



This is an open access article under the
Creative Commons Attribution 4.0
International License

PARENTS' SELF-COMPASSION AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD REARING PRACTICES

Iveta Smane, Guna Svence

University of Latvia, Latvia

E-mail: iveta.smane@gmail.com, guna.svence@lu.lv

Abstract

The issue of parents' psychological well-being, parents' ability to recognize their physical and emotional resources, ability to avoid exhaustion of those resources has become increasingly important. In this context parents' self-compassion could be psychological resource for parents to implement positive parenting approaches and encourage positive contact with the child. The aim of this research was to examine whether there is an association between parents' self-compassion and their perceptions of child rearing practices. Data were collected from 203 respondents in 2019. The results showed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r_s = .268$ $p < .01$) between self-compassion and the Positive parenting indicators; statistically significant negative correlation ($r_s = -.214$ $p < .01$) between self-compassion and Psychological control; statistically significant negative correlation ($r_s = -.192$, $p < .01$) between self-compassion and Physical control.

Keywords: *psychological well-being, self-compassion, perceptions of child rearing*

Introduction

Over the recent decades, the science of psychology has paid increasingly more attention to psychological phenomena which help to enhance psychological well-being, direct toward individual and communal growth, help to understand which qualities of human life can impact the ability to transform negative everyday experiences and grow. Scientists have found that an attitude of self-compassion in difficult situations is linked to a better quality of life (Bohadana, 2019). What does it really mean – to be compassionate toward oneself? In the case of absence of an I - I relationship – a self-compassionate attitude toward oneself – people do not realize that they are often the cause of their suffering (Neff & Davidson, 2016). Lack of understanding of the great role of self-compassion in a person's psychological health, improvement of well-being, satisfaction with life and personal growth is a common occurrence in the Western cultural-historical space. In the UK, for example, a study was conducted (Campion & Glover, 2016), to find out how the society understands and how much it values self-compassion. After being introduced to an educational material, the study participants said that self-compassion is a value, and it can bring individual and communal results. At the same time, they expressed an opinion that self-compassion makes them vulnerable because it can evoke others' judgment, so they often avoid it. Therefore, the scientists point out that in order to be able to raise the quality of life by

self-compassion, the view ingrained in the Western culture must be changed: a system of beliefs that accepts self-compassion and its practice should be established (Campion & Glover, 2016; Germer, 2009). Why is it important to talk about parents' self-compassion? The role of a parent brings not only joy, a fulfilment of life, but also great responsibility, duties and challenges. In the Western culture, the dominant social norms and expectations presume putting a lot of physical, emotional and time resources into intensive parenting. Idealized parent standards presume a child-centred parent action model, primarily targeted at satisfying the child's needs, while the parents' needs take the backseat (Lee et al., 2014). Qualitative and quantitative research has proved that perceived and internalized parenting norms negatively impact parents' well-being and mental health (Rizzo et al., 2013). It is important that parents can balance their own and the child's needs, are aware of their psychological resources and do not let them run out, regardless of the source of difficulties in the parental role. Leuven Catholic University (Belgium) started a project in 2015 researching parents' burnout syndrome – emotional exhaustion in the parental role. Preliminary data show that parent burnout syndrome can affect over 14% of parents (Raes, 2018, as cited in Hubert & Aujoulat, 2018).

The present study, via the prism of self-compassion, tried to find whether the way parents treat themselves can impact the way they see and evaluate themselves as a parent, how confident they feel in the parent role and how they deal with challenges inevitably present with parenting. Though the phenomenon of self-compassion is rooted in the attitude toward oneself, it is possible that healthier relationships and positive interactions can be encouraged by promoting adaptive and positive child rearing practices.

Description of the Construct *Self-Compassion*

Describing the psychological construct of self-compassion, Neff defines three components of self-compassion: self-kindness versus self-judgement, a sense of common humanity versus isolation and mindfulness versus over-identification (Neff, 2003a; Neff, 2003b).

