

Self-Compassion: Unveiling Mental Health Through Emotion Regulation in High-school Students

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effect of self-compassion on mental health, with emotion regulation as a mediator variable. Adolescents experience rapid physical, cognitive, emotional and psychological changes in themselves that have the potential to cause mental health problems. The key to success in maintaining mental health is learning to be kind and compassionate to oneself, especially in stressful and difficult situations, or self-compassion. Self-compassion plays an important role in mental health outcomes, where self-compassion will include the emotion regulation component, helping individuals to face and understand negative emotions as adaptive coping. Effective emotion regulation will shape healthy adolescents, so it is suggested that emotion regulation may mediate the influence of self-compassion on mental health. This research uses quantitative methods and was conducted on 574 high school students in Medan, aged 14-19 years. The instruments used were the Warwick Edinburg Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), the Self-Compassion Scale, and the Emotion Regulation Scale. The results of the mediation analysis using PLS-SEM4 show that emotion regulation significantly mediates the influence between self-compassion and mental health (T -statistic = 3.694 > 1.96 and P -values = .000 < .05). The results showed that emotion regulation plays a partial role in the effect of self-compassion on mental health. Adolescents who practise self-compassion will try to develop positive thinking skills and reduce the pressure and tension resulting from negative emotions, which will ultimately improve their mental health.

Keywords: emotional regulation, mental health, self-compassion

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menguji pengaruh self-compassion terhadap kesehatan mental dengan regulasi emosi sebagai variabel mediator. Remaja mengalami perubahan diri secara fisik, kognitif, emosional dan psikologis yang cepat dimana perubahan tersebut berpotensi menimbulkan masalah kesehatan mental. Kunci keberhasilan dalam menjaga kesehatan mental adalah belajar bersikap baik dan penuh kasih sayang terhadap diri sendiri, terutama ketika menghadapi situasi stres dan sulit atau disebut self-compassion. Self-compassion memainkan peranan penting dalam hasil kesehatan mental, dimana self-compassion akan melibatkan komponen regulasi emosi dalam membantu individu menghadapi dan memahami emosi negatif sebagai coping yang adaptif. Regulasi emosi yang efektif akan membentuk remaja yang sehat, sehingga diduga regulasi emosi dapat memediasi pengaruh self-compassion terhadap kesehatan mental. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif yang dilakukan pada 574 siswa SMA di Medan pada rentang usia 14-19 tahun. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah skala Warwick Edinburg Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), skala Self-Compassion dan skala Regulasi Emosi. Hasil analisis mediasi menggunakan PLS-SEM4 menunjukkan bahwa regulasi emosi signifikan memediasi pengaruh antara self-compassion terhadap kesehatan mental (T -Statistic = 3.694 > 1.96 dan P -Values = .000 < .05). Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa regulasi emosi berperan secara parsial pada pengaruh self-compassion terhadap kesehatan mental. Remaja yang mempraktikkan self-compassion akan berusaha mengembangkan

kemampuan berfikir positif dan mengurangi tekanan dan ketegangan yang timbul dari emosi negatif dengan baik hingga pada akhirnya akan meningkatkan kesehatan mentalnya.

Kata kunci: kesehatan mental, regulasi emosi, welas diri

Introduction

Adolescence is a unique period characterised by uncertainty (Greischel et al., 2018), self-discovery (Antaramian et al., 2008) and significant physical, emotional and psychological changes (Potts & Mandleco, 2012; UNICEF, 2019). This period of life is particularly important for mental health development, as it is a time of increased vulnerability to stress, anxiety and other mental health problems (Sawyer et al., 2018). Hormonal changes, pressure to conform socially, academic and extracurricular challenges (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Tribakti, 2023) inhibit adolescents' potential and even make them vulnerable to stress, all of which contribute to mental health (Sanger et al., 2018).

