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The Mediator Role of Self-Compassion in the Relationship between Self-Concept and Communication Skills in Emerging Adults

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the mediator role of self-compassion in the relationship between self-concept and communication skills of emerging adults, using a correlational research survey method to survey the impressions of 206 university students from various institutions across Turkey. The respondents were asked to fill out Social Comparison Scale, Self-Compassion Scale, and Communication Skills Scale to reveal that self-compassion partially mediated the relationship between self-concept and communication skills. Bootstrapping also showed that the indirect effect of self-concept on communication skills through self-compassion was significant. Individuals between adulthood and adolescence were found to perform the tasks expected of adolescence and ensure quality and satisfaction in life after graduation.The results revealed the connection between strong communication skills and positive self-concept and the fact that this connection can be addressed through self-compassion. Given that the most common reasons for university students to apply for psychological counseling concern problems around self-concept and communication/socialization, the inclusion of psycho-educational content in the concept of self-compassion in programs related to communication skills, using methods such as self-compassion awareness exercises can make a significant contribution in practice.

1. Introduction

Over the last century, some changes have been observed in roles regarding the transition period between adolescence and adulthood – i.e. the period of life that meets the demographic age range of 18-25. Until about thirty years ago, many studies and theories considered life tasks such as completing a certain level of education, leaving the parental home, starting a job that allows one to make a living, getting married, and having children as primary indicators of adulthood (Shanahan et al., 2002).The period between the late teens and early twenties was acknowledged as the appropriate period for reaching adulthood by completing these various tasks. Nowadays, these indications as mentioned earlier of adulthood, do not appear to be as effective and essential for a person to be regarded as an adult or to perceive themselves as an adult (Arnett, 2004). In light of changing conditions, the factors that determine adulthood have become defined as being able to take responsibility for oneself, make independent decisions, and become economically self-sufficient (m-Shanahan

et al., 2002). Furthermore, the age for completing these life tasks has risen toward the end of the twenties on average, and – compared to the prior century – a substantial postponement has thus occurred (Atak et al., 2016). Considering all these, it is evident that what is known and foreseen, concerning the transition to adulthood, has undergone changes over time.

According to Erikson's (1968) Psychosocial Development Theory as an adopted and comprehensive theory that deals with stages of life, late teens struggle with "role confusion versus identity," while those in their mid-twenties struggle with "isolation versus intimacy" conflicts. Although Erikson speaks of such irrefutably significant and easily observable conflicts, it cannot be ignored that the phases of the individual's transition from adolescence to adulthood, associated with longer education and thus separation from the family, the opportunity to make one's own decisions without the influence of the family, and the attainment of economic independence, are shifted to later ages.In light of this, it would not be false to claim that individuals aged 18- and 25 may experience interwoven conflicts of role confusion versus gaining identity and isolation versus intimacy.

Regarded as one of the most influential theories in recent times, the Emerging Adulthood Theory (Arnett, 2000), which focuses on the age range of 18-25 (also known as the "university phase") points out that the stated age range is a developmental stage that connects adolescence with adulthood and comprises traces of both. As each developmental stage has its traits and tasks, the emerging adulthood stage holds some themes. According to Arnett (2004), one of these themes is identity exploration. Although identity explorations arise in the early teens, as stated in Erikson's theory, this continues in the 20s – especially when the individual is still in the role of a student. In the emerging adulthood stage, the individual is still in the process of understanding and seeking emotional and romantic relationships, social position, a career, and a worldview. In this stage of life, individuals are self-focused, making decisions, establishing social interactions, and attempting to learn to survive on their own. From this point of view, it can be stated that the emerging adulthood period is a stage in which it is vital for the person who is in the process of self-understanding and self-concept to establish appropriate and meaningful connections with the outside world.

While individuals' self-concept is shaped according to their interaction and relationship with the people and their self-evaluation, a cyclical self-concept of oneself impacts one's behaviour. Hence, self-concept both affects and is affected by social relations. How people perceive and treat themselves can determine how they position themselves in social contexts and communicate.

