

Exploring Relationship between Self-compassion, Self-esteem and Adjustment among College Students in Delhi

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The transition from college to professional higher learning is the most crucial period of student life. During this stage students are required to make major changes and adjustment in life. Adjustment among fresh students has also been found to be positively associated with their self-esteem levels (Hernandez, 2017; Pasha & Munaf, 2013). In this background, this study explored the association among students' self-compassion, self-esteem and adjustment of 122 students (67 males and 55 females) from Delhi, National Capital Territory Region (NCR). Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1989), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) and Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form (SCS-SF; Raes, Pommier, Neff, & Gucht, 2011) were used. Regression analyses revealed self-compassion to be a significant predictor of self-esteem, academic adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and total adjustment. Further no gender differences were found between males and females in self-compassion, self-esteem or any of the dimensions of adjustment. Except for self-compassion, of which they showed moderate level, students were found to be low on all the other variables.

Keywords: self-compassion, self-esteem, total adjustment, social and emotional adjustment, academic adjustment.

Entering college is a critical developmental period for identity, forming career and exploration in an individual's life. It requires significant changes and adjustments to be made in one's life and thus can be a daunting phase. Initially, students may have to make various adjustments: in their daily routine, lifestyle, social circle; dealing with the newfound independence and some even have to move away from home and settle in a new city, new environment, unique culture, etc. Additionally, changes like greater personal freedom or new environment and relationships are often accompanied by stress regarding maintaining or balancing old and new relationships and managing time to deal with the newly added academic, personal and social responsibilities. Such tasks pose a challenge and it is essential that students successfully adjust to their new environment, its demands, and the new roles and responsibilities which come their way, as they grow older and change places. Optimal adjustment leads to stronger social, academic and institutional integration as well as greater goal commitment among

students; this in turn increases their persistence and academic achievement (Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012). Adjustment, academic, emotional as well as social, has also been found to predict attrition among college students (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). Self-esteem, on the other hand, refers to positive or negative evaluation of oneself (Rosenberg, 1965). It may be global (overall) or specific (such as pertaining specifically to academic ability, sports competence, social skills, etc.). High self-esteem is found to be related to various outcomes like reduced academic as well as life stress (Abouserie, 1994); academic achievement (Aryana, 2010); and social connectedness (Lee & Robbins, 1998).

According to (Neff, 2003a), self-compassion is about being touched by our own suffering, recognizing our pains, being open minded, accepting failures, limitations and experiencing feelings of caring and kindness toward oneself rather than seeing them as isolation and critical as part of human experience. People high in self-compassion have been found to show

better mental health outcomes than those who are not self-compassionate: self-compassion has been linked to less depression, anxiety and stress (Barnard & Curry, 2011); it promotes psychological resilience (Sbarra, Smith & Mehl, 2012); it has been found to be related to greater happiness, optimism, positive affect, wisdom, curiosity and exploration, and personal initiative (Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2007), among other positive consequences. In line with these findings, we expect self-compassion to contribute to students' adjustment levels.

Although self-esteem and self-compassion seem similar constructs, they have specific differences. Self-esteem, for example, is often developed either positively or negatively based on our comparing ourselves with other individuals. Self-compassion, on the other hand, is a solely an individual phenomenon, not influenced by how we view ourselves relative to others. The difference between these constructs can also be understood by looking at what kind of associations they show with other related constructs. Neff & Vonk (2009) found both global self-esteem and self-compassion to predict happiness, optimism and positive affect. However, unlike self-esteem, self-compassion did not show a positive association with narcissism. Further, self-compassion was found to show a stronger negative relationship with social comparison, anger, self-rumination, self-consciousness at the public level and a closed mindset called the need for cognitive closure. Lastly, self-compassion predicted more stable feelings of self-worth.