The first component, self-kindness, includes the ability to forgive oneself, be emphatic and considerate in the attitude toward oneself, one's actions, feelings, and thoughts. Self-kindness presumes awareness of one's limits, which brings with it the ability to minimize frustration when overly high performance standards are not reached (Neff, 2003a). The opposite of self-kindness is critical, relentless, contemptuous and sometimes even hateful attitude toward one's traits, performance or oneself as a whole (Neff, 2003b). Self-judgment is a form of negative self-assessment where evaluative, condemning, attacking thoughts are directed toward oneself, especially in the context of perceived mistakes, failures and inability to live up to the standards set by oneself or others (Gilbert, et al., 2004, as cited in Smart, et al., 2016). Also, the individual can be unaware that it is their own harsh criticism and condemn toward themselves that might be the cause of their suffering (Brown, as cited in Neff, 2003a).

Another element of self-compassion is common humanity, or the recognition of the common human life experience. It is awareness of the fact that the human experience cannot be flawless, as mistakes, failures, pain and suffering are an unavoidable part of human experience. Own limitations, feelings of disappointment, vulnerability are shared among all humans (Neff, 2003a; Neff & Dahm, 2015). Awareness of common humanity marks the difference between self-compassion and self-pity (Neff, 2003a). Locating own pain as a part of shared human experience, individuals can sense belonging (Neff & Davidson, 2016). The opposite of this component is isolation. People who are less self-compassionate can feel alone and isolated in the event of failure and negative experiences, perceive their misfortune as unique to oneself and feel ashamed of it (Barnard & Curry, 2011).

The third component in self-compassion is mindfulness – a balanced state of mind, openness to the experience here and now, allowing oneself to have thoughts, emotions and feelings without condemn, avoidance or suppression (Bishop et al., as cited in Neff & Dahm, 2015). It is a metacognitive skill of attention self-regulation to perceive one's experience in an accepting and exploratory way (Neff & Davidson, 2016). In the context of self-compassion mindfulness allows the individual to be aware of and recognize their negative emotions that come with dif-

difficulties and challenges in life, instead of suppressing or denying them. At the same time, it is a mindful tendency to soothe and help oneself. The opposite of mindfulness is over-identification, which is a process where an individual is immersed in their current emotional reaction, not leaving the mental space for alternative solutions – other kinds of emotional reactions and the interpretation of the situation (Bennet-Goleman, 2001, as cited in Neff, 2003a). Therefore, self-compassion presumes that by being aware of one's emotional reactions and accepting them, the individual is left in a position where they do not condemn themselves and can seek alternative cognitive and behavioural models.

Neff emphasizes that self-compassion is a holistic construct: all its elements interact and complete one another. The components of self-compassion indicate the individual's attitude toward oneself in three basic dimensions: how they emotionally react to pain and failure (with kindness, without harshness and contempt); how they cognitively assess difficulties (inclusive in the common humanity or isolating); direction of attention and focus (mindfulness or over-identification) (Neff, et al., 2018).

Theoretical literature shows an opinion that individual differences in the ability to be self-compassionate are formed in early childhood and are linked to a child's early experience in their interactions with their attachment figure. It has been found that individuals that have formed insecure or anxious style of attachment with their mother or other attachment figures, who have experienced emotionally cold or dismissive attitude, or childhood trauma, are less compassionate toward themselves (Gilbert & Procter, 2006; Raque-Bogdan et al., 2011). On the other hand, positive, emotionally warm attitude by the attachment figures, understanding and fulfilling of the child's psychological and physical needs, can encourage the child's self-soothing and socially secure emotion regulation system, thus impacting the development of self-compassionate attitude (Gilbert, 2005; Gilbert & Procter, 2006).

To sum up, self-compassion is an individual's emotionally positive attitude toward oneself, characterized by kind and accepting attitude toward oneself, a sense of common humanity and awareness of one's negative emotions. Self-compassion includes mindful tendencies to self-soothe while also seeking alternative cognitive and behavioural models to avoid pain in the future. Self-compassion has a positive correlation with different aspects of the individual's mental health and higher psychological and subjective well-being. Self-compassion can be viewed not only as a personality trait but as a skill that can be developed.

Correlations between Self-compassion and Parenting Practices

There are few studies of self-compassion in the context of parent-child relationships. In particular, the interest of researchers has so far been linked to the sensitivity of parents to themselves as a psycho-emotional resource to overcome the difficult life situations associated with the role of parents, to improve quality of life and to raise parental awareness and to engage in positive parenting practices.

