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Self-compassion as a predictor of social safeness in Turkish university students

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KEYWORDS

Self-Compassion;
Social Safeness;
Multiple Regression
Analysis

Abstract

There are few studies that have examined the role of self-compassion in the context of social life, while self-compassion appears to enhance interpersonal relationship skills. The purpose of this study is to examine the predictive role of self-compassion on social safeness. Participants were 401 university students (213 women, 188 men; *M* age= 20.5 yr.). In this study, the Self-compassion Scale and the Social Safeness and Pleasure Scale were used. The relationships between self-compassion and social safeness were examined using correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. In the correlation analysis, self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness factors of self-compassion were found to be positively related, and self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification factors of self-compassion were found to be negatively related to social safeness. According to regression results, social safeness was predicted positively by mindfulness, self-kindness, and common humanity. Further isolation predicted social safeness in a negative way. The regression model explained 28% of the variance in social safeness. Together, the findings illuminate the importance of self-compassion on social adjustment. The results are discussed in the light of the related literature.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Autocompasión;
Seguridad social;
Análisis de regresión
múltiple

Autocompasión como predictor de la seguridad social en estudiantes de la universidad turca

Resumen

Existen pocos estudios que examinen el papel de la autocompasión en el contexto de la vida social, mientras que la autocompasión parece mejorar habilidades de relación interpersonal. El propósito de este estudio es examinar el papel predictivo de la autocompa-

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sión sobre la seguridad social. Los participantes eran estudiantes universitarios 401 (213 mujeres, 188 hombres; Edad $M = 20,5$ años.). En este estudio, se utilizaron la escala de la autocompasión y la Seguridad Social y la escala de placer. Las relaciones entre la seguridad social y la autocompasión fueron examinadas usando análisis de correlación y análisis de regresión múltiple. En el análisis de correlación se consideraron positivos los factores de la autocompasión de la auto-amabilidad, la humanidad común y la atención plena mientras que el autojuicio, el aislamiento y los factores de identificación excesiva de autocompasión fueron considerados negativamente en relación con la seguridad social. Según los resultados de regresión, la seguridad social fue considerada positivamente por concienciación, uno auto-bondad y humanidad común. Un aislamiento adicional predijo la seguridad social de una manera negativa. El modelo de regresión explica el 28% de la varianza en seguridad social. Juntos, los resultados iluminan la importancia de la autocompasión en el ajuste social. Los resultados se discuten a la luz de la literatura relacionada.

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Self-compassion was proposed first by Neff (2003a) as an alternative conception of individual's achieving functional attitudes toward himself and was described by her as "being gentle towards oneself in the face of hardship or perceived inadequacy, acknowledging that suffering, failure, and inadequacies are part of the human condition and that all people, oneself included, are worthy of compassion" (Neff, 2003b; Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007). In her pioneer articles Neff (2003a,b) conceptualized and developed a valid and reliable instrument to measure this concept and considered self-compassion as a three-dimensional concept: (a) self-kindness (vs. self-judgment), which involves the ability of treating oneself with understanding and care as opposed to harsh self-judgment. People with self-kindness offer themselves warmth and non-judgmental understanding rather than belittling their pain or berating themselves with self-criticism (Neff, 2003b; Neff et al., 2007); (b) common humanity (vs. isolation), which requires the recognition that imperfection is a shared aspect of the human experience, as opposed to feeling isolated and alone by one's failures; individuals with awareness of common humanity consider joyful and painful experiences as not personal, but as all human beings', accept that all humans are imperfect (Neff, 2009), and (c) mindfulness (vs. over-identification), which includes a state of balanced awareness that one's feelings and thoughts are observed without avoiding or exaggerating them. While these three dimensions of self-compassion are conceptually distinct and are experienced differently at the phenomenological level, they combine and mutually interact to create a self-compassionate frame of mind (Neff, 2003a). For example, if individuals accept and tolerate their painful or failure experiences and if they are gentle and kind toward themselves, they may avoid suppressing their emotions and thoughts. Thus, when they are aware that these negative experiences are something that all humans experience, they are not trapped by over-identification (Neff, Hsieh & Dejitterat, 2005).

Studies have traditionally demonstrated that self-compassion is correlated positively with psychologically healthy outcomes

in a variety of domains such as affect, cognitive patterns, achievement, and social connections. For example, self-compassion was linked positively to psychological well-being (Akin, 2008a), life satisfaction, social relatedness (Neff, 2003b), reflective and affective wisdom, personal initiative, curiosity and exploration, optimism, positive affect, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness (Baker & McNulty, 2011; Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2007), social relationship, emotional intelligence, self-determination (Neff, 2003a), learning-approach goals (Akin, 2008b), social support (Akin, Kayis & Satici, 2011), and relational-interdependent self construal (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). The other studies have proved that self-compassion is negatively associated with submissive behavior (Akin, 2009), depression, anxiety, rumination, thought suppression (Neff, 2003b), loneliness (Akin, 2010b), interpersonal cognitive distortions (Akin, 2010a), social anxiety, fear of negative evaluation (Werner et al., 2012), performance-approach/avoidance goals (Akin, 2008b), internet addiction (Iskender & Akin, 2011), automatic thoughts (Akin, 2012), and neuroticism (Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2007).

Social safeness

People, like animals, should overcome three basic life functions that have been sub-served by emotion regulation systems (Kelly, Zuroff, Leybman & Gilbert, 2012): (a) to detect, avoid, and protect themselves from threats; (b) to acquire, control, and maintain resources necessary for survival and reproduction, and (c) to regulate affect and motivation during times of affiliation and goal satisfaction (Gilbert, 2005, Porges, 2007). The first basic life functions are thought to produce negative affects while the latter two promote different types of positive affect (Kelly et al., 2012). However more recently, a gradual differentiation has been made between positive emotions associated with dopaminergic drives and activation states and positive emotions related to endorphin-based states of contentment,

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