In this background, this study, explores adjustment in college students in New Delhi, India, along three dimensions: academic, social and emotional. We further assess their self-esteem and test a third variable, self-compassion, as a predictor of adjustment and self-esteem among these students. Due to various positive consequences associated with successful adjustment to college life as well as high self-esteem, studying the relationship of self-compassion, esteem, and adjustment with regard to college students becomes essential. Besides it is also useful to explore the determinants of social adjustment in stages of student's transition in life, to gain insight into

how poorly adjusted students and those low on self-esteem may be helped. Most of the extant researches were focussed on study of self-compassion, self-esteem, coping mechanism on populations that include the students, adult, elderly and aging but there is no study which shows the three variables self-compassion, self-esteem and adjustment among students particularly in India. Adjustment is an important and challenging problem faced by students during the transition from high school, to college to university life or professional courses as they have to face a new environment, different cultures, and unfamiliar metropolitan city. Adjusting to university life is a major transition for young adults, as they have to overcome the unfamiliarity of the university environment (Blimling & Miltenberger, 1981). According to a survey by Fan (2000), 86.6% of first-year Chinese students perceived high stress in their academic life, 55.3% in their social life, and 32.5% in their finances. These academic, interpersonal, and financial challenges require adequate coping responses in order to avoid maladjustment, which has been suggested to be a major cause of poor academic performance and dropouts (Baker & Siryk, 1984).

Review of Existing Literature

Self-compassion was associated with an ability to manage adversity and make necessary life changes (Neff,2011 and Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007) making individuals respond to personal weaknesses, failures, and challenges with fewer emotional overreactions, greater emotional coping skills, and more adaptive motivational orientations than less self-compassionate individuals (Leary et al., 2007 and Neff , Hsieh & Dejitterat , 2005). High self-compassion students were found to be exhibiting greater perspective-taking and less anxiety and isolation when contemplating unpleasant life events, and less negative affect and more emotional equanimity when responding to situations involving failure or embarrassment (Leary et al., 2007) and . Self-compassion has a causal influence on psychological well-being (Bluth & Neff,2018) and found self-compassion associated with higher well-being and lower distress and also mediated the relationships between stress and depression, negative affect

and depression, burnout and depression, and aggregate distress and aggregate well-being (Fong and Loi, 2016).

Self-esteem is part of the self-concept. Neff (2011) defines it as an evaluation of our worthiness as individuals, a judgment that we are good, valuable people. A low and high self-esteem would be a result of the assessment we choose to make for ourselves. One of the concepts that can aid the process of alleviating the pain that may come from a negative assessment can be Self-compassion. Self-compassion implies a certain kind of kindness towards oneself. The presence of self-compassion can aid the self by allowing it the mental tendencies to be less harsh to oneself, be less critical and recognize the nature of fallacy that is inherent to human behaviour and society at large. (Neff, 2003b). So, self-compassion has both augmenting tendencies along with buffering capacity. Not only does it help to enhance a positive feeling towards oneself but also act as a buffer when in situations that can trigger a negative onset of emotions. In a study done of adolescent it was found that self-compassion helped explain the relationship between mindfulness and the negative affect and perceived stress of the sample (Bluth, 2012). Self-compassion can be experienced both cognitively and behaviorally. Klinge and Vliet (2019) found that self-compassion helped adolescents in putting themselves at the center, maintaining a positive outlook, engaging in pleasurable activities, connecting positively with others, working on self-improvement, making oneself attractive to others, accepting oneself and helped them experiencing a balance in their emotions.

The next section highlights existing researches in this area of study. We provide an overview of each variable under study as well as previous researches that have studied the relationships we aim to research in our study.

Self-compassion. The concept of self-compassion was proposed by Neff (2003b) as a way of studying healthy attitudes towards oneself as per Buddhist philosophy. It involves acknowledging pain and imperfections as part and parcel of human life. Self-Compassion

comprises of three components: a) self-kindness: when faced with failure, being kind and understanding towards oneself instead of harsh and critical; b) common humanity: involves seeing one's negative experiences as part of the larger human experience and not as isolated instances; and c) mindfulness: being open to and aware of one's suffering, not disconnecting from it but also not over-identifying with it.

