

Conference Paper

Spirituals Function in Health on Medical Students: A Perspective from Self-Compassion

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Abstract

Healthy and ill conditions are needed to be understood as a comprehensive state of well-being. Therefore, healthy individuals cannot be seen only from the absence of disease or physical weakness, but it is also important to pay attention to their psycho-social and spiritual condition. The spiritual function is related to value, hope, the meaning of life, and belief system that have an impact on humans' health. The purpose of this study was to find empirical evidence of a correlation between self-compassion and spirituality among medical students. Stratified random sampling was used as the sampling method. The results of the research showed that there is empirical evidence of a significant relationship between self-compassion and spirituality. The instruments used in the measurement were self-compassion and spiritual scales. Simple regression techniques were used to see the correlation between the two. The results showed a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.647$ with $p < 0.000$) between self-compassion and spirituality. We conclude that self-compassion influenced spirituality by 41.9%, and the rest were affected by other factors.

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1. Introduction

The concept of health is essential to be understood as a comprehensive welfare condition. Healthy individuals cannot be seen only from the absence of disease or physical weakness, but it is also important to pay attention to their psycho-social and spiritual condition. There is a standard of healthiness according to the World Health Organization. A healthy individual must have four elements; physical, psychological, social and spiritual [1]. Spiritual function in health is related to values, hopes, the meaning of life and belief systems that affect health. Spirituality will help to make the meaning of life through its interpersonal, intrapersonal and transpersonal process. A survey has been conducted, the result is 60% of Americans stated that religion was important in life and 82% believed that they needed to improve their spirituality. The results of this study

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explore spirituality's influence on physical and psychological health. Spirituality has an impact on psychological and physical healthiness [2].

Spirituality gives a substantial positive impact on health [3, 4]. A previous study reported that from 51 articles selected from publications, it can be concluded that spirituality has a relationship with health [5]. Other findings reported that before 2000, the term spirituality was indexed at the Institute for Scientific Information for less than 100 times per year but in 2008, the theme rose to 489 times per year. This illustrates an increment of publications about spirituality and health [6].

Spirituality is a multidimensional concept, interpreted as a tendency to make the meaning of life through intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal processes in overcoming various problems of life. Spirituality is an experience and an individual's connectedness with the fundamental and non-material aspects of the universe [7]. In addition, spirituality is a connection with something more significant that leads to the establishment of the meaning of life in an individual [8].

The instrument for measuring spirituality is based on aspects that have been conceived by Hardt [9]; i.e., belief in God, search for meaning, awareness, and feeling of security. According to Dyson [10], self is one of the factors related to spirituality. Therefore, some researchers conduct empirical studies about spirituality that are linked to self-compassion. Self-compassion here means being gentle towards oneself during difficulties or a downturn of situation. This self-compassion also means acceptance of failure, suffering, and inability as part of the human (everyone) condition, and that they deserve to be loved [11]. Furthermore, the research explained that self-compassion has three aspects: (1) self-kindness, (2) common humanity, and (3) mindfulness. A study conducted on students at Turkish universities reported a significant correlation between spiritual experience and self-compassion [12]. Another research about spiritual well-being and its relationship with self-compassion to students in Turkey proved that both of them are correlated. That study was intended to obtain empirical evidence regarding the correlation and predictors of self-compassion in medical students [13].

Another research explained that for these past three decades, literature researches on spirituality are developed very rapidly [14]. Spirituality is not only associated with religious issues, but with a variety of psychological problems, such as personality, management, social and psychotherapy [15]. Psychological studies have linked health to emotions and mental health [12]. The definition of spirituality is divided into two forms, first spirituality is understood as a relationship with God (Higher Power). Benner [16] has a similar definition. According to him, spirituality is "the humans' response to the call of God's mercy and to connect with Him." Spirituality as "the presence of a relationship

with a Higher Power that influences the way a person operates in the world [17]. Another definition of spirituality is a personal search as an effort to understand the answers of the ultimate goals in life, meaning, and sacred or transcendent relationships [18]. This situation leads to the development of religious rituals and community formation. Chiu, et al [19] conducted a study by analyzing 73 definitions of spirituality that are related to health science. The researchers identified several common components: (a) reality or existential meaning and way of life, (b) transcendence, (c) connectedness and integrity, (d) the presence of unifying forces or energy.

There are more researches on spirituality, prayer, hypnosis, meditation, biofeedback, massage, acupuncture, laugh and play therapy, proving that they give a positive influence on psychological, social, and physical health [14,20-22]. In addition, some effects of spirituality are useful in reducing tension/stress as well as symptoms of anxiety and depression, increasing life satisfaction and psychological well-being, strengthening immune system, and increasing the meaning and purpose of life, and in recovering alcohol and drug addict [14, 23-25]. Spirituality is positively related to the results of psychological adaptations such as social support [4, 20, 26], quality of life, optimism [20, 27], happiness, joy, self-esteem, and life satisfaction [14, 27], energy [28], better emotional health [29], positive influence, and psychological well-being [14]. Conversely, spiritual experience was found to be negatively associated with unhealthy variables such as anxiety [14, 20, 25], alcohol consumption, depression [14,20,25,26,28,30-32], stress, hostility [20], loneliness, and frigid relationship [25].

Self-compassion is related to individual psychological functions. The research about this has been widely carried out, but research on the role of self-compassion in the spiritual context is still very limited, even researchers have not found the results of this study in Indonesia. Supporting research on self-compassion related to personal and interpersonal functions has been done before. There are some empirical pieces of evidence of the existence of a self-compassion relationship with alienation in adolescents. In addition, there is a relationship of self-compassion with the behavior of altruism in nurses [33] and its relationship to procrastination actions (Rananto & Hidayati, 2016).

