

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION, MOTIVATION, AND BURNOUT WITH STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING

Bayram ÇETİN *
Hasan Basri GÜNDÜZ **
Ahmet AKIN ***

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to investigate the relationships between self-compassion, motivation, and burnout. The participants were 357 police chief candidates, who completed a questionnaire package that included Self-compassion Scale (Akin, Akın, & Abacı, 2007), Motivation Skills Scale (Onur, 1998), and Maslach Burnout Scale (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Ergin, 1992). The relationships between self-compassion, motivation, and achievement goals were examined using correlation analysis and the hypothesis model was tested through structural equation modeling. Data were analyzed by LISREL 8.54 and SPSS 11.5. Findings demonstrated that self-kindness, awareness of common humanity, and mindfulness related positively and self-judgment and isolation related negatively to motivation. In addition, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization negatively and personal accomplishment associated positively with motivation. Also results from structural equation modeling showed that the model fitted well ($\chi^2=34.04$, $df=27$, $p=0.00$, $RMSEA=.027$, $NFI=.98$, $CFI=1.00$, $IFI=1.00$, $RFI=.97$, $GFI=.98$, $AGFI=.96$, and $SRMR=.038$). According to this model, motivation was predicted positively by self-kindness, awareness of common humanity, and mindfulness and was predicted negatively by self-judgment and isolation. Further emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were predicted negatively and personal accomplishment was predicted positively by motivation. Results were discussed in the light of the literature.

Keywords: Self-compassion, Motivation, Burnout, Structural Equation Model.

* Assist. Prof. Dr. Sakarya University Faculty of Education Educational Science Department
e-mail: bccetin@sakarya.edu.tr

** Assist. Prof. Dr. Sakarya University Faculty of Education Educational Science Department
e-mail: hgunduz@sakarya.edu.tr

***Research Assist. Sakarya University Faculty of Education Educational Science Department
e-mail: aakin@sakarya.edu.tr

ÖZ-DUYARLIK, MOTİVASYON VE TÜKENMİŞLİK ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİLERİN YAPISAL EŞİTLİK MODELİYLE İNCELENMESİ

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı öz-duyarlık, motivasyon ve tükenmişlik arasındaki ilişkileri incelemektir. Araştırma 357 komiser adayı üzerinde yürütülmüştür. Araştırmada ölçme araçları olarak, Öz-duyarlık Ölçeği (Akın, Akın, & Abacı, 2007), Motivasyon Ölçeği (Onur, 1998) ve Maslach Tükenmişlik Ölçeği (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Ergin, 1992) kullanılmıştır. Öz-duyarlık, motivasyon ve tükenmişlik arasındaki ilişkiler korelasyonla incelenmiş, hipotez modeli yapısal eşitlik modeliyle test edilmiştir. Veriler LISREL 8.54 and SPSS 11,5 programlarıyla analiz edilmiştir. Korelasyondan elde edilen bulgular, öz-duyarlığın öz-sevecenlik, paylaşımların bilincinde olma ve bilinçlilik alt boyutlarının motivasyonla pozitif, öz-yargılama ve izolasyon boyutlarının ise motivasyonla negatif ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Tükenmişliğin duygusal tükenme ve duyarsızlaşma boyutları motivasyonla negatif, kişisel başarı boyutu ise motivasyonla pozitif ilişkili bulunmuştur. Yapısal eşitlik modelinden elde edilen uyum indeksleri modelin iyi uyum verdiğini göstermiştir ($\chi^2=34.04$, $df=27$, $p=0.00$, $RMSEA=.027$, $NFI=.98$, $CFI=1.00$, $IFI=1.00$, $RFI=.97$, $GFI=.98$, $AGFI=.96$, and $SRMR=.038$). Path analizi sonuçları, öz-duyarlığın öz-sevecenlik, paylaşımların bilincinde olma ve bilinçlilik boyutlarının motivasyonu pozitif, öz-yargılama ve izolasyon boyutlarının ise motivasyonu negatif yordadığını ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca motivasyon duygusal tükenme ve duyarsızlaşmayı negatif, kişisel başarıyı ise pozitif yordamıştır. Bulgular literatür doğrultusunda tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Öz-duyarlık, Motivasyon, Tükenmişlik, Yapısal eşitlik modeli

