

## Translation and Cultural Adaptation of the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale into Urdu (CIPS-Urdu) for Use in Pakistan

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### Abstract

The Impostor Phenomenon (IP) is a psychological experience explained by persistent self-doubt and a fear of being exposed as a fraud despite of evident success. Although it is widely studied but there is a lack of culturally adapted instruments which limits its assessment in non-English-speaking populations. The present study aimed to translate and culturally adapt the *Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale* (CIPS; Clance, 1985) into Urdu for use in the Pakistani context. A methodological research design was employed using established guidelines for cross-cultural adaptation. The process followed 5 step model of translation including forward translation, synthesis, backward translation, expert committee review and pilot testing. Bilingual translators independently translated the scale into Urdu followed by reconciliation and back-translation to ensure accuracy of the translated version. An expert panel evaluated final translated version for semantic, idiomatic, experiential and conceptual equivalence, resulting in minor revisions to improve clarity and cultural relevance. The pre-final Urdu translated version of CIPS was pilot tested on a sample of Urdu-speaking participants who reported high levels of comprehensibility and clarity and suggested minor adjustments. The CIPS-Urdu was found to be linguistically accurate and culturally appropriate while maintained reliability with the original construct.

Considering pre-established structural validity and reliability of CIPS-Urdu in Pakistani population, this study provides a standardized Urdu adaptation suitable for research in applied settings. This instrument aims to facilitate more inclusive assessment of impostor feelings in culturally sensitive psychological research in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Impostor phenomenon, Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale, CIPS-Urdu, scale translation, cultural adaptation, Urdu, Pakistan, 3 Cs of Pilot Study, 5 Step Model of Translation.

## **Introduction**

Impostor Phenomenon (IP) is a psychological experience known as persistent self-doubt, feeling of intellectual fraudulence and a fear of being exposed as incompetent person despite of clear evidence of success (Clance & Imes, 1978; Rajput & Mahesar, 2025). Although initially identified among women who are high-achievers but subsequent research has verified that IP is not confined to any specific gender or professional group as it occurs across diverse populations in performance-oriented contexts (Abbas et al., 2024). Individuals experiencing IP tend to attribute their achievements to external factors like luck or chance and find it difficult to own their accomplishments (Afzal et al., 2024; Harvey & Katz, 1985; Rajput & Mahesar, 2025).

In academic settings, IP has emerged as a concern within higher education environments which is characterized as intense competition and continuous evaluation along with high expectations about achievement from the students (Nori & Vanttaja, 2022). Empirical evidence suggests that students who experience impostor feelings are more vulnerable to psychological distress in terms of anxiety and depression which diminish their self-esteem (Cusack et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2019). Furthermore, IP is associated with maladaptive cognitive and emotional patterns of perfectionism and fear of failure which effect their academic performance and long-term career development (Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch, 2017). This importance of IP indicates the critical need for accurate and culturally relevant assessment tool of IP among young adults.

*Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale* (CIPS; Clance, 1985) is a tool which is widely used to assess IP as it is concise, easy to administer and have strong psychometric characteristics (Mak et al., 2019). The scale was originally conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising of factors such as *Fake*, *Discount* and *Luck* (Chrisman et al., 1995) but the empirical findings across different cultural contexts have produced inconsistent factor structures ranging from one-factor to multi-factor models (French et al., 2008; Simon & Choi, 2018). These variations suggest that cultural and contextual influences play a significant role in shaping the experience and measurement of IP.

In non-Western contexts like Pakistan, socio-cultural dynamics complicate the manifestation of IP through cultural norms, collectivist values, gender expectations and socio-economic disparities by influencing how individuals perceive success and competence (Cokley et al., 2013; Bauer-Wolf, 2017; Rajput & Mahesar, 2025). Rapid expansion of higher education in Pakistan has led to an increase in first-generation college students who often face challenges in navigating academic environments that significantly differ from their family and cultural backgrounds (Abbas et al., 2024). Transition from collectivistic home settings to more individualistic academic systems along with societal and gender-based expectations intensify impostor feelings and associated psychological distress in students (Abbas et al., 2024; Ijaz et

al., 2022).