Mental health is defined as a combination of emotional, psychological and social well-being (Keyes et al., 2020). Often, mental health problems arise in childhood or adolescence (Kessler et al., 2007; Patton et al., 2014). Kessler et al., (2007) add that it is estimated that half of all mental disorders occur by mid-adolescence and $\frac{3}{4}$ by mid-20s. In the United States, 31.9% of school students experience anxiety disorders (The National Institute of Mental Health, 2018). Research has shown that depression and anxiety are among the most common mental health conditions experienced by adolescents (Dandala & Hodambia, 2021; Jia & Vu, 2023; Cabacungan et al., 2022). These conditions can have a significant impact on adolescents' overall well-being, including cognitive functioning, social skills and emotional development (Astutik & Dewi, 2022). In Indonesia, as many as 60.17% of junior high school and high school students experience mental emotional disorders (Mubasyiroh et al., 2017). There are 44.54% who experience feelings of loneliness, 40.75% feel anxious, and 7.33% have wanted to commit suicide. Many adolescents are unaware of their potential and lack education on how to promote mental health (Purnomosidi et al., 2023). One of the WHO agencies, Global Health Estimates (2018) states that Indonesia ranks 6th in terms of overall mental health and psychiatric disorders, and 4th in terms of rates of mental disorders and depression globally. The results of the first mental health survey in Indonesia by I-NAMHS (2022) added that one in three Indonesian adolescents (34.9%) or about 15.5 million adolescents had mental health problems and one in twenty adolescents (5.5%) or about 2.45 million adolescents had experienced mental disorders in the past 12 months.

Being a student at school is a commitment for school-aged adolescents. Adolescents spend half of their time at school in learning activities, interaction, extracurricular activities and various other activities than outside the home (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). In the context of education in Indonesia, school is a supportive environment for adolescent development that allows students to develop their full potential. On the other hand, school is an environment that can trigger emotional and behavioural problems in adolescent students (Yunanto, 2018). According to Daradjat (1976), especially in education institution (Syahid, 2016), the most important thing in a student's life is mental health (Sumarwoto, 2016). This is stated in the Law of the Republik Indonesia No.36 (2009), which includes mental health as part of health itself. The manifestation of students' mental health in school is when students feel calm, can follow the learning in class well, can control their behaviour and emotions in the environment, and can engage in positive activities that show self-development.

According to Rickwood and Thomas (2019) there are several factors that influence mental health such as: individual factors, family, social relationships, past experiences, culture, work or school environment, economic, living environment. Notosoedirdjo and Latipun (2019) added other psychological factors that help predict mental health, such as self-compassion. Research on self-compassion is growing rapidly (Neff & Dahm, 2015). Self-compassion, which involves treating oneself to accept, love and acknowledge all that happens as part of learning, has prompted researchers to delve deeper into the topic. Positive mental health has always been associated with self-compassion (Bluth &

Neff, 2018; Crego et al., 2022), with high self-compassion supporting positive mental health and a reduction in mental health problems (Kotera et al., 2023; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Self-compassion is important for every individual to possess as it helps to overcome various life problems (K. D. Neff et al., 2007) and is also a protective factor that holds negative mental states such as stress, depression and anxiety (Játiva & Cerezo, 2014). Self-compassion interventions also linked to lower mental health stigma levels (Heath, 2022). In addition, self-compassion also plays a role in increasing an individual's ability to survive and recover from difficult events through adaptive coping (Amanda, 2022). This is because self-compassion allows individuals to see a problem in a balanced way subsequently learn and develop by organizing negative perceptions during difficult times and not being afraid of what has happened (Nery-Hurwit et al., 2017). It also helps individuals to balance views of personal failure and suffering by recognizing and accepting shortcomings, which can ultimately trigger personal growth and development (Maricic et al., 2023). In this way, self-compassion can avoid negative emotions and promote positive feelings, which are beneficial for psychological well-being (Ge et al., 2019; Kotera & Ting, 2021; Tran et al., 2022).

