SELF-COMPASSION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT AS KEYS FOR STUDENTS TO WORK READINESS

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Abstract

In an increasingly competitive job market, graduates are expected to be not only knowledgeable but also emotionally and socially prepared to enter the workforce. This study investigates the role of self-compassion and social support as key psychological factors influencing students' work readiness. Using a quantitative descriptive approach, data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 103 fifth-semester students at Pamulang University. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS to examine both individual and combined effects of the variables. The results indicate that self-compassion and social support have a positive and significant effect on work readiness (Sig. < 0.05), with social support showing a stronger influence ($\beta = 0.474$) than self-compassion ($\beta = 0.292$). Students who receive consistent emotional and practical support from their families, peers, and lecturers tend to show higher confidence, motivation, and adaptability. Meanwhile, students with strong self-compassion demonstrate better emotional balance and resilience when facing academic or professional challenges. Together, these factors provide a psychological foundation that enhances readiness for the professional world. The study concludes that fostering emotional well-being and strengthening social connections within higher education environments can significantly improve students' preparedness for future careers. This highlights the need for universities to integrate mentorship, counseling, and peer-support programs as part of holistic career development strategies.

Keywords: Self-compassion, social support, work readiness, higher education, emotional well-being

Introduction

College is a crucial stage in preparing students for the world of work. During this time, students are not only required to master academic knowledge but also to develop non-technical skills, such as adaptability, emotional management, collaboration, and coping with pressure. The modern workplace is increasingly competitive and demands holistic preparedness, not just intellectual ability. Therefore, work readiness is a crucial aspect that indicates a student's ability to adapt to the demands of the professional world (Caballero & Walker, 2010).

However, in practice, many students feel anxious and unsure of their abilities when entering the workforce. Fear of failure, lack of self-confidence, and environmental

pressure often make the transition from college to work challenging. In situations like this, self-compassion and social support are two factors that play a crucial role in fostering work readiness. Self-compassion, according to Neff (2003), means being gentle and understanding when facing failure, recognizing that everyone makes mistakes, and accepting life experiences with awareness and non-judgment. This attitude helps students remain calm and avoid becoming discouraged when facing challenges, allowing them to learn and develop more positively.

Students with a high level of self-compassion typically have stronger emotional balance and resilience. They don't give up easily when they fail, but instead use the experience as a lesson for self-improvement. This attitude is crucial in preparing for the stressful and uncertain world of work. With self-compassion, students can better manage stress and maintain the motivation to keep trying despite obstacles.

In addition to internal factors, social support also plays a significant role in shaping students' work readiness. Social support can come from family, friends, lecturers, and the campus environment. Cohen and Wills (1985) explain that social support can function as a "buffer" that helps individuals mitigate the negative impact of stress and improve psychological well-being. Students who feel supported tend to have higher self-confidence and a more optimistic outlook on their future. Research by Saraswati and Rahmawati (2020) shows that social support is positively related to students' work readiness, where individuals with strong social networks adapt more easily and feel capable of facing the challenges of the working world.

With adequate self-compassion and social support, students have a stronger psychological foundation for adapting and preparing for the working world. They become more resilient to stress, develop self-acceptance, and have a realistic yet positive outlook on the future. Therefore, it is crucial for universities to address these two aspects in their student learning and development processes. Building self-compassion and creating a supportive social environment can be key to helping students achieve optimal work readiness and become competitive in the professional world.

Theoretical Framework

Work readiness is a crucial aspect for students entering the professional world. Today's workforce demands not only academic and technical skills but also mental, emotional, and social readiness. Work-ready students are those who can adapt quickly, possess self-confidence, and cope with pressure and change in the work environment. Several psychological factors play a crucial role in this journey toward work readiness, including self-compassion and social support.

Self-compassion is the ability to treat oneself with kindness, especially when faced with failure, mistakes, or difficult situations. Neff (2003) explains that self-compassion consists of three main aspects: self-kindness, the awareness that suffering is part of human life (common humanity), and mindfulness. Students who possess self-compassion are less likely to succumb to guilt or despair when experiencing academic failure or life challenges. Instead, they are able to accept the situation more calmly and

turn it into a learning experience for growth. This attitude makes students more resilient and prepared to face the various dynamics of the uncertain world of work.

