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Topic:

Breaking through the glass ceiling by overcoming imposter syndrome: Women in hospitality and tourism management

Abstract

This study examines the imposter syndrome in the hospitality and tourism industry and its impact on career development, employee engagement, and organizational commitment. The research analysed data from 574 women at various managerial levels using SEM. The results show that imposter syndrome negatively impacts career advancement, organizational commitment, and employee engagement. The study found that imposter syndrome significantly mediates the effect of work-family balance on career advancement, organizational commitment, and employee engagement. Additionally, diversity management moderates the relationship between work-family balance and imposter syndrome, while female role models moderate the relationship between work-family balance and imposter syndrome, and career expectations and imposter syndrome. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on gender inequality in hospitality and tourism workplaces and extends the role congruity theory of prejudice in understanding women's imposter syndrome. This study also provides insight for policymakers and managers to implement policies that alleviate imposter syndrome and contribute to women's career development and gender equality in workplaces.

Keywords: Gender inequality, imposter syndrome, career advancement, employee commitment, diversity management, Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 8 and 10) 2030 aim to provide all citizens equal employment opportunities and income by creating decent jobs with reduced discrimination and marginalization (Kronenberg & Fuchs, 2021). However, gender inequality in the workplace remains a pervasive issue that has persisted for decades, leading to fewer opportunities, lower

pay, and reduced job security for women compared to men (Costa et al., 2017; Pritchard & Morgan, 2017). Despite numerous studies on gender inequality in the workplace, most existing research has only focused on external causes/factors, such as unconscious bias, undervaluation of work done by women, and discriminatory practices in hiring, promotion, and pay (Calinaud et al., 2021; Russen et al., 2021). Therefore, there is a need for further research that delves deeper into the intersectional nature of gender inequality and explores the role of internal factors that contribute to perpetuating this issue.

Notably, imposter phenomenon is a significant mental framework that can contribute to gender inequality in the workplace. Imposter syndrome is a psychological pattern in which individuals doubt their abilities and accomplishments, and have a persistent fear of being exposed as a fraud (Clance & Imes, 1978). Imposter syndrome can happen to all genders in many workplaces (Feenstra et al., 2020), but it is particularly prevalent among women (Yaffe, 2020). In the hospitality and tourism industry, low career expectations, challenges of work-family balance, lack of role models, and lack of diversity management all produce signs of imposter syndrome among women (Kronenberg & Fuchs, 2021).

Imposter syndrome can impair women's career development, engagement, and commitment in hospitality and tourism. Women who experience imposter syndrome often concentrate on their flaws and failures rather than their competencies and achievements, hence struggling with anxiety, lack of confidence, procrastination, risk aversion, decreased motivation, and disengagement (Crawford, 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2020). This can hinder women's career advancement by discouraging them from pursuing new opportunities (Breeze, 2018), exacerbating feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy (Morris et al., 2022), and reducing their organizational commitment (Liu, Shen, et al., 2020). However, there is still insufficient research attention knowledge to explore women's imposter syndrome in the hospitality and tourism workplace. While there have been studies on challenges to women's career advancement in this industry, little attention has been given to imposter syndrome from the perspective of female employees at various management levels.

As the hospitality and tourism industry continues to face the challenge of gender disparities in career development, research on women's imposter syndrome remains scant. To address this knowledge gap and help alleviate imposter syndrome in the workplace, this study investigates the main factors of imposter syndrome among women in the industry and their

impact on career development, employee engagement, and organizational commitment in unity with the role congruity theory of prejudice (Brown et al., 2014; Kumar & Jagacinski, 2006).

Literature review and hypothesis development

Imposter syndrome and the role congruity theory of prejudice

Imposter syndrome is a psychological phenomenon that has garnered increasing attention in recent years. It refers to the experience of feeling like a fraud despite objective evidence of one's competence and accomplishments (Morris et al., 2022). Individuals with imposter syndrome doubt their abilities and fear being exposed as inadequate or incompetent (Sharlung, 2022). Imposter syndrome can be measured by six dimensions, including competence doubt, working style, alienation, other-self divergence, frugality, and need for sympathy (Ibrahim et al., 2020). Competence doubt refers to the belief that one's abilities and achievements are not adequate and that one may be exposed as a fraud; working style involves feeling like one needs to overwork or over-prepare to compensate for perceived deficiencies; alienation is a feeling of isolation and disconnection from colleagues or the work environment due to the fear of being exposed as a fraud; other-self divergence involves feeling like one has to present a different persona or image to others than one's true self, leading to a sense of inauthenticity; frugality refers to downplaying one's accomplishments or attributing them to external factors rather than personal ability or effort; the need for sympathy is a tendency to seek reassurance and validation from others (Ibrahim et al., 2020).

Imposter syndrome can have serious negative impacts on individuals' personal and professional lives. In the workplace, employees with imposter syndrome may be less likely to take on new challenges, seek career promotions or opportunities for growth, and may struggle to advocate for themselves. Even when impostors achieve success, they may attribute it to external factors, such as luck or help from others, rather than their abilities and efforts, which can result in reduced job performance and career stagnation (Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch, 2016). Additionally, employees with imposter syndrome may be more susceptible to burnout or mental health problems and may struggle in their interactions with others due to a fear of failure (Crawford, 2021). Furthermore, in the workplace, imposter syndrome may lead to a lack of diversity and inclusion.

The Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice can be used to understand women's imposter syndrome in the workplace when women face challenges in their leadership roles due to gender stereotypes and societal expectations (Eagly et al., 2000). According to the theory, the discrepancy between communal attributes associated with women and the assertive characteristics considered necessary for leaders create unfair processes when appraising women as either current or potential leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Hence, this leads to a less positive assessment of women's leadership potential and qualities compared to men (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Women who are in leadership positions or aspire to be in leadership positions may experience imposter syndrome due to the societal expectations and gender stereotypes associated with leadership roles (Brown et al., 2014). They may receive unequal assessments (Allen, 2006), have their abilities questioned, or face blowback in the form of people not wanting to work with them (Rudman & Glick, 1999). These discrepancies may be accentuated when men outnumber women, and when tasks are skewed toward men (Powell, 2018). Likewise, incongruent employment affects quality aspects of women's life including stress, anxiety, self-esteem, and commitment (Edwards, 2008) which compliments the imposter syndrome effects on career women. The present study proposes that disposing women employees to prejudices and incompatible roles could damage their competencies and careers and create undue pressure, fear, and anxiety for them.

