



The Influence of Self-Compassion on Flourishing in College Students

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ABSTRACT.

This study aims to determine whether self-compassion influences flourishing in college students. The study population consisted of 386 final-year college students in Surabaya who were writing their theses. The sampling technique used snowball sampling. The research instrument consisted of two psychological scales: the self-compassion scale ($\alpha = 0.872$) and the flourishing scale ($\alpha = 0.950$), which demonstrated high reliability. Data analysis was carried out using simple regression analysis with the help of the SPSS for windows 26.0. The results showed a significant effect of self-compassion on the level of flourishing in college students ($\beta = 0.261$; $Z = 8.46$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that self-compassion, which involves self-acceptance, managing negative feelings in a healthier way, and the ability to empathize with oneself, is a key factor in improving students' psychological well-being.

Keywords: Self-Compassion, Flourishing, College Students'

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INTRODUCTION

Final-year student life is a time when individuals face various pressures, particularly in the process of writing their final assignment or thesis. This process is often a significant source of stress as students face various obstacles, both internal and external (Akbar et al., 2022). Internal factors include poor writing skills, low interest, limited academic capacity, and unfamiliarity with scientific writing and time management. Meanwhile, external factors include difficulty finding literature, limited funds, and communication difficulties with supervisors (Fatiy et al., 2023). These obstacles can lead to delayed graduation, decreased motivation, and even failure to complete their thesis. Therefore, students require good psychological well-being to optimally complete their final assignment (Sekarini, 2021).

One indicator of psychological well-being is flourishing, a state in which an individual is able not only to withstand pressure but also to develop positively and achieve a meaningful life (Herdiansyah & Puteri, 2023). Students with high levels of flourishing are characterized by positive emotions, confidence in facing challenges, life satisfaction, and the ability to function optimally in various situations (Anindya & Trihastuti, 2022). Conversely, students with low levels of flourishing tend to feel anxious, depressed, and unable to enjoy the academic process.

However, various studies indicate that levels of flourishing among students are still relatively low. According to a 2024 survey by the American College Health Association (RI) published in Rri.co.id (2024), 76% of students experience moderate to high levels of psychological distress caused by academic demands, adaptation difficulties, and financial problems. Research by Lutfianawati (2024) also showed that 41% of students had low levels of flourishing, 39% had moderate levels, and only 20% had high levels. Similar findings were obtained from research by Zulfa and Prastuti (2020), who found that the majority of students (70%) fell into the moderate flourishing category. These data indicate that students' psychological well-being has not yet been achieved optimally.

Low flourishing can impact academic productivity and academic success. Students with high flourishing are more likely to complete their studies on time, demonstrate good academic performance, and have brighter career prospects (Sekarini et al., 2020). Conversely, students with low flourishing tend to experience stress, procrastinate on assignments, and lose motivation to study (Herdiansyah et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to identify factors that can increase flourishing in students.

One important factor influencing flourishing is self-compassion. Neff (2003) defines self-compassion as an individual's ability to show compassion for themselves when facing failure, difficulty, or pain, by being understanding and non-judgmental. Individuals with high levels of self-compassion tend to accept their weaknesses and mistakes as part of the human experience, thus being better able to manage negative emotions and build better psychological well-being.

Several studies support a positive relationship between self-compassion and flourishing. Research conducted by Almisari et al. (2023) showed that self-compassion plays a role in increasing students' flourishing because it helps them manage negative emotions such as anger, sadness, or frustration, and redirect their thoughts in a more positive direction. Similar results were found by Oktafiani and Ekasari (2023), who stated a significant relationship between self-compassion and flourishing in final-year students, with a moderate correlation. Research by Dahlan (2023) also confirmed that the higher a student's self-compassion, the higher their flourishing.

Furthermore, Zulfa and Prastuti (2020) explained that students who can love themselves and accept their shortcomings tend to feel satisfied with life, experience positive emotions, and see their lives as more meaningful. Kurniawan and Kusumiati (2024) also found that individuals with high self-compassion are more resilient to failure, have a positive relationship with themselves, and exhibit high levels of flourishing. Thus, self-compassion plays a crucial role in helping students cope with academic stress, achieve complete self-acceptance, and achieve optimal psychological well-being.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that self-compassion has an important influence on flourishing in students, especially undergraduate students.

METHOD

This study aims to determine whether self-compassion influences student progress. In this study, the dependent variable measured was flourishing, while the independent variable was self-compassion. The study population consisted of 386 university students in Surabaya who were working on their theses.

