

Self Compassion and Relationship Satisfaction Among Romantic Couples

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Abstract:

The research paper aims to study self-compassion and relationship satisfaction among romantic couples. The present study has a sample size of 115 participants chosen by simple random sampling method and the research instrument used during the study were *Self Compassion Scale Short Form* developed by Neff (2011) and *Relationship Assessment Scale* developed by Hendrick (1988). The statistical techniques used were Pearson correlation, one way ANOVA, and Post Hoc test. The findings revealed that Relationship satisfaction and self-compassion have a significant inverse correlation, indicating that a higher level of self-compassion may be linked to a lower level of relationship satisfaction. In this sample, self-compassion and relationship satisfaction are not significantly influenced by gender, suggesting that men and women have equivalent amounts of these categories. Also, self-compassion and relationship satisfaction are significantly influenced by relationship status. Relationship satisfaction differs greatly depending on the nature of connection; love marriages are more satisfied than arranged marriages and in-love partnerships.

Keywords: Self compassion, relationship satisfaction, romantic couples

I. Introduction

In the realm of interpersonal relationships, the dynamics between people are a major factor in determining overall happiness and well-being. One area of growing attention among the many variables affecting relationship quality is the function of self-compassion. Although a lot of study has been done on the benefits of self-compassion for personal health, not as much has been done on how it affects romantic relationships.

According to Neff's (2003) conceptualization, self-compassion consists of three fundamental elements: self-kindness-being emotionally present when things go hard is a key component of self-kindness. It indicates that we are touched by our own suffering and pause to acknowledge how difficult things are at the moment. How can I take care of myself right now? Warm responses to ourselves are similar to how we feel when we are shown kindness by someone; they make us feel validated, supported, and encouraged., shared humanity -It arises from the recognition that the human experience is flawed and suggests a fundamental mutuality in the experience of pain. Remembering that everyone suffers is a reminder that we are all human. Although there are differences in the circumstances, triggers, and level of anguish, the sense of imperfection is universal. We feel less alone and alone when we remember our shared humanity and another one element is mindfulness- which is to cultivate a selfcompassion, we must be willing to face and consciously recognize our own suffering.

According to Shapiro et al. (2006), mindfulness is a kind of balanced awareness that neither minimizes n

or magnifies the discomfort of our current experience. According to Rafique et al. (2018), self-compassion lessens the detrimental consequences of work-family conflicts on wellbeing, self-compassion as a successful way to manage work-family conflicts. It has been found that those who practice self-compassion are less emotionally conflicted, more amiable & creative (Neff & Beretvas, 2012) claim that people with high levels of self-compassion are perceived as warmer, kind, and loving by their relationships. An interpersonal assessment of one's partner's positive feelings and attraction to the relationship is what is known as relationship satisfaction (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Prosocial actions, which support relational intimacy, trust, and liking in the relationship, make up the majority of behaviors needed to keep partnerships intact. Task sharing, social networking, openness, reassurance, and optimism are the five key prosocial maintenance techniques. High levels of prosocial maintenance techniques have been linked to stable, committed partnerships and higher levels of relationship satisfaction, according to research Guerrero et al. (2011). According to Korner et al. (2024), self-compassion, characterized by being supportive and kind to oneself during times of failure or inadequacy, is linked to positive outcomes in both personal and relational domains and his study suggests self-compassion was positively correlated with the partner's satisfaction with the relationship, particularly among men. Suppes (2021) conducted a study to investigate the impact of integrating a self-compassionate intervention into individual psychotherapy sessions on women's levels of self-compassion and satisfaction within romantic relationships. Utilizing case study notes and assessments from four female participants engaged in a five-session self-compassionate intervention, the researcher observed a consistent increase in self-compassion among all participants throughout the intervention. Fahimdanesh et al., (2020) conducted research to investigate the relationship between self-compassion, forgiveness, and marital satisfaction among 200 couples aged 20 to 40 years and revealed that marital satisfaction was positively correlated with self-compassion among women. However, in men, forgiveness emerged as a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. In the overall sample, self-compassion was found to be the primary predictor of marital satisfaction, with forgiveness also exerting some predictive power, albeit to a lesser extent. These variables were identified as significant predictors of marital satisfaction specifically among young couples. Baker and McNulty (2011) conducted a study which suggests that the impact of responding to interpersonal mistakes with self-criticism versus self-compassion can vary depending on individual characteristics and the context of the relationship. Studies have shown that among men, the effects of self-compassion on relationships are moderated by conscientiousness. Self-compassion among males who score highly on conscientiousness is linked to increased motivation to rectify interpersonal errors, positive problem-solving behaviors, and enhanced marital satisfaction. However, among men low in conscientiousness, self-compassion is linked to less favourable outcomes in relationship dynamics. Conversely, among women, self-compassion consistently contributes to positive relationship outcomes, regardless of conscientiousness levels. These findings underscore the importance of considering individual differences and other motivational factors when examining the implications of self-compassion for relationship dynamics. It's important to comprehend how self-compassion and relationship satisfaction are related and how it can help to improve romantic partnerships. By examining this link, the research will be able to provide insights for relationship education initiatives, therapeutic approaches, and preventative actions that will ultimately improve relationship well-being and individual well-being by fostering stronger, more resilient relationships.

