

Self-Compassion, Emotional Intelligence and Empathy Among Private University Teachers

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy among university Teachers. The study's participants included both male and female university instructors ($N = 155$) from Lahore, Pakistan with age range 25 to 50 years ($M = 33.7$, $SD = 5.2$). The purposive sample technique was used to select teachers from private universities. Variables have been assessed with the help of The Self-Compassion Scale- Short Form (SCS-SF), The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence (SSEIT), The Toronto Empathy Survey (TEQ). The correlation analysis showed positive correlation among self-compassion, emotional intelligence and empathy in teachers. Regression analysis showed that self-compassion and emotional intelligence are significant predictors of empathy among university teachers. Results revealed significant differences for man and woman regarding self-compassion, emotional intelligence and empathy. Results showed a strong positive association between self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy. In university professors, self-compassion and emotional intelligence were highly significant positive predictors of empathy. The findings showed that there were higher emotional intelligence and empathy scores were seen among female university professors.

Keyword. Self-compassion, emotional intelligence, empathy, university teachers

Empathy may be useful for educators, physicians, social workers, and other professionals who interact with people on a regular basis (Stojiljković et al., 2012). Self-compassion is closely correlated with emotional intelligence and wisdom, which is perhaps even more significant (Neff, 2009). Teachers' emotional traits are frequently regarded as being crucial in establishing the general climate in the classroom. among these, the two qualities that are most crucial in the

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classroom are emotional stability and empathy (Kavgić, 2017). The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships among university instructors between self-compassion (SC), emotional intelligence (EI), and empathy. There are numerous duties related to the profession of teaching, including the duty of a cognitive-diagnostic role, an assessor, a motivator, a manager of social interactions, and a partner in an emotional encounter. Self-esteemed people adore who they are, keep close friendships, and use healthy coping strategies.

Self-compassion is the capacity to treat oneself well. According to the author, self-compassion entails being kind to ourselves when we experience suffering, failure, or feelings of inadequacy rather than berating ourselves with self-criticism. In other words, it is an ability to turn understanding of our self's acceptance, and love inward (Neff & Germer, 2022). According to literature self-compassion includes 'be open to and accept and deal with own suffering, then experience of kind feelings and caring toward oneself, flexibility about individual's flaws, being a non-judgmental toward one's decision and recognition of individual's experience as a common human experience (Neff & Knox, 2020).

Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to being aware of personal emotions without being hijacked by them, in order to make wise choices for themselves and sensing what others are feelings, and effectively handling that situation and relationships. "Emotional intelligence is a mix of connected emotional and social qualities that determine how well we understand and relate to others, perceive and express ourselves, and manage the stresses and demands of daily life" (Bru-Luna et al., 2021).

Understanding other people's feelings is known as empathy, and it is considered to be a unique occurrence that distinguishes it from other kinds of emotional experiences (Kaymakçı et al., 2023). Understanding a situation and experiencing it from the perspective of another person is what is meant by the phrase "having empathy" "A social and emotional skill that enables us to understand the needs, feelings, intentions, and circumstances of others so that we may help them and interact with them in a kind, insightful, and acceptable way" (Fernandez & Zahavi, 2020).

Self-compassion gives individual courage, calm that individual needed to face the unwanted negative emotions. Self-compassionate people have good emotional coping skills (Hu, 2023). The capacity to understand and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others is known as emotional intelligence. Empathy is interactive process that involves different dimensions and all dimensions of empathy

work together for teacher' benefits (Di Renzo et al., 2020). Empathy, in the context of education, is "an ability to access the life of the mind of others in their physiological and behavioral displays". As students observe and experience demonstrated instances of empathy, a behavioral definition is thought to be appropriate for teaching. An essential part of social cognition, or the ability to consider and comprehend others, is empathy (Dohrenwend, 2018). Empathy arises when educators shift from single-minded focus to double-minded attentiveness. People are only thinking about themselves when they lack empathy. The definition of teacher empathy has been defined as "the ability to demonstrate concern and adopt the perspective of the learner involving the affective and cognitive aspects of empathy (Goroshit & Hen, 2016)

