



Examining the relationship between Mindfulness and Self-Compassion among University Adults

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ABSTRACT

Mindfulness and Self-Compassion are two interrelated psychological constructs that are essential to emotional health. The act of showing kindness and understanding to oneself, particularly when one is feeling inadequate or hurt, is known as Self-Compassion. Mindfulness involves learning to examine one's thoughts, feelings and other present moments. The current study aimed to explore the relationship between Mindfulness and Self-Compassion among university adults. By using the sample of 200 students taken from different department of University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Mindfulness (MAAS_15) by Brown and Ryan (2003) and Self-Compassion (SCS_12) by Neff were used in the study. Pearson correlational and regression analysis were used to assess the impact of mindfulness on self-compassion. The results showed a significant positive relationship between Mindfulness and Self-Compassion. Future researches should investigate this relationship across diverse populations and look at potential mediating factors.



Introduction

Mindfulness is being aware of what is happening right now without judging. It involves noticing your feelings, thoughts, body sensation, and the things that are around you like sensation (Kabat Zinn, 2005; Linehan, 1993). It comes from a buddhist meditation, which is teaching us that practicing mindfulness can help in reducing pain and increase posih & wellbeing, both in the short & long term.(Brown et al., 2007; Keng et al.,2011)positive feelings like happiness, kindness, and empathy. Mindfulness is now easily available in western societies through meditation centers & mental health programs. The research has shown that mindfulness training can improve mental health (Goldstein& Kornfield, 2001).

Self-compassion has consistently shown that treating oneself with kindness and compassion has a positive impact on mental health. Practicing self-compassion can increase happiness and overall life satisfaction (Germer, 2009). Self-compassion means treating oneself with kindness, especially when you are struggling or facing failure.

Mindfulness based stress reduction theory (MBSR): This notion improves wellbeing by lowering stress through awareness and meditation. It illustrates that being aware doesn't require paying close attention or avoiding distractions; rather, it means being open and accepting of the motions that are happening right now. (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). MBCT combines cognitive behavioral concepts with mindfulness. Teaching people to observe life objectively will help them to avoid depression. (Mark William et al., 2002). Bishop's two-part mindfulness model: This style emphasizes paying attention and being receptive to new experiences.

Bishop's two component model of mindfulness: This model focuses on attention & openness to experiences. Self-Regulation of Attention: It maintains one's focus on the present situations. Orientation to Experience: It is openness to change accepting one's experiences by fostering curiosity (Bishop et al, 2004).

Self-compassion means treating oneself with kindness, especially when you are struggling or facing failure. Below are the key theories & frameworks related to self-compassion. Neff's Self Compassion Theory: It includes three main components: Self-kindness vs Self-judgment, Treating oneself with care rather than harsh criticism, Common humanity vs Isolation. A person recognizing that suffering & imperfection are part of human experiences (Neff., 2003).

Attachment Theory & Self-Compassion: This theory suggests that early caregiver relationships can influence self-compassion development. In other words, secure attachments with individuals are more likely to respond to personal failures with better understanding (Bowlby, 1950s).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) & Self-Compassion: It basically highlights the importance of fulfilling basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, & relatedness) while self-compassion helps meet our basic needs & helps in achieving our basic goals (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Social Mentalities Theory: Self-compassion is connected with our adaptive need for social connection & caregiving. It is grounded in a caregiver mindset, where individuals show kindness to themselves as they would to others (Gilbert, 2005).

Emotional Regulation Theory: In this theory, self-compassion is linked to improved emotional regulation. Self-compassion helps in reducing denying emotions and it also helps individuals in healthy emotional coping (Gross, 2002).

Literature Review

Giorgi (2016) examined how emotional intelligence, particularly self-management, is affected by workplace bullying. Study using a sample of 300 employees from different organizations, using a cross-sectional survey design with standardized self-report measures. The findings suggest that psychological distress mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and emotional intelligence, it suggests that stress affects emotion regulation. This is consistent with Arisen (2015), who indicated that stress negatively impacts cognitive functioning. Given that mindfulness enhances self-regulation and emotional intelligence (Baumeister, 2005), these findings highlight the importance of mindfulness in maintaining emotional well-being. This supports the current study's focus on the effects of mindfulness on self-compassion.