The relationship between Imposter Syndrome and Employee engagement

Employee engagement refers to the incorporation of individuals within an organization to carry out their duties by utilizing and expressing themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally throughout the process of performing their duties (Kahn, 1990). In the hospitality and tourism industry, where customer satisfaction and service quality are paramount, engaged employees are critical to achieving business goals (Dedahanov et al., 2017). Research has shown that engaged employees are more likely to take ownership of their work, participate in decision-making processes, and contribute to the overall success of the organization (Bailey et al., 2017).

Imposter syndrome has been found to have a negative relationship with women's employee engagement, leading to a range of negative consequences in the workplace. As highlighted by Jackson et al. (2022), self-doubt and fear of being exposed as fraud can result in a lack of confidence and recognition, which in turn, can lead to disengagement and reduced productivity. Furthermore, individuals with imposter syndrome may avoid taking on new

challenges and sharing their ideas due to the fear of failure or not meeting expectations, which can further perpetuate feelings of inadequacy and detachment from the workplace community (Naoum et al., 2020). In addition, the perfectionist mindset that often accompanies imposter syndrome can lead to burnout and unrealistic expectations, putting undue pressure on employees to achieve high standards or avoid failure at all costs (Ibrahim et al., 2020). Finally, a lack of feedback and recognition can further exacerbate feelings of self-doubt and disengagement (Johnson et al., 2018) an outcome of the holding of an implicit idea and experiencing role incongruity at the workplace (Dweck, 2000; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Therefore, this study proposes:

H1: Imposter syndrome negatively relates to women's employee engagement

The relationship between Imposter Syndrome and Career advancement

Career advancement is a multifaceted concept that encompasses an individual's progression and growth in their professional life over time (Belfi et al., 2022). It involves acquiring new skills, taking on new challenges, and assuming greater responsibilities, ultimately leading to improved job performance, job satisfaction, and quality of life (Asiedu-Appiah et al., 2013). Career advancement is crucial in today's fast-paced and competitive job market as it provides a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment (Liu, Shen, et al., 2020). Despite its benefits, women face significant challenges in advancing their careers, particularly in the hospitality and tourism industry, due to gender biases, lack of mentorship opportunities, and inadequate work-life balance (Remington & Kitterlin-Lynch, 2018).

Imposter syndrome has been identified as a significant barrier to women's career advancement in the hospitality and tourism industry (LaDonna et al., 2018). Imposter syndrome can lead to a negative cycle of anxiety and self-doubt that hinders career advancement opportunities. In other words, imposter syndrome associated with the entity mindset and the allocation of incompatible tasks can erode women's confidence in their abilities, making them reluctant to take on new challenges or responsibilities that would contribute to their career growth (Crawford, 2021; Kumar & Jagacinski, 2006; Powell, 2018). Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2: Imposter syndrome negatively relates to women's career advancement.

The relationship between Imposter Syndrome and Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment refers to the degree of loyalty and dedication that an employee has towards his/her organization, demonstrated by the desire to remain with the company and the willingness to put in extra effort to achieve its goals (Sahoo & Sia, 2015). It is an essential component of an organization's performance, as it reflects the attitudes and behaviours of its employees towards their tasks and responsibilities (Becker, 1960; Liu, Shen, et al., 2020).

Women's imposter syndrome can lead to a decrease in organizational commitment. Women experiencing imposter syndrome may feel disconnected from their organization and its goals, leading to decreased motivation, engagement, and commitment (Naoum et al., 2020). This sense of disconnection can lead to a lack of commitment to the organization, ultimately affecting the overall job satisfaction and retention (Ladge et al., 2019). Additionally, imposter syndrome can create feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, leading to women feeling undervalued and unappreciated by their organization, which can further decrease their organizational commitment (Lane, 2015). According to the Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice, the persistence of male biased tasks can lead to decreased job satisfaction and motivation to perform well and the commitment to their organization (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H3: Imposter syndrome negatively relates to women's organizational commitment.

The relationship between Career expectations and Imposter Syndrome

Career expectations encompass an individual's beliefs about their job prospects and future goals shaped by the interplay between personal qualities and contextual factors that influence their views on career advancement (Liu, Gao, et al., 2020). Women's career expectations may be influenced by societal expectations and gender roles, such as the belief that they are primarily responsible for family care, which can affect their career choices and progress (Sposato & Rumens, 2021).

Career expectations can play a significant role in reducing imposter syndrome, which in turn can have positive effects on career advancement, organizational commitment, and employee engagement. Career expectations can influence an employee's beliefs and attitudes about their abilities and potential for growth, which can positively affect their career advancement opportunities (Liu, Gao, et al., 2020). However, when employees experience imposter syndrome, they may doubt their abilities and to feel that they do not deserve their success, leading to self-sabotage and missed opportunities for career advancement (Naoum et

al., 2020). Similarly, imposter syndrome can also affect organizational commitment and employee engagement (Ling et al., 2020). When employees' implicit beliefs disconnect from their organization and its goals, due to discrimination based on irreconcilable roles, they may become less committed and engaged, leading to decreased career advancement, organizational commitment, and employee engagement (Costa & Faria, 2018; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Therefore, the following hypotheses are developed:

***H4:** Career expectation positively relates to (a) imposter syndrome, (b) employee engagement, (c) career advancement, and (d) organizational commitment.*

The relationship between Work-family balance and Imposter Syndrome

Work-family balance is a crucial topic that has garnered considerable attention in the literature, particularly in terms of addressing barriers to women's career advancement. Despite ongoing debate about its precise definition, some scholars have emphasized the importance of equal involvement in both work and family-related responsibilities (Tsagkanou & Polychroniou, 2023). Women, in particular, face pressure from both work and home as they balance dual roles, leading to a lack of interest in their work and career continuity (Liu et al., 2019; Mooney et al., 2017).

