



## Impact of Psychological Flourishing and Self-Compassion on Emotional Experiences among Female University Students in Saudi Arabia

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### Abstract:

This study investigated how psychological flourishing and self-compassion influence the emotional experiences of university students, recognizing their crucial roles in supporting mental well-being and resilience during the challenging transition to university life. The research focused on 390 female students aged 18 to 22 from a Saudi university, representing programs such as computer science, tourism and hospitality, and administrative science. Researchers employed validated measures—the psychological flourishing scale, self-compassion scale, and emotional experiences scale—and conducted statistical analyses, including regression and correlation analyses, to examine the relationship between these variables. The results demonstrated statistically significant positive associations between both psychological flourishing and self-compassion with students' emotional experiences. Furthermore, the interaction of psychological flourishing and self-compassion was found to significantly impact emotional experiences. Regression analysis confirmed that these factors jointly and individually help explain variations in students' emotional experiences. The study highlights the importance of fostering psychological flourishing and self-compassion in university settings and suggests that targeted interventions incorporating these elements could enhance students' emotional regulation and overall well-being.

**Keywords:** psychological flourishing, self-compassion, emotional experiences, well-being, mental health

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## تأثير الازدھار النفسي والرحمة بالذات على الخبرات الانفعالية لدى طالبات الجامعات في المملكة العربية السعودية

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### الملخص:

ترکز هذه الدراسة على أهمية فهم تأثير الازدھار النفسي والرحمة بالذات على الخبرات الانفعالية لدى طلاب الجامعات، إذ تبرز أهميّتها في دعم الصحة النفسيّة وتعزيز القدرة على الصمود خلال الفترات الانتقالية الصعبة. استهدفت الدراسة 390 طالبة سعودية تتراوح أعمارهن بين 18 و 22 عاماً من تخصصات مختلفة مثل علوم الحاسوب والسياحة والضيافة والعلوم الإدارية. استخدمت الدراسة ثلاثة مقاييس هي: الازدھار النفسي، الرحمة بالذات، والخبرات الانفعالية، بالإضافة إلى تطبيق تحليلات إحصائية شملت الارتباط والانحدار لفحص العلاقات بين المتغيرات. أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الازدھار النفسي والخبرات الانفعالية، وكذلك بين الرحمة بالذات والخبرات الانفعالية. كما اتضح أن تفاعل الازدھار النفسي مع الرحمة بالذات تأثير قوي على الخبرات الانفعالية لدى الطالبات. أكدت تحليلات الانحدار أهمية الازدھار النفسي والرحمة بالذات في تفسير الاختلاف في الخبرات الانفعالية. وتبرز هذه النتائج ضرورة إدراج هذين العاملين في برامج الدعم وتدخلات تعزيز الصحة النفسية لطلاب الجامعات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الازدھار النفسي، الرحمة بالذات، الخبرات الانفعالية، الرفاهية، الصحة النفسية.

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout life, individuals strive for stability, seeking a life free from difficulties and pressures. Once they achieve this sense of stability, it becomes essential to maintain it as long as possible. To navigate challenges and recover from setbacks, individuals require psychological strength - often referred to as flourishing. This state of flourishing represents a form of positive mental health, characterized by a blend of emotions that support overall well-being.

In other words, psychological flourishing is a mixture of feelings that function well on behalf of the individual (Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi & Biswas-Diener, 2010). The psychological flourishing model, designed by Diener et al.(2010), is the first model of psychological flourishing, for it was enriched by the field of psychological well-being. It added the dimension of psychological flourishing to the dimensions of psychological well-being. According to this model, the dimension of psychological flourishing stipulates that the individual owns a meaningful life, positive relationships, involvement, emotional competence, self-esteem, and optimism.

As a central theme in positive psychology, flourishing has garnered significant scholarly attention. Flourishing is one of the most important topics of positive psychology that has occupied scholars recently. According to Bakracheva (2020: 96), psychological flourishing refers mainly to self-reflection, the quest for well-being, optimal performance, self-realization, health, and positive feelings towards family, friends, and children. Flourishing is interpreted primarily in terms of the total happiness and satisfaction with life. In an increasingly competitive society, where individuals often compare themselves to one another, the risk of emotional distress escalates.

To mitigate this suffering, psychologists have turned their focus to self-compassion - a vital strategy for fostering resilience and training the compassionate mind to alleviate stress and levels of self-loathing, anxiety, and depression for better mental health (Baer, et al, (2019); Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007). Self-compassion involves treating oneself with kindness during times of difficulty and recognizing that suffering is a shared human experience (Neff, 2003). This three-dimensional model contrasted self-kindness with self-judgment and emphasized awareness of common humanity with isolation and rationality with over-identification (Neff, 2003). Self-compassion has been determined to be closely linked to psychological flourishing, offering numerous benefits for mental health and social interactions across diverse cultures (Galante, Galante, Bekkers & Gallacher, 2019).

Recently, a scholarly interest in the term psychological flourishing has emerged. It is uncontroversial to claim that there was a correlation between the term and many positive psychological variables among individuals in general and students in particular. For example, Gunnell et al. (2017); Durkin et al. (2016); and



MacNeal-Harris (2020) conducted a correlation between self-compassion and psychological flourishing among students. Both studies confirmed a positive correlation between self-compassion and psychological flourishing. Akin (2015) also conducted research on self-compassion and psychological flourishing. The study found a positive relationship between both variables among students. It was also found that students with frequent positive emotional experiences in educational environments are more likely to flourish psychologically (Diener, Helliwell & Kahneman, 2010). Emotional experiences - both positive (such as joy and satisfaction) and negative (such as sadness and anxiety) - play a crucial role in shaping an individual's overall well-being. Understanding these emotional dynamics is essential for fostering psychological flourishing in students.