Self-compassion and mindfulness play a crucial role in the well-being of healthcare professionals (HCPs). Mindfulness, defined as present-moment awareness with non-judgment, increasing emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, and reduces the stress (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Mindfulness-based Stress reduction (MBSR) interventions such as improve Self-Compassion and reduce burnout, depression and anxiety. Self-compassion involves treating oneself with kindness during hard situations and helps protect against compassion fatigue (Neff, 2003). While prolonged exposure to suffering can lead to compassion fatigue, combining mindfulness and compassion-based interventions can strengthen psychological resilience and improve the well-being of HCPs (Tang et al., 2018).

Mindfulness and self-compassion play a role in increasing resilience and improving mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression (Neff, 2003). Mindfulness, characterized by present-moment awareness, helps to regulate emotions, while self-compassion promotes self-kindness and coping positive mechanisms. A study conducted on UK participants found that mindfulness and self-compassion highlighted their positive effects of mediating the negative relationship between poor mental health and resilience (Rizal et al., 2020). These findings emphasize the importance of integrating faith-based mindfulness interventions to enhance compassion to promote mental well-being (Horan & Taylor, 2018).

Mindfulness and Self-Compassion plays an important role in enhancing well-being and improving mental health by reducing stress especially among healthcare professionals (HCPs) at risk of burnout (Conversano, 2020). Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) improve self-compassion and resilience while reducing stress and anxiety (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Research shows that mindfulness improves attention control, emotional regulation, and self-awareness, leading to structural brain changes (Tang, 2018). Similarly, self-compassion is a prevents compassion fatigue by fostering a compassionate and non-judgmental attitude (Neff, 2003). Overall, structured mindfulness and compassion training are essential for HCPs' well-being (Conversano, 2020).

Baer et al. (2012) studied 77 long- term mediators and 75 non-mediators to study the connection between psychological well- being, self- compassion and mindfulness they research that both self-compassion and mindfulness were strongly linked to mediation experience and overall wellbeing. Their results showed that self-compassion and mindfulness each played a role in improving well being.in fact the positive effects of mediation on wellbeing were entirely due to higher levels of self-compassion and mindfulness.

Golden et al. (2020) research how mindfulness based programs MBPs affect the self-compassion in humans without medical conditions. They analyze multiple studies and research that MBPs somewhat enhance self-compassion evaluated to those who didn't participate researches assist previous studies showing that mindfulness reduces stress and improves self-compassion. However, the connection between self-compassion and reduced anxiety or depression was unclear, possibly due to differences in participants and program duration.

Studied 860 Spanish adults to observe how self-compassion and mindfulness affect anxiety and depression. They analyze that both were directly linked to lower anxiety and depression. They also discovered that resilience played a partial role in this process, meaning that people with higher resilience might experience fewer depressive symptoms due to mindfulness and self-compassion (Perez- Aranda et al., 2021).

Methods

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between mindfulness and self-compassion among university students.
2. To assess the predictive role of mindfulness in determining self-compassion levels.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between mindfulness and self-compassion among university students

H2: Mindfulness significantly predicts self-compassion levels.

Informed Consent

The consent form was designed to seek consent for willingness of participation and to obtain permission for using data of the participants.

Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale: The 15-item Mindfulness Scale developed by Brown and Ryan (2003) will be used to assess participants' mindfulness levels. This scale evaluates an individual's ability to maintain attention and awareness in the present moment.

Self-Compassion Scale: The 12-item Self-Compassion Scale, based on Neff's Self-Compassion Scale, will be used to measure participants' levels of self-compassion. This scale assesses key aspects of self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness in self-evaluation.

Demographic Sheet

The demographic Sheet was consisting of age, gender, degree, marital status, family system and physical illness.

Research design

The current study has correlation research design.

Sample

University students were selected as the participants of the study. Convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample of study. The sample size consist of N= 200 students. In which male (n=69) and female (n=131). The study was conducted in University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad. The selected participants were from different departments of the university.

