Self-Compassion Based on Gender and Student Academic Achievement

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Abstract
This study aims to determine the effect of gender on the level of students' self-compassion and determine the effect of students' level of self-compassion on their academic achievement. This study uses a quantitative approach, with the type of ex-post facto research and ordinal regression analysis. The data were collected using the Self-Compassion Scale (SWD) with alternative answers from one to five of scale. The sample in this study was students at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. Our analysis results showed no significant effect of gender on the students' level of self-compassion and no significant effect of students' level of self-compassion on their academic achievement.

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1. Introduction

The student learning process is a process of learning struggle with various unavoidable challenges. During the learning process, students also face various learning demands that require proper management. The absence of adequate regulation will result in students' poor mental health. A number of suicide cases among students were reported to be caused by recurrent stress, pressure, and extremely high demands in the learning process (Muyor-Rodríguez, Caravaca-Sánchez, & Fernández-Prados, 2021; Shen et al., 2020). In Indonesia, students' suicide attempts are caused by depression, one of which is the academic factor (Himayanti, Ratnawati, Yuliatun, & Windarwati, 2020).

The aforementioned findings from previous studies illustrate the severity of the students' struggle during the learning process, which highlight the need for a strong mentality since a weak mentality will result in depression and suicide. Further, this also affects students' academic achievement if they face learning demands and pressure with a weak mentality. The negative emotion and high pressure on students affect their academic scores and health (Frazier, Gabriel, Merians, & Lust, 2019; Pascoe, Hetrick, & Parker, 2020; Savarese et al., 2019).

Students' self-compassion is required to face all the challenges and demands during the learning process (Al-Awamleh, 2020; Tang, 2019; Zhang, Kessler, & Braasch, 2021). Self-compassion covers and aids students in overcoming difficulties, generating a desire to relieve difficulties and heal themselves with kindness (Lim & Kartasasmita, 2018). Besides, self-compassion is consistently linked with positive mental health (Bluth & Neff, 2018). With great self-compassion, someone will not be judgmental toward themselves (on a cognitive level) while capable of feeling and connecting with their own suffering (on an emotional level) (Elices et al., 2017).

Conceptually, self-compassion contains three core components, namely self-kindness versus self-judgment, common humanity versus isolation, and mindfulness versus over-identification, related to painful experiences (Germer & Neff, 2013). Development of one's self-compassion also correlates with three basic interdependent components, namely self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness (Neff, 2003). An Individual's high degree in these three components represents high

self-compassion. Meanwhile, someone's low capacity on one of the three components reflects poor self-compassion (Moningka, 2017).

Self-kindness is individuals' ability to comprehend themselves when faced with sorrow, failure, or imperfection without self-judgment and self-criticism (Moningka, 2017). Meanwhile, common humanity represents an individual's understanding and awareness that suffering, failure, or self-imperfection is a part of life experienced by all humans so that it can make individuals perceive things from a better perspective (Neff, 2003). Mindfulness is an individual's capacity to recognize, comprehend, and cope with his feelings, as well as present a balanced response in facing failures without suppressing or exaggerating their feelings (Moningka, 2017).

A previous study reported that self-compassion helps to avoid negative thoughts (Schlosser, Jones, Demnitz-King, & Marchant, 2022). The same study also discovered that students experience pressure, stress, depression, and even commit suicide due to the demands of the learning process, signifying their low self-compassion. In adolescents, low self-compassion leads to stress and even depression because people are unable to accept their condition and blame themselves (Wahyuni & Arsita, 2019).

Stress, depression, and committing suicide indicate students' inability to treat themselves with understanding and compassion. They are engulfed in negative thoughts and emotions and do not practice self-healing via compassion. Suicide rates and risk of death are reported to be higher in men than in women (Murphy, 1998). Based on gender, men are three times more likely to commit suicide than women, and the ratio rises with age, reaching 4.5:1 between the ages of 15 and 19 years old (Zulaikha & Febriyana, 2018). Meanwhile, a study uncovered that women are more susceptible to stress and anxiety, as well as have a greater tendency of low self-compassion than men (Wahyuni & Arsita, 2019).

Therefore, the effects of gender on people's self-compassion remain to be questionable. Even though men exhibit stronger self-compassion than women, they commit suicide more frequently. This research is supported by a study conducted in Yogyakarta, suggesting a difference in male and female student self-regulation of emotional ability. The study discovered that female students have better emotion management than males (Alhadi et al., 2019). Meanwhile, self-compassion is needed by students in facing challenges and demands in the learning process to achieve the expected academic achievements.

