# **Self-Compassion Among University Students**

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#### Abstract

Self-compassion among university students, and the current research community was identified by Wasit University students for morning studies for the academic year (2022-2023), and their number is (14394), with (8748) students from scientific disciplines and (5646) students from humanities disciplines. The research sample included (400) male and female students from the University of Wasit, and the study tool included the self-compassion scale prepared by Neff (2003) and translated by the researcher, consisting of (26) paragraphs, and the psychometric characteristics of honesty and stability were extracted, and the research sample (400) was relied upon and analyzed The data were statistically analyzed using the statistical bag for social sciences (spss).

The results showed the following: Wasit University students enjoy a high level of self-compassion, and in the light of the results, the researcher developed a set of conclusions, recommendations and suggestions.

Keywords: self-compassion - Wasit University students

### Chapter one

- Research problem :-

In light of the rapid events and the tremendous technological development that the world is witnessing these days, university students are among the groups most affected by these successive changes. Image (Mansoor, 45:2022).

And that the experiences that the university student goes through are not only success experiences, but also failure and frustration experiences; Some students may deal with the experiences of failure that they go through with some focus, perseverance, steadfastness, prudence, positive self-sympathy, and complete openness to the experiences of those around them in order to seek support, assistance, and support. On the contrary, we find that some of those who fail to face the pressures and burdens of life in general and university life in particular They tend to blame, reprimand, and reprimand themselves, rejecting them, and accusing them of neglect and laziness. Such negative traits lead them into a cycle of anxiety, depression, tension, and

suffering from isolation, introversion, and a low level of satisfaction with life (Al-Wakil, 2020: 2).

One of the problems that university students are exposed to is the weakness of selfcompassion, which results in a high frequency of self-criticism and suffering, and in the case of exacerbation, a number of depressive symptoms result. the individual (Joeng, 2014: 2).

Compassion in particular as a human characteristic varies from one individual to another, and in the individual himself from time to time, and the features of mercy in particular appear when the individual goes through painful circumstances that are beyond his ability to control, in an attempt to understand and accept suffering and coexist with it, and compassion in particular is affected by a group of factors, the most important of which is style Thinking, the more positive the method of thinking used by the individual, the more it leads to overcoming obstacles and painful stressful situations that he may face. (Mahmoud, 2022: 446)

Do university students enjoy self-compassion?

Second: the importance of research:

The university is a social institution that represents the top of the educational pyramid, as it is the first contributor to building society through the specialized cadres it produces, which in turn initiate the development process in society. The backbone of development in all aspects of life, and there is no development without an active force that is psychologically and emotionally balanced. (Maarabes, 2010: 142).

The university students represent an important developmental sector and they will have a leading role, whether in the educational fields or others, depending on their various specializations. Therefore, they must be well prepared in all fields, including the cognitive and emotional fields. There is no doubt that socialization in all its institutions has a major role in building the personality of individuals and in defining their style. Negatively or positively, and since the university is an extension of these institutions, they will have a relative contribution to the preparation of this important sector of society, being the main tributary of all functional fields (Al-Ali Bey, 4: 2004-5).

This category can be considered the beating heart of the society, being one of the important segments in it and they are the leaders of the future and to them belongs the responsibility of carrying the secretariat of national and national action and as much as the society succeeds in preparing this segment, its tomorrow will succeed, and they are the generation that faces challenges in all aspects of life with its creative abilities to achieve from Through his normal compatibility, and his enjoyment of mental health (Al-Anzi, 2001: 2).

Mercy, in particular, is of great importance to the university student, as it contributes to coexistence, compatibility, and overcoming academic failure, as it helps students more to adapt to university academic life (431: Fong & Loi, 2016;).

It helps the individual to adapt constructively to the stressful and painful events of life, and makes the person insightful of his faults, accept his weaknesses, deal with himself with compassion in times of adversity and difficulty, and his awareness that his personal experiences are part of the general human experience, and his endeavor to control his painful thoughts and feelings instead of indulging in them (Mandour, 2019: 116).