Self-concept is related to social-emotional development and social problem solving (Ozkan, 2015; Polat & Aksin, 2015). Furthermore, it is stated that self-esteem, which can be considered as a sub-dimension of self-concept, is positively related to social behaviour (Gizir & Baran, 2003). Both Rosenberg (1979) and Harter (1993) have stated that people who perceive themselves as competent in fields of life and personality have higher self-esteem.

On the other hand, Schroeder (1995) has a more detailed explanation, arguing that those with increased anxiety due to the negative perception of oneself fail to read the cues in social contexts and therefore display poor communication skills. In this regard, it has been found that negative emotions, such as anxiety, which arise due to a negative self-concept, negatively affect information processing processes and tasks that require attention, such as reading social contexts and forming appropriate responses, can lead to failure due to the disruption of this mechanism (Sarason & Sarason, 1986).Aside from how a person perceives themselves, how that person builds a relationship with themselves is also important. This phenomenon is treated as a matter of self-compassion. Self-compassion does not necessarily presuppose that a person perceives himself positively. On the contrary, it expresses being kind to oneself because of qualities that are perceived as negative (Neff, 2003a).Self-compassion is considered a protective factor that enhances the strength of coping (Akin & Akin, 2015). It makes it possible to forgive and accept oneself for mistakes even in negativities such as failure and incompetence (Neff et al., 2007). The period when self-compassion is at the lowest level is adolescence (Neff, 2003a). In this period, while the person seeks an identity as a unique individual, the tendency to compare themselves with others increases. Rising criticism over comparing oneself with others brings social withdrawal (Neff, 2003a). In this sense, it seems meaningful to consider self-compassion as an intermediary role, which is a factor that affects both one's perceptions of oneself and the relationship the person establishes with others.

With this in mind, this study aims to examine how the relationship between perceived communication skills and the self-concept of individuals in emerging adulthood is shaped through self-compassion. As aforementioned, emerging adulthood is a life period that bears traces of adolescence and adulthood and focuses on an individual's perceptions regarding self-concept, self-compassion, and communication skills. Considering the related literature, it is hypothesized that self-compassion has a mediating role in the relationship between self-concept and perceived communication skills. In other words, it is hypothesised that participants who report low scores on self-concept will also have low scores on communication skills, and it is expected that scores indicative of self-concept will influence communication skills via the mediating role of self-compassion. Consistent with these data and conclusions from the literature, the following research questions were formulated:

- Is self-concept positively related to perceived communication skills?
- Is there a positive relationship between self-concept and self-compassion?3. Are perceived communication skills positively related to self-compassion?
- Is the relationship between self-concept and perceived communication skills mediated by self-compassion?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model

In this study, the correlational research survey method, which is a sub-model of the general survey method (Mazlum & Atalay, 2017), was used to examine the relationship between university students' communication skills with self-concept and self-compassion. The most common model to analyze the mediation effect is structural equation modeling (SEM; Cheung & Lau, 2008; Kline, 2010). Therefore, SEM was conducted to examine the relationship between self- concept, perceived communication skills, and self-compassion. Chi-square difference test (x^2) and Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), a measure of model fit adjusted for parsimony (Burnham & Anderson, 2002), were used to determine which model was preferred. The model with smaller values of AIC and ECVI has been suggested to have a better fit for the data.

2.2. Research Sample

The participants in this study were students who have received education from various universities across Turkey. Since the research was planned to be an investiagation of factors that play an important role in emerging adulthood, university students were recruited as the research sample. The sampling method in current study is convenience sampling, in which individuals who fit the criteria of a study are identified in any way possible (Emerson, 2015). The scales were delivered to participants via a prepared online form. 206 of 210 participants within the specified age range who accessed online forms, read and accepted the informed consent, and filled out all the scale items were included in the study. A total of 120 females and 86 males, whose ages varied between 18 and 25 (x=21.24, sd=1.61), participated in the study. Of the participants, 41 (19.9%) were freshmen, 40 (19.4%) were sophomores, 61 (29.6%) were juniors, and 64 (31.1%) were seniors.

