

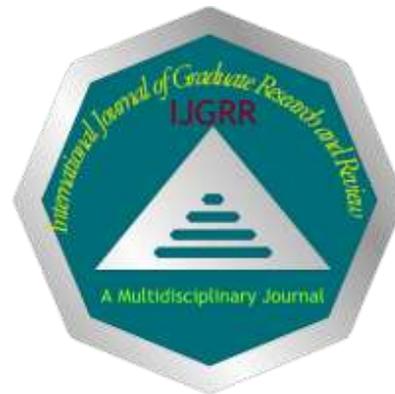


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## The Association Between Self-Compassion and Multidimensional Perfectionism Level Among Nursing Students

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### Abstract

**Background:** Self-compassion means that feelings of kindness, love and understanding the feeling of pain when someone is in suffering. Self-compassion was described as a positive self-perception that was comprise with three interacting components: self-kindness vs. self-judgment (SK-SJ), common humanity vs. isolation (CH-ISOL) and mindfulness vs. over-identification (MIND-OI). Perfectionism can be considered as a positive trait related to elevated personal standards and high achievement and as a negative behaviours and symptoms such as depression and anxiety. Perfectionism has both a positive and a negative side in the part of human performance. **Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to determine the association between self-compassion and multidimensional perfectionism levels among nursing students. **Methods:** A descriptive correlational study was conducted on 133 nursing students. Data was collected with a student data form, the Self-Compassion Scale and the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale. The one-way ANOVA and Pearson's correlation analysis were used for data analysis. **Results:** The results show the total self-compassion means score was 3.64. This mean score indicates a high level of self-compassion (self-compassion scores: 1.0-2.5 is low, 2.5-3.5 is moderate, and 3.5-5.0 is high). The students' self-compassion subscale mean scores were: 3.71 for self-kindness, 3.52 for self-judgment, 3.70 for common humanity, 3.62 for isolation, 3.65 for mindfulness and 3.64 for over-identification. Self-judgment had the moderate score, and common humanity and self-kindness had the high scores. The total mean score of multidimensional perfectionism of nursing students was 5.03. The subscales mean scores were: self-oriented perfectionism, 5.00; others-oriented perfectionism 75.45, and socially-prescribed perfectionism 76.09. Socially prescribed perfectionism had the highest scores and self-oriented perfectionism had the lowest scores in multidimensional perfectionism. There was a statistically significant positive correlation between the self-compassion and perfectionism subscales. **Conclusions:** The result of this study shows that nursing students had a high level of total self-compassion. The total self-compassion levels of nursing students increased as their self-oriented, others-oriented and socially-prescribed perfectionism levels decreased.

**Keywords:** Nursing students; self-compassion; multidimensional perfectionism.

### Introduction

Nursing education is necessary to educate students for nursing professionals. Nursing is one of the most trusted health care professionals they are with patients throughout the life. Nurses are responsible for the health care of an individual. Nurses have high a strong sense of responsibility towards for human life to establish good relationships. Nursing is a demanding field with constant challenges. Nursing education involves both mental and physiological wellbeing, and it changes the life of a patient. Nurses work

for patient self-care. Nurses promote and protect health of patient. There is a great interest in nursing, Community Health nursing (CHN) and Midwifery programmes and they lead to students and high demands on the few successful ones who manage to realize admission to the nursing training colleges. They have to be ready to adapt to the various challenges of college life and maintain high level of educational standards so they are going to not be withdrawn. These demands are highly stressful (Abasimi *et al.*, 2015).

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Self-compassion was associated with various kinds of traits such as personality aspects, self-judgment, common humanities, isolation, and mindfulness and over identification. Self-compassion has been examining the influence of stress on nursing students which provide some initiatives to reduce stress. Self-compassion training sessions will be helpful to reduce professional stress and self-regulation (Finlay-Jones *et al.*, 2015).

Self-kindness means creating kindness, caring for others, open hearted feeling of warmth for others and patience. Self-kind requires after failure we use positive affirmation to remind us that we deserve love, happiness, and affection (Mantzios & Egan, 2017).