There are a number of studies of parents' self-compassion with children who have autism spectrum disorders. For example, Neff and Fasso have found that parents of children with autism, regardless of the degree of illness and severity of the symptoms the child exhibits, are more compassionate to themselves, were more satisfied with life, had higher hopes, and were more flexible in their ability to set new targets for the child's treatment methods and the state of health if it was found that the objectives previously set were not achievable. Higher levels of self-compassion correlated negatively with parents' stress and depression (Neff & Fasso, 2015). The results of the study show that self-compassion can highly impact the well-being of the parents of autistic children. Similar results were observed in Bohadana et al.'s study which concluded that the scale of self-compassion, self-kindness, mindfulness and sense of common humanity positively correlated with better quality of life of the parents of autistic children, whereas elevated self-judgment, over-identification with negative emotions and isolation positively correlated with high stress levels (Bohadana, et al., 2019).

The positive impact of self-compassion in connection with difficulties in parental role has also been observed in studies of parents without the experience of children having long-term

or severe illnesses. It has been concluded that higher self-compassion negatively correlates with parents' stress (Moreira, et al., 2014). Parental stress is one of the risk factors that impacts practicing negative parenting (Anthony et al., 2005, as cited in Moreira, et al., 2016). Under the impact of high stress levels, parents can become more dismissive in their relationship with the child, controlling and not adaptive, emotionally cooler, and automatically apply negative relationship patterns with their children (Guoveia, et al., 2016). It has been proved that parents' stress levels positively correlate with problematic parent-child relationships (Bögels, et al., 2010). Studying connections between parental stress and parenting practices it has been found that parents' stress positively correlates with permissive and authoritarian parenting styles and negatively with the authoritative parenting style (Gouveia, et al., 2016).

High level of parents' self-judgment is a risk factor for parents' stress (Moreira, et al., 2018). Nonadaptive psychological process – self-judgment and self-critical rumination is linked to persistence of perceived mistakes, failures, negative self-evaluation, self-limitation, and negative attitude toward oneself (Smart, et al., 2016). It has been proved that women with elevated self-judgment levels are prone to higher post-natal depression risks and frequently experience issues in contact with their children (DeJong et al., 2016, as cited in Moreira, 2018).

There have been a series of studies about the impact of depressed parents on children. It has been found that parents' depression has been linked to their children's emotional, mental health and behavioural issues, and it is also known that parental depression can impact the parenting practices they implement and relationships with their children (Goodman, 2007; Goodman et al., 2011, as cited in Psychogiou et al., 2016). A longitudinal study involving mothers and fathers with a history of depression, one or repeated episodes, found that parents who are more self-compassionate used healthier and more adaptive coping strategies to overcome the impact of children's negative emotions. It was concluded that mothers who are more compassionate toward themselves are less critical in the relationships with their children, whereas more self-compassionate fathers reacted to children's negative emotions less stressfully (Psychogiou et al., 2016).

In the context of parenting, the perceived guilt and shame can diminish their confidence in their ability as parents, negatively impact the parents' identity and encourage isolation, dysfunctional parenting practices (Kim, et al., 2011, as cited in Siriois, 2019). Parents' feeling of guilt and shame can be caused by children's bad behaviour or the parent's perceived inability to control that behaviour (Scarnier, et al., 2009, as cited is Sirois, 2019).

Overall, it can be said that self-compassionate attitude helps to be lenient toward oneself in hard situations and balance the physical and psycho-emotional resources in caring for oneself and one's child. Empirical studies show that self-compassionate parents have higher indicators of well-being and quality of life, and they can implement positive parenting more.

Research Aim

To find out whether there are statistically significant correlations between the indicators of parents' self-compassion and child rearing practices by answering the research question: is there a correlation between parents' self-compassion indicators and child rearing practices?

Research Methodology

Sample

The research sample consists of 203 Latvian-speaking respondents aged 22 to 57 ($M=38.7$; $SD=6.9$ years), of which 152 are women (74.9%) and 51 are men (25.1%), with at least one child aged 16 and under.