Achieving a work-home balance is crucial in reducing imposter syndrome among women in the hospitality and tourism industry, which can positively impact their career advancement, organizational commitment, and employee engagement (Ma et al., 2021; Tulshyan & Burey, 2021). Unbalanced work and family responsibilities can lead to conflicts and psychological stress, contributing to feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy (McKercher et al., 2023). Women with imposter syndrome may feel like they are not qualified or deserving of promotions or leadership positions, even if they have the necessary skills and experience (Yaffe, 2020). Imposter syndrome can also decrease organizational commitment, as women may feel less satisfied with their jobs and less loyal to their employers (Ladge et al., 2019). However, effectively supporting employees in achieving a work-home balance can alleviate these negative effects, resulting in increased job satisfaction and engagement, ultimately leading to higher levels of organizational commitment (Ladge & Little, 2019; Tran et al., 2023). Thus, prioritizing work-home balance in the workplace may be a support system for skills development for which women may develop an incremental mindset to constantly improve

their skills and imposter feelings without being unfairly evaluated with incongruent roles (Allen, 2006; Bostwick et al., 2017). This study hypothesized:

H5: *Work-family balance positively relates to (a) imposter syndrome (b) employee engagement, (c) career advancement, (d) organizational commitment*

Moderating effect of diversity management training and female role model

Diversity management training is a process that aims to foster knowledge, understanding, and respect for individual differences in the workplace, and equip employees and organizations with the skills to effectively manage diversity and create an inclusive and welcoming environment (Sinicropi & Cortese, 2021). Diversity management training is important for gender equality in hospitality and tourism because it can raise industry awareness of gender biases and provide companies with strategies to create an inclusive workplace culture that supports the advancement and retention of women (Song et al., 2020). Notwithstanding its importance, diversity management in the hospitality and tourism industry is still in its early phases with significant issues (Kalargyrou & Costen, 2017).

Recent research has highlighted the potential role of diversity management in adjusting the impact of work-family balance and career expectations on the imposter syndrome. For instance, studies demonstrate that diversity management can act as a buffer against the negative effects of work-family conflict and perceived career plateau on employees' job satisfaction (Kim & Mullins, 2016) thereby reducing their experience of imposter syndrome (Feenstra et al., 2020). Effective diversity management practices can foster a workplace culture that promotes diversity and inclusivity, which in turn can lead to improved employee well-being and job satisfaction (Russen & Dawson, 2023). Furthermore, diversity management can play a crucial role in addressing imposter syndrome, given that it encourages skills diversification that ensures increased knowledge and role congruity to address stereotypical prejudices against women (Bostwick et al., 2017; Brown et al., 2014). Therefore, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H6: *Diversity management has a moderating effect on the relationships between (a) work-family balance and imposter syndrome, and (b) career expectations and imposter syndrome.*

Female representation in leadership positions within the hospitality and tourism industry could widely be recognized as being more equitable, and diverse when there is facilitation of career progression for other women by female managers, mentors, and recruiters (Russen et al., 2021). However, the underrepresentation of female role models in this industry poses a significant challenge for women aspiring to advance their careers into leadership positions (Boyol Ngan & Litwin, 2019; Remington & Kitterlin-Lynch, 2018). This is especially evident among female employees who lack exposure to female role models, as they are more likely to be affected by entry barriers to leadership positions (Remington & Kitterlin-Lynch, 2018). Moreover, female employees are more likely to have confidence in companies that have female role models or recruiters, demonstrating the importance of exposure to female mentors and role models in fostering career progression (Remington & Kitterlin-Lynch, 2018). The following hypotheses are proposed,:

***H7:** Female role model has a moderating effect on the relationships between (a) work-family balance and imposter syndrome, and (b) career expectations and imposter syndrome.*

Mediating role of Imposter Syndrome

This study also used the imposter syndrome as a mediator to examine the indirect effects of the career expectations and/or work-family balance, and employee career advancement, employee engagement, and organizational commitment. It is proposed that impostor syndrome served as an intermediary between work-family balance and/or career expectations and career advancement, employee engagement, and organizational commitment. Thus, hypothesized:

***H8:** Imposter syndrome mediates the influence of career expectations on (a) career advancement, (b) organizational commitment, and (c) employee engagement.*

***H9:** Imposter syndrome mediates the influence of work-family balance on (a) career advancement, (b) organizational commitment, and (c) employee engagement.*

Finding the factors that contribute to career advancement issues in the hospitality and tourism industry is the goal of this study. Eight constructs were included in our conceptual framework for women's imposter syndrome and career advancement in the hospitality and tourism industry (Figure 1). Imposter syndrome not only acts as endogenous and exogenous variable but as an intermediary variable to modify the relationship between career expectations, work-family balance, and career advancement.

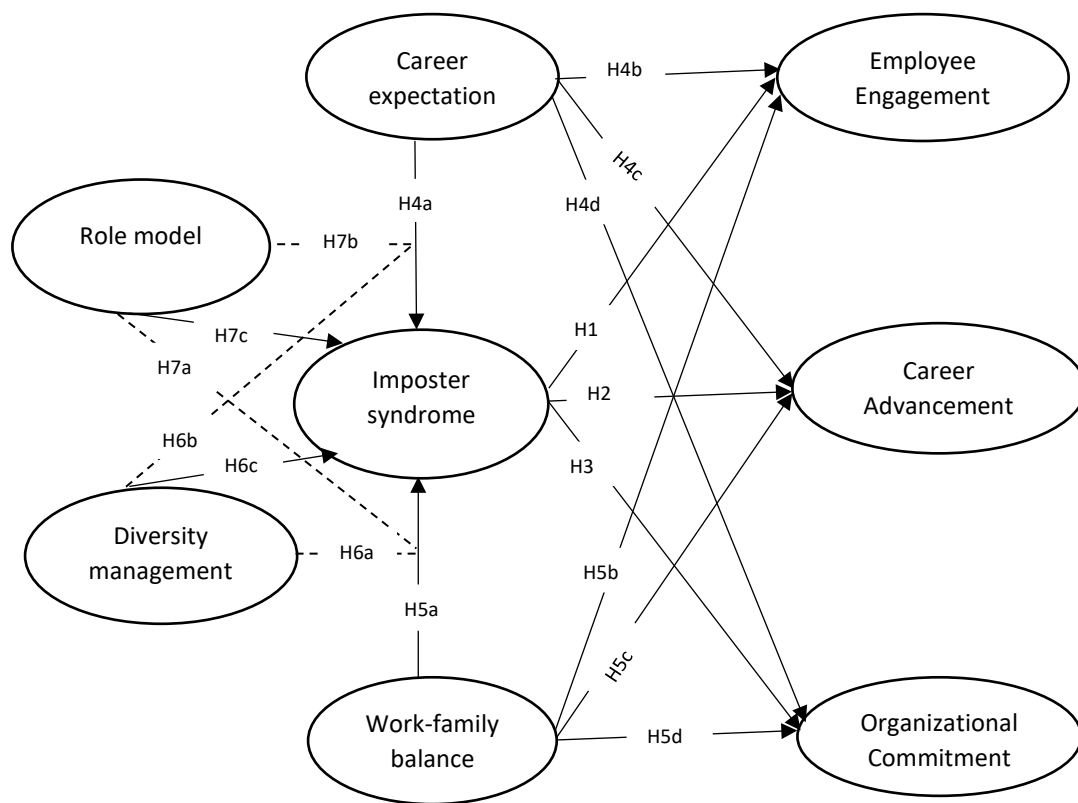


Figure 1. Proposed model on imposter syndrome of women in the hospitality and tourism industry

