



# A Study on Self-compassion, Mindfulness, and Resilience among Adolescents

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## Abstract

Adolescence is considered to be one of the most vital and critical stages in one's life span marked with experiences that threaten well-being. The objectives of the study were devised to study the relationship and gender differences between Self-compassion, Mindfulness, and Resilience among adolescents. The study followed a correlational design. A total sample of 80 adolescents (40 boys and 40 girls; age range 16–18 years) were recruited from schools and colleges through purposive sampling and were administered the following scales: Self Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003), the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown & Deci 2003), Resilience Scale (Wagnild & Young, 1993). The obtained quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, independent samples *t-test*, and Pearson's correlation. A significant positive relationship between all three variables, viz. Self-compassion, Mindfulness, and Resilience was found.

Keywords: Adolescents, Self-compassion, Mindfulness, and Resilience

## Introduction

Spanning over a decade, the research on self-compassion is relatively new in psychology. youngsters rely on their families for different needs yet they must learn to be independent in the rapidly changing and competitive world. High levels of self-compassion are essential at this age because lacking them might harm one's self-esteem and confidence. Neff (2003) defined self-compassion as being receptive to and moved by one's own suffering, experiencing feelings of caring and kindness toward oneself, adopting a perceptive, nonjudgmental attitude toward one's inadequacies and failures, and realizing that one's experience is a reflection of the experience of all humans.

Having poor self-esteem and believing that one is undeserving or worthless might make it difficult to feel compassion for oneself. This results in a complete incapacity to sense or feel happy emotions (Gilbert, 2015). However, the growth of self-compassion results in a realistic assessment of one's value, which encourages motivation to change moral failings and unhelpful behaviours as well as trying to improve personal flaws (Arimitsu & Hofmann, 2015; Pepping, Davis, O'Donovam & Pal, 2015). Self-compassion is also regarded as a key mechanism for emotional regulation, acting as a release valve for all of the negative emotions and the psychological effects they have. Additionally, it promotes feelings of fulfillment, relaxation and connection that serve as a protective barrier against all the bad emotions brought on by difficult or challenging circumstances in our daily lives (Wei, Liao, Ku & Shaffer, 2011). The two essential components of mindfulness are awareness and acceptance. The ability to concentrate attention on one's inner processes and sensations, such as the experience of the present moment, is known as awareness. Instead of judging or avoiding those streams of thought, acceptance is the capacity to notice and accept them. Resilience, as defined by Dillen (2012), is the capacity for people to flourish in the face of adversity. It was described in adolescents as the capacity to handle challenging circumstances and to develop as a result of those challenges.

### **Rationale of the study**

Due to the alarming suicide rate, increased screen time, and sedentary lifestyle physical as well as mental health has been hampered. Adolescence is a necessary phase in the establishment of personal values. The transition to self-sufficiency forces an array of adjustments upon many adolescents making it an ideal time to learn and unlearn. This study will highlight the use of positive psychology principles for the holistic development of adolescents. The study is essential in marking the importance of bursting the stress and being mindful

### **Objectives of the study**

To investigate the relationship of self-compassion, Mindfulness and Resilience among adolescents and to study the differences among gender.

## Hypotheses

H<sub>1</sub>: It is expected that there will be a positive relationship between Self-Compassion, Mindfulness, and Resilience among adolescents

H<sub>2</sub>: It is expected that there will be significant gender differences in Self-Compassion, Mindfulness, and Resilience among adolescents

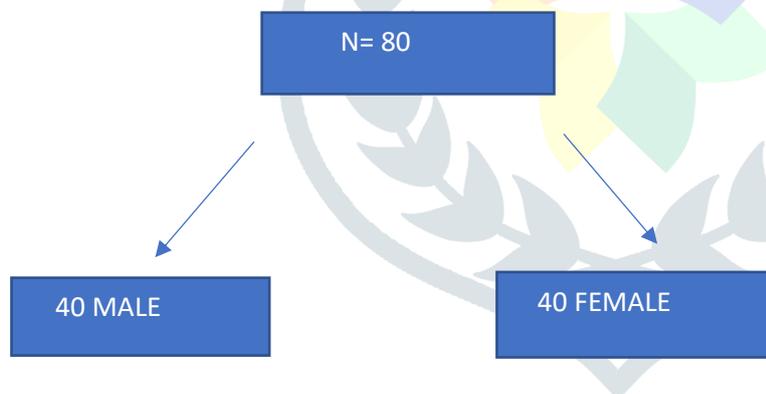
## Methodology

### Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and correlational research design

### Participants

The sample comprised of 80 adolescents in the age range of 16-18 years. They were further divided into 2 groups -40 were male adolescents and 40 were female adolescents. They were selected randomly from the Government and Private schools of Tricity (Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali).