In school-aged adolescents, self-compassion plays a role in understanding the self and recognising the importance of the presence of problems as positive and reducing negativity (Karakasidou & Stalikas, 2017). Increased compassion has been identified as a factor that supports the mental health and well-being of adolescents in school settings (Al-Ghabban, 2018). Students or adolescents with low self-compassion will respond to stress in unhealthy ways, such as blaming themselves, distancing themselves from others, and focusing on the problems that arise (Finlay-jones, 2017). Of course, this will affect the process of self-acceptance and it is difficult to forgive yourself. These negative emotions will further aggravate his situation as he goes through the adolescent transition (Kaminer et al., 2001; Neff & McGehee, 2010). Meanwhile, students or adolescents who have self-compassion usually show calm, empathetic, sensitive, warm and patient behaviour in solving various problems. Even when they face failures, they do not blame themselves but try to correct the wrong behaviour that occurred and try to become more productive and ready to solve challenges with new difficulties (Hidayati, 2015). Therefore, self-compassion acts as a predictor of well-being in adolescents (Marsh et al., 2018).

Neff (2003a) reported the relationship between self-compassion and emotion regulation strategies. The positive effects of self-compassion can promote emotion regulation skills and also increase positive automatic thoughts (Arimitsu & Hofmann, 2015). This leads to an increase in life satisfaction and a decrease in anxiety levels. Increased self-compassion is associated with an increased ability to regulate emotions (Neyestani et al., 2023). Emotions are important for good mental health because they regulate how individuals feel and interact with the world (Arndt, 2014). The skill needed to maintain mental health is the ability to regulate emotions according to the situation at hand (LeBlanc et al., 2020; W. et al., 2022).

Individuals' efforts to assess, manage, regulate and express their emotions appropriately in different situations with the aim of achieving emotional equilibrium is referred to as emotion regulation (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Emotion regulation skills relate to the way in which individuals manage and understand their emotional expressions (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014). The ability to regulate emotions allows a person to increase the level of positive emotions or reduce the impact of negative emotions in certain situations and conditions (Adinda & Prastuti, 2021). Adolescents who have effective emotion regulation skills will actively seek methods to overcome obstacles in the learning process, both by developing problem-solving strategies and by managing emotions. They are also able to control their emotional responses, both positive and negative, resulting in the display of attitudes or expressions of emotion that are appropriate to the task or activity they are undertaking (Aseana, 2020). Positive coping that individuals have, such as cognitive reappraisal, can influence life satisfaction (Jiang et al., 2021) and also help to maintain mental health (Hughes et al., 2011).

Conversely, adolescents who struggle to regulate their emotions may trigger depression and engage in risky behaviours such as substance abuse or self-harm as a way of coping with their emotions,

resulting in greater costs to physical and mental health and social functioning (Berking & Whitley, 2014; Estefan & Wijaya, 2014; Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Ionaşcu et al., 2023; Rodhiyah & Djuwita, 2023; Thesalonika & Apsari, 2021). Research by Eisenberg et al., (2001) and Kim and Cicchetti, (2010) states that poor emotion regulation skills in children and adolescents have been shown to predict externalising and internalising problems in later life. An individual's ability to manage emotions is also expected to assist the individual in solving problems related to education, learning difficulties and so on (Vienlenta, 2021). Emotion regulation is not a way of suppressing emotions that young people want to express, but rather a way of regulating the intensity of emotions that are excessive or cross the line of emotional equilibrium (Goleman, 2002). By regulating emotions, individuals experience greater emotional stability. Effective emotion regulation is associated with reduced stress and better mental health outcomes (Yunus & Chaudhary, 2023).

In the field of psychology, the relationship between two phenomena often does not occur directly because it is often influenced by other phenomena (Urbayatun & Widhiarso, 2012). Cai et al., (2023) provide evidence that emotion regulation may mediate the relationship between self-compassion and mental health. Regulation in response to an event can help individuals to appropriately express and control their emotions and avoid excessive and unhealthy reactions (Murfield et al., 2020). Research by Diedrich et al., (2017) shows that success in applying emotion regulation skills mediates the relationship between self-compassion and depression. Similar research on the role of emotion regulation in mediating the relationship between self-compassion and depression in adolescents and early adults has been conducted by Keel and Pidgeon, (2017), Shapero et al., (2019) and Meilasari and Utami, (2022). According to Berking and Whitley, (2014), self-compassion can improve mental health by improving emotion regulation. This suggests that a lack of self-compassion in individuals can affect depression through deficiencies in emotion regulation, particularly avoidance of (Krieger et al., 2013; Neff, 2003b).

