Is there a relationship between Self Compassion and Life Satisfaction?

A research by

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1. Introduction

Positive Psychology is a branch of Psychology that has focused on character strengths and focuses on how human beings can prosper and lead healthy and happy lives. Many other branches of Psychology tend to focus on weaknesses, abnormal behavior, and dysfunctions, whereas, positive psychology is centered on helping people lead a content and happier life. According to Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Positive Psychology helps us achieve " scientific understanding and effective interventions to build thriving in individuals, families and communities. Positive Psychology is referred to as having three different levels that are Subjective level that mostly focuses on feelings of happiness, well-being and optimism. Another level is Individual level that includes a combination of feelings from the subjective level and other virtues such as love, forgiveness and courage. Group Level focuses on positive interactions between communities, this level includes virtues like altruism and social responsibility that strengthen social bonds.

With this intent to build on an individual's strength the study proposes to understand the relationship between the two variables from positive psychology , Self Compassion and Life satisfaction.

Self-Compassion

Compassion is the ability to show love, empathy, and concern to people who are in agony, and self-compassion is the ability to direct these same exact emotions to our own self, to appreciate and acknowledge our growth, to accept and forgive ourselves, and our failures. Self Compassion is also defined as being "kind and understanding when confronted with personal failures" (Neff, 2003). Fostering Self compassion is not difficult, it is a skill that can be learned and enhanced.

A growing number of studies have shown that self compassion can promote resilience by buffering against and reducing the adverse effects of negative life events. (Wong and Mak, 2013; heath et al., 2017). Some studies have also shown that self compassion is also positively correlated with well-being (Bluth and Blanton, 2014). According to research it has been seen that self compassionate individuals are more curious about life because they tend to be intrinsically motivated and have less fear of failure when faced with difficulties (Neff et al., 2005)

Self compassion is a significant human strength as it implements qualities of kindness, equanimity, and feelings of interconnectedness, helping individuals to find hope and meaning when faced with difficulties in life.

Life Satisfaction

Life Satisfaction is a significant variable that reflects the state of an individual's life as well as their mental state. (Pavot and Diener, 1993). Life Satisfaction somewhat refers to stable cognitive assessment of one's own life. Life Satisfaction is also used as a synonym for "Happiness". There are several factors that contribute to life satisfaction through a number of domains, such as work, relationship with friends and family, personal development, health and wellness. The measures of Life Satisfaction are usually subjective, or are mostly based on the variables that an individual finds personally important in their own life. Research has found that there are contributing factors to Life Satisfaction that sequentially fall into four categories, Life Changes, it involves societal resources like social equality, political freedom, economic welfare; Personal resources like social position, family bonds, social prestige; and individual abilities such as physical fitness, social capability, and intellectual skills. Second category is Course of events, it involves factors like solitude or company, humiliation of honor, routine or challenge, ugliness or beauty, these are the few factors that can confront us through our daily life, causing us to lean more in one direction either towards greater satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The third category, the flow of experience; includes factors such as anxiety or safety, loneliness or love, rejection or respect, dullness or excitement and repulsion or rapture. Finally, the evaluation of life category involves comparison of our own life with our idea of the "good life", and how we compensate for good and bad in our life .

1.1 Aim

The Aim of this study is to understand the relationship between the variables Self-Compassion and Life-Satisfaction.

2. Review of literature

Papers that were reviewed for this study as literature, focused on self compassion and life satisfaction among different populations. The term Self-compassion refers to being kind and caring about oneself when facing hardships (Neff, 2003). Specifically, people with a high level of self-compassion are self-kind to themselves instead of self-judgement and criticism (Neff, 2003). On the other hand, life satisfaction according to Ruut Veenhoven (1996) means " The degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads." Empirical studies supported that self-compassion is positively related to life-satisfaction across ages and Western and Eastern cultures (Jennings & Tan, 2014; Kim & Ko, 2018; Neff et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2016).

A study on 'Self-compassion and life satisfaction: The mediating role of hope' three hundred and twenty Chinese adults completed the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). This study demonstrated a positive link between self compassion and life-satisfaction in Chinese adults. (Yang et al., 2016). In a study on 'The impact of self-compassion on mental health, sleep, quality of life and life satisfaction among older adults' associations between self-compassion and mental health symptoms, sleep disturbance, life satisfaction, and health-related quality of life (HR-QoL) among older Korean adults was studied. According to the results Self-compassion was found to enhance life satisfaction among 203 older adults aged over 65 in Korea (Kim & Ko, 2018).