High moral standards, effective emotional and mental communication with their students, and encouraging their pupils to develop these kinds of relationships with others are all characteristics of empathic teachers (Fernandez & Zahavi, 2020). By interacting positively with their students, these teachers serve as moral role models for them. Empathic teachers were shown to have a stronger moral code, connect with their pupils more effectively, support the development of empathic relationships, and successfully motivate their students. Nevertheless, there is a paucity of knowledge on how to foster this empathy in instructors (Bibi, 2015). Studying self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy in private university instructors makes sense because these qualities are essential for overcoming the particular difficulties faced by their line of work. Teachers at private universities frequently deal with demanding workloads, performance expectations, and a wide range of student demands, all of which can cause stress and emotional weariness. Emotional intelligence allows teachers to control their own emotions and establish healthy connections with students and co-workers, while self-compassion helps them deal with these difficulties by promoting resilience and lowering burnout. Empathy makes it easier to recognize and meet the academic and emotional needs of pupils, resulting in a more efficient and caring learning environment. Examining these characteristics offers important insights into enhancing student results, professional performance, and teacher well-being, all of which support a more robust and effective educational ecosystem.

Stanley et al. (2020) studied the predictive role of self-reflection and emotional intelligence on empathy. Self-reflection and emotional intelligence were identified as significant predictor of empathy in social work practitioners. One of the research projects also conducted to find out the correlation and predictive role of self-compassion on

empathy. Results proved the positive correlation between self-compassion and empathy (Lyvers et al., 2020). Another research was conducted on self-compassion in relation to positive psychological functioning and personality traits. Results revealed that self-compassion is linked to several positive psychological traits, including joy, optimism, wisdom, curiosity, and exploration, as well as self-initiative and emotional intelligence (Neff, 2023). Another study was done on the subject of teachers' roles and empathy. Findings showed that empathy may help teachers successfully carry out their professional responsibilities. Teachers, doctors, social workers, and other professionals that deal with people need empathy to do their jobs well (Sivakumar et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Goroshit and Hen (2021) concluded that teachers must also build the emotional stamina necessary to improve their resilience, survival, and inventiveness in the complicated and demanding university environment. Further study is being done in Italy on the relationship between compassion for oneself and others, emotional intelligence, and personality. Results revealed significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-compassion. The five factors of personality showed positive correlation with EI dimensions. This demonstrates the significance of emotional intelligence as a key factor in the growth of compassion and self-compassion (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2021).

Objectives

1. To investigate the association among self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy among university Teachers.
2. To identify self-compassion and emotional intelligence as predictor of empathy among university Teachers.
3. To identify the gender differences regarding self-compassion, Emotional Intelligence and Empathy in University teachers.

Hypotheses

1. There is positive relationship between self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy in university teachers
2. Self-compassion and emotional intelligence are likely to be positive predictors of empathy in university teachers.
3. Emotional intelligence plays a role of mediator between self-compassion and empathy in university teachers.

4. Male teachers tend to exhibit higher level of self-compassion as compared to female university teachers.
5. Female teachers tend to exhibit higher level of emotional intelligence and empathy as compared to male university teachers

Method

Research Design

This study employed a correlation research design. The link between self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy is evaluated among university teachers.

Measures

Demographic Sheet

Using information from a literature review, the researcher created a demographic sheet. Participants' age, gender, institute, semester, family structure, and job preferences were listed.

The Self-Compassion Scale- Short Form (SCS-SF)

Instead, disregarding our grief or berating ourselves with self-criticism when we fail, suffer, or feel inadequate, it implies being real and caring toward ourselves (Neff, 2011). It was measured by the self-compassion scale in this research. Low self-compassion is indicated by a score of 1.0–2.49. Moderate is defined as 2.5-3.5. A high level of self-compassion is 3.51 to 5.0.