Despite the growing recognition of IP and its implications not only in academic settings but also generally there is a notable gap in culturally appropriate assessment tools within the Pakistani context. Although recent studies have demonstrated that the CIPS possesses strong psychometric properties among Pakistani undergraduates by including high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and a unidimensional factor structure (Rajput & Mahesar, 2025) the absence of a standardized Urdu Translated version limits its accessibility and broader applicability in Urdu speaking population. Considering that Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and is widely understood across diverse educational and socio-cultural groups the lack of a translated and culturally adapted instrument may hinder accurate assessment among individuals with limited proficiency in English.

Translation and cultural adaptation of any psychological instrument in other languages is essential to ensure semantic, conceptual and contextual equivalence across these languages (Beaton et al., 2000). These translated versions enhance the validity and reliability of these tools and allow a more accurate measurement of psychological constructs within specific cultural contexts.

Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) has been used across different cultural contexts and has demonstrated strong psychometric properties in previous research conducted within the Pakistani population (Rajput & Mahesar, 2025). Therefore, the present study focused solely on linguistic translation and cultural adaptation of CIPS into Urdu language for Pakistani population rather establishing its structural and contextual validity. Establishing a reliable Urdu version of CIPS will provide a culturally sensitive tool for assessing IP, facilitating research and developing targeted interventions aiming at impostor feelings to promote psychological well-being of the individuals.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

Correlation research design was used in this study to translate and culturally adapt Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale in Urdu (national language of Pakistan). The adaptation process followed internationally recognized guidelines proposed by Beaton et al. (2000) to ensure semantic, conceptual, idiomatic and experiential equivalence between the original and translated versions of the scale.

### **Instruments**

The primary instrument was the *Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale* (CIPS; Clance, 1985) consisted of 20 items to assess impostor feelings such as lack of confidence in self, fear of losing and attribution of success to external factors. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all true* to *very true* and higher scores indicated greater impostor tendencies of the individuals.

*Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale* (BFNE; Leary, 1983) was used to assess convergent validity of CIPS. This 12-item scale captures the extent to which individuals are concerned about being judged negatively by others. Items are rated using 5-point scale ranging from *not at all characteristic of me* to *extremely characteristic of me* and some items reverse scored. Total scores reflected the degree to which an individual was fearful of being negatively

evaluated.

*Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) comprised of 10 items was used to assess global self-worth perceived by the individual by rating on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. High scores indicate high level of self-esteem.

### **Phases of the study**

#### **Phase I: Translation and Cultural Adaptation**

##### **Participants**

Participants in this phase bilingual linguistic and subject-matter experts ( $N=13$ ) of psychology, linguistics and psychometrics were selected based on their proficiency in both English and Urdu languages and expertise in scale development and adaptation.

##### **Procedure**

The translation process followed a structured *5 Step Model of Translation* resulting in a **pre-final Urdu version** of the scale.

- **1. Forward Translation:** Independent translation of the original English scale into Urdu by bilingual experts.
- **2. Synthesis:** Integration of translated versions into a single reconciled Urdu form through expert consensus.
- **3. Backward Translation:** Independent back-translation into English by translators blinded to the original instrument.
- **4. Expert Committee Review:** Evaluation of semantic, idiomatic, experiential and conceptual equivalence. Content validity was established using the Content Validity Index (CVI).
- **5. Piolet Testing:** to check the comprehension and user friendliness of the scale it was pilot tested on a small sample of target population.

#### **Phase II: Pilot Testing**

##### **Participants**

Urdu-speaking individuals ( $N=22$ ) as the representative of the target population were recruited in this phase through convenience sampling.

##### **Procedure**

The pre-final Urdu version of the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) was administered on participants to assess *3Cs of Pilot Study* for the scale including Clarity and readability, Comprehensibility and Cultural appropriateness. Feedback received by the participants of this phase indicated that the items were generally well understood and minor refinements were suggested to improve clarity which resulted in finalized Urdu version.