2.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedure

Personal information form. A personal information form was designed by the researchers and was included in data collection tools to examine the age, gender, and education level of the participants.

Social comparison scale. This scale was developed by Allan and Gilbert (1991) to measure how an individual perceives oneself when compared to the others. Sahin, Durak, and Sahin (1993) performed the Turkish adaptation and validity-reliability study of the scale. The Turkish version of 18 items was brought in with the items added by Sahin and Sahin (1992) and Sahin and Durak (1994) during the adaptation and development phase of the original scale with 11 items. Participants rank the scale items from positive to negative on a 6-point Likert scale between two edges. High digits indicate positive self-concepts, while low digits indicate negative self-concepts. Aside from the total score, the scale consists of three factors: social class, atrectşveness, and social skills. Cronbach alpha value was reported as .87. As a self-assessment scale, it is expressed that its validity and reliability are at high levels. The Cronbach alpha value calculated for the current study was .90. The purpose of using this scale in the study is to evaluate self-concept, which is the way a person perceives him or herself.

Self-compassion scale. The original Self-Compassion Scale developed by Neff (2003b) consists of 26 items and three main components that define self-compassion. These three main components of self-compassion are defined as self-kindness versus self-judgment, common humanity versus isolation, and mindfulness versus over-identification. The scale is scored in a five-point Likert type. Turkish adaptation, validity, and reliability studies were carried out first by Akin and Akin, later on by Deniz, Kesici, and Sumer (2008). First, two items with a factor load of less than .30 were excluded from the scale, and the Turkish form was reduced to 24 items. In addition, while the six-factor structure was confirmed in the first study, the second study supported the one-factor structure. Repeated validity and reliability study made by Kantas (2013) also pointed to a single factor structure. The Cronbach alpha value was reported as .94. For the current study, the Cronbach alpha value was calculated as .88.

Communication skills scale. This was developed by Tuncer (2008) based on the model of Canary and Cody (1994). The communication skills scale consists of six factors: adaptability/flexibility, the relevance of speech, speech management, empathy, efficiency, and appropriateness, and includes 36 questions in total, 18 of which are negative and the rest are positive. Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin value reported as .74 and Barlett test was significant, allowing running factor analysis. Cronbach alpha coefficient was reported as .81 in previous studies, and it was calculated as .80 for the current study.

2.4. Data Analysis

The battery of online measurement tools, which was created on Google Forms, has been made accessible for university students with an informed consent form. Participants were contacted for a convenience sampling method (Kurtulmus, 2010).

A correlation analysis was performed with the SPSS 23 program to examine the relationships and Structural Equation Modeling was conducted with the AMOS program to test the mediation model.

In this study, a two-stage SEM was used according to the recommendations of Kline (2011). In the first phase, the measurement model was tested, which deals with the formation of latent variables by the indicator variables and the relationships among these latent variables. After the measurement model was verified, the hypothetical structural model was tested. Aside from the x^- difference test, AIC and ECVI values were examined to qualify and select one of the multiple models as the best model in SEM. The smaller AIC and ECVI values model is acknowledged as the best model (Akaike, 1987; Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

In addition, bootstrapping, which provides additional evidence of the significance of mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2008), was also applied. For this purpose, bootstrapping was used to increase the sample to 10,000 and to test the significance of mediation in the large sample.

2.5. Ethical

Ethical approval was received from Istanbul Medipol University Social Sciences Institute Ethics Committee (43037191-604.01.01-E.53199, 6/10/2020). The study was based on voluntary participation, and online forms collected the data. Before answering the survey, all participants were informed about the study by the informed consent form.