167 (82.3%) respondents have higher education, 15 (7.4%) have secondary education, 18 (8.9%) have vocational education and 3 (1.5%) have primary education.

Instruments and Procedures

A form including two surveys used in the study, as well as questions on the respondents' demographic data (age, sex, education) was designed. The form was published online at docs.google.com/forms/. The respondents were selected via partially random sampling method – the so-called snowball or chain-referral method. The link to the form was posted on the social network Facebook asking to participate in the study and forward the link to others. The link was also sent on WhatsApp and e-mails asking to forward it. The survey was anonymous, without a time limit, and the participants' involvement was voluntary, without material compensation. The time required to fill in the survey was around 5-10 minutes. 203 questionnaires were filled in online.

Two surveys were used in the study. Data were collected in 2019 (October-November).

To determine the indicators of self-compassion, a self-compassion scale was used (*Self-Compassion Scale*, SCS; Neff, 2003). The author of the scale is Kristin Neff. The initial adaptation of the scale in Latvia was carried out by Liliāna Tamsone in 2015. The self-compassion scale measures the individual's attitude toward oneself in difficult situations.

Questionnaire has six subscales which measure both ends of the three components of self-compassions. The subscales 'self-kindness', 'common humanity' and 'mindfulness' contain statements of positive meaning and indicate the individual's self-compassion, whereas the subscales 'self-judgment', 'isolation' and 'over-identification' have a negative connotation and point to a less self-compassionate attitude of the individual.

The subscales of self-kindness and self-judgment show the individual's attitude toward oneself in difficult situations of life. For example, "I try to be compassionate toward myself (not criticize, condemn, berate, shame myself, etc.) in times of emotional distress"; "I can be critical and condemning toward myself when I experience emotional suffering". The subscales of common humanity and isolation help to evaluate how individuals cognitively assess hardships (inclusive in the human experience or isolating). Examples of the questions in these subscales are "I perceive hardships in my daily life as a natural part of everyday life which everyone faces" and "When I have to battle problems, I tend to think that other people could deal with it better". Mindfulness and over-identification scales can help to determine the indicators of mindfulness and over-identifying emotions. Example statements: "When I fail at something important to me, I try to maintain focus on the goal without exaggerating the negative consequences of the event" and "When something unpleasant happens I tend to exaggerate the importance of the event".

To determine the parenting practices, the Block's Child Rearing Practices Report (CRPR) was used. The questionnaire was translated and adapted in Latvian by Ph. D.Prof. S.Sebre in 2009. The survey allows to determine three approaches to child rearing: positive parenting, psychological control, and physical control. The survey consists of 32 statements. The subscale of positive parenting characterizes the approach of positive parenting, for example. "I encourage my child's independence"; the physical control subscale describes punishment-based disciplinary methods in parenting, for example, "I slap my child with my hand if they have done something bad,"; whereas the psychological control indicators are characterized, for example, by "I think my child has to be aware how much I have done for them". The responses are provided on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 – not at all applicable; 5 – highly applicable). The result of each subscale is created by the mean average of the responses.

Data Analysis

To answer the research question, calculations on the empirical data were made using Excel and SPSS 22. The result analysis was examined using the descriptive and conclusive statistics method in accordance with the key of each survey. The measure of internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha, was calculated to estimate the reliability of the results. To determine correlations, Spearman's correlation coefficient was used.

Research Results

First, to estimate the reliability of the results, internal consistency of the surveys was determined by using Cronbach's alpha test conducted in the SPSS 22 program. In this study, the total indicator of internal consistency of the Self-compassion scale was $\alpha = 0.91$, which is regarded as excellent. The indicators of subscales are also appropriate: self-kindness $\alpha = 0.82$; common humanity $\alpha = 0.74$; mindfulness $\alpha = 0.80$; self-judgment $\alpha = 0.84$; isolation $\alpha = 0.74$; and over-identification $\alpha = 0.74$. The survey of parenting approaches showed these results: positive parenting $\alpha = 0.73$; psychological control $\alpha = 0.82$, which are regarded as appropriate, and physical control $\alpha = 0.65$, which is dubious.