Effective self-judgment about the quality of the work for which they were assigned, depend on self-judgment. Nursing students self-judgment about their work and personality through some criteria based on clinical assessment and personal skills. Self-assessment was broadly depending on the needs and effectiveness of constructive feedback from other students. Many problems were arises during the process of self-judgment but considered normal. Peers reviews and preceptor constructive feedback may become helpful of their own judgment (Boud *et al.*, 2015).

Common humanities were recognized that all people were imperfect, fail and make mistakes in his personal life. Mostly people don't focus on what they do in daily life and what they have common with others. In the sense of common humanity they have serious life challenges and experience. They feel ashamed or inadequate when they focus on their shortcomings without taking the bigger human imperfection in light of shared human experiences. They feel isolated and disconnected from other people when they fail (Albertson *et al.*, 2015).

Isolation was defined as means of pain or frustration with feeling of loneliness and cut off from other people due to suffering and failures irrationally. Nursing students were feeling alone when they were frustrated and exhausted from clinical setting. They were thinking that it was hard time for themselves and something that has wrong with them. They were totally forgotten that failure was the part of life and it was normal action. Isolation was just a feeling of our own failure and sufferings (López *et al.*, 2018).

Mindfulness was a thought to help people with deep heart without any distraction of self-evaluations worries about future. Mindfulness was awareness about emotions and feeling of happiness with the present situation. Those moments that involves aware of one's present moment experience. Mindfulness was observing thoughts and emotions of happiness rather than reacting badly (Khoury *et al.*, 2015).

Over identification were one's own limitations and thoughts that prevent deep experiencing of present moment. People who show over-identify they may also "increase the significance of failures." People with over-identified have negative thoughts and feelings that we are loose up and swept away by negative reactivity (Castilho *et al.*, 2015).

### ***Self-Compassion***

Self-compassion means that feelings of kindness, love and understanding the feeling of pain when someone is in suffering. It is very important component of the factors that protect us against depression and a negative outcome that was bring with it. Self-compassion has six factors; in which three factors are potential (self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness) and negative factors are (self-judgment, isolation and over identification). Self-compassion acts as a buffer between us and self-judgment, isolation and over identification.

Self-compassion was described as a positive self-perception that was comprise with three interacting components: self-kindness vs. self-judgment (SK-SJ), common humanity vs. isolation (CH-ISOL) and mindfulness vs. over-identification (MIND-OI). SK-SJ deals with oneself with kindness and understanding in times of suffering or failure. CH-ISOL deals with considering one's capability to connect a shared human experience, instead of feeling isolated. MIND-OI deals with the sharing of one's thoughts and emotions in awareness without suppressing those (Dunne *et al.*, 2018)

These are the three interacting factors of self-compassion.

### ***Self-Kindness vs. Self-Judgment***

self-compassion includes being kind and loving with ourselves when we suffer, do not succeed, or feel inadequate, instead of dismissing our hurt and punishing ourselves with self-judgment. Individuals who are understanding and accept their imperfections and life challenges are more likely to feel emotional self-control and self-acceptance (López *et al.*, 2018).

### ***Common Humanity vs. Isolation***

Disappointment and frustration can be experienced when our expectations do not meet reality. When we see ourselves as alone in our suffering, we can feel alienated and isolated from others. By being accepting of our common humanity, we acknowledge that being human means that one is mortal, vulnerable, and imperfect just like everyone else (López *et al.*, 2018).

### ***Mindfulness vs. Over Identification***

Mindfulness is a non-judgmental mind state that allows individuals to observe their thoughts and feelings as they are, without trying to suppress them. Accepting, rather than denying painful feelings like sadness, anger, and fear can help prevent over-identification with thoughts and feelings,

so that we are not taken away by our negative reactions (López et al., 2018).

### **Perfectionism**

Perfection means her own ability to achieve moral perfection and sinlessness life. Perfectionism has both a positive and a negative side in the part of human performance and functioning in academic career-related to success and desirable goals. Although perfectionism can be considered as a positive trait related to elevated personal standards and high achievement and as a negative behaviours and symptoms such as depression and anxiety. Perfectionism has many components such as high standards, concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, perception of parental expectations, perception of parental criticism, and emphasis on order and organization. The definition of perfectionism focused on the interpersonal aspects of three dimensions, which are labelled as self-oriented perfectionism, other oriented perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism (Linnett & Kibowski, 2017).

