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PERSONALITY AND SELF-COMPASSION

Exploring Their Relationship in an Indian Context

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The present study examines the relationship between personality and self-compassion among Indian emerging adults. Two samples of emerging adult males ($N_1 = 494$ Catholic seminarians, $N_2 = 504$ Catholic non-seminarians) completed the Big Five Inventory, the Honesty-Humility Subscale of HEXACO and the Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form. Primarily, we examined the mean-level differences for Big Five factors, honesty-humility and self-compassion between the samples and found that mean-levels were higher for seminarians except for neuroticism. Therefore, we treated the samples separately for further analyses. Secondly, we examined the associations between personality factors of the Big Five, honesty-humility and self-compassion. Conscientiousness, agreeableness and extraversion were positively associated with self-compassion. Neuroticism had a large negative correlation with self-compassion. Openness to experience had a medium positive relationship with self-compassion among seminarians and a small positive relationship among emerging adult non-seminarians. A medium positive association was found between honesty-humility and self-compassion. Thirdly, we examined the impact of personality factors on self-compassion. Self-compassion was significantly and positively predicted by agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and honesty-humility for seminarians and by extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness for non-seminarians. Neuroticism was a significant negative predictor of self-compassion for both samples.

Keywords: Big Five, Catholic, emerging adults, HEXACO, honesty-humility, Indian, personality, self-compassion

Persönlichkeit und Mitgefühl mit uns selbst: Erforschung des Zusammenhangs in indischer Umgebung: Diese Forschung untersucht die Zusammenhänge der Persönlichkeit und des Mitgefühls mit uns selbst am Beispiel von indischen jungen Erwachsenen. Zwei Gruppen von jungen erwachsenen Männern ($N_1 = 494$ katholische Seminaristen, $N_2 = 504$ katholische Nicht-Seminaristen) haben den Fragebogen mit dem Fünf-Faktoren-Modell (Big Five), die Unterskala Ehrlichkeit-Demut des Modells Hexaco und die Skala Mitgefühl mit uns selbst ausgefüllt. Beim

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ersten Schritt wurden die Unterschiede zwischen den Mitterdurchschnitten in Bezug auf die fünf Faktoren des Big Five Modells, nach den Punkten von Ehrlichkeit-Demut und Mitgefühl mit uns selbst untersucht und beobachtet, dass in der Gruppe der Seminaristen alle typischen Durchschnittswerte – bis auf den Neurotizismus – höher waren. Die Gewissenhaftigkeit, Freundlichkeit und Extraversion sind positiv mit dem Mitgefühl mit uns selbst korreliert. Der Neurotizismus zeigte eine hohe negative Korrelation mit dem Mitgefühl mit uns selbst. Die Offenheit zeigte eine positive Korrelation vom mittleren Wert mit dem Mitgefühl mit uns selbst in der Gruppe der Seminaristen und eine geringe positive Korrelation in der anderen Gruppe der jungen Erwachsenen. Drittens untersuchten wir die Wirkung der Persönlichkeitsmerkmale in Bezug auf das Mitgefühl mit uns selbst. Bei den Seminaristen ließ sich aufgrund von Freundlichkeit, Gewissenhaftigkeit, Offenheit und Ehrlichkeit-Demut das Mitgefühl mit uns selbst deutlich positiv voraussagen, bei den Nicht-Seminaristen eben Extraversion, Freundlichkeit und Gewissenhaftigkeit. Der Neurotizismus erwies sich in beiden Gruppen als eine signifikante negative Vorhersagevariable.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Persönlichkeit, Fünf-Faktoren-Modell (Big Five), Ehrlichkeit-Demut, HEXACO, Mitgefühl mit uns selbst, junge Erwachsene, Indien, katholisch

