



ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

## A Correlational Study on Self-Compassion, Psychological Resilience, and Aggression among Students of Private and Government Schools and Colleges

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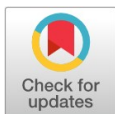
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**Abstract**— The goal of the education system is to provide valuable and equivalent standards of education along with extracurricular activities that teach them how to deal with conflict, cope with adversity, and overcome tough circumstances. The study aimed to scrutinize aggression, self-compassion and psychological resilience among private and government school and college students. A sample comprised of students ( $N = 200$ ) with mean age of  $\pm 17$  years from private and government schools and colleges from Rawalpindi and Islamabad was gathered. Sample was collected using purposive sampling technique. To study variables, Self-Compassion Scale-SF, Brief Resilience Scale and The Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire were used. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 23. Results revealed that self-compassion and psychological resilience have significant negative correlation with aggression whereas self-compassion and psychological resilience have a significant positive correlation with each other. Furthermore, Results also indicated that there is a significant difference based on the institutional level of students i.e., private or government institutes among study variables. Moreover, significant differences based on gender were also revealed by the results. Based on current study resilience interventions programs are recommended for school and college students to cope with challenging situations. Study findings will also help the education providers in identifying practical strategies for promoting self-compassion and psychological resilience among students with high levels of aggression.

**Index Terms**— Self-Compassion, Psychological resilience, Aggression, Students, Mental health

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### Introduction

Education is a process that helps students develop into fully realized individuals. Educational planners and administrators strive to fully develop each student's personality and intellectual capacity in this way. Ideally, the ultimate goal of educational systems is to help each person reach their potential. All nations, including Pakistan, have distinct educational systems, but they can be broadly categorized into two groups: private education systems and public education systems. Parents must pay for their children to attend a private school because the government does not provide financial support for public schools, which the government does. There are many opportunities and problems in terms of developing policies as a result of the changes that have been occurring in Pakistan's education sector. Even if

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government school enrolment is significantly higher than that of private schools, the shift in favour of private schools is significant. The negative experiences of government schools have instigated parents to shift children from government to private schools (Nisar, 2017).

In Pakistan, the private sector has become a significant provider of educational services, both in absolute terms and in comparison to the public sector. By providing better academic environments, private educational institutions are playing a crucial role in not only eliminating illiteracy but also raising the level of both students and teachers. Private schools have the potential to raise educational standards in Pakistan as well provided they are handled appropriately (Nisar, 2017). Superior test results, superior physical facilities, and lower rates of teacher absenteeism are just a few of the factors that make private schools more desirable to parents than public ones. Other elements include parental income, the calibre of the teachers, the school's amenities, the safety of the students, the standard of instruction, the mode of learning, and improved outcomes (Nisar, 2017).

Aggression is when a behavior is aimed at another person with the goal to cause harm to that person. These reactions might be verbal or physical, appear out of nowhere, be caused by an upsetting circumstance, or both. Social psychology defines aggression as any behavior intended to damage a person or an animal, and aggression is also defined as a group of behaviors that are considered to be a substantial issue for society to deal with (Siddiqui, 2018). Some of these violent behaviors may have major societal repercussions if prompt intervention is not provided, including extreme bullying or long-lasting negative outcomes like delinquency (Thomas, 2015). A person who engages in aggressive behavior intends to hurt or harm another person verbally, physically, or financially. It is a significant issue that primarily impacts teenagers. Students in secondary schools are even more at risk. This is strongly felt by parents, teachers, and the general populace who care about education, and it manifests itself in pupils in one way or another (Fayso, 2019). Researchers classified aggressive behavior as antisocial behavior (Odebo, 2019), deviant behavior (Al-Dmour et al., 2023; Domracheva & Andreeva, 2019), and occasionally problematic behavior (Amstad & Müller, 2020). The same is true of verbal and physical aggression, which can take different forms in both high school and college. First is label direct, where hitting and striking take place and theft is primarily used. Indirect hostility is defined as talking negatively about someone behind their back (Pérez-Fuentes et al., 2019).