This questionnaire including 12 items and five-point Likert scale in which 1 is determined as *almost never* to 5 *almost always* measure. It is developed by Neff in 2011. Targeted population of this scale was adults and it is measuring their capacity for self-compassion. According to Rocha et al. (2022), this scale is appropriate for age 14 and up, internal consistency was Cronbach's alpha 0.86 and SCS-SF showed good correlation with the long form SCS ($r = .97$). For information on total score, the SCS-SF shows excellent internal consistency. However, subscales of Self-compassion scale short form internal consistencies were low (varying between .54 and .75), subscale interpretation for this scale was not advised. Over the course of five months, the test-retest reliability was reported to be .7. It consists of two subscales first is about to client's view about self with

regard of approval and judgment, second is about client's view patience and empathy. Calculation of total score done by summing of Self disparagement (Items, 1,4,8,9,11,12) in reverse form and self-care (items, 2,3,5,6,7,10) (Rocha et al., 2022).

The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

It is defined as having the ability to perceive, comprehend, and manage one's own and other people's emotions as well as the application of emotion in problem-solving (Schutte et al., 1998). To gauge it, the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale was employed. High ratings on this scale are a sign of great emotional intelligence. With responses ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*) on a five-point Likert scale, it was created by Schutte et al. in 1998 and comprises of 33 items. Scale measures four aspects: emotion awareness, employing emotions, handling self-relevant emotions, and managing other emotions. Reverse coding items are 5, 28, and 33, along with adding up all the items, results in the scale's scoring. Score ranges between 33 and 165 (Bru-Luna et al., 2021).

The Toronto Empathy Survey (TEQ)

Empathy is referring to the skill of effectively recognize others' emotions, as well as the effects that this state has on the individual. It was measured by the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ). If individual receive a score of 45 or higher, he/she have more empathy than usual. Any person is less empathic will be lower in their scores.

Spreng and colleagues designed it in 2009. It comprises 16 items and requests you to rate each one on a Likert scale of 0 (*Never*) to 4 (*Always*). Self-reported empathy scores above 45 indicate above average empathy levels, while scores below 45 indicate below average empathy levels. Reverse coding items 2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15 allowed for the calculation of the total scale scores, which were then added. Next, multiply the final achievement score by 4. The range of 0.85 to 0.87 was found to be its excellent internal consistency (Iqbal et al., 2020).

Sample

Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from the participants. The city of Lahore was the site of the current study. Participants were chosen from teachers at private universities. The sample was selected according to inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria included teachers from private universities with age

range of 25-50 years with at least 2 years teaching experience. Any disabled Teachers like (Handicapped Teachers) were not included in study. Sample size was calculated by using open epi tool.

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 155)*

Variables	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Gender		
Male	81(52%)	
Female	73(47%)	
Age in Years		33.7(5.2)
Family system		
Nuclear	90(58%)	
Joint	65(41%)	
Marital status		
Single	80(51%)	
Married	75(48%)	
Teaching Experience in Years		4.4(3.0)

Sample comprised of 150 participants including Men ($n = 81$) and women ($n = 73$) university teachers. The sample's age range was 25 to 50 years ($M = 33.7$, $SD = 5.2$).

Procedure

Then permission was taken from the authors of questionnaires/scales that were used in this research through email. They allowed the researcher to use the scales. Then, permission was taken from the institutes from where data collection was completed. Overall data was collected from private universities of Lahore city. The participants were given a brief explanation of the issue and the study's objectives, as well as the chance to ask any questions they might have had about the subject or the questionnaire. The researcher informed participants that their information would be kept confidential and utilized exclusively for the investigation. The self-compassion scale (SCS), a demographic survey, and any other necessary inventories must then be completed. The target population ($N = 150$) was also given the Schutte self-report emotional intelligence test (SSEIT) and the Toronto empathy questionnaire (TEQ). The response rate of the participants was really high, and they worked very well together. The researcher concluded by thanking the participants for taking part in the study. Following that, data was arranged and examined in accordance with the suggested analysis using.

