

## THE ROLE OF SELF-COMPASSION AS A MEDIATOR IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC STRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING STUDY ON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

Psychological well-being is a complex construct involving optimal psychological functioning and experience. When people are experiencing problems in psychological well-being, self-compassion is a powerful resource for dealing with stress, depression, and increasing resilience. Self-compassion is directly related to feelings of compassion and concern for others. Self-compassion is very important for adolescents because adolescence is a vulnerable period for self-criticism. Education is one of the important things in the life of every human being and is an obligation for every human being. Through education, a person can develop their potential. In education, of course, there is stress in itself. Academic stress results from stress related to grades and competition for higher education advancement. The researcher conducted this study to determine whether self-compassion mediates the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being in high school and vocational high school students. Researchers used the Hayes mediation regression analysis technique with Process to see the role of self-compassion as a mediator in the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being of SMA and SMK students. There were 164 participants in this study, aged 15-19 years, who were high school or vocational high school students. The study results show that self-compassion fully mediates the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being in SMA and SMK students. These results are expected to be the basis for creating intervention programs that can prevent the impact of academic stress on high school and vocational students so that they can have good psychological well-being.

### KEY-WORDS

*Academic stress, psychological well-being, self-compassion, high school, and vocational students.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Problems related to mental health in adolescents, especially students, have recently increased. Based on data from women's empowerment and child protection (KPPPA), it is stated that there are more than 3,200 (13%) elementary to high school children in 34 provinces in Indonesia who experience symptoms that lead to mild to severe depressive disorder. 93% of depressive symptoms are experienced by children in the age range of 14-18 years, while the other 7% are at the age of 10-13 years. The pandemic is one of the dominant factors for children to experience mental health problems (Christner et al., 2021). The impact of mental health problems on students is very diverse, ranging from anxiety, irritability, stress, depression, to suicidal thoughts. Therefore, the role of teachers and schools is very important, especially in providing initial psychological support for students' mental health problems (Azizah, 2022).

COVID-19 has hit all over the world, including Indonesia, and it has had an impact on many things, one of which has an impact on the psychological side. The pandemic changes the psychological state of humans and ultimately has an impact on human thinking and behavior, affecting social interaction patterns (Sindo, 2020). Based on data from Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) in 2018, as many as 19 million people aged 15 years and older experience mental and emotional disorders. Adolescence is a transition from childhood to adulthood, so that during that time adolescents will experience many changes that occur in their lives in various aspects (Chandra C. and Erlaningtyas, A. D. and Suryadi, D., 2022) Adolescent changes will affect their psychological well-being. Adolescents who can adapt well to these changes can cultivate positive emotions and feel satisfied in their lives.

Psychological well-being is a complex construct that concerns optimal psychological function and experience. Psychological well-being can be interpreted as hedonic happiness (enjoyment, pleasure) and eudaimonic (meaning, fulfillment), as well as resilience (coping, emotional regulation, healthy problem solving). Elements of psychological well-being include a sense of balance in emotions, thoughts, social relationships, and pursuits that require active involvement of self-control processes such as emotion regulation. Emotion regulation is defined as the process by which we influence the emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express them (Tang et al., 2019). Psychological well-being not only leads to negative mental health but also leads to how individuals can develop their potential and abilities to understand better and how individuals can function optimally, as individuals who are physically, emotionally, and psychologically intact (Sutanto et al., 2020).

When people are experiencing problems in psychological well-being, self-compassion is a potent source to overcome stress, depression, and increase resilience in a person. People who have less anxiety will have better psychological well-being. Self-compassion, which is related to mental health, is beneficial, can prevent individuals from pathological symptoms (e.g., anxiety, stress, and depression), and can work towards personal perfection with its shortcomings. One of the things that achieves self-compassion is that people must achieve spiritual balance when dealing with psychological well-being issues (for example, self-compassion is a powerful source for coping with stress, depression, and improving resilience). Self-compassion can help people prevent pathological experiences such as anxiety and depression (Tang et al., 2019).

Self-compassion is directly related to feelings of compassion and concern for others; self-compassion does not mean being selfish, nor does it mean that a person prioritizes personal needs above others (Indonesia, 2024). On the contrary, self-compassion entails acknowledging that suffering, failure, and deprivation are part of the human condition, and that everyone, including oneself, is worthy of pity (K. L. Neff et al., 2007). Compassion involves being open and moved by the suffering of others, so that one wants to alleviate their suffering. It includes patience, kindness, and understanding that is non-judgmental to others, acknowledging that all humans are imperfect and make mistakes. Self-compassion involves being open to one's suffering, experiencing feelings of care and kindness toward oneself, understanding, non-judgmental attitudes towards one's shortcomings and failures, and acknowledging that one's own experiences are part of the ordinary human experience (K. D. Neff, 2003).