#### **Phase III: Reliability and Validity Assessment**

##### **Participants**

In this phase 138 young adults including 54 male and 84 female from age range of 19 to 28 years ( $M_{age}=22.39$ ,  $SD=2.15$ ) with proficiency in both English and Urdu languages were recruited to enable accurate evaluation of equivalence and psychometric properties across

English and Urdu language versions of CIPS.

### **Procedure**

After obtaining informed consent, participants were asked to complete a protocol comprising a demographic information sheet along with Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (English version), Urdu version of the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale. Participants completed the measures using an online form in which standard instructions were provided. At the end of the survey the participants were provided with the information regarding the counselling services.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered to the ethical standards outlined by the American Psychological Association (2017) for research involving human participants. Approval was obtained from the institutional review board prior to the commencement of data collection. All participants were provided with the information about the aims and objectives of the study, their role and rights and obtained electronic informed consent prior to participation. Participation was entirely voluntary and individuals were informed about their right to withdraw at any stage of the study without any penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained as all data was anonymized to protect the identities of the participants. The study posed minimal risk and the participants were informed that they could skip survey at any items they feel uncomfortable. All collected data was securely stored and used solely for research purposes.

### **Data Analysis**

IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27) was used to analyze the data. Content validity was assessed using the Content Validity Index (CVI) and descriptive statistics was used to evaluate clarity and comprehension during pilot testing. In Phase III, reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha, language equivalence was tested using an independent samples *t*-test and validity was evaluated through Pearson correlation analysis with the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale with the statistical significance at  $p < .05$ .

### **Results**

#### **Phase I: Translation and Cultural Equivalence**

The translation and cultural adaptation of the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) demonstrated a high degree of semantic, conceptual and cultural equivalence between the original English and Urdu versions of the scale. Subjective comparison between the original instrument and the back-translated version revealed substantial consistency in item meanings as out of the 20 items, 18 items showed direct equivalence with the English version of the scale and 02 item required minor linguistic refinement which were primarily related to wording clarity. These refinements were incorporated after discussion and consensus of the experts which ensured fidelity to the original construct.

The expert committee further evaluated the translated version for semantic, idiomatic, experiential and conceptual equivalence. Item-Level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) ranged from .89 to .98 for all the 20 items in CIPS-Urdu and Scale-Level Content Validity Index (S-

CVI/Ave) was .95. These values indicated strong agreement among experts regarding the relevance and clarity of the items with the original CIPS. At this stage no major refinement was suggested.

### **Phase II: Pilot Testing**

The findings of pilot-testing phase indicated that the majority of participants found the scale easy to understand and items were rated as clear and comprehensible. No major refinements were recommended by the participants of pilot study. Hence, the final Urdu version of the scale was established and considered linguistically accurate and culturally appropriate which has no apparent major conceptual deviations from the original instrument.

### **Phase III: Reliability and Validity Assessment**

The internal consistency of the Urdu version of the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha which yielded a value of  $\alpha = .93$  indicating strong reliability and suggesting that the items consistently measure the construct of impostor phenomenon. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare mean scores obtained from the English and Urdu versions of the scale to ensure language equivalence of CIPS-Urdu with its original version. The results indicated no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of two versions ( $t = .59, p = .696$ ) which suggested that both versions produce comparable score distributions and are functionally equivalent across both languages. Test-retest analysis over a period of one week also indicated that CIPS-Urdu provides persistent ratings ( $r=.92, p<.001$ ).

Convergent validity was evaluated by examining the relationships between the CIPS-Urdu and theoretically related constructs like Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between impostor phenomenon and fear of negative evaluation ( $r=.62, p<.001$ ) which indicated that individuals with higher impostor feelings tend to experience greater concern about social evaluation. Additionally, a significant negative correlation was observed between impostor phenomenon and self-esteem ( $r=-.49, p<.001$ ) suggesting that higher impostor tendencies are associated with lower levels of self-worth. Small values of the correlations indicate that this scale is a significantly different construct from Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

### **Summary of Findings**

Overall, the Urdu adaptation of the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS-Urdu) demonstrated strong psychometric properties. The findings indicate satisfactory content validity, high internal consistency, evidence of convergent validity and equivalence between the English and Urdu versions. The absence of significant differences between language versions further supports the suitability of the CIPS-Urdu as a reliable and valid instrument for assessing impostor phenomenon in the Pakistani context.

