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Self-Compassion, Self-Concept Clarity, and Rumination in Working Professionals

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ABSTRACT

This research study focus on the connections between self-compassion, self-concept clarity and rumination among the working professionals in the health and education sector in Pakistan that are often characterized with a substantial strain because of their occupation. Even though a few literatures on international research claim that self-compassion is healthy psychologically well-being characteristic of persons because of clarity of self-concept, and reduced rumination, little empirical study in the Pakistani context has been done to meet these variables in an interacting framework. The present study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design. A purposive sample of 200 professionals, aged between 25 and 50 years, was selected. Standardized psychological scales, Self-Compassion Scale-Short form (SCS-SF), Self-Concept Clarity Scale (SCCS), and Rumination-Reflection Questionnaire-Rumination subscale (RRQ-R) were administered to the participants to collect data relevant to the study variables. Correlation outcomes gave a significantly negative value of self-companionship and rumination, and self-concept clarity and rumination. The mediation test under the guidance of Hayes PROCESS macro enabled them to establish that self-concept clarity was a crucial factor and extensively mediated the relationship between self-compassion and rumination. The theoretical contribution of these findings is linked to the fact that the knowledge about the emotional processes of resilience will be expanded, and the practical implication of the findings refers to the fact that it will be possible to create an intervention that targets mental health in the workplace in the South Asian professional environments.

Keywords: Self Compassion, Self Concept Clarity, Rumination, Working Professionals

INTRODUCTION

Self-compassion defined as the capacity to treat oneself with kindness and understanding in the face of failure or suffering, has been identified as a potential buffer against stress and a facilitator of psychological resilience. (Neff, 2023).Through self-compassion, individuals can become more self-aware, self-accepting, and self-respecting, and it is possible that using this approach will result in greater mental and physical health, better interpersonal relationships, and a higher quality of life (Poorhosseini Dehkordi, 2023). Crego et al., (2022) in a study found that among healthcare professionals, individuals with better well-being self-compassion had lower levels of emotional exhaustion and a higher level of satisfactions in a job. An analysis conducted on healthcare professionals showed that about 50.7% had moderate levels of self-compassion and had large fluctuations between positive and negative subscale scores (Gilbert-Ouimet et al., 2025). Another study conducted on nurses in Pakistan revealed that patient care practices were greatly influenced by self-compassion with 23% explaining the variances in the practices. Nurses who experienced a high level of self-compassion performed well at work when it comes to patient care, and this fact indicates that self-compassion is an imperative aspect in medical institutions(Abbasi et al., 2024).And even in the education sector, a study conducted on female school teachers provided a meaningful negative correlation between self-compassion and work-family interference in that self-compassion plays a role in the reciprocation of work and family roles (Iqbal & Bashir, 2021).Psychological resilience also enhanced significantly in workplaces through the interjection of self compassion (Neff & Germer, 2018).

The concept of self-concept clarity is rooted in self-concept theory, which was originally developed by Carl Rogers (Hussain et al., 2024). The concept of self-concept clarity is rather a description notion of these stable and internal mechanisms of self-awareness (Ozcan et al., 2025). A research examination of the teachers of the secondary schools of Karachi demonstrated the vigor of the self-concept of the teachers meaning that teachers possess a clear and definite comprehension of themselves (Ahmad et al., 2023). In addition, other scholars asserted that frequent and robust sense of self is the antidote to the rumination and assists healthcare professionals to feel more resilient (Goliroshan et al., 2021). Those who are clearer in their self-concepts are more emotionally resilient and less subject to anxiety, which they develop due to their ability to endure hardship with a reduced level of ruminations, and are more adaptive (Liang et al., 2022).

