

Impostor syndrome and academic hardiness: Investigating the impact on academic anxiety students

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Abstract: Academic life serves as a process for students to develop their abilities; however, in reality, not all students can optimize their potential. This is often related to internal factors such as emotions, feelings, and perceptions. This study aims to examine the influence of impostor syndrome tendencies and academic hardiness on academic anxiety. The research method employed is quantitative. The subjects of this study were 205 students from Mulawarman University in Samarinda, selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using scales measuring academic anxiety, impostor syndrome, and academic hardiness. The data analysis technique used was multiple linear regression, with data analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0 for Windows. The results of the study indicate that (1) there is a significant influence of impostor syndrome and academic resilience on academic anxiety, with an F-value of 43.279 > F-table of 3.23 and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, contributing 30% of the variance; (2) there is a significant positive influence of impostor syndrome on academic anxiety, with a beta coefficient (β) = 0.459, t-value = 7.186, and $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$); and (3) there is a significant negative influence of academic hardiness on academic anxiety, with a beta coefficient (β) = -0.171, t-value = -2.676, and $p = 0.008$ ($p < 0.05$). a coefficient beta (β) value of 0.363, t value = 2.407, and $p = 0.021$ ($p < 0.05$); (3) there is a significant negative influence of academic hardiness on academic anxiety with a coefficient beta (β) value of -0.472, t value = -3.127, and $p = 0.003$ ($p < 0.05$). The study finds that impostor syndrome and academic hardiness significantly influence academic anxiety, with impostor syndrome showing a positive impact and academic hardiness showing a negative impact.

Keywords: Academic anxiety; Impostor Syndrome; Academic Hardiness

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INTRODUCTION

Academics have become a crucial process for students. This process determines the career path they will take in the future, and students who utilize their academic process well can pave the way for their success. Sholichah et al. (2019) explain that students are responsible for their futures, and with a good and positive academic approach, they can tackle current problems. Certainly, maintaining mental health is essential to staying positive and responsible in developing their potential (Susanti, 2018).

Being mentally healthy means feeling internally happy, being able to manage stress, recognizing one's potential, and thinking positively. However, in reality, many students still experience mental health issues (Nur et al., 2023). Mental health problems are very common during the academic process (Seehuus et al., 2021). According to WHO (2023), there has been

a 25% increase in global mental health issues, with anxiety being the most common. Research by Yang and Yang (2022) also indicates that approximately 10% to 38% of students experience academic anxiety, with moderate to severe anxiety levels reaching around 5% of the research sample. Students who experience academic anxiety will negatively impact their potential and performance in college.

Academic anxiety is a condition in which students feel worried and emotionally disturbed, affecting their sense of security. It is associated with the strength and weakness of self-confidence and personal characteristics when facing certain situations, particularly in an academic environment (Muawanah & Asdar, 2021). The psychological reactions that arise when facing an academic event, along with the often unpleasant emotions and accompanying physiological symptoms, are also referred to as academic anxiety (Yang & Yang, 2022)

It can be concluded that academic anxiety is a condition where individuals experience feelings of threat, nervousness, fear, worry, and tension during academic activities due to an excited nervous system. Based on the aforementioned conditions, researchers will conduct a study on undergraduate students of Mulawarman University. Previous research discussing academic anxiety has shown that subjects tend to have high levels of academic anxiety, with results indicating that 73.64% of students in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences experience academic anxiety (Sukman et al., 2022).

The psychological patterns and experiences of individuals who feel deceived and tend to doubt their abilities and achievements, perceiving themselves as incompetent and inferior compared to their peers when facing academic and career-related tasks, are referred to as impostor syndrome (Walker & Saklofske, 2023). Impostor syndrome is characterized by individuals who believe their academic success is a deception to others because they think it does not match their actual achievements (Campos et al., 2022). These individuals continually doubt their intellectual abilities and feel that their accomplishments are fraudulent.

Furthermore, research by Campos et al. (2022). has identified that approximately 30% of students in medical, dental, nursing, and pharmacy schools in Brazil experience impostor syndrome. This finding also indicates that feelings associated with impostor syndrome are linked to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and burnout (Gottlieb et al., 2020). Earlier research by Fandrayani et al. (2021) also indicated that about 70% of the global population experiences at least one episode of impostor syndrome, with students being at the highest risk. The study found a significant relationship between individuals experiencing impostor syndrome and symptoms of anxiety, both state anxiety and trait anxiety.

