

SELF-COMPASSION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION OF STUDENT TEACHERS IN MANDALAY EDUCATION DEGREE COLLEGE

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Abstract

The main aim of this study was to investigate self-compassion and conflict resolution of student teachers in Mandalay Education Degree College (2020-2021AY). A total of student teachers (Male=22, Female=48) from Mandalay Education Degree College was randomly selected in this study. Descriptive research design and survey method were used in this study. Self- Compassion Scale consisting of 41 items developed by Neff (2003a) (Cronbach's alpha = .781) was used to measure the Self- compassion of student teachers. The independent samples *t* test result revealed that there was no significant difference in Self- compassion by gender and subjects. And, Conflict Resolution Questionnaire consisting of 40 items developed by *Jock McClellan (1997)* (Cronbach's alpha = 0.772) was used to measure the student teachers from Mandalay Education Degree College. The results of independent samples *t* test showed that there were no significant differences in conflict resolution by gender and subject. There was moderately positive correlation between self-compassion and conflict resolution.

Keywords: Self-Compassion, Conflict Resolution, Self-Kindness, Common Humanity, Mindfulness

Introduction

In society, positive self-compassion not only makes individuals to perform his work in a better manner but also make satisfying and rewarding to them. On the other hand, unfavorable self-compassion makes individual tired, boring and unacceptable individuals.

Although the construct of self-compassion has emerged in Western psychological and health literatures over the last fifteen years, in Eastern self-compassion derived from the last many years the times of the Buddha. Buddhist principles that can also apply more generally to compassion. The roots of this construct lie in Buddhist psychology and philosophy. Self-compassion has been defined as "being touched by and open to one's own suffering, not avoiding or disconnecting from it, generating the desire to alleviate one's suffering and to heal oneself with kindness" (Neff, 2003a).

Self-compassion positively impacts psychological health by promoting adaptive emotion regulation in times of stress. Self-compassion defuses negative emotional patterns by promoting non-judgmental awareness of one's emotions and orienting oneself to respond to stressful events in a way that is self-supportive.

The lives of every person, agency, organization, and nation occur conflict, arguments, and change natural parts of our lives. Thus, as a teacher not only must be avoid of unpleasant conflict but also need to know the ways to avoid conflict. Conflict resolution is defined as an internal process whereby individuals' emotional intensity and arousal to cope effectively with stressful stimuli (Fisher & Ury, 1991).

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Conflict resolution is appropriate for almost any disagreement. Human daily lives offer plenty of opportunities for negotiation - between parents and children, teacher and pupil, co-workers, friends, etc., and as a result, a person probably already have a variety of effective strategies for resolving minor conflicts. But for more serious conflicts, and conflicts between groups rather than individuals, human being may need some additional skills.

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. Conflict resolution through negotiation can be good for all parties involved. Often, each side will get more by participating in negotiations than they would by walking away, and it can be a way for the group to get resources that might otherwise be out of reach.

Conflict is characterized by perceived differences and negative emotional states. The issues in conflict can be thought of as tangible and intangible, as needs or beliefs. Conflict often results in destructive ends but it does not have to. Collaboration and compromise are usually available as alternatives in a conflict situation. Pursuing these ends in conflict is called conflict resolution.

The conflict can best be dealt with by interest-based negotiation. Solutions are found when conflicting parties surface the interest behind their positions. The problem-solving process is used to allow the free creation of ideas that will best meet the needs to the two parties.

In Myanmar, studying the effect of self-compassion on conflict resolution of student teachers is an inevitable matter for now. Student teachers' self-compassion and conflict resolution are interdependent, and both are important for all-round development of students. The investigating of self-compassion and conflict resolution of student teachers is necessary and also essential for the psychological development of citizens in all countries.