Nolen-Hoeksema proposed the Response Style Theory (1991) whereby they define rumination as passive thinking and continuous thought about symptoms of the depressive mood,

cause and effects of depression (Shahzad et al., 2024). Nevertheless, it is notable that in both samples of nurses and emergency responders in Pakistan, psychological distress was associated with rumination (Syed et al., 2021; Rasheed et al., 2022). In healthcare professionals, about 22% experienced moderate to severe anxiety and depression symptoms. Among them, a large proportion of 65.5% had moderate fear, which may lead to rumination (Ali & Nausheen, 2021). In another study, 79.7% of healthcare professionals reported having high and severe anxiety (Saleem et al., 2020).At the university students, rumination mediates the association between personality traits and the mental symptoms in Pakistan (Kiran et al., 2020). Rumination is decreased by self-compassion, which improves self-concept clarity (Coutts et al., 2023; Miyagawa, 2024). Those who self-compassionately treat others are more able to accept their strengths and weaknesses as facts, which results in a complete and consistent sense of self. Compassion to the self was associated with greater wellbeing (less stress, depressive signs, and more life satisfaction). The Self-concept clarity mediated the outcomes of the impact of these associations in an incredible manner meaning that self-concept clarity is one of the ways self-compassion as a person can help in promoting mental health (Coutts et al., 2023).Increased self-compassion correlates with lower rumination. Self-compassion examiner effects between the relationship between rumination and mental wellbeing (Yamasaki et al., 2024).Research indicates that a self-compassion intervention improves self-concept relative clarity, as well as helping individuals to cope effectively in unfavorable situations (Miyagawa, 2024).Individuals with better SCC rate rumination lower, and this demonstrates that greater awareness of personal self-concepts reduces rumination (Jankowski et al., 2022). Moreover, low SCC is commonly coupled with significant levels of rumination, in the absence of self-compassion, which would only aggravate the anxiety and decrease mental wellbeing (Chehayeb et al., 2025).

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The current research was conducted to investigate the relationship between self-compassion, self-concept clarity and rumination in working professionals of the health care and education sectors of Pakistan. Moreover, it explored the possible presence of self-concept clarity as a mediating mechanism concerning the relationship between self-compassion and rumination. The current work was intended to also advance a more considerable insight into psychological mechanisms of resolution that might be applicable to the problem of occupational stress and emotional control in the workplace.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Investigate the relationship between the self-compassion, self-concept clarity, and rumination among professionals.
2. The second study will entail the analysis of the mechanism of the relationship between self-compassion and rumination, which would be represented by self-concept transparency.

HYPOTHESIS OF STUDY

1. The working professionals exhibit high negative correlation between self-compassion and rumination.
2. The correlation between self-concept clarity and rumination amid working professionals is highly negative thereby indicating a considerable aspect of a correlation.
3. Self-compassion is related to rumination via self-concept clarity.

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational design aimed at examining the relationships among self-compassion, self-concept clarity, and rumination among individuals working in the health and education sectors in Pakistan.

This research design was highly appropriate in analysis of mediating relations in the psychological constructs. The intended population was professionals of the healthcare fields (e.g., nurses, doctors) and professionals of the education fields (e.g., teachers of schools, colleges, and universities) located in the urban areas of Pakistan such as Lahore.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

Purposive sampling was employed. This is a non-probability method of sampling whereby participants are chosen due to certain characteristic or purposes in relation to a research (Memon et al., 2024).

PARTICIPANTS

The study sample comprised 200 participants, ranging in age from 25 to 50 years.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

The participants were individuals currently employed in medical or educational professions, age between 25 and 50 years, with sufficient English proficiency to comprehend and complete the administered assessment scales.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Participants with physical and mental disabilities, individuals under the age of 25 and over the age

of 50, unemployed participants, retired participants, and participants in non-healthcare/ education professions were not part of research.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The measurement tools applied in the current study were as follows:

1- SELF COMPASSION SCALE-SHORT FORM (SCS-SF)

Self Compassion Scale-Short Form(SCS-SF) is the scale that is based on 12 items and used to measure secondary and the most basic markers of self compassion (Raes et al., 2011). The questionnaire is based on a modified 5-point likert scale which includes suggestions to the respondents to respond in the range of 1 to 5 or conduct a construct test as in 1(almost never) and 5(almost always).The SCS-SF research has effectively been demonstrated to attain substantial internal consistency and a construct test.