Self-compassion is one of the important things in human life. Self-compassion is very important for adolescents because adolescence is a vulnerable time for self-criticism. Adolescents who have low self-compassion will experience stress due to not being able to accept themselves and find it difficult to forgive themselves for the problems that occur. Self-compassion can make people love themselves more. Self-compassion is an attitude of gentleness, kindness, and understanding of oneself. Being able to accept that we are imperfect and also understand that we have the potential to grow and continue to learn from every mistake or failure we go through (Nurbayati, 2021).

Self-compassion is one of the ways a person treats or loves themselves. By applying self-compassion in one's life, a person can accept themselves as a human being who can make mistakes and not blame themselves for it (Murniaseh, 2022). In recent years, people have begun to realize the importance of mental health. There are several perceptions that use mental health as a basis to validate self-love, such as self-compassion. Self-love focuses on oneself and does not care about others, while self-compassion includes both (Dewi, 2022).

Ferrari, M. (2022) research says that there are many benefits of self-compassion. People who have self-compassion can be associated with high psychological well-being and a low risk of developing mental health symptoms. Self-compassion also leads to better stress management and increased learning motivation, often contributing to better grades. Self-compassion gives us the courage to try things that might fail, because we can take on greater opportunities if we know that we won't blame ourselves if we fail. And sometimes, as with more learning, these extra opportunities and efforts pay off.

Individuals with self-compassion will explain to others when they experience failure or success. Even though it is difficult and in a fragile position, it does not keep individuals away from these conditions. But the individual tries to share the experiences they have had with others. Self-compassion can teach us to reduce guilt, failure, and others (Dewi, 2022).

Self-compassion can play a role in reducing guilt, failure, and stress because self-compassion is needed by students at school, especially those who are stressed. Education is one of the important things in the life of every human being and is an obligation for every human being. Through education, a person can develop their potential (Nugraha, 2022). Based on the great Indonesian dictionary (education, 2016), education comes from the word *didik*, which means changing the attitude

and behavior of a person or group of people to mature human beings through teaching and training efforts. The definition of education for Plato is that education is something that can help the development of individuals from the body and intellect, with something that can allow the achievement of perfection (Nugraha, 2022).

Aware of Law No. 2 (1989) explains that the purpose of education is to educate the life of the nation and develop the whole Indonesian people, namely human beings who believe and fear God Almighty and have noble ethics, have knowledge and skills, physical and spiritual health, a steady and independent personality and a sense of community and national responsibility. Meanwhile, in Law No. 20 (2003) Article 3 concerning the national education system, it is said that the purpose of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent and become democratic and responsible citizens (Nugraha, 2022).

There are several benefits of education, namely: a) achieving success, a person's success or success can be associated with the level of education they have, the higher a person's knowledge, the greater the chance of achieving success; b) wise in making decisions, education provides benefits for a person to be wise in making decisions so that the person becomes more careful in dealing with various problems; and c) making it easier to worship, people who have knowledge can get closer to God Almighty (Nugraha, 2022).

In education, of course, there is its own stress. Academic stress results from stress related to grades and competition for the advancement of higher education. Academic stress has a positive association with anxiety and depression, but one study found that the mindfulness that moderates the association between academic stress and psychological well-being was low. This study only examines domestic students and does not include international students. Other studies have shown a negative influence as an independent predictor of showing a moderate effect of self-compassion, which cannot be compared to academic stress (Koppenborg et al., 2022).

Based on research conducted on students in Ghana, they believe that the experience of academic stress they go through is unpleasant and is accompanied by negative emotions such as tension, frustration, and anger. However, this study says that more research is needed on the effects of academic stress on psychological well-being (Cole et al., 2015). Academic stress experienced by students is caused by demands, pressure, and academic burdens that exceed the child's capacity. One of the things that affects academic stress is the amount of workload, too much material that needs to be studied, the need for students to have academic achievements, and academic demands that are reinforced by parents, schools, and also peers (Rachmadi, 2019).

