Mediating role of optimism in the relationship between self-compassion and subjective well-being

Zeynep Akkuş Çutuk[1]

Abstract

In this study, whether optimism has a mediating role in the relationship between self-compassion and subjective well-being was examined. The sample of the study consisted of 302 volunteer participants (117 [38.74%] males) between the ages of 18 and 47. Data were obtained using the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS), and Optimism Scale (OS). The data obtained from the scales were analyzed with the Structural Equation Model using IBM SPSS Amos 22.00 statistical package program. According to the findings of the study, optimism plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between self-compassion and subjective well-being. Consequently, self- compassion affects optimism, and this effect may increase subjective well-being.

Keywords: Self-compassion, subjective well-being, optimism.

1. Introduction

Self-compassion (SC) is defined as being open to the emotions that cause pain and distress of the individual, approaching himself with caring and loving attitudes, understanding against his inadequacies and failures, and accepting negative experiences as a natural process of human life (Neff, 2003a). The concept of self-compassion (SC) is different from the tendencies to "avoid responsibility" and "self-pity" developed at the end of negative experiences. When individuals feel sorry for themselves, they generally feel disconnected from others. They get caught up in their problems and forget other people who have similar problems (Neff, 2003b). On the other hand, it is emphasized that both avoidances of responsibility and self-pity are tendencies originating from narcissism, whereas SC is a structure far from narcissistic tendencies. SC allows individuals to see their own experiences related to those of other individuals without distortion (Neff, 2003a).

Studies have shown that high SC is closely associated with optimism, happiness, and physical and psychological health (Barnard & Curry, 2011; Hall et al., 2013; Kirkpatrick, 2005; Neff, 2009; Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007). SC prevents self-criticism and enables people to look at themselves, to those around them, and to life more positively. Thus, it increases positive emotions. In addition, SC also reduces negative emotions. SC has a positive effect on deep thinking, and parallel to this, depression and anxiety (Neff & Dahm, 2015). It does this by shutting down our threat system that is activated in case of danger and activating our relief system (Gilbert & Irons, 2009). In addition, SC

---

[1] Associate Professor, Trakya University, Department of Educational Sciences, Turkey, zeynepacutuk@trakya.edu.tr
Orcid ID: 0000-0001-8364-4431

positively affects interpersonal relationships (Neff & Dahm, 2015). To the extent that SC enables us to be compassionate, understanding, and tolerant towards ourselves, it also enables us to be compassionate, tolerant, and understand the people around us. Thus, it enables people to have warmer and more intimate relationships. SC enables strong social relationships between people and increases positive emotions and decreases negative emotions causes an increase in people's subjective well-being (SWB) levels (Zessin, Dickhäuser, & Garbade, 2015).

While Diener (1984) defined high subjective well-being (SWB), he stated that we should experience positive emotions frequently and negative emotions less frequently. In addition, it has been argued that individuals' frequent experience of positive emotions will increase their subjective well-being (SWB) levels, and dense experience of negative emotions will negatively affect their mood and decrease their SWB (Diener & Ryan, 2009). SC is closely related to emotional intelligence, wisdom, and life satisfaction (Neff, 2003a). All these factors also ensure that SC is closely related to positive emotions (Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007). The study of Rockliff et al. (2008) showed that individuals who received short-term SC training had a marked fall in the levels of the stress hormone cortisone. How does SC reduce negative emotions such as stress? Gilbert and Irons (2009) explain this process as follows. The threat system is activated when people feel they are in any dangerous or vulnerable situation. The activated threat system increases negative emotions, such as stress and anxiety. Likewise, when we feel safe, our relaxation and the calming system are activated. The activated calming system also increases positive emotions. SC activates the relief system by turning off the threat system, thereby reducing negative emotions. SC is thought to increase the level of happiness by increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative emotions (Zessin, Dickhäuser & Garbade, 2015).

In studies related to the structure of SWB, it was seen that the variables that affect SWB the most are the competence and optimism level of the individual in matters that are attributed to him by himself and his important people (Barunch & Barnett 1986; Ruff, 1989; Whitley, 1983). In studies conducted with different sample groups, it was found that optimism affects SWB, and there is a direct positive and significant relationship between them. In a longitudinal study conducted on women, it was concluded that early age optimism, in other words, an optimism at an early age, affects SWB in adulthood (Daukantaite, & Bergman, 2005). Optimism is significantly associated with SWB in adolescents (Eryılmaz & Atak, 2011; Karademas, 2006), university students (Seller, 2019; Zhang et al., 2014; Zimmerman, 1999), the elderly (Ferguson & Goodwin, 2010; Ju et al., 2013), licensed athletes from different branches (Şar & Işıklar, 2012) and patients with burn injuries (He et al., 2013). Optimism is defined as individuals' looking at their future with confidence and believing that they expect good things in the future (Gillham & Reivich, 2004). In addition, it is stated that optimism tends to see the positive sides of events (Benson, 2007) and somehow includes a belief that the future will bring good things (Scheier & Carver, 1985). In this context, optimism is seen as focusing on positive information and tending to positive judgments (Matlin & Gawron, 1979). Seligman (1991) thinks that optimism tendency is a general cognitive process and can be acquired later. There are two types of optimism. The first is optimism, which is considered as a personality trait (dispositional optimism). Individuals with this optimism tend to focus more on positive events while evaluating life events. The second is called situational optimism. Individuals who have this optimism tendency expect good things to happen in some specific situations. In the studies conducted, it was concluded that individuals with high SWB give meaning to life events, strive to provide and maintain their SWB and evaluate themselves positively. It was observed that individuals with low SWB interpreted life events in a way that reinforces their unhappiness and evaluated themselves negatively. There are studies indicating that the optimistic tendency is effective in many areas of life; those who are optimistic exhibit fewer depressive symptoms, live longer, and show faster improvement in treatments (Lyubomirsky, 2001).