3. Findings

3.1. Preliminary Analysis

The descriptive statistics results regarding the variables are presented in Table 1. Average scores came to x=77.54 (*sd*=12.65) for the social comparison scale, x=77.26 (*sd*=15.09) for the self-compassion scale, x=17.60 (*sd*=2.61) for the adaptation ability, which is the sub-dimension of the communication skills scale, x=20.25 (*sd*=3.18) for the speech relevance, x=21.04 (*sd*=2.69) for being able to manage the speech, x=19.76 (*sd*=2.66) for empathy, x=21.24 (*sd*=4.04) for efficiency, x=20.68 (*sd*=3.43) for appropriateness and x=120.57 (*sd*=12.79) for the total of the communication skills. Skewness=-0.62 in the social comparison scale, kurtosis=0.38, skewness=-0.04 in the self-compassion scale, kurtosis=-0.26, skewness=-0.23 for adaptability, which is the sub-dimensions of the communication skills scale, kurtosis=-0.21, speech relevance skewness=-0.03, kurtosis=-0.26, ability to manage speech skewness=-0.20, kurtosis=0.74, empathy skewness=-0.22, kurtosis =0.50, efficiency skewness=-0.34, kurtosis=0.35, appropriateness skewness=-0.47, kurtosis=0.66, and skewness=-0.04, kurtosis=-0.09 in the total scores of communication skills.

Table1. *Descriptive Statistics Results Regarding the Variables*

	$\bar{x}$	sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
SCStotal	77.54	12.65	-.61	.37
Self-Compassion	77.26	15.09	-.03	-.26
CSStotal	120.56	12.78	-.04	-.08
Adaptability (CSS1)	17.60	2.61	-.23	-.20
Relevance of speech (CSS22)	20.25	3.18	-.03	-.25
Speech management (CSS3)	21.04	2.69	-.19	.74
Empathy (CSS4)	19.76	2.66	-.22	.50
Efficiency (CSS5)	21.24	4.04	-.33	.35
Appropriateness (CSS6)	20.68	3.43	-.47	.65

*1-SCStotal: Total scores in Social Comparison Scale, 2-, 3-CSSotalt: Total scores in Communication Scale

To assess the relationship between the variables, Pearson correlation coefficients and significance were evaluated with a 95% confidence interval. The results are shown in Table 2.The scores for the social comparison scale positively correlated with the total scores of both self-compassion (r=.53, %95 CI=.41, .62) and communication skills (r=.55, %95 CI=.45, .64), as well as with all sub-dimensions of the communication skills scale, except speech management. Self-compassion scores were positively correlated with the total scores of social comparison, communication skills, and all sub-dimensions of communication skills.

Table 2. *Correlation Coefficients and Significance With 95% Confidence Interval*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.SCSt	-								
2.SelfC	.53**								
3.CSSt	.55**	.47**							
4.CSS1	.37**	.32**	.74**						
5.CSS2	.41**	.31**	.69**	.40**					
6.CSS3	.08	.15*	.45**	.33**	.15*				
7.CSS4	.26**	.30**	.71**	.49**	.40**	.35**			
8.CSS5	.57**	.37**	.73**	.41**	.46**	.01	.38**		
9.CSS6	.46**	.42**	.76**	.51**	.36**	.23**	.41**	.51**	-

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.001, 1-SCSt: Total scores in Social Comparison Scale, 2-SelfC: Self -compassion scale, 3-CSSt: Total scores in Communication Scale.