Compassion in particular would develop the health and psychological well-being of individuals throughout their lives, just as the practice of mercy develops happiness and optimism, and achieves better psychological health in depressed individuals, and compassion improves the individual's ability to deal with diseases and injuries, and is also considered a practical way for individuals to overcome On bad psychological conditions such as anxiety and stress (Taha, 2017: 9)

And that compassion itself has the ability to respond and deal with the weaknesses of the individual and the crises that he faces with some kindness, softness, tenderness and openness instead of directing criticism, rejection and blame for himself, and therefore it is considered strong evidence that the person who has these characteristics lives in a distinguished and correct relationship with himself Which contributes to enhancing his feeling of happiness and satisfaction with life (purdie & Morley, 2015: 2354). Therefore, compassion in particular includes many positive features that express the desire to share with others emotionally and empathize with them and try to alleviate their pain and suffering (Potter et al., 2014: 33). .

Neff (2003) provided several explanations explaining the reason why compassion in particular reduces the severity of the pressures facing the individual, as it gives a kind of understanding when a person faces failure or failure; Instead of mercilessly judging oneself and instead of self-criticism for the various shortcomings, there must be a kind of understanding, as things do not always go the way we want, as we may face some frustrating situations and things, and something will happen or a loss, and we will face Limitations, but we have to understand situations and try to reach a solution, which helps in that is self-compassion, which works to reduce depression and anxiety as well as increase satisfaction with life (Neely 2009: 89).

A study (We, Chi, Lin, 2018) indicated that therapeutic practices based on selfcompassion can help prevent the development of symptoms of depression in adults, while a study (Al-Wakil, 2020) found that selfcompassionate students are less afraid of failure, and are more

proficient. In their academic achievement, in addition to their ability to coexist and face the experiences of academic failure, to have selfcompassion and to reach an appropriate level of a sense of mental health (Al-Wakil, 2020: 269), and the study (Abdul Khaleq, 2021) indicated that treating oneself with care and compassion is a powerful way to strengthen Personality, when we realize our suffering and remember that suffering is part of the human condition, we are able to deal with the struggles of life more easily (Abdul Khaleq, 249: 2021).

Research objective: The current research aims to identify self-compassion among university students.

Research limits: The research is determined by students of Wasit University for morning studies of both sexes (male - female) and academic specialization (scientific - human) for the academic year (2022-2023).

#### Define terms:

Compassion in particular is defined by:

- 1- (Kristin Neff, 2003): It is the individual's ability to open up to his own personal suffering and be affected by it, to feel feelings of interest and sympathy towards himself, to understand them and not to take preconceived positions towards his own shortcomings and failures, and to recognize that his own experience is part of the common human experience. (Neff, 2003: 224).
- 2- (Iskender, 2011): It is a possible response to personal suffering or failure and can be defined in general as emphasizing a gentle and understanding attitude towards oneself while accepting individual shortcomings as a natural component of human experience (Iskender, 2011: 230).

Theoretical definition: The researcher adopted the definition (Kristin Neff, 2003) as a theoretical definition of self-mercy.

- Procedural Definition: It is the score that the student obtains when answering the paragraphs of the self-mercy scale approved for the purposes of the research.

### **Chapter Two**

The first axis - the theoretical framework

The concept of compassion in particular:

Compassion in particular is a relatively modern psychological concept derived from ancient Buddhist contemplative psychology (Potter et al, 2014: 35). Consecutive studies provided a theoretical rooting for it, and developed a scale to measure it, which was translated into several languages in several cultures, and used in most of the research on compassion in particular.

The concept of compassion in particular includes openness and movement towards the suffering and pain of others, so that one desires to alleviate it. It also includes openness to personal suffering and moving it, and the desire to alleviate it, heal wounds and achieve healing (Neff, 2003b: 223). It also includes acceptance and awareness of one's pain, weakness, failure and lack of judgment. himself, recognizing that suffering, failure, and weakness are part of human nature, and that all human beings, including the individual, deserve mercy (Brion, 2014: 218).

Thus, self-compassion is a kind of inner dialogue that is characterized by kindness to oneself, and is associated with happiness, optimism, positive feelings, and acceptance rather than self-criticism, self-blame, unwanted self-comparisons, and unrealistic expectations (Umphrey & Sherblom, 2014: 18). Therefore, compassion in particular expresses the individual's adoption of a balanced attitude towards himself when he is exposed to painful personal experiences and experiences, so that he is able to open up to his personal suffering and become aware of it, so he does not separate from it, nor underestimate it, nor frighten it, nor unite with it, and becomes more able to mitigate it through self-kindness. and realizing his suffering as part of the larger human experience (Al-Wakil, 2020: 375).