Methods

Research design and data collection

The study adopted an online survey approach to investigate the influence of imposter syndrome on women employees' career in the hospitality and tourism industry. This approach is preferred because it involves employing a previously established theoretical framework (Al-Ababneh, 2020), namely the role congruity theory of prejudice thus, making it meaningful to establish hypotheses with rigor, test them empirically, and measure the outcomes based on theories

(Kothari, 2004). The study considered women from the hospitality and tourism industry who work at various management levels (such as operational, supervisory, line, middle, and senior management levels) and different sectors, representing the food and beverage, lodging, travel and tourism, and tourist attractions sectors. A total of 574 women supervisors or managers were randomly sampled. The four screening factors for respondents are female employees; 21 years and above of age; and working in the hospitality and tourism industry for at least one year (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Data was collected by distributing an online questionnaire through MTurk in December 2022. Questionnaires were designed based on the study objectives and uploaded to Qualtrics. Three screening questions concerning gender, industry and age were used to screen respondents, to be able to access the intended respondents, and overcome the biasedness in

Items	Category	<i>f</i>	(%)	Items	Category	<i>f</i>	(%)
Age (Years)	Under 21	4	0.7	Religion	Christian	525	91.5
	21-30	35	62.2		Muslim	8	1.4
	31-40	15	26.3		Asian Folk	13	2.3
	41-50	42	7.3		Hindu	24	4.2
	51 or Older	20	3.5		Jewish	3	0.5
Gender	Female	57	100.0	Ethnicity	White	506	88.2
		4			Black or African American	28	4.9
Marital status	Married	525	91.5		American Indian or Alaska Native	22	3.8
	Widowed	4	0.7		Asian	15	2.6
	Divorced	3	0.5		Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	0.5
	Separated	7	1.2	Job Position	Top-level Management	146	25.4
	Never married	35	6.1		Middle-level Management	331	57.7
Parental status	Presence of adult children	224	39.0		Lower level (Supervisory) Non-managerial Position	68	11.8
	Presence of younger children	236	41.1	Educational Qualification	Less than High School	29	5.1
	Presence of both adult and young children	63	11.0		High school graduate	14	2.4
	No children	51	8.9		Some college	68	11.8
Work Experience	Less than 2 years	13	2.3		2-year Degree	34	5.9
	2-5 years	322	56.1		4-year Degree	25	4.4
	6-10 years	173	30.1		Professional Degree	312	54.4
	10-11 years	53	9.2		Doctorate	96	16.7
	16-20 years	10	1.7			25	4.4
	More than 20 years	3	0.5				

responses. Following the American Psychological Association's (APA) ethical standards, participants' consents were sought, they were asked to engage willingly, and not be compelled to divulge any information that would compromise their privacy for anonymity purposes.

All constructs were evaluated using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The career advancement construct has two dimensions with nine items, organizational commitment has fifteen items , career expectations has two dimensions with

seven items, and work-family balance has two dimensions with ten items from (Liu, Shen, et al., 2020); imposter syndrome has six dimensions with twenty-one items from (Ibrahim et al., 2020); employee engagement has three dimensions with ten items from (Milliman et al., 2018); diversity management has nine items from (García-Rodríguez et al., 2020); and finally female role model has five items from (Russen et al., 2021) were adopted which matches the study objectives.

Since structural equation modeling (SEM) as in line with Hair et al. (2012) necessitate a minimum sample size of 10 (or even 5) times the number of values for the most complex latent construct, this study demanded a minimum sample size of 100. But the 10 (or the rule of 5) rule might result in a statistically significant loss in power (Goodhue et al., 2012). Additionally, G*power was used to confirm the sample size using F tests in the case of linear multiple regression with a fixed model and an R^2 deviation that is greater than zero. Based on the directives by Faul et al. (2009), if effect size = 0.1, probability of error = 0.01, power (1 - β probability of error) = 0.95, tested, and a total number of predictors = 4, the minimum sample size is 245 with noncentrality parameter = 25.00, critical F = 3.3966, numerator df = 4, denominator df = 250, and actual power = 0.95. As a result, the sample size used in this study is thought to be sufficient for the conceptual model that has been proposed.

Results

Data analysis

To evaluate the structural model, we utilized the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) program and followed the two-step technique outlined by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Each measurement model underwent examination through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). As Field (2005) suggests, the first stage in interpreting the discovered dimensions and identifying the main structures in the analysis is to use EFA with varimax rotation. The verification of the goodness of fit of the measuring instruments, an examination of their psychometric qualities, and the proposed relationship between the observed items and the latent variables were also conducted using CFA. When testing a scale for a single dimension and refining a factor structure discovered during exploratory analysis to ensure uniformity, CFA improves the outcomes of conventional methods such as Cronbach's alpha.

Assessment of measurement models

The internal consistency reliability, indicator loadings, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement model were estimated. First, the internal consistency reliability was calculated using composite reliability (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015; Jöreskog, 1971) and Cronbach's alpha (α). As part of basics, acceptable, adequate, and good thresholds are defined as having 0.60, 0.70, and 0.90 (less than 0.95) respectively (Hair et al., 2019). All the investigated constructs in this study had acceptable to good internal consistency reliability, as shown in Table 2. Second, all items had factor loading higher than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019). Those indicators were maintained in the measurement model considering the approved validity and reliability (Hair, 2009). Third, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) method was used to evaluate discriminant validity (Table 3). All AVE values are higher than 0.5, indicating the construct accounts for more than 50% of the variance of the indicators. The positive square root of the AVE for each latent variable was higher than the highest correlation with any other latent variable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Kline, 2023), which confirmed the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

Common method bias may be present if an Exploratory Factor Analysis reveals that a single factor explains more than half of the variance in the measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003) and may impact estimates of construct validity and reliability, and the hypothesis tests (Williams et al., 2010). Thus, using SPSS 29.0, Harman's single-factor test was run on the extracted factors of the eight latent variables/constructs in order to investigate the common method bias. The largest variance explained by a single factor, according to the data, was 42.445%, significantly less than the 50% cutoff figure. Thus, common method bias did not present a problem in this investigation.