Diener et al. (2010) define positive and negative emotional experiences as a set of general and individual emotional experiences that reflect the person's feelings in different situations regardless of his culture. The model of Diener et al. (2010) of positive and negative emotional experiences is one of the refreshingly newly designed models for evaluating a wide range of negative and positive emotional experiences. The model consists of two aspects of emotional experiences: negative and positive emotional experiences. Scholars have found a link between negative and positive emotional experiences, on the one hand, and psychological flourishing among students, on the other. (Silva & Caetano, 2013).

Moreover, self-compassion has been associated with enhanced social support and the availability of positive emotional experiences within educational environments and broader social contexts (Akin & Eroglu, 2020). Numerous studies have demonstrated the relationship between self-compassion and emotional experiences among students, underscoring its importance in promoting mental health and well-being (Schellenberg, Bailis & Mosewich, 2016; Barnett & Flores, 2016; Farnsworth et al. 2016; Maraldo, Zhou, Dowling & Vander, 2016; Manavipour & Saeedian, 2016; Tanaka, Wekerle, Schmuck & Paglia-Boak, 2019, and Cunha, Xavier & Castilho, 2016).

By exploring the interplay between psychological flourishing and self-compassion, this study aims to provide valuable insights into how these factors influence emotional experiences among university students. Addressing these elements is not just beneficial; it is essential for cultivating a healthier academic environment that supports student resilience and overall quality of life.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

The university phase is a pivotal stage in the student's life for it determines his/her future. To successfully pass this stage, the student must exert effort and perseverance to bear the burdens of study and university requirements and challenge the pressures of daily life and other responsibilities, such as preparing himself/herself to be fully independent of the family and seeking an independent job. Therefore, the student



needs psychological strength to provide him with energy in moments of weakness, namely, flourishing. Therefore, positive psychology seeks to probe the virtues that help individuals enjoy life by reaching psychological flourishing.

After reviewing the literature, the researcher found that there were no Arabic or foreign studies that addressed the subject of psychological flourishing, self-compassion, and positive and negative emotional experiences combined, and the scarcity of foreign studies that dealt with each three variables separately. The researcher found only the study of Akin (2015) on psychological flourishing and self-compassion, and the study of Silva & Caetano (2013) and Diener, et al. (2010) on psychological flourishing and negative and positive emotional experiences. A few foreign studies have also suggested investigating the connection between psychological flourishing and self-compassion, such as Gunnell et al. (2017); Yang et al. (2016); Sun et al. (2016); Mansfield et al. (2019); Brown et al. (2020). Moreover, a few studies have suggested the relationship between self-compassion and positive and negative emotional experiences, such as Barnett & Flores (2016) and Farnsworth et al. (2016).

In addition, the researcher found that there are no studies that proposed interactions among psychological flourishing, self-compassion, and positive and negative emotional experiences. This moved the researcher to explore the impact of the interaction of both psychological flourishing and self-compassion on predicting the emotional experiences of these variables to determine their nature and prove the proposed hypotheses experimentally. Such findings, on the one hand, support the importance of exploring the interaction of study variables in the Saudi environment among university students. On the other hand, the university stage requires the need to deal with students with a compassionate mind and provide them with positive emotional experiences to achieve psychological flourishing. Therefore, exploring these variables among university students seems a must. The researcher found that most studies that dealt with psychological flourishing, self-compassion, and positive and negative emotional experiences used samples from the university stage for their vitality.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the correlation between emotional experiences and psychological flourishing among the study sample?
2. How does self-compassion correlate with the emotional experience of the study sample?
3. Is there a significant effect of the interaction of both psychological flourishing and self-compassion on the emotional experiences among the study sample?
4. Do the variables of psychological flourishing and self-compassion contribute to predicting the emotional experiences among the study sample?



## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. There is a statistically significant correlation between emotional experiences and psychological flourishing among the study sample.
2. There is a statistically significant correlation between emotional experiences and self-compassion in the study sample.
3. There is a significant effect of the interaction of both psychological flourishing and self-compassion on the emotional experiences of the study sample.
4. The variables of psychological flourishing and self-compassion contribute to predicting the emotional experiences among the study sample.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The present research aims to:

1. Explain the correlations between the variables of psychological flourishing, self-compassion, and emotional experiences of the study population.
2. Understand and interpret the interaction of psychological flourishing and compassion in particular on the emotional experiences among the study sample.
3. Determine the significance of the regression coefficient to predict emotional experiences through psychological flourishing and self-compassion.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current research is essentially important for:

1. It focused on important variables in the field of positive psychology - psychological flourishing, self-compassion, and emotional experiences - and their impact on the student's personality and academic future.
2. It increases cognitive construction by deciphering the relationship between psychological flourishing, self-compassion, and emotional experiences.
3. The study addresses variables related to the level of mental health (psychological flourishing and self-compassion), for its significance for individuals, especially university students. Such variables play a role in achieving psychological and social harmony and dealing positively with the self when it goes through unpleasant and painful experiences. When the student is conscious, compassionate, and emotionally balanced, he can manage his life, negotiate its pressures and problems, and achieve success in his future.
4. It draws attention to the importance of the role of psychological flourishing and self-compassion in protecting university students from the impact of stress, frustrating situations, and traumatic events.