Self-compassion has further been studied as an important contributor to the wellbeing of college students, over and above other factors like stress, social support and goal management (Neely et al., 2009). It has also been shown to be associated with students being able to face challenges more successfully, experiencing less homesickness and depression, and greater satisfaction with attending university (Terry, Leary, & Mehta, 2012). Further, students face demands such as higher workload, balancing educational and social pursuits, maintaining motivation, etc. In such a situation, they are likely to experience failures and setbacks. Those high on self-compassion, however, may find it easier to recover as it has been found to give people the emotional resources necessary to endure painful and challenging circumstances, and thus allowing them to bounce back quicker (Neff & Davidson, 2016). Self-compassion also promotes psychological resiliency (Sbarra, Smith & Mehl, 2012), which will help students not feel overwhelmed by failures but rather, grow and develop their skills and abilities so they succeed on a second try. It is thus expected that self-compassion would predict academic adjustment of students as well.

Researchers have also focused on how self-compassionate people deal with unpleasant life events. The move away from home to college, the taking up of new roles and responsibilities, the pressure of establishing a career, etc. are part of college life and if not entirely unpleasant, can be distressing to many students. Leary et al. (2007) have studied how one's level of self-compassion influences their reactions to unpleasant life events. They found that in imagined uncomfortable social situations, self-compassion acts as a buffer against negative self-feelings. In the context of our study, when students begin their college journey, they have

to form a new social circle. They network around, meet different people, explore different societies or clubs, and, likely, that some of these would not work out perhaps due to issues of incompatibility. In such situations, thus, self-compassionate students are likely to not feel bogged down and take these experiences as negatively as those who are low on self-compassion, ultimately influencing their social adjustment.

The same researchers also found self-compassion to play a moderating role on one's negative emotions after they received ambivalent feedback, as well as allowing people to not feel overwhelmed by negative emotions in the face of unpleasant experiences. In an academic setting, such findings may be interpreted such that when faced with enormous academic pressures or even failure, self-compassionate students would not engage in self-pity and have extremely negative, generalised thoughts about themselves and their abilities. As described above, failures for such individuals may more likely be a fuel that ignites greater efforts and perseverance. Those low on self-compassion, on the other hand, are likely to find it challenging to make a comeback as they would be more engrossed in their feelings of negative self-evaluations. Such behaviours of individuals can influence their degree of academic adjustment to college.

The review thus shows that successful adjustment in different domains when entering college is essential and associated with positive outcomes for students, making this an important construct for researchers to study, along with its antecedents. In the current study, we thus assess adjustment levels (academic, social as well as emotional) and self-esteem of college students and study self-compassion as a predictor of each of the three aspects of college adjustment and self-esteem. Findings here can have implications for how school management can better prepare students for the transition to college life (e.g., by engaging in programs to promote self-compassion from an early age), as well as how the college administration can ensure a smooth entry into this new phase of one's life (e.g., by providing students ample opportunities for socialization both inside and outside the class for proper social adjustment

or creating a curriculum that increases in difficulty and complexity gradually so students can demonstrate good academic adjustment or providing professional services on campus to help students emotionally adjust to their new roles).

Adjustment. Adjustment is the "psychological process of adapting to, coping with, and managing problems, challenges, and demands of everyday life" (Simons, Kalichman, & Santrock, 1994, p. 8). Bennett & Okinaka (1990) defined college adjustment as the opposite of psychological trauma, which is said to occur when students experience alienation as a result of their unfamiliarity with the norms and values of the new place and expectations from them. Among those who move to a different region for college, such experiences of distress are likely to be even more, especially with regard to their social and emotional adjustment. Socially, they move away from their family and friends and may find it difficult to meet or talk regularly. At the same time, emotionally, feelings of homesickness and loneliness may hamper their emotional adjustment. Poor adjustment in these domains is then likely to adversely affect academic achievement as well. When studying adjustment in college students, thus, it is important to consider the adjustment of students in these three different domains, viz. academic, social and emotional (Friedlander et al., 2007).

Academic adjustment. This aspect of adjustment refers to how well students are able to deal with academic demands and meet academic requirements, how motivated they are to complete academic work and how much effort they put in it, and how satisfied they are with their chosen program (Baker & Siryk, 1989, as cited in Friedlander et al., 2007).

Social adjustment. This concerns students' satisfaction with the social aspects of their college life; how involved they are in social activities and how well they are able to function in the new social environment (Baker & Siryk, 1989, as cited in Friedlander et al., 2007).

Emotional adjustment. Emotional problems that students may face on entering college generally include psychological distress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or somatic distress

(Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). Feelings of homesickness or having to face new stressors that come with college life can impede one's emotional adjustment.