Table 2. Assessment results of the measurement model

Items	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	VIF	Loadings
IMPOSTER SYNDROME ($\alpha=0.920$; $CR=0.96$; $AVE=0.82$)						
Competence doubt ($\alpha=0.88$; $CR=0.88$; $AVE=0.60$)						0.743
IMPO_2_11	5.17	1.484	-0.964	0.484	2.363	0.805
IMPO_2_15	5.13	1.473	-0.911	0.438	1.996	0.734
IMPO_2_7	5.16	1.446	-0.840	0.250	2.132	0.758
IMPO_2_12	5.21	1.482	-0.896	0.393	2.274	0.793
IMPO_2_3	5.18	1.442	-0.876	0.508	2.197	0.773
Working style ($\alpha=0.63$; $CR=0.63$; $AVE=0.46$)						0.924
IMPO_2_13	5.42	1.232	-0.782	0.350	1.560	0.638
IMPO_2_16	5.37	1.235	-0.795	0.670	1.736	0.721
Alienation ($\alpha=0.57$; $CR=0.58$; $AVE=0.41$)						0.992

IMPO_1_8	5.56	1.156	-0.752	0.417	1.647	0.645
IMPO_2_5	5.22	1.390	-0.815	0.282	1.726	0.632
Other self-divergence ($\alpha = 0.78$; $CR = 0.79$; $AVE = 0.55$)						0.874
IMPO_1_2	5.40	1.253	-0.978	1.197	1.710	0.683
IMPO_1_4	5.30	1.382	-0.917	0.582	2.178	0.781
IMPO_1_6	5.27	1.360	-0.972	0.715	1.984	0.761
Frugality ($\alpha = 0.67$; $CR = 0.68$; $AVE = 0.51$)						0.932
IMPO_1_9	5.48	1.122	-0.812	0.962	1.801	0.740
IMPO_1_13	5.41	1.282	-0.955	0.858	1.746	0.687
Need for sympathy ($\alpha = 0.64$; $CR = 0.63$; $AVE = 0.47$)						0.947
IMPO_1_12	5.44	1.298	-0.876	0.447	1.856	0.715
IMPO_1_14	5.51	1.209	-0.975	1.229	1.574	0.662
CAREER ADVANCEMENT ($\alpha = 0.83$; $CR = 0.92$; $AVE = 0.86$)						
Institutional guarantee ($\alpha = 0.76$; $CR = 0.76$; $AVE = 0.52$)						0.904
CAR_ADV_1	5.38	1.261	-0.774	0.391	1.610	0.706
CAR_ADV_2	5.33	1.308	-0.801	0.378	1.881	0.767
CAR_ADV_6	5.31	1.305	-0.747	0.365	1.574	0.685
Measure guarantee ($\alpha = 0.74$; $CR = 0.74$; $AVE = 0.49$)						0.949
CAR_ADV_3	5.39	1.211	-0.842	0.931	1.658	0.719
CAR_ADV_5	5.45	1.177	-0.844	0.840	1.607	0.695
CAR_ADV_8	5.47	1.223	-0.951	1.127	1.556	0.683
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ($\alpha = 0.91$; $CR = 0.84$; $AVE = 0.73$)						
Affective commitment ($\alpha = 0.86$; $CR = 0.86$; $AVE = 0.48$)						0.918
ORG_COM_10	5.44	1.193	-0.714	0.231	1.722	0.684
ORG_COM_1	5.51	1.131	-0.748	0.472	1.677	0.680
ORG_COM_6	5.49	1.230	-0.847	0.693	1.823	0.702
ORG_COM_15	5.47	1.216	-0.776	0.379	1.730	0.687
ORG_COM_4	5.37	1.239	-0.710	0.411	1.868	0.699
ORG_COM_8	5.49	1.191	-0.716	0.421	1.696	0.706
ORG_COM_5	5.43	1.185	-0.679	0.272	1.712	0.666
Normative commitment ($\alpha = 0.85$; $CR = 0.86$; $AVE = 0.54$)						0.786
ORG_COM_13	5.20	1.410	-0.865	0.388	2.164	0.746
ORG_COM_14	5.23	1.399	-0.907	0.475	2.065	0.743
ORG_COM_16	5.22	1.449	-0.971	0.727	1.878	0.743
ORG_COM_3	5.19	1.421	-0.804	0.175	1.897	0.742
ORG_COM_11	5.10	1.458	-0.693	-0.052	1.808	0.713
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ($\alpha = 0.87$; $CR = 0.97$; $AVE = 0.92$)						
Physical engagement ($\alpha = 0.69$; $CR = 0.70$; $AVE = 0.54$)						0.962
EMP_ENG_3	5.61	1.179	-1.035	1.239	1.745	0.719
EMP_ENG_9	5.77	1.221	-1.195	1.458	1.925	0.748
Emotional engagement ($\alpha = 0.73$; $CR = 0.73$; $AVE = 0.58$)						0.963
EMP_ENG_7	5.59	1.258	-1.132	1.477	1.852	0.749
EMP_ENG_5	5.59	1.281	-1.010	0.848	2.010	0.774
Cognitive engagement ($\alpha = 0.74$; $CR = 0.75$; $AVE = 0.60$)						0.959
EMP_ENG_4	5.56	1.256	-1.029	1.114	1.799	0.768
EMP_ENG_8	5.56	1.210	-1.008	1.391	1.998	0.776
WORK-FAMILY BALANCE ($\alpha = 0.84$; $CR = 0.96$; $AVE = 0.92$)						
Time support ($\alpha = 0.69$; $CR = 0.69$; $AVE = 0.43$)						0.952
WFB_4	5.32	1.161	-0.798	0.514	1.513	0.666
WFB_2	5.37	1.161	-0.785	0.530	1.526	0.655
WFB_3	5.32	1.246	-0.822	0.610	1.520	0.645
Work support ($\alpha = 0.78$; $CR = 0.79$; $AVE = 0.48$)						0.967
WFB_10	5.37	1.250	-0.786	0.478	1.710	0.697
WFB_8	5.37	1.230	-0.775	0.544	1.596	0.676
WFB_6	5.42	1.187	-0.981	1.452	1.722	0.717