Theories and models explaining the concept of mercy in particular:

Bowlby's affective attachment theory.

This theory considers that humans have an innate behavior of emotional attachment and caregiving, and according to Bowlby (1988), the function of the emotional attachment system is to protect the individual from danger by ensuring that they maintain proximity to others who are caring and supportive, and includes competencies for expressing distress and responding to caregivers. Care for the child's signals and needs, and in turn, the function of the care system is to provide protection and support to others who need it, and includes the competencies of assessing the needs of the other, empathic understanding, and responding through caring behaviors, and in the same way that the mentality of seeking and providing care is activated when relating to others (For example, a crying baby and a mother comforting him) can also be activated through self-attachment, hence, selfcompassion is a form of self-attachment in which signals of distress and need for care are transmitted by a care-seeking mentality, and a care-giving mentality By responding through compassionate, inward thinking and emotion (Hermanto & Zuroff, 2016:2).

# 2-Neff's model of self-compassion

The building of compassion in particular is related to the individual's upgrading and emotional adjustment, and his regulation of emotions. In such situations, denying negative feelings, or distracting attention from them, pretending to be forceful, instead of confronting them directly and knowing their causes. Therefore, emotional regulation includes meaningful attempts to maintain exploration, understanding of his feelings, and awareness of them, which helps him to adapt positively to them. This reflects an important dimension in the concept of selfcompassion, which is prudence, which includes not avoiding painful feelings while understanding them. Thus, negative feelings turn into more positive feelings, which contributes to changing oneself or the environment in appropriate and effective ways. For this reason, the concept of self-compassion may be an important aspect of emotional intelligence, which involves the ability to monitor and understand one's own feelings, and to skillfully use this information to guide thinking effectively (Neff, 2003b: 255).

The second axis is previous studies

### Compassion itself:

1 - A study (Ahmed, 2018) on the relationship of self-compassion and wisdom with the creative thinking abilities of university students.

The study aimed to reveal the relationship between self-compassion and wisdom with the abilities of creative thinking among university students. The arithmetic mean - standard deviation - Pearson's correlation coefficient, and the results revealed that there is a relationship between self-compassion and its various dimensions and its relationship to creative thinking abilities and its ability to predict these abilities: The common human being described them as one of its dimensions - in particular with creative thinking abilities (fluency, flexibility, and originality), whether verbal or formal, especially among males, and students of practical colleges, in addition to their ability to predict creative thinking abilities, and the existence of a positive relationship between prudence and some creative thinking abilities ( Fluency, flexibility, and originality) in different samples (males/females), (theoretical colleges/practical colleges), and the ability of this dimension to predict these abilities, and the existence of a negative relationship between the total degree of selfcompassion, and formal originality among students of theoretical colleges (Ahmed, 2018).

- Study (Abdul Khaleq, 2021) Mental alertness and its relationship to selfcompassion among adolescents in the preparatory stage.

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between mental alertness and selfcompassion, in addition to examining the difference in the study variables according to the demographic variables, gender

(male-female) and type of school (private government) among a sample of adolescents in the preparatory stage. The study consisted of (80) male and female students, and the measure of self-compassion was applied to them (prepared by Hiyam Saber Shaheen, (2011), and the measure of mental alertness for adolescents in the preparatory stage (prepared by the researcher). - Cronbach's alpha coefficient - half-partition - Siberman - Brown - Gutman, and the results concluded that there is a positive correlation between mental alertness and self-compassion, and it also resulted in differences between the mean scores of males and females on the mental alertness and self-compassion scales as a total score and sub-dimensions in the direction of females It was also found that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of adolescents in the preparatory stage in public and private schools on the scales of mental alertness and self-compassion as a total score and as sub-dimensions towards adolescents in private schools (Abdul Khaleg, 2021).

### **Chapter Three**

Research methodology and procedures:

First: Research Methodology: The researcher adopted the descriptive correlational approach based on monitoring what exists, and this approach is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the current research. It is classified, analyzed, and subjected to careful study (Abdul Salam, 2020: 163).