It has been determined that optimism is positively correlated with SC (Ergün-Başak & Can, 2018; Namani, & Bagherian Kakhki, 2019). While SC is a feature that enables individuals who encounter difficult conditions to find meaning and hope in life (Neff et al., 2007), optimism is defined

as individuals' having positive expectations about their future (Jackson, Weiss, Lundquist, & Soderlind, 2002). Both concepts believe that the future will be good and points out that they are related in this sense. SC can positively regulate the neurological processes of individuals affected by negative experiences. However, in this process, the brain produces emotional responses, acting faster than producing logical responses. It is suggested that the emotional responses produced by the brain are mostly chaotic emotions such as anxiety, worry, blame, and rejection. The function of SC, such as reducing or balancing the negative emotions produced by the brain in the face of attacks (Gilbert, 2009), may cause individuals with high SC to calm their negative emotions, thus turning away from pessimism and towards optimism. Individuals with a high level of SC see their depressing and corrosive experiences as a natural consequence of being human, rather than attributing them to their inadequacies (Neff, 2003a). Similarly, the foundations of optimism are based on attributional styles theory, which suggests that the way individuals explain the causes of events also shape their perceptions and behaviors (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978).

In line with the theoretical background mentioned above, since optimism has a possible relationship between self-compassion and subjective well-being, this study aimed to evaluate the mediating role of optimism between self-compassion and subjective well-being and to test the model. In this context, the following hypotheses have been created: (H1) Self-compassion is positively connected with subjective well-being and optimism. (H2) Optimism is positively associated with subjective well-being. (H3) Optimism mediates the relationship between self-compassion and subjective well-being.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Participants and Procedure

The sample of the study consisted of 302 participants (117 [38.74%] males) between the ages of 18 and 47 (Mean = 31.67; SD = 2.46). The participants were informed about the study to be done and invited to participate. Informed consent was provided during data collection. Participation was voluntary.

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)

SCS is a self-report style scale developed by Neff (2003b). The scale, which consists of 26 items, is based on a 5-point Likert-style rating ranging from 1 (Almost never) to 5 (Almost always). It consists of six sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are; self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. The higher the score of the individual for each sub-dimension, the higher the individual has the features measured by the relevant sub-dimension. SCS is scored separately for each sub-dimension. In addition, SCS gives the total self-compassion score. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of SCS is .92, and the test-retest reliability coefficient is .93. Adaptation, reliability, and validity study of SCS to Turkish was done by Akın, Akın, and Abacı (2007). The internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish form was found between .72 and .80, and the retest reliability coefficient was found between .56 and .69. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of the sub-dimensions of SCS was found to be between .75 and .86, and the total Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was found to be .94.

2.2.2. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) were used to measure subjective well-being.

2.2.2.1. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

SWLS was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin (1985). SWLS is a 7-point, five-item measurement tool. In the original form of SWLS, the internal consistency reliability coefficient was found to be .87, and criterion-dependent validity was found as .82. SWLS was adapted to Turkish by Köker (1991) and Yetim (1991). Yetim (1991) found the internal consistency reliability coefficient of .86; test-retest reliability coefficient .73; Köker (1991) found, test-retest reliability coefficient .85; the internal consistency coefficient ranged from .81 to .86 for all age groups in Turkish Form. As a

result of the analyses conducted within the scope of this research, the Cronbach alpha coefficient of SWLS was calculated as .84.

2.2.2.1.2. Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS)

PANAS was developed by Watson, Clark & Tellegen, (1988). Ten items of the 20-item PANAS consist of positive emotions to measure positive mood (interested, excited, determined), and the remaining ten items consist of negative emotions to measure negative mood (upset, ashamed, scared). PANAS has a 5-point Likert-type rating (1 not at all, 2 a little, 3 average, 4 quite, 5 very much) expressing the frequency of experiencing these feelings. The internal consistency coefficient of PANAS was found as .88 for positive emotion and .87 for negative emotion. The adaptation validity and reliability study of PANAS to Turkish was done by Gençöz (2000). The internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish form was .83 for positive emotion and .86 for negative emotion; test-retest consistency was found as .40 for positive emotion and .54 for negative emotion. As a result of the analyses made in this study, it was determined that the Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of PANAS was .87 for positive emotion and .85 for negative emotion.

2.2.3. Optimism Scale (OS)

The scale was developed by Balcı & Yılmaz (2002). The scale consists of 24 items and has a 4-point Likert type rating (1 is not like me at all, 2 is not like me, 3 is sometimes like me, and 4 is just like me). The higher the score obtained by the person, the higher the level of optimism. The correlation coefficient of the Pearson Product Moments obtained as a result of applying the scale to 290 university students with an interval of four weeks was found to be .61, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient found as .96, and the reliability coefficient obtained by the split-half method found as .91. In consequence of the analysis conducted within the scope of this research, the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as .93.