3.2. Measurement Model

The measurement model consists of three latent factors (self-concept, self-compassion, and communication skills) and 12 observable variables. In addition to the six sub-dimensions of the communication skills scale and three dimensions of the social comparison scale, self-compassion in a single factor structure, was divided into three equivalent factors using the parcel method. Parceling was used due to higher reliability, greater communality, lower likelyhood of distributional violations, and higher ratio of common to unique factor variances, as suggested by Little et al. (2013).Several indices were used to evaluate the overall fit of the model to the data: x^2/DF<5, SRMR<.08, RMSEA<.08, CFI, RFI,GFI and TLI>.90 were used as cut-off levels as suggested in Hu and Bentler (1999) and Kline (2016). When the measurement model was tested, it was seen that the values of fit indices fell within the acceptable range: x^2(51, N=206)=78.845, p<.01; CFI=0.098; SRMR=0.043; RMSEA=0.052 CI (0.027, 0.073). Standardized factor loads were between 0.34 and 0.92 and seemed significant.
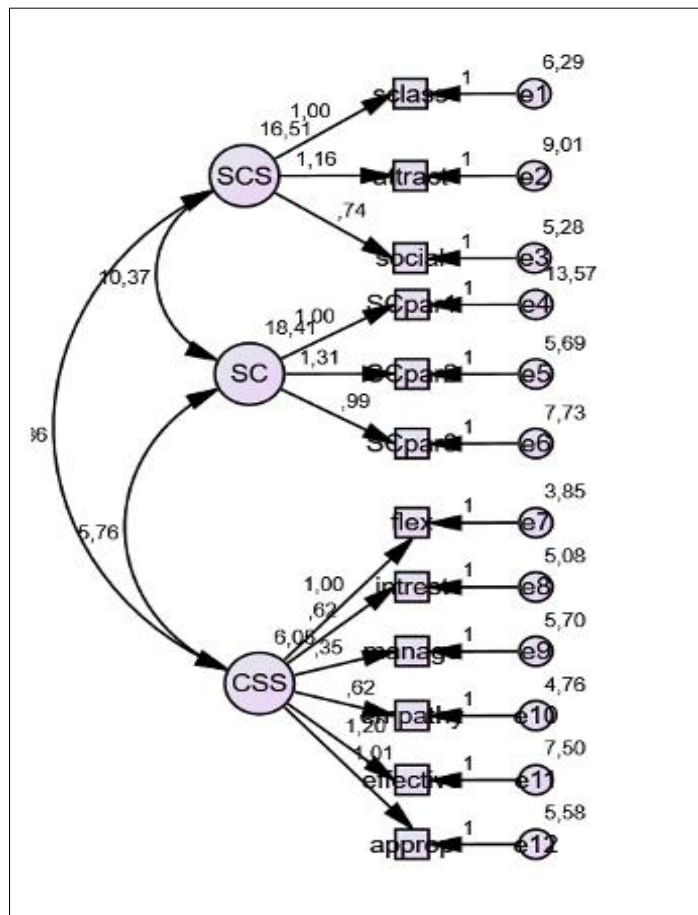
Note: SCS, Self-Comparison Scale; SC, Self-Compassion; CSS, Communication Skills Scale; SCpar1-3 parcels of Self-compassion scale.
Figure 1. *Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Measurement Model*
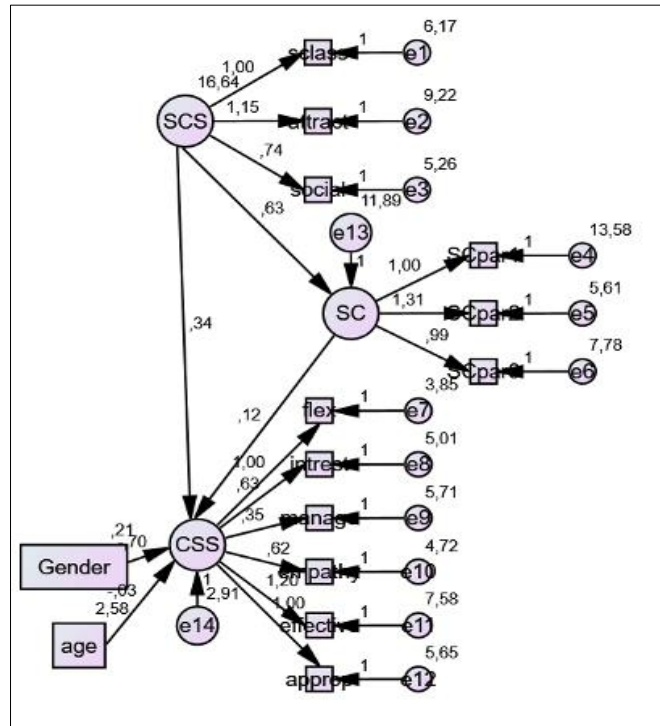
3.3. Structural Model