Previous research has said that self-compassion is positively associated with students' well-being. This is also supported by previous studies that have been conducted. Self-compassion ensures better coping, higher levels of resilience, and improved psychological well-being. The study also found that an increase in self-compassion improved psychological well-being. However, the study has limitations, namely, the cross-sectional research design does not allow us to reach a strong conclusion about the cause-and-effect relationship. However, self-compassion improves psychological well-being (Quang et al., 2022).

Age also affects people's self-compassion and well-being, so these two things are among the things we want to ensure. With the age difference, we can ensure the relationship (Ryff, 1989). Do older people have higher self-compassion and well-being or vice versa. Knowing this can help us to understand more about self-compassion and well-being. Previous research had limitations in the types of subjects that could affect the data's reliability. Therefore, the researcher suggests further studies exploring the role of self-compassion in subjects who experience greater challenges.

In the research of Quang et al. (2022), the researcher researched students at the university level and has significant results in the upcoming research. The researcher wants to research students at the high school (SMA) level. High school and vocational school students are generally sixteen to nineteen years old. At this age, high school students are at the stage of adolescent development. The developmental stage of adolescence is a developmental transition that involves physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes and takes various forms in different social, cultural, and economic settings. Based on Piaget's stage of cognitive development, high school students are at the stage of formal operational cognitive development, which is characterized by the ability to think abstractly (Papalia & Martorell, 2021). Another limitation of previous research was regarding COVID-19. Indeed, it is happening, but we cannot capture differences in various cultural contexts because it only focuses on one thing. Therefore, in the next research, we must look at various cultural contexts to understand more about the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being mediated by self-compassion.

In recent years, the prevalence of anxiety and depression among college students in general has increased and has been recognized as a global issue. Therefore, the researcher wants to research the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being mediated by self-compassion. To find out if there is a relationship between these three things in students who are at the high school education level. Researchers will use quantitative research methods. The researcher will distribute the questionnaire to students who meet the criteria set by the researcher. This study has a problem formulation: whether self-compassion is a mediator in the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being in high school students.

Psychological well-being is a concept that includes self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, control of the environment, life goals, and personal growth (Ryff, 1989). Academic stress is a subjective perception of an academic condition or response experienced by students, which is a negative physical, behavioral, thought, and emotional reaction that arises due to school or academic demands (Barseli I., 2017). Self-compassion involves being touched by the suffering of others, opening one's awareness to the pain of others, and not avoiding or deciding on it, so the feeling of kindness towards others and the desire to alleviate one's suffering arise (K. D. Neff, 2003). Based on research conducted on students in Ghana, they believe that the experience of academic stress they go through is unpleasant and is accompanied by negative emotions such as tension, frustration, and anger. However, this study says that more research is needed on the effects of academic stress on psychological well-being (Cole et al., 2015).

Previous research has said that self-compassion is positively associated with students' well-being. This is also supported by previous studies that have been

conducted. Self-compassion ensures better coping, higher levels of resilience, and improved psychological well-being. This study also found that increased self-compassion increased psychological well-being (Quang et al., 2022). The researcher is interested in further research and hypotheses in this study, namely, (a) there is a relationship between academic stress and self-compassion in high school students, (b) there is a relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being in high school students, (c) there is a relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being in high school students, and (d) self-compassion plays a mediator role between academic stress and psychological well-being in high school students (Beaumont et al., 2016).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a non-experimental research design with a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach in this study aims to test the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being with self-compassion as a mediator. The researcher uses the purposive sampling data collection technique to find research participants based on the criteria and objectives needed so that they can describe the research that the researcher wants to conduct. Data collection was carried out in June 2023. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires in the form of Google Forms that had been compiled based on the Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff, 1989) Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (Sun et al., 2011) and Compassion Scale (Sugianto et al., 2020) online through the Instagram platform, WhatsApp, and directly to relatives. The questionnaire was distributed online in various cities, but more data came from DKI Jakarta. The data were obtained by a regression test model using Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) and PROCESS Hayes with an estimated population of 5000 bootstrap samples to see direct and indirect effects.

### Participants

Participants in this study have the characteristics of (a) male and female, (b) aged 15-19 years, and (c) currently pursuing high school or vocational education. The total number of participants was 164. Participants of the male gender were 75, and female participants were 89. The participants in this study had an age range between 15 and 19 years, with a mean of 17.13 (SD= 0.967). The classes in this study are from high school grade 1 to high school grade 3 and vocational school grade 1 to grade 3, with a mean of 2.75 (SD= 0.942).

