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From Self-Compassion to Life Satisfaction: Examining the Mediating Effects of Self-Acceptance and Meaning in Life

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Abstract

Objectives Despite the well-established link between self-compassion and subjective well-being, little is understood about the mechanisms of this relationship. This study aimed to determine whether self-acceptance and meaning in life act as mediators between self-compassion and life satisfaction.

Method Using a cross-sectional survey design, this study utilized a sample of 178 Filipino adults. A mediation analysis was run using participants' responses to the Self-Compassion Scale, Unconditional Self-Acceptance Questionnaire, Meaning in Life Questionnaire, and the Satisfaction With Life Scale.

Results Self-acceptance was not a significant mediator ($B = 0.12$, $SE = 0.19$, 95% CI: [−0.296, 0.425]) while meaning in life had a significant mediating effect ($B = 0.50$, $SE = 0.12$, 95% CI: [0.271, 0.770]) between self-compassion and life satisfaction. When self-compassion was analyzed in terms of its components, the serial mediating effect of self-acceptance and meaning in life was found to be significant for common humanity ($B = 0.18$, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI [0.036, 0.397]) and mindfulness ($B = 0.17$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [0.032, 0.354]) but not for self-kindness ($B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [−0.019, 0.259]).

Conclusions These results contribute to the understanding of how overall and certain components of self-compassion predict life satisfaction. Focusing on meaning in life, and to a certain extent on self-acceptance, may potentially maximize the impact of self-compassion on life satisfaction.

Preregistration This study is not preregistered.

Keywords Self-compassion · Self-acceptance · Meaning in life · Life satisfaction · Subjective well-being · Mediation

Self-compassion has created a wave of research interest over the past two decades (Chio et al., 2021; Neff, 2016). Defined as a caring attitude toward oneself in the face of hardships or failures (Neff, 2003a, 2023), self-compassion has been consistently linked with reduced mental health problems (Macbeth & Gumley, 2012) and increased subjective well-being (Zessin et al., 2015). Several studies showed that self-compassion is associated with lower levels of anxiety (e.g., Hoge et al., 2013; Kaniuka et al., 2019; Monteiro et al., 2019), depression (e.g., Ehret et al., 2018; Greenberg et al., 2018; Kaniuka et al., 2019; Krieger et al., 2013, 2016; Monteiro et al., 2019), and stress (e.g., Eriksson et al., 2018; Pires et al., 2018). A meta-analysis by Macbeth and Gumley (2012) revealed a strong negative correlation

between self-compassion and mental health issues (anxiety: $r = -0.51$; depression: $r = -0.52$; stress $r: = -0.54$). There is also robust evidence that self-compassion predicts different aspects of subjective well-being, including positive affect (e.g., Booker & Dunsmore, 2019; Kreemers et al., 2018; Phillips & Ferguson, 2013; Shin & Lim, 2018) and life satisfaction (e.g., Bluth & Blanton, 2015; Marshall & Brockman, 2016; Smeets et al., 2014). A meta-analysis by Zessin et al. (2015) demonstrated that self-compassion had a moderate positive correlation with pleasant emotional states ($r = 0.39$) and favorable life evaluation ($r = 0.47$).

Despite these findings, little is known about the pathways through which self-compassion and subjective well-being are related. The available studies mostly focused on emotion regulation strategies as mediators between self-compassion and mental health concerns (e.g., Bakker et al., 2019; Diedrich et al., 2016; Finlay-Jones, 2017; Raes, 2010). Far less is understood about how self-compassion influences subjective well-being (Roxas et al., 2019). Some of the few studies that investigated these

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possible mechanisms point to automatic positive thoughts (Arimitsu & Hofmann, 2015), anticipation of positive events (Phillips, 2018) and hope (Yang et al., 2016) as mediators. The present study aimed to add to this emerging research area by exploring whether self-acceptance and meaning in life act as mediators between self-compassion and an aspect of subjective well-being that is life satisfaction. Drawing from observations in practice, the researchers noted how approaching oneself with judgement may hinder the attempt to make sense of challenging experiences and bring about a more positive evaluation of life. Since non-judgement is a central theme in self-compassion, the researchers purported that its practice may contribute to subjective well-being by facilitating self-acceptance and meaning-making.

