

Positive Psychological Functioning as Mediator in the Relationship between Self-Compassion and Burnout

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Abstract

The main objective of the current research was to explore the role of positive psychological functioning as a mediator in the relationship between self-compassion and job burnout. The sample consisted of 382 faculty members of the public and private sector educational institutions (teaching faculty of universities) from Pakistan, selected through the non-probability sampling technique (convenient sampling strategy). To measure the hypothesized model, Partial Least Square and Process Macro (SPSS-26) was applied. Results revealed an inverse and significant link between self-compassion and employees' job burnout. Results also revealed that positive psychological functioning dimensions: happiness, curiosity and exploration, personal growth initiative, positive affect, and optimism partially mediate the relationship between self-compassion and employees' job burnout. The results pointed out the significance of self-compassion in repressing employees' job burnout in the presence of positive psychological functioning as a mediator. Research limitations and implications are also discussed in this study.

Keywords: Self-compassion, Job Burnout, Psychological Functioning, Mediation Analysis

Introduction

Positive psychology highlights the strength, capabilities, and positive characteristics of individuals (Seligman & Csikzentmihalyi, 2000). Therefore, numerous scholars tried to recognize more positive attitudes towards themselves. By following this, the literature review reflects a clear interest of researchers on individuals' assistances, their potential for self-enhancement, their skills, and talents. (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012), which further contributed in many areas. Researchers (Neff, 2003; Bennett-Goleman, 2001; Rosenberg, 2000; Salberg, 1997) have conceptualized a healthy attitude and positive behavior with oneself, known as self-compassion.

Self-compassion, an emerging concept in an organizational setting (Neff & Dahm, 2014; Atkins & Parker, 2012; Feldman & Kuyken, 2011; Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007) includes an understanding of the involvement of pain, attached through a profound aspiration to relieve that pain (Goetz et al., 2010). The self-compassion incorporates sympathy, consideration, kindness, liberality, generosity, acknowledgment, and acceptance (Feldman & Kuyken, 2011). It is also stated by Neff (2003) that the presence of pain is essential to experience self-compassion. Thus, self-compassion implies being carried out and open to one's pain, not disregarding or disconnecting from it, and fostering an urge to mitigate one's misery and heal oneself with kindness (Neff, 2003).

Social and clinical research literature demonstrates that self-compassion is considered a positive psychological strength (Reizer, 2019). It reflects a loving, caring, and kind attitude towards oneself when faced with hardship, traumatic circumstances, or personal shortcomings (Neff, 2003). Previously, it has also been mentioned that self-compassion is the ability, when met with challenges, to express caring emotions to oneself, including self-acceptance, self-kindness awareness, and a sense of shared humanity. Self-compassion works as a versatile strategy for feeling and emotions arranging through diminishing negative feelings, yet making optimistic approaches of thoughtfulness and relatedness (Neff, Hsieh & Dejitterat, 2005).

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It is also evident from previous research that self-compassion reduces negative feelings, including stress, depression, and anxiety (Thurlow, 2010). Which has been mostly studied in clinical settings (Muris et al., 2019) and very few have been examined in an organizational setting. The current study identified the gap as no study has been conducted on teaching faculty of universities to find the impact of self-compassion on burnout in an organizational setting, particularly in Pakistan. Furthermore, the impact of self-compassion on burnout with psychological functioning as a mediating variable is also missing in the literature. This study tried to uncover the mechanism of an inverse association between self-compassion and job burnout of the employees in educational institutions.

Literature Review

Self-Compassion and Job Burnout

Burnout is a sort of negative job phenomenon and associated with various negative job outcomes (Dev et al., 2018), such as withdrawal, absenteeism, turnover intention, low morale (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach & Jackson, 1981), and lower productivity in an organization (Burke & Greenglass, 2001). Burnout happens in employees of almost every field and is most likely to occur in public services occupations (e.g., Garner, Knight, & Simpson, 2007; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Cherniss, 1980). Many types of research have been undertaken to investigate the association between self-compassion and burnout in the clinical environment (e.g., Spickard, Gabbe & Christensen, 2002; Miller, Stiff & Ellis, 1988; Jackson, Schwab & Schuler, 1986). Atkinson et al. (2017) concluded that a higher level of self-compassion tends to decrease the burnout effect.