### Measurement

Psychological Well-Being. The Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), developed by Ryff (1989), determines students' psychological well-being. PWBS consists of 31 items that have 24 positive items and 7 negative items that measure the six dimensions possessed by psychological well-being, namely: a) self-acceptance, (such as "I like a lot of things in myself"); b) positive relations with others, (such as "I feel like I have a lot of friends in my life" or "I find it difficult to have warm relationships with the people around me"); c) autonomy, (such as "I have no difficulty managing my own life"); d) environmental mastery, (such as "I feel optimistic that I can make major improvements/changes in my life" or "Various demands in daily life often make me pessimistic"); e) purpose in life, (such as "I feel like my life is going according to plan") and f) personal growth, (such as "I think having new experiences is very important"). The psychological well-being measure



uses 5 Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The total reliability value on the psychological well-being measure was 0.896, and the reliability value was 0.609 in the dimensions of autonomy, 0.715 in personal growth, 0.725 in purpose in life, 0.758 in self-acceptance, 0.740 in environmental mastery, and 0.777 in positive relation with others.

**Academic Stress.** The Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA), developed by Sun and Dunne (2011), determines students' academic stress level. ESSA consists of 16 negative items that measure five dimensions, namely: a) pressure from study, (such as "I feel a lot of pressure in daily study"); b) workload, (such as "I feel like I have too much schoolwork"); c) worry about grades, (such as "I feel like I have let my teacher down when my exams/exam results aren't ideal"); d) self-expectation (such as "I feel stressed when I don't meet my own standards") and e) despondency, (such as "I have always lacked confidence in my academic grades"). The academic stress scale uses 5 Likert scales ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The total reliability value is 0.81. The reliability value in the pressure from study dimension was 0.74, workload was 0.75, worry about grades was 0.71, self-expectation was 0.66, and despondency was 0.66 (Sun et al., 2011).

**Self-Compassion.** Sugianto has adapted the Self-Compassion Scale (SWD) (2020) from the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) developed by Neff (2003). SWD consists of 26 items that have 13 positive items and 13 negative items that measure the six dimensions possessed by self-compassion, namely: a) self-kindness, (such as "When I have a hard time, I will give the care and gentleness I need"); b) common humanity, (such as "I try to see my failures as part of the condition that humans in general experience"); c) mindfulness, (such as "When I fail at something important to me, I try to see it as normal"); d) self-judgment, (such as "I can be heartless to myself when I am suffering"); e) isolation, (such as "When I fail at something important to me, I tend to feel alone in the midst of that failure"); and f) overidentification, (such as "When something hurtful happens, I tend to exaggerate it"). The self-compassion scale uses 5 Likert scales ranging from 1 (Rarely) to 5 (Almost Always). The method of calculating SWD uses the same method as SCS, where negative items will be calculated backwards. The total reliability value was 0.865, and the reliability of the self-compassion scale in the self-loving dimension was 0.757, self-judgment was 0.728, universal humanity was 0.695, isolation was 0.721, mindfulness was 0.626, and overidentification was 0.654.

### **Procedure**

First, researchers look for phenomena related to academic stress and psychological well-being, then, they look for journals related to the variables they want to research. Researchers seek theories, materials, and concepts from reliable sources. After the researcher finds it, the researcher consults with the researcher's supervisor. After providing guidance, the researcher began to prepare a research proposal based on the considerations and suggestions of the supervisor. While preparing the measuring instrument, the researcher made an expert judgment on the academic stress measuring instrument, followed by an ethical assessment. After the researcher gets the results of the ethical assessment and permission from the supervisor, the researcher begins the data collection process.

The researcher prepared a questionnaire to be distributed, using psychological well-being, academic stress, and self-compassion measuring tools. After the

questionnaire has been created, the researcher begins to look for participants who match the characteristics of the participants that the researcher has determined. The researcher asked participants to be willing to participate in the research and explained the purpose of the research in the informed consent section.

