

An Exploration of Imposter Syndrome and Its Psychological Effects on Black Women in College

In the United States, Black women are more likely to obtain a college degree in a White-dominated education system and may experience feelings of insecurities, self-consciousness, and self-doubt which is known as Imposter syndrome “phenomenon”. Imposter syndrome “phenomenon” is the feeling of self-doubt, believing that one’s accomplishments are due to luck rather than intellect (Clance & Imes, 1978). The original study by Clance & Imes focused on middle to upper class White women. This study did not acknowledge cultural, racial, and ethical components regarding other racial groups, or the impact IP has on students of color.

This study will focus on the psychological well-being of Black women at Tennessee State University – a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) - and their experiences of imposter syndrome and if their well-being is impacted. There is very little research that links Black women students at an HBCU and how their well-being could be impacted due to imposter syndrome. Black women have the highest levels of health disparities and inequalities compared to their White counterparts (Chinn et al., 2021). The study of imposter syndrome among Black women college students at an HBCU can help close gaps in literature regarding the health of Black women.