In addition, previous research revealed that self-compassion could increase students' motivation and reduce procrastination (Rapoport, Bengel, Möcklinghoff, & Neidhardt, 2022; Sirois, 2014). A person with high self-compassion will have lower procrastination and vice versa. Another study reported that self-compassion enhances people's motivation to improve themselves and their academic performance (Al-Awamleh, 2020).

Self-compassionate individuals are motivated to learn and grow for intrinsic reasons rather than social approval (Neff & Vonk, 2009). Students with high self-compassion develop an internal desire to survive and struggle to face challenges and demands in the learning process. Thus, high self-compassion is expected to enhance students' academic achievement.

Moningka (2017) described the factors of self-compassion, such as personality, gender, parental roles, and culture. In addition to these factors, the same study also found several new factors that affect health professionals when they face failure, hardship, or feelings of inadequacy, namely the social environment, external pressure, type of work, education, age, high self-confidence, motivation, and economy.

Therefore, a study that further investigates the correlation between students' gender, self-compassion, and academic achievement is required. This study aims to determine the effect of gender on the students' self-compassion and the effect of students' level of self-compassion on their academic achievement.

2. Method

This research used a quantitative approach, with the ex post facto research of causal-comparative research. The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of gender on the students' level of self-compassion and the effect of students' self-compassion on their academic achievement. This study involved 36 final-year students majoring in educational psychology and guidance at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. Our research variables consisted of students' self-compassion, gender, and academic achievement. Further, the students' self-compassion was categorized into three categories high, medium, and low.

Data collection was carried out using a self-compassion instrument adopted from Dicky Sugianto's Scale of Compassion (SWD), the Indonesian version of Neff's 2003 Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) (Sugianto, Suwartono, & Sutanto, 2020). On the Self-Compassion Scale (SWD), the alternate response employed a one to five Likert scale with both favorable and unfavorable questions. Besides, the obtained data were analyzed using ordinal regression analysis, in which the dependent variable was polychotomous with the ordinal data type. The ordinal regression analysis reveals the effect of gender on students' level of self-compassion and the effect of the level of self-compassion on their academic achievement.

3. Results

The results of our data analysis focus on: (1) the effect of gender on students' level of self-compassion and (2) the effect of students' self-compassion on their academic achievement.

3.1. The Effect of Gender on Students' Level of Self Compassion

From 36 students who participated in this study, there was no missing sample data, so the data was valid to be processed in further analysis. As presented in Table 1, of 36 students, 86.1% of them have moderate self-compassion.

Table 1. Case Processing Summary

		N	Marginal Percentage (%)
Self-Compassion Level	Low	1	2.8
	Currently	31	86.1
	Tall	4	11.1
Gender	Man	7	19.4
	Woman	29	80.6
Valid		36	100.0
Missing		0	
Total		36	

Table 2 shows a decrease in the value of -2 log-likelihood from 9.973 intercepts to 4.968 and a significance value of 0.025 < 0.05. The obtained data suggested the fit model for this study was the one containing independent variables. The model with independent variables presents better prediction than models containing intercepts.

Table 2. Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Likelihood Logs	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	9.973			
Final	4.968	5.005	1	.025

As presented in Table 3, we obtained a Pearson chi-square value of 0.00 with a significance of 1 > 0.05, indicating that the model is a suitable model for our data. Therefore, the model was used, and the data generated from the model is in accordance with the predictions of the model.

Table 3. Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	.000	1	1.000
Deviance	.000	1	1.000

Table 4 shows that Nagelkerke's score is 0.212, showing that 21.2% of gender affects students' level of self-compassion, while the 78.8% is influenced by other factors outside the model. In other words, 21.2% of the gender variable is able to explain the participants' level of self-compassion.

Table 4. Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.130
Nagelkerke	.212
McFadden	.147

Furthermore, we used two equations model because we have three categories in the dependent variable (high, medium, low), as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Self-Compassion= 1.00]	-22.969	1080	452.192	1	.000	-25.086	-20.852
	[Self-Compassion= 2.00]	1.833	.539	11,581	1	.001	.777	2.888
Location	[Gender =1.00]	-21.177	.000	.	1	.	-21.177	-21.177
	[Gender =2.00]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.

The two equations model are:

p_1: -22.969 + 21.177X   (1)

p_2 : 1.833 + 21.177X   (2)

Ideally, to identify the magnitude of the independent variable's influence on the dependent variable, the examination of the odds ratio value is carried out. However, since our finding showed no significant effect of the independent variable (gender) on the dependent variable (level of self-compassion), we did not examine the odds ratio value.