Additionally, it makes them more psychologically balanced and more adaptive, which improves their mental health.

5. The results of the study offer guidance and therapeutic programs for the development of self-compassion and psychological flourishing among university students to improve positive emotional experiences and reduce negative emotional experiences by their abilities.
6. The study provides an educational environment with positive emotional experiences among university students to improve their self-compassion and psychological flourishing.

#### RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

**Sample characteristics:** The study likely focused on a specific group of female university students, which may limit generalizability to males, other age groups, or non-student populations.

**Geographic and cultural constraints:** The study was conducted in a single university; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to students in different cultural or geographic contexts.

**Cross-sectional design:** A cross-sectional approach was used, which provided a snapshot at one point in time, limiting generalizability across different time periods or developmental stages.

**Academic discipline specificity:** The emotional experiences of students may vary across different academic disciplines, potentially limiting generalizability across all university programs.

#### RESEARCH TERMINOLOGY

##### **Psychological flourishing:**

It is, according to (Rizk, 2020), a psychological structure consisting of several dimensions, namely, the emotional dimension (a decrease in negative feelings and a rise in positive feelings, and life satisfaction), the personal dimension (self-acceptance, personal growth, purposeful life, environmental empowerment, independence, and positive relationships with others), the social dimension (community acceptance, a sense of community growth, societal contribution, bonding with society, social integration), and the spiritual dimension (manifestations of religiosity and spiritual sublimation).

Procedurally, psychological flourishing is defined as the outcome of the individual's responses to his judgments about his positive feelings in the aspects of psychological, emotional, personal, social, and spiritual flourishing as measured by the scores of the four sub-dimensions of the psychological flourishing scale.

##### **Self-compassion:**

As conceptualized by Neff (2003), self-compassion is a positive mental disposition toward oneself, in painful situations or in situations of failure that involves self-kindness, lack of strong criticism, understanding its experiences, and processing painful feelings consciously with an open mind (Neff, 2003).



### Emotional experiences:

Diener, Helliwell & Kahneman (2010) define it as a common set of positive and negative emotional experiences of university students regardless of the origin of the participants and their culture

### METHODS

The findings of the present study were determined by the response of the individuals on the scales prepared for their purposes and the statistical methods. It follows that the researcher presented the study methodology, sample, tools, and procedures.

#### Research Methodology

The current study was based on the descriptive analytical method due to its suitability to the nature and objectives of the study, and this was carried out through cross-sectional design.

#### Study Sample

A random sampling technique was applied.

A. The sample of psychometric characteristics of research tools: The survey sample consisted of 310 female students from a university in Saudi Arabia, specializations of computer science programs (programming/information technology/multimedia), tourism and hospitality programs (tourism management/culinary arts/hospitality management), and administrative science programs (office management/marketing) to calculate the psychometric characteristics of the study scales (psychological flourishing, self-compassion, emotional experiences).

B. The main sample consisted of 390 female students randomly selected from a university in Saudi Arabia, specializations in computer science programs (programming/information technology/multimedia), tourism and hospitality programs (tourism management/culinary arts/hospitality management), and administrative science programs (office management/marketing), with an average age of 19.22 years and a standard deviation of 0.99 years. The main sample did not include any of the members of the survey sample. The data from this sample were used to verify the study hypothesis.

#### Research Tools

The present study used the following tools:

##### 1. The scale of psychological flourishing (prepared by the researcher)

The psychometric properties of the scale were verified according to the following steps:

###### A. Internal consistency of the scale

The value of the internal consistency of the items of the scale was estimated by finding the value of the linear correlation coefficient between the item degree and the overall degree of the scale. The correlation



coefficients' values varied between 0.651 and 0.852. The values of the correlation coefficients of the items were significant at 0.01.

### B. Validity of the psychological flourishing scale

The scale was presented to seven university professors, two Saudis and five Arabs. Amendments were made according to their views. Additionally, the value of the scale's validity coefficient was calculated in the following ways:

#### (1) Exploratory Factor analysis of the Psychological Flourishing Scale:

The researcher conducted the exploratory factor analysis of the items on the scale. The researcher followed a set of basic steps in the exploratory factor analysis in the manner of the basic components. These are:

- a. Ensuring the adequacy of the sample for the factor analysis by reviewing the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests, where the value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy test was 0.796, and Bartlett's sphericity test was significant at 0.001. This indicates the adequacy of the sample to conduct the exploratory factor analysis.
- b. Ensuring that all the commonalities' coefficients of the items exceed or equal 0.05, as the values of the commonalities coefficients of the items ranged between 0.511 and 0.823. Hence, no item was deleted or re-analyzed.
- c. Through the diagonal cell matrix, the researcher ensured that all diagonal cell values ( $X_{ii}$ ) exceed or are equal to 0.05.

After confirming the results of previous tests, the researcher ensured the possibility of conducting a factor analysis for the scale. The results of the analysis revealed the presence of (8) factors that interpreted (57.2%) of the variation in the scores of the study sample. The researcher then reviewed the diagram of the scree plot to determine the number of factors according to which the rotation process can be carried out. After checking the shape of the drawing and ensuring that there are (6) clear factors on the drawing, the researcher carried out the rotation using the varimax method on (5) factors. For the rotation process, the researcher considered some criteria, namely, the saturation criterion is three times the single factor saturation criterion, that is, 1 at least, and the single factor saturation criterion is equal to at least 0.35. Accordingly, the researcher rotated five factors, where the structure of two factors consisting of six factors was able to explain 47.874% of the percentage of the variance of the sample. The three factors are manifested as the following:

#### The first factor

It was noted that the statements of the first dimension were related to positive feelings such as an individual's high level of satisfaction, pleasure, warmth, euphoria, joy, and love. It is worth noting that the



saturation values of the statements of this dimension ranged from 0.412 and 0.602. This dimension was interpreted by 13.111 of the total variance of the sample scores.