The direct path coefficient from self-concept to communication skills without a mediation effect was also significant (β=0.34, p<.001). This indicated a partial mediation model in which self-compassion mediated the relationship between self-concept and communication skills. Age and gender were included in the model as a covariant to communication skills, which was the exogenous variable. The goodness of fit indices for the model are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *Fit Indices Among Competing Models*

|	x^2	df	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	AIC	ECVI
Model1	134.445	74	.948	.0553	.063	196.445	.958
Model2	173.861	75	.915	.080	.080	233.861	1.141

Note: Model1: partially mediated structured model, Model2 fully mediated structured model

Note: SCS, Self-Comparison Scale; SC, Self-Compassion; CSS, Communication Skills Scale; SCpar1-3 parcels of Self-compassion scale.

Figure 2. *Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Partially Mediated Structural Model.*

To test the full mediation model, the direct path from self-concept to communication skills was extracted and reanalyzed, but the goodness-of-fit indices did not yield results in an acceptable range that corresponded to the full mediation model. Smaller AIC and ECVI values also indicated the accuracy of Model 1. Fully mediated model pathways and standardized parameter estimates are given in Figure 2.
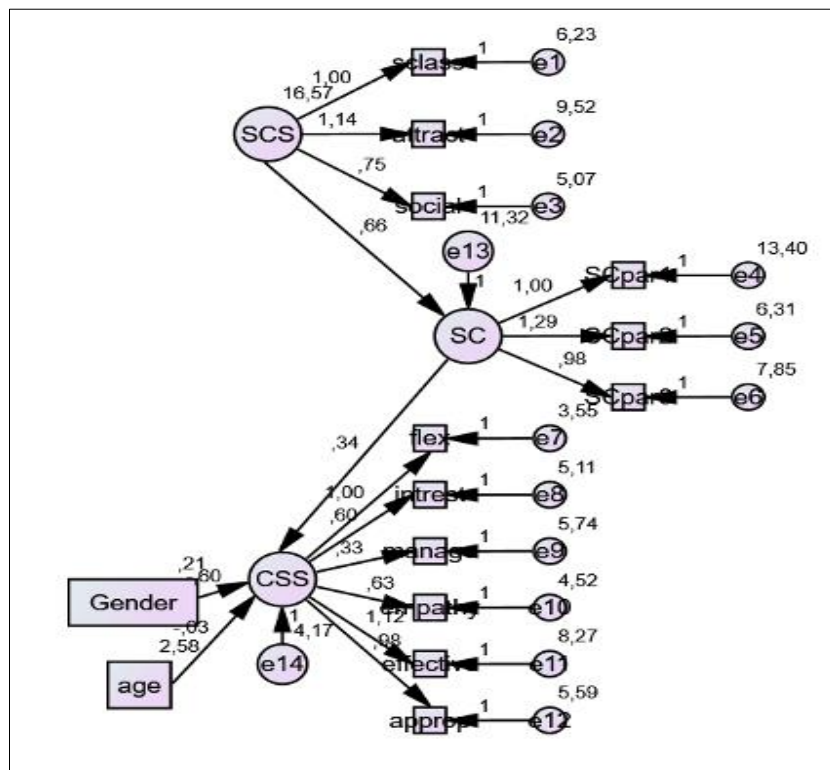
Note: SCS, Self-Comparison Scale; SC, Self-Compassion; CSS, Communication Skills Scale; SCpar1-3 parcels of Self-compassion scale.

Figure 3. *Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Fully Mediated Structural Model.*

3.4. Bootstrapping

A bootstrapping procedure was conducted to test the indirect path between self-concept and communication skills (MacKinnon, 2008). Bootstrap applied confidence intervals are given in Table 4.