INTRODUCTION

Self-compassion proposes an alternative approach to thinking about psychological well-being and as defined by Neff (2003a), has three components which mutually influence each other: Self-kindness, awareness of common humanity, and mindfulness. Self-kindness can be defined as the tendency to be caring and understanding with oneself rather than being harshly critical or judgmental. When noticing some disliked aspect of one's personality, for example, the flaw is treated gently and the emotional tone of language used towards the self is soft and supportive (Neff, in press). Self-compassion entails not being self-critical when one's expectations are not met and not being harmful to individual's ego in order to make achievements. Instead, self-compassion suggests the individual should encourage his/her ego gently and patiently to change behaviors (Neff, 2003a). Awareness of common humanity, the second dimension of self-compassion, is seeing one's happy or painful experiences as not personal, but as all human beings'. The sense of common humanity principal to self-compassion involves recognizing that all humans are imperfect, that all individuals fail, make mistakes, and engage in unhealthy behaviors. Self-compassion connects one's own flawed condition to the shared human condition, so that features of the self are considered from a broad, inclusive perspective (Neff, in press). Having this kind of awareness, one perceives these experiences as part of the larger human experience rather than feeling isolated and alienated from the society and harshly criticizing oneself for failure and suffering experiences (Neff, 2003a). This awareness emphasizes one's relatedness to all other humans and to another individual (Kirkpatrick, 2005).

Mindfulness, the third component of self-compassion, is a pre-conceptual awareness that allows individual to accept life's most stressful and painful emotions without being carried away by them (Gunaratana, 1993; Martin, 1997; Neff, 2003a; Nisker, 1998; Rosenberg, 1999). Mindfulness is a state of balanced awareness that one's feelings and thoughts are observed without avoiding or trying to change them, without exaggeration and prejudice. When individuals accept and tolerate their distress and pain, when they are gentle and kind toward themselves, they avoid suppressing their emotions and thoughts. Thus, when they are aware that distress and pain are something all humans experience, they are not trapped by over-identification.

Self-compassion functions as an adaptive strategy for emotion-organizing through decreasing negative emotions but creating more positive emotions of kindness and relatedness (Neff, Hsieh, & Dejjitrat, 2005). Studies have proved that self-compassion is negatively associated with self-criticism, depression, anxiety, rumination, and thought suppression; and positively associated with social relationship, emotional intelligence, and self-determination. In addition, it has been found out that although self-compassion is significantly related to self-esteem, it is not associated with narcissism (Neff, 2003a).

Motivation is an inner process that helps people to move toward their goals in definite motion, with purpose and vision. Self-motivated people know that there is no simple solution to becoming motivated after a disappointment, but they also know that if they can beat the odds, then they will be stronger the next time another obstacle comes along. Self-motivated individuals also realize that their thoughts are what control their emotions (Deci & Ryan, 1991).

Burnout has been described as a syndrome comprising emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson,

1981). Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being depleted of one's emotional resources. This dimension was regarded as the basic individual stress component of the syndrome (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Depersonalization, referring to negative, cynical or excessively detached response to other people at work, represents the interpersonal component of burnout. Reduced personal accomplishment, referring to feelings of decline in one's competence and productivity and to one's lowered sense of self-efficacy, represents the self-evaluation component of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). According to a prevailing view, in a person who is burned out, emotional exhaustion appears first and results in depersonalization; the combined effect of those two constituent parts leads to a feeling of low personal achievement. However, Shirom (1989) views burnout as an affective reaction to ongoing stress whose core context is the gradual depletion over time of the individuals' intrinsic energetic resources, and includes the expression of emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, and cognitive weariness.

The Present Study

To our knowledge, to date studies have not examined the relationships between self-compassion, motivation, and burnout. Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate the relationships between self-compassion, motivation, and burnout. In this research, it was hypothesized that, the self-kindness, awareness of common humanity, and mindfulness factors of self compassion would be positively related and self-judgment, common humanity, and isolation factors of self compassion would be negatively related to motivation. Also it was hypothesized that, motivation would be associated positively with personal accomplishment and negatively with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 357 police chief candidates who enrolled in a pre-service training programme, in Bursa, Turkey. 352 of the participants (98.6%) were males and 5 (1.4%) were females. A large majority of the participants (94.4%) were between 30 and 39 years of age, mean 34 years.

Instruments

Self-compassion Scale. Self-compassion was measured using the Self-compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b). Turkish adaptation of this scale was done by Akın, Akın, and Abacı (2007). The Self-compassion Scale is a 26-item self-report inventory and consists of six subscales: self-kindness, self-judgment, awareness of common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. Each item was rated on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Language validity findings indicated that correlations between Turkish and English forms were .94, .94, .87, .89, .92, and .94 for six subscales, respectively. Results of a confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the model was well fit and Chi-Square value ($\chi^2=779.01$, $N=633$, $sd=264$, $p=0.00$), which was calculated for the adaptation of the model, was found to be significant. The goodness of the fit index values of the model were $RMSEA=.056$, $NFI=.95$, $CFI=.97$, $IFI=.97$, $RFI=.94$, $GFI=.91$, and $SRMR=.059$. The internal consistency coefficients of six subscales were .77, .72, .72, .80, .74, and .74, respectively. The test-retest reliability coefficients were .69, .59, .66, .60, .69, and .56.