Previous research conducted by Rohmadani dan Winarsih (2019) indicates a relationship between impostor syndrome and academic anxiety in first-year university students, accounting for 17.5%. The findings suggest that lower levels of impostor syndrome are associated with reduced anxiety among these students. Individuals with high hardiness are likely to experience less anxiety as they have confidence in their abilities. According to Spiridon (2022) hardiness can enhance individual engagement with tasks, leading to superior academic performance. A resilient personality can motivate individuals to complete their academic tasks, enabling them to reach their potential in specific fields.

Previous research by Ginting (2022) demonstrated a negative relationship between hardiness and anxiety, with a correlation coefficient of -0.486. This indicates that higher academic hardiness tends to be associated with lower academic anxiety, and conversely, lower academic hardiness tends to be associated with higher academic anxiety.

This study offers a unique perspective compared to previous research, addressing phenomena that have not been extensively explored. The novelty of this research lies in its

examination of the impact of impostor syndrome and academic hardiness on academic anxiety, variables that have not been tested together in prior studies.

Based on the background elaborated regarding the tendencies of impostor syndrome and academic hardiness, and their influence on academic anxiety, it is evident that these conditions are prevalent in recent times, specifically in 2023. This makes it an important and intriguing topic for researchers. Consequently, this study aims to explore the influence of impostor syndrome tendencies and academic hardiness on academic anxiety among undergraduate students at Mulawarman University, Samarinda.

METHODS

In this study, the researcher used the quantitative approach and cross-sectional online survey method to collect data on the influence of impostor syndrome tendencies and academic hardiness on academic anxiety among undergraduate students at Mulawarman University. The sampling in this study used purposive sampling, which is a technique for selecting samples based on criteria or considerations relevant to the quantitative research, particularly in cases where the research does not generalize a subject (Sugiyono, 2018). Therefore, the researcher selected a sample of 205 undergraduate students from Mulawarman University, who experienced academic anxiety, impostor syndrome, and academic hardiness.

The research instruments utilized in this study encompass three components: academic anxiety scale, impostor syndrome scale, and academic hardiness scale. Data collection for this research employed applied testing techniques, namely validity and reliability tests. The academic anxiety scale, adapted by Muawanah and Asdar (2021) comprises three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and physical. This scale demonstrates a reliability value of 0.872. The impostor syndrome scale was modified based on the research conducted by Walker and Saklofske (2023) consisting of three facets: external attribution, negative self-beliefs, and self-handicapping behavior. The reliability coefficient for this scale is 0.671. The academic hardiness scale was developed through research conducted by Muhajirin (2022) encompassing three aspects: control, commitment, and challenge. This scale exhibits a reliability value of 0.673.

Likert-type scale was employed as the measurement scale in this study. Likert scale is utilized to gauge individuals' or groups' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions regarding social phenomena (Sugiyono, 2018). The scale constructed adopts the Likert format, offering four answer alternatives. These scales are categorized into favorable and unfavorable statements, with four response options: Very Suitable, Suitable, Not Suitable, and Not Suitable at All.

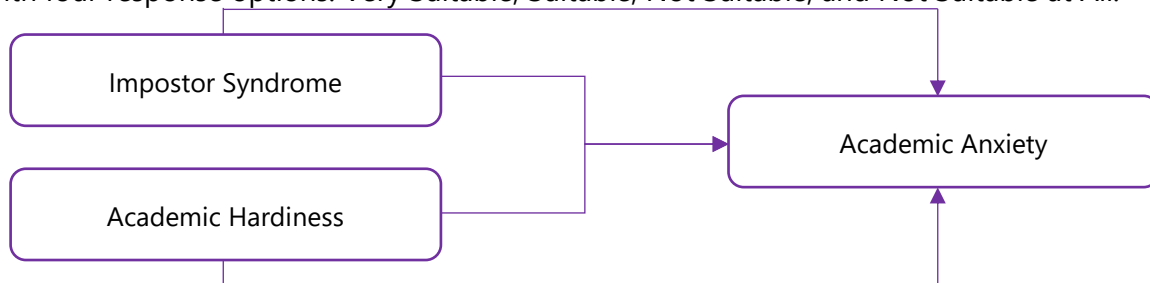


Figure 1. The Research Framework

The data analysis conducted in managing research data involves using multiple linear regression analysis to determine the extent of influence and predictive ability of both independent variables impostor syndrome and academic hardiness on the dependent variable academic anxiety. The overall data analysis technique is performed with the assistance of the

