linked with fewer impostor experiences.

Overall, the findings suggest that impostor experiences may be influenced not simply by students' academic ability but by how they evaluate their performance and perceive their competence. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted cautiously because the non-experimental, predictive-correlational design does not establish causality. Furthermore, this study examined undergraduate students within selected higher education institutions in the Davao Region; thus, generalization of the findings to the broader regional student population should be made with caution due to the accessible sampling frame boundaries. The use of self-report measures may have also introduced response bias.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, higher education institutions may develop student-support programs that promote realistic academic standards, healthy responses to mistakes, and stronger academic self-efficacy. Guidance and counseling services may address excessive self-criticism and impostor-related self-doubt, while faculty members may foster learning environments that emphasize growth and improvement rather than flawless performance. Students may also be encouraged to recognize and internalize their accomplishments and distinguish healthy achievement striving from excessive perfectionism.

Future researchers may examine additional factors associated with IP, including self-esteem, fear of failure, academic stress, social comparison, and psychological well-being. Larger and more diverse samples, as well as longitudinal or qualitative approaches, may further clarify these relationships across different educational contexts.

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