Maslach Burnout Scale. The Maslach Burnout Scale (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) is a 22-item self-report questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale. Turkish adaptation of this scale

was done by Ergin (1992). This instrument has three sub-scales: Emotional exhaustion (eight items), depersonalization (six items), and personal accomplishment (eight items). Internal consistencies were .83, .71, and .72 and the test-retest reliability estimates were .83, .72, and .67, respectively.

Motivation Skills Scale. The Motivation Skills Scale (Onur, 1998) is a 40-item self-report scale. The participants were asked to indicate whether or not “The statement is generally true for me” or “The statement is generally false for me,” using a 2-point Likert scale to collect data. Validity of this scale was established with content validity.

Procedure

Completion of the questionnaires was anonymous and there was a guarantee of confidentiality. Measurement items were administered to the participants in groups in the classrooms. The measures were counterbalanced in administration. Prior to administration of measures, all participants were told about purposes of the study. In this research, Pearson correlation coefficient and structural equation modeling was utilized to determine the relationships between self-compassion, motivation, and burnout. These analyses were carried out via LISREL 8.54 (Jöreskog & Sorbom, 1996) and SPSS 11.5.

RESULTS

Descriptive data and inter-correlations

Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations for the variables used in the analyses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of the variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Self-kindness	1.00									
2. Self-judgment	0.04	1.00								
Common Humanity	0.62**	0.05	1.00							
4. Isolation	0.05	0.68**	0.08	1.00						
5. Mindfulness	0.74**	0.12*	0.63**	0.06	1.00					
6. Over-identification	0.09	0.72**	0.04	0.71**	0.15*	1.00				
7. Emotional Exhaustion	0.07	0.46**	0.04	0.55**	0.07	0.51**	1.00			
8. Depersonalization	0.06	0.43**	0.07	0.46**	0.11*	0.44**	0.67**	1.00		
9. Personal accomplishment	0.46**	0.04	0.38**	0.01	0.50**	0.07	0.07	0.01	1.00	
10. Motivation	0.34**	0.10*	0.14*	0.17*	0.18*	-0.02	-0.29*	0.37**	0.46**	1.00
Means	14,03	11,21	11,47	9,06	12,17	8,75	18,17	8,50	25,81	56,44
Standard deviation	3,76	3,48	3,17	2,97	3,40	3,13	5,95	3,28	7,17	4,87
Alpha	.79	.83	.81	.77	.69	.88	.91	.85	.72	.84

* p< .05 **p< .01.

As shown in Table 1, self-kindness, awareness of common humanity, and mindfulness were positively (.34, .14, and .18, respectively) and self-judgment and isolation were negatively (-.10 and -.17 respectively) related to motivation. In addition, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (r=-.29 and r=-.37) associated negatively and personal accomplishment associated positively (r=.46) with motivation.

Structural equation modeling

The model was examined via structural equation modeling (SEM), employing LISREL 8.54 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996).

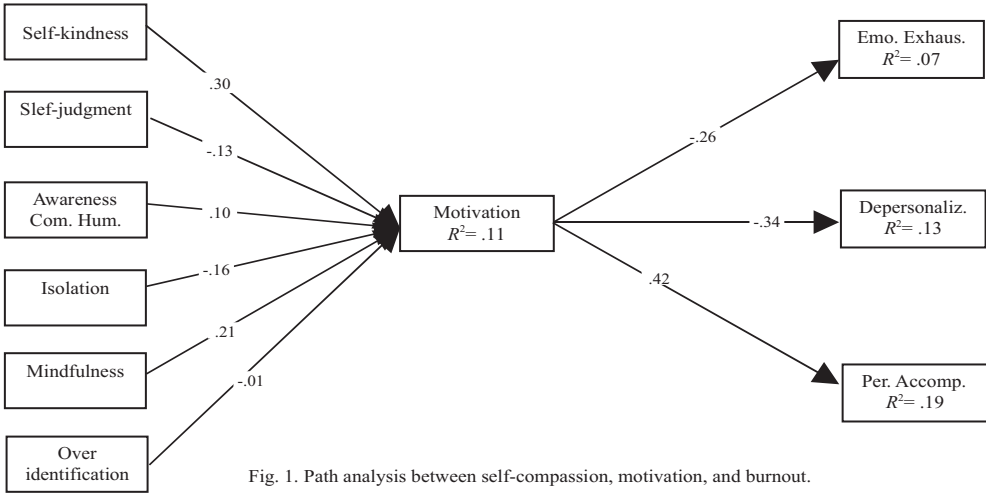


Fig. 1. Path analysis between self-compassion, motivation, and burnout.