Table 6 shows that the obtained significance value of 1 > 0.05 indicating the model's same parameters and that the logit link function selection is correct.

Table 6. Test of Parallel Linesa

Model	-2 Likelihood Logs	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Null Hypothesis	4.968			
General	4.968	.000	1	1,000

3.2. The Influence of Self-Compassion Level on Academic Achievement

From the total of 36 participants, we obtained no missing sample data. Thus, the data was valid to be used for further analysis. As presented in Table 7, 80.6% of 36 student attained above average GPA (> 3.5), and 86.1% of them had a moderate level of self-compassion.

Table 7. Case Processing Summary

		N	Marginal Percentage (%)
Academic Achievement (GPA)	GPA below average (< 3.5)	5	13.9
	GPA equal to average (= 3.5)	2	5.6
	GPA above average (> 3.5)	29	80.6
Self-Compassion Level	Low	1	2.8
	Currently	31	86.1
	Tall	4	11.1
Valid		36	100.0
Missing		0	
Total		36	

In addition, there is a decrease of -2 log-likelihood from intercept, with a significance value of 0.057 > 0.05, as listed in Table 8. Therefore, the fit model is a model that only contains intercepts, showing the model's inability to generate reasonable predictions.

Table 8. Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Likelihood Logs	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	11.408			
Final	5.666	5.743	2	.057

As presented in Table 9, we obtained a Pearson chi-square value of 0.00 with a significance of 1 > 0.05, signifying that the model is a good model and that the data generated from the model matches the predictions.

Table 9. Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df
Pearson	.000	2
Deviance	.000	2

For Nagelkerke's score, we obtained a 0.209 score, as presented in Table 10. This finding showed that 20.9% of students' level of self-compassion affects their academic achievement. In other words, the students' self-compassion can explain their academic achievement. Additionally, 78.8% of students' academic achievement is explained or influenced by other factors outside the model.

Table 10. Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.147
Nagelkerke	.209
McFadden	.131

Based on Table 11, we used two model equations (equation 3 & equation 4) because we had three categories in the dependent variable.

Table 11. Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[GPA =1.00]	-18.237	3415.966	.000	1	.996	-6713.409	6676.934
	[GPA =2.00]	-17.755	3415.966	.000	1	.996	-6712.926	6677.416
Location	[Self-Compassion =1.00]	-36.899	.000	.	1	.	-36.899	-36.899
	[Self-Compassion =2.00]	-16,328	3415.966	.000	1	.996	-6711.499	6678.843
	[Self-Compassion =3.00]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.

p_1: -18.237 + 16.328 X   (3)

p_2: -17.755 + 16.328 X   (4)

To identify the magnitude of the tendency from the independent variable to the dependent variable, we investigated the value of the odds ratio. However, Table 12 shows the Wald test score and significant value for the level of self-compassion of 0.00 with a significance of 0.996 > 0.05. Thus, there is no significant effect of students' self-compassion level on student academic achievement, and we could not identify the odds ratio value.

Table 12. Test of Parallel Linesa

Model	-2 Likelihood Logs	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Null Hypothesis	5.666			
General	5.666	.000	2	1,000

In addition, the obtained significance value of 1 > 0.05 indicates that the model has the same parameters, so the selection of the logit link function is appropriate.

4. Discussion

Self-compassion represents an individual's ability to pay attention and care for themselves when facing challenges, problems, and difficulties in life while regarded challenges, problems, and difficulties in life as part of the experience of human life (Renggani & Widiasavitri, 2018). Self-compassion entails treating oneself with kindness, recognizing one's shared humanity, and being mindful in considering negative aspects of oneself (Neff & Vonk, 2009). Accordingly, self-compassion leads an individual to a healthy mentality. Besides, with self-compassion, individuals are more tolerant of themselves when facing challenges and difficulties in their lives. Someone's kindness towards themselves in the facing their own weaknesses and difficulties results in the absence of self-judgment, self-blame, stress, and depression, so it enhances individual's mental health and lower their urge to commit suicide. Compassion to oneself is equally as vital as kindness to others.

Self-compassion is not synonymous with selfishness, which stimulates someone to disregard others and ignore the present difficulties. In contrast, high self-compassion enables individuals to care for and treat other people and problems properly. It should also counter the tendencies towards narcissism, self-centeredness, and downward social comparison associated with attempts to maintain self-esteem (Neff, 2003). With high self-compassion, individuals will be more concerned about themselves, their difficulties, and other people.