According to Neff (2003a, 2023), self-compassion entails engaging with suffering, instead of avoiding it, and directing compassion inward. It consists of three components. First is self-kindness or being understanding of oneself, in contrast to self-judgement or harshly criticizing oneself due to one's inadequacies. Next is common humanity which grounds one's struggles as part of the shared human condition, instead of isolation or thinking that one's misery is unique and separate from what others go through. Lastly is mindfulness or paying attention to negative experiences and accepting them as what they are, as opposed to overidentifying with them. While considered discrete, these three facets interact and mutually enhance one another to bring about greater overall self-compassion.

Self-compassion has been consistently associated with subjective well-being (Zessin et al., 2015) whose one aspect involves a positive evaluation of life as measured through life satisfaction (Diener & Ryan, 2009). As self-compassion offers a more supportive, inclusive, and objective attitude toward oneself and one's trials, it can attenuate the impact of adversities and contribute to well-being outcomes like higher life satisfaction (Neff, 2003a). The Attention, Interpretation and Memory (AIM; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008) model offers a cognitive lens on how subjective well-being operates. Specifically, the AIM model proposes that one's satisfaction with life depends on the kind of stimuli people attend to, how they interpret events, and how they remember them with a certain valence. This can also be applied in the case of self-compassion whose context involves negative events. For instance, mindfulness directs one's attention to the situation at hand. Mindfulness then increases both the awareness and acceptance of adverse events as they arise (Lindsay & Creswell, 2017) so that a person can acknowledge difficulties in an open and balanced manner (Neff, 2003a, 2023). This is instead of encouraging avoidance of unpleasant experiences, the prolonged practice of which is found to be detrimental to well-being (Bakker et al., 2019). Self-kindness and common humanity can then allow an individual to interpret ordeals less harshly. Such is made possible as a caring stance toward oneself and a normalizing view on adversities are adopted

(Neff, 2003a, 2023). A less threatening construal can then bring about an alternative and more adaptive interpretation of distressful events which helps promote well-being (Diedrich et al., 2016). Altogether, a self-compassionate attitude can become more readily activated (Breines & Chen, 2013) as it is made accessible in memory when one is faced with relevant circumstances (Eitam & Higgins, 2010; Molden, 2014).

One possible mechanism through which self-compassion predicts life satisfaction is self-acceptance, which is characterized by wholly accepting the self (Neff & Costigan, 2014) including one's strengths and limitations (Saricaoğlu & Arslan, 2013). A number of studies found that self-compassion and self-acceptance are strongly related to each other (Homan, 2016) given their shared non-judgmental stance toward the self (Sun et al., 2016). There is also evidence from a recent series of studies (Zhang et al., 2020) that self-compassion can lead to greater self-acceptance. Knowing how to treat oneself with gentleness in times of setbacks and acknowledging one can make mistakes can make it easier to accept one's own flaws and integrate them as part of oneself.

According to the Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (Ellis, 1977), accepting oneself unconditionally can help boost well-being by countering people's tendency for self-criticism which often underlies distress. In line with this, a study by Popov (2018) indicated that participants who scored higher on self-acceptance reported higher subjective well-being, including greater life satisfaction. Xu et al. (2014) offer preliminary evidence on directionality. Their model showed that self-acceptance is a significant mediator between mindfulness—an aspect of self-compassion—and subjective well-being. These findings suggest that through self-acceptance, individuals are less likely to engage in self-blame, freeing them up to experience greater life satisfaction.