2.4. Procedures and Statistical Analysis

In this study, which was conducted to determine the mediating role of optimism between self-compassion and subjective well-being, first of all, descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis of variables was performed. After these analyses, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was made. SEM is an overall statistical approach that enables the testing of hypotheses about the relationships between observed and latent variables (Hoyle, 1995). SEM is expressed as a very strong quantitative analysis since it includes a large number of statistics and takes more than one parameter in the decision phase (Kline, 2015). Various types of models are used in SEM to describe the relationships between variables. In other words, in SEM, various theoretical models are tested that assume how variable sets define structures and how these structures are related to each other (Schumacher & Lomax, 2004). A two-stage approach is recommended to test models in SEM. In this approach, firstly, the measurement model is tested to describe the relationships between the latent variables and the observed variables, and then the structural model in which the internal and external latent variables are related (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; James, Mulaik & Brett, 1982; Kline, 2015). In the measurement model, all variables can be tested in a single model, or all variables can be examined separately (Şimşek, 2007). In the model used in this study, all variables were tested separately. The significance of the model established in SEM is examined with the goodness of fit values (Schumacher & Lomax, 2004). In this study, chi-square/degrees of freedom, IFI, CFI, NFI, GFI, AGFI, RMSEA, and SRMR were used as values of the goodness of fit. It is suggested that acceptable goodness of fit indexes of these values should be ≤ 5 for $\chi2/sd$; $\geq.90$ for CFI, NFI, and IFI, $\geq.85$ for GFI and AGFI, and $\leq .10$ for RMSEA and SRMR (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marcoulides & Schumacher, 2001; Maydeu-Olivares, Shi, & Rosseel, 2018; Schermelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003; Schumacher & Lomax, 2004).

The method of Baron and Kenny (1986) was used both to test the hypotheses and to determine whether optimism had a mediating role in SEM. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), some conditions must be met in order to specify the mediating effect. First, SC should predict SWB. The second condition is that SC should have an effect on optimism. Another condition is that optimism must predict SWB. Finally, when optimism is included in the equation, the decrease in the amount of relationship between SC and SWB is considered an indicator of mediation partly. The significance of the mediation effect was evaluated using the bootstrapping technique (5000 samples) and 95% confidence intervals. In mediation analysis performed with the bootstrapping technique, the values obtained at the 95% confidence interval obtained in consequence of the analysis should not include zero value in order to support the research hypothesis (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In addition, since the optimism variable in the study consists of one dimension, it has been converted into two dimensions by using the parcelling method. In this method, the items in the scale were divided into two groups according to the item-total correlation values, and the total score of both groups was included in the model as the observed variable. The parcelling method has been used because it contributes to the normal distribution of the data and allows us to obtain better values of the goodness of fit (Bandalos & Finney, 2001). IBM SPSS Statistics 21.00 and IBM SPSS Amos 22.00 statistical package programs were used for the data analysis.

3. Results

Table 1. Correlation analysis and descriptive statistics results for variables

	Correlation			Descriptive Statistics		
	1	2	3	Mean (SD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Self-compassion(SC)	-			11.38 (3.10)	-.25	-.13
2. Subjective well-being(SWB)	.24**	-		76 (11.86)	.20	.08
3. Optimism	.75**	.33**	-	71.74 (12.44)	-.81	.71

Note. **$p < .01$

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that all variables have positive and significant relationships with each other. In the research, whether the data obtained from the scales show normal distribution or not was examined by using the skewness and kurtosis values. Accordingly, the skewness value of the SC variable was found as -.25, the kurtosis value was found as -.13; the skewness value of the SWB variable was found as .20, and the kurtosis value was found as .08; the skewness value of the optimism variable was found as -.81, and the kurtosis value was found as .71. These results show that the data obtained from the scales meet the criteria for normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2010; Finney & DiStefano, 2006; Huck, 2012; Kim, 2013).

3.1. Structural Equation Modelling

3.1.1. Measurement Model

The model expresses the relationship of latent variables with related indicators or measured variables and is recommended to be tested before transitioning to the structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). A confirmatory measurement model was established for each of the variables of SC, SWB, and optimism, and the results obtained are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Results Regarding the Confirmatory Measurement Model

Variables	χ2	χ2 /df	IFI	CFI	NFI	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Self-compassion(SC)	1130.114	3.83	.90	.90	.90	.89	.86	.076	.067
Subjective well-being(SWB)	770.352	2.87	.97	.97	.95	.85	.81	.079	.065
Optimism	681.062	2.73	.92	.92	.90	.87	.85	.076	.056

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the fit index values of the confirmatory measurement model established for each of the variables of SC, SWB and optimism are significant. Accordingly, fit index values of the SC scale were found as; χ2 (295) = 1130.114, χ2/df = 3.83, IFI = .90, CFI = .90, NFI = .90, GFI = .89, AGFI = .86, SRMR = .067, RMSEA = .076, 90% CI for RMSEA = 070-.082. Fit indices in SWB scale were found as; χ2 (268) = 770.352, χ2/df = 2.87, IFI = .97, CFI = .97, NFI = .95, GFI = .85, AGFI = .81, SRMR = .065, RMSEA = .079, 90% CI for RMSEA =.072-.085. The fit index values of the optimism scale were found as χ2 (249) = 681.062, χ2/df = 2.73, IFI = .92, CFI = .92, NFI = .90, GFI = .87, AGFI = .85, SRMR = .056, RMSEA = .076, 90%. CI for RMSEA = .069-.083. In line with these results, it was determined that the confirmatory measurement model can be used to test the structural model.