The sampling technique used snowball sampling. In this technique, the researcher first identified several participants who met the criteria. The researcher then asked these initial participants for permission or connected them with others who also met the same criteria. This process continued from one participant to the next, like a snowball rolling and growing. This method allowed the number of participants to continue to grow, allowing the researcher to reach a wider range of relevant respondents (Creswell, 2012).

The research instrument consisted of two psychological scales: a self-compassion scale and a well-being scale. The Self-Compassion Scale has been adapted into Indonesian and psychometrically tested by Sugiyono (2020). It draws on the self-compassion aspects proposed by Neff (2003): self-kindness versus self-judgment, common humanity versus isolation, and mindfulness versus over-identification. This study used Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with JASP software to analyze the data. The self-compassion scale consists of 26 items, divided into 13 favorable items and 13 unfavorable items. Reliability testing showed a high Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.872 for all items.

The Flourishing Scale was developed by researchers based on five aspects proposed by Seligman (2011): positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. The total number of items in this growing scale is 40, divided into 20 preferred items and 20 disliked items. The growing scale reliability test used Cronbach's Alpha with the help of SPSS 26 for Windows. The reliability test results obtained a growing scale reliability value of 0.950. This means that the growing scale is reliable as a data collection tool and can be used to determine the level of success.

Data analysis was conducted using simple regression analysis to examine the relationship between self-compassion as the independent variable and flourishing as the dependent variable. Before testing the hypotheses, parametric statistical assumptions such as normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance were checked to ensure the data's suitability for the analytical technique used. All analyses were processed using SPSS for Windows version 26, which facilitates the analysis of regression coefficients, the significance of relationships, and the proper interpretation of results. This approach allows the study to empirically assess the influence of self-compassion on flourishing, improving psychological well-being, and can be a focus for efforts to develop students' potential and resilience in the face of academic and social pressures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting data analysis, a series of assumption tests are carried out as a prerequisite for the use of parametric or non-parametric statistics. The normality assumption test with residual values based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov calculations shows a p-value of 0.173 ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the data is normally distributed. Next, the results of the linearity test between Self-Compassion and Flourishing show a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a non-linear relationship. Based on the results of the assumption tests above, the only assumption that is not met is the linearity test, thus this study uses Non-Parametric statistics.

Table 1 illustrates the categorization of data for each research variable based on Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD). The categorization of this research data uses five categories: Very Low (VL), Low (L), Medium (M), High (H), and Very High (VH). This grouping is carried out to obtain a more detailed description of the distribution of levels for each variable among the 386 respondents involved in the study.

Table 1. Data Categorization

Variable	Self Compassion	Flourishing
Mean	109,77	157,96
SD	10,42	13,10
SR (%)	9,1%	4,4%

R (%)	6,2%	10,4%
S (%)	51,6%	69,7%
T (%)	31,3%	6,5%
ST (%)	1,8%	9,1%
TOTAL	386(100%)	386(100%)

Based on Table 1, categorization of the self-compassion and flourishing variables shows that the majority of respondents fall into the moderate category for both variables. The distribution of the data for self-compassion is more varied. A total of 199 respondents (51.6%) fall into the moderate category, with 121 respondents (31.3%) falling into the high category, indicating a significant number of individuals with high levels of self-compassion. However, 35 people (9.1%) had very low self-compassion and 24 people (6.2%) had low self-compassion. Only 7 people (1.8%) had very high self-compassion.

Regarding the flourishing variable, 269 respondents (69.7%) fell into the moderate category, followed by 40 respondents (10.4%) in the low category, and 35 respondents (9.1%) in the very high category. Meanwhile, only a few respondents fell into the very low (4.4%) and high (6.5%) categories. This indicates that most respondents had a fairly good level of flourishing, although there were still small groups with very low and very high levels.

Table 2 presents information regarding The results of a simple regression analysis conducted to determine the effect of self-compassion on flourishing. Based on the analysis, the regression coefficient value indicates a positive relationship between self-compassion and flourishing, meaning the higher a person's level of self-compassion, the higher their level of flourishing

Table 2. Simple Regression Analysis

Variabel	Z-Value	P	Categorization
Self Compassion - Flourishing	8,46	<0,001	Significant

Based on Table 2, it can be seen the significance value between self-compassion and flourishing, the test results show that the relationship between the two has a positive and significant meaning. Based on the very high Z-Value, which is 8.46 and a very small P-value (<0.001), it can be concluded that self-compassion has a significant positive influence on students' level of flourishing. This shows that the higher the level of self-compassion a student has, the higher the level of flourishing they feel. Thus, there is a positive relationship between self-compassion and students' flourishing, which is acceptable. These findings indicate that self-compassion, which involves self-acceptance, managing negative feelings in a healthier way, and the ability to empathize with oneself, is a key factor in improving students' psychological well-being.