Another possible mediator between self-compassion and life satisfaction is meaning in life, which can be defined as having a sense of coherence or understanding of life (Steger et al., 2006), purpose, or directedness toward a valued goal (Ryff, 1989) and significance or extent of mattering that goes beyond the self (King et al., 2006). According to Frankl's (1959) Logotherapy Theory, one of the ways an individual can find meaning is through the attitude a person adopts in times of adversities. Hence, by engaging with difficulties rather than avoiding them, self-compassionate individuals have more opportunities to gain meaning out of their painful experiences (Neff et al., 2007). Studies involving older adults (Homan, 2016; Phillips & Ferguson, 2013) showed that self-compassion is moderately to strongly correlated with meaning in life. As late life is marked by different challenges, those who demonstrate more self-compassion are better able to derive meaning in their aging. Suh and Chong (2020) also found self-compassion to be a strong predictor of meaning in life among the general population. As self-compassion puts

trials in a less threatening light, people can better embrace their struggles and make meaning out of them.

Logotherapy Theory also asserts that an individual's will to meaning can positively influence one's subjective well-being (Frankl, 1959). A meta-analytic study (Li et al., 2020) revealed that having meaning in life has a strong correlation with life satisfaction. Pointing to possible directionality, a study by Yuan et al. (2021) showed that meaning in life mediated the link between mindfulness—a component of self-compassion—and life satisfaction. These findings imply that meaning in life provides people with a frame through which they can better make sense of their experiences, resulting to greater life satisfaction.

In her well-being model, Ryff (1989) included self-acceptance and purpose in life—a construct close to meaning in life—among the elements that constitute the process of attaining subjective well-being. With this, a number of studies demonstrated that self-acceptance and purpose in life are highly correlated (Homan, 2016; Sanjuán, 2011), making a case for serial mediation (Hayes, 2022). Preliminary evidence also suggests that self-acceptance is the one that predicts meaning in life. As argued, individuals who have high self-acceptance engage in less judgement of their selves and their condition. As a result, they are better able to pay attention to and understand their experiences. This paves the way for more opportunities to make sense of and derive meaning out of life (Zhou & Xu, 2018).

In summary, the present study proposed a conceptual framework where, as demonstrated in literature, self-compassion predicts life satisfaction. To account for this link, self-acceptance and meaning in life were included as mediators. Further, a serial mediation model was adopted (Hayes, 2022) where self-acceptance is argued to bring about meaning in life, which in turn, results in life satisfaction. This framework suggests that self-compassion leads to life satisfaction by enabling people to be at peace with themselves through self-acceptance. As individuals become less concerned about self-criticisms or doubts, this can reposition them from being too focused on the self to being oriented to the larger world. In the context of negative events, there is evidence that this shift in perspective buffers against mental health concerns (Brockmeyer et al., 2015). Extending one's view beyond the self to include others and the environment, which meaning in life entails (King et al., 2006), is linked with greater contentment and satisfaction, even in the presence of negative experiences (Dambrun, 2017).

Overall, this research aimed to test these hypotheses: (1) Self-acceptance and meaning in life each have a significant mediating effect between self-compassion and life satisfaction and (2) self-acceptance and meaning in life serially mediate the relationship between self-compassion and life satisfaction.

Method

Participants

A convenience sample of Filipino adults was used and participants were recruited online. Monte Carlo power analysis for serial mediation (Schoemann et al., 2017) recommended a minimum sample size of 122 to achieve 80% power. A total of 189 individuals answered the online survey form. However, some were excluded as they were not able to provide demographic information ($n = 9$), meet the inclusion criteria of age ($n = 1$), and sustain participation with their decision to withdraw ($n = 1$). Hence, only the responses from the remaining 178 participants were included in the data analysis. The final sample was predominantly female (70.8%) while 29.2% were male. Their mean age was 26.65 years old ($SD = 6.31$), with a range of 18 to 53 years old.

Procedure

The data collection was conducted entirely online through Google Forms. Data gathering ran for over 2 weeks, from January 22 to February 9, 2022. Participants were recruited through Facebook where the survey form link and QR code were posted.