Neff (2003) stated that self-compassion is "being touched by and opens to one's suffering, not avoiding or disconnecting from it, generating the desire to soothe one's suffering and to heal oneself with kindness" By encouraging positive capacity to cope with stress, happiness, optimism, sense of connection to others, and initiatives while demonizing negative emotions, self-compassion contributes to people's psychological well-being (Leary et al., 2007; Neff, 2009; Neff, 2010; Terry & Leary, 2011). Three additional characteristics are used to further define self-compassion: mindfulness, which refers to keeping a level head while struggling; common humanity, which refers to accepting that everyone experiences struggle; and self-kindness, which refers to treating oneself with compassion and understanding when struggling (Neff, 2003). Self-compassion has been linked to improved psychological resilience and well-being in adults (Zessin et al., 2015), as well as lower levels of anxiety, sadness, stress, annoyance, and anger (MacBeth and Gumley, 2012). Research on self-compassion in adolescents has paralleled these findings, with those who exhibit high levels of self-compassion reporting lower levels of stress, depression, anxiety, frustration, anger, and self-injurious behavior (Xavier et al., 2016), lower levels of problem substance use (Tanaka et al., 2011), and lower levels of shame or fear of failure (Mosewich et al., 2011). These results suggest that self-compassion is a particularly beneficial quality during adolescence because it seems to guard against typical developmental vulnerabilities like increased self-consciousness (Rankin et al., 2004), feeling alone in one's struggle (Laursen and Hartl, 2013), and mood instability like rising anxiety and depression (Maciejewski et al., 2014). Additionally, self-compassion varies by age and gender, with older teenage girls showing the lowest levels of self-compassion in comparison to younger adolescents and all males (Bluth et al., 2017).

Resilience is a core character trait seen as an important component of good child and adolescent development, which is another strength-based feature (Bethell et al., 2017). The capacity for psychological resilience is the speedy recovery from a catastrophe and ability to function normally. Simply put, individuals who possess the psychological and behavioral skills necessary to remain composed in the face of turmoil or crises and to recover from the occurrence without suffering long-term negative effects are said to have psychological resilience. Most people have psychological resilience, an evolutionary trait they employ to cope with everyday pressures. Resilient people may recover from losses, stave off disease, and adapt to adversity or flourish in it (Smith et al., 2008). According to Masten (2007), the development of resilience in adolescence is defined as the successful navigation of challenges as demonstrated by attaining age-appropriate competencies (such as having good peer relationships or holding a job) combined with positive (or absence of negative) mental health outcomes. According to this perspective, resilience is a dynamic process that develops throughout time and may alter when developmental expectations shift. Additionally, research suggests that resilient teenagers engage in more behaviors that are good for their health (Barger et al., 2017; Murphey et al., 2013), avoid risks like substance use (Barger et al., 2017; Murphey et al., 2013), and display fewer signs of stress, anxiety, depression, and anger (Skrove et al., 2013). Effective parenting, good connections with other caring adults, a positive self-perception, a safe neighborhood environment, and other characteristics have all been connected to teenage resilience thus far (Khan et al., 2021; Murphey et al., 2013). It is anticipated that these two qualities will be positively correlated because self-compassion is one of the variables that foster resilience. Teenagers who are resilient and self-compassionate, for instance, frequently have a positive view of themselves and feel a strong sense of connection to others. They also adopt adaptive coping techniques. Similar to how a resilient person would bounce back from a bad circumstance, the self-compassionate person's balanced perspective and absence of harsh self-

criticism may encourage "bouncing back" from life's challenges (Warren et al., 2016). This has been proven in numerous studies using lab-based tests on student populations. For instance, those who handled academic failure with warmth, acceptance, and self-compassion were more likely to forgive themselves and use the experience to encourage self-improvement (i.e., altering study habits). Similarly, Leary et al. (2007) found that among college students, self-compassion predicted effective coping and reduced negative reactivity to painful life situations. Both studies suggest that self-compassion and trait resilience are positively correlated in young people. Individuals with a high degree of self-compassion typically treat themselves with care, see hardship as a shared experience, and keep a steady mood and a balanced viewpoint when life troubles arise. Instead of reacting in an uncompassionate way (Wu et al., 2023). Studies investigating the association of self-compassion with aggressive behaviors have placed a strong emphasis on the beneficial impact of self-compassion in managing emotional distress and sustaining positive emotional function (Wu et al., 2023). In several populations (such as students and those with personality disorders), there is a negative correlation between self-compassion and violent behaviors (such as verbal and physical aggression display) and dispositions (Miyagawa et al., 2022; Sommerfeld, 2020). Therefore, self-compassion may safeguard people from the effects of negative emotions and stop them from acting impulsively or aggressively towards others as a result (Miyagawa et al., 2022). Self-compassionate students may be less likely to exhibit resentment and aggressiveness towards other people.