From the background explanation, many studies have linked self-compassion, emotion regulation and depression in both adolescents and students. However, research on mental health through self-compassion and emotion regulation in students has not been widely conducted. Therefore, the researcher sought to investigate this issue. This study investigate how self-compassion affects mental health with emotion regulation as a mediating variable. The hypothesis of this study is that self-compassion has a role in mental health mediated by emotion regulation in high school adolescents.

Methods

Participants were selected using cluster random sampling with the criteria of being high school age adolescents in Medan City. This study uses the causal method to observe the cause and effect (Sugiyono., 2019) of the independent variable (self-compassion) on the dependent variable (mental health) with emotion regulation as a mediator. The population of this study were high school students in Medan City, using cluster random sampling technique, 574 high school students were obtained. This study was approved by the Psychology Research Ethics Committee with the reference number 001/2024/ Ethics/KPIN. After receiving permission from the committee, the researcher contacted the school to obtain written consent from the participants.

This study uses 3 types of directly administered instruments. First, mental health is a state in which individuals can function in an appropriate and balance way, realizing their potential to cope with the pressure they face, to play a role and to contribute to their community. Mental health was measured using the Warwick Edinburg Mental Wellbeing by Tennant et al., (2007) from Warwick Medical School University of Warwick. It was translated to Bahasa Indonesia and validated by Wicaksono et al., (2021). The adaptation of this scale aims to measure mental health positively with a reliability coefficient of 0.932 using Rasch analysis. All items in this scale have met the correlation criteria index above 0.4. This scale consists of 14 statement items and has 5 (five) response options, namely never (1),

rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4) and always (5). Example items are "I feel optimistic about the future" and "I feel good about myself".

Second, self-compassion is the understanding of oneself to be compassionate and good to oneself when faced with difficulties in life or shortcomings in oneself. Self-Compassion was measured using Self-Compassion Scale by Neff, (2003b). This scale has been adapted into Indonesian by Sugianto et al. (2020), which aims to see the extent of self-compassion that exists in individuals through six subscales: self kindness ("I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain"), self judgement ("I'm disapproving and judgemental about my own flaws and inadequacies"), common humanity ("I try to see my failings as part of human condition"), isolation ("When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am"), mindfulness ("When something upsets me, I try to keep my emotions in balance") and overidentification ("When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion"). The self-compassion scale consists of 26 statement items with five response points, ranging from 1 for almost never to 5 for almost always. This adaptation scale showed a Cronbach's alpha value of .872 with reliability values for each subscale ranging from .60 - .78.

Third, emotion regulation is an individual's ability to understand, process and manage emotional responses with full awareness so that they can adjust appropriate emotional behaviour at particular times and in particular situations to achieve emotional stability. Emotional regulation was measured using Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) by John and Gross (2004). This scale was translated into Bahasa Indonesia by Suwartono and Bintamur, (2019). The reliability coefficient of the cognitive reappraisal aspect $\alpha = .80$ and the expressive suppression aspect with a value of $\alpha = .60$. This scale aims to measure the tendency of individuals to regulate their emotions through two aspects, namely reappraisal ("When I want to feel less negative emotions such as sadness or anger, I change what I'm thinking about.") and suppression ("I keep my emotions to myself.") with 10 statement items. ERQ used seven alternative answers from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). All data were tabulated and analyzed using SPSS 26 and PLS-SEM 4.

Results and Discussion

Result

Based on the data collection of research participants, there were 574 high school students in Medan City who completed the questionnaire. **Table 1.** shows that the majority of respondents were female students (55.2%), in grade XII (55.7%), 17 years old (45.3%), and of Batak ethnicity (50.2%).