1. Introduction

1.1. The Indian context

Framed within the religious tradition of Buddhism as well as within current psychology, ‘self-compassion’ is a topic that has received increasing attention (KRIEGER et al. 2013). Based on the perspectives of Buddhism and founded in a social psychological framework, NEFF (2003a; 2003b) developed a positive self-oriented concept, called ‘self-compassion’. After publishing the first two articles on self-compassion by Neff in 2003, more than 200 journal articles and dissertations were published on this topic within a period of ten years (GERMER & NEFF 2013). The earliest psychological usage of the term ‘compassion’ appeared in ‘A Group Test for the Measurement of Cruelty-Compassion: A Proposed Means of Recognizing Potential Criminality’ (HAWTHOME 1932), where the concept is, however, not well defined. Later, MACINTYRE elaborated further on the concept and defined compassion as ‘to put oneself imaginatively in the place of the sufferer and to alter one’s actions appropriately either by desisting for what would have caused pain or by devoting oneself to its relief’ (1966, 22). In this process of compassion, one loses the self completely and focuses on the sufferer. NEFF narrowed down the broad perspective of the other-oriented concept of compassion to a more self-oriented concept without losing the benefit of the former aspect. Self-compassion is defined as,

being touched by and open to one’s own suffering, not avoiding or disconnecting from it, generating the desire to alleviate one’s suffering and to heal oneself with kindness. Self-compassion also involves offering non-judgemental understanding to one’s pain, inadequacies and failures, so that one’s experience is seen as part of the larger human experience. (2003b, 87)

Self-compassion is determined by the positive and negative poles of three components: self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness. Self-kindness entails being kind to and understanding of oneself rather than being overly critical to oneself at the time of suffering and failure. Common humanity implies a non-judgemental understanding that suffering and failure are part of the shared human experience. Mindfulness is a balanced awareness of one's suffering and failure without exaggerating, suppressing and avoiding them (NEFF 2003b; NEFF et al. 2007a; PETERSEN 2014). Similar psychological concepts can be found in the humanistic approach such as ROGERS's 'unconditional positive regard' (1961), MASLOW's 'B-perception' (1968) and ELLIS's 'unconditional self-acceptance' (1973) that concentrate on the individual. Self-compassion encompasses them with its unique focus on a sense of shared humanity without isolating the individual from other human beings and with its notion of mindfulness (BARNARD & CURRY 2011; NEFF 2003a).

Traditionally in India, a compassionate individual is normally considered a mentally healthy person because of the inner contentment and being fair to everyone equally (PARANJPE 2002). To be compassionate with oneself aims to liberate oneself from one's suffering and at the same time acts as a prerequisite for an advanced form of self-compassion – compassion for others (LADNER 2004). Buddhism describes compassion as *Karuna*, an important quality to lead a meaningful and content life (LADNER 2004). From a Buddhist perspective an ideal person is the one who is free from any negativity toward any creature and is, instead, filled with positive qualities of compassion, friendliness and selflessness (PARANJPE 2002).

Christianity is called 'the religion of compassion' (WALKER 1979, 755) because of its teaching of compassion as a 'homage rendered to the Lord' (ACHTEMEIER 1962, 353). But it does not mention self-compassion directly. At the same time, the higher level of self-compassion, that is, compassion for others is well explained in Christianity, and it is mainly attributed to the character of God, who is full of compassion. Every Christian is called to follow the example of God's compassion that should not be reserved for friends and neighbours alone but extended to everyone without exception, even to one's enemies (WALKER 1979). Considering its significance in relationships, compassion is understood on three levels: family, community and dependent people like children, the elderly, the poor, orphans and widows (ACHTEMEIER 1962).

A short historical overview can explain why self-compassion is significant among Indian Christians. Christianity is a minority group (2.5% of the total population) in India, but with a tradition dating back to the first century. Early Indian Christians, known as St. Thomas Christians, are found in Kerala, one of the southern states of India. Later, from the fourteenth century onwards, European Christian missionaries came to India and baptised many into Christianity in the Latin Catholic tradition. Therefore, three individual Churches of Latin, Syro-Malabar, and Syro-Malankara constitute the Catholic Church in India.

Interestingly, Christians in India have never separated themselves from others except in their strong Christian faith, and they have been following indigenous trad-

itions and incorporating interreligious elements in their religious practices (BROWN 1982; COLLINS 2007). During different stages of life, every Catholic in India is religiously trained through different religious programs. For example, during the school and college years, a Catholic receives religious education through a system of Sunday school classes that take one and a half hour a week. The non-seminarians in this study are those who received a nominal Catholic formation in such terms.

A Catholic seminary is a place for the spiritual, moral, and intellectual formation of priests (O'DONOHUE et al. 2002). According to the Indian worldview, an individual acquires qualities like compassion in the first stage of human life called *Brahmacarya Azram* (student life) in order to lead the other three stages of life (*Grhastha Azram* – household stage, *Vanaprastha Azram* – retired life, *Sanyasa Azram* – renounced life) successfully. For this reason, one has to leave the family and live with the teacher (BHAWUK 2011). This tradition of student life is incorporated into the Catholic seminary system in India, where candidates leave their family and live in an institution with many scholar priests who specialise in different religious disciplines and serve as examples for the novices.