### **Discussion**

Aim of the study was to translate and culturally adapt the *Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS)* into Urdu to facilitate its use within the Pakistani context. Following internationally

recommended guidelines for cross-cultural adaptation (Beaton et al., 2000) the findings indicated that the CIPS-Urdu demonstrate strong linguistic clarity and cultural appropriateness along with maintained conceptual fidelity to the original instrument. The 5-Step translation process followed in this study ensured that the meaning of each item was preserved and supported the suitability of the CIPS-Urdu for Urdu-speaking populations.

Forward and backward translation procedures revealed a high level of equivalence between the original and translated version of CIPS with only minor linguistic refinements. These refinements primarily involved simplifying expressions and replacing culturally unfamiliar terms with contextually relevant alternatives. Such modifications are consistent with previous adaptation studies which emphasize on the importance of achieving not only literal translation but also cultural resonance to ensure accurate interpretation of psychological constructs (Beaton et al., 2000). The minimal number of revisions required for cultural adaptation suggests that the core constructs underlying the Impostor Phenomenon are conceptually transferable across cultures.

The evaluation made by the committee of experts provided additional support for the adequacy of *5 step translation process*. High levels of agreement among experts regarding semantic, idiomatic, experiential and conceptual equivalence indicate that the CIPS-Urdu successfully captures the intended meaning of the items in original version. These findings are aligned with prior cross-cultural adaptations of the CIPS in other languages which have reported similar strong content validity and minimal need for structural changes (Şahin & Gülşen, 2022; Yaffe, 2020; Sandoval-Lentisco et al., 2024). This consistency across adaptations reinforce the robustness of the CIPS as a measure of impostor feelings across diverse cultural contexts. The pilot testing phase confirmed the clarity and comprehensibility of the CIPS-Urdu as the participants found the items easy to understand and reported minor concerns related to wording and phrasing.

Translation and adaptation of CIPS into Urdu addresses a critical gap of the availability of culturally relevant psychological assessment tools in Pakistan. considering increase in recognition of the Impostor Phenomenon in academic and professional settings the availability of a standardized Urdu version allows for more inclusive and accurate assessment. This is especially relevant in a context where varying levels of English proficiency may otherwise limit participation in research or the validity of responses. the present study contributes to improving both research quality and accessibility by providing a linguistically appropriate instrument.

The present study did not aim to establish the psychometric properties of the CIPS as previous research has already demonstrated its reliability and validity within the Pakistani population (Rajput & Mahesar, 2025). Translation and adaptation of CIPS was builds upon already established evidence base and extends its applicability by ensuring linguistic and cultural suitability. Future research can be planned to examine measurement invariance across languages or explore the use of CIPS-Urdu in diverse populations beyond young adults.

Despite its contributions there are certain limitations which should be acknowledged. The pilot testing was conducted on a relatively small sample which limit generalizability of findings related to clarity and comprehension of the scale. Additionally, while expert evaluation ensured content validity, further large-scale studies may be beneficial to examine the performance of the CIPS-Urdu across different demographic groups. Future research may

also consider adapting the scale into regional languages to enhance inclusivity to the next level.

In conclusion, the present study successfully translated and culturally adapted the *Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS)* into Urdu by ensuring semantic accuracy, cultural relevance and conceptual equivalence. The availability of this adapted version (CIPS-Urdu) provides a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners to assess impostor feelings in Urdu-speaking populations and supports the broader goal of culturally sensitive psychological assessment.

**Disclaimer:** To get a copy of CIPS-URDU to be used for research purpose, the researches can contact with the corresponding author.

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