Table 1. Sample Responses to the Rolnow Survey

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	257	44.8 %
	Female	317	55.2%
	Total	574	100%
Class	Grade X	106	18.5%
	Grade XI	148	25.8%
	Grade XII	320	55.7%
	Total	574	100 %

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	14 years	8	1.4 %
	15 years	81	14.1%
	16 years	185	32.2 %
	17 years	260	45.3 %
	18 years	37	6.4 %
	19 years	3	0.5%
	Total	574	100 %
Tribe	Batak (Toba, Mandailing, Karo, Nias)	288	50.2%
	Jawa	154	26.8%
	Minang	40	7.0%
	Aceh	31	5.4%
	Melayu	30	5.2%
	Others (Cina, Tamil, Sunda, Pakistan, Arab, Banjar, Palembang, Banten)	31	5.4%
	Total	574	100 %

The multicollinearity test results show that the tolerance value of mental health, self-compassion and emotion regulation in each variable has VIF below 5, (emotion regulation on mental health: $2.033 < 5$; self-compassion on mental health: $2.033 < 5$; self-compassion on emotion regulation: $1.000 < 5$). This means that there is no evidence of multicollinearity. Therefore, the results of parameter estimation in PLS-SEM are robust (unbiased).

Table 2. shows that the variables of mental health, self-compassion and regulation are constructively adequate and reliable.

Table 2. Test Description Based on Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), Average Extracted (AVE)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Mental Health	.958	.962	.646
Emotion Regulation	.946	.954	.677
Self-Compassion	.973	.974	.594

Based on the **Table 2.**, according to Hair et al (2021); Sholihin and Ratmono (2013) the Cronbach Alpha value is above $> .7$, the AVE value is above $> .5$ and the CR value is above $> .7$, which means that both the Cronbach Alpha value, the composite reliability and average variance extracted have meet the established standards.

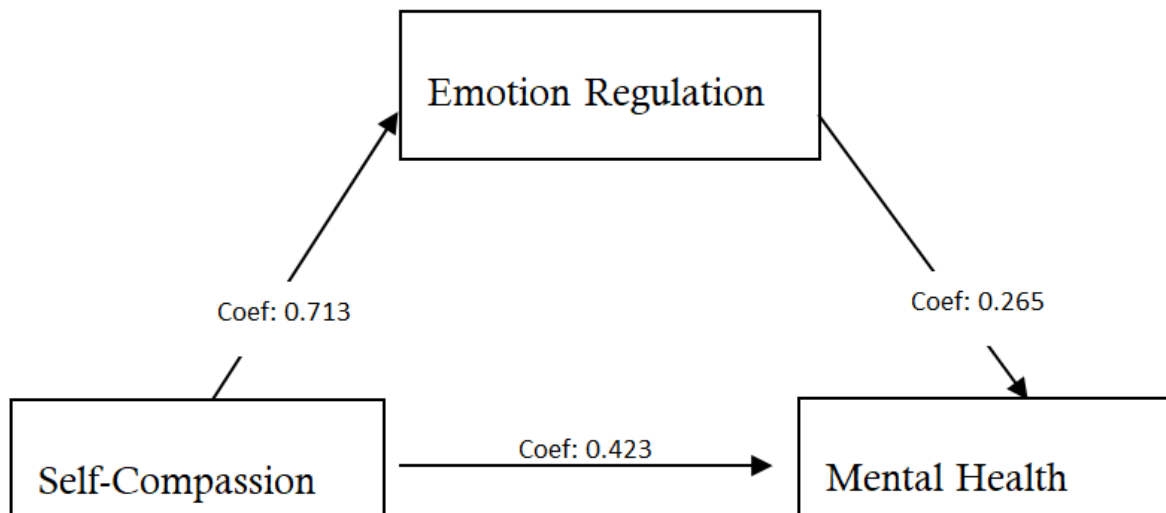
Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Category		
					Low	Moderate	High
Mental Health	14	70	42	9.33	51 (8.89%)	206 (35.89%)	317 (55.23%)
Emotion Regulation	10	70	40	10	71 (12.37%)	127 (22.13%)	376 (65.51)
Self-Compassion	26	130	78	17.33	95 (16.55%)	315 (54.88%)	164 (28.57%)

Based on Azwar's (2013) guidelines, categorised into three parts (low, moderate and high categories), Table 3 shows that out of 574 participants, more than 55% had high levels of mental health and emotion regulation, while the level of self-compassion was at a medium level (>50%).