Objective:

1. To study the relationship between the self-compassion and relationship satisfaction among romantic couples.

2. To know the gender difference in individuals' level of self-compassion and relationship satisfaction.
3. To examine the difference in Self compassion and relationship satisfaction among romantic couples based on relationship status.

Hypotheses:

1. There is a significant relationship between self-compassion and relationship satisfaction among the individuals in romantic relationship.
2. There is a significant gender differences in self-compassion among romantic couples
3. There is a significant gender differences in relationship satisfaction among romantic couples.
4. There is a significant difference in self-compassion based on relationship status among romantic couples.
5. There is a significant difference in relationship satisfaction based on relationship status among romantic couples.

II. Method**Participants**

The participants of the study consist of 115 romantic partners from different regions of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu state. The participants were selected randomly and their age range from 18 to 60.

Research Instruments

There are 2 questionnaire which will be used during the study are

Self-Compassion Scale Short form

Self-Compassion Scale Short form developed by Neff, K.D. in the year 2011. A shortened version of the Self Compassion Scale (short Form) with 12 of the original 26 items was created by Raes et al. (2011). A 12-item Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form showed nearly perfect correlation ($r > 0.97$ in all samples) and adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.86$ in all samples). Confirmatory factor analysis of the SCS–SF indicated that it had the same six-component structure as the long version, plus an additional higher-order self-compassion factor. Consequently, the SCS–SF is a valid and reliable replacement for the long-form SCS, especially when taking overall self-compassion scores into account.

Relationship Assessment Scale

Relationship assessment scale was developed by Hendrick, S. S. (1988). Relationship Assessment Scale ("RAS") used to gauge overall relationship satisfaction is the. Any two people who are in a close relationship, whether they are married, cohabiting, engaged, or just dating, can use the RAS. There are seven questions on this test. Research has demonstrated that the scale is connected with measures of love, marital happiness, sexual attitudes, self-disclosure, commitment, and involvement in a relationship. Its brevity further enhances its usefulness in clinical settings. Because of its psychometric characteristics, the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) questionnaire has strong validity and reliability indices. The RAS exhibits good test-retest reliability, consistent measurement features across samples of age- and ethnically-diverse couples, as well as spouses seeking family and marital therapy, and moderate to high correlations with measures of marital satisfaction. The RAS is a suitable, practical, and quick assessment tool for romantic interactions between partners in a range of study contexts.

Procedure

Technology has been chosen by the investigator. Google forms were created from the instruments. A straightforward random sample technique was applied to gather data. The researcher spoke with study participants remotely and went over the goals and applicability of the research. A rapport was built and a

self-introduction made with the participants. Prior to using the instruments, the investigator made sure that everyone understood everything. Every participant was certain that the data collected would be kept confidential and utilized just for study, including their identities. The Google form was sent over WhatsApp by the investigator. Ultimately, 115 responses were sent to the investigator. After the data was loaded into a spreadsheet for statistical analysis, the scoring was finished in accordance with the handbook.

III. Result and Analysis

The basic descriptive statistics of the variables under examination, such as the arithmetic mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, were computed and shown in table 1 to provide a general understanding of the nature of the distribution of the variables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the study variables.

N Valid	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115
Mean	28.25	32.41	5.23	4.87	5.7	5.82	5.11	5.68
Median	29	32	5	5	6	6	5	6
Mode	35	29 ^a	6	4	6	6	4	6
Std. Deviation	5.221	6.245	1.779	1.809	1.671	2.08	1.964	1.755
Skewness	-0.93	0.097	-0.029	0.316	0.025	0.343	0.349	0.069
Kurtosis	0.972	-0.002	-0.807	-0.385	-0.393	-0.648	-0.612	-0.362

The variables under investigation's descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 1. The arithmetic means of the variables Relationship Satisfaction, Self-compassion, Self-kindness, Self judgement, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness, over identity were 28.25, 32.41, 5.23, 4.87, 5.7, 5.82, 5.11, 5.68 respectively. The median of the variables was 29, 32, 5, 5, 6, 6, 5 and 6 respectively. The mode of the variables Relationship Satisfaction, Self-compassion, Self-kindness, Self judgement, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness, over identity were 35, 29, 6, 4, 6, 6, 4, 6 respectively. The standard deviation of the variables Relationship Satisfaction, Self-compassion, Self-kindness, Self judgement, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness, over identity were 5.221, 6.245, 1.779, 1.809, 1.671, 2.08, 1.964, and 1.755 respectively. The value of skewness for the variables were -0.93, 0.097, -0.029, 0.316, 0.025, 0.343, 0.349, and 0.069 respectively. The values of the kurtosis for the variables were 0.972, -0.002, -0.807, -0.385, -0.393, -0.648, -0.612, -0.362 respectively. From the table values, it can be concluded that the collected data was more or less normally distributed and viable for parametric statistical techniques.

