

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF STUDENTS IN MEDAN CITY

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRAK
<p><i>Article History: (Filled in by Editor)</i></p> <p>Diterima: 05 Desember 2025 Direvisi: 25 Desember 2025 Disetujui: 30 Desember 2025 Tersedia Daring: 31 Januari 2026</p> <hr/> <p>Kata Kunci Belas Kasih Diri; Kesejahteraan Psikologis, Mahasiswa</p>	<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara welas diri dan kesejahteraan psikologis pada mahasiswa di Medan. Berdasarkan hasil uji korelasi Pearson, dapat disimpulkan bahwa terdapat hubungan positif yang kuat antara welas diri dan kesejahteraan psikologis pada mahasiswa yang sedang menulis tesis. Semakin tinggi tingkat welas diri, semakin tinggi pula kesejahteraan psikologis yang dirasakan mahasiswa. Hasil kategorisasi kesejahteraan psikologis berdasarkan aspek-aspek yang ditemukan adalah aspek penerimaan diri (78,1%), hubungan positif dengan orang lain (82,2%), dan otonomi (83%), yang menunjukkan kemampuan yang baik untuk menerima diri sendiri, membangun hubungan sosial yang sehat, dan mengambil keputusan secara mandiri. Pada aspek penguasaan lingkungan, tujuan hidup, dan pertumbuhan pribadi, distribusinya lebih seimbang antara kategori sedang dan tinggi, yang menunjukkan bahwa beberapa mahasiswa masih perlu mengembangkan kemampuan beradaptasi dengan lingkungan, menemukan tujuan hidup yang jelas, dan meningkatkan pertumbuhan pribadi.</p>

ABSTRACT	
<p>Keywords: Self Compassion; Psychological Wellbeing; Students</p>	<p><i>This study aims to determine the relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being in students in Medan. Based on the results of the Pearson correlation test, it can be concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being in students who are writing a thesis. The higher the level of self-compassion, the higher the psychological well-being felt by students. The results of the categorization of psychological well-being based on aspects found aspects of self-acceptance (78.1%), positive relationships with others (82.2%), and autonomy (83%), indicating a good ability to accept oneself, establish healthy social relationships, and make decisions independently. In the aspects of environmental mastery, life goals, and personal growth, the distribution is more balanced between the medium and high categories, which indicates that some students still need to develop the ability to adapt to the environment, find clear life goals, and improve personal growth.</i></p>



1. INTRODUCTION

The thesis writing period is a challenging time for students. During this phase, students often face academic pressure, demands to complete research, and expectations from supervisors and family. This often triggers stress, anxiety, and feelings of insecurity, which can impact their psychological well-being. A thesis is a term used in Indonesia to describe a scientific paper in the form of a written presentation of undergraduate research results that addresses a problem or phenomenon in a specific field of science using applicable principles (Chesney & Darbes, 2023). Based on the formulated lay definition, a thesis contains the following components: a written work, scientific work, research results conducted by a student, and a bachelor's degree (Fachrial & Herdiningtyas, 2023).

Conflicts and obstacles that students cannot overcome in the process of writing a thesis will have an impact on the decline of their psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is the full achievement of one's psychological potential and a state where an individual can accept their strengths and weaknesses as they are, have a purpose in life, develop positive relationships with others, become independent, able to control their environment, and continue to grow personally (Dwitya & Priyambodo, 2020)

Individuals with high psychological well-being will accept themselves positively, enabling them to develop their potential well, build warm relationships with others, be independent and free to manage their own needs, master their environment, be able to utilize opportunities, create opportunities for self-development, and have a purpose in life, thereby achieving life satisfaction (Aziz et al., 2023). also explains that psychological well-being contributes to achievement. This means that psychological well-being leads to the emergence of positive emotions in facing life's challenges and obstacles. These positive emotions will open up space for

potential, so that individuals can give their best performance in learning. Thus, students who have high psychological well-being can improve academic achievement in lectures. Meanwhile, individuals who have low psychological well-being tend to be unable to accept themselves well, are easily stressed, depressed, dissatisfied, have difficulty establishing good relationships, feel isolated, dependent on others, have less control over the environment so they are unable to develop optimally, tend to be trapped in the past, do not have a clear direction in life so they are unable to face change (Susi Fitri & Revitia Thalita Salsabila, 2020).

Low psychological well-being among Indonesian students is nothing new. Several studies have shown that a significant number of students suffer from low psychological well-being. Research conducted by Triaswari and Utami (Gelles et al., 2020) showed that 27.26% of psychology students at Gajah Mada University had low psychological well-being. As many as 46.2% of students at the University of Indonesia had low psychological well-being (Anggraini, 2021).

