Self-compassion in relation to personal initiativefulness, curiosity and exploration among young adults

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The present study is an attempt to explore the relationship of self-compassion with few positive attributes, viz., personal initiativefulness and curiosity and exploration among young adults. Self-compassion stands for the quality of the human-being, which makes him kind and understanding towards oneself, even in the face of adverse situations. It suggests the perception of one’s experiences as a part of the broader human experience. Self-compassion has various implications in academic and professional life. As it provides an intrinsic motivation to an individual; it facilitates a self-initiated behavior and curiosity and exploratory behavior. The present study has been conducted on 100 college students using Neff’s (2003a) self-compassion scale, personal growth initiative scale (Robitschek, 1998), and curiosity and exploration inventory (Kashdan et al., 2004). In order to analyze the results product moment correlation method has been employed. The results reflect a positive correlation between self-compassion and personal initiativefulness as well as with both dimensions of curiosity and exploratory behavior, i.e. self-exploration and absorption. This suggests that having an open and accepting stance toward oneself is related to being open to the world, in general.

Keywords: absorption, curiosity, exploration, personal initiativefulness, self-compassion

The world salutes to rising sun. “success” the basic and ultimate goal of almost each and every individual is a very precarious position, which never stays permanently to any person.

The society’s over emphasis on achievement and relating one’s self-esteem and confidence with the success is the root cause of all sufferings. From very early years of our lives, we are all taught to build our self-esteem by competing successfully. This kind of social comparison leads to many negative effects as, considering others as obstacles to our way to success disconnection with people marking our territory, etc., therefore, looking at this darker side of high self-esteem, and its undesirable consequences, it seems better to replace it with a more positive and constructive concept, which helps oneself in looking himself in a positive light even in failure and consequent difficult situations. This healthier self-concept is self-compassion.

Neff (2003a) defines self-compassion toward oneself in instances of pain or failure, rather than being self-critical; perceiving one’s experiences as part of the larger human experience, rather than seeing them as isolating; and holding painful thoughts and feelings in mindful awareness, rather than over-identifying with them.

Self-compassion has three components (Neff, 2003b):

- Being kind and understanding to oneself in instances of suffering or perceived inadequacy
- A sense of common humanity
- A balanced awareness of one’s emotions the ability to face (rather than avoid) painful thoughts and feelings, but without exaggeration, drama or self-pity.

Researchers have found self-compassion to be a powerful predictor of mental health in various researches. Self-compassion is negatively associated with self-criticism, depression, anxiety, rumination, thought suppression, and neurotic perfectionism while being positively associated with life satisfaction and social connectedness (Neff, 2003a). Increased self-compassion has been found to explain lessened stress following participation in a widely implemented stress-reduction program (mindfulness-based stress reduction; Shapiro et al., 2005). Self-compassion appears to have academic benefits as well. Neff et al. (2005) found that self-compassion was linked to intrinsic interest in learning and healthier coping strategies after failing an exam.

Self-compassion has been linked with many positive attributes and here in the present study, an attempt has been made to explore its relationship with personal growth initiative (PGI) and curiosity and exploration.

PGI concept was given by Robitschek (2003a), and is being defined as an intentional engagement in the process of trying to change oneself. It has cognitive and behavioral elements. PGI is in the form of a continuum, the values ranging from high to lower levels, determining the person’s response to a situation that demands either a change in the person himself or present an opportunity for change and growth.

Curiosity is the quest for knowledge and is a motivational prerequisite for exploratory behavior (Berlyne, 1960). Exploratory behavior refers to all activities concerned with gathering information about the environment.

PGI and curiosity-exploratory behavior can be viewed as good indicators of both academic performance and better carrier, so they are being studied in relation to self-compassion among college students.

Hypothesis of the study
Self-compassion will be positively related to personal initiative and curiosity and exploration

Method

Participants
The sample of the present study comprised 100 college going undergraduate girls, age ranging from 18 to 22 years.