3.1.2. Structural Model

In order to reveal the network of relationships between self-compassion, subjective well-being and optimism variables, in the first structural model, whether SC has a significant effect on SWB was tested. The fit index values of the model tested in the study were found as; χ2 (22) = 106.144, χ2/df = 4.82, p<.05; IFI = .94, CFI = .94, NFI = .93, GFI = .92, AGFI = .85, SRMR = .045, RMSEA = .010, 90% CI for RMSEA = .092-.125 and they showed that the fit of the model was acceptable. According to the findings, it is seen that SC has a significant positive effect on SWB (β = .91; p <0.05).

In the other model of the study, it was tested whether SC had a significant effect on optimism, whether optimism positively affected SWB, and whether optimism had a mediating effect on the relationship between SC and SWB. In the research, in order to test these hypotheses, a separate model was established in which optimism is the mediator variable. As a result of the established model, it was determined that SC positively affected optimism (β= .86; p<0.05), and optimism positively affected SWB (β= .56; p<0.05). However, with the inclusion of the mediator variable, optimism, into the model, it was observed that there was a decrease in the amount of relationship between SC and SWB variable (β= .47; p<0.05). Considering the goodness of fit indices of the model in which optimism is a partial mediator, it was determined that all values were at acceptable levels (χ2 (37) = 141.544, χ2/df = 3.82, p<.05; IFI = .95, CFI = .95, NFI = .93, GFI = .91, AGFI = .85, SRMR = .042, RMSEA = .097, 90% CI for RMSEA = .080-.114). In Figure 1, the structural model in which optimism is a partial mediator between SC and SWB is presented.
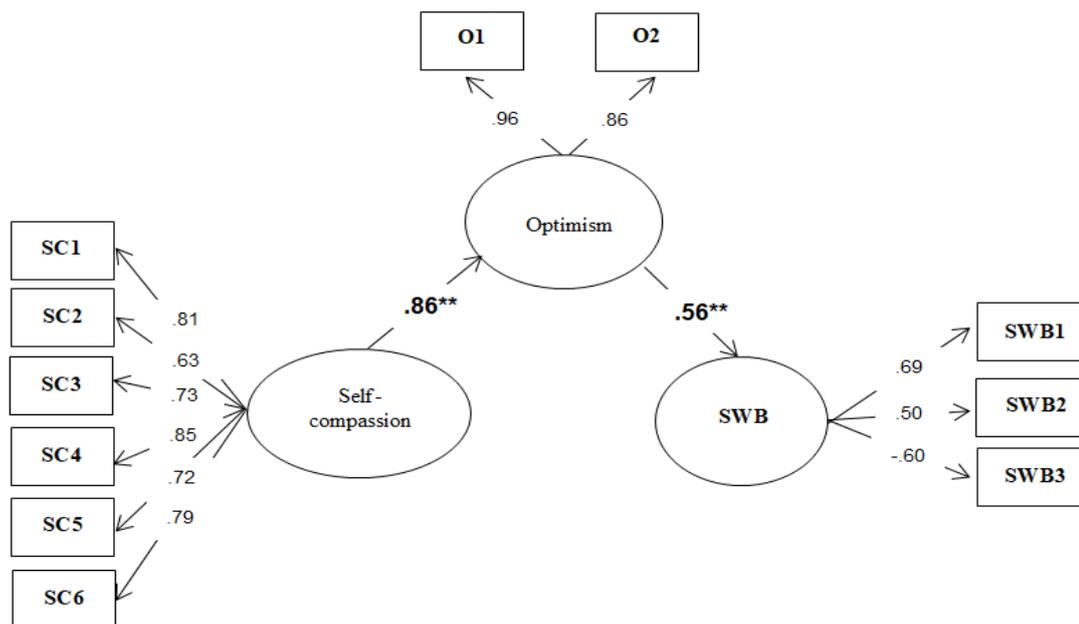
Figure 1. Partially Mediated Model

Note. **p<.05; SC1 self-kindness, SC2 common humanity, SC3 mindfulness, SC4 self-judgment, SC5 isolation, SC6 over-identification; O1 optimism parcel1, O2 optimism parcel2; SWB1 satisfaction with life, SWB2 positive emotions, SWB3 negative emotions

3.1.3. Bootstrapping Process

According to the bootstrapping procedure performed to provide additional evidence whether the indirect effect of self-compassion in predicting subjective well-being through optimism is significant or not, the indirect effect was found to be significant (β=.48, %95 GA= .22, .71). Bootstrapping lower and upper confidence interval values obtained by percentage method do not include zero value. According to all these results, it can be said that optimism partially mediates the relationship between SC and SWB.

4. Discussion

In this study, it was determined that optimism played a partial mediating role in the relationship between self-compassion and subjective well-being. In the model established, it was concluded that self-compassion positively affected subjective well-being, and this result was found to be like the studies conducted in the literature. The direct effect of SC on SWB is statistically significant and positive (Allen, Goldwasser & Leary, 2012; Andersson, 2018; Brenner et al., 2018; Dolunay-Cuğ, 2015; Erkoç, 2013; Ge, Wu, Li & Zheng, 2019; Neff & Faso, 2015; Rahma, & Puspitasari, 2019; Vötter, & Schnell, 2019; Pandey, Tiwari, Parihar, & Rai, 2019; Zessin, Dickhäuser, & Garbade, 2015). A significant relationship was found between SWB and all sub-dimensions of SC. The factors such as self-caring, self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness increase SWB. On the other hand, self-criticizing, isolation, and overidentification factors decrease SWB (Yılmam, 2019). It has been determined that SC mediates the relationship between attachment anxiety and SWB (Wei, Liao, Ku, & Shaffer, 2011) and also plays a fully mediating role in the relationship between perfectionism and SWB (Stoeber, Lalova, & Lumley, 2020). SC was found to be associated with positive changes in life satisfaction, identity development, and decreases in negative affect throughout the academic year in college freshmen (Hope, Koestner, & Milyavskaya, 2014). Neff (2004) stated that SC is an emotion control function that turns negative emotions into positive ones. In addition, it increases our positive emotions by providing compassion and understanding of ourselves (Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick,