Conceptually, self-compassion contains three core components, namely self-kindness versus self-judgment, common humanity versus isolation, and mindfulness versus overidentification, in relation to painful experiences (Germer & Neff, 2013). Someone with high self-compassion presents a good attitude in looking at themselves (self-kindness), feeling that their shortcomings and limitations are part of being a normal human being (common humanity), and being fully aware of the conditions they experience (mindfulness) (Neff, 2016). In contrast, people with low self-compassion tend to judge themselves badly (self-judgment), do not understand that he is part of another human being (isolation), and overly criticize themselves (overidentification).

Several factors were reported to influence self-compassion, including gender (Zhang & Chen, 2016). Research by Yarnell et al. (2015) showed that men have slightly higher levels of self-compassion than women. Another study reported a tendency for male students to have a higher self-compassion, with a 0.09 higher score than female students (Wahyuni & Arsita, 2019). These studies showed a relatively low trend of a score. Research results from Al-Awamleh (2020) described significant differences in self-compassion between females and males, with females having higher self-compassion in general.

Our ordinal regression analysis results showed no significant effect of the independent variable (gender) on the dependent variable (level of self-compassion). There is no conformity of the results

with previous research that have been described. Therefore, our findings provide an understanding that the interventions related to self-compassion do not really need to consider gender differences. This is linear with a study conducted by Yarnell et al. (2015) which suggested that researchers and practitioners in future studies and interventions focusing on self-compassion should not overemphasize gender differences in self-compassion as the essential variable.

High self-compassion affects someone's internal motivation in surviving and struggling to face challenges and demands in the learning process. Previous studies have found that self-compassion enhances motivation to improve themselves and their academic performance (Al-Awamleh, 2020). Self-compassionate individuals are motivated to learn and grow, but for intrinsic reasons – not because of their demand for social approval (Neff & Vonk, 2009). Aside from motivation, self-compassion also has an impact on decreasing procrastination (Rananto & Hidayati, 2017).

Zahra and Hernawati (2015) stated that academic achievement is negatively affected by academic procrastination. Decreased procrastination enhances academic achievement and vice versa. In addition, there is a positive relationship between learning motivation and learning achievement (Tokan & Imakulata, 2019). From the relationship between self-compassion, motivation, and procrastination, motivation and procrastination are connected to academic achievement. Thus, it is hoped that self-compassion will also improve student academic achievement. Our data suggested that students with above-average GPAs (> 3.5) have a high and moderate level of self-compassion, while students with moderate GPAs also have a medium self-compassion. Besides, students with below-average GPAs (< 3.5) present moderate to low levels of self-compassion.

Our data analysis and hypothesis test results discovered no significant effect of the level of self-compassion on student academic achievement. This is related to the research in Texas from Neff et al. (2005), reporting that self-compassion can help in overcoming academic failure as someone with self-compassion can accept failure, and not over-criticizing themselves. Thus, the person can overcome academic failure. Further, Neff and Vonk (2009) explained that self-compassion is significantly associated with age.

The study explained that someone's higher age level reflects a higher level of self-compassion. Individuals will achieve a high level of self-compassion when it reaches the integrity stage because, at that stage, the individual will be able to accept themselves more positively. Additionally, self-compassion can be developed through training, among others, by doing psychoeducation and writing training (Mosewich, Crocker, Kowalski, & DeLongis, 2013). Thus, self-compassion can be trained and taught in schools or universities regardless of the gender of students. As a follow-up to this study, further research should involve a wider range and more respondents in order to ensure stronger results related to the effect of self-compassion on student academic achievement.

5. Conclusion

Based on our findings, there is no significant effect of students' gender on their level of self-compassion, and there is no significant effect of students' level of self-compassion on their academic achievement. These findings have no conformity of results with previous research. Thus, this provides an understanding that in interventions related to self-compassion, gender differences should not be highly regarded. As a follow-up, future research should use wider scope and a higher number of respondents in order to ensure more substantial results related to the effect of self-compassion on student academic achievement as well as the impact of gender on the level of self-compassion.

Author Contributions

All authors have equal contributions to the paper. All the authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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Welas Diri Ditinjau Berdasarkan Gender dan Prestasi Akademik Mahasiswa

Abstrak

Penelitian bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh gender terhadap tingkat welas diri mahasiswa, dan mengetahui pengaruh tingkat welas diri terhadap prestasi akademik mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif, dengan jenis penelitian *ex-post facto* dan menggunakan analisis regresi ordinal. Instrumen pengumpul data menggunakan Skala Welas Diri (SWD) dengan alternatif jawaban dari skala satu sampai skala lima. Sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa di Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gender tidak memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap tingkat welas diri mahasiswa dan tidak terdapat pengaruh signifikan tingkat welas diri terhadap prestasi akademik mahasiswa.