2- SELF CONCEPT CLARITY SCALE (SCCS)

Self- Concept Clarity Scale (SCCS) formulated by Campbell et al., (1996) is based on 12 questions which are administered to calculate the level of clarity which individuals possess concerning their self-image and positive sense of self which may be developed over a period of time. All of the involved was asked to respond to the questions of the questionnaire by using a 5-point scale based on Likert (1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree). The SCCS is stated to have a wide use and indicate stable psychometric characteristics.

3-RUMINATION-REFLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE- RUMINATION SUBSCALE (PRQ-R)

Rumination Subscale of Rumination-Reflection Questionnaire Rumination (PRQ-R) by Trapnell & Campbell, (1999) has a total of 12 items, which assess dysfunctional rumination behavior. It has the scale that offers a rating system of 5 points, where: 1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree. RRQ-R scale was discovered to build such magnificent consistencies and validities with the other measurements at workplace.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In the study, descriptive statistics were used to proceed and determine whether the information was collected in the right manner. The statistical software, which was applied in the analysis of the sample of the reffered population, was SPSS 26 software.

RESULT

Table 1 shows that the experiment was conducted among 200 purposefully selected and sampled individuals with the mean age of 30 years (SD = 4.73 years) aged between 25 and 50 years. On the

gender scale, 51 percent of them were women (n = 119) and 49 percent were men (n = 81). Amongst the participants, 15 percent (n= 30) had intermediate level and 28 percent had Bachelor's degree (n= 57) and 56 percent had acquired Masters / M.Phil degree (n=113) in terms of level of education attained. Using the marital status, 49 percent of the people were single (n = 97) and 51 percent were married (n = 103). Birth order was distributed in such a way that 22 percent of respondents were first-born (n = 45), 39 percent were middle-born (n = 78), 28 percent were last-born (n = 57) and 10 percent only children (n = 20). In reaction to the perceived socioeconomic status, 5 percent (n = 10) of the respondents were lower, 81 percent (n = 162) were middle and 14 percent (n = 28) were upper class. Concerning family structure, majority of the participants were found to be living in joint families (72-144) and the rest in nuclear family (22-45) and few of them were extant family (6-11).

TABLE 1: ***DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS***

Variable	***M***	***SD***	***Min-Max***	***F***	***%***
Age (years)	30	4.73	25-45	200	100%
Gender					
Male				81	49%
Female				119	51%
Education					
Intermediate				30	15%
Bachelors				57	28%
Ms/M.Phill				113	56%
Marital Status					
Single				97	49%
Married				103	51%
Birth Order					
1st Born				45	22%
Middle Born				78	39%
Last Born				57	28%
Only Child				20	10%
Perceived Socioeconomic Status					
Lower Class				10	5%

Middle Class	162	81%
Upper Class	28	14%
Family Structure		
Joint Family	144	72%
Nuclear Family	45	22%
Extended Family	11	6%

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics as well as the estimates of internal consistency Cronbach alpha of the study variables. Reliability of all scales was acceptable whose alpha range between .60 and .72. Means, the standard deviation, the range of the score in every measure, and skewness and kurtosis are also presented in the table. Such findings demonstrate internal validity of the adopted measurement tools and provide the foundation to further inferential research. The three key variables that included self-compassion, self-concept clarity and rumination were computed with the help of descriptive statistics. Due to Cronbach alpha coefficients having good internal consistencies (self-compassion (alpha =.72), and self-concept clarity (alpha=.71)), the scales are designed with good internal consistencies. However, the reliability coefficient (alpha =.60) of the rumination scale was quite low, and this means that the inner consistency may not be very great either.