In the actual survey form, participants first saw an introductory section that showed the informed consent provisions. To control for response bias, only the general aim of the study was articulated. Those who chose to participate by clicking "I agree" proceeded to answer the scales enumerated below and a demographic questionnaire. The option of voluntary withdrawal was incorporated in each section, asking the participants whether they still wished to proceed. Should any of them clicked "no," they were directed to the end of the form. This consisted of a debriefing portion, the researchers' contact information and psychosocial resources for those who might need further support. Five participants won a raffle prize of ₱200 credit by sending proof of their online survey form completion.

Measures

Self-Compassion Scale

Self-compassion was measured using the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b). It consists of 26 items, where each of the statements was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Almost never*) to 5 (*Almost always*). The scale produces a total score by reverse scoring the negative subscale items (e.g., "I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies") and summing them up with those of the positive subscale statements (e.g., "When I'm

going through a very hard time, I give myself caring and tenderness I need"). Scores range from 26 (lowest level of self-compassion) to 130 (highest level of self-compassion).

Filipino studies (Roxas et al., 2019; Ty & Morga, 2020; Umandap & Teh, 2020) demonstrated that the scale has good reliability with Cronbach's alpha value ranging from 0.85 to 0.92. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the whole Self-Compassion Scale was 0.92 while the subscales for its three components had internal consistency of 0.93 (self-kindness and reversed self-judgement), 0.89 (common humanity and reversed isolation), and 0.89 (mindfulness and reversed over-identification). Neff (2003b) also provided support for the scale's validity as it negatively correlated with measures of depression ($r = -0.51$) and anxiety ($r = -0.65$) and positively correlated with life satisfaction ($r = 0.45$). It also had weak correlation with an inventory on narcissism ($r = 0.11$) and strong correlation with scales on self-esteem ($r = 0.59$) and self-acceptance ($r = 0.62$), consistent with how self-compassion was conceptualized (Neff, 2003a).

Unconditional Self-Acceptance Questionnaire

To measure self-acceptance, the Unconditional Self-Acceptance Questionnaire (Chamberlain & Haaga, 2001) was administered. It is composed of 20 statements, each of which was rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Almost always untrue*) to 7 (*Almost always true*). Nine items are worded to represent higher self-acceptance (e.g., "I believe that I am a worthwhile person simply because I am a human being") while the rest of the 11 items must be reverse scored because their endorsement translates to lower self-acceptance (e.g., "Being bad at certain things makes me value myself less"). Scores range from 20 (lowest level of self-acceptance) to 140 (highest level of self-acceptance).

The scale was shown by Chamberlain and Haaga (2001) to have acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.72$) and, as theorized, was negatively correlated with measures of depression ($r = -0.39$) and anxiety ($r = -0.50$) and positively associated with happiness ($r = 0.36$) and life satisfaction ($r = 0.29$). In this study, reliability measure using Cronbach's alpha was 0.82.

Meaning in Life Questionnaire

Meaning in life was measured through the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger et al., 2006), specifically its 5-item Presence of Meaning subscale. This is in line with the more consistent association of this subscale with life satisfaction measure as demonstrated by Li et al. (2020). To answer, participants were asked to rate the statements (e.g., "My life has a clear sense of purpose") on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Absolutely untrue*) to 7 (*Absolutely true*).

Scores range from 5 (lowest level of meaning in life) to 35 (highest level of meaning in life).

As documented by Steger et al. (2006), the Presence of Meaning subscale has adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.82$) and evidence of convergent validity with average correlation of 0.65 with other meaning questionnaires. In this study, Cronbach's alpha of the Presence of Meaning subscale was high at 0.92.

Satisfaction with Life Scale

For a measure on subjective well-being, the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) was utilized. This consists of 5 items that assess one's positive evaluation of life. Respondents were asked to answer the statements (e.g., "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal") on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). Scores range from 5 (lowest level of life satisfaction) to 35 (highest level of life satisfaction).