According to the authors (Dev et al., 2018), self-compassion is the capacity to be kind to oneself in moments of pain and break the link between burnout and compassion barriers. The growth of self-compassion (the ability to care for oneself in times of stress) can minimize the negative emotional impact and barriers to compassion. They also stated that self-compassion alleviates the link between job burnout and its dimensions.

It is also evident from previous research that self-compassion is linked negatively with burnout and its three dimensions (Richardson et al., 2016; Lee, 2013; Neville & Cole, 2013; Boellinghaus, Jones & Hutton, 2012; Thurlow, 2010; Neff, Pisitsungkagarn & Hsieh, 2008; Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007). They concluded that teaching self-compassion might decrease burnout. Moreover, people who have self-compassionate traits are less likely to suffer from mental health disorders (Kim & KO, 2018). Keeping in view the above discussion, it can be hypothesized that:

H₁: there is a negative association between self-compassion and burnout

Self-Compassion and Positive Psychological Functioning

Psychological functioning may also be characterized as the capacity between oneself and the external world to achieve his or her objectives. It includes the behavior, emotion, social skills, and general mental health of a person (Preedy & Watson, 2010). Psychological functioning is compiled of many positive and negative dimensions. This study deals with some of the positive dimensions of psychological functioning in an organizational setting, including happiness, curiosity and exploration, personal growth and initiative, positive affect, and optimism.

Self-compassion is linked with many positive psychological outcomes (Zessin, Dickhäuser, & Garbade, 2015), such as Neff et al. (2007) found that the relationship between self-compassion and curiosity and exploration is positive and significant. It is also stated that happiness helps increase productivity (Natasha & Coelho-Junior, 2016) while, self-compassion is a basis of happiness (Reizer, 2019). Neff et al. (2007) showed that self-compassion, optimism, and happiness are positively linked. Literature also provides evidence about the relationship between self-compassion, optimism, and joy (Lutz et al., 2004). Previous research on self-compassion and positive effects has identified that an individual with self-compassion reported substantially high optimistic moods (Neff et al., 2007). Similarly, a positive relationship between personal growth initiative and self-compassion was also concluded by Neff et al. (2007). With the help of these previous researches, it can be posited that:

H₂: there is a positive association between self-compassion and positive psychological functioning

Psychological Functioning and job burnout

The literature revealed that burnout exists in employees of every profession particularly in the human services profession, where interaction with people can be frustrating and stressful, and often workers are under immense pressure and stress (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Besides, Maslach and Leiter

(1997) reported that burnout is a response that converts devotion, commitment, trust, pleasure, and happiness into worry, exhaustion, anger, and depression.

Happiness is a psychological state and can prevent negative job outcomes in the workplace. Researchers have found that there is a negative link between happiness and burnout at the workplace (Stoewen, 2018). Other studies have indicated a significant negative relationship between optimism and burnout (Chang & Chan, 2013; Gustafsson & Skoog, 2012; Crosno et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2008; Hayes & Weathington, 2007; Chang, Rand, & Strunk, 2000).

Research (Crosno et al., 2009; Hayes & Weathington, 2007) reveals that optimism is linked inversely with burnout. Similarly, Positive affect was also tested with burnout (e.g., Gustafsson et al., 2015; Gustafsson et al., 2013). The studies concluded that people with a higher level of positive affect experience a low level of burnout. They concluded that the association between positive affect and burnout is the opposite. Keeping in view these studies, it can be hypothesized that:

H₃: there is a negative link between positive psychological functioning and burnout

Psychological functioning as Mediator in the Relationship between Self- compassion and Employee's job burnout