Results

The goal of the current study was to determine how empathy, emotional intelligence, and self-compassion related among university teachers. Data were analyzed for the outcome as follows. The sample's socio demographic data was calculated using descriptive statistics. The association between self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy was investigated using Pearson product correlation analysis. To test the prediction assumptions, multiple regression was used. To determine the mean differences based on gender and institute, an independent sample t test was performed. Version 21 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis. Here are the findings of the current study.

Psychometric Properties

Cronbach's Alpha reliability was examined by psychometric analysis, as shown in the Table.

Table 2: *Alpha Coefficient of Self-compassion, Emotional Intelligence and Empathy (N = 155)*

Variables	<i>k</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Emotional Intelligence	33	.84	38.04	5.47
Self-compassion	12	.63	34.41	6.97
Self-disparagement	6	.63	19.78	4.17
Self-care	6	.56	3.63	1.18
Empathy	16	.70	23.8	14.8

Table 2 represents the alpha coefficients of self-compassion, emotional intelligence and empathy. The Cronbach's Alpha results of reliability test are .63 for the self-compassion scale short-form and .63 for the self-disparagement and the .56 for the self-care. These two are the subscales of the self-compassion, and .84 for the schutte self-report emotional intelligence test and .70 For Toronto empathy questionnaire. Results showed that all scales are reliable. As alpha values for all the scales and subscales are in good acceptable ranges. Moreover, mean values reflect that university teachers are not very high on emotional intelligence scores.

Correlation of Study Variables

Table 3: *Relationship Between Self-Compassion, Emotional Intelligence and Empathy Among University Teachers (N = 155)*

Variables	M	SD	E	EI	SD	SC
Empathy	38.04	5.4	-			
Emotional Intelligence	123.8	14.8	.23**	-		
Self-compassion	34.41	6.97	.42**	.07		
Self-disparagement	19.78	4.17	.36**	-.16*	-	
Self-care	3.63	1.18	.15*	.30**	-.19*	-

Note. E = Empathy; EI = Emotional Intelligence; SD = Self-disparagement; SC = Self-care.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3 depicts the association between university teachers' emotional Intelligence, self-compassion, and empathy. The results revealed that self-compassion has significantly positively correlated with empathy at ($r = .42^{**}$) Meanwhile the subscales of self-compassion also positively and significantly correlated with the empathy i.e., Self-disparagement ($.36^{**}$) and Self-care ($.15^*$). Similarly, significantly positive relationship occurs between emotional intelligence and empathy among university teachers ($r = .23^{**}$). Overall result indicates significant positive correlation between self-compassion, emotional intelligence and empathy.

Mediation of Emotional Intelligence between Self-compassion and Empathy

Table 4: *Regression Analysis for mediation of Emotional Intelligence between Self-compassion and Empathy in University Teachers (N = 155)*

Antecedents		Consequences						
		M(EI)			EMT(Y)			
		B	SE	p		B	SE	p
SC(X)	a	.18	.21	.38	c	.51	.09	.00
EI(M)	-	-	-		b	.09	.03	.00
		$R^2 = .06$			$R^2 = .46$			

Note. SC = Self-compassion; EI = Emotional Intelligence.

Table 4 shows that the association between self-compassion and Empathy was found to be positively significant with mediator Emotional Intelligence. In the first step, path "a" was tested and

revealed a non-significant association between self-compassion (Independent variable) and Emotional Intelligence (Mediator variable). Findings showed that there was a non-significant effect of self-compassion and Emotional Intelligence ($b = .18$, $SE = .21$, $p = .338$). In the second path, “b” a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence (Mediator) and Empathy (dependent variable) was found. M (EI) with F value is $F = (1,153) = .749$, $p = .388$, and EMT with F value is $F = (2,157) = 21.154$, $p = .000$. Findings revealed that there was a significant effect of emotional intelligence and Empathy ($b = .51$, $SE = .09$, $p = .000$). In the third path, “c” tested and revealed a significant positive association between self-compassion (independent variable) and Empathy (dependent variable). Findings showed that there were significant direct effects of self-compassion on empathy, the coefficient was significant ($b = .09$, $SE = .03$, $p = .000$).