Results from structural equation modeling showed that the model fitted well ($\chi^2=34.04$, $df=27$, $p=0.00$, $RMSEA=.027$, $NFI=.98$, $CFI=1.00$, $IFI=1.00$, $RFI=.97$, $GFI=.98$, $AGFI=.96$, and $SRMR=.038$). Furthermore, six dimensions of self-compassion predicted 11% of motivation variances. On the other hand, motivation predicted 07% of emotional exhaustion, 13% of depersonalization, and 19% of personal accomplishment variances. According to this model, motivation was predicted positively by self-kindness, awareness of common humanity, and mindfulness and negatively by self-judgment, common humanity, and isolation. Further emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were predicted negatively and personal accomplishment was predicted positively by motivation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To examine the hypothesis model, structural equation modeling was used. The fit indexes indicated that correlations among measures were explained by the model and that its formulation was psychometrically quite acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The model delineated that motivation was predicted positively by self-kindness, awareness of common humanity, and mindfulness subscales of self-compassion. Also, self-judgment and isolation subscales of self-compassion predicted negatively to motivation. When it was considered that self-kindness, awareness of common humanity and mindfulness are positive and adaptive aspects of self-compassion and that motivation is a positive emotion which drives human beings for achieving their goals and provides them with the necessary drive to achieve what they desire, these correlations seem significantly important. Contrarily, self-judgment and isolation, are means that the individual attributes him/herself for making errors and unsuccessful life experiences and intensively identify him/herself with negative feelings when faced failure (Neff, 2003a). Thus, individuals who scored high on these factors would have lower motivation.

On the other hand while motivation predicted emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in a negative way, personal accomplishment was predicted positively by motivation. Most studies have shown that motivation is a stronger influence on productivity than any other factor (Boehm, 1981) and that burnout has negative consequences for the individuals. Therefore it can be said that findings from this study which indicated that there are negative relationships between motivation and burnout seem not surprising.

However, there are a number of limitations to our conclusions. Firstly, the generalizability of our results is constrained by the fact that we studied only with police chief candidates. Moreover, because this research intended to build a model rather than test a model that already exists, findings from the research are of explanatory characteristics.

REFERENCES

- Akın, Ü., Akın, A., & Abacı, R. (2007). Öz-duyarlık Ölçeği: Geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalışması. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 33, 1-10.
- Boehm, B. W. (1981). *Software engineering economics*. Advances in computing science and technology series. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M. (1991). Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. In Steers, R.M. & Porter, L.W. (Eds.) *Motivation and work behavior* (pp. 44-58), New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Ergin, C. (1992). Doktor ve hemşirelerde tükenmişlik ve Maslach Tükenmişlik Ölçeği'nin uyarlanması, VII. Ulusal Psikoloji Kongresi Bilimsel Çalışmaları, Ankara: Türk Psikologlar Derneği Yayınları, 143-154.
- Gunaratana, V. H. (1993). *Sati. In mindfulness in plain English*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.
- Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structural analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6, 1-55.
- Joreskog, K. G., & Sorbom, D. (1996). *LISREL 8 reference guide*. Lincolnwood, IL: Scientific Software International.
- Martin, J. R. (1997). Mindfulness: A proposed common factor. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 7, 291-312.
- Maslach, C. & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Occupational Behavior*, 2, 99-113.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (1997). The truth about burnout. *Journal of Occupational Behavior*, 2, 99-115.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. A., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 2, 397-422.
- Neff, K. D. (in press). Self-Compassion. In M. R. Leary & R. H. Hoyle (Eds.), *Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior*. Guilford Press.
- Neff, K. D. (2003a). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and Identity*, 2(2), 85-102.
- Neff, K. D. (2003b). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2(3), 223-250.
- Neff, K. D., Hsieh, Y., & DeJitterat, K. (2005). Self-compassion, achievement goals, and coping with academic failure. *Self and Identity*, 4, 263-287.
- Nisker, W. (1998). Mindfulness: The opposable thumb of consciousness (Chapter 3). In *Buddha's nature: A practical guide to discovering your place in the cosmos* (pp. 26-30). New York: Bantam Books.
- Onur, V. (1998). Yeterliye dayalı lider yetiştirme programının etkililiği. Marmara Üniversitesi, Yayınlanmamış doktora tezi.
- Rosenberg, L. (1999). Breathing with the body (Chapter 1). In *Breath by breath: The liberating practice of insight meditation* (pp. 10-39). Boston: Shambala.
- Shirom, A. (1989). Burnout in work organizations. In C. L. Cooper and I. Robertson (Eds.), *International Review of Industrial Psychology* (pp. 26-48). Wiley.