At different stages of seminary formation, a candidate allows oneself to be formed by the social, cultural and religious realities in which he lives (PADINJAREKUTTU 2005). The entire training in a major seminary is intended to the formation of true pastors. Candidates are trained for the ministry of the word of God, which has to be expressed in words and in example. The capacity to relate to others is fundamental for them since they are responsible for a community. Therefore, genuine compassion is considered to be an important quality of a pastor (JOHN PAUL II 1992, 43). Being a shepherd, a Catholic priest continues the work of compassion, incorporating truth, love and life (82).

1.2. Personality traits and self-compassion

The following empirical findings provide a basis for an analysis of the relationship between personality and self-compassion in an Indian Christian context. In a sample of 177 undergraduates, NEFF and her colleagues (2007a) found a significant positive relationship between self-compassion and three personality constructs of the Big Five, more precisely agreeableness ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$), extraversion ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.05$), and conscientiousness ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$). Self-compassion seems to improve interpersonal relationships (CROCKER & CANEVELLO 2008; NEFF & BERETVAS 2013) and is significantly associated with the personality factors of the Big Five (AYODELE 2013). It plays an important role as a predictor of psychological health (GILBERT & PROCTER 2006; NEFF 2003a; NEFF et al. 2007a, 2007b; SBARRA et al. 2012) especially among younger people (BARNARD & CURRY 2011; NEFF 2011). Self-compassion, furthermore, has a strong positive relationship with well-being (MACBETH & GUMLEY 2012), life satisfaction (NEFF et al. 2005), and happiness (NEFF & VONK 2009). A meta-analysis of 19 studies (between 2003 and 2011) point-

ed out significant negative association between self-compassion on the one hand and anxiety, depression and stress on the other hand (MACBETH & GUMLEY 2012). The relationship between self-compassion and performance level shows that individuals with higher levels of self-compassion evaluate their performance more accurately than those with low self-compassion, who underrate their abilities, or those with high self-esteem, who overestimate their performance (LEARY et al. 2007).

Self-compassion has a negative association with neuroticism ($r = -0.65$, $p < 0.05$; NEFF et al. 2007b). GILBERT and PROCTER (2006) found that self-compassion acts as a buffer to the markers of maladjustment such as depression, anxiety, self-criticism, shame, inferiority and submissive behaviour significantly. NEFF et al. (2007a) also supported the buffering hypothesis with their findings, indicating that at the time of ego-threat, self-compassion acts as a buffer against anxiety. A multicultural study confirms this association in both eastern and western societies (NEFF et al. 2008). Also LEARY and his colleagues (2007) described that individuals high in self-compassion expressed less extreme reactions, less negative emotions, more accepting thoughts and were more likely to take responsibility in a negative situation. Finally, SCHANCHE and her colleagues (2011) found in a sample of psychiatric patients that a gradual increase in self-compassion from early to late in therapy was accompanied with a significant decrease in psychiatric symptoms, interpersonal problems and personality pathology.

In the field of personality research, the Big Five model is the most widely used model, which includes five dimensions of personality traits, namely openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (COSTA & MCCRAE 1992; PAUNONEN & ASHTON 2001) and is very effective in categorising personality (KAJONIUS & DADERMAN 2014). Although not many studies have been made in the area of personality and self-compassion, NEFF and her colleagues (2007b) noticed a positive relationship of extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness, and a negative relationship of neuroticism with self-compassion. However, a strong criticism against the Big Five model was that it excluded any other possible trait as a predictor (PAUNONEN & ASHTON 2001). To overcome this limitation, we also relied on a new model, the HEXACO model, to fully examine the impact of personality on self-compassion.

The HEXACO model has emerged as a newly recognised model of personality research (AGHABABAEI & ARJI 2014) with six dimensions of personality: honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. The HEXACO model has similarities with the Big Five model of personality in terms of the subfactors, except for the honesty-humility subscale of HEXACO (O'NEILL & PAUNONEN 2013; ROLISON et al. 2013). The uniqueness of this model is the introduction of this new factor, which is a tendency to be fair and genuine in dealing with individuals to the extent of being exploited without retaliation (ASHTON & LEE 2007). The Big Five model lacks this dimension of personality (VRIES et al. 2009).

