Self-Compassion, Fear of Failure and Imposter Syndrome in Working Professionals



Muhammad Sultan Ul Arfeen
03-171222-013

Muhammad Ali
03-171222-019

BAHRIA UNIVERSITY LAHORE CAMPUS

Self-Compassion, Fear of Failure and Imposter Syndrome in Working Professionals



Muhammad Sultan Ul Arfeen
03-171222-013

Muhammad Ali
03-171222-019

Supervisor Name

Dr Usman Rasheed Ch

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science (Psychology)

May 2026

Department of Professional Psychology
BAHRIA UNIVERSITY LAHORE CAMPUS

APPROVAL FOR EXAMINATION

Scholar's Name: Muhammad Sultan Ul Arfeen & Muhammad Ali

Registration No: 78630 & 78646

Program of the study: Bachelor of Science in Psychology

Thesis Title: "Self-Compassion, Fear of Failure and Imposter Syndrome In Working Professionals"

I hereby confirm that I am satisfied with the completion of the scholar's thesis, and I believe it meets the appropriate standards for examination and submission. The Plagiarism test, conducted using the HEC prescribed software, returned a similarity index of 9%, which is within the permissible limit set by the HEC for BS degree thesis. Additionally, the thesis adheres to BU's recognized format for BS thesis.

Principal Supervisor Signature:

Date:

Name: Dr Usman Rasheed Ch

DECLARATION

We, M. Sultan and M. Ali hereby state that my BS thesis titled **"Self – Compassion, Fear of Failure and Imposter Syndrome in Working Professionals"** is our own work and has not been submitted previously by us for taking any degree from the university **Bahria University** or anywhere else in the country/world.

At any time if my statement is found to be incorrect even after our Graduation the university has the right to withdraw/cancel our degree.

Name of Students: M. Sultan and M. Ali

Date:

PLAGIARISM UNDERTAKING

We, solemnly declare that the research work presented in the thesis titled "Self – Compassion, Fear of Failure and Imposter Syndrome in Working Professionals" is solely my research work with no significant contribution from any other person. Small contribution/help wherever taken has been duly acknowledged and that complete thesis has been written by me.

We understand the zero-tolerance policy of the HEC and Bahria University Lahore Campus towards plagiarism. Therefore, I as an author of the above titled thesis declare that no portion of my thesis has been plagiarized, and any material used as reference is properly referred/cited.

We undertake that if we are found guilty of any formal plagiarism in the above titled thesis even after award of BS degree, the university reserves the right to withdraw/revoke our BS degree and that HEC and the University has the right to publish our names on the HEC/University website on which the names of the students are placed who submitted plagiarized thesis.

Scholar's Sign: _____

Name of Students: M. Sultan and M. Ali

DEDICATION

We dedicate this thesis to Almighty Allah for we could not have achieved this work successfully without His endless blessings, guidance and mercy. We dedicate this Thesis wholeheartedly to Parents, Siblings, and ourselves. We are deeply grateful to our parents as we acknowledge that without their guidance and constant love, we would not have become the individuals we are today**.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, we would like to thank Allah Almighty who helped us throughout this journey of research work. Allah has given me the strength to complete this task whenever we felt down. We would like to acknowledge efforts of our Supervisor Dr. Usman Rasheed Chaudhary, for his valuable guidance, continuous support, encouragement, and constructive feedback during the completion of this thesis. His mentorship, knowledge, and dedication greatly contributed to the successful completion of this research work. We are also sincerely thankful to all our respected teachers who taught and guided us throughout our academic journey. Their knowledge, efforts, and encouragement helped us improve our academic and professional skills. We would also like to thank our family for their prayers, sacrifices, love, and endless support during every stage of our studies. Special thanks to our friends for their motivation, cooperation, and encouragement throughout this process. Finally, we are grateful to everyone who directly or indirectly contributed to the successful completion of this thesis.

M Sultan & M Ali

ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to investigate the complex relationship among self-compassion, fear of failure and imposter syndrome in working adult population of Pakistan. With a fast-paced working world, it is not uncommon for professionals to experience imposter syndrome – a low sense of self-worth and fear that they don't have the knowledge or skills needed to be an intellectual impostor. Self-compassion is a known psychological resilience factor against such distresses, however, how it works in collectivist cultures of the South Asians has been less examined. Due to this, this study had a quantitative, cross-sectional design that examined a mediation role of general fear of failure between the relation between self-compassion and imposter syndrome. This research was conducted with a large sample of 212 working professionals in a variety of sectors including Health care, education and information technology. Data was collected using the following self-reported questionnaires: Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS-20), Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI-5) and the Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form (SCS-SF). Pearson correlation analysis was used to interpret direct relationships between variables and the PROCESS macro for SPSS was used for determining indirect relationships. There were significant and negative associations between self-compassion and fear of failure and imposter syndrome. Moreover, there was a strong correlation between high level of fear of failure and imposter syndrome. Importantly, the mediation analysis supported the significant inverse relationship between self-compassion and imposter syndrome, where fear of failure significantly mediated this relationship. Understanding and cultivating self-compassion can reduce fear of failure, thereby reducing the strength of imposter feelings, and impact organizational well-being interventions.

Keywords: Self – Compassion, Fear of Failure, Imposter Sundrome, Working

Professional, Mediation, SPSS.

Table of Content

Chapter 1 ..... **1**
1.1 Introduction 1

Chapter 2 ..... **5**
2.1 Literature Review 5
2.2 Theoretical Framework 8
2.3 Conceptual Framework 10
2.4 Problem Statement 10
2.5 Significance and Rationale of Study 12
2.6 Research Gap 14
2.7 Research Objectives 14
2.8 Research Questions 15
2.9 Research Hypotheses 15

Chapter 3 ..... **17**
Methods 17
3.1 Operational Definitions 17
2.8 Research Design 17
3.3 Participants 17
3.4 Inclusion Criteria 18
3.5 Exclusion Criteria 18
3.6 Measures 19
3.7 Procedure 20
3.8 Statistical Analysis 21
3.9 Ethical Considerations 21

Chapter 4 ..... **23**
Results 23
Table 4.1 23
Table 4.2 25
Table 4.3 26
Table 4.4 27
Table 4.5 28
Table 4.6 30

Chapter 5 ..... **31**

5.1 Discussion 31
5.2 Conclusion 34
5.3 Strengths 34
5.4 Implications 34
5.5 Limitations 35
5.6 Recommendations 36

References **38**

Appendices **43**

Appendix A 43
Appendix B 45
Appendix C 46
Appendix D 51

List of Tables

Table No	Title
4.1	Demographics Profile (N=212)
4.2	Reliability Analysis of Study Variables (N=212)
4.3	Correlation Analysis Among Study Variables (N= 212)
4.4	Independent Sample T – Test Across Gender Among Variables
4.5	Fear Of Failure as Mediator Between Self-Compassion And Imposter Syndrome In Working Professionals
4.6	One-Way Analysis of Professions Difference Among Study Variables

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
APA	American Psychological Association
PSS	Psychological Support System
HR	Human Resource
IT	Information Technology
PFAI	Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory
CIPS	Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale
SCS - SF	Self-Compassion Scale – Short Form
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

List Of Symbols

Symbol	Full Form
α	Alpha Cronbach's Index of Internal Consistency
β	Standardized Coefficient
f	Frequency
M	Mean
SD	Standard Deviation
%	Percentage
r	Correlation Coefficient

List of Appendices

Appendices		Page No
Appendix A	Permission Letter from Department of Professional Psychology	44
Appendix B	Consent Form	46
Appendix C	Questionnaire	47
Appendix D	Plagiarism Report	52