2007). Fredrickson (2004) argued that positive emotions increase cognitive performance and enable creative thinking. SC makes it easier to reach our goals by increasing cognitive performance, creative and solution-oriented thinking, and thus provides happiness (Zessin, Dickhäuser, & Garbade, 2015). When examined empirically, it was found that there is a positive relationship between SC with life satisfaction (Neff, 2003b), happiness/positive emotions (Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2007), and psychological well-being (Neff, 2004).

Another result obtained in this study is that SC is positively associated with optimism and is a predictor of optimism. This finding is consistent with some researchers (Ergün-Başak & Can, 2018; Imtiaz, & Kamal, 2016; Namani, & Bagherian Kakhki, 2019; Neff & Vonk, 2009; Phillips, 2018). Individuals with high levels of SC consider their depressing and corrosive experiences as a natural consequence of being human, rather than attributing them to their inadequacies (Neff, 2003a). Similarly, the foundations of optimism are based on attributional styles theory, which claims that the way individuals explain the causes of events also shape their perceptions and behaviors (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). Otherwise, SC is to be negatively related to the repetition of negative memories in a vicious circle (rumination) (Neff & Vonk, 2009; Raes, 2010). In this sense, optimism acts as a soothing shield between negative experiences and perceived psychological distress, allowing the mood to change positively (Segerstrom et al., 1998). In this process, it is stated that optimistic perspective plays an effective role in ignoring negative stimuli that are not related to the events that happen to individuals (Isaacowitz, 2005), in turning to productive behaviors (Gillham & Reivich, 2004), and choosing stimulants to solve their problems (Isaacowitz, 2005). In this context, optimism prevents individuals from easily turning into a negative mood in the face of challenging experiences and makes it easier to be resistant (Segerstrom et al., 1998). In the study examining the relationships between psychological well-being, SC, and positive personal characteristics, it was emphasized that optimism has a strong relationship with SC and the relationship observed between both concepts strengthens psychological well-being (Neff, Rude, Kirkpatrick, 2007).

Another result obtained from the study is that optimism positively affects SWB. This result shows consistency with Carver and Scheier's idea, which states that (2002a, 2002b) optimists expect the events they are experiencing now and in the future to be positive, and therefore their tendency to experience more positive emotions increases, on the other hand, pessimists expect negative results in life, and this is consistent with the idea that it increases the possibility of experiencing more negative emotions. There are research findings showing that optimistic adolescents have more friends, tend to cope with the source of stress by using a problem-oriented coping strategy, adapt to their new school in a shorter time, and express that they are happier (Brissette, Scheier, & Carver, 2002). Optimism predicts the positive emotional aspects of SWB in middle-aged adults and the psychological adaption of adults (Chang & Sanna, 2001). It has been found that optimism is associated with self-esteem, low negative emotions, low depression and life satisfaction (Ali, & Zaman, 2014; Shnek, Irvine, Stewart, & Abbey, 2001; Vickers & Vogeltanz, 2000; Wrosch & Scheier, 2003). It was found that optimism was a mediator in the relationship between shyness and SWB criteria (life satisfaction, positive and negative emotion) (Liu et al., 2018). Optimism in adolescents played a partial mediating role in the relationship between the meaning of life and both positive (life satisfaction) and negative (psychosocial problems) aspects of well-being (Ho, Cheung, & Cheung, 2010). Tuzgöl-Dost (2007) and Doğan (2006) found that the more optimistic young people have higher levels of life satisfaction. According to Myers and Diener (1995), while SWB is less related to external resources such as age, gender, and income, it is more related to internal resources such as self-confidence, optimism, internal control, and extroversion.

A final finding in the model established in this study is that optimism mediates the relationship between SC and SWB. The fact that SC is based on the understanding that individuals' self-esteem does not depend on their achievements, power, or high life standards (Neff, 2003a) may have led to an increase in the level of optimism of individuals with high SC. It has been found that individuals with high optimism have higher life satisfaction and positive emotions that constitute SWB and have less negative emotions (Ben-Zur, 2003; Hutz, Midgett, Pacico, Bastianello, & Zanon,

2014; Krok, 2015). In line with these results, it can be deduced that as the SC levels of individuals increase, their optimism levels increase, and as their level of optimism increases, their SWB levels increase. In line with all the information obtained, the model put forward in the research is considered to be acceptable.

The research has some limitations. First, SEM was used in the study, which could get strong results from quantitative methods. However, due to the nature of the quantitative method and the cross-sectional nature of the sample, the cause-effect link should be considered and caution should be taken. Longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to fully reveal these causal sequences. The second limitation of the study is that the data from the participants were obtained by self-reporting data collection tools. Therefore, the difficulties of self-reporting measures should not be overlooked in the interpretation of the findings.

This research was conducted on a large sample group, future studies can be applied on a more specific sample and sociodemographic characteristics can be considered. In addition, since the design of this research is correlational, causality could not be established, therefore, it is thought that it would be beneficial to use qualitative and quantitative research methods together with experimental studies in future studies. Considering the relationship between self-compassion, subjective well-being and optimism, it is recommended to expand psycho-education, family counseling and therapy studies.