The new factor, honesty-humility, has a significant negative correlation with behaviour related to deceit, self-monitoring and individualistic gains (ASHTON et al. 2000). Exploitative behaviour such as Machiavellianism or psychopathic personality

traits is also negatively correlated with this factor (ASHTON & LEE 2005; JAKOBWITZ & EGAN 2006; PAULHUS & WILLIAMS 2002). The honesty-humility factor is proved to be a more active trait than agreeableness (HILBIG et al. 2013). Moreover, due to its predictive validity with different types of behaviour (ASHTON & LEE 2005), the honesty-humility factor of HEXACO is considered to be an active and egotistical part of personality (KAJONIUS & DADERMAN 2014).

1.3. The current study

The study mainly aimed to examine the relationships between self-compassion and personality traits, especially the five factors of the Big Five and the honesty-humility factor of HEXACO. Therefore, our first hypothesis was that conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience and honesty-humility would have a significant positive relationship, and neuroticism would have a significant negative relationship with self-compassion. Because the concept of self-compassion emerged from Buddhism, an ancient religion which originated in the Indian culture, and the higher level of self-compassion, that is, compassion for others has a strong foundation in Christianity, we aimed to study this association in an Indian Christian population. Moreover, we wanted to examine the relationship between personality and self-compassion in Indian emerging adults (ARNETT 2004). Emerging adulthood is a life stage in between adolescence and young adulthood, characterised by the age of identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between and possibilities (ARNETT 2011). We selected the samples of emerging adulthood specifically because of the distinctiveness of the process of this stage to develop qualities, skills and capacities of character to complete the transition to adulthood (ARNETT 1998). In addition to the focus on this specific life stage, we were particularly interested to explore the role of compassion for individuals who were enrolled in an intensive Christian training with a focus on compassion within the Indian Christian context. We therefore selected a sample of young Catholic seminarians from India who share the same life period with a sample of Catholic non-seminarians.

Since personality factors could describe the characteristics of individuals from different domains, we assumed that they could predict self-compassion due to its close association with personality. Therefore, our second hypothesis was that personality factors of the Big Five (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and neuroticism) and the honesty-humility factor of HEXACO would predict self-compassion among seminarians and non-seminarians due to their Christian faith and Indian tradition. We also hypothesised that, due to their many years of intensive Christian formation which would focus on personality development and human values both theoretically and practically, seminarians would score lower than non-seminarians in neuroticism and higher in the personality factors of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience of the Big Five and honesty-humility of HEXACO as well as in self-compassion.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and procedure

The study was conducted on two samples of emerging adult males, between 18 and 30 years of age. All participants in the study had completed their pre-university certificate course and hailed from the geographical region of Kerala, one of the southern states of India, where the Christian population is 19% (2.3% in India). Participants of the first sample were 494 Catholic seminarians (mean age = 23.18, SD = 2.95), who belonged to one of the three different Catholic churches present in this area (13.6% to the Latin Church, 83.8% to the Syro-Malabar Church and 2.9% to the Syro-Malankara Church). To make it convenient, the sample will be referred to in the study as “seminarians”. All participants were enrolled in a bachelor program of either Philosophy or Theology. The majority came from villages (91%) and a minority from cities (9%). To get an access to the first sample, we contacted the authorities of the major seminaries in India and got permission from eight seminaries.

Participants of the second sample were 504 Catholic non-seminarians (mean age = 20.74, SD = 3.24). To make it convenient, they will be referred to in the study as “non-seminarians”. They belonged to three churches of the Catholic faith in this area (9.2% to the Latin Church, 88.2% to the Syro-Malabar Church and 2.6% to the Syro-Malankara Church). Among the participants, 63.9% were from villages and 36.1% from cities. They had completed the pre-university certificate course and were unmarried at the time of the data collection. In order to reach the Catholic emerging adult population, we approached different institutions, namely one private university, eight colleges (including a medical college and an engineering college), two Catholic youth organisations, five parishes and three Catholic youth program centres in South India.