Based on the validation studies by Diener et al. (1985), the scale had sufficient internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.87$) and evidence of validity through its negative correlation with measures of psychological distress such as anxiety ($r = -0.54$) and depression ($r = -0.55$). In this study, reliability measure was similarly found at $\alpha = 0.87$.

Data Analyses

For this cross-sectional survey study, SPSS 24 was used to do the following: generate descriptive statistics for the sample's demographics and the focal variables, calculate the correlation among the variables and the Cronbach's alpha for the reliability of each scale, and evaluate the statistical assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, independence, and normality of errors or residuals.

To determine whether there was a significant mediation, Model 6 of PROCESS v4 macro package for SPSS (Hayes, 2022) was run. To calculate the indirect effects, this employed bootstrap resampling process where the original data were resampled 5000 times to generate a 95% bias-correlated bootstrap confidence interval (CI) within which to locate the true indirect effect values. If zero was not within the 95% CI, the mediation effect was significant at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and intercorrelations among variables are presented in Table 1. The mean scores across most of the variables were around or a little above the mid-point, indicative of moderate levels of self-compassion, self-acceptance, meaning in life, and life

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations of study variables ($n = 178$)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Self-Compassion	3.16	0.63	0.92			
2. Self-Acceptance	4.22	0.73	0.75**	0.82		
3. Meaning in Life	5.04	1.29	0.58**	0.48**	0.92	
4. Life Satisfaction	4.36	1.30	0.53**	0.45**	0.63**	0.87

Internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) are shown on the diagonal

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$
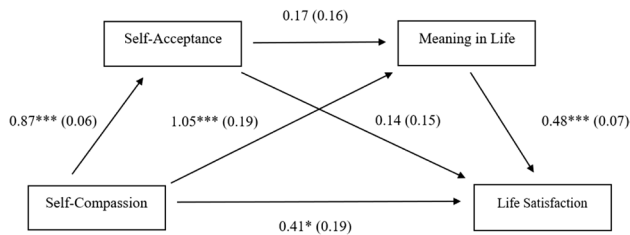
Fig. 1 Mediation model results showing the associations among variables. Note: Values are unstandardized estimates (figures in parentheses are standard errors). *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

satisfaction among participants. Analysis of the bivariate correlations also showed significant positive and moderate to strong associations among all variables, while the assumptions of absence of multicollinearity and other statistical assumptions were verified using regression statistics. Reliability coefficients indicated good internal consistency, with values ranging from 0.80s to 0.90s.

Using the serial mediation model of the PROCESS v.4 macro package for SPSS (Hayes, 2022), this study aimed to determine whether the relationship between self-compassion and life satisfaction is individually and serially mediated by self-acceptance and meaning in life. Figure 1 shows the results of the mediation analysis. The total effect model was statistically significant, $F(1, 176) = 70.30$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.28$.

For each of the paths involving self-compassion, results indicated its significant relationship with all the other variables in the model. Self-compassion significantly predicted self-acceptance ($B = 0.87$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, self-compassion significantly predicted meaning in life ($B = 1.05$, $SE = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$) and life satisfaction ($B = 0.41$, $SE = 0.19$, $p = 0.03$). For the rest of the paths, it was shown that self-acceptance did not significantly predict meaning in life ($B = 0.17$, $SE = 0.16$, $p = 0.31$) nor life satisfaction ($B = 0.14$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = 0.38$). Meaning in life, however, significantly predicted life satisfaction ($B = 0.48$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < 0.001$).

As for the indirect effects, the first hypothesis about the individual mediating effects of self-acceptance and meaning in life was only partially supported. Self-acceptance did not significantly mediate the relationship between

self-compassion and life satisfaction ($B = 0.12$, $SE = 0.19$, 95% CI: [−0.296, 0.425]). Only meaning in life had a significant mediating effect ($B = 0.50$, $SE = 0.12$, 95% CI: [0.271, 0.770]). The second hypothesis was also not supported as the results failed to verify the proposed serial mediation model involving both self-acceptance and meaning in life ($B = 0.07$, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI: [−0.060, 0.284]).