References

Abramson, L. Y., Seligman, M. E., & Teasdale, J. D. (1978). Learned helplessness in humans: Critique and reformulation. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 87(1), 49–74. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.87.1.49

Akın, Ü., Akın, A. & Abacı, R. (2007). Self-compassion scale: The study of validity and reliability. Hacettepe University Journal of Education, 33, 01-10. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/hunefd/issue/7805/102335

Allen, A. B., Goldwasser, E. R., & Leary, M. R. (2012). Self-compassion and well-being among older adults. Self and Identity, 11(4), 428-453. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2011.595082.

Ali, U. & Zaman, N.I. (2014). Optimism as a predictor of subjective well-being among university students. Pakistan Journal of Clinical Psychology, 13(2), 59-70.

Andersson, M. (2018). Examining facebook use, self-compassion and its interactions with subjective well-being. Unpublished Master's Dissertation, Umeå University, Sweden.

Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. Psychological Bulletin, 103(3), 411-423. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.103.3.411

Balcı S. ve Yılmaz M. (2002). Developing the Optimism Scale: A validity and reliability study. OMÜ Journal of Education, 14, 54-60.

Bandalos, D. L., & Finney, S. J. (2001). Item parceling issues in structural equation modeling. In M. G. A. & S. R. E. (Eds.), New developments and techniques in structural equation modeling (pp. 269–296). NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Barnard, L. K. & Curry, J. F. (2011). Self-compassion: Conceptualizations, correlates, & interventions. Review of General Psychology, 15 (4), 289-303. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025754

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51(6), 1173–1182. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.51.6.1173

Barunch, G., & Barnett, R. (1986). The health of women in paid employment effects of quality of work role, social support and cynicism on psychological and physical well being. Women & Health, 20(3).

Benson, H. P. (2007). Children's dispositional optimism and pessimism: social and emotional outcomes. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Seattle Pacific University, ABD.

Ben-Zur, H. (2003). Happy adolescents: The link between subjective well-being, internal resources, and parental factors. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 32(2), 67–79. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021864432505

Brenner, R. E., Vogel, D. L., Lannin, D. G., Engel, K. E., Seidman, A. J., & Heath, P. J. (2018). Do self-compassion and self-coldness distinctly relate to distress and well-being? A theoretical model of self-relating. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 65(3), 346–357. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000257

Brissette, I., Scheier, M. F. & Carver, C. S. (2002). The role of optimism in social network development, coping, and psychological adjustment during a life transition. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82 (1), 102 – 111. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.1.102

Carver, C.S., & Scheier, M.F. (2002a). Optimism. In C.R. Snyder & S.J. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of positive psychology (pp. 231–243). Oxford: University Press.

Carver, C.S., & Scheier, M.F. (2002b). Optimism, pessimism, and self-regulation. In E.C. Chang (Ed.), Optimism & pessimism. Implications for theory, research, and practice (pp. 31–52). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Chang, E. C., & Sanna, L. J. (2001). Optimism, pessimism, and positive and negative affectivity in middleaged adults. A test of a cognitive-affective model of psychological adjustment. Psychology and Aging, 16, 524-531. https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.16.3.524

Daukantaite, D., & Bergman, L. R. (2005). Childhood roots of women's subjective well-being: The role of optimism. European Psychologist, 10(4), 287–297. https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040.10.4.287

Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. Psychological Bulletin, 95(3), 542–575. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.95.3.542

Diener, E., & Ryan, K. (2009). Subjective well-being: A general overview. South African Journal of Psychology, 39(4), 391-406. https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630903900402

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. Journal of Personality Assessment, 49(1), 71–75. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13

Doğan, T. (2006). The investigation of the wellness of university students. Hacettepe University Journal of Education, 30, 120-129.

Dolunay-Cuğ, F. (2015). Self-forgiveness, self-compassion, subjective vitality, and orientation to happiness as predictors of subjective well-being. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Middle East Technical University, Turkey.

Erkoç, R. (2013). Mindfulness and self-compassion as mediators of effect of self-criticism on subjective well-being. Unpublished Master's Dissertation, Ege University, Turkey.

Ergün-Başak, B. & Can, G. (2018). The relationships between self-compassion, social-connectedness, optimism and psychological resilience among low-income university students. Elementary Education Online, 17(2), 768-785. https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2018.419299

Eryılmaz, A. & Atak, H. (2011). The relationships between adolescent subjective well being, self-esteem and optimism. Electronic Journal of Social Sciences, 10(37), 170-181.

Ferguson, S.J. & Goodwin, A.D. (2010). Optimism and well-being in older adults: The mediating role of social support and perceived control. Int J Aging Hum Dev., 71(1), 43-68. https://doi.org/10.2190/AG.71.1.c

Fredrickson B. L. (2004). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences, 359(1449), 1367–1378. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2004.1512

Ge, J., Wu, J., Li, K. & Zheng, Y. (2019). Self-compassion and subjective well-being mediate the impact of mindfulness on balanced time perspective in chinese college students. Front. Psychol. 10:367. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00367

Gençöz, T. (2000). Positive and negative affect schedule: A study of validity and reliability. Türk Psikoloji Dergisi, 15(46), 19-26.

Gilbert, P. (2009). Introduction compassion-focused therapy. Advances in Psychiatric Treatment, 15(3), 199-208. https://doi.org/10.1192/apt.bp.107.005264

Gilbert, P. & Irons, C. (2009). Shame, self-criticism, and self-compassion in adolescence. In Nicholas B. Allen and Lisa B. Sheeber. (Eds.). Adolescent emotional development and the emergence of depressive disorders. Cambridge University Press, 195-214.