To answer the research question on whether there is a correlation between the parents' self-compassion and their views on parenting practices, Spearman's correlation coefficient was used.

Table 1

Spearman's Correlation Coefficients between the Self-compassion Scale Indicators and Child Rearing Practices Indicators

	Positive parenting	Psychological control	Physical control
Self-Compassion	.268**	-.214**	-.192**
Self-Kindness	.291**	-.195**	-.120
Common Humanity	.260**	-.016	-.042
Mindfulness	.295**	-.101	-.135
Self-Judgment	-.049	.195**	.146*
Isolation	-.184**	.215**	.144
Over Identification	-.122	.205**	.184**

Note. N= 203. ** $p < .01$; * $p < .005$

Table 1 shows that there is a weak statistically significant correlation between self-compassion and positive parenting indicators $r_s = .268$ $p < .01$. It shows that more self-compassionate parents use positive parenting methods more often. The result corresponds with the study which showed that self-compassion indicators positively correlated with authoritative parenting style, which is also regarded as a positive parenting approach. It can be seen that there is a weak statistically significant negative correlation between self-compassion and psychological control in parenting $r_s = -.214$ $p < .01$. It means that more self-compassionate parents use psychological control in the relationships with their children less. The results also show that there is a very weak statistically significant correlation between self-compassion indicators and physical control $r_s = -.192$, $p < .01$.

Table no. 1 includes also the correlations of subscales of the self-compassion subscales and parenting methods. The calculated results show that there is a weak statistically significant positive correlation between self-kindness subscale and positive parenting $r_s = .291$ $p < .01$. There is a weak, statistically significant positive correlation between the mindfulness subscale and positive parenting.

A weak statistically significant positive correlation is observed between common humanity and positive parenting, but the isolation subscale indicators show a weak statistically significant correlation with positive parenting. Since both these subscales are polar opposites of one component, it can be concluded that individuals who do not isolate themselves and are aware of their common humanity with others can implement positive parenting more often. Over-identification, isolation, self-judgment subscales have weak negative correlations with the psychological control scale. Since these subscales consist of inverted statements and display characteristics that are not prominent in self-compassionate individuals, it can be concluded that

less self-compassionate parents possibly use psychological control against their children more often. It corresponds to the weak statistically significant negative correlation of the self-kindness subscale with psychological control.

The obtained results reveal the total indicator of self-compassion psychological construct and its separate components and their negative and positive aspects' relations with child rearing practices.

Discussion

The research question whether there are correlations between parents' self-compassion and child rearing approaches is answered positively. The study results show that parents who are more self-compassionate are likely to use positive parenting practices more often, whereas less self-compassionate parents are more likely to use psychological and physical control, which represent negative approach to child rearing. A similar correlation was observed in the study which showed positive correlation between parents' self-compassion with the authoritative parenting style which is a positive approach to parenting, and a negative correlation with the permissive and authoritarian styles (Gouveia et al., 2016). To explain correlations of self-compassion with parenting styles, the study further examines the resource potentially present in the self-compassion psychological construct which possibly impacts parents' attitude toward themselves and their behaviour.

The study found a correlation between mindfulness, one of the self-compassion components, and positive parenting. The results are explainable in accordance with the Model of Mindful Parenting (Duncan et al., 2009). Self-compassionate parents, by recognizing and accepting their negative emotions and thoughts related to difficulties in fulfilling parental role, could easier achieve emotional balance and peace, thus facilitating the parents' ability to maintain focus on positive parenting practices in accordance with parenting goals and their values.

The study found a correlation between both ends of self-compassion dimension with positive parenting. The subscale of self-compassion, common humanity, positively correlated with positive parenting, whereas the subscale of isolation negatively correlated with positive parenting. A question arises on how parents' thoughts, self-positioning in the common humanity or isolation thereof could be related to parenting practices. Parents' own attitudes towards mistakes can make them vulnerable. They feel guilt and may subject themselves to a destructive sense of guilt that is not focused on improving the situation, but on ruthless self-denigration and isolation. Studies confirm that the perception of guilt and shame in the parenting context can diminish their confidence in their ability as parents, negatively impact the parents' identity and promote isolation, dysfunctional parenting practices (Kim, et al., 2011; as cited in Siriois, et al., 2019).