To further probe the indirect effects, overall self-compassion score was analyzed in terms of its three components, namely self-kindness and reversed self-judgement; common humanity and reversed isolation; and mindfulness and reversed overidentification, as done in some studies (e.g., Kaniuka et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2016) and in line with the conceptualization of Neff (2003a, 2023). Table 2 shows the results.

Similar to the results with overall self-compassion, the mediating effect of self-acceptance remained non-significant across all self-compassion components (self-kindness: $B = 0.10$, $SE = 0.13$, 95% CI [−0.189, 0.340]; common humanity: $B = 0.13$, $SE = 0.14$, 95% CI [−0.187, 0.379]; and mindfulness: $B = 0.22$, $SE = 0.12$, 95% CI [−0.025, 0.450]). Meanwhile, meaning in life was found to be a consistent significant mediator involving self-kindness ($B = 0.39$, $SE = 0.10$, 95% CI [0.204, 0.583]), common humanity ($B = 0.32$, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI [0.092, 0.542]), and mindfulness ($B = 0.32$, $SE = 0.10$, 95% CI [0.115, 0.528]) as predictor. Among the modified serial mediation models, a non-significant result was found with self-kindness ($B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [−0.019, 0.259]). On the other hand, the serial mediation model involving common humanity ($B = 0.18$, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI [0.036, 0.397]) and mindfulness ($B = 0.17$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [0.032, 0.354]) each turned significant, although these indirect effects can be considered very modest with less than a quarter of a point in value.

To check the robustness of the new serial mediation models, an alternative analysis was conducted with the sequence of the mediators reversed. The indirect effects of self-kindness ($B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [−0.025, 0.038]), common humanity ($B = 0.02$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [−0.029, 0.057]), and mindfulness ($B = 0.03$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [−0.004, 0.081]) through meaning in life and

Table 2 Indirect effects of self-compassion components

Path	B (SE)	95% CI
Self-Kindness		
Indirect Effect 1		
Self-Kindness ➜ Self-Acceptance ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.10 (0.13)	[−0.189, 0.340]
Indirect Effect 2		
Self-Kindness ➜ Meaning in Life ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.39* (0.10)	[0.204, 0.583]
Serial Mediating Effect		
Self-Kindness ➜ Self-Acceptance ➜ Meaning in Life ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.09 (0.07)	[−0.019, 0.259]
Alternative Serial Mediating Effect		
Self-Kindness ➜ Meaning in Life ➜ Self-Acceptance ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.01 (0.02)	[−0.025, 0.038]
Common Humanity		
Indirect Effect 1		
Common Humanity ➜ Self-Acceptance ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.13 (0.14)	[−0.187, 0.379]
Indirect Effect 2		
Common Humanity ➜ Meaning in Life ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.32* (0.11)	[0.092, 0.542]
Serial Mediating Effect		
Common Humanity ➜ Self-Acceptance ➜ Meaning in Life ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.18* (0.09)	[0.036, 0.397]
Alternative Serial Mediating Effect		
Common Humanity ➜ Meaning in Life ➜ Self-Acceptance ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.02 (0.02)	[−0.029, 0.057]
Mindfulness		
Indirect Effect 1		
Mindfulness ➜ Self-Acceptance ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.22 (0.12)	[−0.025, 0.450]
Indirect Effect 2		
Mindfulness ➜ Meaning in Life ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.32* (0.10)	[0.115, 0.528]
Serial Mediating Effect		
Mindfulness ➜ Self-Acceptance ➜ Meaning in Life ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.17* (0.08)	[0.032, 0.354]
Alternative Serial Mediating Effect		
Mindfulness ➜ Meaning in Life ➜ Self-Acceptance ➜ Life Satisfaction	0.03 (0.02)	[−0.004, 0.081]

*Significant at the 0.05 level

self-acceptance were all non-significant, offering support to the originally proposed sequence of mediators.