Gillham, J. & Reivich, K. (2004). Cultivating optimism in childhood and adolescence. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 591, 146 – 163. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716203260095

Hall, C. W., Row, K. A., Wuensch, K. L., & Godley, K. R. (2013). The role of self-compassion in physical and psychological well-being. The Journal of Psychology, 147(4), 311–323. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2012.693138

He, F., Cao, R., Feng, Z., Guan, H. & Peng, J. (2013). The Impacts of dispositional optimism and psychological resilience on the subjective well-being of burn patients: A structural equation modelling analysis. PLoS ONE, 8(12). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0082939

Ho, M. Y., Cheung, F. M., & Cheung, S. F. (2010). The role of meaning in life and optimism in promoting well-being. Personality and Individual Differences, 48(5), 658–663. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.01.008

Hope, N., Koestner, R., & Milyavskaya, M. (2014). The role of self-compassion in goal pursuit and well-being among university freshmen. Self and Identity, 13(5), 579–593. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2014.889032

Hoyle, R.H. (1995). Structural Equation Modeling: Concepts, Issues, and Application, SAGE Publications, London.

Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cut off criteria for fit indexes in covariance structural analysis: conventional criteria versus new alternatives. Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 6(1), 55-65. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118

Hutz, C. S., Midgett, A., Pacico, J.C., Bastianello, M. R. & Zanon, C. (2014). The relationship of hope, optimism, self-esteem, subjective well-being, and personality in brazilians and americans. Psychology, 5(6), 514–522. https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2014.56061

Imtiaz, S. & Kamal, A. (2016). Rumination, optimism, and psychological well-being among the elderly: Self-compassion as a predictor. Journal of Behavioural Sciences, 26(1), 32-50.

Isaacowitz, D. M. (2005). The gaze of the optimist. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 31, 407 – 415. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167204271599

Jackson, T., Weiss, K., Lundquist, J. & Soderlind, A. (2002). Perceptions of goaldirected activities of optimists and pessimists: A personal projects analysis. Journal of Psychology, 136 (4), 521-532. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980209605548

James, L.R., Mulaik, S.A. & Brett, J.M. (1982). Causal analysis: Assumptions, models and data. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Ju, H., Shin, J.W., Kim, C.W., Hyun, M.H. & Park, J.W. (2013). Mediational effect of meaning in life on the relationship between optimism and well-being in community elderly. Arch Gerontol Geriatr., 56(2), 309-313. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.archger.2012.08.008.

Karademas, E. C. (2006). Self-efficacy, social support and well-being. The mediating role of optimism. Personality and Individual Differences, 40(6), 1281–1290. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2005.10.019

Kirkpatrick, K. L. (2005). Enhancing Self-Compassion Using a Gestalt Two-Chair İntervention. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, TX, USA.

Kline, R. B. (2015). Principles and practice of structural equation modeling. New York: Guilford Publications.

Köker, S. (1991). Comparison of life satisfaction levels of normal and problematic adolescents. Unpublished Master's Dissertation, Ankara University, Turkey.

Krok, D. (2015). The mediating role of optimism in the relations between sense of coherence, subjective and psychological well-being among late adolescents. Personality and Individual Differences, 85, 134-139. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.05.006

Liu, C., Cheng, Y., Hsu, A.S.C., Chen, C., Liu, J. & Yu, G. (2018). Optimism and self-efficacy mediate the association between shyness and subjective well-being among Chinese working adults. PLoS ONE, 13(4): e0194559. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0194559

Maydeu-Olivares, A., Shi, D., & Rosseel, Y. (2018). Assessing fit in structural equation models: A monte-carlo evaluation of RMSEA versus SRMR confidence intervals and tests of close Fit. Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 25(3), 389–402. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705511.2017.1389611

Matlin, M. W. & Gawron, V. J. (1979). Individual differences in pollyannaism. Journal of Personality Assessment, 43, 411 – 412. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4304_14

Marcoulides, G., & Schumacher, R. (2001). New developments and techniques in structural equation modeling. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Myers, D. & Deiner, E. (1995). Who is happy. Psychological Science, 6(1), 10-19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.1995.tb00298.x

Namani, E. & Bagherian Kakhki, M (2019). Mediating role of psychological security in the relationship between optimism and self-compassion with psychological well-being in veterans' spouses. Iranian Journal of War & Public Health, 11(2), 101-108. http://ijwph.ir/article-1-783-en.html

Neff, K.D. (2003a). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. Self and identity, 2 (2), 85-102. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860390129863

Neff, K. D. (2003b). The development and validation of a scale to measure selfcompassion. Self and Identity, 2, 223-250. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860309027

Neff, K. D. (2004). Self-compassion and psychological well-being. Constructivism in the Human Sciences, 9(2), 27-37.

Neff, K. D. (2009). The Role of self-compassion in development: A healthier way to relate to oneself. Human Development, 52, 211-214. https://doi.org/10.1159/000215071

Neff, K.D. & Faso, D.J. (2015). Self-compassion and well-being in parents of children with autism. Mindfulness 6, 938–947. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-014-0359-2

Neff, K. D., Kirkpatrick, K. L., & Rude, S. S. (2007). Self-Compassion and adaptive psychological functioning. Journal of Research in Personality, 41, 139-154. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2006.03.004

Neff, K. D. & Vonk, R. (2009). Self-compassion versus global self-esteem: Two different ways being related to oneself. Journal of Personality, 77 (1), 23-50. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2008.00537.x.