When the participant meets the participant's characteristics and is willing to participate, they will fill out the questionnaire so that the researcher obtains the necessary data. The data obtained by the applicant is input into the document, then processed using the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) and analyzed. The data analysis technique used by the researcher in this study is a quantitative data analysis technique that uses a regression test model with one mediator variable (simple mediation analysis) using the bootstrap method, assisted by PROCESS in SPSS 26. The results of the data that have been analyzed are then reflected, and conclusions are drawn.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data processing results, the three variables had five scales. Most participants on the psychological well-being variable scale chose scale 2 to scale 5, most participants on the academic stress variable scale chose evenly from scale 1 to scale 5, and most participants on the self-compassion variable scale chose scale 2 to scale 5. A more complete explanation can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive Data of Research Variables.**

| Variable                        | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Standard Deviation |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|--------------------|
| <i>Psychological Well-Being</i> | 2.30    | 4.83    | 3.5902 | 0.49188            |
| <i>Academic Stress</i>          | 1.22    | 4.90    | 3.1485 | 0.61402            |
| <i>Self-Compassion</i>          | 1.53    | 4.38    | 3.2405 | 0.51038            |

Based on the data obtained, the subjects can be classified into three groups based on empirical mean: low, medium, and high. In the psychological well-being variable, it was known that 14.6% of participants were in the low category, 70.7% in the medium category, and 14.6% in the high category. In the academic stress variable, it was found that there were 15.9% of participants with low categories, 67.1% of participants with moderate categories, and 17.1% of participants with high categories. In the self-compassion variable, it was found that there were 13.4% of participants in the low category, 70.1% of participants in the medium category, and 16.5% of participants in the high category. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the participants in this study have a moderate level of psychological well-being, a moderate level of academic stress, and a moderate level of self-compassion. A more complete explanation can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. Categorization of Research Variables**

| Variable                        | Score Range        | Criterion | Number of Subjects | Percentage of Participants (%) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Psychological Well-Being</i> | < 3.09832          | Low       | 24                 | 14.6                           |
|                                 | 3.09832 sd 4.08208 | Keep      | 116                | 70.7                           |
|                                 | > 4.08208          | Tall      | 24                 | 14.6                           |



|                        |                    |      |     |      |
|------------------------|--------------------|------|-----|------|
| Academic Stress        | < 2.53448          | Low  | 26  | 15.9 |
|                        | 2.53448 sd         | Keep | 110 | 67.1 |
|                        | 3.762252           | Tall | 28  | 17.1 |
|                        | > 3.762252         |      |     |      |
| <i>Self-Compassion</i> | < 2.73012          | Low  | 22  | 13.4 |
|                        | 2.73012 sd 3.75088 | Keep | 115 | 70.1 |
|                        | > 3.75088          | Tall | 27  | 16.5 |

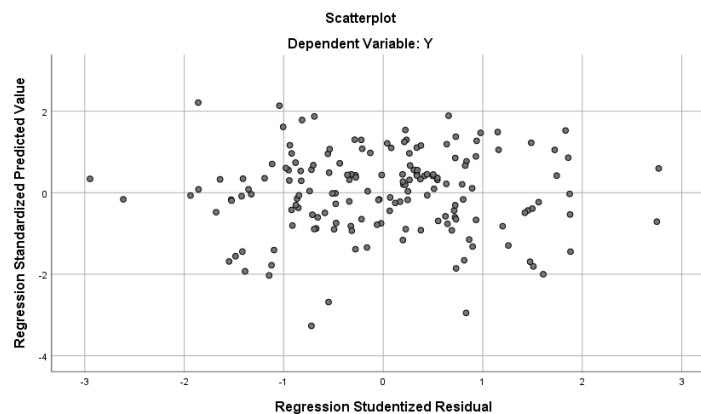
### Classical Assumption Test

This study conducted an assumption test that included a normality test, a linearity test, a multicollinearity test, and a heteroscedasticity test. The researcher first tested the data's normality with SPSS software version 26 and the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to determine whether the data were normally distributed. Based on the normality test results, the researcher obtained a significance value of  $0.200 < 0.050$ . This shows that the distribution of data from all variables, namely psychological well-being, academic stress, and self-compassion, is distributed normally, so the test of the relationship between the variables of this study uses parametric statistics. Data on the results of the full normality test can be seen in Appendix 11.

The researcher conducted a linearity test to determine whether the data obtained by the researcher is linear data or the relationship to the research variables is in the form of a straight line. The results of the linearity test obtained a Deviation from Linearity value of 0.172 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, the research variables, namely psychological well-being, academic stress, and self-compassion, can be concluded to be in a linear relationship. Data on the results of the complete linearity test can be seen in Appendix 12.