### Inclusion criteria

- An equal number of students from Arts and Science streams were selected
- The sample was confined to a middle-income group in order to maintain homogeneity in the sample.
- Students studying in Tricity were only included in the study

### Exclusion criteria

- Those suffering from any psychopathology or undergoing treatment for psychological problems were excluded from the sample.

- Those suffering from any other chronic illness were also excluded
- Ethical considerations
- •A prior informed consent of the participants was taken
- . • Confidentiality was maintained.

## Tools used

The following standardized tests were administered:

- Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003)
- Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown & Deci 2003),
- Resilience Scale (Wagnild and Young, 1993)

### Brief Description of the tests

The Self Compassion Scale was developed by Neff (2003). It is a 26-item self-report questionnaire. Each item requires the respondent to answer on a 5-point Likert scale, the degree to which they agree with each statement on the scale from 1 = “Almost Never” to 5= “Almost Always”. The Resilience Scale is developed by Wagnild and Young (1993). It consists of 25 items. The purpose of the resilience scale is to identify the degree of individual resilience, considered a positive personality characteristic that enhances individual adaptation. The respondents are asked to state the degree to which they agree or disagree with each item. All items are scored on a 7-point scale which ranges from 1(disagree) to 7(agree). All items are worded positively and reflect accurately the verbatim statements made by participants in the original study (Wagnild & Young, 1990). The reliability of the resilience scale is high with a coefficient alpha of 0.91. The MAAS is a self-report tool that measures an individual’s ability to practice mindfulness in their day-to-day life. It is developed by a professor of social and health psychology Kirk Brown and a professor of psychology Richard Ryan in 2003. It is a 15-item scale used to determine an individual’s experience of mindfulness in general terms as well as in specific day-to-day circumstances. Statements are scored using a 6-point scale from Almost Always (1) to Almost Never (6), with lower scores indicating a less sensitive awareness. The total score reflects the level of disposition that is mindfulness.

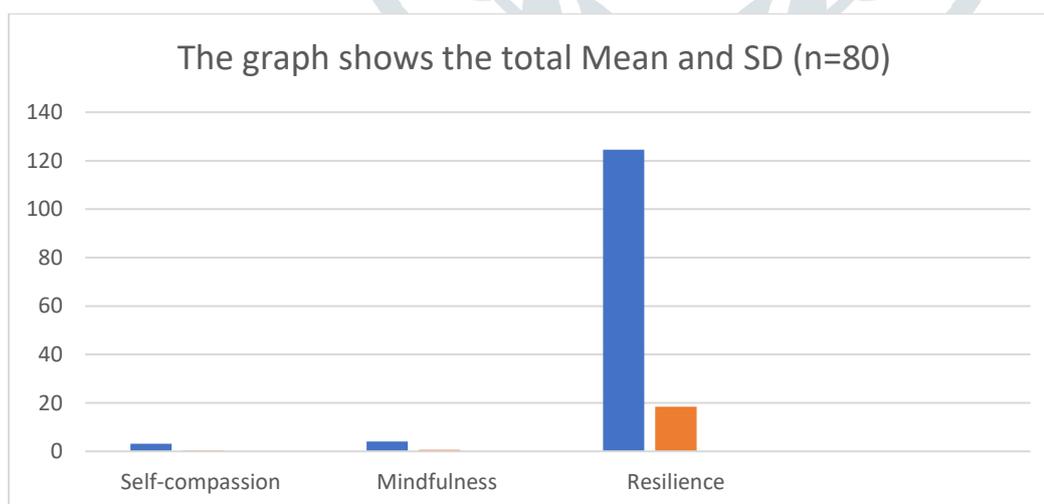
## Procedure

The battery of questionnaires was administered to a sample of 80 school students. The sample comprised 40 female and 40 male adolescents in the age range of 16-18 years. A random sample was drawn from Tricity (Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali). The participants were asked to fill demographic details form along with questionnaires. Subjects were requested to respond honestly. They were assured that their results and the information obtained would be kept strictly confidential; and will be used for research purposes only.

## Results

Descriptive statistics were tabulated for the total sample. Means and Standard Deviations were calculated for the two groups (Males and females). t-test was calculated to find out the significant gender differences in self-compassion, mindfulness and resilience.

The participant's mean age was 17.2 years and SD was 0.60. Total Mean score and SD for self-compassion are 3.1 and 0.45 respectively. Total Mean score and SD for self-compassion are 4.1 and 0.65 respectively. Total Mean score and SD for self-compassion are 124.6 and 17.7 respectively. Female students scored higher than male students on self-compassion ( $t= 2.33$ ;  $p<.01$ ) and mindfulness ( $t= 3.41$ ;  $p<.01$ ). Male adolescents scored higher than female adolescents on Resilience ( $t= 2.29$ ;  $p<.01$ ).