In addition to internal factors, external factors such as social support also play a significant role in shaping students' work readiness. Social support is the emotional, informational, and practical assistance provided by those around them, such as family, friends, or professors. According to Cohen and Wills (1985), social support serves as a buffer against stress, as individuals who feel supported are more confident, motivated, and able to cope better with pressure. Students who receive support from their social environment are more optimistic about the future, more willing to face challenges, and have a positive outlook on the transition to the workforce.

The integration of self-compassion and social support is key for students to achieve optimal work readiness. Self-compassion provides the inner strength to remain calm, realistic, and positive in the face of adversity, while social support provides a sense of security, acceptance, and appreciation from those around them. When these two go hand in hand, students have a strong psychological foundation to face the changes and demands of the working world. They are not only prepared skillfully but also emotionally and socially. Therefore, self-compassion and social support can be considered two key pillars supporting students' work readiness in this fast-paced and competitive era.

Framework

Self-Compassion ⟶
    ↓
Employment Readiness
    ↑
Social Support ⟶
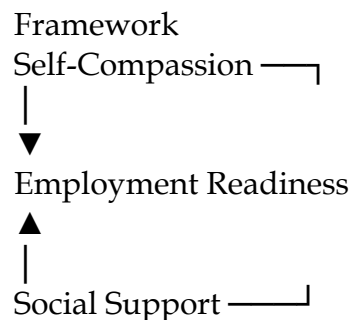
Hypothesis

H1: Self-compassion has a positive effect on students' employment readiness.

H2: Social support has a positive effect on students' employment readiness.

H3: Self-compassion and social support together have a significant effect on students' employment readiness.

Method

This study employs a quantitative descriptive approach aimed at describing and analyzing the influence of self-compassion and social support on students' adaptability toward career readiness. This approach was chosen because it provides an objective overview of the relationships among variables based on numerical data obtained from respondents through structured measurements.

The population of this study consists of fifth-semester students at Pamulang University, totaling 103 individuals. Considering the manageable population size, this research adopts a total sampling technique, in which all members of the population

are included as respondents. Thus, the results are expected to accurately represent the entire population.

The data were collected using a questionnaire developed based on the indicators of each variable, namely self-compassion, social support, and adaptability toward career readiness. The questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents because this method efficiently collects quantitative data from a large group within a limited timeframe.

The research instrument utilized a Likert-scale questionnaire with a value range of 1 to 5, categorized as follows:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Somewhat Disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree.

Each statement in the questionnaire was designed to measure the levels of self-compassion, social support, and adaptability toward career readiness among students. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was tested through validity and reliability tests to ensure that each item was appropriate and consistent in measuring the intended variables.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software through several stages, including validity and reliability tests to assess the accuracy and consistency of the instrument; multiple linear regression analysis to determine the influence of self-compassion and social support on students' adaptability toward career readiness; F-test and t-test to evaluate the simultaneous and partial effects of the independent variables; and coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure how much the independent variables contribute to explaining the dependent variable. The analysis results are expected to provide empirical evidence on how self-compassion and social support contribute to enhancing students' adaptability in preparing for their future careers.

Results

Table 1. t - test

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	12.598	3.212		3.922	.000
	SELF-COMPASSION	.299	.091	.292	3.277	.001
	SOCIAL SUPPORT	.419	.079	.474	5.326	.000

a. Dependent Variable: WORK READINESS

The results of the regression test show that Self-Compassion and Social Support have a positive and significant effect on Work Readiness (Sig. Self-Compassion = 0.001; Sig. Social Support = 0.000). This means that the higher the level of self-compassion and social support, the higher the student's work readiness. However, the influence of Social Support (β = 0.474) is stronger than Self-Compassion (β = 0.292), so that social support is the most dominant factor in increasing work readiness.