The study revealed that self-compassion indicators negatively correlate with psychological control indicators. Guoveia et al.'s study showed that less self-compassionate parents implement the permissive parenting style more frequently (Guoveia, et al., 2016).

Prior empirical studies have shown that the parents' low self-esteem can promote psychologically controlling behaviour (Laukkanen et al., 2014). The present study also showed that psychological control positively correlates with self-criticism scale which indicates that psychological control may be used more by parents who are less self-compassionate and who criticize themselves harshly and exhibit low self-esteem.

Long-term stress of parents can encourage parents' burnout, which manifests itself as emotional exhaustion, lowered perceived self-efficacy in the parental role, emotional distancing from the child, and, as prior studies show, parents' burnout positively correlate with dismissive or abusive attitude toward children (Mikolajczak et al., 2018; Roskam et al., 2017). It is possible that self-compassionate parents' ability to recognize their physical and emotional resources, ability to avoid exhaustion of those resources by responding to their own physical and psycho-emotional needs is a source of strength that can encourage positive contact with the child, ability to implement adaptive disciplinary methods, be responsive and emotionally warm.

Limitations

As a *limitation of the study*, it could be mentioned that the data were collected through a self-assessment survey. It is possible that the respondents' evaluation is subjective and does not portray the truth. Firstly, it cannot be excluded that respondents' answers have been impacted by the desire to provide socially acceptable answers. Secondly, it is possible that respondents' answers demonstrate the parents' attitude toward the parenting practice instead of their actual behaviour. It is possible that some questions already direct them to demonstrate attitude instead of behaviour, for example "I think that praise is more useful than punishment".

Since the sample of participants was highly disproportionate (74,9% women; 25,1% men), the study did not analyse data on differences in sexes in the self-compassion indicators. Further studies could create samples of a more proportionate number of mothers and fathers.

Conclusions

Results of the study show statistically significant positive correlation between parents' self-compassion indicators and positive parenting practices, as well as a statistically significant negative correlation between parents' self-compassion indicators and psychological and physical control practice indicators. Correlations of the self-compassion subscales, both the positive and negative dimensions, with parenting practices were also observed.

The results of the study suggest that self-compassion could be an important psychological resource for parents to overcome difficulties and challenges in the parental role and increase the possibility to practice positive parenting. Therefore, it is desirable that self-compassion developing practices and interventions for parents of children of all ages be promoted.

Further studies could explore whether mindfulness and parents' stress mediate self-compassion with its components and opposites on the one hand and child rearing practices on the other.

References

- Barnard, L. K., & Curry, J. F. (2011). Self-Compassion: Conceptualizations, correlates, & interventions. *Review of General Psychology, 15*(4), 289–303. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025754>
- Bögels, S. M., Lehtonen, A., & Restifo, K. (2010). Mindful parenting in mental health care. *Mindfulness, 1*(2), 107–120. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-010-0014-5>
- Bohadana, G., Morrissey, S., & Paynter, J. (2019). Self-compassion: A novel predictor of stress and quality of life in parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 49*(10), 4039–4052. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-019-04121-x>
- Campion, M., & Glover, L. (2016). A qualitative exploration of responses to self-compassion in a non-clinical sample. *Health & Social Care in the Community, 25*(3), 1100–1108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12408>
- Duncan, L. G., Coatsworth, J. D., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). A model of mindful parenting: Implications for parent–child relationships and prevention research. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 12*(3), 255–270. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-009-0046-3>
- Germer, C. (2009). *The mindful path to self-compassion: Freeing yourself from destructive thoughts and emotions* (1st ed.). The Guilford Press.
- Gilbert, P. (2005). Compassion and cruelty: A biopsychosocial approach. In Gilbert (Ed.), *Compassion: Conceptualisations, research and use in psychotherapy* (pp. 3–74). Routledge.
- Gilbert, P., & Procter, S. (2006). Compassionate mind training for people with high shame and self-criticism: Overview and pilot study of a group therapy approach. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 13*(6), 353–379. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.507>
- Gouveia, M. J., Carona, C., Canavarró, M. C., & Moreira, H. (2016). Self-Compassion and dispositional mindfulness are associated with parenting styles and parenting stress: The mediating role of mindful parenting. *Mindfulness, 7*(3), 700–712. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-016-0507-y>

