Psychological Achievements
Spring & Summer, 2025, *32*(1)
Serial Number 33, 371-394
Rcceived: 22 Aug 2023
Accepted: 28 Oct 2023
DOI: 10.22055/psy.2023.44618.3105
(Psychol Achiev)
Orginal Article

Examining the Relationship between Self-compassion and Teachers' Job Burnout: the Mediating Role of Resilience

Abolfazl NejatiMehr*
Mohammad Saeid Abde khodaei**
Abbas Firoozabadi***

Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between self-This correlational study examined the relationship between compassion and job burnout among teachers with over ten years of experience, focusing on the mediating role of resilience. A total of 372 teachers with more than ten years of work experience were sampled using a multi-stage random sampling method. Data was collected using the Neff Self-Compassion Scale, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, and the Maslach and Jackson Burnout Inventory. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and structural equation modeling in SPSS-26 and AMOS-25 software.The results from the structural equation modeling indicated that self-compassion had a significant direct effect on job burnout ($\beta = -0.27$, $p < 0.003$). It also had a significant indirect effect on job burnout mediated by resilience ($\beta = -0.28$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, resilience had a significant direct effect on job burnout ($\beta = -0.43$, $p < 0.002$). Together, self-compassion and resilience explained 42% of the variance in job burnout. These findings suggest that self-compassion is a crucial factor related to job burnout, as it helps individuals manage stressful situations. Through its positive impact on resilience, self-compassion enables individuals to accept challenges with kindness and awareness, reducing the intensity of job burnout.

Keywords: Self-compassion, Resilience, Job Burnout, Teacher

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* Master of Arts in General Psychology , Department of Psychology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran.
** Associate Professor of Psychology, Department of Psychology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran. *Corresponding* Author: abdkhoda@um.ac.ir
*** Assistant Professor of Psychology, Department of Psychology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran.

Extended Abstract

Introduction

Teaching is widely regarded as a profession with high levels of occupational stress. Stress, at its core, is a normal emotional response to perceived threats or challenges; however, when it persists over time and becomes chronic, it can lead to traumatic experiences with harmful psychological consequences. For teachers, prolonged exposure to stressful working conditions can result in severe anxiety, decreased job satisfaction, increased intentions to leave the profession, and ultimately, burnout. Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment, all of which can severely impair teachers' professional functioning and well-being. Given the significant impact of burnout on both teachers and educational systems, it is crucial to investigate the factors that influence its intensity and occurrence.

One psychological construct that has garnered considerable attention in the field of positive psychology is self-compassion. Self-compassion involves treating oneself with kindness, recognizing one's experiences as part of the common human condition, and maintaining balanced emotional awareness (mindfulness). It has been linked to greater emotional resilience and improved mental health outcomes across various populations. Resilience, defined as the ability to cope effectively with adversity and recover from stress, is another critical factor that may interact with self-compassion to protect against burnout. The current study aimed to explore the relationship between self-compassion and burnout in teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience, specifically focusing on the mediating role of resilience in this relationship.

Method

The study employed a correlational design alongside structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized model. A total of 372 teachers, including 220 men and 152 women—all with over ten years of professional experience—were selected using a multi-stage random sampling technique to ensure a representative and diverse sample. The multi-stage sampling involved selecting educational districts, schools within those districts, and eligible teachers within the selected schools, enhancing the generalizability of the results.

For data collection, three validated instruments were utilized: the Neff Self-Compassion Scale (SCS), which measures self-compassion across six dimensions, including self-kindness and mindfulness; the Connor-Davidson

Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), which assesses resilience levels; and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), the most widely used tool for measuring burnout dimensions. Questionnaires were administered during school hours, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

Data analysis involved calculating Pearson correlation coefficients to examine bivariate relationships between variables, followed by SEM using SPSS-26 and AMOS-25 software to evaluate direct and indirect effects within the proposed model. The use of SEM allowed for simultaneous testing of the mediating role of resilience in the relationship between self-compassion and burnout.

Results

Structural equation modeling results indicated that all hypothesized pathways were statistically significant. The direct effect of self-compassion on burnout was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.27$, $p < 0.003$), demonstrating that higher levels of self-compassion are associated with lower levels of burnout. Importantly, resilience was found to significantly mediate this relationship ($\beta = -0.28$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that self-compassion enhances resilience, which in turn reduces burnout. Additionally, resilience itself had a strong direct negative effect on burnout ($\beta = -0.43$, $p < 0.002$). Collectively, the model explained approximately 42% of the variance in burnout levels among the participants, highlighting the meaningful influence of self-compassion and resilience on teachers' occupational stress and well-being.

Conclusion

The findings underscore the critical mediating role of resilience in the association between self-compassion and burnout among experienced teachers. Sub-components of self-compassion showed varying relationships with burnout: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness were positively associated with reduced burnout, while self-judgment, feelings of isolation, and over-identification with negative emotions were linked to increased burnout. These results align with the principles of positive psychology, which emphasize fostering psychological well-being through self-acceptance and growth. Teachers with higher self-compassion are more likely to engage in adaptive coping strategies by extending kindness and understanding to themselves, recognizing their struggles as part of the universal human experience, and maintaining mindful awareness of their emotions. This compassionate approach fosters greater resilience, enabling teachers to manage occupational stressors more effectively and reduces the likelihood of burnout. By empowering individuals to actively regulate their

emotional responses and maintain psychological well-being, we can create healthier teaching environments.

Author Contributions: Author 1, designing the general framework, editing the content and analyzing the content, editing the article. **Author 2**, Guidance and cooperation in the design of the general framework, content and statistical corrections and final review, sending the article. **Author 3**, Guidance in modifying the introduction and final review All authors discussed the results, reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Acknowledgments: We are grateful to all the dear teachers who accompanied us in this research.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare there is no conflict of interest in this article. This article extracted from the M.A thesis, with the guidance of Dr. Mohammad Saeed Abdekhodaei and with the consultation of Dr. Abbas Firoozabadi

Funding: This article did not receive financial support.