

MANIFESTATIONS OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME IN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT DURHAM UNIVERSITY



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INTRODUCTION
Imposter Syndrome (IS) is a psychological phenomenon where individuals experience pervasive feelings of self-doubt and fear of being exposed as frauds, despite evidence of their competence and accomplishments. This study investigates the manifestation of IS among international students at Durham University, focusing on how their non-native accents and cultural differences contribute to their feelings of inadequacy and sense of belonging.



RESEARCH AIM
This research report aims to elucidate the factors contributing to imposter syndrome and suggest ways in which Durham University can foster a more inclusive and supportive academic environment for international students.

KEY FINDINGS

<p>Cultural Differences Students reported feeling profoundly out of place due to unfamiliarity with British cultural norms and references.</p>	<p>Academic Pressure The transition to postgraduate studies intensified feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, particularly for non-native English speakers.</p>
<p>Financial Disparities Economic divides exacerbated feelings of exclusion, as some students struggled to participate in social events and extracurricular activities.</p>	<p>Gender and Racial Factors Intersectionality of race and gender compounded IS experiences, particularly in male-dominated academic spaces.</p>

METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative study design
- In-depth interviews with three international students at Durham University
- Focus on non-native accents and cultural differences
- Examination of their feelings of inadequacy and sense of belonging



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
This study draws on the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) to analyze how multiple identity factors interact with IS. It also considers Bourdieu's (1986) notion of cultural capital to understand how unfamiliarity with local cultural norms impacts academic integration and self-perception.

ANALYSIS

- Increase diverse representation in leadership roles
- Offer inclusive, low-cost activities and support systems.
- Provide workshops and counselling for imposter syndrome.
- Establish peer networks and mentorship for students with similar backgrounds.
- Promote academic practices that value diverse contributions.
- Address financial disparities with additional support and affordable opportunities.
- Raise awareness of imposter syndrome and reduce its stigma.

CONCLUSION
This study provides insight into the multifaceted nature of IS among international students at Durham University. By illuminating the interplay between cultural, linguistic, and academic factors, we contribute to a more nuanced understanding of IS in diverse academic settings. Our findings underscore the need for institutions to adopt holistic approaches to support international students, fostering an inclusive environment that validates diverse experiences and promotes academic success.

Scan for Research Project and References



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