### **Multi-Dimensional Perfectionism**

Multidimensional perfectionism has three main components 1) self-oriented, 2) other oriented, and 3) social prescribed.

There have been identified three main components of perfectionism

### **Self-Oriented Perfectionism**

Self-oriented perfectionism means one's own performance must have flaws, perfect and without errors. Striving for perfection was important for being perfect. It is an intrapersonal dimension that was a powerful motivation for being perfect, setting and attempt for high standards and being able to see clearly on flaws, generalization of self-standards (Smith et al., 2016).

### **Other-Oriented Perfectionism**

Other-oriented perfectionism means having unrealistic expectations and standards for others. Other-oriented perfectionism was described as an interpersonal feature of perfectionism that was also relating with impractical expectations, approving evaluative style, and a strong motivation to achieve perfection and avoid failures resulting from the others. It deals with these behaviours that are going toward others rather than toward self (Smith et al., 2018)

### **Social-Prescribed Perfectionism**

Socially prescribed perfectionism is developing perfection and motivation that being perfect is important to others. Socially prescribed perfectionism was defined as one's beliefs or perceptions that others had unrealistic expectations for them and evaluated them gently. This dimension entailed perfectionist demands that were perceived to stem from the others and directed to the self. It

deals with the idea that others have perfectionist expectations and motives for one self (Smith et al., 2018).

Self-compassion has been identified as an important target variable for researchers for investigating the relation between self-compassion and perfectionism. However, the relation between self-compassion and perfectionism among nursing students is very low. The link between self-compassion and perfectionism indicates that the relation between self-compassion and perfectionism can be increase in the process by which self-compassion not directly effects on the behaviour of nursing students.

some forms of perfectionism are negatively correlated with self-compassion(Neff, 2003a), a mindset that is characterized by being moved by your own suffering and acknowledging that you are worthy of care and understanding. However, there have been no further studies that explicitly investigate the relationship between the dimensions of perfectionism and self-compassion (Brion et al., 2014).

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Study Design**

A descriptive Correlational research design was used to determine the association between self-compassion and multidimensional perfectionism among nursing students.

### **Site**

The site of study was nursing students in nursing school Jinnah hospital Lahore.

### **Settings**

The study was conducted at nursing school Jinnah hospital Lahore.

### **Duration of Study**

The Study duration was completed 4month from February 2019 to May 2019.

### **Target Population**

The study population was nursing students who were attending regular classes of general nursing in nursing school.

### **Sample Size**

The Sample size was 133 based on number of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> year of nursing students who studying in the school of nursing in Jinnah hospital Lahore.

Sample size is 133 according to Slovene's formula (Ellen, 2018; Slovin, 1960).

Total population = 200

$n = N / [1 + (N) (E)^2]$

$n = 200 / [1 + 200(0.05)^2]$

$n = 133(\text{approx.})$

### Sampling Technique

Randomized sampling technique was used for the data collection.

### Inclusion Criteria

- 1<sup>st</sup> year nursing students
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year nursing students
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year nursing students
- 4<sup>th</sup> year nursing students

### Exclusion Criteria

- Nursing midwives
- Dispensers
- O.T technician

### Instruments

Two quantitative instrumental questionnaires on measuring of self-compassion and multidimensional perfectionism were used on Likert scale. The self-compassion questionnaire is adopted by the cited of (Neff, 2003). The self-compassion questionnaire is consisted of 26 items and 6 subscales in which subscales have following items. The positive subscales are following Self-kindness (5 items), self-judgment (5 items), and common humanity (4 items), and the negative subscales are following isolation (4 items), mindfulness (4 items), and over-identification (4 items) (Coroiu *et al.*, 2018).