Self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) has defined self-esteem as an attitude of the person towards one's self, which may be either positive or negative. Tafarodi and Swann (1995, 2001) have further argued for two dimensions of self-esteem: self-liking and self-competence. The former is mainly derived through our social interactions, which allow us to make opinions based on perceived judgements of others about us. The latter, on the other hand, arises from our individual accomplishments: based on an evaluation of our actual and desired performances. Studies have demonstrated high correlations between self-compassion and self-esteem (Araya et al., 2017; Hayter & Dorstyn, 2014), which makes it worthwhile to explore self-compassion as a predictor of self-esteem.

The above review gives us some understanding on the concepts of self-esteem and adjustment and an indication of the importance of self-esteem and college adjustment as critical variables to be studied in the context of college students in the Indian context. Both are associated with various desirable outcomes that make them of interest to all stakeholders in the education system. Self-compassion too has shown to have associations with consequences that have a bearing on one's self-esteem and adjustment, thus warranting the need to be studied as a predictor of these two variables.

Method

Participants

Participants for the study comprised 122 college students from NCR region. The NCR region comprises of a diverse zone of areas drawn from Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan states and due to its character as National Capital territory Region of India, it attracts large number of students from various parts of the India to numerous educational Institutes located in this region. Out of these, 67 were males and 55 were females. The mean age of participants was 22.6 years, with the range being 20 to 26 years. All participants were MBA

students coming from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Purposive sampling was used to obtain data.

Measures: Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). Developed by Baker & Siryk (1989), the SACQ was used to measure adjustment on three different dimensions: Academic adjustment (reliability of the scale, cronbach alpha was 0.92, 5 items), Social Adjustment (cronbach alpha was 0.85, high- 3 items), and Emotional adjustment (cronbach alpha was 0.82, high, 5 items). Items of the scale were responded on a four-point scale. In our study, overall reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha value of 0.71. For the academic, social and emotional adjustment sub-scales, internal consistency values were 0.62, 0.52 and 0.67 respectively.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965). The scale comprises ten items that measure global self-esteem. Items were rated on a scale of four-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. For scoring, items 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9 were first reverse scored and then scores for all items were added. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. Rosenberg (1979) demonstrated excellent internal consistency for the scale with the internal reliability coefficient being 0.92. In our study, reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha value of 0.76.

Self-Compassion Scale- Short Form (SCS-SF) (Raes, Pommier, Neff, & Gucht, 2011). The scale, consisting of 12 items of a shorter version of the original Self-Compassion Scale (SCS; Neff, 2003b). Items are responded on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). To compute the total score, negative subscale items (i.e., items 1, 4, 8, 9, 11 and 12) are first reverse scored and then a total mean of item responses is calculated. Higher scores indicate higher self-compassion. Raes et al. (2011) found the SCS-SF to demonstrate good internal consistency, with the Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.86 , and a very strong correlation with the original SCS ($r \geq 0.97$). Both these findings were obtained across three different samples. For our sample, reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha value of 0.54.

Procedure

All the three scales were administered to sample of 122 participants, college students of Delhi NCR. Once collated, it was entered into IBM SPSS version 21 for analysis. Data cleaning / filtering was done for any incorrect / missing entries in the data. Reliability analyses were conducted for all three scales to ascertain their internal consistency with respect to our sample. In the main analysis, descriptive statistics were obtained for all measures; independent samples t-tests were run to check for gender differences in all variables; and a simple linear regression was computed to check self-compassion as a predictor of self-esteem and adjustment.