All subjects were asked to give informed consent to participation in the study. We used a generally accepted form of informed content that included the purpose of the study in general (to explore personality factors in early adulthood), confidentiality and the anonymity of the participant. Participation was voluntary and was allowed to discontinue at any time with no penalty. Once they had expressed their consent in writing, each participant completed a demographic survey consisting questions of age, education, place of living, rite (identifying church affiliation; in our study, Latin, Syro-Malabar or Syro-Malankara), education of father and education of mother. They were given proper guidelines both orally and in writing before administering the tests.

2.2. Measures

Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form (SCS-SF) (RAES et al. 2011). The twelve-item instrument was completed in order to measure self-compassion. Participants had to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) ‘almost never’ to (5) ‘almost always’. The items were prefaced with the following statement: ‘How I typically act

towards myself in difficult times'. Each item (such as 'I try to see my failings as part of the human condition' or 'when something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance') had to be assessed on the basis of 'how often you behave in the stated manner'. The scale was a shorter version of the original Self-Compassion Scale with 26 items (NEFF 2003a), having an adequate internal consistency. The English SCS-SF total score (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$) had a positive correlation ($r = 0.98$) with the long SCS total score (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$). Confirmatory factor analysis supported the same dimensions as found in the long form (see RAES et al. 2011).

Big Five Inventory (BFI) consists of 44 self-report items and assesses the five dimensions of personality: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (JOHN et al. 1991). The items were prefaced by a phrase, 'I am someone who . . .' and followed by the item statement such as '. . . is talkative' or '. . . is reserved'. Participants assessed each item on a five-point Likert scale from (1) 'disagree strongly' to (5) 'agree strongly'. The scores of reliability and validity were high across age, culture and gender (SOTO & JOHN 2009). The scale had substantial internal consistency, retest reliability and a clear factor structure. It had also considerable convergent and discriminant validity with longer Big Five measures. The content coverage was not affected by its brevity (BENET-MARTÍNEZ & JOHN 1998; JOHN et al. 2008).

The 60-item HEXACO-PI-R (HEXACO-60). To measure the honesty-humility factor, we used the honesty-humility subscale of the HEXACO-60, which is a shorter version of the HEXACO-PI-R (ASHTON & LEE 2009). The HEXACO-60 measures six dimensions of personality such as honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness. It contains ten items for each factor that collectively cover a wide range of content, with at least two items representing each of the four narrow traits of each scale in the longer HEXACO-PI-R. Participants were asked to rate each item (such as 'If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars') on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (5) 'strongly agree'. The instrument shows moderately high internal consistency reliability, low interscale correlations and a factor structure in which items of the same broad scale would show their primary loadings on the same factor of a six-factor solution.

3. Results

3.1. Preliminary results

Initially, we conducted a MANOVA for both samples to examine the significance of mean-level differences of the socio-demographic variables. The multivariate results were significant for the socio-demographic variables of age, level of education, place of living, education of father and education of mother (Wilks' Lambda = 0.71; $F(5,961) = 77.83$; $p < 0.001$; multivariate $\eta^2 = 0.29$) in the study. Therefore, we examined the univariate ANOVA results. They indicated that both samples were

significantly different for socio-demographic variables of age ($F(1,965) = 146.10$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.13$), level of education ($F(1,965) = 19.60$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.02$), place of living ($F(1,965) = 117.33$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.11$), education of father ($F(1,965) = 137.77$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.13$) and education of mother ($F(1,965) = 158.88$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.14$). Means and standard deviations of both samples are given in *Table 1*.

To test the significance of the mean-level differences of Big Five factors, honesty-humility and self-compassion between seminarians and non-seminarians, a one-way MANOVA was done. The result showed significant differences among the study variables (Wilks' Lambda = 0.86; $F(7,982) = 23.40$; $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.14$). Follow-up univariate ANOVAs indicated significant differences between the two samples for the Big Five factors of extraversion ($F(1,988) = 10.32$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.01$), agreeableness ($F(1,988) = 29.61$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.03$), conscientiousness ($F(1,988) = 87.14$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.08$), neuroticism ($F(1,988) = 48.75$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = .05$), honesty-humility ($F(1,988) = 121.08$; $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.11$) and self-compassion ($F(1,988) = 10.32$; $p = 0.001$; $\eta^2 = 0.01$), but not for openness to experience ($F(1,988) = 0.589$; $p < 0.10$; $\eta^2 = 0.00$). The mean-level differences showed that seminarians scored higher in extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness of the Big Five and the honesty-humility factor of HEXACO and lower in neuroticism (see *Table 1*).