Table 2. f – test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1265.344	2	632.672	35.317	.000[b]
	Residual	1594.341	89	17.914		
	Total	2859.685	91			

a. Dependent Variable: WORK READINESS

b. Predictors: (Constant), SOCIAL SUPPORT, SELF-COMPASSION

Based on the ANOVA table, the F value is 35.317 with a significance level of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. This indicates that self-compassion and social support together have a significant effect on work readiness. It means that when both factors are considered simultaneously, they jointly influence students' preparedness for employment. The combination of inner self-acceptance (self-compassion) and external encouragement (social support) plays an important role in helping students develop confidence and adaptability before entering the job market.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.665[a]	.442	.430	4.232	2.113

a. Predictors: (Constant), SOCIAL SUPPORT, SELF-COMPASSION

b. Dependent Variable: WORK READINESS

The Model Summary table shows that the correlation coefficient ® is 0.665 and the R Square value is 0.442. This means that 44.2% of the variation in work readiness can be explained by self-compassion and social support, while the remaining 55.8% is influenced by other factors not included in this research, such as motivation, experience, personality, or academic performance. The correlation value also indicates that there is a moderately strong positive relationship between the independent variables and work readiness. In other words, both self-compassion and social support contribute quite meaningfully to how ready students feel to enter the workforce.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression Test

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	17.820	3.448		5.168	.000
	SELF-COMPASSION	.577	.084	.563	6.849	.000

a. Dependent Variable: WORK READINESS

The results of a simple linear regression test show that Self-Compassion has a positive and significant effect on Work Readiness with a Sig. value of 0.000 < 0.05 and a regression coefficient of 0.577. This means that the higher the level of Self-Compassion, the higher the student's work readiness.

Table 5. Simple Linear Regression Test

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	18.902	2.693		7.018	.000
	SOCIAL SUPPORT	.567	.068	.641	8.393	.000

a. Dependent Variable: WORK READINESS

The test results on Social Support also showed a positive and significant influence on Work Readiness with a Sig. value of 0.000 < 0.05 and a regression coefficient of 0.567. This means that the greater the social support received, the higher the level of work readiness. Based on the standard Beta value, the influence of Social Support (0.641) is stronger than Self-Compassion (0.563) in increasing students' work readiness.

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Test

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	12.598	3.212		3.922	.000
	SELF-COMPASSION	.299	.091	.292	3.277	.001
	SOCIAL SUPPORT	.419	.079	.474	5.326	.000

a. Dependent Variable: WORK READINESS

The results of the multiple linear regression test show that Self-Compassion and Social Support have a positive and significant effect on Work Readiness (Sig. Self-

Compassion = 0.001; Sig. Social Support = 0.000). The regression coefficient values indicate that both variables increase work readiness, with the influence of Social Support (β = 0.474) being stronger than Self-Compassion (β = 0.292).

Discussion

The results of this study show that self-compassion and social support together have a significant effect on students' work readiness. However, when analyzed separately, social support has a stronger influence than self-compassion. This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the importance of external social factors in shaping career confidence and adaptation (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Fitriani, 2021). The dominance of social support suggests that students who feel accepted, encouraged, and guided by their families, peers, and lecturers are better able to cope with uncertainty and challenges in the workplace. Emotional and instrumental support provides motivation, reduces anxiety, and fosters a sense of belonging that strengthens readiness for professional life.

On the other hand, self-compassion remains an important internal factor that helps students regulate emotions and recover from failure. According to Neff (2003), self-compassion involves self-kindness, mindfulness, and awareness of common humanity, which enable individuals to view challenges as learning opportunities rather than threats. Although its effect is not as strong as social support, self-compassion contributes indirectly by improving psychological resilience and promoting a growth mindset.

These findings imply that the development of work readiness should not only focus on academic achievement but also on emotional and social aspects. Universities can play a strategic role by providing mentoring programs, peer-support activities, and emotional well-being workshops that cultivate both self-compassion and social connectedness. In doing so, educational institutions can prepare students more holistically. equipped not just with skills, but with the mental and emotional strength needed to thrive in a competitive job market.

Conclusion

This study concludes that both self-compassion and social support have a significant and positive effect on students' work readiness. The results indicate that social support exerts a stronger influence than self-compassion, emphasizing the crucial role of emotional and practical assistance from family, friends, and lecturers in preparing students to enter the workforce. Social support provides encouragement, reassurance, and a sense of belonging, which strengthen students' confidence and adaptability in facing the challenges of professional life. Meanwhile, self-compassion contributes to emotional regulation, resilience, and self-acceptance, allowing students to manage failure and stress constructively. The combination of these internal and external factors forms a balanced psychological foundation that enhances students' readiness for work. Therefore, universities are encouraged to promote programs that foster both emotional well-being and social connectedness, such as mentoring, peer collaboration,

and counseling support, to holistically prepare students for successful career transitions in a dynamic and competitive job market.

Acknowledgments

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