Discussion

This study aimed to extend the literature by examining the well-established link between self-compassion and life satisfaction through the possible mediating effects of self-acceptance and meaning in life. While self-compassion has been consistently associated with greater life satisfaction, little is currently understood about the mechanisms of this relationship (Roxas et al., 2019).

Consistent with expectation, meaning in life was found to be a significant mediator between self-compassion and life satisfaction. This suggests that extending compassion to oneself can lead to a more satisfying life by fostering a greater sense of meaning. As self-compassion entails engagement with, rather than avoidance of suffering, self-compassionate individuals are afforded more opportunities to make sense of their ordeals or failures (Neff et al., 2007). The acknowledgement of negative experiences seen through a balanced lens, coupled with a less threatening interpretation and recollection of the same (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008), can make it safe for individuals to process difficult events (Neff, 2003a, 2023) in ways that make more sense to them. This sense of meaning then contributes to higher life satisfaction as argued in Frankl's (1959) Logotherapy Theory.

On the other hand, this study did not find self-acceptance as a significant mediator between self-compassion and life satisfaction, even after breaking down self-compassion into its components. One factor that may account for this is the high correlation between self-compassion and self-acceptance. Although the statistical assumptions on the absence of multicollinearity were met, it is possible that the overlap between self-compassion and self-acceptance may have obscured the latter's effect, with the former having a stronger effect in the model. Another plausible explanation for the non-significant mediating effect of self-acceptance is theoretical. In particular, the supposedly freed-up resources from

self-blame, out of a global sense of self-acceptance (Ellis, 1977), may not automatically translate to paying attention, interpreting and remembering experiences (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008) that make life satisfying. While self-compassion helps people process painful situations, self-acceptance may not operate the same way. Self-acceptance is conceptualized to be more global in nature and thus draws from the overall premise that one is worthy no matter what (Ellis, 2005). Beyond mere acceptance of oneself out of this unconditional valuation, active processing of experiences seems to be crucial for the translation to life satisfaction, as reflected in the nature of self-compassion and meaning in life. Corollary to this, there must be moderators that determine whether the freed-up resources from unconditionally accepting oneself would translate to life satisfaction, which may be subject to further research. One candidate is personal growth initiative. Defined as an active and ongoing desire for improvement, it has been shown to increase out of a non-judgmental approach toward oneself (Umandap & Teh, 2020) and result in subjective well-being (Robitschek & Keyes, 2009). Personal growth initiative may also be consistent with the more encompassing nature of self-acceptance, as it involves a continuous drive for positive change that can be applicable to many different areas of life (Robitschek, 1998). It is possible that personal growth initiative can channel one's resources from blaming oneself to pursuing growth activities that can lead to greater life satisfaction.

As for the serial mediation by self-acceptance and meaning in life, the model was not found to be significant when overall self-compassion was the predictor. As some researchers argue (López et al., 2015), it is possible that total self-compassion scores could mask the results. To further explore this, self-compassion was analyzed in terms of its three components as done in a number of studies (e.g., Kaniuka et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2016). While Neff (2003a, 2023) mentioned that self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness mutually enhance one another toward overall self-compassion, they are also regarded as conceptually distinct. Running a serial mediation analysis with each of these components yielded significant serial mediating effects for common humanity and mindfulness. This implies that recognizing one's struggles as a shared reality with other people more than a unique and isolating experience encourages acceptance of oneself and a sense of meaning in life, which then brings about greater life satisfaction. Similarly, seeing hardships in a balanced manner instead of overidentifying with them enables one to accept oneself and derive a sense of life meaning. This then engenders a positive evaluation of life. Interestingly, self-kindness which seems closest to the notion of a self-compassionate attitude did not produce a significant indirect effect through self-acceptance and meaning in life. This finding is consistent with some studies where self-kindness did not emerge as a significant predictor of

psychological well-being where self-acceptance and meaning in life are a part of (Hollis-Walker & Colosimo, 2011) and in the optimal regression model where life satisfaction was an outcome (Bluth & Blanton, 2015).