The following tables show the Mean, SD and t -test value of the two groups (male and females)

\*t-value significant at .05 level= 1.97

\* t-value significant at .01 level= 2.59

Self-compassion	N	Mean	SD	t- value
Male	40	2.9	0.54	2.33
Female	40	3.1	0.62	

Mindfulness	N	Mean	SD	t- value
Male	40	3.8	0.83	3.41
Female	40	4.1	0.78	

Resilience	N	Mean	SD	t- value
Male	40	127	16.34	2.29
Female	40	121	13.41	

The following is the inter-correlation matrix for the total Sample (n=80)

S.no	Variables	Self-Compassion	Mindfulness	Resilience
1	Self-Compassion	1	0.43	0.29
2	Mindfulness		1	0.32
3	Resilience			1

\*Value of Correlation significant at 0.05 level=0.11

\*Value of Correlation significant at 0.01 level=0.15

## Discussion

The adolescent years are a time of intense strain and upheaval. High academic standards, body image issues, the need to fit in, a sense of failure, anxieties about sexual attractiveness, and other factors can all contribute to the pressure faced in growing years. These evaluations are frequently unfavourable, which causes adolescents to appraise themselves severely and critically (Harter, 1993; Sternberg, 1999). Self-compassion is one of the remedies for these pressures. Whenever such a circumstance occurs, the person is directed to either self-criticism, self-isolation, or self-absorption. Neff's self-compassion components, however, cause someone to respond in the exact opposite way, leading them to cultivate kindness toward

themselves, recognise the universality of the experience in question, and adopt a more balanced stance toward the unpleasant feelings (Germer, 2009).

The aim of the study was to understand the relationship between Self-compassion, Mindfulness, and Resilience among adolescents. To accomplish the objectives of the present study the raw scores were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Means and Standard Deviations were calculated for all the two groups (male and female adolescents). t-ratios were calculated to find out gender differences in the measured variables. Correlational analysis was employed to understand the relationship between Self-Compassion, Mindfulness and Resilience. The results show that there is a moderate positive intercorrelation among the three variables. The correlation between Self-Compassion and Mindfulness came out to be 0.43. The correlation between Self-Compassion and Resilience was found to be 0.29. The correlation between Resilience and Mindfulness came out to be 0.32. Our data is well supported by the review of the literature. Alizadeh, Khanahmadi, Vedadhir and Barjasteh (2018) investigated the relationship between resilience, self-compassion, and a sense of belonging (n=150 women with breast cancer). There was found to be a significant and positive correlation between resilience, self-compassion, perceived social support, and a sense of belonging. Hence, self-compassion can help people to maintain their health more effectively as this approach demands individuals to be more kind to themselves.

Self-compassion entails a coping method for dealing with life's endless disarray and never-ending demands. Self-compassion is a key indicator of mental wellness. Over time, greater self-compassion results in improved psychological health (Gilbert & Procter, 2006; Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2007). Self-compassion has a direct relationship with social connectivity and life happiness, whereas it has an inverse relationship with anxiety, melancholy, self-criticism, thought suppression, neurotic perfectionism, and rumination (Neff, 2003).

On the other hand, a person's mental health may suffer if they don't feel compassion for themselves or don't get it from others. According to Marshall et al. (2015), people who did not experience enough compassion as children would find it difficult to deal with life's challenges.

There has come to be a significant gender difference proving the hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>). It was observed that female adolescents were high on self-compassion compared with males whereas male adolescents scored higher than female adolescents on Resilience. Sünbul and Güneri (2019) investigated the association

between mindfulness and resilience as well as the mediating role of self-compassion among underprivileged 752 Turkish adolescents. The results of the study revealed that mindfulness had significant as well as low direct correlations with resilience. Additionally, mindfulness had a direct, positive relationship with self-compassion. Adolescence is characterized by the emotional ups and downs that come with this stage of life, along with specific ties to critical societal comparisons and severe assessments of oneself. Resilience and self-compassion were found to have a favourable, substantial link. Adolescent identity formation starts with positive or negative assumptions that people make about themselves. However, when these assumptions become overly critical and harsh, adolescents become vulnerable to distortions that cause harm to their mental health. During such times, a gentle and compassionate view of the self potentially creates resilience and well-being in adolescents. The findings of this study are also proven by our present research and imply self-compassion, as well as mindfulness as effective safeguards against the stressors and challenging conditions of adolescence period.

## **Conclusion**

Adolescents can immensely benefit from practicing mindfulness since higher scores on mindfulness tend to report higher levels of autonomy, competence, and positive affect which leads to better mental health. These findings extended our understanding of self-compassion. The study recommends a dire need to develop programs in schools and colleges to foster self-compassion and psychological well-being to protect adolescents from further declines in self-esteem and self-efficacy.

## **Limitations**

Along with the small sample size, the entire data collection relied on self-report questionnaires, which opens the door for biases to inflate or deflate the results. The construct of flourishing can also be explored as a mediating factor in further studies. The study also leaves a space open to find out the differences between private and government schools on all three dimensions.

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