Table 5: *Multiple Regression Analysis on Self-compassion and Emotional Intelligence as a predictor of Empathy Among University Teachers (N = 155)*

Variables	B	95 % CI		SE	β	t	p
		LL	UL				
Constant	2.96	-7.48	13.3	5.27		.55	.57
SC	.51	.33	.70	.09	.40**	5.66	.00
EI	.09	.02	.16	.03	.20**	2.80	.00
R^2	.21						
ΔR^2	.21						

Note. SC = Self-Compassion; EI = Emotional Intelligence.

Table 5 displays multiple regression on university teachers' emotional quotient, self-compassion, and empathy. In this Table R^2 value of self-compassion is .21 that reveals 21% variance among outcome variable, empathy with $F = (2,152) = 21.15$ ($p < .05^{**}$). Result shows that self-compassion and emotional intelligence are found significant positive predictor of empathy among university Teachers. Self-compassion and emotional intelligence applied as predictor. The results revealed that self-compassion and emotional intelligence both significantly positively predicted empathy among university Teachers.

Gender Differences on Study Variables

Table 6 demonstrates the results of independent sample t -test that was conducted to compare the means of self-compassion, emotional intelligence and empathy for male and female university Teachers.

Results showed significant results for mean differences on empathy. Female teachers show more empathy as compared to male teachers.

Table 6: *Gender Differences on Self-compassion, Emotional Intelligence and Empathy in University Male and Female Teachers (N = 155)*

Variables	Male Teachers (n = 81)		Female Teachers (n = 73)		t	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
SC	37.6	7.60	38.40	5.13	-0.82	.15	0.1
EMT	33.1	6.08	35.11	7.60	-2.34	.03	0.2
EI	122.3	16.3	125.26	12.85	-1.24	.10	0.1

Note. SC = Self-Compassion; EI = Emotional Intelligence; EMT = Empathy.

Discussion

The goal of this investigation was to assess the relationship between self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy among university professors. It also put a lot of emphasis on predicting emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-compassion. Gender variations on these characteristics were also looked at using 155 participants as the sample size. Also, the institutions for empathy and demographic mean differences were examined.

Three research variables self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy were statistically analyzed, and the findings showed a strong positive link between them. Among university teachers, emotional intelligence and self-compassion were highly significant positive predictors of empathy. Independent sample *t*-test was used in addition to looking at gender disparities.

Demographics details of sample were collected for the purpose to check the characteristics of the sample and to check effect of some demographics on the dependent variable. Using a demographics form, it was posed to the teachers. The following demographic information was provided: age, gender, experience level, family structure, and marital status. 155 university professors (81 men and 73 women) participated in the study. Using SPSS-21, analysis was performed. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were calculated for each of the following variables: age, gender, experience, marital status, and family system.

Self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy were examined in connection to one another using Pearson product moment correlation. The significance of the results was established at alpha

levels of .01 and .05. Self-compassion and emotional intelligence are used in prediction analysis as predictors. The findings showed that among university teachers, self-compassion and emotional intelligence both strongly positively predicted empathy. Independent Sample *t*-test was applied to check the mean differences on self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy. Results revealed that female Teachers had high level of emotional intelligence and empathy as compared to male Teachers in this research.

The hypotheses were developed to study based on past researches. The first hypothesis was that there would likely to be a positive relationship between self-compassion, empathy, and emotional intelligence among university Teachers. Teachers who were good in self-compassion chances to be good in emotional intelligence as well. The findings of first correlation analysis was not approved the first hypothesis is rejected. Research conducted on following topic “The relationship of compassion and self-compassion with personality and emotional intelligence. The findings showed a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-compassion (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2021).