For the Self-Compassion Scale Neff (2016) suggests that scores of 1-2.5 indicates low self-compassion, 2.5-3.5 indicates moderate self-compassion and scores of 3.5-5.0 indicate high self-compassion (Shanahan).

The multidimensional perfectionism questionnaire is adopted by the cited of (Hewitt & Flett, 1990). This questionnaire is consisted of 45 items and 3 subscales in which self-oriented perfectionism have 15 items, other-oriented have 15 items, and socially prescribed perfectionism have 15 items.

## Result and Discussions

In our study which aimed to determine the association between the self-compassion and multidimensional perfectionism of nursing student, the self-compassion mean score was 3.64. The mean scores for subscales of self-compassion were, for self-kindness 3.7, for self-judgment 3.5, for common humanity 3.7, for isolation 3.6, for mindfulness 3.6, for over-identification 3.6. The mean score for self-judgment were moderate and score for common humanity and self-kindness were high. Fig. 1 shows normal distribution of self-compassion.

Table 1 shows the students' self-compassion total means score was 3.64. This mean score indicates a high level of self-compassion. Of the students, 12.3% had low self-compassion, 53.3% had moderate self-compassion, and 34.4% of them had high self-compassion. The students' self-compassion subscale mean scores were: 3.71 for self-

kindness, 3.52 for self-judgment, 3.70 for common humanity, 3.62 for isolation, 3.65 for mindfulness and 3.64 for over-identification. Self-judgment had the moderate score, and common humanity and self-kindness had the high scores.

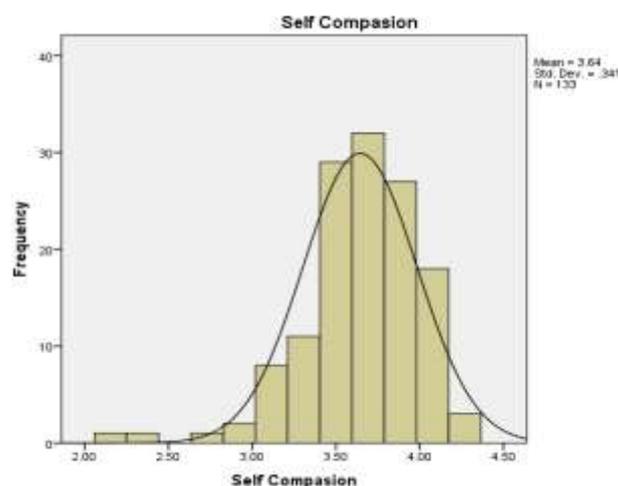


Fig. 1: Normal distribution of self-compassion.

Neff provides a rough guide for classifying self-compassion levels: A score of 1.0-2.5 indicates low, 2.5-3.5 indicates moderate, and 3.5-5.0 indicates high self-compassion (Shanahan). In our study, the self-compassion levels of the nursing students were found high score according to the classification provided by Neff. Additionally, the rate of students with self-compassion and Self-judgment had the moderate score 12%, and common humanity and self-kindness had the high scores 88%.

The nursing profession is considered the overall self-compassion score of the students is high. However, the subscale scores raise some concerns. Scores for self-kindness common humanity mindfulness, which constitute the positive dimensions of self-compassion, were higher than self-judgment, isolation and over-identification, the negative dimensions of self-compassion.

The multidimensional perfectionism mean scores of the nursing students were 5.00 for self-oriented perfectionism, 75.45 for other-oriented perfectionism and 76.09 for socially-prescribed perfectionism. This result may be related to the fact that the admission requirements for health profession study program for students who set very high standards for themselves and after acceptance into such programs students feel that they must continue to meet the high standards that others have set for them. During the education of nurses and other health professionals, health care is taught as a discipline that does not accept any mistakes because it deals with human life and well-being. In this way, perfectionism is prescribed by the educational and social context of the profession (Neff & McGehee, 2010).