This study states that there is a positive relationship between self-compassion and student flourishing. Based on the results of the analysis test, it shows that self-compassion has a significant effect on student flourishing. This finding confirms that the higher the level of self-compassion a student has, the higher the level of flourishing they experience. This is reinforced by research by Dahlan (2023) who stated that the higher the self-compassion, the higher the level of flourishing in students. This statement is in line with the theory put forward by Neff (2003) which states that individuals with high self-compassion tend to be better able to accept their shortcomings, manage stress, and demonstrate emotional resilience, which are important foundations of flourishing. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted, which means that self-compassion is an important factor in increasing flourishing in students.

Self-compassion involves an individual's ability to show kindness toward themselves, accept personal weaknesses, and manage negative feelings in a more adaptive manner. In the context of college students, high levels of self-compassion positively impact how they cope with stress, failure, and other challenges faced in their academic and social lives. This statement aligns with research by Makarti and Tjahjoanggoro (2022), who stated that self-compassion enables individuals to face failure positively and constructively, thereby increasing aspects of flourishing such as meaning in life and achievement. The results of this study indicate that students who are more able to love and accept themselves, despite experiencing difficulties, tend to experience a more developed and meaningful life, which is reflected in their level of flourishing. This research aligns with research by Nurcahyo and Valentina (2023), who stated that self-compassion enables individuals to recover from negative experiences with self-compassion, reducing self-criticism and increasing self-acceptance. This can strengthen a person's capacity to continue to thrive amidst psychological stress.

The importance of self-compassion in fostering flourishing aligns with psychological theories that emphasize the link between self-acceptance and well-being. Several previous studies have also shown that individuals with higher levels of self-compassion are better able to respond to stress and negative feelings healthily, which in turn increases feelings of life satisfaction and well-being. These findings reinforce the view that self-compassion plays a role not only in reducing stress but also in encouraging individuals to grow and develop psychologically, improving their overall well-being.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that self-compassion has a positive and significant influence on student flourishing. These findings indicate that students with higher levels of self-compassion tend to experience greater flourishing. This underscores the importance of self-compassion as a psychological factor that plays a role in supporting students' well-being and personal growth, particularly in facing various academic challenges, social pressures, and the demands of daily life during college.

Students with high self-compassion are able to accept themselves holistically, including their shortcomings and failures, without over-judgment. They are also better able to manage negative emotions adaptively, understand that difficulties are part of the universal human experience, and cultivate empathy and self-kindness. Therefore, the better a student cultivates self-compassion, the greater their likelihood of experiencing a meaningful, prosperous life and optimal development, both emotionally, socially, and academically.

Advice

Based on the research findings, which show that self-compassion has a positive and significant effect on student flourishing, the researchers offer several recommendations for both practical purposes and for further research.

First, psychology practitioners, particularly those working in higher education settings, are advised to develop psychological intervention programs focused on enhancing student self-compassion as an effort to support psychological well-being and foster flourishing. These programs can be implemented through individual and group counseling services, training in managing negative emotions, self-acceptance, and developing empathy and self-compassion. This will enable students to face academic challenges and social pressures in a more adaptive and healthy manner.

Second, educational institutions and universities are advised to strengthen the role of guidance and counseling institutions by integrating self-compassion training and increasing social support into campus psychosocial support systems. Universities are also expected to create a conducive, inclusive, and supportive academic environment so that students feel accepted and have the opportunity to develop optimally, both academically and personally.

Third, for students, the results of this study are expected to provide a foundation for cultivating and implementing self-compassion in their daily lives, especially when facing academic pressure, failure, or stressful situations. Students are advised to learn to accept themselves holistically, to be less harsh in their judgment, and to view mistakes as part of the learning process. Furthermore, building positive social relationships with peers, family, and supervisors can strengthen feelings of connectedness and promote flourishing.

Fourth, for future researchers, it is recommended to explore other variables that may play a role in the relationship between self-compassion and flourishing, such as resilience, emotional regulation, or self-efficacy as mediators or moderators. Future research could also use a longitudinal design to examine changes in self-compassion and flourishing over time, particularly in students in the final phase of their studies. Furthermore, further research is expected to develop and test the effectiveness of self-compassion-based intervention programs that are applicable in campus environments, thereby significantly contributing to improving students' overall psychological well-being.

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