According to another study on 'Self-compassion and life-satisfaction among Chinese self-quarantined residents during COVID-19 pandemic: A moderated mediation model of positive coping and gender' This study investigated the relationship between self-compassion and life-satisfaction among Chinese self-quarantined residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.Participants consist of 337 self-quarantined residents (129 men, 208 women) from a community in China, who completed measures of demographic information, Self-Compassion Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale.The results revealed that self-compassion was positively linked with life-satisfaction. Furthermore researchers also examined the mediating effect of positive coping and the moderating role of gender in this relation and found that positive coping partially mediated the relationship between self-compassion and life-satisfaction for males and not females.(Li, Wang, Cai, Sun, & Liu, 2021)

A study on psychological capital, self compassion, and life satisfaction was conducted on unemployed youth. Youth unemployment has been a huge concern in European society.

One of the aims of this study was to study the relation between Psychological capital and self compassion with life satisfaction of unemployed youth. The Psychological Capital questionnaire (Luthans et.al., 2007), Life satisfaction scale (Diener et al., 1985), and self compassion scale (Neff, 2003) were used in this study. The data was collected from 80 unemployed youth, aged 19 to 29. The results of this study revealed that there is a positive and significant correlation between Psychological capital and self compassion with life satisfaction of the unemployed youth of Europe. (Sabaityte, Dirzyte, 2016)

3 Method

3.1 Research Problem

1. Is there a positive or negative correlation between the variables Self-Compassion and Life-Satisfaction?

3.2 Participants.

3.2.1 Description of the population

Both the tests were administered on the population of age ranging from 14 years to 60 years. These age restrictions were made to adhere to the norms of both the tests. Out of 37 participants 18 were female and 19 participants were male.Participation in the study was voluntary.

3.2.2 Sampling Method

Purposive and snowball sampling was used in this research. Both of these are types of non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, is a strategy in which individuals that conform to some predetermined criteria are deliberately selected. Snowball sampling involves the primary sources nominating other potential data sources for the study.

3.3 Procedure

Data was collected from 37 participants. Both the scales were administered on each participant through google forms which was forwarded to the research participants via Whatsapp and email. Confidentiality of all the participants was maintained. The collected data was then scored as per the scoring criteria of each scale, after scoring the sample data, correlation was derived using Microsoft Excel.

3.4 Tools

3.4.1 Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

For measuring life satisfaction among the population 'Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)' was used. The test was developed by Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin in 1985. The SWLS is a short 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. The scale usually requires only about one minute of a respondent's time, where respondents answer on a 7 point Likert scale.The possible range of scores is 5-35, with a score of 20 representing a neutral point on the scale. Scores between 5-9 indicate the respondent is extremely dissatisfied with life, whereas scores between 31-35 indicate the respondent is extremely satisfied. The questions are open to interpretation,

making this scale suitable for adults with a range of backgrounds. It is most appropriate for use in non-clinical populations.

3.4.2 SELF-COMPASSION SCALE–Short Form (SCS–SF)

The self-report 26-item SCS explicitly represents the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors associated with the three components of self-compassion.The Self-Compassion Scale is a completely free resource and has been translated into 18 languages including; Dutch, French, German, Greek, Turkish, Italian, Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Chinese.While the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) is undoubtedly the most commonly utilized measure of self-compassion, concerns were raised that the 26-item SCS was too burdensome or semantically complex for use by some individuals. A shortened yet structurally equivalent 12-item Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form (SCS-SF) was developed as a way to reduce this burden and offer researchers an opportunity to gather perspectives from individuals who would be unable or unwilling to take the original long-form version. The SCS-SF was developed by selecting two items from each of the original six SCS subscales that showed the highest correlations with the overall scale and assesses various aspects of self-compassion including one's sense of a common humanity, mindfulness, and self-kindness. For this study the short form version of the scale was used.

3.5 Research Design

The design is a correlational design research study in which the scores of the subjects were computed to understand the correlation between two variables.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The purpose of the study was clearly defined to everyone who participated in the study. They were assured that the information provided by them will be strictly used for research purposes. The participants were also informed of the option of withdrawing from the study whenever they wished to.

3.7 Data Analysis

The responses of the participants on both the scales were converted into scores on the basis of the scoring criteria given for each scale. Then, the correlation between them was obtained using MS Excel.

4 Result and Discussion

The data collected from 37 individuals suggests that there is a correlation of 0.20 between self compassion and life satisfaction. This seems to indicate that there is a slight and almost negligible positive correlation between the two variables.