Purpose of the Study: The main aim of this study is to investigate self-compassion and conflict resolution of student teachers in Mandalay Education Degree College. The specific objectives are as follow:

1. To examine the self-compassion and conflict resolution of student teachers from Mandalay Education Degree College
2. To measure the differences in self-compassion of student teachers by gender and subject
3. To explore the conflict resolution of student teachers from Mandalay Education Degree College by gender and subject
4. To find out the relationship between self-compassion and conflict resolution of student teachers
5. To find out the extent to which the impact of self-compassion on conflict resolution of student teachers

Definitions of Key Terms

Self-Compassion: is extending compassion to one's self in instances of perceived inadequacy, failure, general suffering. Self-Compassion a being composed of three main elements. Self-Kindness, Common humanity, and Mindfulness (Neff, 2003).

Conflict Resolution: is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negation to resolve the disagreement (Fisher & Ury, 1991).

Self- Kindness: when we consider our own needs, we are being kind to ourselves. Self-kindness can take many forms, such as rest, asking for help letting something go, setting boundaries, doing something fun, advocate for yourself, apologizing, or taking accountability (Neff, 2003).

Common Humanity: we tend to feel alone during challenging experiences or, emotion. We may ask, "why me?" these questions only add salt to the wound. Recognizing your common-humanity means remembering that these experiences are normal and part of being human. You are not alone (Neff, 2003).

Mindfulness: is being aware of and acknowledging our emotion. Recognize the physical, emotional, or mental pain of the moment by label an emotion, tuning into the body, or using a phrase to describe or reflect what you are feeling (Neff, 2003).

Related Literature Review

Self-compassion as a psychological concept has been for many decades, garnering more attention recently with other third-wave cognitive-behavioral concepts such as mindfulness. Self-compassion is the psychological concept of showing oneself kindness in the face of adversity or pain.

Self-Compassion Theory: Self-compassion is a positive attitude we can have towards ourselves, and it's also an empirically measurable construct. Operationally defined and introduced to the positive psychology literature by Associate Professor Dr. Kristin Neff, it is comprised of three separate constructs: Self-kindness, Common Humanity, and Mindfulness (Neff, 2003a; 2003b).

Self-compassion is a caring way to relate to one's self (Neff & Dahm, 2003). It consists of self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. Self-kindness is defined as a caring self-talk that fosters acceptance and awareness of our own suffering and shortcomings. Common humanity is defined as viewing our own pain as a collective human experience. Mindfulness is defined as the experience of our own emotions and thoughts with a balanced awareness (Neff & Dahm, 2003).

The Six Components of Self-Compassion: The various Buddhist teachers (Kornfield, 1993; Salzberg 1997, Neff (2003b) has operationalized self-compassion as consisting of three main elements: kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. These components combine and mutually interact to create a self-compassionate frame of mind. Self-compassion is relevant when considering personal inadequacies, mistakes, and failures, as well as when struggling with more general life situations that cause us mental, emotional, or physical pain.

Self-kindness vs. Self-judgment: Self-kindness is about showing kindness and understanding toward ourselves when a person fail at something, or when he is hurt (Neff, 2003a). Rather than being critical or judging himself harshly when a person already feel pain, he can recognize the negative influence of self-judgment and treat himself with warmth and patience instead (Gilbert & Irons, 2005).

Common humanity vs. Isolation: 'Being part of something bigger' is a pervasive concept in positive psychology literature, and it's long been argued that the need for connections is part of human nature (Maslow, 1943). Having Common Humanity means viewing our own individual experiences as embedded in the broader human experience, rather than seeing ourselves as isolated or separate from others (Neff, 2003a).

Mindfulness vs. Over-identification: Mindfulness is seen as the opposite of avoidance or over-identification in self-compassion theory-it entails acknowledging and labeling our own thoughts as opposed to reacting to them (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Neff, 2010).

When a person has self-compassion, he is aware of his own hurtful thoughts and emotions without blowing up his significance through rumination. Instead, he adopt a positive balance between this over-identification at one extreme, and completely avoiding painful emotions and experiences at the other (Neff, 2003a).