The results of the interview above show that the two students have good self-compassion and are able to regulate themselves well in the process of completing their final assignment or thesis, so that the difficulties they face when working on their thesis

do not prevent them from completing their thesis on time, in this case completing the proposal seminar according to the schedule.

Students face many challenges during their time at university, both internal and external. The feelings they experience can impact their psychological well-being, such as excessive self-esteem, which can affect their self-acceptance. This can be overcome if students develop self-compassion. Students with high self-compassion are better able to understand, recognize, and accept everything that happens to them, including the difficulties they face. This allows them to manage all attitudes and feelings to remain positive and experience greater life satisfaction, which leads to improved psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being is considered important because every individual desires well-being. Individuals will experience well-being when they are able to accept their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, it can be concluded that individuals with high self-compassion will also have high psychological well-being. Self-compassion is also linked to many psychological outcomes. Individuals with high levels of self-compassion have higher levels of happiness, higher life satisfaction, lower negative affect, and fewer symptoms of (Hasanah & Pratisti, 2023).

Based on the above explanation, the author is interested in examining the relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being among college students in Medan (Abdullah, 2022). This research is expected to contribute to the world of education, particularly psychology in Indonesia, and to provide insight to the public, particularly college students, about the concepts of self-compassion and psychological well-being

2. METHOD

Research variables are the initial step used to determine a main variable in a study and find the function of each variable in the study (Sya'roni, 2019). According to Sugiono (2013), a research variable is an attribute or object that has certain variations that have been determined by the researcher so that it can be studied and ultimately drawn to be used as a conclusion.

The subjects of this study are students and active students in Medan City. According to Arikunto (2006) population is the overall subject in a study. The population in this study is active students in Medan City who are writing their thesis. The total population of students and the sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiyono (Dumas et al., 2024) purposive sampling is a sampling technique by adjusting based on certain criteria or objectives (intentional). The criteria used by researchers are:

- a. Active students of Medan City.
- b. Students who are writing their thesis in Medan City
- c. Age 18-23 years

The primary data collection technique is to use a psychological scale as a measuring tool to reveal psychological aspects. A psychological scale is a data collection procedure that expresses psychological constructs or concepts that can describe aspects of an

individual's personality (Aboobaker, 2022). Data collection in this study can be done online. Data collection methods are methods that can be used to used by researchers to collect data. The research method used was distributing questionnaires. This study used a questionnaire method using a Likert scale. According to Arikunto (Every-Palmer et al., 2020) a questionnaire is a list of questions given to respondents with the intention of encouraging respondents to provide information according to user requests. The data collection method in this study used questionnaires to compile the Self-compassion scale and Psychological well-being (Adu, 2023).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study included 270 students from several universities/campuses in Medan. The researchers categorized each student respondent based on gender, age, ethnicity, and university.

Description of Research Results

From the table above, it is known that the hypothetical *self-compassion data* shows a minimum score (X_{min}) of 17 and a maximum score (X_{max}) of 68, with a mean value of 42.5 and a standard deviation of 8.5. Meanwhile, the empirical data obtained a minimum score of 29 and a maximum score of 66, with a mean value of 49.44 and a standard deviation of 4.29. This shows that empirically, the respondents' *Self-Compassion scores* are on average higher than the hypothetical mean value, but with a smaller data distribution (standard deviation), indicating that the respondents' scores are relatively more homogeneous (Lim et al., 2024).

For *the psychological well-being variable*, hypothetical data shows a minimum score of 23 and a maximum score of 92, with a mean value of 57.5 and a standard deviation of 11.5. While in empirical data, the minimum score obtained by respondents is 39 and a maximum score of 89, with a mean value of 70.74 and a standard deviation of 7.14. These results show that the average *Psychological Well-Being* of respondents is also higher than the hypothetical mean value, with a lower data distribution, so it can be said that the level of *Psychological Well-Being* of respondents tends to be in the fairly good category and is relatively consistent among research subjects (Yosep et al., 2023).

The researchers presented the categorization results of all data obtained from the respondents who were the research subjects. The results of this categorization were obtained from the measuring instrument used in this study, which was divided into three categories: low, medium, and high.

Hypothesis

Pearson Product Moment Test

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig (2-tailed)	
Self-compassion	0.617	0,000	270
Psychological Well-Being			

From the results of the hypothesis test analysis, the significance value is 0.000, which means H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected, meaning there is a significant relationship between *self-compassion* and *psychological well-being* in students who are writing a thesis in Medan with a *Pearson product correlation value* of 0.617 or 61.7%. The classification of *the Pearson product correlation value* can be seen in the following Pearson r correlation coefficient table.