Second: Research Community:

It means all vocabulary of the phenomenon to be studied, whether these vocabulary are human beings, institutions, educational activities, etc. (AlMashhadani, 2019: 109), and the current research community is determined by university students of both types (male-female) for the academic year (2022- 2023), the number of which is (14,394) male and female students, as the number of males is (6,634) and the number of females is (7,760), both majors (scientific - human).

Third, the research sample:

It is a part taken from the original community to be studied, examined and analyzed. It represents the characteristics of the community in all its quantitative and qualitative components. In other words, when the number of units in the statistic is very high, or it is not possible to examine all the units, the study is limited to a part of the statistic called the sample (Hamdawy). 2014: 28), the statistical analysis sample consisted of (400) male and female students who were selected from (4) colleges, they were chosen using the stratified random sample method, with (200) males and (200) females (200) scientific and (200) human.

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Fourth: the search tool:

The measure of self-compassion:

After examining the researcher with the literature and studies related to the subject of the research, the researcher adopted the scale (Neff, 2003) for self-compassion, which consists of (26) items and included (5) alternatives. (1,2,3,4,5) for the negative paragraphs, which was adapted to suit the Iraqi environment.

The reason for choosing this scale in general and preparing it for the Iraqi environment is due to the following advantages:

- 1- It is very appropriate to measure the concept of mercy in particular.
- 2- Its suitability for the age group covered by the current research.
- 3- It is suitable for different environments, as it has been translated into several languages.
- 4- It has not been widely used (as far as the researcher knows) in research.

Alternatives to answering and correcting the scale:

The researcher adopted the graded Likert method in preparing the items for the scale, and it is considered one of the most common methods in measurement, and the best in predicting behavior, and that the five alternatives are (always apply to me, often apply to me, sometimes apply to me, rarely apply to me, never apply to me). When correcting the scale, scores are given from (5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1) for the positive items (1-2-3-4-5) for the negative items, and the highest score obtained by the respondent is (130) and the lowest score is (26).

# Scale instructions:

The instructions of the scale are the guide that guides the respondent during his answer to the paragraphs of the scale, so the instructions must be clear, precise and explicit, as the student answers the paragraphs of the scale that apply to him by placing a mark () in front of the appropriate alternative and that the student does not leave any A paragraph without an answer and not to put more than one mark in front of one paragraph, and the respondent was asked to answer the paragraphs of the scale honestly and frankly, and there is no right or wrong answer, which is for the purposes of scientific research, and he stated that there is no need to mention the name and that the answer will only be seen by the researcher; This is to reassure the respondents of the confidentiality of the answer, and to fill in the data related to personal information such as (gender and specialty).

### Instruction clarity experience:

For the purpose of identifying the clarity of the instructions of the scale and the clarity of its paragraphs and alternatives, and calculating the time taken to answer it, as well as identifying the difficulties facing the respondent, the researcher carried out an exploratory experiment and applied the scale of mercy in its final form to (20) male and female students who were randomly selected and assured them that their answers are For the purposes of scientific research, they were not asked to mention the name in order to reduce the influence of the factor of social desirability, and after reviewing the students' answers to the items of the scale, it became clear that all the items are clear and easy to answer and understand. Either the time taken to answer the scale ranged between (15-20) minutes and its value (17.5) minutes.

### Statistical analysis of paragraphs:

The aim of these procedures is to keep the highlighted paragraph and delete the unmarked paragraph. Because a good scale must have the ability to distinguish between individuals (Anastasi & Mina, 1997: 18).

In order to calculate the discriminatory power of the paragraphs of the Compassion scale in particular, the scale was applied to the sample (400) male and female students, and for the purpose of maintaining the distinctive paragraphs, the analysis of the paragraphs was carried out using:

The two extreme groups to find the discriminatory force and this is done by following the following steps:

- 1- Determining the total score for each of the (400) questionnaires.
- 2- Arranging the questionnaires from the highest to the lowest.
- 3- Assigning a percentage of (27%) of the (108) questionnaires obtaining higher grades, and (27%) of the (108) forms obtaining lower grades. Thus, the number of questionnaires that were analyzed is (216). Form.

Applying the t-test for two independent samples to test the significance of the differences between the upper and lower groups on each paragraph. The t-value was considered an indicator to distinguish each paragraph by comparing it with the tabular value of (1.96) at the level of significance (0.05) and with a degree of freedom (214). All items were distinguished because their t-values were higher than the tabular value (1.96).