Conflict Resolution: Conflict is a normal, natural part of human relationships. People will not agree about everything all the time. In and of itself, conflict is not necessarily a negative thing. When handled constructively it can help people to stand up for themselves and others, and work together to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution. But if conflict is handled poorly it can cause anger, hurt, divisiveness and more serious problems. This guide discusses how to deal with conflict in a constructive manner (Fisher & Ury, 1991).

Conflict Resolution Model: The conflict resolution working model is a process comprised of four stages: awareness, self-preparation, conflict reduction, and negotiation (Neil Katz & Kevin McNulty, 1994).

Stage 1- Awareness (Neil Katz & Kevin McNulty, 1994): This is the first stage of the conflict resolution model. It involves coming to awareness of the negative emotional states in a conflict. It emerges around the awareness of perceived differences, usually because of:

1. An assertion where one party attempts to influence another party of parties to achieve his or her needs.
2. One party takes a stand on an issue that is opposed by another party or parties.
3. One party attempts to exercise power or control over the actions of behavior of the other party or parties.
4. Feedback, where one party gives feedback to another and the feedback is resisted.
5. An assertion where a party attempts to influence another party of parties to achieve his needs.

Stage 2- Self Preparation: This second stage of the conflict resolution model involves accessing a resourceful state, deciding a person outcome and planning the steps to achieve it. This stage can take place quickly or involve a considerable amount of time depending on the context.

A person will first need to “own” and take charge of his own emotions or internal states. A belief tends to exist that emotional states just occur or are somehow controlled by other’s actions or behaviors. I believe that emotional states are chosen by people at some level and are controllable. Owning and controlling your emotional state end then ensuring that you can maintain a resourceful state throughout a conflict situation is essential to successfully resolving conflict.

Stage 3- Conflict Reduction: The third stage of the model, conflict reduction, involves reducing the level of emotional energy (diffusing negative emotions) and clarifying to understand the differences. This allows disputing parties to settle the conflict, that is, agree to eliminate destructive behavior as well as negative attitudes and feelings toward each other. This settlement may not be an agreement that resolves all the differences but one that enables the disputing

parties to go forward with an understanding of their differences and mutual respect for one another (Neil Katz & Kevin McNulty, 1994).

Stage 4- Negotiation: Negotiation is a communication process where each party attempts to influence each other to get what they want or need from each other. Interest based negotiation is a particular form of negotiation where the outcome is to achieve an integrative agreement. An integrative agreement is one in which all the parties get their interests at least partially satisfied.

Problem solving is an important step in the negotiation and conflict resolution model presented in the section. Overall, the stages are to prepare for the conflict, to manage the negative emotional energy in the conflict, and to negotiate acceptable agreements. Negotiation involves the identification of interests and problem solving to identify acceptable joint agreements. Conflict resolution most generally requires problem solving. Problem solving in the context of conflict is a joint effort to find a mutually acceptable solution.

Method

Sampling

The Participants of this study were second year student teachers attending in (2020-2021) Academic Year from Mandalay Education Degree College. The number of participants was 70 student teachers (22males, 48 females). The sample was chosen by using sample random sampling technique.

Research Method

The design and method used in this study were descriptive research design and survey method.

Instruments

Self- Compassion Scale: The key instrument used to measure Self- Compassion Scale was developed by (Neff, 2003a). The scale for Self- Compassion was composed of six subscales: (a) Self-Kindness (b) Self-judgement (c) Common Humanity (d) Isolation (e) Mindfulness and (f) Over Identify. There were 41 items for the whole scale. It was scored with five -point Rating scales. The reliability coefficient for Self- Compassion was 0.95.