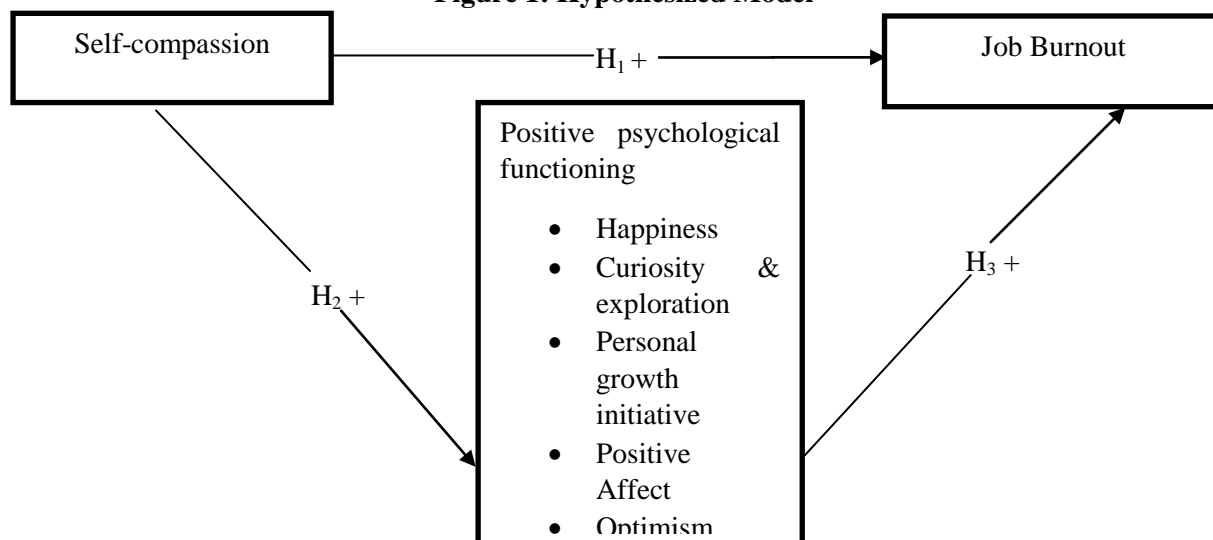
Previous literature showed the link between self-compassion and burnout (e.g., Barnard & Curry, 2012; Alkema, Linton & Davies, 2008). Alkema and colleagues (2008) stated that self-compassion is linked to less burnout, and it protects against negative outcomes of burnout both personally and professionally (Atkinson et al., 2017). A self-compassionate mindset in a difficult situation can lead to less anxiety (Landgraf, 2013). Researchers (Neff & Germer, 2013; Allen & Leary, 2010; Neff, 2003b) revealed that self-compassion is a valuable resource to cope with difficult times. These researchers determined that self-compassion was negatively linked with burnout.

Recent studies by Friis et al. (2015) revealed the positive association of self-compassion with both mental and physical health. Another study found the relationship between psychological wellbeing and self-compassion as self-compassion reduced negative effects such as anxiety and depression (e.g., Zessin, Dickhauser & Garbadee, 2015; MacBeth & Gumley, 2012). It was also found in the literature that self-compassion is strongly linked with psychological health such as a higher level of life satisfaction, social connectedness, emotional intelligence, wisdom, curiosity, happiness, personal initiative, and optimism (Neff, 2009). Self-compassion minimizes the effects of challenges associated with burnout (Eriksson et al., 2017). So, it can be hypothesized:

H₄: Psychological functioning mediates the association between self-compassion and burnout.

After listing all the hypotheses mentioned above, the theoretical model was developed, which is well defined by "positive psychology's theory of resilience." According to this theory, self-compassion can be a beneficial technique for improving psychological and emotional wellbeing. Self-compassion tends to promote higher psychological wellbeing levels and protect against the detrimental effects of burnout. This theory also explained that self-compassion could be an acquired ability (Gilbert & Procter, 2006; Gilbert & Iron, 2004) and help guard against harmful effects. Thus, it is justifiable to hypothesize the link between self-compassion and burnout in the presence of positive psychological functioning as a mediator between these relationships.

Figure 1: Hypothesized Model



Methodology

The current study is quantitative using a deductive approach (testing the hypotheses developed from previous literature) to analyze the association among the variables: self-compassion, psychological functioning, and burnout. The decision to choose the type of research design to be used depends on the research problem's interpretation and clarification.

Sample and Population

The current study's target population was the teaching faculty of higher education institutions in Balochistan, Pakistan. This study used a non-probability sampling method with a convenience sampling strategy for data collection from the given population. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), when the population is not well defined, then non-probability sampling can be used; in this study, the sampling strategy is non-probability sampling technique for the given population because the data of all the faculty members of universities in Balochistan was not available online. Besides, many universities were not willing to share their official data about faculty members (e.g., some faculty members are on overseas scholarships, while others may have another type of vacation).