Since the mean-level differences of the majority of the socio-demographic variables and study variables were statistically significant, we treated the two samples separately in our study.

3.2. Correlations

We conducted a series of Pearson's correlations to test the relationship between personality and self-compassion for both samples separately. *Table 1* shows descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables. The socio-demographic variables of age, education (see *Table 1*) and year of study ($r = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$) had a positive correlation with self-compassion of seminarians. It showed that seminarians who were higher in age, education and year of study expressed a higher level of self-compassion.

Results also indicated that neuroticism had a large negative relationship with self-compassion among both samples. Meanwhile, conscientiousness had a large positive association with self-compassion among seminarians and a medium positive association among non-seminarians. Extraversion, agreeableness and honesty-humility had a medium positive relationship with self-compassion among both samples. Interestingly, openness to experience had a medium positive association with self-compassion among seminarians, whereas it had a small positive association among non-seminarians (see *Table 1*).

Results described that higher levels of conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion and openness to experience were related to higher levels of self-compassion, and lower levels of neuroticism were related to higher levels of self-compassion among both samples.

Table 1
 Correlations between Big Five factors, honesty-humility and self-compassion in the seminarians (below diagonal) and non-seminarians (above diagonal) (seminarians: N = 489, non-seminarians: N = 502)

	Group	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
M	Sample 1			23.16	0.82	3.06	3.18	3.36	3.51	3.79	3.63	3.40	2.54	3.79
	Sample 2			20.76	0.59	3.98	4.15	3.17	3.40	3.62	3.30	3.35	2.83	3.40
SD	Sample 1			2.93	0.82	1.19	1.20	0.57	0.53	0.50	0.56	0.46	0.68	0.54
	Sample 2			3.25	0.80	1.27	1.18	0.50	0.55	0.50	0.56	0.46	0.63	0.58
<i>Cronbach's α</i>	Sample 1							0.78	0.62	0.69	0.76	0.59	0.80	0.67
	Sample 2							0.65	0.62	0.63	0.71	0.58	0.73	0.62
1 Age				1	0.58**	0.06	0.00	0.05	-0.07	0.12**	0.18**	0.12**	-0.01	0.04
2 Education				0.55**	1	0.15**	0.12*	-0.03	-0.10*	0.06	0.07	0.11*	0.03	-0.10
3 Education of Father				-0.09	-0.02	1	0.70**	-0.04	-0.08	0.06	-0.08	0.16**	0.13**	-0.01
4 Education of Mother				-0.15**	-0.07	0.64**	1	-0.07	-0.09*	0.03	-0.12**	0.13**	0.09*	-0.05
5 Self-compassion				0.11*	0.13**	0.06	-0.04	1	0.34**	0.38**	0.38**	0.14**	-0.52**	0.29**
6 Extraversion				-0.08	-0.04	0.07	0.01	0.39**	1	0.26**	0.37**	0.35**	-0.38**	0.19**
7 Agreeableness				0.10*	0.12**	0.06	0.00	0.49**	0.43**	1	0.31**	0.24**	-0.45**	0.38**
8 Conscientiousness				0.12**	0.15**	0.10*	0.02	0.56**	0.51**	0.58**	1	0.19**	-0.39**	0.33**
9 Openness to experience				0.07	0.05	0.06	-0.02	0.41**	0.42**	0.42**	0.49**	1	-0.13**	0.10*
10 Neuroticism				-0.04	-10.00*	-0.04	0.01	-0.61**	-0.52**	-0.59**	-0.62**	-0.40**	1	-0.25**
11 Honesty-Humility				-0.04	-0.05	0.05	0.02	0.33**	0.26**	0.47**	0.41**	0.24**	-0.33**	1

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

3.3. Hierarchical regressions

3.3.1. Sample 1 (seminarians)

To determine whether Big Five and honesty-humility scale scores could predict self-compassion among seminarians, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted (see *Table 2*). In step 1, we examined self-compassion with the Big Five factors as regressors. Result showed that conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$), openness to experience ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$) and agreeableness ($\beta = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$) were significant predictors of self-compassion. Neuroticism was a significant negative predictor of self-compassion ($\beta = -0.37$, $p < 0.001$). In step 2, we added honesty-humility factor to the Big Five factors as a possible predictor of self-compassion. Results indicated that conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$), openness to experience ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$) and agreeableness ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$) remained positive predictors and neuroticism ($\beta = -0.37$, $p < 0.001$) a negative predictor of self-compassion. Furthermore, the honesty-humility factor ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$) of HEXACO also predicted the level of self-compassion of the seminarians.