WFB_5	5.41	1.170	-0.870	0.828	1.576	0.680
CAREER EXPECTATION ($\alpha = 0.90$; $CR = 0.94$; $AVE = 0.88$)						
Career reward ($\alpha = 0.85$; $CR = 0.86$; $AVE = 0.60$)						0.932
CAR_EXP_2	5.54	1.188	-0.991	1.330	1.865	0.729
CAR_EXP_4	5.63	1.198	-1.134	1.495	2.344	0.813
CAR_EXP_6	5.56	1.212	-1.032	1.178	1.903	0.730
CAR_EXP_8	5.62	1.154	-1.118	1.886	2.466	0.827
Career development ($\alpha = 0.82$; $CR = 0.83$; $AVE = 0.62$)						0.942
CAR_EXP_3	5.61	1.229	-0.989	0.948	2.021	0.765
CAR_EXP_7	5.55	1.195	-0.884	0.694	2.386	0.820
CAR_EXP_5	5.57	1.216	-0.976	0.939	1.993	0.772
DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT ($\alpha = 0.89$; $CR = 0.83$; $AVE = 0.72$)						
Inclusion ($\alpha = 0.88$; $CR = 0.88$; $AVE = 0.56$)						0.929
DIV_MAN_7	5.49	1.218	-0.791	0.434	2.088	0.749
DIV_MAN_5	5.51	1.196	-1.051	1.448	2.037	0.746
DIV_MAN_6	5.48	1.190	-0.921	1.195	1.944	0.745
DIV_MAN_4	5.55	1.195	-0.931	0.895	1.779	0.729
DIV_MAN_1	5.44	1.219	-0.826	0.661	2.115	0.764
DIV_MAN_9	5.53	1.181	-0.690	0.237	1.906	0.737
Equity ($\alpha = 0.84$; $CR = 0.85$; $AVE = 0.65$)						0.761
DIV_MAN_2	5.24	1.442	-1.026	0.733	2.267	0.822
DIV_MAN_8	5.10	1.498	-0.729	-0.051	1.901	0.764
DIV_MAN_3	5.27	1.382	-0.983	0.762	2.354	0.825
ROLE MODEL ($\alpha = 0.83$; $CR = 0.85$; $AVE = 0.53$)						
ROL_MOD_1	5.43	1.231	-0.921	0.918	1.666	0.564
ROL_MOD_2	5.41	1.303	-0.982	0.924	1.640	0.552
ROL_MOD_3	5.12	1.498	-0.694	-0.193	2.260	0.797
ROL_MOD_4	5.01	1.519	-0.680	-0.135	2.875	0.850
ROL_MOD_5	5.04	1.533	-0.653	-0.280	2.657	0.827
Fit of the model: $\chi^2 = 6232.234$, $df = 2371$, $\chi^2/df = 2.629$, RMSEA = 0.072, CFI = 0.854, IFI = 0.855, TLI = 0.847						

Assessing structural model

Before doing the structural model analysis, the multivariate assumptions of outliers, normalcy, collinearity, and homoscedasticity were reviewed. To find multivariate significant outliers, a cook's distance analysis was performed in SPSS 26. No outlier was removed because most cases were much lower than 0.1. Based on the skewness and kurtosis of the new variables for each latent concept produced by exploratory factor analysis, multivariate assumptions of normality were tested. Since the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis are all less than or equal to one, normalcy is not a severe concern (Field, 2009; Hair et al., 2010). Additionally, evaluation of the variable inflation factors (VIF) for preceding constructs on dependent variables reveals that all VIFs are below the permissible level of multicollinearity set by O'brien (2007).

Table 3. Discriminant validity

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Imposter syndrome	0.906							

2. Career advancement	0.829**	0.927						
3. Organizational commitment	0.856**	0.783**	0.854					
4. Employee engagement	0.735**	0.812**	0.737**	0.959				
5. Work-family balance	0.792**	0.830**	0.760**	0.779**	0.959			
6. Career expectation	0.745**	0.778**	0.762**	0.862**	0.774**	0.938		
7. Diversity management	0.855**	0.823**	0.851**	0.801**	0.792**	0.861**	0.849	
8. Role model	0.794**	0.687**	0.794**	0.598**	0.619**	0.659**	0.807**	0.728
<i>Mean</i>	5.33	5.39	5.34	5.61	5.37	5.58	5.40	5.20
<i>Standard deviation</i>	0.90	0.92	0.89	0.97	0.87	0.95	0.95	1.11

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); The diagonal elements are the squared root of AVE.

The results show that imposter syndrome, organizational commitment, employee engagement, and career advancement, work-family balance, career expectation, and diversity management have a medium level of explanatory power (Hair et al., 2011). The measurement model satisfactorily describes the covariation in the data, as shown by the square root of the average squared element of the residual correlation matrix (SRMR) value of 0.056 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Additionally, the proposed structural model exhibited an adequate model fit (NFI = 0.90) above the threshold for acceptable model fit (Lohmöller & Lohmöller, 1989).

All hypotheses are supported except for H1(c), H3(d), and H5(b). Imposter syndrome has a high impact on employee engagement ($\beta = -0.591, p = 0.000$), career advancement ($\beta = 0.395, p = 0.002$), and organizational commitment ($\beta = 1.199, p = 0.000$) supporting H1, H2, and H3 (Table 4). According to Morris et al. (2022), the impact of imposter syndrome can be positive or negative depending on the stimuli one is exposed to, hence it may have an influence on women's emotions, work performance, and career progression. The impact of imposter syndrome on women mostly exhibits itself in the form of anxiety and stress in their attempt to attain a promotion or when in leadership (Breeze, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2020). The finding indicates institutional factors as an important influence on imposter syndrome just as in the findings of earlier studies indicating societal, organizational, and interpersonal experiences as factors impacting the emotions of imposter high-achieving individuals (Feenstra et al., 2020; Morris et al., 2022).