Furthermore, in non-probability sampling, this study used a convenience sampling strategy suggested by authors (Hair et al., 2007; King, 2004). Convenient sampling was the best technique for data collection for this study as some of the faculty members were having a busy schedule and unable to fill the questionnaire. Convenient sampling provides the chance to select the sample based on ease of accessibility. According to Green (1991), a sample size of at least five participants per variable for analytical methods is required. This study collected data from 386 respondents.

Measures

The cross-sectional timeframe was used to collect the data, and the Questionnaire (consisted of four sections) was used as an instrument for data collection. According to Saunders, Thornhill, and Lewis (2003), the Questionnaire is the most widely used data collection tool. This study employed 12 items self-compassion scale by Neff (2003b), including items like, "I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain." The Burnout instrument was developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) and modified by Lambert et al., (2010) into seven items and also used by Çelik, Turunç, and Begenirbaş (2011) in their study, including sample items, e.g.; "working with people directly puts too much stress on me."

Psychological functioning was measured by using different adopted instruments for each dimension. It included Lyubomirsky and Lepper, (1999), Happiness scale with sample items such as "to what extent does this characterization describe you?" "Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything". Kashdan, Rose, and Fincham (2004), Curiosity and exploration scale was used. The sample item was like, "I would describe myself as someone who actively seeks as much information as I can in a new situation." For measuring Personal growth initiative, the scale of Robitschek (1998) including the sample item "I have a good sense of where I am headed in my life" was used. The positive effect scale developed by Bradburn and Caplovitz, (1965) was adopted to measure the "activeness, determined, attentiveness." Optimism scale by Scheier and Carver (1985) was adopted, including sample item "in uncertain times, I usually expect the best." The items were rated on 5-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, to 5 = *quite often*). The Questionnaire of the present thesis has consisted of two sections; the first one for demographic analysis of participants and the second section for the measurement of the model by using variables.

Procedure

This study used the survey method as it is a useful approach to analyze large samples (Konting, 1990). The measurement items were administered to the sample of 450 teaching faculty of six universities of Balochistan through questionnaires and online links. Three hundred eighty-six questionnaires were received back, where 4 cases had missing data, so 382 cases were analyzed. Both male and female teachers were accessed.

The current research aimed to find the association between self-compassion, psychological functioning, and employees' performance by using the Pearson correlation coefficient. While structural equation modeling was applied to test the model. For descriptive and inferential statistics, SPSS software (26 version) and Smart PLS.3 was used.

Results

Results of the demographic analysis exhibited that the sample (382) was comprised of both male (60.5%) and female (39.5%) participants. The frequency for the age category of 25 to 30 years of respondents was 117 (30.6 %). The majority of the participants (32.5%) were between 31 and 35 years of age and from 36 to 40 years, the sample size was 81 (21.2%), and from 41 to 45 years, the respondents' frequency was 54 (14.1%) and 1.6% respondents were from the age of 46 to 50. The demographic information was intended to classify the sample's characteristics and allow these factors' effects on the key variables to be monitored. Frequency tests have been applied for demographic analysis and results. Respondents were selected were teaching faculty of different universities of Balochistan: comprised of lecturers, assistant professors, and professors. The frequency of the respondents' educational qualifications showed that 191 of the total respondents were master (50%), 163 were MS/M.Phil/Master of Science degree holders (43%). While the remaining 28 out of the total 382 were having Ph.D./doctoral degree (7%). The universities selected for this study were from both the public and private sectors. The frequency for the organization's nature showed that 68 participants were from private universities (18%) and 314 respondents currently working in public sector universities (82%). The job experience of the respondents started from one year to 16 and above. The frequency table shows that 217 (57%) participants were in the category of 1 to 5 years of experience. From the total, 109 (28%) respondents were having 6 to 10 years of experience. At the same time, 50 respondents had experience from 11 to 15 years (13%), and only four respondents were in the range of 16 years and above job experience.

Preliminary data analysis (Descriptive statistics)

The descriptive statistics were calculated for all scale scores by using computed variables and each item of the scale (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Kline, 2005). Authors (Bentler & Chou, 1987) stated that every construct must have three items to measure the standard CFA, and the loaded value must be greater than 0.40 of each factor (Hair et al., 1998). However, for the high strength of correlation between items, the value must be less than 0.85 (Kline, 2005).