**Table 1:** Mean and SD of Self-Compassion and its sub domains

Descriptive Statistics						
	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	N
Self-Compassion	3.6	3.6	2.15	4.27	.34110	133
self-kindness	3.7	3.8	1.60	4.8	.52244	133
self-judgment	3.5	3.6	2.0	4.6	.58424	133
common humanity	3.7	3.7	1.25	5.0	.52146	133
Isolation	3.6	3.7	1.25	5.75	.68231	133
Mindfulness	3.6	3.7	2.25	4.75	.53531	133
over-identification	3.6	3.7	2.0	4.75	.54359	133

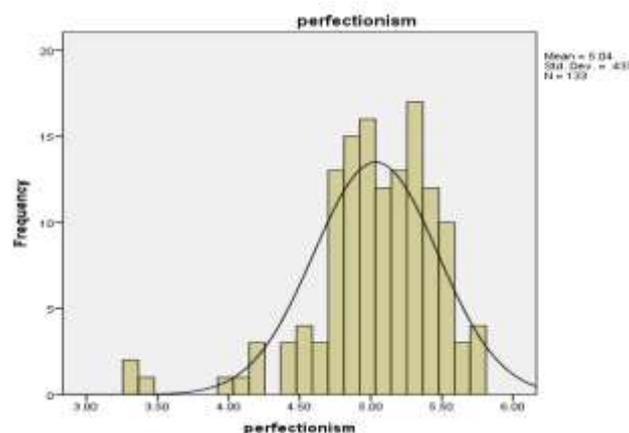
According to our study the Analysis of variances shows homogeneity of variables. Levene statistic is .985 and level of significance is .492. This is also shows that sum squares between groups is 4.76 and within groups is 20.41.the level of significance is .017. The total sum square of perfectionism is 25.17.

According to our results, the relationship between multidimensional perfectionism and self-compassion determined positive correlations and the subscales of the self-compassion and perfectionism. When overall self-compassion rises, self-oriented and other-oriented perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism increases. This positive correlation is not surprising when considering that self-compassion provides a positive self-affect and a strong sense of self-acceptance, which are not based on performance evaluations of the self or comparisons with others. Fig. 2 shows normal distribution of perfectionism.

In another study Otrar and Tezcan reported a positive correlation between self-compassion and perfectionism in psychological guidance and counselling department students in the fulfilment of their responsibilities and goals (Hiçdurmaz & Aydin, 2017).

Table 2 shows the students' multidimensional perfectionism total mean score was 5.03. The subscales mean scores were: self-oriented perfectionism, 5.00; others-

oriented perfectionism 75.45, and socially-prescribed perfectionism 76.09.



**Fig. 2:** Normal distribution of perfectionism

Table 3 shows that sum squares between groups is 4.76 and within groups is 20.41.the level of significance is .017. The total sum square of perfectionism is 25.17.

Table 4 shows the relationship between overall self-compassion and multidimensional perfectionism subscales were examined, there were positive significant correlations. As overall self-compassion rose, self-oriented perfectionism ( $r=.426$ ), others-oriented perfectionism ( $r=.495$ ) and socially oriented perfectionism ( $r=.350$ ) increases.

**Table 2:** Mean and SD of Multidimensional Perfectionism Level

Descriptive Statistics						
	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Std. Deviation	N
Perfectionism	5.0	5.0	3.31	5.80	.43673	133
self-oriented perfectionism	5.0	5.0	2.93	6.3	.54057	133
other-oriented perfectionism	75.4	77.0	46.0	91.0	9.03236	133
socially-prescribed perfectionism	76.0	76.0	46.0	88.0	7.49633	133

**Table 3:** One Way Analysis between Self-compassion and Perfectionism Level

ANOVA					
Perfectionism					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.766	13	.367	2.137	.017
Within Groups	20.411	119	.172		
Total	25.177	132			

**Table 4:** Correlation between Self-compassion and Perfectionism Level

Correlations					
		Self-Compassion	self-oriented perfectionism	other-oriented perfectionism	socially-prescribed perfectionism
Self Compassion	Pearson Correlation	1	.426**	.495**	.350**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
self-oriented perfectionism	Pearson Correlation	.426**	1	.312**	.508**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
other-oriented perfectionism	Pearson Correlation	.495**	.312**	1	.556**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
socially-prescribed perfectionism	Pearson Correlation	.350**	.508**	.556**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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