Table 4. *Parameters and 95 % Cis for the Paths of the Partially - Mediated Models*

Model pathways	Effect	95 % C.I.	
		Lower	Upper
Direct effect			
Self-Concept → Communication skills	.34	.23	.49
Self-Compassion → Communication skills	.12	.01	.24
Self-Concept → Self-Compassion	.63	.48	.80
Indirect effect			
Self-Concept → Self-Compassion → Communication skills	.07	.01	.16

As seen in Table 4, the direct path coefficients were significant. Aside from this, the indirect path coefficient also seemed significant (bootstrap coefficient=.07, 95% CI=.01, .16). The fact that values in the 95% confidence interval do not include zero showed that self-concept significantly affected communication skills through self-compassion. All these results revealed that the indirect effect of self-concept on communication skills, mediated by self-compassion, is significant.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Three crucial factors concerning emerging adults' life tasks were put under the scope in this study. Although numerous researchers have already pointed out the relationship between self-concept and social skills, the role of self-compassion in this relationship has not been examined. The concepts the study deals with, such as self-concept, self-compassion, and communication skills, were interrelated. Accordingly, it can be stated that how a person perceives oneself directly affects their competence to communicate with others. This finding is consistent with other studies in the relevant literature on self-concept and communication skills (Gizir & Baran, 2003; Ozkan, 2015; Polat & Aksin, 2015; Sarason & Sarason, 1986; Schroeder, 1995). The main purpose of this study was to examine how self-compassion is positioned in the relation between these two variables. The obtained results revealed that self-compassion has a partial mediating role in the relationship between self-concept and communication skills. In other words, even though self-concept per se has an influence on communication ability, this influence is reinforced by self-compassion.People often make self-critical, self-blaming, and unpleasant comparative internal monologues (Rosenberg, 2003). The findings of Sarason and Sarason (1986) and Schroeder (1995) indicate that negative self-concept disrupts cognitive processes by "causing negative emotions" and leads to poor communication skills. At this point, the following self-compassion definition of Terry and Leary (2011) comes to the mind, in which: "Self-compassion is treating oneself with kindness, care, and concern even in the face of negative life events." Those who are higher in self-compassion regard strong negative feelings, which emerge as a result of self-demanding and destructive or when presented with negative situations, as a part of humanness and can bring positive emotions to the forefront by comforting and encouraging themselves through inner dialogue (Terry & Leary, 2011). Neff (2011) also defined self-compassion as an acceptance of one's weaknesses and the ability to embrace all of these qualities rather than being harshly critical or judgmental of oneself.From this point of view, it is evident that most people have traits that they find incomplete or incompetent and that coming face-to-face these traits can lead to negative feelings. At this point, potential negative feelings and harsh judgmental attitudes towards oneself can be replaced by understanding and self-acceptance for those who are high in self-compassion.

The university students in the study are individuals undergoing a period between adulthood and adolescence. It is inevitable that they thus seek faults by focusing on themselves with particularly adolescent egocentrism and judge themselves in comparison with others in terms of identity formation. However, in addition to this, given this period is simultaneously also one in which adulthood themes crop up, it is crucial to proceed with the due communication tasks as smoothly as possible. Developmental theorists often point out that the significance of completing previous stages with the least disruption possible for a pleasing adulthood. At this point, it becomes clear that it is crucial for an emerging adult to fulfil the tasks of adolescence and those of adulthood as ideally as possible in order to ensure quality and satisfaction in life after graduation.As a period that demands various complicated and heavy life tasks, emerging adulthood is a stage in which university

students, in particular, seek help by applying to psychological counseling services. While studies conducted both in Turkey and abroad indicate that the reasons for applying for psychological counseling of students in the earlier stages of education (middle school-high school) mostly aim to improve academic competence (Kaya & Kaya, 2018), the university period presents multiple other challenges, such as relationships with the opposite sex, friendship, family problems, professional development, and career issues on top of – and sometimes in lieu of – academic issues (Erkan et al., 2011; Nicholas, 2002; Norris, 2008; Schweitzer, 1996).