The factor loading (factor loading shows each construct's reliability with its items) demonstrated a value greater than 0.4. According to the results, CFA revealed that the items used to measure self-compassion loaded on a single factor. Accordingly, a composite measure of burnout (BO) was computed by seven items loaded on a single factor. The five positive dimensions of psychological functioning were measured, and each dimension showed a loading value greater than .40, as mentioned by Hair et al. (1998), and loaded on a single scale. All scales demonstrated acceptable estimates.

Reliability Test (Cronbach Alpha)

Reliability was calculated by the internal consistency of the questionnaire reporting the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Results showed the internal consistency, measured by Cronbach's alpha, was sufficiently reliable. The three subscales' internal consistency coefficients were 0.732, .628, and .73, respectively (as shown below in table 4.1).

Correlation analysis of the constructs.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure the relationship between the variables.

Table. 4.1 Correlations coefficients between self-compassion scores, burnout scores, dimensions of psychological functioning, and internal reliability.

	Self- Compassion	Burnout	Happiness	Curiosity and Exploration	Personal Growth Initiative	Positive affect	Optimism
Total Self-compassion	(.73)						
Total burnout	-0.04	(.62)					
Happiness	.46**	0.01	(.75)				
Curiosity and exploration	.14**	0.03	.31**	(.78)			
Personal growth initiative	.12*	-0.06	.18**	.32**	(.67)		
Positive affect	0.01	-.94**	0.04	0.01	.29**	(.71)	
Optimism	-0.01	-.39**	-.28**	-0.08	.10*	.23**	(.77)

*Note: N=382, * correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The internal consistency of variables mentioned diagonally

As preliminary evidence of correlation coefficients between the factors (i.e., the correlations between self-compassion and job burnout was negative (-0.04). A weak positive relationship has been found between happiness and burnout ($r = .01$), curiosity and exploration with burnout ($r = .03$), while personal growth initiative ($r = -.06$), positive affect ($r = -.94$), and optimism ($r = -.39$) were linked inversely with burnout. All the dimensions of positive psychological functioning were found positively linked with self-compassion.

Hypotheses results

Self-compassion and burnout

The impact of self-compassion on burnout was tested and found a small variance caused in burnout by self-compassion i.e., 21% ($R^2 = .21$). This relationship was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.06$, $p = .03$). Other studies reported similar results between self-compassion and burnout (Dev et al., 2018; Sicsic, Vaillant & Franc, 2012). This result showed that self-compassion was a significant predictor of burnout.

Self-compassion and psychological functioning

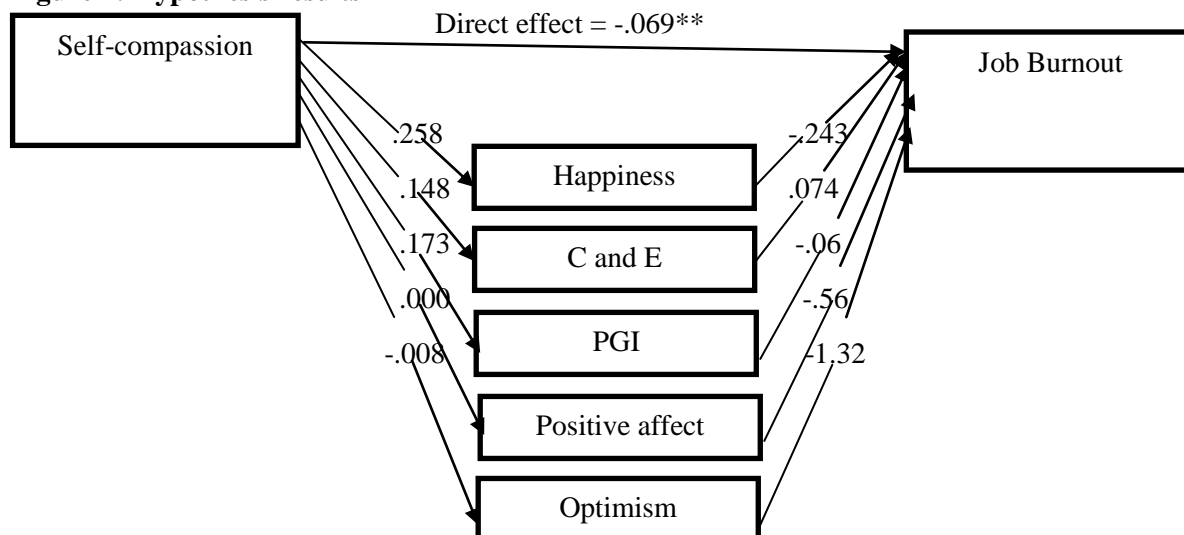
Positive psychological functioning (happiness, personal growth and initiative, Curiosity and exploration, positive affect and optimism) relationship was measured with self-compassion, and results showed positive link of self-compassion with happiness ($R^2 = .21$, $\beta = .25$, $p = .00$), Curiosity and exploration ($R^2 = .02$, $\beta = .14$, $p = .00$), personal growth and initiative ($R^2 = .01$, $\beta = .17$, $p = .01$). While, the results of self-compassion and positive effect showed no relationship between these two variables ($\beta = .00$, $p = .99$). Self-compassion and optimism results demonstrated that there was no relationship between these two variables ($R^2 = .00$) and this relationship was statistically non-significant ($p = .72$). The regression coefficient between the self-compassion and optimism was negative ($\beta = -.009$).