Some other researches have empirically proven that spirituality is related to improving the positive aspects of individuals and decreasing the harmful effects of negative life events, and spirituality is also related to optimism [20, 27] and emotional health [29]. These findings reinforced the assumption that self-compassion with its three aspects; i.e., self-quality, common humanity and mindfulness, has a predictive effect on spirituality. The hypothesis is that there is a relationship between self-compassion and spirituality.

The higher the self-compassion, the higher the spirituality. Conversely, the lower the self-compassion, the lower the spirituality.

2. Method

The participants of this research were 279 students of Universitas Sebelas Maret, located in Surakarta, Indonesia. The sampling method is a cluster random sampling technique. This research used the primary data source, specifically the Likert model scale. Two instruments were used; spirituality scale and self-compassion scale. The spirituality scale used in this present study was The Spiritual Questionnaire that has been modified to fit the participants' real conditions. The scale was created by Hardt [9]. This instrument is based on four aspects: belief in God, search for meaning, awareness, and feeling of security. There were 20 items that were divided into 14 favorable items and 6 unfavorable items. Self-compassion scale consisted of 26 items which were arranged based on aspects proposed by Neff [11]; i.e., self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness.

3. Results

The analysis was done using simple linear regression analysis. The dependent variable is spirituality and the independent variable is self-compassion.

TABLE 1: The contribution of Emotional Intelligence towards Critical Thinking.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.647 ^a	.419	.417	6.08094

From the table above we can conclude that R-value = 0.647. This shows that the correlation between self-compassion and spirituality is 0.647, it means that the correlation can be categorized as a strong correlation. Furthermore, the R square value or the coefficient of determination is equal to 0.419. That means the effect of self-compassion on spirituality is 41.9% while other factors influence the rest.

Based on Table 2 above, it can be seen that the F value is 199.488 with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. So, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between self-compassion, and spirituality.

Based on Table 3 above, the value of B is 19.493. It means that if there is no X variable (independent), the consistent value of the Y variable (dependent) is 19.493. In each increment of 1% of X variable, then the Y variable will increase by 0.802. The regression

TABLE 2: Anova.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7376.627	1	7376.627	199.488	.000 ^b
	Residual	10242.857	277	36.978		
	Total	17619.484	278			

a. Dependent Variable: Self Compassion
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Spirituality

TABLE 3: Coefficients.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.493	3.615		5.392	.000
	Spiritualitas	.802	.057	.647	14.124	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Self Compassion

value is (+). It means that the X variable has a positive effect on the Y variable. The regression equation for those results is: $Y = 19.493 + 0.802X$.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to obtain empirical evidence about the correlation between self-compassion and spirituality in medical students. The results proved that there is a relationship between self-compassion and spiritual in medical students. This study provides essential information that increasing self-compassion will enhance the individual's spirituality. This study strengthens previous studies that showed positive relationships between spirituality and psychological variables such as optimism [20]. Also, spirituality can strengthen the psychological aspects of individuals by reducing the negative effects due to individuals' stress [34]. Likewise, spirituality is related to self-compassion which has a positive influence on many things in life. Individuals with high self-compassion will have psychological strength associated with the development of positive psychology such as happiness, optimism, wisdom, curiosity, motivation to explore, personal initiative, and positive emotions [11].

Based on previous research, the existence of relationships between self-compassion and alienation in adolescents was investigated. Low self-compassion in adolescents will make the adolescents restrict themselves to the social environment, due to the feelings of isolation and difference from others [35]. An alienated teenager cannot be more open to life experiences and cannot interpret every activity they do. Self-compassion can be

useful through the changes from childhood to adolescence. This is supported by the research of Neff and McGehee [36] who suggested that self-compassion can influence adolescents in overcoming negative self-views. Self-compassion will help adolescents to accept discrepancies calmly so they can increase self-awareness instead of avoiding and disconnecting from the situation. These results are consistent with the literature which proves that self-compassion is closely related to social adjustment indicators such as extraversion, social relations, self-determination, social linkages [11], and social support [12]. The feeling of separation is strongly associated with maladaptive social outcomes such as submissive behavior [12], social anxiety, fear of negative evaluation [37], and loneliness [12]. Therefore, both self-compassion and spirituality contain the same psychological benefits, and their conceptual properties are very similar.

Spirituality is found to be related to personal tolerance. In the same way, self-compassion expands self-tolerance when expectations are not fulfilled and boost the ego gently and patiently to change the behavior [11]. This research shows that spirituality and self-compassion are related to the same adaptive results as social support, optimism, happiness, the joy of life, life satisfaction, emotional health, positive influence, and psychological well-being. Besides, these two constructs are related to the same maladaptive outcomes such as anxiety, depression, stress, and loneliness [12].

Evaluation of these findings needs to be done due to some limitations in this study. Firstly, the number of the participants needs to be increased in order to produce a stronger relationship between both variables and generalizations can be expanded. Secondly, this research is limited only to see the correlation between self-compassion and spirituality, instead of the causality. Further research can use the experimental method to see causality of this relationship so that it can be seen whether self-compassion has an influence on individual spiritual change.

Finally, it can be concluded that this study provides evidence that self-compassion can predict individual spirituality. The increase of self-compassion can be improved spiritually. The development of self-compassion can also be useful for positive aspects of individuals such as the findings of the previous studies.

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