TABLE 2: ***CRONBACH'S ALPHA RELIABILITY OF STUDY VARIABLES***

Variable	**α**	***N***	***M***	***SD***	***Range (Max-Min)***	***S***	***K***
1.Self-Compassion	.72	12	43.31	6.76	24-55	-.71	.62
2.Self Concept Clarity	.71	12	42.34	8.85	29-53	-.12	.91
3.Rumination	.60	12	43.30	4.98	30-54	-.13	.52

Note: *α = Cronbach alpha reliability, n= Number of item,M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, k=Kurtosis, S= Skewnes*

In the table 3, it is indicated that a Pearson correlation co-efficiency exists between three psychological constructs i.e. Self-compassion, Rumination, and Self-Concept Clarity Self-Concept Clarity and Rumination. At one level or another the correlations are all significant. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients have been calculated as the means of studying the correlation amid self-compassion, self-concept clarity and rumination. The correlation between self-compassion and self-concept clarity is highly negative at r = -. 79 and p <.01 as seen in Table 3. This demonstrates that the adverse association of self-concept clarity to the topmost degrees of

self-compassion may be associated with the element of surprise or sample dynamic. It was also revealed to have negative correlation of the self-compassion with the rumination of r = -.11, p <.05, or the greater the self-compassion, the lower the rumination. Besides that, it emerged that the relationship between the self concept clarity with the rumination is r = -. 21, p <. 001 as the higher the clarity of the self the less people are found to ruminate.

TABLE 3: ***CORRELATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION, SELF CONCEPT CLARITY, AND RUMINATION***

Variables	*Self-Compassion,*	*Self Concept Clarity*	*Rumination*
1.Self-Compassion,	**1**	-.79**	-.11*
2.Self Concept Clarity		**1**	-.21***
3.Rumination			**1**

*p<.000***,p < .001**, p* < .01, p* < .05*

REGRESSION ANALYSIS (MEDIATION)

Mediation model 4 was performed to deduce the existence of a relationship between self-compassion and rumination in the mediator which is self-concept clarity. The 95 percent confidence interval showed no significant direct relationship between self-compassion and rumination and this implies that it does not have any significant direct relationship even after controlling the variable self-concept clarity. It was seen though that the concept of clarity of self-did actually turn out to be a predictor of rumination, 17** and thus those who said that they had lesser clarity of self-concept did here become another example of rumination. An example of meaningful mediation effect relied on the example of the indirect influence of the self-compassion on the rumination effect which again in statistical terms passed through a significant mediating variable of the self-concept clarity. These findings suggest that the self-compassion and rumination through self-concept clarity is of such nature that, the higher the self-compassion level, the more self-concept clarity and the more the predictability with the resultant low level of rumination.

The outcome of sobel z test gave the result that indirect effect is significant 3.32***, and, hence, we can be able to speak about self-concept clarity as a mediating variable amid self-compassion and rumination. The analysis of data collected on the 200 professionals who ventured in the activities of educational and health occupation was conducted with the help of regression Macro Hayes process to find out the relevancy of self-compassion and clarity of self-concept as a significant predictor to the extent of rumination. The overall model was however not very

important F (2, 197) = 1.84, p = .16, since in the mentioned sample self-compassion and self-concept clarity did not form the significant predictor in the degree of rumination. These findings indicate that the previous studies and the hypothetical expectation with regards to the importance of self-compassion and self-concept clarity, and variability index as a variable to derive the magnitude of the rumination did not seem to be very significant to this statistical sample of the working professionals. Insignificance may arise either because of the nature of sample or because of poor measurement or any other factors as there are some of the factors that cannot be measured.