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer program version 26.0 for Windows. Prior to hypothesis testing, descriptive analysis and assumption testing will first be conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The empirical mean and hypothetical mean were obtained from instruments filled out by the research subjects, namely the academic anxiety scale, impostor syndrome scale, and academic hardiness scale. The empirical and hypothetical means are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. Empirical Mean and Hypotical Means

Variable	Empirical Mean	Hypothetical Mean	Level
Academic Anxiety	57.56	60	Low
Impostor Syndrome	47.23	50	Low
Academic Hardiness	41.23	42.5	Low

Based on Table 1, the measurement results through the academic anxiety scale yielded an empirical mean of 57.56, which is smaller than the hypothetical mean of 60, indicating a low status. These results indicate that the subjects have low academic anxiety. Based on the measurement results of the impostor syndrome scale, an empirical mean of 47.23 was obtained, which is smaller than the hypothetical mean of 50, indicating a low status. These results suggest that the subjects in this study have a low level of impostor syndrome. Based on the measurement results of the academic hardiness scale, an empirical mean of 41.23 was obtained, which is larger than the hypothetical mean of 42.5, indicating a low status. These results indicate that the subjects in this study have high academic hardiness. The researchers proceeded to conduct hypothesis analysis using a multiple regression model. The results of the regression model testing involving the variables impostor syndrome and academic hardiness on academic anxiety collectively yielded the Table 2.

Table 2. Regression Analysis of the Full Model

Variable	F value	Tab-F	R ²	P
Academic Anxiety (Y)				
Impostor Syndrome (X ₁)	43.279	3.23	0.300	0.000
Academic Hardiness (X ₂)				

The results from Table 2 indicate that the calculated F value > tabulated F, and p < 0.05, indicating that impostor syndrome and academic hardiness towards academic anxiety have a significant influence, with a calculated F value of 43.279, R² = 0.300, and p = 0.000. This implies that the major hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely that there is an influence of impostor syndrome and academic hardiness on academic anxiety. The Table 3 is the result of stepwise regression analysis.

Table 3. Stepwise Regression Analysis

Variable	Beta	T-Val	Tab-T	p
Impostor syndrome (X ₁) Academic Anxiety (Y)	0.459	7.186	2.017	0.000
Academic Hardiness (X ₂) Academic Anxiet (Y)	-0.171	-2.676	2.017	0.008

From the data in Table 4, it can be observed that the calculated t-value > tabulated t and the p-value are less than 0.05, indicating a significant influence of impostor syndrome on academic anxiety with a coefficient beta (β) = 0.459, calculated t = 7.186, and p = 0.000 (p < 0.05). This signifies that the minor hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely that there is an influence of impostor syndrome on academic anxiety. Similarly, academic hardiness towards

academic anxiety shows that the calculated $t <$ tabulated t and the p -value is less than 0.05, indicating a significant influence with a coefficient beta (β) = -0.171, calculated $t = -2.676$, and $p = 0.008$ ($p < 0.05$). This means that the minor hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely that there is an influence of academic hardiness on academic anxiety.

Discussion

Based on the results of research conducted on students of the University of Mulawarman, the hypothesis testing of the full regression analysis model revealed that the major hypothesis in this study was accepted, indicating the influence of impostor syndrome and academic hardiness on academic anxiety. The contribution of the influence (R^2) is 0.300, meaning that 30% of the variation in academic anxiety can be explained by impostor syndrome and academic hardiness. According to Sugiyono (2018) the coefficient interval falls within the range of 0.200 to 0.399, categorized as low. This indicates that the level of influence of impostor syndrome and academic hardiness on academic anxiety falls into the low category.

These findings align with previous research by Muawanah and Asdar (2021) which states that factors influencing academic anxiety among students include internal factors within the students themselves, such as being overly sensitive to others' words or external attributions, and conversely, if the student's commitment directs academic goals. These internal factors will influence the student's behavior in academics, whether they are emotionally unstable or have sufficient commitment. Supported by research conducted by Fahira and Hayat (2021) it is stated that high levels of negative feelings in academics will result in high levels of anxiety as well.