#### **The second factor**

It was noted that the statements of the second dimension were related to psychological integration such as the individual's complete absorption in the beloved tasks, his preoccupation with his thinking, and feeling when the situation flows so that he loses the course of time and lives in the present time with the full focus on the task. It is worth noting that the statements of this factor are pure ones whose saturation values ranged from 0.360 and 0.713. This factor also explained the value of 11.023 of the value of the sample variance.

#### **The third factor**

It was clear that the third dimension revolved around the meaning of life: the individual's sense of the importance and value of life, his sense of the existence of meaningful goals, seeking positively towards achieving them, and belonging to something such as belief in religions or belonging to a party, family, or others. It is worth noting that the saturation values of the statements of this factor ranged from 0.366 and 0.699. This factor explained 8.99 the percentage of the variance of the sample.

#### **The fourth factor**

It was clear that the fourth dimension revolved around positive relationships: the links between people that are characterized by intimacy, growth, flexibility, communication, and exchange of feelings of love, joy, appreciation, gratitude, and pride. These relationships provide positive feelings. It is worth noting that the saturation values of the statements of this factor ranged from 0.406 and 0.689. This factor explained the 7.66 percentage of the variance of the sample.

#### **The fifth factor**

It was clear that the fifth dimension revolved around achievement: the individual's sense of ability to set goals, achieve them, complete daily tasks and responsibilities, and overcome obstacles to perform difficult tasks successfully. It is worth noting that the saturation values of the statements of this factor ranged from 0.406 and 0.659. This factor explained 7.09 of the sample variance. In light of the results of the exploratory factorial analysis, the scale has a factorial structure on which all the proposed statements of the scale have been saturated. Moreover, it interpreted a good percentage of the variance of the sample scores, which reflects that the scale has an acceptable degree of validity.

#### **C. Criterion validity for the psychological flourishing scale**

The Psychological Flourishing Scale (prepared by the researcher) and the Psychological Flourishing Scale (Rizk et al. [24]) were applied to the survey study. As a consequence, the correlation coefficient between the



students' scores was calculated on the two scales, which mounted 0.879, with a significance level of 0.01. This indicates the validity of the criterion for the psychological flourishing scale.

#### D. The reliability of the scale

The reliability of the scale was established through calculating the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, which ranged between 0.615 and 0.666 for the dimensions. Conversely, the value of the reliability coefficient of the total score was 0.712. The reliability coefficient of the scale as a whole and the dimensions had a fairly acceptable reliability coefficient.

#### 2. The scale of self-compassion (prepared by the researcher)

The psychological characteristics of the scale were verified according to the following steps:

##### A. Internal consistency of the scale

The value of the internal consistency of the items of the scale was calculated by calculating the value of the linear correlation coefficient between the degree of the item and the total degree of the scale. The values of the correlation coefficients ranged from 0.891 to 0.261. The values of the correlation coefficients of the items were significant at 0.01. Hence, the scale comprised 37 statements.

##### B. Validity of the self-compassion scale

The scale was presented to seven university professors, two Saudis and five Arabs. Amendments were made according to their views. Additionally, the value of the scale's validity coefficient was calculated in the following ways:

###### (1) Exploratory Factor analysis of the Self-Compassion Scale

The exploratory factor analysis of the 37 items of the scale was conducted. A set of basic steps in the exploratory factorial analysis was followed in the manner of the basic components. These steps are as follows:

- a- Ensuring the adequacy of the sample for the factor analysis by reviewing the KMO and Bartlett's tests, where the value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy test was 0.785, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at 0.001. This indicates the adequacy of the sample to conduct the exploratory factor analysis.
- b- Ensuring that all the commonalities' coefficients of the items exceed or equal 0.05. Hence, no item was deleted or re-analyzed.
- c- Through the diagonal cell matrix, the researcher ensured that all diagonal cell values ( $X_{ii}$ ) exceed or are equal to 0.05.

After confirming the results of previous tests, the researcher ensured the possibility of conducting a factor analysis for the scale. The results of the analysis revealed the presence of (12) factors that interpreted (79, 1%) of the variation in the scores of the study sample. The researcher then reviewed the diagram of the scree plot



to determine the number of factors according to which the rotation process can be carried out. After checking the shape of the drawing and ensuring that there are (5) clear factors on the drawing, the researcher carried out the rotation using the varimax method on three factors. For the rotation process, the researcher considered some criteria; namely, the saturation criterion is three times the single factor saturation criterion, that is, 1 at least, and the single factor saturation criterion is equal to at least 0.35. Accordingly, the researcher rotated three factors, where the structure of two factors consisting of six factors was able to explain 37.98% of the percentage of the variance of the sample. The three factors are manifested as the following:

#### **The first factor**

(Self-tolerance): It is noted that the statements of the first dimension revolve around some of the self-messages that give the individual a sense of self-acceptance and tolerance in situations of feeling negligent. It is worth noting that the saturation values of the statements of this dimension are between 0.399 and 0.785. This dimension has interpreted 15.34 of the total variance of the sample scores.