More so, work-family balance has a favourable influence on career advancement ($\beta = 0.602, p = 0.000$), organizational commitment ($\beta = -0.554, p = 0.001$), employee engagement ($\beta = 0.917, p = 0.000$), and imposter syndrome ($\beta = 0.879, p = 0.000$) supporting all proposed hypotheses under H5 (Table 4). Similarly, this finding is consistent with the findings that work-family balance guarantees the commitment of employees to the company they work for while

the lack of work-family balance results in emotional stress and unhappiness with the company (Liu et al., 2022; O'Neill & Follmer, 2020; Tsagkanou & Polychroniou, 2023).

Noteworthy, career expectations have a considerable influence on organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.223, p = 0.014$), and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.798, p = 0.000$), but not on career advancement (H4c), and imposter syndrome (H4a), thus supporting only H4b, and H3c (Table 4). An implication of this finding is the indication that individuals' career expectations are based on their career goals including their career advancement, aspirations, and objectives (Liu, Gao, et al., 2020). Diversity management has no significant influence on imposter syndrome (H6c). It significantly moderates the relationship between work-family balance and imposter syndrome ($\beta = 0.059, p = 0.000$), but does not moderate the relationship between career expectations and imposter syndrome (H6b) supporting only Hypothesis 6a (Table 4). Role models have significant impact on imposter syndrome ($\beta = 0.333, p = 0.000$) and significantly moderate the relationship between career expectations and imposter syndrome ($\beta = 0.069, p = 0.000$), and the relationship between work-family balance and imposter syndrome ($\beta = 0.031, p = 0.035$). Likewise, the presence of female role models enhances the confidence levels of female employees with greater inspiration toward their career advancement (Dashper, 2020; Segovia-Pérez et al., 2021). Hence, hypotheses 7a, 7b, and 7c are supported (Table 4).

Table 4. Hypotheses test

Hypothesized path	β	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Result
H1: IMPO → EENG	-0.591	-3.347***	0.000	Supported
H2: IMPO → CADV	0.395	3.150**	0.002	Supported
H3: IMPO → OCOM	1.199	6.867***	0.000	Supported

H4a: CEXP → IMOP	-0.006	-0.073	0.941	Not Supported
H4b: CEXP → EENG	0.798	7.178***	0.000	Supported
H4c: CEXP → CADV	0.056	0.740	0.459	Not Supported
H4d: CEXP → OCOM	0.223	2.470*	0.014	Supported
H5a: WFB → IMOP	0.879	8.347***	0.000	Supported
H5b: WFB → EENG	0.917	4.821***	0.000	Supported
H5c: WFB → CADV	0.602	4.165***	0.000	Supported
H5d: WFB → OCOM	-0.554	-3.212**	0.001	Supported
H6a: DMAN × WFB → IMPO	0.059	3.714***	0.000	Supported
H6b: DMAN × CEXP → IMPO	0.029	2.011	0.045	Not Supported
H6c: DMAN → IMPO	-0.022	-0.548	0.584	Not Supported
H7a: RMOD × WFB → IMPO	0.031	2.117*	0.035	Supported
H7b: RMOD × CEXP → IMPO	0.069	4.813***	0.000	Supported
H7c: RMOD → IMPO	0.333	6.674***	0.000	Supported

Notes: IMPO= Imposter Syndrome, OCOM=Organizational Commitment, CADV= Career Advancement, EENG= Employee Engagement, CEXP= Career Expectation, WFB= Work-family Balance, DMAN= Diversity Management, and RMOD=Female Role Model

Fit of the model: $\chi^2 = 5300.140$, $df = 2172$, $\chi^2/df = 2.440$, RMSEA = 0.072, CFI = 0.877, IFI = 0.877, TLI = 0.871

Notes: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

Table 5. Mediation results

Indirect effect	β	95% LLCI	95% ULCI	Results
H8a: CEXP → IMOP → CADV	0.406	0.322	0.494	Supported
H8b: CEXP → IMOP → OCOM	0.455	0.352	0.550	Supported
H8c: CEXP → IMOP → EENG	0.159	0.104	0.229	Supported
H9a: WFB → IMOP → CADV	0.385	0.293	0.485	Supported
H9b: WFB → IMOP → OCOM	0.554	0.479	0.632	Supported
H9c: WFB → IMOP → EENG	0.277	0.177	0.396	Supported

Notes: IMPO= Imposter Syndrome, OCOM=Organizational Commitment, CADV= Career Advancement, EENG= Employee Engagement, CEXP= Career Expectation, WFB= Work-family Balance, DMAN= Diversity Management, and RMOD=Female Role Model