Table 2
Multiple regression analysis with self-compassion as the criterion of Sample 1
– seminarians (N = 489)

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Self-compassion</i>	
	<i>Step 1</i>	<i>Step 2</i>
<i>BFI extraversion</i>	-0.02	-0.01
<i>BFI agreeableness</i>	0.10*	0.10*
<i>BFI conscientiousness</i>	0.22***	0.15**
<i>BFI openness</i>	0.12**	0.11**
<i>BFI neuroticism</i>	-0.37***	-0.37***
<i>Honesty-humility (HEXACO)</i>		0.11*
ΔR^2	0.44	0.45
ΔF	76.98***	65.70***
<i>Total adjusted R²</i>	0.44	0.44

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

3.3.2. Sample 2 (non-seminarians)

We repeated the same procedure with sample 2 (see *Table 3*). Results indicated that agreeableness ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$), conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.14$, $p = 0.001$) and extraversion ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$) were significant positive predictors of self-compassion. Neuroticism remained a significant negative predictor of self-compassion

($\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.001$). Results of step 2 showed that agreeableness ($\beta = 0.14$, $p = 0.001$), extraversion ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$) and conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$) were significant positive predictors, and neuroticism ($\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.001$) was a negative predictor of self-compassion. Meanwhile, the honesty-humility factor had no predictive value on the level of self-compassion of non-seminarians.

Table 3
Multiple regression analyses with self-compassion as the criterion of sample 2
– non-seminarians (N = 502)

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Self-compassion</i>	
	<i>Step 1</i>	<i>Step 2</i>
<i>BFI extraversion</i>	0.12**	0.12**
<i>BFI agreeableness</i>	0.15***	0.14***
<i>BFI conscientiousness</i>	0.14***	0.10*
<i>BFI openness</i>	-0.01	-0.03
<i>BFI neuroticism</i>	-0.35***	-0.35***
<i>Honesty-humility (HEXACO)</i>		0.09
ΔR^2	0.33	0.33
ΔF	47.74***	40.55***
<i>Total adjusted R²</i>	0.32	0.32

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.

4. Discussion

The current study was one of the first in which personality factors of the Big Five and honesty-humility were examined in relation to self-compassion within an Asian context. Results were mainly in line with our hypotheses. To support the first hypothesis, we found significant positive associations of the personality factors of conscientiousness, agreeableness and extraversion with self-compassion that supported earlier findings (NEFF et al. 2007a). Additionally, we found a medium positive association between openness to experience and self-compassion among seminarians and a small but significant positive association among non-seminarians. This association was contrary to the past study of NEFF and her colleagues (2007a). Openness to experience was characterised by feelings, fantasy, aesthetics, actions, ideas and values (COSTA & MCCRAE 1992; MISHEL et al. 2008). RAAD (2000) described it as a trait where feelings run highest, and it might be one of the reasons for the close association of openness to experience with self-compassion. Another reason might be the cultural or demographic differences between the Indian samples of the present study and the American samples of the past study. The sense of feeling good is mostly associated with participation in the group for Asians, whereas it is more indi-

vidualistic in the West. The Indian self is considered to be part of a larger whole and more intuitive, whereas the American self is a unitary free agent and more reasoning (NISBETT 2003; SEITER & NELSON 2011). A significant and medium relationship of the honesty-humility factor of HEXACO with self-compassion among both samples was a unique finding of this study.

Results of the current study supported our second hypothesis that personality factors of the Big Five and honesty-humility would predict self-compassion. Impact of openness to experience and extraversion on self-compassion differed between seminarians and non-seminarians. We found that openness to experience predicted self-compassion among seminarians, but no such impact was found among non-seminarians. In earlier studies, openness to experience was closely associated with Goldberg's construct of 'Intellect' and Norman's construct of 'Culture' (COSTA & MCCRAE 1985; RAAD 2000). We therefore assumed that one of the reasons might be an overemphasis on intellectual formation in the seminaries (LEE & PUTZ 1965). Another reason might be based on the correlation between femininity and openness to experience (HATCHETT & HAN 2006). HAGMAIER and KENNEDY (1965), after reviewing different studies, concluded that seminarians were more feminine in their interests than the common men, and therefore the factor of openness to experience predicted self-compassion among seminarians.