Psychometric characteristics of the self-compassion scale:

The psychometric properties of scales are used in educational and psychological research as indicators of the accuracy of the scales, as extracting validity and reliability is one of the most important of these characteristics (Ebel & Frisbie, 2009:

237).

First / Honesty: It is the ability of the test to measure what was set to measure it (AlTariri, 2014: 219), and it was extracted by:

Apparent honesty: This type is represented in the general form of the test, its suitability for the purpose for which it was set, and it is reached through a specialized judgment on the degree of measurement of the test for the measured trait (Abu AlDiyar, 2012: 30). The researcher presented the measure of compassion in particular to a group of experts. It is composed of (10) experts who specialize in educational and psychological sciences in order to estimate the validity of the paragraphs, with the proposal of appropriate amendments in the formulation of the paragraphs and to identify the validity of the response alternatives, and the paragraphs approved by (80%) of the experts or more have been accepted, with modifications For some of the paragraphs and reformulating them, and thus the scale became ready for application and it consisted of (26) paragraphs.

Second: The stability of the scale: The aim of calculating the stability is to estimate the errors of the scale and to suggest ways to reduce these errors (Murphy, 1998: 63). The stability of the scale of mercy in particular was calculated in two ways:

1- Test-Re-Test: To find out the stability in the current study, the researcher applied the self-compassion scale on a sample of (30) male and female students who were chosen randomly. After (14) days had passed, the test was repeated on the same sample, then the relationship between the first and second applications was established using the Pearson correlation coefficient, and the stability coefficient reached (0.81), and this is a good stability coefficient that can be relied upon.

### 2- Cronbach's alpha equation:

In order to extract the stability of the current research scale in this way, the (Alpha Cronbach) equation was used, and the stability coefficient for the scale of mercy in particular was (0.79), which is a good stability.

Description of the scale in its final form:

The current scale in the final form consists of (26) items, and five alternatives have been developed for the scale: (always apply to me, often apply to me, sometimes apply to me, rarely apply to me, never apply to me) and the correction scores are descending (5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1) respectively for the positive paragraphs and the degrees of correction in ascending order (1 - 2 3 - 4 - 5) for the negative paragraphs, and the highest score is (130), and the lowest score is (26), while the hypothetical average is

(78), and the statistical analysis of the scale was extracted and psychometric properties to be ready for application.

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#### Statistical means:

To process the research data, the researcher used the statistical bag program (SPSS) to analyze the data.

# **Chapter Four**

Presentation, interpretation and discussion of research results:

- Recognizing compassion in particular among university students:

The statistical treatment related to the self-compassion scale indicates that the arithmetic mean of the scores of the (400) male and female sample members on this scale was (88.72) with a standard deviation of (10.919) degrees, while the hypothetical mean was (78) and by comparing the arithmetic mean with The hypothetical mean (\*) using the t-test for one sample, the calculated t-value was (19.636), which is higher than the tabular value of (1.66).

Table (1): The difference between the mean scores of the sample and the hypothetical mean of the achievement motivation scale.

level	value	degree of	hypothetical	hypothetical	standard	Arithmetic	Sample
indication	tabular	freedom	,mean	score	,deviation	,mean	
0.05	1.66	19.636	399	78	10.919	88.72	400

Therapeutic practices based on self-compassion can help prevent the development of symptoms of depression among university students. The result of this study was consistent with the study of (Abdul Khaleq, 2021), and different with the study of (Ahmed, 2018).

Conclusions: Based on the data of the current research, the researcher concluded that the students of Wasit University have a high level of self-compassion.

Recommendations: In light of the results reached in the current research, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1- The need for researchers to pay more attention to conducting more studies and research on the variable of compassion in particular among individuals, not to focus on this type of research in Iraq.
- 2- Holding educational sessions to raise awareness of the importance of selfcompassion and its relationship to satisfying the needs of students at the university.
- 3- The need for the attention of parents, teachers and university professors to raise self-compassion among university students, due to its positive effects on students' achievement.

Suggestions: In the light of the findings and recommendations, the researcher suggests the following:

- 1- Conducting studies looking at the relationship between self-compassion and other variables such as (self-efficacy, psychological adjustment, social skills, quality of life, anxiety).
- 2- Conducting similar studies on other samples of students, such as postgraduate students, private university students, middle school students, and middle school students.

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