### **Rationale**

The study aims to address the complexities of modern life and the challenges faced by individuals, particularly teenagers. It recognizes the influential role of schools and colleges in shaping an individual's development and the acquisition of various life aspects. Aggression is a prevalent issue in society and educational settings, influenced by factors such as frustration, economic pressures, media violence, parental aggression, home environment, socio-economic status, and peer relationships. Research indicates a connection between school environment and student behavior, highlighting the need to investigate aggression in private and government schools and colleges.

The study also illustrates how students' psychological resilience, self-compassion, and aggression are related. Self-compassion has been shown to be inversely correlated with narcissism and violence, favorably correlated with self-esteem, and associated with a sense of community. Additionally, overcoming obstacles in both the academic and social spheres requires resilience. According to earlier study, students who are exposed to strong social and emotional skills demonstrate greater resilience and constructive behavior.

Despite the significance of these subjects, there has not been much research done, especially in private and public educational institutions. By investigating aggressiveness, self-compassion, and psychological resilience among students in various kinds of schools and colleges, the study seeks to close this research gap. It also aims to comprehend how these institutions contribute to these issues, either by promoting them or by attempting to mitigate them. The study's findings will ultimately provide significant knowledge on the connections between aggression, self-compassion, and psychological resilience in various educational contexts.

The current study aims to:

- To study aggression, self-compassion, and psychological resilience among students of private and government schools and colleges.
- To study the aggression, self-compassion, and psychological resilience in correspondence to Gender and Education among students of private and government schools and colleges.

### **Hypotheses**

- Self-compassion and psychological resilience are related to aggression among students of private and government schools and colleges.
- There is a significant difference in self-compassion among students of private and government schools/colleges.
- There is a significant difference in psychological resilience among students of private and government institutes.
- There is a significant difference in aggression among students of private and government institutes.
- There is a significant difference in aggression, self-compassion, and psychological resilience among male and female students of private and government schools/college.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

Correlational research design was used in this study.

**Sample**

The data was collected for the project of “Aggression, self-compassion and psychological resilience among the students of private and government schools/colleges”. The sample was comprised of 200 individuals ( $N = 200$ ). The mean age of sample was  $\pm 17$ . The study data was collected from Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Wah Cantt, Attock and Kahuta.

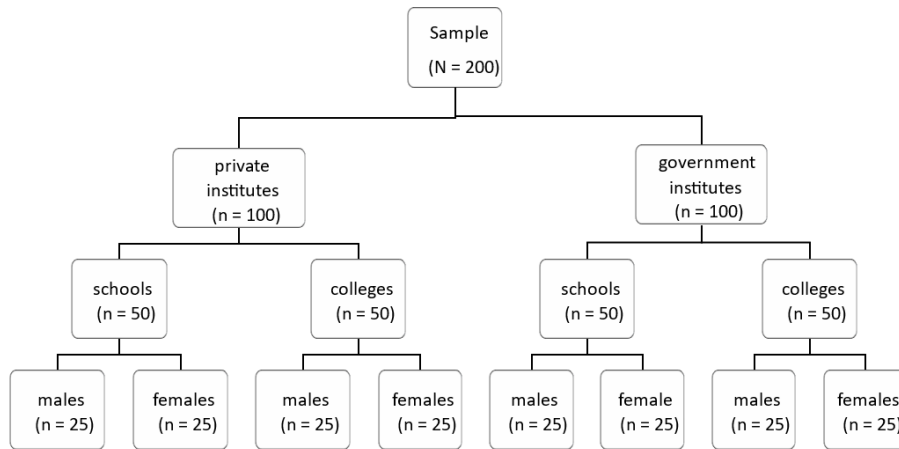


Fig. 1 Sample Distribution in Current Study

**Measures**

**Demographic Sheet:**

The aim of creating the form was to gather demographic information from students in private and government schools and colleges. The Demographic Sheet includes age, gender, education level, field of study, grades/percentage, and the name of the institution.

**The Brief Resilience Scale:**

Bruce Smith (2008) created a 6-item assessment called the Brief Resilience assessment. The BRS is a trustworthy tool for evaluating resilience, which is the capacity to recover or bounce back from stress, and it may offer specific and crucial information on how individuals manage stress that are connected to their health. A 5-point Likert scale with a range of 1–5 (strongly agree–strongly disagree) is used by respondents. The total score was determined by computing the mean after reverse-scoring items 2, 4, and 6. (Int J Environ, 2020) The dependability is  $\alpha = 0.71$ .