Table 4. Coefficient Test of Self Compassion, Emotion Regulation and Mental Health (Direct Effect)

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Self-Compassion -> Mental Health	.423	.424	.052	8.160	.000
Self-Compassion -> Emotion Regulation	.713	.713	.028	25.412	.000
Emotion Regulation -> Mental Health	.265	.264	.071	3.750	.000

**Figure 1.** Influence between Self-Compassion, Emotion Regulation and Mental Health

Based on **Table 4.** and **Figure 1.** it is known that there is a significant direct relationship between self-compassion and mental health with path coefficient value (original sample column) of 0.423 and significant with a T-Statistic value of 8.160 > 1.96 and P-values of .000 < .05). The relationship between

self-compassion has a positive effect on emotion regulation with path coefficient value (original sample column) of .713 and significant with T-Statistic value = 25.412 > 1.96 and P-values = .000 < .05). The relationship between emotion regulation has a positive effect on mental health with path coefficient value (original sample column) of .265 and significant with T-Statistic value = 3.750 > 1.96, and P values = .000 < .05).

Table 5. Coefficient Test of Self Compassion, Emotion Regulation and Mental Health (Indirect Effect)

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Self-Compassion -> Emotion Regulation -> Mental Health	.189	.189	.051	3.694	.000

Table 5. shows that emotion regulation significantly mediates the relationship between self-compassion and mental health, with a T-Statistic = 3.694 > 1.96 and P-Values = .000 < .05. In this study, the result of the indirect effect was .189 (18.9%). This means that the score of the partial mediation role is small compared to the direct effect of self-compassion on mental health directly of 42.3%. Thus, the results of this study indicate that emotion regulation partially mediates the role of self-compassion on the mental health of high school students in Medan City.

Discussion

This study aims to see how self-compassion affects mental health with emotion regulation as a mediating variable. Based on the results of the research conducted, emotion regulation is able to mediate the relationship between self-compassion and mental health, where participants who have high self-compassion will also have high emotion regulation to improve mental health. The findings of this study shows that the presence of self-compassion will increase the individual's ability to survive, bounce back from problems and also cope with the stress they are facing, which are in line with the findings of Neff et al., (2005); Nery-Hurwit et al., (2017).

In high school adolescents, the role of self-compassion is believed to be able to help overcome challenges, increase self-understanding, and see the meaning of problems as something positive in order to reduce the negative effects of anxiety and depression (Karakasidou & Stalikas, 2017). Elices et al (2017) found that high self-compassion leads individuals to not judge themselves and to emotionally understand the failures that occur. Self-compassion as an element that can protect individuals from adverse mental states such as stress, depression and anxiety that exist in adolescents (Játiva & Cerezo, 2014; Kotera & Ting, 2021) and support positive mental (Mitropoulou et al., 2022; K. D. Neff & Dahm, 2015; Shin & Lim, 2018).

The results showed that self-compassion has a positive relationship with emotion regulation. This is consistent with the findings of Berking and Whitley (2014); Neff, K. and Germer (2018), who showed that self-compassion outcomes have been proven to increase an individual's tolerance for negative emotions, allowing individuals to process and accept these negative emotions, which ultimately increases the effectiveness of cognitive appraisal of problems. Adolescents with high levels of self-compassion feel connected, easily accept each other's opinions, strive to engage in cognitive reappraisal, acceptance, problem solving, relaxation, self-support, and have tolerance for problems (Paucsik et al., 2023). Even when faced with failure, they do not blame themselves but try to correct the wrong behavior that has occurred and try to become more productive and ready to complete challenges with new difficulties (Hidayati, 2015).