The results of the hypothesis test show a *Pearson Product Correlation value* of 0.617 or 61.7%. According to the Pearson r correlation coefficient classification table, the relationship between *self-compassion* and *psychological well-being* in students working on their theses in Medan is at a strong level.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between *self-compassion* and *psychological well-being* in students who are writing their theses in Medan City, and to determine the level of *self-compassion* and *psychological well-being* in students who are writing their theses in Medan City. Based on the results of the hypothesis test analysis, it was found that the significance value was 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), which means H_a was accepted and H_o was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between *self-compassion* and *psychological well-being* in students who are writing their theses in Medan City. The *Pearson correlation coefficient value* of 0.617 indicates that the relationship between the two variables is in the strong and positive category, which means that the higher the level of *self-compassion* of students, the higher the level of *psychological well-being* they have. These results illustrate that students who are able to be compassionate towards themselves (*self-compassion*), accept their shortcomings and failures positively, and are not too harsh in judging themselves, tend to have better *psychological well-being* (Lim et al., 2025).

well during the thesis writing process. A full attitude of self-acceptance enables students to deal with academic pressure, anxiety, and fear of failure in a more adaptive manner. *Self-compassion* is not only an attitude of self-acceptance, but also an adaptive psychological mechanism that increases students' mental resilience during stressful academic processes. Students with high *self-compassion* are better able to view the thesis writing process as a challenge for growth, rather than a burden. They tend to have a positive outlook on life, feel more valuable, and are able to find meaning in the difficulties they face.

Practically, the results of this study indicate that students who are writing their theses in Medan City and have good *self-compassion skills, such as accepting their weaknesses, realizing that difficulties are part of the human experience, and being able to face pressure with full awareness, tend to have higher psychological well-being* . This finding is in line with Ryff's (1989) theory on *psychological well-being* which emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, life goals, and personal growth. Thus, *self-compassion* plays an important role in helping students deal with academic pressure, especially in the final stages of writing their thesis, thereby maintaining their *psychological well-being*.

A study conducted by Aditya (Burgess et al., 2022) final-year students writing their theses at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Halu Oleo University, showed a positive relationship between *self-compassion* and psychological well-being. The descriptive analysis showed that most final-year students had moderate levels of *self-compassion*. This indicates that students are quite capable of showing self-care, are not overly critical of themselves when faced with failure, and recognize that failure is an experience shared by others, thus enabling them to be more compassionate towards themselves. Furthermore, the descriptive analysis also showed that most final-year students had moderate levels of psychological well-being, indicating that the average student in the faculty has fairly good psychological well-being.

The results of this study, which show that *self-compassion* has a significant relationship with *the psychological well-being* of students writing their theses in Medan City, are in line with Tran's (2022) study on 654 students in Vietnam. Tran found that psychological well-being and positive emotions fully mediated the relationship between self-compassion, mindfulness, stress, and self-esteem. This indicates that *self-compassion* is not only directly related to *psychological well-being* but also plays a role in forming other psychological mechanisms that support individual well-being, such as positive emotions and self-esteem. Thus, the results of this study strengthen Tran's (Hernawati & Eriany, 2020) findings that *self-compassion* is an important factor in improving *psychological well-being*, especially in students facing academic pressure.

Research conducted by Kumalasari and Azzahra in Indonesia added that students with high levels of *self-compassion* are better able to balance academic and social life, thus improving psychological well-being.

They are more stable. Wilson, Weiss, and Shapiro (2022) also found that students with high *self-compassion* are more resilient in the face of academic failure because they are able to transform negative experiences into learning opportunities.

Based on the descriptive results of the study, it can be seen that the majority of students writing their theses in Medan City have a high level of *psychological well-being*, and *their self-compassion* shows a relatively balanced distribution between the medium and high categories. Students with high *self-compassion* tend to have better *psychological well-being* because they are able to accept themselves, reduce excessive criticism, and face academic challenges in a healthier manner. Conversely, students with medium or low levels of *self-compassion* are at greater risk of experiencing a decline in psychological well-being due to a tendency to blame themselves or feel isolated.

Individuals who are able to view themselves more positively, even with a little illusion, tend to have better psychological well-being. Students with high *self-compassion* are able to reframe thesis failures or obstacles in a more positive light, thus preventing them from damaging their mental health (Wakhidah, 2020).