**Self-Compassion Scale – Short Form:**

Dr. Kristin Neff, Filip Raes, Pommier, and Guich Van recently created the Self-Compassion Scale's short form (12 items) to assess self-compassion. A 5-point Likert scale with a range of 1 (Almost Never) to 5 (Almost Always) is used to rate responses to each item. Reverse-scoring negatively phrased questions results in a total self-compassion score, which is then calculated by adding together all 12 things. With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 and an almost perfect correlation with the long form of the SCS ( $r = 0.97$ ), the SCS-SF showed adequate internal consistency (Raes et al., 2011).

**The Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire:**

Buss and Perry (1992) created a self-report questionnaire with 29 items to assess trait hostility. The scale is broken up into four sub-scales: hostility, rage, verbal aggression, and physical aggressiveness. Items are graded on a Likert type scale with a range of one to five ("Extremely uncharacteristic") and one to five ("Extremely characteristic"). Negatively rated items include item 7 on the physical aggressiveness subscale and item 18 on the rage subscale. (Buss & Perry, 1992) The test-retest reliability is  $r = .78$ .

**Procedure**

The researchers obtained permission from the relevant university Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study. Once the study proposal was approved, the researchers approached students in schools and colleges to collect data. The students were provided with a brief explanation of the study's purpose, and their consent to participate was obtained. The researchers assured the participants that their information would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. The participants were asked to provide their demographic information and then proceed to complete the study questionnaire. At the conclusion of their participation, the participants were thanked for their cooperation.

The data collected for the study was analyzed using SPSS version 23. Descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the distribution of the data and confirm if it followed a normal distribution. Correlation analysis was performed to assess the relationship between psychological resilience, self-compassion, and aggression. Furthermore, t-tests were utilized to explore group differences based on factors such as gender, institute (private vs. government), and educational level.

**RESULTS**

The current study was to determine the relationship between self-compassion and psychological resilience and aggression among students of private and government schools and colleges. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 23.

Table I

Psychometric Properties of Self Compassion Scale, Brief Resilience Scale and Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (N = 200)

Scale	No. of Items	α	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range	
							Actual	Potential
SCS	12	.83	39.04	5.63	0.92	0.72	12-60	14-47
BRS	6	.81	19.23	3.89	0.94	0.63	6-30	8-29
BPAQ	29	.89	83.51	12.23	1.12	0.94	29-145	37-132

Note. SCS = Self Compassion Scale; BRS = Brief Resilience Scale; BPAQ = Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire.

Table I shows Psychometric properties of Self Compassion Scale, Brief Resilience Scale and Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire. The value of Skewness and kurtosis highlighted that data is distributed normally and the parametric tests are applicable.

Table II

Correlation Matrix of Scores of Self Compassion Scale, Brief Resilience Scale and Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (subscales) of students of private and government schools and colleges (N = 200)

Variables	SCS	BRS	BPAQ
SCS	-	.41**	-.52**
BRS		-	-.61***
BPAQ			-

Note. \*\*\*p < 0.001 \*\*p < 0.01; SCS = Self Compassion Scale; BRS = Brief Resilience Scale; BPAQ = Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire.

Table II illustrate the results of correlation between scales of self-compassion scale, brief resilience scale and the Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire. The results show a significant positive correlation between self-compassion and psychological resilience. Furthermore, it was evident that aggression has a significant negative correlation with self-compassion and psychological resilience.

Table III

Compassion, Psychological Resilience, Physical aggression, Verbal aggression, Anger and Hostility among male and female students

Variables	Gender				t	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Male		Female				LL	UL	
	n = 100	n = 100	n = 100	n = 100					
Self Compassion	39.73	5.69	34.35	5.52	2.87	.04	0.18	2.94	0.96
Psychological Resilience	22.76	3.62	19.71	4.10	2.45	.03	0.02	2.14	0.78
Aggression	22.85	6.15	29.12	5.16	2.91	.00	0.85	2.31	1.10

Note. CI = Confidence Interval, LL = Lower Limit, UL = Upper Limit

Table III demonstrates the group differences on the basis of gender across study variables. It is evident that males have higher levels of self-compassion and psychological resilience resulting in lower levels of aggression. Contrary to that female reported higher levels of aggression.