Results

Table 1. Results for reliability analyses for all scales

Scale	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form (SCS-SF)	12	.54
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	10	.76
Adjustment To College Scale	13	.71
Academic Adjustment	5	.62
Social Adjustment	3	.52
Emotional Adjustment	5	.67

As shown in Table 1, Cronbach alpha coefficients range from 0.52 to 0.76, with all scales and sub-scales showing satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 2. Gender and age characteristics of the sample: frequencies, means, SDs

	Fre- quency	Per- cent	Age		
			Mini- mum	Maxi- mum	Mean
Males	67	54.9	20	26	22.8
Females	55	45.1	21	24	22.4
Total	122	100	20	26	22.6

As shown in Table 2, our sample comprised 67 males and 55 females, making up 54.9% and 45.1% of the sample respectively. The mean age for male participants was 22.8 years with

the range being 20 to 26 years. For females, the mean age was 22.4 years with the range going from 21 to 24 years.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the total sample

Variable	Mean	SD
Self-esteem	1.87	0.46
Self-compassion	3.21	0.43
Total adjustment	1.77	0.39
Academic adjustment	1.78	0.49
Social adjustment	1.82	0.61
Emotional adjustment	1.72	0.55

As shown in Table 3, the sample is low on all variables (with mean values ranging from 1.72 to 1.87) measured except self-compassion on which they have a mean score of 3.21 indicating high self-compassion.

Table 4 shows results of six independent samples t-tests conducted to check for gender differences in six variables. As can be seen, a) no significant difference was found in the scores for self-compassion between males ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.41$) and females ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.46$); $t(120) = 0.946$, $p > 0.05$; b) there was no significant difference in the scores for self-esteem between males ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 0.43$) and females ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.49$); $t(120) = 0.338$, $p > 0.05$; and c) there were no significant differences in any of the dimensions of adjustment, namely, academic adjustment: males ($M = 1.77$, $SD = 0.52$), females ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 0.46$); $t(120) = -0.331$, $p > 0.05$, social adjustment: males ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.67$) and females ($M = 1.78$, $SD = 0.53$); $t(120) = 0.675$, $p < 0.05$; and emotional adjustment: males ($M = 1.65$, $SD = 0.54$) and females ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 0.57$); $t(120) = -1.419$, $p > 0.05$.

As shown in Table 5, all correlations, except that between emotional adjustment and social adjustment, are significant at either 0.01 or 0.05 levels of significance. Next, simple linear regressions were calculated to predict self-esteem, academic adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and total adjustment based on self-compassion. As shown in Table 6 ahead, a significant regression equation was found for self-compassion as a predictor of self-esteem: $F(1,120) = 23.012$,

Table 4 Independent samples t-tests for Gender comparing the levels of self-compassion, self-esteem, and academic, social and emotional adjustment among males and females

Variable	Gender	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Self-compassion	Male	3.25	0.41	0.946	0.346 (NS)
	Female	3.17	0.46		
Self-esteem	Male	1.88	0.43	0.338	0.736 (NS)
	Female	1.85	0.49		
Academic adjustment	Male	1.77	0.52	-0.331	0.741 (NS)
	Female	1.80	0.46		
Social Adjustment	Male	1.85	0.67	0.675	0.501 (NS)
	Female	1.78	0.53		
Emotional Adjustment	Male	1.65	0.54	-1.419	0.159 (NS)
	Female	1.80	0.57		
Total adjustment	Male	1.74	0.39	-0.690	0.491 (NS)
	Female	1.79	0.39		

*NS=Non significant

Table 5. Correlation matrix showing correlations among self-compassion (SC), self-esteem (SE), academic adjustment (AA), social adjustment (SA), emotional adjustment (EA) and total adjustment (TA)

Variables	SC	SE	AA	SA	EA	TA
SC	1	.401**	.201*	.207*	.350**	.365**
SE	.401**	1	.344**	.269**	.357**	.460**
AA	.201*	.344**	1	.435**	.221*	.765**
SA	.207*	.269**	.435**	1	.154	.657**
EA	.350**	.357**	.221*	.154	1	.711**
TA	.365**	.460**	.765**	.657**	.711**	1

**p < 0.01, *p < .05

p < 0.001 with an R2 of 0.161. That is, the model explains 16.1% of the variance. The final predictive model thus was: level of self-esteem = 5.062 + 4.23(self-compassion). The table also show results of other regression analyses.

As shown in Table 6, a significant regression equation was found for self-compassion as a predictor of academic adjustment: $F(1,120) = 5.057$, $p < 0.05$ with an R2 of 0.040. That is, the model explains 4% of the variance. The final predictive model thus was: level of academic adjustment = 5.23 + 1.147(self-compassion). A significant regression equation was also found for self-compassion as a predictor of social adjustment: $F(1,120) = 5.387$, $p < 0.05$ with an R2 of 0.043. That is, the model explains 4.3% of the variance. The final predictive model

thus was: level of social adjustment = 2.636 + 0.876(self-compassion).