Positive Psychological Functioning and Burnout

Positive Psychological functioning was tested as an independent variable with burnout. Results showed that the happiness and burnout relationship was positive and nonsignificant ($\beta = .24$, $p = .06$). The only small variance was caused in burnout by happiness ($R^2 = .00$). So, happiness was not a significant predictor of burnout. The relationship between Curiosity and exploration to burnout was also positive and nonsignificant ($\beta = .07$, $p = .28$). Results also showed that Curiosity was not a predictor of burnout ($R^2 = .00$). Personal growth and initiative were negatively linked with burnout ($R^2 = .005$, $\beta = -.06$, $p = .01$) and positive affect was having a negative and significant relationship with burnout ($\beta = -.56$, $R^2 = .08$, $p = .00$). Finally, the regression test was applied between optimism and burnout, and results showed a negative and significant relationship between optimism and burnout ($\beta = -1.32$, $R^2 = .15$, $p = .00$). These results showed that some positive psychological functioning dimensions have no relationship with burnout while, personal growth and initiative, positive affect, and optimism were negatively linked with burnout.

Mediating effect of Psychological Functioning between SC and Burnout

A mediation test was applied to check the effect of positive psychological functioning on the relationship between self-compassion and job burnout. To test the indirect effect, PROCESS MACRO model 4 was applied and the results showed that the relationship between self-compassion and happiness (X to M1) was positive and significant ($\beta_1 = .25$, $p = .00$), self-compassion to CE (X to M2) was positive ($\beta_2 = .14$, $p = .00$), self-compassion to PGI positive ($\beta_3 = .17$, $p = .01$) and self-compassion to positive effect positive ($\beta_4 = .00$, $p = .99$). The self-compassion to optimism negative and non-significant ($\beta_5 = -.00$, $p = .71$) relationship exists. The relationship between psychological functioning to burnout (M to Y: happiness to burnout) was ($\beta = -.08$, $p = .57$), CE to burnout was ($\beta = .03$, $p = .64$), PGI to burnout was ($\beta = .02$, $p = .62$), positive effect to burnout was ($\beta = -.41$, $p = .00$) and optimism to burnout was negative ($\beta = -1.18$, $p = .00$). TSC to Burnout (total effect was $\beta = .06$, ($p = .33$). The direct effect was $-.07$ ($p = .32$) and the indirect was $-.00$. Partial mediation by $-.00$ (combined effect of all psychological functioning). The indirect effect (s) of X on Y showed that TOTAL indirect effect was $-.00$. Indirect effect of happiness was $-.02$, CE = $.00$, PGI = $.00$. Positive affect = $-.00$ and optimism = $.00$.

Figure 2: Hypothesis results

Psychological functioning dimensions mediate the link between Self-Compassion and Job burnout

These results confirmed a mediating effect of positive psychological functioning on the relationship between self-compassion and job burnout by following Preacher and Hayes's (2008). Additionally, the indirect effect result was taken as evidence for mediation, which was statistically significant (t -value > 1.96, $p < 0.05$) (as mentioned by; Preacher & Hayes, 2008 and cited by Zhao et al., 2010).