Norris (2008) states that university students' most common reasons for applying psychological counseling services include questions of self-confidence, anxiety and stress, coping with public speaking anxiety, and coping with the fear of failure. Meanwhile, in another study, university students' first three fundamental personal needs were found to include self-confidence, public speaking, and controlling anxiety and stress (Nicholas, 2002). These findings show that it is an important need as a trait of the life period for emerging adults to get better at coping with problems concerning self-concept and communication/socialization and that psychological counseling services consulted in line with this demand must develop efficient intervention approaches accordingly.

The results of this study reveal the connection between strong communication skills and positive self-concept and the fact that this connection can be addressed through self-compassion. While self-concept is a relatively stable phenomenon that can be affected by many variables that are difficult to control (family, upbringing, values, culture, etc.), self-compassion is a concept that can be learned and improved. Hence, the most clinically intervenable point in the relationship between self-concept, self-compassion and communication skills seems to be self-compassion. In the literature, self-compassion is considered as a variable that shows a high level of correlation with positive psychological health by associating it with a lower propensity to depression, less anxiety on self-evaluation, and higher life satisfaction (Leary et al., 2007; Neff, 2003a). Based on these results, Shapira and Mongrain (2010), recognizing self-compassion as a tool to improve well-being, find that symptoms of self-criticism and pessimism significantly decrease after the program, which includes self-compassion and hope exercises with individuals prone to depression, and that this condition persists in follow-up measures.In light of the conducted study data, the inclusion of psycho-educational content on the concept of self-compassion in intervention programs related to communication skills, which is significantly influenced by self-concept and enrichment with methods such as self-compassion awareness exercises, can make a significant contribution to practice.

In addition, the study highlights the need for self-compassion-based practises to be more widely incorporated into interventions for university students to deal with emotional problems (Erkan et al, 2011) and the resulting negative states of mind, ranging from single symptoms such as depression, pessimism, listlessness, anhedonia, unhappiness, and sadness (Yesilyaprak, 1986) to psychopathologies such as depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder (Deniz et al., 2004; Ozbay, 1997) range to improve well-being and mental health.Self-Compassion is a relatively new and popular phenomenon. Knowing that achieving goals is a main theme for emerging adulthood phase, being pleased, gentle and tolerant with oneself would soften the social pressure of becoming an adult and sweep out depressive and anxious symptoms. Nevertheless, just knowing being harsh to oneself cannot be a key to have a satisfactory life and having self-compassion can play an important role to ease the life challenges and be a path to one's fulfillment.

Germer and Neff (2013) stated that self-compassion may have been an important key to changing habitual thought patterns so that depressive episodes were not re-triggered. Researchers developed a program to teach self-compassion skills to the general population, called Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC; Neff & Germer, 2013). The treatment contains sessions such as "Practicing mindfulness", "Finding one's compassionate voice", "Managing difficult emotions by soothing oneself", and "Transforming relationships". Neff and Germer (2013) highlighted that the MSC program raised participants' self-compassion levels by 43%. It's reported that MSC participants demonstrated a significant increase in self-compassion, compassion for others, mindfulness, and life satisfaction and also a decrease in anxiety, stress, depression, and emotional avoidance. All gains in outcomes were maintained at six months and one-year follow-ups. In addition to our advice about providing psycho-educational content of self-compassion in communication skills programs, structured programs such as MSC would be a comprehensive intervention to life challenges for emerging adults.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that future studies opt for a more balanced gender distribution and wider range of participants. On the other hand, planning studies that can shed more light on the mediating role of self-compassion and its effect, in theory, with communication skills programs could contribute more to the literature in terms of supporting the results in practice. It is also recommended that conducting studies involving structured programmes to teach and promote self-compassion in young adults and comparing participants to a control group may provide further subtle information about the current study.

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