As shown in Table 6, a significant regression equation was found for self-compassion as a predictor of emotional adjustment: $F(1,120) = 16.754$, $p < 0.001$ with an R2 of 0.123. That is, the model explains 12.3% of the variance. The final predictive model thus was: level of emotional adjustment = 1.373 + 2.245(self-compassion). A significant regression equation was found for self-compassion as a predictor of total adjustment: $F(1,120) = 18.399$, $p < 0.001$ with an R2 of 0.133. That is, the model explains 13.3% of the variance. The final predictive model thus was: level of total adjustment = 9.239 + 4.267(self-compassion).

Table 6. Summary of linear regression for self-compassion predicting self-esteem; Academic adjustment; Social Adjustment; emotional adjustment and total adjustment.

Predictor	Self-esteem		
	B	SE B	
Self-compassion	4.23	0.882	0.401*
R2 = 0.161		F = 23.012**	
Variance explained = 16.1 %			
Academic Adjustment			
Self-compassion	1.147	0.510	0.201*
R2 = .040		F = 5.057*	
Variance explained = 4%			
Social Adjustment			
Self-compassion	0.876	0.377	0.207*
R2 = 0.043		F = 5.387*	
Variance explained = 4%			
Emotional Adjustment			
Self-compassion	2.245	0.548	0.35*
R2 = 0.123		F=16.754**	
Variance explained = 12.3%			
Total Adjustment			
Self-compassion	4.267	0.995	0.365*
R2 = 0.133		F=18.399**	
Variance explained = 13.3%			

**p < 0.001 ; *p < 0.0

Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the relationships between self-compassion, self-esteem and adjustment among college students. Further, self-compassion was studied as a predictor of students' self-esteem and their adjustment to college life. Students face many challenges when they enter professional college of higher learning, and these can affect their adjustment by means of having an impact on its different domains such as academic, social or emotional. Unsatisfactory adjustment is a cause for concern for not just the students involved, but also their parents as well as the educational institution, as all three components of adjustment have been found to predict students' attrition rates (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). Healthy or successful adjustment, on the other hand, is something desirable again for all stakeholders

in the educational process as it is associated with better integration to new environment as well as stronger commitment to one's goals, in turn positively influencing one's academic achievement (Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012).

In the present study, as shown in Table 3, the sample showed low self-esteem levels and total adjustment in terms of academic, social, and emotional adjustment, while being moderate on self-compassion. Further, it was found that there were no significant differences between males and females on self-compassion, self-esteem, and academic, social, emotional as well as total adjustment (Table 4). In the literature too, while some researchers have found gender differences in self-compassion with men exhibiting more of it (e.g., Neff & McGehee, 2010; Neff & Vonk, 2009), others have found no such differences (e.g., Neff & Pommier, 2013; Iskender, 2009).

With regard to self-esteem, significant gender differences have been found by researchers with females showing poorer self-esteem (Bolognini, Plancherel, Bettschart, & Halfon, 1996; Furnham, Badmin, & Sneade, 2002). Gentile et al. (2009), on the other hand, found domain-wise differences with males scoring higher on some dimensions (like athletic, physical appearance) while women scored higher on others (such as moral-ethical). In their meta-analysis of studies on gender differences in self-esteem, Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell (1999) discuss reasons for boys having higher self-esteem than girls: media's portrayal of women as having self-esteem issues, and girls' internalization of this message; as well as socialization practices adopted by parents whereby they may subtly communicate their belief that their daughters have lower self-esteem leading to their engaging in self-fulfilling prophecy. In today's world, where women are marching ahead and showing marked presence in every field, such reasons may not be relevant. Further, our sample was collected from a Management Institutes, where female students are likely to be exposed to better media representations of women, have various academic as well as occupational opportunities, thus, leading to no difference in the self-esteem levels of males and females. Lastly, we did

not find significant gender differences in total adjustment or any of its three dimensions, as is supported by findings from Leong, Bonz, & Zachar (1997).