TABLE 4: ***MEDIATION ANALYSIS EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION, SELF-CONCEPT CLARITY, AND RUMINATION***

Measures	***Rumination (R)***			
	β	***SE***	***R²***	***95% CI [LL-UL]***
Mediation Analysis Model				
Constant	32.68***	3.22		26.32 – 39.04
Self –Compassion (SC)	.07	.05		-.02 - .17
Self Concept Clarity (SCC)	.17***	.05	.05	-.29 - .25
Indirect Effect		**Boot SE**		**[Boot LL-UL]**
SC →SCC →R	.16***	.01		-.02 - .06
Sobel z	3.32**			

*p<.000***,p < .001**, p < .01*, p < .05*

DISCUSSION

The findings of the hypothesis also give further literature on how mental health in the work environment will understand how these constructs interact with each other. Findings are to be discussed in the present chapter, which is based on the known theories and empirical studies and implications are taken along with future research directions advised.

The first hypothesis testing with the working health and educational professionals implied that there exists a negative strong relationship between self-compassion and the rumination, which was found to be true in the current research. The observation conforms to what has been established in the research whereby it is stated that droning negative thoughts in self-compassionate people is not as much as in others. Williams, S. (2021), reveals that due to the reduced level of self-criticism and effective control of thoughts, self-compassionate individuals can learn to interrupt the rumination process. It appears that self-compassion is a protective element

in busy working environments since it can help a person to forge resilience and reduce cognitive susceptibility.

This finding is in agreement with the previous theoretical and empirical studies where self-compassion has been identified as pre-condition to reducing maladaptive thinking tendency (rumination). The outcomes of the research studies have revealed that self-compassion is a healthy emotion regulation strategy and a lower liability to anxiety and depressive symptoms (Raes, 2010). Self-compassion can become an important counter against constructively-negative-thought-repetitive rumination with-respect-to delusional-like rumination within the highly-emotion related high-stress intensity occupational-station and work-conditions such-as with the healthcare industry and the educational institution occupational settings respectively where emotion based fatigue appears to be the proverbial norm. It can be therefore stated that the high negative correlation that is discovered in the research paper has its theoretical justification and that it is compatible with other pieces of psychology.

The second hypothesis indicated that a negative correlation exists between the self concept clarity and the rumination of the working professionals. The current study is sustaining the proposed hypothesis that the relationship between self-concept clarity and rumination among the working professionals will be established to be significant and negative. The same argument was presented in the existing literature of the conclusion of this finding that the person who has a definite and consistent conception of himself/herself is less prone to engage in negative and repeatable thoughts. Clarity of self-concept goes hand in hand with the degree of definition and certainty that individuals attach to their self-identity (Campbell et al., 1996) which is the basis upon which the identity stress occurs commonly in the work environment. Patients with a high self-concept clarity always tend to have fewer doubts about themselves and is very competent to control signaling of emotions when presented with work-related problems thus reducing incidence of rumination.

Heekerens, et al. (2023), found that individuals with low self-concept clarity concept were more cognitively responsive and affectively unstable, which is closely correlated to rumination. Therefore, a calm and predictable self-concept is reported as a psychological countermeasure to the gnawing thoughts likely to be harmful to the productivity and psychological health in the view of health and educational practitioners at work.

The last hypothesis self-concept clarity mediates the relationship between self-compassion and rumination amid health and educational professionals. The information on the possible meditational role of the self-concept clarity (SCC) in the connection between self-compassion (SC)

and rumination is obtained in the recent literature. To illustrate, Coutts et al. (2023) examined the SC mediates effect on both SC and mental health indicators (depressive symptoms, stress, and life satisfaction) and concluded that SC mediates effects showed significant indirect effects, which state the SCC role is important as a mediating mechanism.

According to Self-Compassion Theory (Neff, 2003) self -compassion allows individuals to respond to their troubled situations with warmth, openness and a sense of empathy with others. This favorable self-perception results in milder self-criticism and over-identification of emotion that are precursors of rumination. Recently (Neff, 2023; Coutts et al., 2023) the self-compassion has been revealed to lead towards self-concept clarity which is the clearly and stable sense of self since it can reduce the risk of rumination. To this end, it seems that self-concept clarity can be one of the main variables, through which self-compassion may decrease rumination according to the hypothesized model of mediation.