Internal factors within students themselves are strong influences on experiencing academic anxiety in college. This is supported by previous research conducted by Rohmadani and Winarsih (2019) which found a relationship between impostor syndrome and academic anxiety in freshmen students, amounting to 17.5%. The results of this study indicate that low impostor syndrome levels will reduce anxiety levels in freshmen students. Similarly, academic hardiness, as revealed by Azizah and Satwika (2021) shows a negative relationship with academic anxiety. These academic anxiety factors align with the findings of this study, which reveal the influence of impostor syndrome and academic hardiness on academic anxiety among students of Mulawarman University.

Based on the results of descriptive analysis, it can be observed that the distribution of academic anxiety measurement scale data at Mulawarman University, indicates that the subjects in this study are predominantly experiencing moderate academic anxiety. The level of anxiety in students should ideally be in the low category (Andri et al., 2021). This is supported by previous research by Walean et al. (2021) which explains that 2,788 students, or 10.7% out of 25,984 students, experienced moderate levels of academic anxiety. Previous research by Azyz et al. (2019) also found that 70.30% out of 330 students at IAIN Kediri experienced moderate academic anxiety due to psychological conditions rushing to complete academic tasks, also referred to as self-defeating behaviors.

High levels of anxiety that can disrupt students' concentration and impair individual memory result in decreased focus, confusion, and suboptimal learning in understanding subject matter. Ningrum et al. (2021) stated that many individuals experience high anxiety when dealing with difficult academic tasks, especially those with low learning abilities. According to Muawanah and Asdar (2021) academic anxiety experienced by individuals refers to the lack of confidence in their abilities, as well as the inability to adapt to new environments, thereby giving rise to feelings of doubt and fear of facing academic pressure.

Consistent with the research conducted by Rehman et al. (2021) academic anxiety causes individuals to experience negative feelings or fear of evaluation outcomes, and individuals are also hindered in developing their learning abilities, thus diminishing their potential. The high academic anxiety experienced by students is due to internal factors such as self-doubt, procrastination, and negative perceptions of their achievements or impostor syndrome.

Based on the hypothesis testing of stepwise regression analysis, it was found that impostor syndrome towards academic anxiety in the students showed a significant positive influence. This means that the minor hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely that there is an influence of impostor syndrome on students' academic anxiety. The results of this hypothesis testing also explain that the higher the impostor syndrome, the higher the academic anxiety of students. Conversely, the lower the impostor syndrome, the lower the academic anxiety of students.

The findings of Ali et al. (2015) research revealed a positive influence between impostor syndrome and academic anxiety among freshman psychology students. Doubts about one's abilities lead individuals to experience unpleasant feelings such as fear, tension, and nervousness when faced with academic pressures. This is supported by previous research conducted by Rohmadani and Winarsih (2019) indicating a relationship between impostor syndrome and academic anxiety among freshmen, amounting to 17.5%. The results of this study indicate that low impostor syndrome will decrease the level of anxiety among freshmen.

Previous research by Gottlieb et al. (2020) showed an influence on feelings related to impostor syndrome with an increase in anxiety levels. This suggests that if individuals experience high impostor syndrome feelings, it can increase their anxiety levels, and if individuals have low impostor syndrome, its influence on anxiety is also low.

Based on the results of descriptive tests, it can be understood that the distribution of data measurement scales for impostor syndrome among students of Mulawarman University, is predominantly characterized by moderate impostor syndrome, at 44.4%. The impostor syndrome factor in students and the worry of not meeting others' expectations stem from individuals' inability to realize themselves (Pratama, 2021). Feelings of nervousness and worry in individuals experiencing academic anxiety will affect their perception of their abilities to meet others' expectations (Walker & Saklofske, 2023).

Previous research conducted by Ali et al. (2015) indicated that impostor syndrome was predominantly at a moderate level, at 39.9% out of 160 students, attributed to internal factors such as fear, threat, and self-conflict. Supported by the study of Putra and Putri (2023) which found that impostor syndrome at a moderate level affected 31 out of 91 students, due to a lack of awareness and understanding of psychological conditions. Impostor syndrome has become an important concern for students to achieve success without doubt or worry about their abilities, explaining that impostor syndrome can affect students' academic anxiety.