#### **The second factor**

(Acceptance of failure in life situations): The statements of this factor revealed the range of feelings that the individual feels in failure situations, in addition to the individual's acceptance of the feelings of failure and failure situations in life. It is worth mentioning that the statements of this factor are pure statements whose saturation values range from 0.389 to 0.799. Hence, this factor explained the value of 12.98 of the sample variance value.

#### **The third factor**

(Positive outlook in life): The statements of this factor reflect the individual's optimistic feelings and positive outlook in life despite the pressure of life. It is noted that the saturation values of this year's statements ranged from 0.402 and 0.755, which explained 9.66 of the sample variance ratio. The results of the exploratory factor analysis showed that the scale has a factor structure on which all the proposed statements of the scale have been saturated. Moreover, a good percentage of the variance of the sample scores has been explained, which reflects that the scale has an acceptable degree of validity.

#### **B- Criterion validity for the self-compassion scale**

The scales of self-compassion (prepared by the researcher) and the scale of self-compassion (prepared by Al-Awamleh, 2020) were applied to the sample of the survey study, including 310 female students. The correlation coefficient between the students' scores was calculated on the two scales, as the value of the correlation coefficient was 0.785, which is significant at the level of 0.01. This indicates the validity of the criterion for the scale of self-compassion.



### C. The reliability of the scale

The reliability of the scale was established through calculating the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, which ranged between 0.712 and 0.723 for the dimensions. Conversely, the value of the reliability coefficient of the total score was 0.803. The reliability coefficient of the scale as a whole and the dimensions had a fairly acceptable reliability coefficient.

#### 3. Emotional experience scale (prepared by the researcher)

The psychological characteristics of the scale were verified according to the following steps:

##### A. Internal consistency of the scale

The value of the internal consistency of the items of the scale was calculated by calculating the value of the linear correlation coefficient between the scores of the item and the total scores of the scale. The values of the correlation coefficients ranged between 0.788 and 0.625. The values of the correlation coefficients of the items were significant at 0.01.

##### B. Validity of the emotional experiences scale

The value of the scale's validity coefficient was calculated in the following ways:

###### (1) Exploratory Factor analysis of the Self-Compassion Scale

The researcher conducted the exploratory factor analysis of the 41 items of the scale. The researcher followed a set of basic steps in the exploratory factor analysis in the manner of the basic components. These steps are as follows:

- a- Ensuring the adequacy of the sample for the factor analysis by reviewing the KMO and Bartlett's test, where the value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy test was 0.626, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at 0.001. This indicates the adequacy of the sample to conduct the exploratory factor analysis.
- b- Ensuring that all the commonalities' coefficients of the items exceed or equal 0.05. Hence, no item was deleted or re-analyzed.
- c- Through the diagonal cell matrix, it was ensured that all diagonal cell values ( $X_a$ ) exceed or are equal to 0.05

After confirming the results of previous tests, the researcher ensured the possibility of conducting a factor analysis for the scale. The results of the analysis revealed the presence of nine factors that interpreted 52.72% of the variance in the scores of the study sample. The researcher then reviewed the diagram of the scree plot to determine the number of factors according to which the rotation process can be carried out. After checking the shape of the drawing and ensuring that there were six clear factors on the drawing, the researcher carried out the rotation using the varimax method on three factors. For the rotation process, the researcher considered



some criteria; namely, the saturation criterion is three times the single factor saturation criterion, that is, 1 at least, and the single factor saturation criterion is equal to at least 0.35. Accordingly, the researcher rotated six factors, where the structure of two factors consisting of six factors was able to explain 36.478% of the percentage of the variance of the sample. The three factors are manifested as the following:

### **The first factor**

(The feeling of emotional rejection): It is noted that the statements of the first dimension revolved around some of the negative feelings such as emotional rejection from others. It is worth noting that the values of the saturation of the statements of this dimension ranged from 0.321 to 0.685. This dimension explained 14.064 of the total variances of the sample scores.

### **The second factor**

(Emotional imbalance): The statements of this factor revealed the range of feelings in different emotional situations, which involves emotional imbalance. It is worth mentioning that the values of saturation ranged from 0.312 to 0.689. This factor also explained the value of 11.529 of the sample variance value.

### **The third factor**

(defective emotional charts): The statements of this factor reflect the set of defective emotional charts that place the individual in a state of intense experiences in emotional interaction situations. The saturation values of the statements ranged from 0.302 to 0.718. This factor explained 10.898 of the sample variance ratio. The results of the exploratory factor analysis revealed that the scale has a set of factors on which all the proposed statements of the scale have been saturated. A good percentage of the variance of the sample scores has been explained, which reflects that the scale has an acceptable degree of validity.

#### **B- Criterion validity for the emotional experiences scale**

The scale of emotional experiences (prepared by the researcher) and the scale of emotional experiences (prepared by Al-Awamleh, 2020) were applied to the sample of the survey study, which includes 310 female students. Moreover, the correlation coefficient between the scores of students was calculated on both scales, as the value of the correlation coefficient was 0.805, which is significant at the level of 0.01. This indicates the validity of the test for the scale of emotional experiences.

#### **C. The reliability of the scale**

The reliability of the scale was verified by calculating the reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha, which ranged between 0.706 and 0.699 for the dimensions. Conversely, the value of the reliability coefficient of the total score was 0.737. The reliability coefficient of the scale overall and the dimensions had a reasonably acceptable reliability coefficient.