Discussion

The research objective was to find the mediating role of positive psychological functioning in the relationship between self-compassion and burnout. It was the first study in Pakistan's context, which assessed self-compassionate behavior and job burnout in teaching faculty and identified the mechanism of this relationship. Results supported our first hypothesis by showing a negative and significant link between self-compassion and job burnout. These results suggested that an increase in self-compassion leads to a decrease in burnout. Previous empirical studies (Dev et al., 2018; Eriksson et al., 2018; Egan et al., 2016; Sicsic, Vaillant & Franc, 2012; Barnard & Curry, 2012; Alkema et al., 2008; Boellinghaus, Jones & Hutton, 2012) also concluded the similar findings between self-compassion and burnout. Besides, Terry and Leary (2011) documented that stress and anxiety level decreases when a person is self-compassionate. Neff (2003) also stated that teachers need to permit themselves to be self-compassionate for the stress they're under.

The results of the study also supported the second hypothesis, as mentioned above, the link between self-compassion and positive psychological functioning with its five positive dimensions. The relationship between self-compassion and happiness was positive and significant. These results suggested that kind and caring people are happier than others. Furthermore, these results also support the idea that "being happy is a great deal to most people, and happiness is a highly valued goal in most societies" (Diener, 2000). The relationships of self-compassion with curiosity and exploration were found positive. These results suggest that self-compassion increases excited response to prevailing knowledge and systematically explores new information to find all possible problem-solving outcomes. Previous literature also shows that teachers who are kind and caring and having common humanity always seek new knowledge and problem-solving behavior (e.g., Berlyne, 1966).

The analysis showed self-compassion positively and significantly linked with personal growth and initiative. These results suggested that increase self-compassion is also a source of the rise in personal growth and initiative. The reason is that self-compassionate people have skills that help them grow personally (e.g., Robitschek, 1998). These results suggest that employees know how to change specific things in their life and have a good sense to initiate the conversion process. They have a unique contribution to the world and balanced life (Karademas, 2006). Previous results by Neff et al. (2007) also indicated that self-compassion was significantly linked with personal growth and initiative.

The association of self-compassion and positive affect (dimension of psychological functioning) was hypothesized. The results showed that self-compassion has no relationship with

positive affect. Based on the results, it can be reasoned that self-compassionate people are kind, caring towards themselves, and not determined, inspired, and attentive towards their objectives but humanity. Alert and active dimensions of positive affect differentiate them from self-compassionate people. Previous studies on self-compassion and positive affect also suggested that people with high self-compassionate qualities practice a more positive mood (Neff et al., 2007).

The fifth dimension of psychological functioning was tested with self-compassion and no relationship was found between self-compassion and optimism. These results demonstrated that self-compassionate people are not optimistic about their future. They do not expect the best in certain times of pain and are not easily relaxed. The contented attitude of self-compassion and its related adaptive coping skills (i.e., Neff et al., 2005) help to sustain optimistic aspirations about the future (Scheier et al., 1994) and also linked to joy and optimism (Lutz et al., 2004). These findings are also consistent with previous findings by Neff and Dahm (2015). Empirical evidence has also found that self-compassion is correlated with increased psychological functioning (e.g., Neff, 2003a).

The next hypothesis of the study was the negative relationship between Positive psychological functioning and burnout. Results revealed that happiness and burnout were non-significantly linked. The influence of happiness on burnout is minor. So, it can be explained that happiness was having no impact on burnout. The results of the study suggested that the happiness of the employees does not affect their job burnout. Conversely, other authors (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) argued that happiness is an important construct that minimizes depression, stress, and other negative experiences and outcomes.

The results of curiosity and exploration with burnout demonstrated that curiosity and exploration have no impact on burnout. The finding of the current study is not in line with previous ones. As previous studies suggested that, curiosity is an attribute that helps to reduce stress and cope with anxiety and burnout. It is also stated previously that highly curious people are more able to endure stress, fatigue, and put their energies in the direction of desired explorations (Spielberger & Starr, 1994). Based on the results of the current study, it can be advocated that workplace stress is inevitable due to longer work, extra responsibilities, and the pressure to the accomplishment of tasks that always cannot be managed. Conversely, a study by Hakshaw (2018) revealed that curiosity helps to reduce the effect of burnout as curiosity helps to minimize the burnout impact by stimulating imagination and offering a sense of relaxation and discovery.