Correlation among the variables self-compassion, relationship satisfaction, self-kindness, self judgement, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, over identity.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between the variables self-compassion, relationship satisfaction, self-kindness, self judgement, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, over identity. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Correlation of the variables

Relationship Satisfaction	-							
Self Compassion	-.232*	-						

Self Kindness	-.318**	.594**	-					
Self Judgement	0.057	.578**	0.16	-				
Common Humanity	-.196*	.373**	.319**	-0.01	-			
Isolation	-0.139	.655**	0.173	.210*	-0.016	-		
Mindfulness	-.218*	.679**	.414**	.281**	0.109	.387**	-	
Over Identity	0.034	.469**	-0.037	.310**	-0.04	.335**	0.026	-

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

The correlations between the different psychological characteristics are shown in the above mentioned table. It suggests self-compassion ($r = -0.232$, $p < 0.05$) and self-kindness ($r = -0.318$, $p < 0.01$) have a negative correlation with relationship satisfaction, suggesting that lower levels of these traits are linked to higher relationship satisfaction. Self-compassion shows strong positive correlations with self-kindness ($r = 0.594$, $p < 0.01$), self-judgement ($r = 0.578$, $p < 0.01$), isolation ($r = 0.655$, $p < 0.01$), and mindfulness ($r = 0.679$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that these traits tend to increase together. Interestingly, over-identity and self-judgement have a positive correlation ($r = 0.310$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that higher self-judgement is linked to higher over-identity. These correlations highlight the interconnectedness of self-compassion components and their varying relationships with relationship satisfaction. First, it is noted that there are negative associations between relationship satisfaction and self-compassion and self-kindness. While this may appear surprising at first, evidence reveals that higher degrees of self-compassion and self-kindness are associated with lower levels of reported relationship pleasure. On the other hand, this would suggest that those who are more self-kind and self-compassionate might have higher expectations or standards for their relationships, which would result in more critical evaluations of satisfaction. On the other hand, there are strong positive relationships between self-compassion and a number of other characteristics, including self-kindness, self-judgement, isolation and mindfulness. This suggests that people who are self-compassionate in one area also tend to be self-compassionate in other areas at higher degrees. For example, people who practice self-compassion are more likely to be observant of their surroundings and feel more connected to others. They are also likely to be nicer to themselves and less critical of themselves. It's interesting to note that there is a positive correlation between over-identity and self-judgement, which implies that people who are very critical of themselves might also have trouble attaching strongly to particular identities or roles. This could have an impact on their emotional health and overall self-concept. These linkages show the complexity of self-compassion and its constituent parts, emphasizing the ways in which they all affect a person's psychological makeup and social interactions. Furthermore, the negative correlation between isolation and common humanity implies that people who believe their experiences are a part of a greater human experience typically feel less alone. Neff and Beretvas (2012) studied whether being self-compassionate is associated with more positive behaviours in romantic relationships, such as showing support and care instead of dominating or verbally abusing partners. The findings showed that people with self-compassion (SC) exhibited more positive relationship conduct than those without SC. Additionally, SC was a better predictor of positive relationship conduct than attachment style or trait self-esteem (SE). In contrast current study revealed that Relationship satisfaction and self-compassion have a significant negative correlation, indicating that a higher level of self-compassion may be linked to a lower level of relationship satisfaction this might be because those who have higher levels of self-compassion tend to be higher judgmental of their relationships or put their own needs ahead of maintaining

connections. Comparatively previous study and current study have drastic differences in their results these might be due to awareness among the people about maintaining a balanced level self-compassion and importance of their relationship. And also, there could be another reason for the variations in study results are people's perspectives can shift over time. Individual well-being and self-care are given more importance nowadays, which may cause people to put their personal happiness ahead of relationship contentment. Relationship expectations have also changed as a result of people's increased focus on their own personal fulfilment. Furthermore, heightened stress and social demands, in addition to modifications in our communication styles, may influence the ways in which relationships are impacted by self-compassion.

Table 3: F value of the variables relationship satisfaction and self satisfaction between gender groups.