Another assumption test that the examiner conducts is the multicollinearity test to determine the relationship between independent variables in a multicorrelation manner, meaning that there is a very low or very high correlation relationship. The results of the multicollinearity test showed that the variables of psychological well-being, academic stress, and self-compassion had a Tolerance value of  $> 0.871$  (Tolerance  $> 0.10$ ) and the highest VIF value of 1.148 (VIF  $< 10$ ). Data on the results of the multicollinearity test can be seen in Appendix 13.

The heteroscedasticity test aims to determine whether there is a variant disparity in the residual for all observations in the linear regression model. The test model uses a scatterplot by observing that the data spreads above and below or around the number 0, the data does not collect only above or below, the spread of unwavering data widens then narrows and widens again, and the spread of unpatterned data is not patterned. If the results of the heteroscedasticity test show the criteria as above, then heteroscedasticity does not occur. Based on the dependent variables, namely psychological well-being, and the predictor variables, namely academic stress and self-compassion, scatterplots were obtained that met the above criteria. The distribution of data can be seen in Figure 1 and Appendix 14.



**Figure 1. Heteroscedasticity Testing**

It can be concluded that, based on the results of the classical regression assumption test, which consists of a normality test, linearity test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test, the requirements have been met. The researcher conducted a correlation test to measure the extent of the relationship between variables in the study. Based on the test results, it can be seen that psychological well-being, academic stress, and self-compassion are significantly interconnected. Among all the variables, the highest relationship was found between the variables of psychological well-being and self-compassion ( $r = 0.637$ ). A low association was found between psychological well-being variables and academic stress ( $r = -0.284$ ). A second low association was found between psychological well-being variables and academic stress ( $r = 0.097$ ). An explanation can be seen in Table 3 and Appendix 15.

**Table 3. Relationship between Research Variables**

| No. | Variable                        | Mean  | SD      | 1        | 2        | 3 |
|-----|---------------------------------|-------|---------|----------|----------|---|
| 1.  | <i>Psychological Well-Being</i> | 3.590 | 0.49188 | 1        |          |   |
| 2.  | <i>Academic Stress</i>          | 3.148 | 0.61402 | -0.284** | 1        |   |
| 3.  | <i>Self-Compassion</i>          | 3.240 | 0.51038 | 0.637**  | -0.359** | 1 |

### Hypothesis Test

#### 1. The Role of Academic Stress on Self-Compassion

The hypothesis test was carried out using a simple linear regression test and obtained that academic stress significantly played a role in self-compassion, with a value of  $\beta$  constant = -0.359, Sig. = 0.00 < 0.05. The influence of the academic stress variable on the self-compassion variable was 12.9% ( $R^2 = 0.129$ ), which means that the two variables have a negative relationship: the higher the academic stress, the lower the self-compassion. An explanation can be seen in Appendix 16.

#### 2. The Role of Academic Stress on Psychological Well-Being

The hypothesis test was carried out using a simple linear regression test, and the result was that academic stress significantly plays a role in psychological well-being, with a value of  $\beta$  constant = -0.294, Sig. = 0.00 < 0.05. The influence of the academic stress variable on the psychological well-being variable was 8.1% ( $R^2 =$

0.081). The two variables have a negative relationship: the higher the academic stress, the lower the psychological well-being. An explanation can be seen in Appendix 16.

### 3. Peranan Self-Compassion dan Psychological Well-Being

The hypothesis test was carried out using a simple linear regression test and obtained the result that self-compassion significantly played a role in psychological well-being, with a value of  $\beta$  constant = 0.637, Sig. = 0.00 < 0.05. The influence of the self-compassion variable on the psychological well-being variable was 40.6% ( $R^2 = 0.406$ ), which means that the two variables have a positive relationship, namely, the higher the self-compassion, the higher the psychological well-being. An explanation can be seen in Appendix 16.

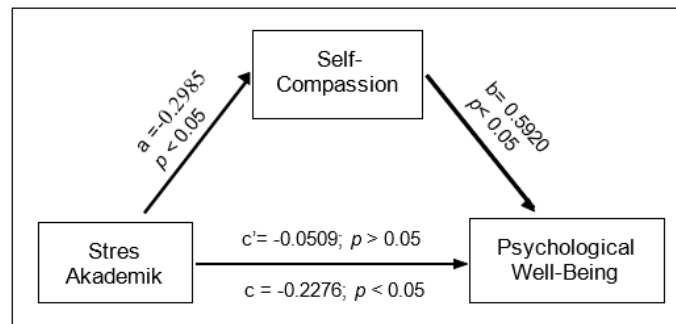
### 4. The Role of Academic Stress and Self-Compassion on Psychological Well-Being