Based on the Self-Verification Theory (Swann, 1983), human beings are motivated to establish consistency and stability levels in the way they think about themselves because this integrity can give them a psychological orientation of a certain degree of clarity, predictability, and control over their social lives and inner experiences (Talaifar & Swann, 2017). Self-compassion is, in this respect, imperative since it would lead to self-accepting and less self-critical, which would likely break a stronger and more enduring self-definition. When the self-concept is more definite, there is less an urge to do repeated negative rumination (i.e., repetition). Therefore taking into account the Self-Verification Theory, the self-concept clarity can be regarded as the significant process due to which self-compassion leads to rumination-reductance.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIKELY BENEFITS

The results of this study are very significant to both the health and the educational sectors. In practice, referring to occupations associated with high stress, such as education and health care, the findings of its results serve to underline the importance of introducing self-compassion to the professional community. One can also add the mindfulness-based training interventions or programs to the professional development or wellness programs in the workplace that involve self-compassion as a way of helping mitigate the rumination and its negative consequences such as burnouts or emotional exhaustion. Theoretically, the research results become part of the evidence base to demonstrate the significance of self-compassion as one of the protective factors against maladaptive thinking behavior in the form of rumination. It is related to the cognitive-affective approaches that endorse specifically the role of self-regulation and attitude towards self in the

mental state, which once again contributes to the self-compassion being one of the most important building blocks in psychological resilience. The training in the area of emotional resilience should be singled out as of great value in the mental health policy and workplace well-being programs, with a particular emphasis on those careers in which there is a higher emotional jobs burning. Self-compassion can potentially be a cost effective intervention to enhancing occupational mental health and productivity.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

The sample is not large and diverse in such a way that one can generalize the findings to the entire healthcare and education professionals, or at least in other socioeconomically or culturally different environments. Researchers should broaden the scope of sampling considering different fields of experts and cultures. Results indicate that, though a negative connection between self-compassion and rumination exists, direction of effect could not be established clearly. Bias such as social desirability or ineffective self-judgment may be elicited by the use of self reporting data and make the results invalid. It did not count organizational culture, workload, or life-related stressors, and it could influence self-compassion and rumination. Future research has to take into account the longitudinal design to develop an effective role of self-compassion and rumination in the long term. The practical values of the results would be strengthened by experimental research aimed at testing the practicality of self-compassion therapy (e.g., the compassion- focused treatment or any mindfulness-based schemes) to get rid of rumination. In future, the external validity and generalization would be enhanced by the samples of study because it could use those of various professions and geographic localities, and different demographics. It is theoretically possible that the combination of quantitative and qualitative research in the form of interviews, or a focus group, will provide more information about the actual state of self-compassion in the workplace. Future studies might be interested in determining whether the interconnection of self-compassion and rumination is mediated /or moderated by variables such as emotional control, level of stress, organizational support, etc.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it has been revealed that the study has investigated the relationship between self-compassion, clarity of the self-concept, and rumination in a sample of teachers and health workers that certify the contribution of self-compassion and clarity of the self-concept as a buffer against rumination. Despite the fact that the hypothesis of mediation proved true only partially, the results suggest that both constructs may be effectively employed in minimizing cognitive and emotional

work stress. The findings show that an excellent way to increase the psychological well-being of the employees the sustainability of their resilience and cognitive steadiness can be encouraged by psychological intervention in the form of self comprehension of emotions, admittance of oneself, and persevering identity. These cognitive traits may play an important variable of mentally fit condition of teachers and healthcare workers. These findings affirm the complexity of rumination and the need to come up with more holistic research designs that will combine individual-based variables and context-based variables. An additional research trend is the interrelationship between psychological resources and environment stressors that would have been more logical to describe the world of specialists in emotionally demanding jobs with respect to its cognitive and emotional spheres.

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