

The Indirect Link Between Adverse Childhood Experiences and Imposter Phenomenon

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Results & Discussion

Introduction

• Few studies have examined the link between ACEs and commonly studied social difficulty, imposter phenomenon.

• Aims of present research were to:

- 1) Establish whether ACEs predict greater feelings of the imposter phenomenon.
- 2) Determine whether emotion dysregulation and attachment anxiety mediate that relationship.

Hypothesis:

• ACEs are positively related to greater feelings of imposter phenomenon through emotion dysregulation and attachment anxiety.

Method

• In this study, 463 participants ($M_{Age} = 20.04$, $SD = 4.46$) completed measures of ACEs, emotion dysregulation, attachment anxiety, and imposter phenomenon.

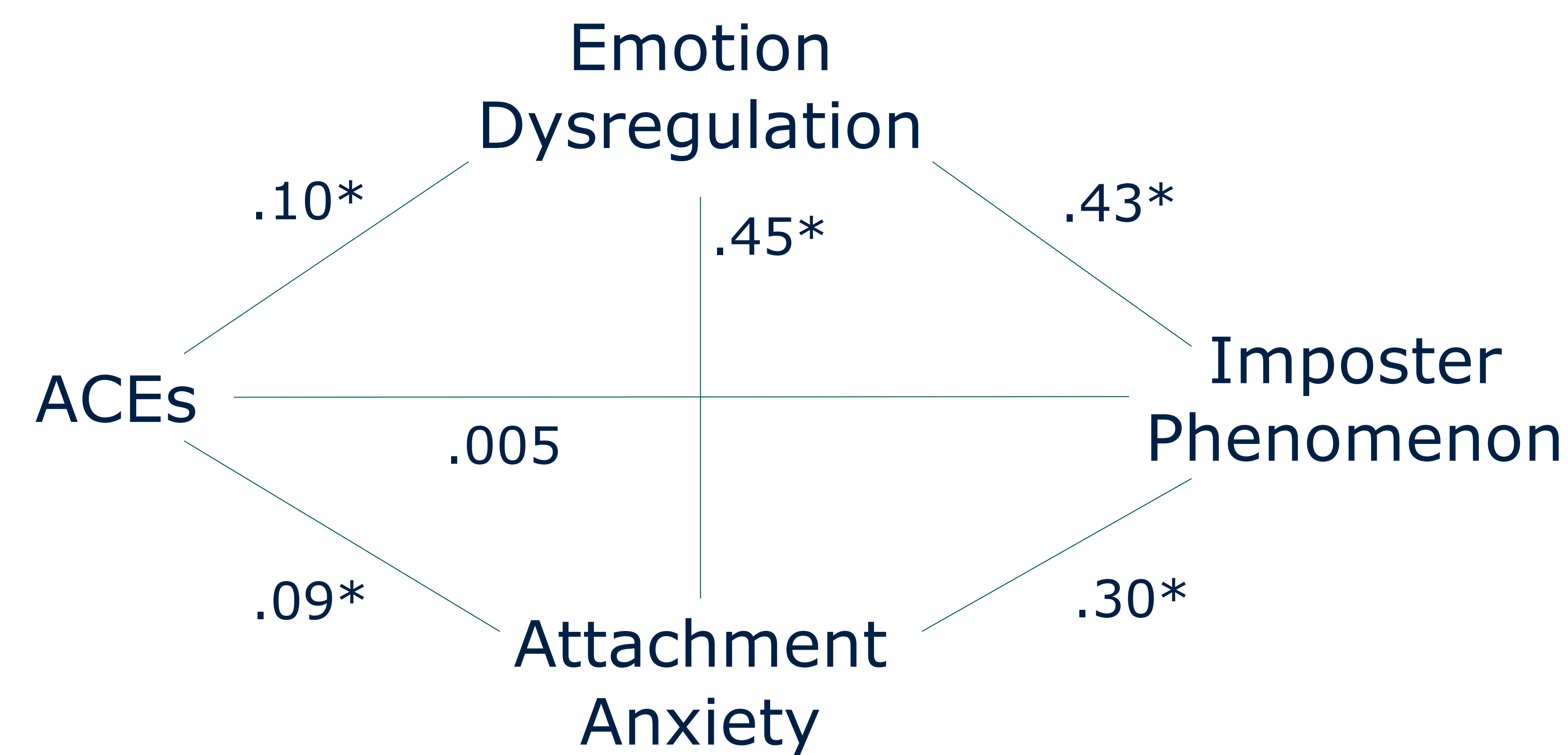
• Measures included:

• CYW Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire [ACE-Q] Teen Self-Report ($\alpha = .82$), which includes an expanded list of 19 items compared to the original 10.

• Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale – 16 item version [DERS-16] (Bjureberg et al., 2016) ($\alpha = .95$), which includes items covering lack of emotional clarity, difficulties engaging in goal-directed behavior, impulse control, regulation strategies, and nonacceptance of emotional responses.

• Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised [ECR-R], Adult Version (Fraley et al., 2000) ($\alpha = .94$), which covers items related to attachment-related anxiety in close relationships.

• Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale [CIPS] (Clance, 1985), covering items related to different feelings of imposter phenomenon ($\alpha = .93$).



Direct effect: $z = 0.45$, $p = .65$, 95% CI = $-.016, .025$
 Total indirect effect: $z = 7.97$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = $0.05, 0.086$
 Emotion dysregulation indirect effect: $z = 6.23$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = $.027, .056$
 Attachment anxiety indirect effect: $z = 5.10$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = $.018, .04$

• A bootstrap (5000 repetitions) mediation analysis conducted in JASP indicated that although ACEs do not directly predict the imposter phenomenon, greater ACEs indirectly predicted greater feelings of being an imposter through emotion dysregulation and attachment anxiety. That is, individuals with a greater number of ACEs reported greater attachment anxiety and emotion dysregulation, both of which positively predicted imposter phenomenon.

• Limitations include that data were collected online on a single occasion via self-report and that the sample largely consisted of white female college students within the U.S. As a result, future research should aim to collect prospective data from more diverse samples of participants to gain further understanding of the relationships amongst the variables studied.

• Despite these limitations, these results help provide a greater understanding of the effect adverse childhood experiences and childhood trauma can have on one's self-concept, achievement, and social well-being and can also lead to a better understanding of factors related to imposter phenomenon and possible interventions.

	1	2	3	4
1. ACEs	–			
2. Emotion Dysregulation	0.35*	–		
3. Attachment Anxiety	0.33*	0.57*	–	
4. Imposter Phenomenon	0.27*	0.60*	0.55*	–
Mean	4.52	40.13	3.54	65.85
SD	3.70	14.57	1.32	15.16

* $p < .001$