Neff, K. D. & Dahm, K. A. (2015). Self-compassion: What it is, what it does, and how it relates to mindfulness. In Robinson, M., Meier, B., & Ostafin, B. (Eds.) Mindfulness and self-regulation. New York: Springer.

Pandey, R., Tiwari, G.K., Parihar, P., & Rai, P.K. (2019). Positive, not negative, self-compassion mediates the relationship between self-esteem and well-being. Psychology and Psychotherapy Theory Research and Practice, https://doi.org/10.1111/papt.12259

Phillips, W.J. (2018). Future-outlook mediates the association between self-compassion and wellbeing. Personality and Individual Differences, 135, 143–148. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.07.006

Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. Behavior Research Methods, 40, 879–891. https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.40.3.879

Raes, F. (2010). Rumination and worry as mediators of the relationship between selfcompassion and depression and anxiety. Personality and Individual Differences, 48, 757 – 761. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.01.023

Rahma, U. & Puspitasari, R. (2019). Self-compassion dan subjective well-being remaja tunadaksa. PSYMPATHIC: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi, 6(2), 157-164. https://doi.org/10.15575/psy.v6i2.4059

Rockliff, H., Gilbert, P., McEwan, K., Lightman, S., & Glover, D. (2008). A pilot exploration of heart rate variability and salivary cortisol responses to compassion-focused imagery. Journal of Clinical Neuropsychiatry, 5(3), 132-139.

Ruff, N. S. (1989). The successful secondary marketing teacher. Case studies of teaching award recipients in marketing education, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, ABD.

Seligman, M. E. P. (1991). Learned Optimism. New York: Erlbaum.

Segerstrom, C., Taylor, S. E., Kemeny, M. E. & Fahey, J. L. (1998). Optimism associated with mood, coping, and ımmune change in response to stress. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74 (6), 1646 –1655. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.6.1646

Schermelleh-Engel, K. & Moosbrugger, H. (2003). Evaluating the fit of structural equation models: Tests of significance and descriptive goodness-of-fit measures. Methods of Psychological Research Online, 8 (2), 23-74.

Scheier, M. F. & Carver, C. S. (1985). Optimism, coping, and health: Assessment and implications of generalized outcome expectancies. Health Psychology, 4 (3), 219 – 247. https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.4.3.219

Schumacher, R. & Lomax, R. (2004). A Beginner's Guide To Structual Equation Modelling. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Shnek, Z.M., Irvine, J., Stewart, D. & Abbey, S. (2001). Psychological factors and depressive symptoms in Ischemic Heart Disease. Health psychology, 20,141–145. https://doi.org/10.1037//0278-6133.20.2.141

Stoeber, J., Lalova, A.V. & Lumley, E. J. (2020). Perfectionism, (self-)compassion, and subjective well-being: A mediation model. Personality and Individual Differences. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.109708

Şar, A. H. & Işıklar, A. (2012). Examination of locus of control, subjective well-being and optimism as the predictors of sport confidence. Nigde University Journal of Physical Education And Sport Sciences, 6(1), 76-84. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/bsd/issue/53547/713182

Şimşek, Ö.F. (2007). Introduction to Structural Equation Modeling, Basic Principles and Lisrel Applications, Ankara: Ekinoks Publications.

Tuzgöl-Dost, M. (2007). Examining life satisfaction levels of üniversity students in terms of some variables. Pamukkale University Journal of Education, 22, 132-143. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/pauefd/issue/11121/133000

Vickers, K. S., & Vogeltanz, N. D. (2000). Dispositional optimism as a predictor of depressive symptoms over time. Personality and Individual Differences, 28, 259–272. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00095-1

Vötter, B. & Schnell, T. (2019). Cross-lagged analyses between life meaning, self-compassion, and subjective well-being among gifted adults. Mindfulness, 10, 1294–1303. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-1078-x

Wrosch, C., & Scheier, M. F. (2003). Personality and quality of life: The importance of optimism and goal adjustment. Quality of Life Research, 12, 59-73. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023529606137

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54(6), 1063–1070. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.1063

Wei, M., Liao, K.Y., Ku, T.Y. & Shaffer, P.A. (2011). Attachment, self-compassion, empathy, and subjective well-being among college students and community adults. J Pers., 79(1),191-221. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2010.00677.x

Whitley, E. (1983). Sex role orientation and self-esteem: A critical metaanalytic review. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44, 765–778. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.44.4.765

Yetim, Ü. (1991). Life satisfaction in terms of the organization and pattern of personal projects. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Ege University, Turkey.

Yılmam (2019). The effect of conscious awareness and self-compassion on subjective well-being. Unpublished Master's Dissertation, Üsküdar University, Turkey.

Zessin U, Dickhäuser O, Garbade S. (2015). The Relationship Between Self-Compassion and Well-Being: A Meta-Analysis. Appl Psychol Health Well Being. 7(3),340-364. https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12051

Zhang, J., Miao, D., Sun, Y., Xiao, R., Ren, L., Xiao, W., & Peng, J. (2014). The impacts of attributional styles and dispositional optimism on subject well-being: A structural equation modelling analysis. Social Indicators Research, 119(2), 757–769. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-013-0520-7

Zimmerman, S.L. (1999). Self-esteem, personal control, optimism, extraversion, and the subjective well-being of midwestern university faculty. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Andrews University, ABD.