Personal growth and initiative were tested with burnout, and results showed a negative link between personal growth and initiative and burnout. These results also revealed that personal growth and initiative is a significant predictor of burnout. Previous researchers also found that people who have high personal growth and initiative tend to have strong social, emotional, and psychological well-being (Robitschek & Keyes, 2009). Positive affect and burnout were found negatively and significantly related. The results are consistent with an earlier study by (Hobfoll 2001). He concluded that Positive affect is an individual personal resource that can reduce the impact of burnout. Similarly, Little, Simmons, and Nelson (2007) also found a negative relationship between positive affect and burnout.

The results of optimism and burnout showed an inverse relationship between these two variables. So, it can be said that optimism is a significant negative predictor of burnout. These results also demonstrated that people who are optimist's faceless job burnout. It is argued that optimism plays an important role in repressing the effect of burnout (Gustafsson & Skoog, 2012). These results are also consistent with previous studies' findings that optimism is associated with lower levels of burnout (Chang & Chan, 2013). The results of Chang's (1998) study also demonstrated that a higher level of optimism is linked with a lower level of burnout. Chang, Rand, and Strunk (2000) also confirmed that optimism was negatively related to both stress and stress outcomes by their study results.

It can be said by these results of positive psychological functioning and burnout, focusing on employees' potential and strengths that as the positive self-states increase, it builds resilience in individuals to cope with stressful times (e.g., Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005; Frederickson, 2001).

The results of the study showed that positive psychological functioning mediates the relationship between self-compassion and burnout. Results indicated that self-compassion is linked inversely with burnout, as high self-compassionate individuals manage stressful conditions more

effectively (e.g., Vigna et al., 2017; Alkema et al., 2008). Self-compassionate employees will increase their performance at the workplace and reduce burnout, anxiety, and stress (Hashem & Zenon, 2020) because Self-compassionate people can enjoy doing what they want to do and help others for the accomplishment of the task. Our findings also revealed that there is an obvious influence of psychological functioning in the relationship between self-compassion and burnout.

Limitations

Although the present research provides valuable theoretical and practical contributions several limitations still exist. First, the psychological functioning consists of positive and negative aspects of life, while this study only considered positive aspects. The participants of this study consisted of teaching faculty. However, the lack of representation from other fields limits how the results could be generalized. The timeframe was another limitation of the study. This study was also limited in its ability to examine the few dimensions of positive psychological functioning.

Future Recommendations

Future studies can be conducted by including negative aspects of psychological functioning also along with its positive features. It is also recommended that future research may replicate this study using a more inclusive and diverse sample by size and from other professional fields.

Implications

The study results showed that burnout is prevalent among teachers because they provide human services. Self-compassion plays an important role in stressful situations to be kind and caring for oneself. The high self-compassion behavior of employees can improve their performance and reduce burnout. Managers may provide training and develop a working environment in such a way that can promote self-compassion behavior to gain a competitive advantage. Employees should be allowed to contribute their kindness and humanity to the staff, colleagues, and related persons at the workplace. This will boost their morale and consequently lead to higher productivity. As suggested by the results of the current study, psychological functioning helps to understand the relationship between self-compassion and burnout, as it reduces the negative outcomes. Employees should focus on improving their psychological functioning so that they may perform their duties properly and fulfill the expectation of their management.

Conclusion

The study main objective of the study was to find the mediating role of positive psychological functioning in the relationship between self-compassion and burnout. This study helps to extend the previous literature about self-compassion and its theoretical model. It is also concluded from the results that psychological functioning is an important factor of organizational psychology that needs to be understood and explored. An individual's mind, thoughts, emotion, social skills, behavior, and mental health are combined to form psychological functioning and dimensions. So, this unique study helps to understand the positive psychological functioning of teaching faculty. This study also concluded that happiness and curiosity and exploration have no significant impact on burnout. The findings also suggest that enhancing positive psychological functioning could be considered in developing intervention strategies for preventing burnout among teaching faculty.

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