The low level of academic anxiety among students is influenced by their high academic hardiness, as they are able to develop perceptions to embrace challenges, self-regulate when facing tasks, and have a high commitment to academic goals. Individuals who are resilient under difficult task pressures tend to avoid feelings of nervousness or anxiety when demonstrating their abilities (Upadianti & Indrawati, 2018). Success in academics requires a personality resilient to pressure and the difficulty of assigned tasks. When individuals resist, endure, and face academic pressures, they can withstand the difficulty of academic tasks, termed academic hardiness (Muhajirin, 2022).

The theory above can be interpreted as the academic hardiness possessed by students may influence academic anxiety. Based on the hypothesis testing of the stepwise regression analysis model, it was found that academic hardiness toward academic anxiety shows a significant

negative influence. This means that the minor hypothesis in this research is accepted, namely there is an influence of academic hardiness on academic anxiety among students of Mulawarman University. The results of this hypothesis testing also explain that the higher the academic hardiness, the lower the academic anxiety. Conversely, the lower the academic hardiness, the higher the academic anxiety.

Previous research by Azizah and Satwika (2021) showing a negative relationship between academic hardiness and academic anxiety, indicated that with low hardiness scores, individuals will feel doubtful about their abilities resulting in experiencing anxiety, stress, and even depression. Similarly, if individuals have high academic hardiness, they will not doubt or worry about their abilities, thereby reducing the tendency to experience academic anxiety.

Another previous study by Ginting (2022) titled "The Relationship between Mental Hardiness and Performance Anxiety in Spirit Simole Football Players in Karo" shows a negative relationship between hardiness and anxiety by 0.486 experienced by the subjects. This is indicated by the higher the academic hardiness, the lower the academic anxiety experienced by the subjects, and vice versa, the lower the academic hardiness of the subjects, the higher the academic anxiety experienced by the subjects.

According to Upadianti and Indrawati (2018) individuals facing difficulties and challenges in the academic world must possess hardiness personality traits to suppress anxiety when dealing with difficult academic tasks. Furthermore, individuals' ability to cope with and confront various difficulties experienced in academic settings has a significant negative correlation with anxiety. The results indicate that the higher individuals' ability to face problems, the lower their anxiety levels (Upadianti & Indrawati, 2018)

Based on descriptive test results, it can be observed that the distribution of academic hardiness measurement scale data among students of Mulawarman University, is predominantly in the moderate category, at 42.2%. Academic hardiness refers to self-understanding in responding to, achieving, managing emotions, and seizing opportunities in academic challenges to withstand the negative effects or anxiety from such pressures (Trifiriani & Agung, 2018). Students who confront all challenges in their academics can manage and overcome such anxiety effectively by utilizing stress as motivation to study better, developing healthy coping strategies, and staying focused on academic goals.

Supported by Jannah et al. (2021) research, found that 70.9% of 317 students have moderate academic hardiness due to positive thinking in facing every demand or stressor. Lectures can be navigated by maintaining a positive mindset, including the ability to learn from failures, and maintain life balance, and emotional stability. Also The government have responsibility to build proper and comfortable learning facilities (Irambona & Syomwene, 2023). Another study by Nugroho dan Karyono (2014) indicates that 60% of 70 students have moderate academic hardiness because they perceive difficulties as challenges.

The conclusion can be drawn that there is an influence of impostor syndrome and academic hardiness on academic anxiety among Mulawarman University students, amounting to 30%, with the remaining 70% influenced by other variables not examined in this study. This research is beneficial for students with low academic hardiness, as awareness of high academic hardiness can help alleviate academic anxiety and impostor syndrome perceptions among students in their academic sphere. A limitation of this study is the need to further explore variables that have a strong influence on academic anxiety, such as self-efficacy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the conducted research, there is a significant influence of impostor syndrome and academic hardiness on academic anxiety. A significant positive relationship was found between

impostor syndrome and academic anxiety. Conversely, a significant negative relationship was observed between academic hardiness and academic anxiety. The positive findings regarding the impact of Impostor Syndrome and Academic hardiness on Academic Well-being offer promising avenues for future research. Subsequent studies could delve deeper into the mechanisms through which these factors interact, exploring potential moderating or mediating variables that may clarify their effects. Furthermore, longitudinal studies that track the long-term impact of these constructs on various academic outcomes would provide valuable insights into their effects over time. Need to further explore variables that have a strong influence on academic anxiety, such as self-efficacy.

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