

An Exploration of the Construct Validity of Self-Compassion

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I certify that all material in this assignment / assessment which is not my own work has been identified and properly attributed. I have conducted the work in line with the BPS DCP Professional Practice Guidelines.

Abstract

Self-compassion is receiving increasing interest from psychologists and researchers due to its potential role in wellbeing and mental health however, self-compassion as a unique construct has not been validated. This research utilised pilot studies in order to develop an operational definition of self-compassion, separate from other similar constructs. A multi-trait multi-method approach to construct validation was utilised to assess self-compassion's discriminant and convergent validity in relation to the constructs of self-esteem and compassion for others in a community sample of 307. Self-compassion was then evaluated for its role in mental health and wellbeing when assessed against the two comparison constructs. Results demonstrated discriminant validity to both comparison constructs but convergent validity only in regards to self-esteem, providing partial support for the construct validity of self-compassion. As hypothesised support was found for self-compassion as a unique predictor in regards to wellbeing, but its role could not be determined for mental health. The results are discussed in terms self-compassion's functional relationships with comparison constructs and therapeutic utility. Recommendations for the direction of future research are discussed.

Keywords: Self-compassion, construct validity, compassion, self-esteem, wellbeing, mental health.

Highlights: >An operational definition of self-compassion was developed and explored>A MTMM approach found partial support for construct validation>Results indicated a distinction between self-compassion and compassion for others>Self-compassion was found to have a significant unique association with wellbeing.

Table of Contents

Journal Copy of Instructions for Authors	pp. 3
Abstract	pp. 8
Introduction	pp. 9
Study 1: Method and Results	pp. 14
Study 2: Method and Results	pp. 17
Discussion	pp. 40
References	pp. 48
Appendices:	
Appendix A: Extended Introduction	pp.56
Appendix B: Focus Group	pp. 57
Appendix C: Analysis of Existing Data	pp. 61
Appendix D: Development of Definition and Items	pp. 68
Appendix E: Standardised Measures	pp. 69
Appendix F: Expanded Methodology	pp. 70
Appendix G: Expanded Results	pp. 72
Appendix H: Ethics Documentation	pp. 73
Appendix I: Survey	pp. 74
Appendix J: Dissemination Statement	pp. 96
List of Tables and Figures:	
Table 1: Participant Demographics	pp. 21
Table 2: Indicators	pp. 28
Table 3: CT-C(M-1) Models	pp. 31
Table 4: CT-C(M-1) Categorical Models	pp. 32
Table 5: MTMM Matrix	pp. 35
Table 6: Correlations Co-efficients	pp. 38
Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis	pp. 39
Figure 1: CT-C(M-1) Model	pp. 25