The evidence of the results of this study shows that emotion regulation is related to mental health, which is in line with the research of Aseana (2020); Fitriani and Alsa (2015), where the ability of effective emotion regulation possessed by a student will be able to help him overcome obstacles in the learning process, either by developing problem-solving strategies or managing emotions to combat the stress that occurs. Emotion management is also expected to help individuals deal with challenges related to education, learning difficulties (Vienlenta, 2021), being able to balance between conscious spontaneous expressions and controlling their rationalization (Atwater & Duffy, 2021). The ability of individuals to manage emotions is the basis for the formation of healthy individuals (Priyanto, 2017), so that it can improve well-being and quality of life (Kozubal et al., 2023).

This study shows that emotion regulation can mediate the relationship between self-compassion and mental health. One of the keys to maintaining mental health is learning to be kind and compassionate to oneself, especially when faced with stressful and difficult situations. This can be done by developing positive emotions and accepting negative emotions that arise (Cai et al., 2023). Individuals with complete mental health have better physical condition, psychological functioning, academic performance and social functioning (Heffner & Antaramian, 2016; Li et al., 2021; Renshaw & Cohen, 2014; Xiao et al., 2020). This occurs through the expansion and formation of positive emotions and positive life cognitions, making it easier for individuals to bounce back when faced with problems (Min et al., 2022). The presence of self-compassion encourages the ability to regulate emotions, which ultimately increases the ability to think positively and reduces anxiety levels (Arimitsu & Hofmann, 2015; Hasmarlin & Hirmaningsih, 2019). Other research findings that show conformity are conducted by Fong and Loi (2016); Martínez et al (2019), where students who apply self-compassion and are actively engaged in academics show more careful thinking in managing goals and motivation. This reflects an increased ability to cope with challenging situations through positive cognitive appraisal.

The mediating role of emotion regulation partially through self-compassion on mental health is consistent with several research findings, but has differences in the dependent variable. As research conducted by Meilasari and Utami, (2022) discusses the role of self-compassion on depression in adolescents mediated by emotion regulation. The results of the study concluded that emotion regulation - cognitive appraisal partially mediates the role of self-compassion on depressive symptoms in adolescents. The results of the next study by Koçak and Terzi (2023), who examined the role of emotion regulation in the relationship between self-compassion and subjective well-being in junior high school students, where the role of mediating regulation is also partial. Research on this topic can extend the literature on the role of self-compassion on mental health through emotion regulation as a mediator.

The direct effect of self-compassion has a stronger impact than the indirect effect through emotion regulation because self-compassion involves treating oneself with kindness and understanding during difficult times, which directly reduces negative mental states such as anxiety and depression (Barnard & Curry, 2011). Although emotion regulation is a mediator between self-compassion and mental health, it involves additional steps that take time to develop and implement effectively, and requires metacognitive awareness, so the effects may not be as immediate as the direct comfort and peace derived from self-compassion (Neff & McGehee, 2010; Tajik-Parvinchi et al., 2021).

The limitations of this study should be considered. Firstly, most participants in this study were female, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to male high school students. Secondly, the use of self-report measures may lead to bias, such as social desirability bias. We have attempted to minimize bias by ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of the responses, however the possibility of bias cannot be completely eliminated. Furthermore, the study was conducted in a specific geographical location, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations. Future research can look at trying to replicate the findings generated in different cultural, gender, and geographical contexts to obtain a more comprehensive understanding on the relationship between self-compassion, emotional regulation, and mental health across different populations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the role of self-compassion and emotion regulation in promoting mental health among high school students. The findings highlight the importance of fostering self-compassion and developing effective emotion regulation skills as key components of mental health interventions for adolescents. Further research is needed to explore these relationships in more diverse populations and settings. As it is, this research is useful for high school adolescents, schools, school counsellors, youth counsellors and parents in overcoming mental health problems that occur in high school adolescents..

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