Table IV  
Compassion, Psychological Resilience, Physical aggression, Verbal aggression, Anger and Hostility among students of Private and Government Institutes

Variables	Institute				t	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Private		Government				LL	UL	
	n = 100	n = 100	n = 100	n = 100					
Self Compassion	M	SD	M	SD					
	39.22	5.55	39.90	5.63	0.73	.09	3.24	-0.13	-
Psychological Resilience	21.59	2.24	18.86	3.47	2.33	.03	0.36	1.82	0.93
Aggression	26.95	4.78	29.78	4.79	2.56	.01	1.16	1.51	0.59

Note. CI = Confidence Interval, LL = Lower Limit, UL = Upper Limit

Table IV shows the group differences based on the type of institute across the study variables. Results reveal that there is no significant difference based on the self-compassion in both groups. Moreover, students in private institutes have better psychological resilience compared to the students in government institutes. Moreover, the aggressive level is reported higher in the students at government institutes.

**DISCUSSION**

The premier constituent of the existing study was to study aggression, self-compassion and psychological resilience among private and governments school and college students. It was also aimed to study differences in gender and institute (private and government) with correspondence to aggression, psychological resilience, and self-compassion among students. Sample of the current study comprises of 200 students from private and government schools with the mean age of ± 17. Sample was collected from different institutes of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Wah Cantt and Kahuta. The Brief Resilience Scale, Self-compassion Scale Short- Form, and Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire, were used to measure the study variables.

Following formal authorization from authorities, the sample was contacted by their respective institutes. Prior to the meeting, participants received a briefing on the objectives and data confidentiality. After data collection, SPSS version 23 was used to analyze the collected data. The alpha reliability of the scales were all in acceptable range; also, the skewness and kurtosis values falling in between the range of ± 2 (George & Mallery, 2010) suggests that the data is normally distributed, and the parametric tests are applicable.

The current study examined the connection between aggression, psychological resilience, and self-compassion. It was revealed that the self-compassion and psychological resilience share a strong positive correlation with each other, that implies that individuals having a strong sense of self-compassion and people who chose to be kind to others despite of the hardships, enhances their capabilities of being resilient (Lefebvre et al., 2020). Contrary to this, aggression has a significant negative correlation with self-compassion and psychological resilience. Individuals that indorse the better quality of self-compassion have reduced risk of the expression of hostility and aggression (Barry et al., 2015). Furthermore, aggression also depicted a negative correlation with psychological resilience that means psychological resilience has the power to reduce sentiments of anger and combat thoughts of terror and worry (Pachi et al., 2023).

Additionally, the findings showed that women have higher levels of violence due to their lower levels of psychological resilience and self-compassion. This might be because adolescent females typically experience other problems that limit their resilience, such as greater levels of depression (Petersen et al. 1991; Bluth et al. 2017). The results also showed that because private schools give their pupils a flexible atmosphere, which results in less hostility, their students have greater levels of psychological resilience.

**Conclusion and Implications**

In Pakistan, Education system which is divided into Private and Government schools/colleges is enduring many psychosocial as well as psychological problems among students. This education system is responsible for remarkable differences in Self compassion, psychological resilience and aggression among students. So, the present study investigated these significant differences in study variables among students of private and government institutes by considering differences between Gender and Institutes (Private and Government). Study findings explained that there are significant differences in self-compassion and psychological resilience among male and female students of Private and Government schools/colleges. Furthermore, findings also indicated that self-compassion and psychological resilience are positively correlated with each other and negatively correlated with aggression. It is crucial to raise awareness within the education system, involving school and college management, teachers, and other authoritative figures. This awareness is necessary to ensure that

educational institutions not only provide equal standards of education but also offer a wide range of extracurricular activities. These activities play a vital role in teaching students important life skills, such as how to navigate challenging situations, resolve problems, and cope with various complexities. By equipping students with these skills, we can contribute to their brighter future, which in turn leads to the development of a prosperous society. Therefore, it is essential for all stakeholders in the education system to recognize the significance of holistic education that encompasses both academic and extracurricular aspects.

### **Limitations**

The correlational methodology of the study made it challenging to ascertain the variables' cause-and-effect relationships. Longitudinal or experimental approaches may provide a better understanding of the connections between self-compassion, psychological resilience, and aggression. The twin cities and their surrounding areas served as the source of the study's data, which may not be an accurate representative of Pakistan's student population as a whole. The findings can't be applied to other areas or demographic groups as a result.

### **Future Directions**

Future studies should imply the longitudinal or experimental research design in order to get a deeper understanding of the development of psychological resilience and self-compassion over a longer duration of time; specifically starting from the time of adolescence as it is crucial part. Moreover, to generalize the study results, future research should gather the data from other cities as well, specially from the remote areas, to understand the impacts of the institutions on the psychological development of children by comparing the results. Translation of the study instruments is also advised to study the variables among younger students with respect to their native language i.e., Urdu.

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