The hypothesis test uses Hayes' PROCESS to see the role of academic stress and self-compassion on psychological well-being. It was obtained that the confidence interval ([CI]) did not go through the value of 0. The indirect effect (indirect effect  $\beta = -0.3309$ , 95% CI = -0.2481, -0.1088) of academic stress on psychological well-being through self-compassion was also greater than the direct effect (direct effect  $\beta = -0.0509$ , 95% CI = -0.1536, 0.0517) of academic stress on psychological well-being. Figure 2 shows a significant mediating effect between academic stress on psychological well-being through self-compassion (BootLLCI = -0.2481, BootULCI = -0.1088). This number is significant because the value of 0 does not fall within the CI = 95% range on BootLLCI and BootULCI. It can be concluded that self-compassion is shown to be a mediator in the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being, so the hypothesis is accepted. The role of self-compassion as a mediator in the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being was 40.9% ( $R^2 = 0.409$ ), which means that the higher the self-compassion and psychological well-being, the lower the academic stress.

**Table 4. Mediation Test Results**

| Summary   | Jalur | Coeff   | 95% CI   |  | LLCI    | ULCI    | p     |
|-----------|-------|---------|----------|--|---------|---------|-------|
|           |       |         | HER-SELF |  |         |         |       |
| SA – SC   | a     | -0.2985 | 0.0609   |  | -0.4189 | -0.1781 | 0.000 |
| SC – PWB. | b     | 0.5920  | 0.0625   |  | 0.4685  | 0.7155  | 0.000 |
| SA – PWB  | c     | -0.2276 | 0.0603   |  | -0.3468 | -0.1085 | 0.000 |
| Direct    | c'    | -0.0509 | 0.0520   |  | -0.1536 | 0.0517  | 0.329 |
| Indirect  | off   | -0.1767 | 0.0354   |  | -0.2481 | -0.1088 | 0.000 |
| Total     |       | -0.2276 | 0.0603   |  | -0.3468 | -0.1085 | 0.000 |

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ . SA= Stres Akademik, SE= Self-Compassion, PWB = Psychological Well-Being



**Figure 2. Hypothesis Test Results**

### Additional Analysis Results

Additional testing, including different tests, uses the independent sample t-test technique. Based on the results of the psychological well-being difference test reviewed by gender, a p-value of 0.05 was obtained. This shows that there is no difference in psychological well-being between the male and female sexes. The results related to Mean, SD, and F on each variable can be seen in Table 5 below and Appendix 18.

**Table 5. Different Psychological Well-Being Tests Based on Gender**

| Variable                 | Gender | Mean   | SD     | F     | p     | Information   |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|---------------|
| Psychological Well-Being | Man    | 3.6695 | 0.4592 | 0.807 | 0.370 | No difference |
|                          | Woman  | 3.3234 | 0.5107 |       |       |               |
| Note: * $p<0.05$         |        |        |        |       |       |               |

Based on the results of the psychological well-being differential test on student stress, a  $p > 0.05$  was obtained. This shows no difference in academic stress between students who experience stress and those who do not. The results related to Mean, SD, and F on each variable can be seen in Table 6 below and Appendix 18.

**Table 6. Test of Psychological Well-Being Differences Based on Student Stress**

| Stress  |        |         |       |       |               |
|---|--------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|
| Do you feel stressed because of something related to school | Mean   | SD      | F     | p     | Information   |
| Already   | 3.5091 | 0.48316 | 0.555 | 0.457 | No difference |
| No  | 3.8185 | 0.44686 |       |       |               |
| Note: * $p<0.05$  |        |         |       |       |               |

Based on the results of the psychological well-being differential test on what makes students feel stressed, a  $p < \text{value of } 0.05$  was obtained. This shows a difference in psychological well-being and why students feel stressed. The results related to Mean, SD, and F on each variable can be seen in Table 7 below and Appendix 18.