## RESULTS

**The first hypothesis: 1. There is a statistically significant correlation between emotional experiences and psychological flourishing among the study sample.**

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the value of Person's linear correlation coefficient was calculated. Table 1 shows the results of the values of correlation coefficients:

**Table (1)**

*Values of correlation coefficients between emotional experiences and psychological flourishing*

| Variables                            | Feeling                 | Emotional | Faulty           | Total   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------------|---------|
|                                      | emotionally<br>rejected | imbalance | Emotional Charts |         |
| <b>Positive feelings</b>             | -0.61**                 | -0.51**   | -0.42**          | -0.66** |
| <b>Psychological<br/>integration</b> | -0.54**                 | -0.32**   | -0.41**          | -0.55** |
| <b>Meaning of Life</b>               | -0.51**                 | -0.62**   | -0.46**          | -0.51** |
| <b>Positive<br/>Relationships</b>    | -0.36**                 | -0.46**   | -0.29**          | -0.49** |
| <b>Achievements</b>                  | -0.40**                 | -0.36**   | -0.32**          | -0.39** |
| <b>Total</b>                         | -0.53**                 | -0.56**   | -0.43**          | -0.63** |

In the light of Table (1), there is a negative correlation between both psychological flourishing and emotional experiences, as the value of the correlation coefficient (-0.63) is significant at 0.001. In effect, this is a strong correlation coefficient. This finding is consistent with Silva & Caetano (2013) and Diener et al (2010) which found a negative correlation between psychological flourishing and negative emotional experiences among university students.

This result can be interpreted in the light of the fact that the higher the psychological flourishing of the student, the lower his feeling of negative effects. The student is characterized by psychological flourishing, the less his feeling of anxiety, despair, frustration, and fear of difficult situations. Rather, these difficult situations may represent a challenge that motivates him to improve himself later. When he goes through negative situations and experiences, he overcomes them by invoking positive emotions and feelings, controlling their emotions, and managing them appropriately for the current situation.

Regarding effect size, this can be considered a large effect, which means that approximately 40% of the variance in emotional experiences can be explained by psychological flourishing, or vice versa. Moreover,



when it comes to real-world relevance, interventions aimed at improving psychological flourishing could have a substantial impact on reducing negative emotional experiences among university students in Saudi Arabia.

**The second hypothesis: 2. There is a statistically significant correlation between emotional experiences and self-compassion in the study sample**

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the value of Pearson's linear correlation coefficient was calculated. Table 2 shows the results of the values of correlation coefficients:

**Table (2)**

*Values of correlation coefficients between self-compassion and emotional experiences*

| Variables                        | Feeling                 | Emotional | Faulty Emotional | Total   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------------|---------|
|                                  | emotionally<br>rejected | imbalance | Charts           |         |
| <b>Self-tolerance</b>            | -0.45**                 | -0.41**   | -0.52**          | -0.58** |
| <b>Acceptance of<br/>failure</b> | -0.43**                 | -0.36**   | 0.48**           | -0.56** |
| <b>Positive outlook</b>          | -0.61**                 | -0.60**   | -0.66**          | -0.69** |
| <b>Total</b>                     | -0.46**                 | -0.61**   | -0.49**          | -0.64** |

Table (2) shows that there is a negative significant correlation between both self-compassion and emotional experiences, as the value of the correlation coefficient (-0.64) was a significant value at 0.001. in effect, this is a strong correlation coefficient. This finding is consistent with the results of Maraldo, et al. (2016) Manavipour & Saeedian (2016), Farnsworth et al., (2016), Schellenberg et al. (2016), Barnett & Flores, 2016), Tanaka et al. (2019). That is the results of studies indicated that people with self-compassion can challenge emotional experiences associated with failure in times of distress.

In line with Neff (2003), self-compassion is an adaptive form of self-relationship, which promotes positive psychological health. In other words, it helps the individual to feel interested, and emotional balance, and therefore it is negatively associated with the feeling of emotional rejection, emotional imbalance, broken emotional plans, depression, anxiety, and suppression of thoughts. Germer & Neff (2013) also state that those who have self-compassion can maintain emotional equilibrium when they look at themselves carefully. This brings a sense of acceptance and equilibrium. Hence, compassion itself is negatively associated with emotional experiences.



Accordingly, individuals with high self-compassion are likely to experience painful self-experience without emotional exaggeration. As for people who lack self-compassion, they are direct harsh criticism at themselves and live in a state of isolation and self-unification. Thus, self-compassion can reduce the intensity or threat of negative thoughts or feelings among university students.

Regarding effect size, this can be considered a large effect, which means that approximately 41% of the variance in emotional experiences can be explained by self-compassion, or vice versa. Moreover, when it comes to real-world relevance, programs designed to enhance self-compassion could be expected to significantly reduce negative emotional experiences; therefore, universities could implement workshops, courses, or therapy groups focused on building self-compassion skills.