Conflict Resolution Questionnaire: The key instrument used to measure Conflict Resolution Questionnaire was developed by *members of Jock McClellan (1997)*. It was composed of 10 subscales: (a) view of conflict (b) Atmosphere (c) Clarification (d) Needs (e) Power (f) Future (g) Options (h) Doables (i) Mutual benefit agreements and (j) Extra Consideration. There were 40 items for the whole scale. It was scored with five-point Rating scales. The reliability coefficient of Conflict Resolution was .85.

Data Collection Procedure

For collecting data for this study, the researcher requested permission from the Head of Department of Educational Psychology. Second, permission to collect data was acceded from the respective principal of Mandalay Education Degree College. All of the participants' responses were gathered by survey method. On average, the participants spent about forty-five minutes to

complete all items. According to the above procedures, the collection of the required data was conducted in each selected person by survey procedure.

Findings

An analysis of Descriptive Statistics, mean and Standard deviation of student teachers' Self-Compassion were presented in Table 1

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Student teachers' Self-Compassion

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Kindness	22	45	34.47	4.346
Self- Judgement	10	24	17.19	2.666
Common Humanity	23	40	31.39	4.837
Isolation	15	31	24.34	3.575
Mindfulness	19	39	30.89	4.522
Over Identify	8	19	14.06	2.283
Total Self-Compassion	115	182	152.33	13.418

As shown in Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of the student teachers' overall six subscales of self-compassion were (152.33) and (13.418) respectively. Since the sample mean (152.33) is greater than the theoretical mean (123) in overall self-compassion, it can be assumed that the student teachers' self-compassion is satisfactory.

The performance of students in each subscales was assessed according to the mean percentages of six subscales of self-compassion. The results showed that the highest mean score was self-kindness (34.47) while the lowest mean score was in over identify (14.06).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Student Teachers' Conflict Resolution

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
View of conflict	9	20	14.49	2.448
Atmosphere	9	20	15.54	2.685
Clarification	9	20	14.94	2.776
Needs	10	20	15.70	2.487
Power	10	20	15.74	2.263
Future	10	20	15.26	2.185
Options	9	19	14.36	2.265
Doables	10	20	15.64	2.353
Mutual benefit agreements	10	20	14.83	2.408
Extra Consideration	8	19	13.56	2.641
Total Conflict Resolution	124	181	150.06	13.425

As shown in Table 2, the mean and standard deviation of the student teachers' overall ten subscales of conflict resolution were (150.06) and (13.425) respectively. Since the sample mean (150.06) is greater than the theoretical mean (120) in overall conflict resolution, it can be assumed that the student teachers' conflict resolution is satisfactory.

The performance of students in each subscales was assessed according to the mean percentages of ten subscales of conflict resolution. The results showed that the highest mean scores was power (15.74) and the lowest mean scores was in Extra Consideration (13.56). It can be concluded that student teachers had the best performance in power and the lowest performance in extra consideration.

Table 3 Results of Independent Samples *t* test for Self compassion and Conflict Resolution by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>MD</i>
Self-Compassion	Male	22	151.45	12.667	-.367	68	.715	-1.275
	Female	48	152.73	13.861				
Conflict -Resolution	Male	22	149.91	13.162	-.062	68	.951	-.216
	Female	48	150.13	13.681				

The results of *t* test showed that there were no significant differences in self-compassion and conflict -resolution by gender.

Table 4 Results of Independent Samples *t* test for Self compassion and Conflict -Resolution by Subject

Variable	Subject	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>MD</i>
Self-Compassion	Science	5	143.40	19.191	-1.560	68	.123	-9.615
	Art	65	153.02	12.821				
Conflict -Resolution	Science	5	149.20	12.276	-.147	68	.883	-.923
	Art	65	150.12	13.595				

The results of *t* test showed that there were no significant differences in self-compassion and conflict resolution by subject.

Relationship Between Self compassion and Conflict resolution

In order to explore relationship between self-compassion and conflict resolution of Education Degree College student teachers, Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient was calculated. The results were shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Relationship Between Self Compassion and Conflict Resolution

Variables	Correlation	Conflict resolution
Self -compassion	Pearson Correlation	.55***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	70

Note: *** Correlation is significant at 0.00 level (2-tailed).