Extraversion was a predictor of self-compassion among non-seminarians. The possible explanation of the predictive value of extraversion on self-compassion among non-seminarians might be due to their outgoing nature, personal involvement in the events of the external world (RAAD 2000) and their response to stress by trying to lose themselves among people (MISCHEL et al. 2008). This resembled the basic qualities of self-compassion, where individuals could find their painful experiences as part of the larger human experience (NEFF 2003b). Interestingly, extraversion was not a predictor of self-compassion among seminarians. It might be due to the enclosed life of seminarians that modified their personality in the direction of greater introversion and submissiveness (HAGMAIER & KENNEDY 1965). The nature of training in the seminary might have formed a personality that perceived the constructs of extraversion and self-compassion differently. Future research could explore more of this area of study. Neuroticism predicted self-compassion negatively in both samples, supporting past findings of the association of neuroticism in general (KRIEGER et al. 2013; NEFF 2003a; NEFF et al. 2007b; PAULEY & MCPHERSON 2010; PHILLIPS & FERGUSON 2013; RAES 2010; SHAPIRA & MONGRAIN 2010; TERRY et al. 2012). Results showed that self-compassionate seminarians and non-seminarians could experience lower levels of neuroticism.

Honesty-humility, which was characterised by sincerity, modesty, fairness and greed avoidance, predicted the self-compassion of seminarians significantly, though with a low impact. The goal of seminary training, just like that of training in a military academy, is, focusing on external deportment, to achieve exactness in every detail however small and to build a character straight and true (LEE 1965). Living in such a controlled environment can in fact form seminarians' character in line with

the goal of their training. That might be a reason why honesty-humility was a predictor of self-compassion for seminarians.

Results of the current study also supported the third hypothesis that seminarians would score higher in personality factors (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience of the Big Five and honesty-humility of HEXACO) and self-compassion, and lower in neuroticism than other merging male adults. We found that seminarians scored higher in extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness of the Big Five and in the honesty-humility factor of HEXACO and lower in neuroticism. NEFF and POMMIER (2013) found that practitioners of meditation could score higher levels of self-compassion than other undergraduate students. The limitation of their study was that the meditators were from the West alone. We expected that, due to the daily practice of meditation and religious training, seminarians would score higher than non-seminarians. The results of the current study in the eastern context also support the past study (NEFF & POMMIER 2013) that self-compassion could be developed through special training. To substantiate this, results of the current study showed that seminarians who were in the higher level of religious training showed a higher level of self-compassion. Moreover, we also noticed that seminarians who were progressed in age and higher in educational level expressed higher levels of self-compassion than their juniors and less educated seminarians.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Limitations and future directions

Apart from the limitations of self-report and cross-sectional studies, the current study had other limitations that highlighted the need for further research, and should be considered when interpreting the results. Primarily, the selection of samples was limited to an emerging adult male population who belonged to a particular language-speaking group in India. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to other populations. Future studies should consider additional samples of multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic backgrounds. Through longitudinal studies of different age groups of both genders, future research could explore the nature of the relationship of personality and self-compassion.

Secondly, the study was limited to a minority religious group in India (Catholics). The samples therefore represented only a smallest section of the Indian population. Future studies should consider different segments of society, for example, believers and non-believers, or they should focus on Buddhist emerging adults. Thirdly, we could not explore the subscales of the Big Five factors, the honesty-humility of HEXACO and self-compassion, which limited the scope for our understanding of the relationship between the constructs. Future studies should consider the sub-factors of personality factors and self-compassion to explore in detail the nature of

the association between the constructs. Specifically, longitudinal studies could be used to get the directionality of the constructs distinctively.

5.2. Summary

The present study was an attempt to explore the relationship of personality, understood in terms of the Big Five factors and honesty-humility, with self-compassion. Overall, the results showed that personality had a close association with self-compassion, and the former could predict the latter. In this sense, individuals who enjoy a healthy personality are more likely to express high levels of self-compassion. Apart from the positive relationship of conscientiousness, agreeableness and extraversion, openness to experience also showed a positive relationship with self-compassion, and neuroticism had a significant negative relationship with self-compassion. Honesty-humility showed a significant relationship with self-compassion, whereas its predictive value on self-compassion was different.

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