The results of the categorization of *psychological well-being* based on aspects found in the aspect of self-acceptance, the majority of respondents were in the high category (78.1%), with 18.9% in the medium category, and only 3% in the low category. This finding indicates that students are generally able to accept themselves well, including accepting their strengths and weaknesses (Ramachandran et al., 2023). This is in line

with Carl Rogers' (1961) theory of *self*, which states that self-acceptance is an important indicator of self-actualization for psychological well-being. Research by Smith and Morgan (2020) also found that *self-acceptance* plays a significant role in increasing students' academic resilience, while Shen, Wang, and Liu (Nguyen et al., 2024) revealed that students with high self-acceptance have lower levels of academic anxiety.

Regarding positive relationships with others, 82.2% of students were in the high category, 17.4% in the moderate category, and only 0.4% in the low category. This indicates that the majority of students have healthy and supportive social relationships, both with family, friends, and the campus environment. Bowlby's (1988) *Attachment Theory* emphasizes the importance of secure interpersonal relationships as a key factor in building psychological well-being. Research by Wang and Kong (2019) supports this finding by showing that the quality of social relationships is a significant predictor of student well-being, while a study by Białek and Anczewska (2021) stated that social support from peers plays a significant role in improving student mental health. These findings imply that universities need to strengthen *peer-support programs* to better enable students to cope with academic stress through social support.

The autonomy aspect also showed high results, with 83% of students in the high category, 15.6% in the medium category, and only 1.5% in the low category. This indicates that the majority of students are independent in making decisions and are able to take responsibility for their choices (Guo & Xu, 2024).

Overall, the results of the study indicate that self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, and autonomy were predominantly high, while environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth were more evenly distributed between the medium and high categories (Hutajulu et al., 2023). This indicates that although students have good abilities in self-acceptance, building relationships, and being independent, they still need further support in terms of finding life purpose, mastering their environment, and experiencing optimal personal growth (Park et al., 2020).

self-compassion categorization based on aspects found that the majority of respondents (73%) were in the high category for *self-kindness*, almost all respondents (99.3%) showed high scores on *common humanity*, while the vast majority (93.7%) were in the medium category for *mindfulness* with only 6.3% in the high category. These results indicate that students generally tend to be able to be kind and forgiving towards themselves (*self-kindness*) and almost all feel connected to human experience (*common humanity*), but the ability to maintain stable full awareness of internal experiences (*mindfulness*) is still relatively at an intermediate level for most students (Banjarnahor, 2020).

The categorization results show that the majority of respondents (73%) achieved a high score on *self-kindness*, only 25.9% were in the medium category and 1.1% in the low category. Neff (2003) with a neurophysiological approach such as Polyvagal Theory (Porges, 2011) which emphasizes that the capacity to respond to oneself with kindness is related to the state of the autonomic nervous system that provides a sense of security. In practice, when students feel safe (physiologically and socially), they are more likely to be gentle with themselves when facing academic failure or revision.

the self-compassion categorization based on gender found that male and female students had relatively balanced levels of *self-compassion*, with slight variations in the distribution of categories. Of the 100 male students, 51 (51%) were in the high category, 48 (48%) in the medium category, and only 1 (1%) in the low category. Meanwhile, of the 170 female students, 83 (48.8%) were in the high category, 87 (51.2%) in the medium category, and none were in the low category (Ifdil et al., 2020).

However, at age 23, there was a decline, with only 56% in the high category, 42% in the medium category, and 2% in the low category. This condition is understandable because 23-year-old students are generally facing the final phase of college, where academic burdens (thesis writing, graduation preparation) and anxiety about facing the world of work are more dominant. This is in accordance with Schlossberg's (1981) theory of life transitions, which emphasizes that major transitions often reduce levels of well-being because individuals are faced with demands for change and uncertainty. Research conducted by Gould & Macdonald (2022) confirms that age factors influence the dynamics of well-being, where younger individuals tend to experience greater fluctuations due to the identity transition phase (Addis et al., 2021). *the self-compassion* categorization based on age were found at age 18, the majority of students were in the high *self-compassion* category (58.1%), while 41.9% were in the medium category and none were in the low category. This indicates that students at this age are generally starting to be able to treat themselves with compassion and have an awareness of the general human experience (Zhang et al., 2021). The high *self-compassion* at this age also

can be explained by the concept of *emerging adulthood* put forward by Arnett (2000), where individuals are in the phase of exploring identity, career, and social relationships, so that positive self-treatment can be an adaptive strategy in facing academic and social challenges (Pridayati & Indrawati, 2019).