As inquiry into the components of self-compassion is still emerging, no explanation was offered and further studies were instead called for (Bluth & Blanton, 2015; Hollis-Walker & Colosimo, 2011). In the present research, however, it can be argued that common humanity and mindfulness provide a frame (Kaniuka et al., 2019) through which unpleasant experiences can be integrated to the self, as these are paid attention to, construed, and remembered (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008) as part of a shared human reality or through a broader and balanced perspective of life (Neff, 2003a, 2023). Common humanity and mindfulness thus enable an active processing of negative events that turns the focus beyond oneself, that is involving others or a bigger world, which makes meaning-making more likely (Frankl, 1959). The resulting sense of coherence, purpose, or significance (Martela & Steger, 2016) then contributes to a positive evaluation of or satisfaction with life. This is as opposed to self-kindness that appears closest to self-acceptance, both of which can seem as an end-state which do not necessarily direct one's attention, interpretation, and memory (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008) to stimuli that lead to a sense of life meaning. In a more collectivist culture such as the Philippines, self-kindness may also be considered rather individualistic (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This is unlike common humanity and mindfulness that connect us with other people and a larger perspective of life. Such integrative tone is more aligned with how our well-being operates (Roxas et al., 2019).

Given that overall self-compassion and its components yielded different serial mediation results involving self-acceptance and meaning in life, further investigation is warranted. A closer look as to how specific self-compassion components relate to life satisfaction and their mediators may further advance our understanding in this budding area of inquiry. Even though the findings of this study were derived from cross-sectional data, the results provide initial insights as to how self-compassion may predict life satisfaction. With meaning in life as a mechanism for example, practitioners can potentially maximize the benefit of self-compassion intervention by helping individuals make meaning out of their painful circumstances. Although very modest in contribution, the serial mediating effect of self-acceptance and meaning in life can also be a prospective pathway that could add to the gains of self-compassion on life satisfaction. The present research offers preliminary evidence on the value of underscoring common humanity and mindfulness in the Philippine context. Normalizing struggles as part of every person's journey and helping frame hardships in the grander scheme of life may afford Filipinos with an anchor

to be more connected with others and the world. With this sense of connection beyond themselves, they can possibly embrace themselves more, derive a sense of meaning out of crises, and feel more satisfied with life. Elements of self-compassion interventions such as the Mindful and Self-Compassion Program (Neff & Germer, 2018) may hence be blended with Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy for self-acceptance (Ellis, 1977) and Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959) for meaning in life. This is to potentially capitalize on all these positive resources for greater life satisfaction, especially in the context of suffering.

Limitations and Future Research

The following limitations of this study must be noted. First, it utilized a convenience sample, with the majority of participants being females in their mid-20s. Hence, the results cannot be generalized across the Filipino adult population. Second, it employed a cross-sectional survey design which does not allow for the determination of the temporal order of variables or their casual relationships. Longitudinal studies that track variables over time can establish the sequence of variables and provide better evidence for mediation. Experimental studies that utilize self-compassion interventions or exercises must also be considered to infer directionality. Third, as the study used self-report instruments, social desirability may have influenced the results. Future studies can then consider alternative methods involving actual behaviors and observation for a more objective measure. Lastly, the outcome in the current study only involved life satisfaction as a positive aspect of well-being. Although mental health problems are more commonly studied, future research may examine if the same mediators such as self-acceptance and meaning in life operate between self-compassion and distress symptoms. Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy asserts that self-blame and rigid self-demands underpin many psychological disturbances (Ellis, 1977) while Logotherapy indicates that lack of meaning in life underlies much of people's malaise (Frankl, 1959). There can be merit in studying whether self-acceptance and meaning in life act as mediators through which self-compassion buffers against mental health concerns.

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