According to the result of Table, there was a statistically significant correlation in student self-compassion and conflict resolution ($r=.55, p<0.01$). Therefore, it can be interpreted that there was positive correlation between self-compassion and conflict resolution of student teachers. This means that student teachers with higher level of self-compassion would possess greater in conflict resolution.

The Result of Multiple Regression for Factors of Self compassion and Conflict Resolution

The regression analysis was conducted in order to investigate how well the self-compassion predicts conflict resolution. The results were shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Model Summary of Self compassion and Conflict resolution

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of Estimate
1	.704 ^a	.496	.448	9.976

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-compassion

It may be seen that a total of 44.8% of the variance in student teachers' conflict resolution can be predicted by self-compassion.

To find out the effect subscales of self-compassion on conflict resolution, simultaneous multiple regression was computed. A combination of six subscales: Self-Kindness, Self-judgement, Common humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness and Over Identified was expected to determine students' conflict resolution. The result was shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for subscales of Self compassion on Conflict resolution

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	96.289	16.320		5.9	.000
Self-Kindness	.885	.364	.287	2.432	.018
Self-Judgment	.104	.469	.021	.222	.825
Common Humanity	-.272	.330	-.098	-.825	.412
Isolation	-.289	.352	-.077	-.820	.416
Mindfulness	1.698	.412	.572	4.118	.000
Over Identification	-1.095	.580	-.186	-1.887	.064

Table showed the intercept, unstandardized regression coefficient (B), and standardized regression coefficient β for model. By applying the results of multiple regression analysis presented in Table 7, the resultant model for subtests of self-compassion can be defined as in the following equation:

$$\text{CR} = 96.289 + .885 \text{SK} + .104 \text{SJ} - .272 \text{CH} - .289 \text{I} + 1.698 \text{M} - 1.095 \text{OI}$$

Note: CR = Conflict resolution, SK = Self-Kindness, SJ = Self judgement,

CH = common Humanity, I=isolation, M = Mindfulness, OI = Over Identified

Among all subscales of self-compassion, self-kindness, and mindfulness were significant predictors of students' self-compassion. However, other dimensions like self-judgement, common humanity, mindfulness, over identified and isolation were not significant predictors of students' Self-Compassion.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This study can support in examining and shaping the self-compassion of student teachers. In addition, through the findings of this study, pre-service teacher training programmers can know the differences of student teachers' self-compassion and can support them to become strong positive self-compassion on their experiences.

A person in life, no matter what pain he had experienced or mistakes him had made, his future will not stop, and he can begin again. One small step at a time, he can practice self-compassion and move in the direction of greater health, happiness, and joy.

If become a conflict, should do meditation practice and exposure to Buddhist teachings. They might be a useful means of achieving greater mental health for human who are suffering from a lack of self-compassion.

According to Neff and Germer (2013), the Mindful Self-Compassion program effectively teaches individuals how to become more compassionate toward themselves. The more Mindful Self-Compassion participants practiced formal meditation, the more they increased their self-compassion levels. By wrapping emotional pain in the warm embrace of self-compassion, suffering is ameliorated and wellbeing is enhanced, allowing for healthier functioning in daily life.

Moreover, teaching co-curricular subjects such as physical education, industrial arts/domestic science, agriculture, fine arts and music make students mindful and then this performance looks like meditation. Self-compassion is associated with healthy relationship functioning and the tendency to integrate concerns with autonomy and connectedness when faced with relationship conflicts. Thus, the benefits of self-compassion may not only be personal, but also interpersonal.

For this reason, counselors who work with individuals experiencing relationship conflicts with family, friends, or partners might consider encouraging self-compassion as a way should treatment these conflicts in a psychologically beneficial manner.

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