Variables	Groups	Sum of Squares	df	F
Relationship Satisfaction	Between Groups	15.072	1	0.55
	Within Groups	3092.62	113	
	Total	3107.69	114	
Self-Compassion	Between Groups	14.898	1	0.38
	Within Groups	4430.89	113	
	Total	4445.79	114	

The ANOVA table provides the results of the analysis of variance for relationship satisfaction and self-compassion. With a significant level (p-value) of 0.46, the relationship satisfaction F-value is 0.55. Given that the p-value is higher than the standard alpha threshold of 0.05, this suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in relationship satisfaction between the groups. Similarly, for self-compassion, the F-value is 0.38 with a significance level of 0.539. Given that the p-value is once greater than 0.05, this further implies that there is no statistically significant difference in self-compassion across the groups. In conclusion, the ANOVA results shows that there are no significant differences in relationship satisfaction and self-compassion between the gender groups being compared. Iskender (2009) conducted a study to determine whether there were gender differences in learning-related self-compassion, self-efficacy, and control beliefs. The findings indicated that there were no gender differences in self-efficacy, control belief, or self-compassion for learning. This existing study also proving there is no significant gender differences as like current study. The similarities between these two studies might be due to cultural shifts towards gender equality, which have led to more similar experiences and attitudes between genders.

Table 4: F value of the variables self compassion and relationship satisfaction between the relationship status.

Variables	Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Relationship Satisfaction	Between Groups	274.144	2	137.072	5.418**
	Within Groups	2833.54	112	25.299	
	Total	3107.69	114		
SelfCompassion	Between Groups	38.899	2	19.449	0.494
	Within Groups	4406.89	112	39.347	

	Total	4445.79	114		
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****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The ANOVA table provides the results of the analysis of variance for relationship satisfaction and self-compassion across different relationship types. The F-value for relationship satisfaction is 5.418, and the p-value (significant threshold) is 0.006. Given that the p-value is below the standard alpha threshold of 0.05, this suggests that there is a statistically significant difference in relationship satisfaction between the groups. This implies that relationship satisfaction is significantly influenced by the form of relationship—arranged marriage, love marriage, or in-love relationship. On the other hand, the F-value for self-compassion is 0.494 at a significant threshold of 0.611. Given that the p-value is higher than 0.05, this suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in the groups' levels of self-compassion.

Table:5 Post Hoc Tests shows the significant differences between the types of relationship status.

Relationship Status	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Arranged Marriage	41	27.32	
In Love Relationship	47	27.47	
Love Marriage	27		31.04
Sig.		0.898	1

The post hoc tests for relationship satisfaction provide further insights into the differences between the groups. The homogeneous subsets table shows which groups have similar means and are not significantly different from each other.

For relationship status: The love marriage group (Mean = 31.04) is in a different subset (Subset 2), indicating that its mean is significantly different from the other two groups. The significance value (Sig.) for the first subset is 0.898, which is greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference between the arranged marriage and in-love relationship groups. The love marriage group stands out with a higher mean relationship satisfaction, which is significantly different from the other two groups. In conclusion, individuals in love marriages report significantly higher relationship satisfaction compared to those in arranged marriages and in-love relationships, which do not differ significantly from each other. In supporting to this finding, Duggi and Kamble (2015) found substantial differences in relationship satisfaction between couples in love marriage and arranged marriage. The similarity between these two research may stem from the fact that love marriages frequently let people select mates based on affection and compatibility, which increases relationship satisfaction. Arranged marriages, on the other hand, might not always take into consideration individual preferences, which could lead to a lesser level of pleasure. Both studies emphasize how crucial individual choice is to creating fulfilling and fruitful partnerships.

IV. Conclusion

The study shed light on the intricate relationships between romantic couples' levels of relationship satisfaction and self-compassion. Relationship satisfaction and self-compassion have a significant negative correlation, indicating that a higher level of self-compassion may be linked to a lower level of relationship satisfaction. This might be because those who have higher levels of self-compassion tend to be more judgmental of their relationships or put their own needs ahead of maintaining connections. In this

sample, self-compassion and relationship satisfaction are not significantly influenced by gender, suggesting that men and women have equivalent amounts of these categories. Relationship satisfaction differs greatly depending on the nature of connection; love marriages are more satisfied than arranged marriages and in-love partnerships. The study's conclusions have important implications for theoretical knowledge as well as real-world applications. Practically, people should make an effort to strike a balance between relational awareness and self-compassion in order to prevent their self-centred views from having a detrimental effect on their romantic relationships. Suggestions for future studies are improved approaches, like partner perspectives and dyadic assessments, would offer a more thorough comprehension of these dynamics in practical contexts, guiding successful treatment plans and long-term relationship results.

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