At ages 19 and 20, the proportion of students with high *self-compassion* remained dominant (67.9% and 61.7%), while those with moderate self-compassion remained at 32.1% and 38.3%. This stability indicates relatively good psychological adaptability to increasing academic pressure. According to Neff & Germer (2013), *Mindful Self-Compassion training* can help students maintain and enhance *self-compassion*, enabling individuals to cope with failure or academic pressure without overly judging themselves. Tran's (2022) research in Vietnam also supports these findings, showing that *self-compassion* can reduce negative psychological symptoms and improve well-being in students facing academic stress. At ages 18 to 20, most students demonstrated high levels of *self-compassion*. This is in line with the findings of Bluth et al. (2023) in their study showed that *self-compassion programs* can improve psychological well-being in young adults. At the ages of 21 and 22, the proportion of students in the medium category increased significantly (62.9% and 53.8%), while the high category decreased (Masyhuri et al., 2023).

(37.1% and 46.2%). This can be interpreted as a reflection of heavier academic pressures, such as thesis writing and graduation preparation. Schlossberg (1981) in his theory of life transitions emphasized that major transitions can reduce well-being because individuals are faced with changing roles and new responsibilities. These results

are supported by a study by Kumalasari & Azzahra (Sun et al., 2022) which found that students with moderate to high *self-compassion* are better able to balance academic and social life. However, when the burden increases without additional coping strategies, *self-compassion* can temporarily decline. A study by Bluth et al. (Banjarnahor, 2020) also showed that *self-compassion programs* can help young adults cope with stress and improve their psychological well-being (Wakhidah, 2020).

At age 23, only 42% of students were in the high *self-compassion category*, while the moderate category increased to 56%, and the low category appeared at 2%. This decline may be explained by the stress of transitioning to the workforce and post-college uncertainty, which can reduce an individual's capacity to treat themselves with compassion. At age 23, the proportion of students with high *self-compassion* decreased, while the moderate category increased.

4. CONCLUSION

1. Based on the results of the Pearson correlation test, it can be concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being in students writing their theses. The higher the level of self-compassion, the higher the psychological well-being experienced by students.
2. The results of the psychological well-being categorization based on aspects found aspects of self-acceptance (78.1%), positive relationships with others (82.2%), and autonomy (83%), indicating good abilities in self-acceptance, establishing healthy social relationships, and making independent decisions. In the aspects of environmental mastery, life goals, and personal growth, the distribution is more balanced between the medium and high categories, which indicates that some students still need to develop the ability to adapt to the environment, find a clear life purpose, and improve personal growth. Overall, students tend to have good psychological well-being, but some aspects still require attention to support the optimization of academic and personal development.
3. The results of the self-compassion categorization based on aspects found that there were aspects of self-kindness (73%) and common humanity (99.3%), indicating a good ability to be gentle with oneself and recognize that difficult experiences are part of the universal human experience. In the aspect of mindfulness, the majority of students were in the moderate category (93.7%), which indicates that although they are able to be compassionate towards themselves and feel connected to others, the ability to maintain full awareness of internal experiences still needs to be improved. Overall, students have quite good self-compassion, which supports their psychological well-being in dealing with academic pressures such as writing a thesis.
4. The results of the psychological well-being categorization based on gender found that the majority of male students (73%) and female students (72.4%) were in the high category, indicating good psychological well-being. Meanwhile, a small proportion were in the medium category, and almost none were in the low category. These findings indicate that both men and women are able to maintain their psychological well-being, with a relatively balanced distribution between genders.

5. The results of the psychological well-being categorization based on age show that the majority of students across the 18–23 age range fall into the high category, although the percentage varies, ranging from 56% to 89.4%. The moderate category appears in smaller proportions, while the low category is almost non-existent. This indicates that students generally have a good level of psychological well-being, although there is a slight decline at age 23, possibly related to increased academic pressure as they approach the completion of their thesis.
6. The results of the self-compassion categorization based on gender show that male and female students have relatively balanced levels of self-compassion. For males, 51% are in the high category and 48% are in the moderate category, while for females, 48.8% are in the high category and 51.2% are in the moderate category. Only a very small percentage are in the low category (1% for males and 0% for females). This indicates that, in general, both male and female students have a fairly good ability to be compassionate towards themselves.
7. The results of the self-compassion categorization by age show that the majority of students in each age group have moderate to high self-compassion. At the age of 18–20, the proportion of students with high self-compassion is more dominant (58.1%–67.9%), indicating good psychological adaptation to initial academic pressure. However, at the age of 21–23, there is an increase in the proportion of the moderate category (53.8%–62.9%) and a decrease in the high category (37.1%–46.2%), indicating a temporary decline in self-compassion ability, possibly related to the increasing academic load and the responsibility of writing a thesis. Overall, these data indicate that student self-compassion is quite good, although there are fluctuations related to higher academic pressure in the final stage of the study.

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