**The third hypothesis: There is a significant effect of the interaction of both psychological flourishing and self-compassion on the emotional experiences of the study sample**

To validate this hypothesis, a two-way analysis of variance through design (3 X 3) was used to verify the impact of the interaction of psychological flourishing and self-compassion on the degree of emotional experiences in the study sample. Table 3 illustrates the results of the two-way analysis of variance as follows

**Table (3)**

Results of two-way analysis of variance to verify the impact of the interaction of psychological flourishing and self-compassion

| Variance                        | Sum of squares | Degree of freedom | Mean squares | F value | Significance level | ETA Square |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|---------|--------------------|------------|
| <b>Psychological Prosperity</b> | 2566.99        | 2                 | 1283.49      | 1222.22 | 0.01               | 0.30       |
| <b>Compassion in particular</b> | 3357.67        | 2                 | 1678.83      | 1598.69 | 0.01               | 0.39       |
| <b>Interaction (A x B)</b>      | 2228.37        | 4                 | 557.09       | 530.49  | 0.01               | 0.27       |
| <b>Error variance</b>           | 400.1          | 381               | 1.06         |         |                    |            |
| <b>Grand Total</b>              | 8553.12        | 389               |              |         |                    |            |

Table 3 states that there is a significant interaction between psychological flourishing and self-compassion in the degree of emotional experiences in the study sample, as the value of ETA reached 26%. This confirms that the variables play a role in reducing the level of negative emotional experiences among the study sample.



This result can be interpreted because the variables of psychological flourishing and self-compassion play an important role in maintaining a positive feeling in difficult times. Therefore, these variables have a positive impact on reducing the emotional experiences among university students. They improve mental, psychological, and physical health, and reduce the levels of awareness of difficult and stressful situations. The most prosperous and compassionate individuals in particular are less affected by pressures and tend to use coping strategies to face these pressures and manipulate a sense of self-compassion and empathy with others.

In addition, self-compassion helps individuals to understand and support themselves, especially in difficult situations, and to be compassionate and positive rather than harsh and frustrating. In other words, instead of punishing oneself for not doing something efficiently, one tends to gently admit that one has done one's best. When life's circumstances are difficult and harsh and we cannot afford them, we adapt and support ourselves.

According to Neff (2003), the self-compassion of individuals makes them feel particularly kind in multiple situations of life. They have a great ability to overcome all actions in a balanced manner and avoid irrational thinking. Also, self-compassion increases their keenness to learn skills that help them solve problems and face pressures of all kinds.

Regarding effect size, this can be considered a large effect, which means that 26% of the variance in emotional experiences can be explained by the interaction between psychological flourishing and self-compassion. Moreover, when it comes to real-world relevance, programs aimed at improving students' emotional well-being should focus on enhancing both psychological flourishing and self-compassion simultaneously, and integrated interventions that combine elements of both constructs may be more effective than addressing each separately.

#### **The fourth hypothesis: The variables of psychological flourishing and self-compassion contribute to predicting the emotional experiences among the study sample**

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the multiple linear regression analysis method was used to verify the effect of the scores of the study sample on psychological flourishing and self-compassion in predicting emotional experiences. Table 4 shows the multiple regression analysis.

**Table (4)**

Results of the analysis of variance to contribute psychological flourishing and self-compassion in predicting emotional experiences

| Variable           | Source of variance | Total Squares | Degree of freedom | squares mean | F value  | Level of significance |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|----------|-----------------------|
| <b>First model</b> | Regression         | 320337.53     | 1                 | 320337.53    | 41106.42 | 0.01                  |
|                    | Residuals          | 3686.033      | 473               | 7.792        |          |                       |



|                    |            |            |     |            |          |      |
|--------------------|------------|------------|-----|------------|----------|------|
|                    | Total      | 324023.56  | 474 |            |          |      |
| <b>Archetype 2</b> | Regression | 320,889.89 | 1   | 320,889.89 | 48435.46 | 0.01 |
|                    | Residuals  | 3133.673   | 473 | 6.625      |          |      |
|                    | Total      | 324023.56  | 474 |            |          |      |

In Table 4, all values of the ratio are significant at the level of (0.001), which indicates the possibility of predicting emotional experiences through their scores on psychological flourishing and self-compassion scales. Table 5 illustrates the results of the models of linear regression analysis, and Table 6 shows the results of the gradual multiple linear regression analysis.

**Table (5)**

The results of the models of linear regression analysis

| Model         | Value (R) | Value of (R) square | Value of Modified (R) Square | Change in F-value | Df1 | Df2 | Significance of change in F-value |
|---------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-----|-----|-----------------------------------|
| <b>First</b>  | 0.994     | 0.989               | 0.989                        | 41106.42          | 1   | 473 | 0.001                             |
| <b>Second</b> | 0.995     | 990                 | 990                          | 48435.46          | 1   | 473 | 0.001                             |

Model I (a): The Constant, Psychological flourishing.

The second model (b): is constant, psychological flourishing, and self-compassion.

**Table (6)**

Results of the Gradual Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

| Predictors                       | Coefficient of partial slope (house) | Partial regression coefficient (B) | Value (t) | Level of significance | Percentage of predictability |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Constant</b>                  | 314.393                              |                                    | 426.442   | 0.001                 | 98.90%                       |
| <b>Psychological flourishing</b> | -1.458                               | -0.994                             | 202.747   | 0.001                 |                              |
| <b>Constant</b>                  | 313.255                              |                                    | 452.790   | 0.001                 | 99.01%                       |
| <b>Psychological flourishing</b> | -1.902                               | -1.297                             | 38.707    | 0.001                 |                              |
| <b>Self-Compassion</b>           | -0.460                               | -0.306                             | 9.121     | 0.001                 |                              |

It is evident that all models contribute to a satisfactory degree in predicting emotional experiences, but the best predictor of emotional experiences is model (2). That is, this model is the best regression model



that predicts emotional experiences, which was able to predict 99.1% of the degrees of emotional sensitivity. As a consequence, the regression equation can be formulated as follows:

Dependent variable = constant value + partial correlation coefficient B × independent variable

With compensation in the equation, the best regression equation for predicting emotional sensitivity through psychological flourishing and self-compassion is formulated as follows:

Emotional sensitivity = 313.85 - (1.90) Student's score on the Psychological Flourishing Scale - (0.460) Student's score on the Self-Compassion Scale

These results highlight that there is a high predictive capacity for psychological flourishing and self-compassion in predicting the emotional experiences among the study sample.