Before regression analyses could be done, correlations were computed among all the variables (Table, 5). Self-compassion was found to be significantly correlated with self-esteem ($r = 0.4$) as well as total and dimension-wise adjustment (r ranging from 0.2 to 0.65). Self-esteem too showed significant correlations with all adjustment measures (r ranging from 0.27 to 0.46). Among adjustment domains, correlations between all types of adjustment, except that between emotional and social adjustment, were also significant.

Simple linear regressions were then computed to assess self-compassion as a predictor of self-esteem, and total as well as the three dimensions of adjustment. As shown in Table 6, self-compassion was a significant predictor of all our dependent variables, explaining 16%, 4%, 4.3%, 12.3% and 13.3% variance in self-esteem, academic adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and total adjustment respectively.

Neff (2003a) found self-compassion to have a moderate correlation with self-esteem. It was argued that those high on self-compassion would be kinder towards themselves and will mindfully acknowledge their shortcomings as a part of being human, thus also having higher self-esteem compared to those low on self-compassion. Further, self-compassion has been found to have a significant negative correlation with depression, anxiety and rumination and significant positive associations with happiness, optimism, positive affect (Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007) along with wellbeing (Neff & McGehee, 2010). These findings may explain how self-compassion predicts emotional adjustment of students. Additionally, Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick (2007) found self-compassion to show significant positive relationships with wisdom, personal initiative, curiosity and exploration, and conscientiousness, all of which can play a role in students' academic adjustment; while extroversion and agreeableness, also found significantly correlated to self-compassion,

may help us understand how self-compassionate students adjust better socially to college life.

To conclude, we found self-compassion to be a significant predictor of college students' self-esteem as well as college adjustment.

Implication:

Our findings indicate that efforts to enhance students' self-compassion before or during this transitional phase can help them maintain their self-esteem as well as adjust better to college life. Mindfulness-based stress reduction programmes, for example, have shown an association with increase in self-compassion (Birnie, Speca, & Carlson, 2010). Such programs, coupled with other exercises and activities, thus should be made accessible to students in the first year of their college to help them adjust successfully and prevent incidences of depression, academic failure, social isolation and attrition. Findings have implications for how schools and colleges can make use of self-compassion enhancing programs to help students ease into the change from school to college life. Self-compassion has also been linked to personal growth and other improvement-oriented responses, such as enhanced motivation to make constructive changes in response to a negative personal event among a group of students who were highly dissatisfied with their exam grade (Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterat, 2005). Self-compassion was associated with positive changes in life satisfaction, identity development, and decreases in negative affectivity over the academic year. Hope, Koestner and Milyavskaya (2014), So educational institutes both public or private should start intervention or training programme in areas of self-compassion as part of their curriculum.

The policymakers, educational institutes, parents and Faculty can work together and come up with interventions, training programme like mindfulness training programme, mentoring of self-compassion so that a student's level of self-esteem and adjustment is enhanced and reduce stress as in previous studies (Shapiro, Astin, Bishop, & Cordova, 2005) and ensure students' pleasant adjustment to college life. Many studies have found the application or

intervention /role of self- compassion in reducing distress , depression, anxiety (Gilbert & Procter 2006).

There is also evidence supporting Gilbert's Compassionate Mind Training (CMT; Gilbert & Irons, 2005) among clinical populations, demonstrating that CMT may be an effective treatment for lessening feelings of shame and self-criticism that often play a prominent role in the manifestation of disorders such as major depression (Gilbert & Procter, 2006). Self-compassion interventions have shown positive results for eating behaviours (Adams & Leary, 2007), psychopathology (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012), student resilience (Smeets, Alberts, & Peters, M. (2014). sport-related rumination (Mosewich, Crocker, Kowalski, & Delongis, 2013), transition to college (e.g., Terry, Leary, & Mehta, 2012), chronic health issues (Brion, Leary, & Drabkin, 2014).

Limitation and future direction of the study.

The study could be done in larger sample and comparison with students coming from rural areas and urban areas in terms of their level of self-compassion, self-esteem and adjustment. Since only very few studies were conducted in India, there are many opportunities to come up with similar studies in line of self-compassion, stress, coping mechanism and well-being among students.

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