**Table 7. Test of Psychological Well-Being Differences in Reasons for Student Stress**

| What makes students feel stressed       | Mean   | SD      | F     | p     | Information           |
|---|--------|---------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Too many tasks                          | 3.4939 | 0.46262 | 3.483 | 0.033 | There is a difference |
| Grades not as expected                  | 3.6633 | 0.50732 |       |       |                       |
| Demands from parents to get good grades | 3.7715 | 0.49620 |       |       |                       |
| Note: * $p<0.05$                        |        |         |       |       |                       |

## Discussion

The results of the correlation test showed the highest relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being ( $r = 0.637$ ). The second highest association was between academic stress and self-compassion ( $r = 0.359$ ). The lowest relationship was found between the variables of academic stress and psychological well-being ( $r = 0.284$ ). Ferrari, M. (2022) said that self-compassion has many advantages. People who have self-compassion can be associated with high psychological well-being and a low risk of developing mental health symptoms. Self-compassion also leads to better stress management and increased learning motivation, often contributing to better grades. Self-compassion gives us the courage to try things that might fail, because we can take on greater opportunities if we know that we won't blame ourselves if we fail. And sometimes, as with more learning, these extra opportunities and efforts pay off. People with self-compassion experience less self-criticism, excessive isolation, and identification when facing problems, and their stress level will be reduced (Maeko R., 2021). Therefore, it is good to have self-compassion within themselves so that the person can face bad things to the maximum (Koppenborg et al., 2022).

The results of the correlation test in this study were supported by the results of the mediation test with PROCESS which showed an insignificant direct effect (c') pathway ( $\beta = -0.0509$ ,  $p > 0.05$ , 95% CI: -0.1536, 0.0517) and a significant indirect effect pathway ( $\beta = -0.1767$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , 95% CI: -0.2481, -.1088). The results prove that self-compassion significantly mediates the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being in high school and vocational school students. The role of self-compassion as a full mediator in this study also shows that academic stress cannot significantly affect the psychological well-being of high school and vocational school students without going through self-compassion.

Previous research has said that self-compassion is positively associated with students' well-being. This is also supported by previous studies that have been conducted. Self-compassion ensures better coping, higher levels of resilience, and improved psychological well-being. In previous research, it was found that an increase in self-compassion increased psychological well-being. However, the study has limitations, namely, the cross-sectional research design in this study does not allow us to draw a strong conclusion about the causal relationship. However, self-compassion improves psychological well-being (Quang et al., 2022).

Based on research conducted on students in Ghana, they believe that the experience of academic stress they go through is unpleasant and is accompanied by negative emotions such as tension, frustration, and anger. However, this study says that more research is needed on the effects of academic stress on psychological well-being (Cole, 2015). Although previous research stated that the effect of



academic stress on psychological well-being was not clearly seen, this study showed that academic stress was negative for high school and vocational school students in terms of psychological well-being. However, the results of this study prove that when academic stress is mediated by self-compassion, students have good psychological well-being.

This study also conducted additional analysis by examining differences in psychological well-being based on gender, age, and education. Based on the participants' gender, there was no difference in the level of psychological well-being between men and women. In the difference test results based on age, there was no difference in the level of psychological well-being in students aged 15-19 years. This is supported by research that finds that age is also something that affects people in having self-compassion and well-being, so that these two things are one of the things that we want to be sure that, with the difference in age, we can ensure the relationship (Ryff C. L. M., 1995).

Overall, this study has opened up insights into how important self-compassion is in the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being. The study also applied suggestions from previous studies to test self-compassion more thoroughly because there was less clarity about the effects of self-compassion and psychological well-being. However, due to limitations, this study has not been able to research further the factors that play a role in increasing self-compassion. Therefore, this study is expected to be the basis for further research in finding factors that can increase self-compassion so that students with academic stress do not affect psychological well-being.

The number of participants in this study is still limited because there are still not many participants, namely 164 participants, so the results cannot be generalized. One of the obstacles experienced by the researcher is that data collection is carried out when students enter the holiday period, so many students spend the holidays. Therefore, further studies are also suggested to be able to take a larger sample and may try to involve more mature participants. Researchers are also faced with the next research that can overcome the limitations in this study and make this research one of the bases for making future research better and more objective.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that self-compassion significantly mediates the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being among high school students. The findings underscore the crucial role of self-compassion in buffering the negative effects of academic stress and enhancing students' overall psychological well-being. These results contribute to educational psychology by highlighting self-compassion as an important psychological construct that can support adolescents' mental health in academically demanding environments. The implications suggest that educators and parents should actively foster self-compassion through targeted interventions, such as mindfulness training or psychoeducational programs. For future research, it is recommended to extend the investigation to younger populations, such as elementary school students, to explore developmental differences in self-compassion and its protective effects. Moreover, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how self-compassion evolves and interacts with academic stress across various educational stages.

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