This means that if one variable increases, the other variable will also increase. Conversely, if one variable decreases, the other will also decrease. It is a substantial but small relationship. As the self compassion in people increases, their life satisfaction also increases. Conversely, lower levels of life satisfaction can be related to lower levels of self compassion.

	Self compassion (X)	Life satisfaction (Y)
Self compassion (X)	1	
Life satisfaction (Y)	0.195895813	1

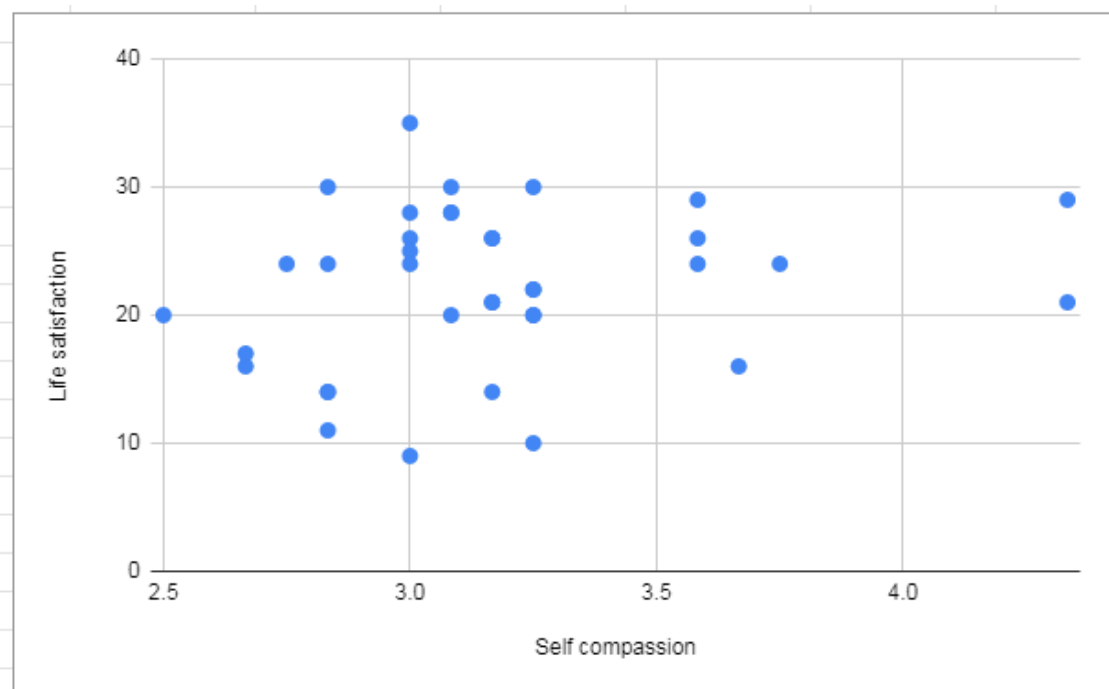Table 1- Correlation coefficient between the two variables.

Figure 1 – Scatter plot of the relation between the two variables

The results of the study are in line with the results of the previous studies in the literature review mentioned above. Various studies have shown that self-compassion is

positively related to life-satisfaction across ages and Western and Eastern cultures (Jennings & Tan, 2014; Kim & Ko, 2018; Neff et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2016). A study demonstrated a positive link between self compassion and life-satisfaction in Chinese adults. (Yang et al., 2016). According to the results of a study Self-compassion was found to enhance life satisfaction among older adults aged over 65 in Korea (Kim & Ko, 2018). According to a study conducted on self-quarantine residents during COVID-19 pandemic, self-compassion was positively linked with life-satisfaction.(Li, Wang, Cai, Sun, & Liu, 2021) **.** A study also demonstrated a positive and significant correlation between Psychological capital and self compassion with life satisfaction of the unemployed youth of Europe. (E.Sabaityte, A.Dirzyte; 2016)

The research has a few limitations like the sample size used to infer a link between these 2 factors is relatively small. Another limitation is that the truthfulness of answers given by participants cannot be tested as researchers had sent a google form. Hence there was no scope for control on the participant's test taking environment and making observations while the participant was filling the form was also not possible.

5 Conclusion -

There is a slight and almost negligible positive correlation between self compassion and life satisfaction. However, it is still unclear whether having a happy life makes one more empathetic toward themselves or the opposite is true.

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