Notes: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

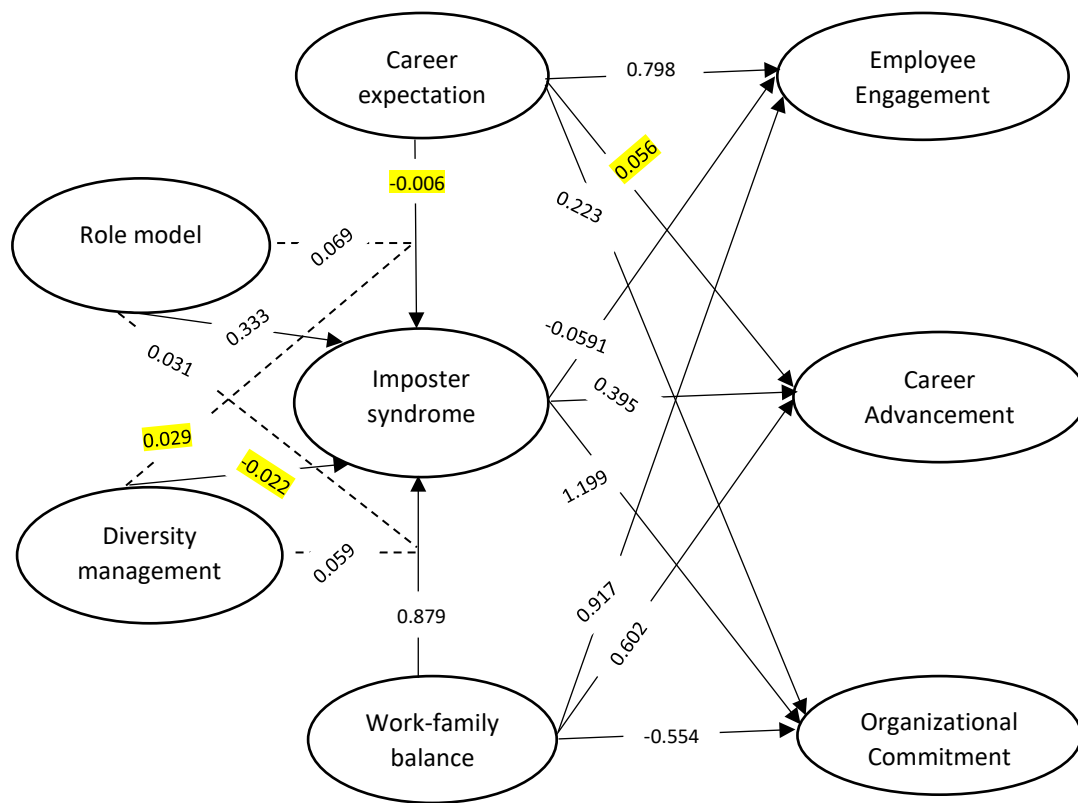


Figure 2. Structural model of the imposter syndrome and career advancement in the hospitality industry.

Note: Paths are significant at 0.001, 0.01, and 0.05 levels

Conclusions

This study highlights the importance of considering institutional-level influences in understanding the impact of imposter syndrome on the career advancement of women in the hospitality and tourism industry. The findings suggest that work-life balance, female role models, and diversity management can significantly influence the experiences of imposter syndrome among women, which can have a direct effect on their career advancement and commitment to their organizations. These institutional-level factors are crucial in supporting female employees and encouraging their career continuity. The proposed conceptual model provides a different perspective and a deeper understanding of the complex nature of imposter syndrome in the hospitality and tourism industry. This study contributes to the existing literature by shedding light on the factors that can influence imposter syndrome and how it affects women in this industry. The knowledge obtained from this study can benefit both the

research and business fields by providing effective ways to empower female employees and promote their career progression in the hospitality and tourism industry. Further research is needed to explore the impact of other institutional factors on imposter syndrome and how they can be effectively managed to promote gender equity in the workplace.

Theoretical implications

Three significant theoretical additions are made to the literature by this work. The findings of this study are consistent with previous claims by (Clance & O'Toole, 1987), (Feenstra et al., 2020), (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), (Eagly & Karau, 2002), and (Brown et al., 2014).

Firstly, by considering workplace gender issues, this study contributes to advancing gender equality literature and serve as the unifying theoretical foundation for imposter syndrome and workplace gender equality. It is grounded in the role congruity theory of prejudice and findings which essentially confirm the concerns that women's career development problems can be an outcome of institutional prejudice against women.

Secondly, the study adds to the understanding of the imposter syndrome, its antecedents, and its consequences by highlighting some causes of impostor syndrome and how it impacts women working in the hospitality and tourism industry. Identifying imposter syndrome in two different contexts - inherent and structural factors, and hypothetically testing the causative influence of institutional factors on imposter syndrome including its related consequences on careers in general, is important in enhancing literature that delves into imposter syndrome and career development challenges among women. Deep-seated gendered traditions in organizations generate greater emotions in female employees leading to career discontinuity.

Finally, by creating an imposter syndrome model of its causes and effects that is empirically tested in a hospitality and tourism environment, this study adds knowledge to the integration of the Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice. The findings provide substantial support for the theorizing of the causal relationships between institutional factors and imposter syndrome and its outcome on women's career advancement, organizational commitment, and employee engagement in hospitality and tourism. Rooted in the Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice, which indicate that employees who hold entity thinking and/or access incongruent jobs experience anxiety, stress, doubt their competence and self-esteem (Edwards, 2008; Kumar & Jagacinski, 2006), this study also serves as the overarching theoretical foundation for imposter syndrome and the associated barriers to career advancement.

Practical implications

The findings of this study have several managerial implications for organizations in the hospitality and tourism industry, especially those seeking to promote gender diversity and equity in their workforce.

This study highlights the need to increase awareness of imposter syndrome among both employers and employees in the hospitality and tourism industry. It is essential to recognize that imposter syndrome is a common experience that can have a detrimental effect on one's well-being and career development. Employers can benefit from this study by gaining a better understanding of the institutional factors that can impact the imposter syndrome of their female employees, such as the presence or absence of work-life balance, female role models, and diversity management. By implementing policies and structures that support their employees' well-being and career advancement, companies can reduce the prevalence of imposter syndrome and promote employee retention and job satisfaction. Furthermore, counselling services can be provided to help individuals cope with imposter syndrome and to develop personal strategies to overcome it. This can include communication skills training, coaching, and mentoring programs that focus on building confidence, self-esteem, and developing a sense of belonging in the workplace.

In addition, organizations can prioritize diversity management and promote a workplace culture that fosters diversity and inclusivity. This can include initiatives such as training programs, mentorship opportunities, and employee resource groups. Organizations should also evaluate and address any biases or discrimination within the hiring and promotion processes. This can include implementing blind hiring practices, providing unconscious bias training for managers, and ensuring that job descriptions and qualifications are free from gender biases. Organizations should foster a culture of transparency and open communication where female employees feel comfortable discussing their career aspirations and concerns with their managers. It is also suggested to encourage male allies to actively participate in diversity and inclusion initiatives, including mentorship and sponsorship programs.

The study highlights the importance of work-family balance and its direct impact on reducing imposter syndrome among female employees. Organizations can adopt policies and practices that support work-family balance, such as flexible work arrangements, to help alleviate the negative effects of work-family conflict on female employees' well-being and job satisfaction. Organizations can also promote the visibility and availability of female role

models and mentors to support female employees' career progression. This can include initiatives such as mentorship programs, leadership development programs, and networking opportunities. By providing female employees with access to role models and mentors, organizations can help build their confidence and motivation and support their career advancement. Organizations can also create opportunities for female employees to share their own stories and experiences to inspire and motivate others. This can include hosting speaker events, networking sessions, and panel discussions where female employees can share their career journeys and offer advice and insights to others. Finally, organizations can actively seek out and promote women in leadership positions as visible role models for others to look up to. This can help to break down the perception that leadership roles are only for men and encourage more women to pursue these positions.

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