Results found positive relationship between self-compassion and empathy among university Teachers. Teachers with high level of self-compassion can be more empathetic as compared to those teachers who are poor in self-compassion. Findings approved this hypothesis statistically. Results indicated that higher level of self-compassion in teachers made them more empathetic. These results can be supported by another research conducted by (Papadimitriou et al., 2023). That proved teachers who had a higher level of self-compassion also had a higher level of empathy. So, Self-compassion was found to have a positive impact on self-reported empathy. Individual high with self-compassion can be more empathetic and can create compassionate attitude towards other.

There is positive relationship between emotional intelligence and empathy among university Teachers. University teachers with high level of emotional intelligent can be more empathetic. The findings of the analysis approved the hypothesis statistically. Results revealed that teachers who had high level of emotional intelligence were more empathetic with others. Results revealed significant positive correlation between variables of the research emotional intelligence and empathy. As a result, emotional intelligence directly affects the teaching and learning process (Abiodullah et al., 2020)

The second hypothesis was that self-compassion and emotional intelligence would likely to be a positive predictor of empathy among

university Teachers. Means good levels of self-compassionate and emotional intelligent enhance the teacher's empathy. The findings of the analysis accepted the hypothesis at statistical level. Results revealed that self-compassion and emotional intelligence both significantly positively predicted empathy in university Teachers. Meanwhile a research conducted by (Lyvers et al., 2020) on predictive role of self- reflection and emotional intelligence on empathy

The fourth hypothesis was that male teachers tend to be exhibit higher level of self-compassion as compared to female teacher. The findings of the analysis reject the hypothesis statistically. Results indicated that there is a minor (0.1) difference in the mean of male and female Teachers. But at the statistical level the results are not significant. The results were not consistent in the past researches. The reason for this inconsistency might be the cultural differences or sample taken from a limited area. Because previous research that support this hypothesis had conducted in collectivistic culture. But this research had done in individualistic culture. Results revealed that males had slightly high level of self-compassion as compared to females (Cai et al., 2023).

The fifth hypothesis was that female teachers tend to be exhibit higher level of emotional intelligence and empathy as compared to male teachers. Hypothesis was accepted statistically. Results revealed statistically significant mean difference in emotional intelligence and empathy of university male teachers and female university teachers. Possible reason of female scoring high can be our culture. In Pakistani culture, most women prefer to stay at home and happily accept the household responsibilities and financially dependent on males. So, they are trained to survive in men-dominant society. And handle all household problems with calm attitude. A significant and favorable association between teachers' job performance and emotional self-awareness, self-confidence, success, developing others, and conflict management was found to exist, according to key research findings (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anjum, 2020).

Female university teachers tend to have higher level of empathy. Male have more testosterone, which is negatively related to empathy and female have more oxytocin which is positively correlated to empathy, so gender differences appear from here. Second can be the role of both genders, like men's role more focusing about equality, justice which has no relation with empathy while women's are more focused about others that is related to empathy. This present study has some limitations like sample was taken from only one city which decreased the likelihood that the results would be generalizable. The gender discrepancy in this study may raise questions about generalizability and validity. The fact that the questionnaires required

self-reporting was a significant flaw in the current study. Because the study was self-reported, so may be its conclusion based on results might have been biased.

Recommendations and Suggestions

A big sample size and data from the whole country should be obtained in order for the conclusions to be generalizable. It is recommended that future studies should include more male university teachers in data. There needs to be more research on how to increase self-compassion, emotional intelligence and empathy among university teachers. For this purpose, longitudinal study will be helpful to understand the levels of empathy

Conclusion

Self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy were the subjects of a study to determine their relationships with university teachers. First hypothesis showed a strong positive association between self-compassion, emotional intelligence, and empathy, the three research variables. In university professors, self-compassion and emotional intelligence were highly significant positive predictors of empathy. The findings of the *t*-test showed that there were statistically significant differences between the sexes in terms of emotional intelligence, empathy, and gender, but not in terms of mean differences between the variables. Higher emotional intelligence and empathy scores were seen among female university professors.

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