## DISCUSSION

The researcher attributes the findings of the study to the fact that psychological flourishing can help reduce emotional experiences by increasing awareness of emotions and the ability to accept negative or positive emotional experiences. The individual's sense of psychological flourishing and happiness can prevent negative emotions by strengthening the establishment of new emotional and cognitive ties. Psychological flourishing also affects emotional processes through responses to stressful emotions by allowing emotions to increase and decrease without the need for an immediate response. Thus, psychological flourishing may not alter the emotional experience, but it supports the elimination of stimuli that cause stress and reduce the response to them. Thus, the individual's sense of psychological flourishing can help the individual increase attention and association with positive emotional experiences and reduce the general level of stress and anxiety.

Conversely, addressing emotions as undesirable, an individual without introspection is more likely to suppress these emotions, which can lead to more negative emotions such as sadness, anxiety, and guilt. An individual who finds it difficult to regulate negative emotions has difficulty accepting his emotions and attempts to ignore them, which makes it difficult to get accustomed to the present time. Hence, emotional experiences arise in the case of low psychological flourishing.

For self-compassion, Neff (2003) assumes that individuals who have self-esteem are more open and aware of their emotions. In other words, self-compassion means that emotional pressures are not avoided but approached gently and understandingly. Thus, negative emotions turn into a state of more positive emotions, allowing a more accurate understanding of the current situation, and the individual's behavior modifies himself or the environment in appropriate and effective ways. Hence, self-compassion is an adaptive strategy that contributes to the feeling of emotional experiences. Emotional pressures are prevented by activating adaptation and improving self-response.



Germer & Neff (2013) expounds that self-compassion is a skill that helps individuals to be aware of their needs gently and take care of themselves in stressful situations, which makes individuals with high self-compassion more able to face emotional experiences.

On the other hand, the study's design likely does not allow for causal inferences. While correlations between psychological flourishing, self-compassion, and emotional experiences were observed, experimental designs would be necessary to establish causal relationships. Additionally, the study's reliance on self-report measures may introduce biases. Future research could benefit from incorporating physiological measures or behavioral observations to complement self-report data. The study does not address the long-term stability of the observed relationships, so longitudinal research would be valuable in understanding how these factors interact over time.

## CONCLUSION

This research examined the intercorrelations between psychological flourishing, self-compassion, and emotional experiences among a sample of Saudi Arabian university students with the following results. The research found very strong negative intercorrelations between psychological flourishing and emotional experiences and between self-compassion and emotional experiences. These robust relationships suggest that both psychological flourishing and self-compassion play crucial roles in reducing negative emotional experiences among university students. The significant interaction between psychological flourishing and self-compassion on emotional experiences underscores the synergistic impact of these two constructs in shaping students' emotional well-being. The interaction explains a substantial portion of the variance in emotional experiences, highlighting the importance of cultivating both psychological flourishing and self-compassion simultaneously.

The two scales developed by the researcher for this study - the Psychological Flourishing Scale and the Self-Compassion Scale - have demonstrated promising psychometric properties in assessing these constructs among Saudi university students. These scales provide valuable tools for future research and practical applications in this cultural context. However, further validation studies across diverse populations would be beneficial to establish their broader applicability and reliability. It is important to note that, while the developed scales show promise, their use should be accompanied by ongoing evaluation and potential refinement. Cross-cultural validation studies would be particularly valuable to ensure their applicability beyond the current study's context. In conclusion, this study, along with the newly developed scales, provides a foundation for understanding and addressing emotional experiences among university students in Saudi Arabia. However, it also underscores the need for continued research and practical application to fully leverage these insights for improving student well-being.



## DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

To address some of the study's limitations and expand on the findings, future research could employ experimental designs to establish causal relationships between psychological flourishing, self-compassion, and emotional experiences. Longitudinal studies also could be conducted to examine the long-term effects and stability of these relationships.

Furthermore, future research could investigate potential cultural differences in the effectiveness of interventions targeting psychological flourishing and self-compassion, explore the neurobiological mechanisms underlying the observed relationships, potentially using neuroimaging techniques, and examine how these factors interact with academic performance and other measures of student success.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have several practical implications for university settings and mental health interventions. Universities could consider integrating courses or workshops on psychological flourishing and self-compassion into their curriculum. This could help students develop these skills proactively, potentially reducing the incidence of negative emotional experiences. Furthermore, university counseling centers could incorporate techniques that foster psychological flourishing and self-compassion into their treatment approaches. This might include mindfulness-based interventions or compassion-focused therapy.

Regarding early interventions, screening tools based on measures of psychological flourishing and self-compassion could be developed to identify students at risk for negative emotional experiences, allowing for early intervention. It is also effective to provide training for faculty members on how to foster a classroom environment that promotes psychological flourishing, and self-compassion could have wide-reaching effects on student well-being. Finally, developing mobile apps that guide students through daily exercises in psychological flourishing and self-compassion could provide accessible, ongoing support.

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