Procedure

The questionnaires were applied to sample of 200 hundred students from University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. All the participants were informed about purpose of study and were asked to complete questionnaire. The participants were requested to give honest responses. After the collection of data from participants, it was transferred to Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Participants

Total participants were 200. The sample includes adults who 131 females and 69 males. More of them were single and very few were married or divorced.

Table 1: Frequency distribution in terms of demographic variables (N=200)

Variables		F	%
Age	16-24	158	79.0
	25-32	31	15.5
	33-41	9	4.5
	42-50	2	1.0
Gender	male	69	34.5
	female	131	65.5
Marital status	single	173	86.5
	married	24	12.0
	Divorced	3	1.5
Qualification	matric	8	4.0
	Intermediate	44	22.0
	Bachelor's	131	65.5
	MBBS	6	3.0
	M.Phil	11	5.5

Note. F=frequency, p=percentage

Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the scale used in the study (N=200). Higher score on the MAAS scale reflects greater mindfulness, while higher score on the SCS scale reflects greater self skewness and kurtosis values indicate moral distribution for both scales.

Table2: Descriptive statistics for scales Mindfulness & Self Compassion used in the study (N=200).

Scale	M	SD	A	Skewness	Kurtosis
MAAS	53.97	10.70	0.788	0.187	-0.35
SCS	51.8	6.33	0.76	0.26	-0.46

Cronbach's alpha=a, Mean=M

Table 2 indicates mean, standard deviation, Cronbach alpha reliability skewness and kurtosis of scale mindfulness and self-compassion scale.

Table3: Correlation matrix between Mindfulness & Self Compassion.

Variables	1	2
1. Mindfulness	-	.472**
2. Self-compassion	-	-

Note. P<0.01

Table 3 shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between mindfulness and self-compassion ($r=.472$, $p<.01$). This shows that as mindfulness increases, self-compassion tends to increase. The correlation coefficient proposes a moderate strength relationship between the two variables.

Table 4: Regression analysis between mindfulness and self-compassion

Model				
Constant)	B	SE	t	P
Mindfulness	22.47	2.051	10.95	.000
Self-compassion	.280	.037	7.50	.000

This table shows a positive relationship between mindfulness and self-compassion. This suggests that higher level of mindfulness predict greater self-compassion.

Discussion

The present study aims to determine the relationship between Mindfulness and Self-Compassion. Pearson's correlational analysis showed a positive relationship between self-compassion and mindfulness, indicating positive relationship decreases the psychological distress, which supports previous study by Barer et al. (2012). Their results showed that self-compassion and mindfulness are positively related and each played a role in improving wellbeing and the positive effects of mediation on wellbeing were entirely due to higher levels of self-compassion and mindfulness. As well, regression analysis also shows that self-compassion is positively predicts by mindfulness, which is consistent with earlier research (Conversano et al., 2020) Studies indicate that when mindfulness levels increases the level of self-compassion also increases. Also support the study of (Horan & Taylor, 2018). Their findings emphasized the importance of integrating faith-based mindfulness interventions to enhance compassion to promote mental well-being. Their study suggested that play a role to enchanting individual's well-being and reducing stress. These findings highlight the importance of mindfulness in promoting self-compassion, which can have broader implications for mental health and well-being interventions.

Conclusion

The study highlights the role of mindfulness in enhancing self-compassion. Individuals who consciously experiences the present moments have higher levels of mindfulness which also enhance the self-compassion. Findings show that mindfulness practices can improve well-being and reduce the stress, anxiety and depression. These results are consistent with previous studies and rely on combined effect of self-compassion and mindfulness to reduce distraction, improve mental health and foster happiness.

Suggestions and Limitations

Although this study provides insights into the relationship between mindfulness and self-compassion. Firstly, the sample may not fully represent diverse cultural or demographic groups. Mindfulness and self-compassion may be perceived differently across cultures, affecting their effectiveness and application. It can be apply in various settings such as education and learning, health and wellbeing, relationships and personal life.

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