- Hubert, S., & Aujoulat, I. (2018). Parental burnout: When exhausted mothers open up. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01021>
- Laukkanen, J., Ojansuu, U., Tolvanen, A., Alatupa, S., & Aunola, K. (2013). Child's difficult temperament and mothers' parenting styles. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 23(2), 312–323. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-013-9747-9>
- Lee, E., Bristow, J., Faircloth, C., & Macvarish, J. (2014). *Parenting culture studies* (2014th Ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mikolajczak, M., Brianda, M. E., Avalosse, H., & Roskam, I. (2018). Consequences of parental burnout: Its specific effect on child neglect and violence. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 80, 134–145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.03.025>
- Moreira, H., & Canavarro, M. C. (2018). The association between self-critical rumination and parenting stress: The mediating role of mindful parenting. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(7), 2265–2275. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1072-x>
- Moreira, H., Carona, C., Silva, N., Nunes, J., & Canavarro, M. C. (2015). Exploring the link between maternal attachment-related anxiety and avoidance and mindful parenting: The mediating role of self-compassion. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 89(4), 369–384. <https://doi.org/10.1111/papt.12082>
- Moreira, H., Gouveia, M. J., Carona, C., Silva, N., & Canavarro, M. C. (2014). Maternal attachment and children's quality of life: the mediating role of self-compassion and parenting stress. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 24(8), 2332–2344. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-014-0036-z>
- Neff, K. D. (2003a). Self-Compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and Identity*, 2(2), 85–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860309032>
- Neff, K. D. (2003b). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2(3), 223–250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860309027>
- Neff, K. D., & Dahm, K. A. (2015). Self-compassion: What it is, what it does, and how it relates to mindfulness. In B. D. Ostafin, M. D. Robinson, & B. P. Meier (Eds.), *Handbook of mindfulness and self-regulation* (1st ed. 2015 ed., pp. 121–137). Springer.
- Neff, K. D., & Davidson, O. (2016). Self-compassion: Embracing suffering with kindness. In T. Lomas & I. Ivtzan (Eds.), *Mindfulness in positive psychology the science of meditation and wellbeing* (1st ed., pp. 37–50). Routledge.
- Neff, K. D., & Faso, D. J. (2014). Self-compassion and well-being in parents of children with autism. *Mindfulness*, 6(4), 938–947. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-014-0359-2>
- Neff, K. D., Long, P., Knox, M. C., Davidson, O., Kuchar, A., Costigan, A., Williamson, Z., Rohleder, N., Tóth-Király, I., & Breines, J. G. (2018). The forest and the trees: Examining the association of self-compassion and its positive and negative components with psychological functioning. *Self and Identity*, 17(6), 627–645. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2018.1436587>
- Psychogiou, L., Legge, K., Parry, E., Mann, J., Nath, S., Ford, T., & Kuyken, W. (2016). Self-compassion and parenting in mothers and fathers with depression. *Mindfulness*, 7(4), 896–908. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-016-0528-6>
- Raque-Bogdan, T. L., Ericson, S. K., Jackson, J., Martin, H. M., & Bryan, N. A. (2011). Attachment and mental and physical health: Self-compassion and mattering as mediators. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58(2), 272–278. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023041>
- Rizzo, K. M., Schiffrin, H. H., & Liss, M. (2012). Insight into the parenthood paradox: Mental health outcomes of intensive mothering. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 22(5), 614–620. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-012-9615-z>
- Roskam, I., Raes, M. E., & Mikolajczak, M. (2017). Exhausted parents: Development and preliminary validation of the parental burnout inventory. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00163>
- Sebre, S., & Skreitule-Pikše, I. (2009). Parenting sense of competence, psychological control and punishment predicting preschool children's behaviour problems. XIVth European Conference on Developmental Psychology.

Sirois, F. M., Bögels, S., & Emerson, L. M. (2018). Self-compassion improves parental well-being in response to challenging parenting events. *The Journal of Psychology*, 153(3), 327–341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2018.1523123>

Smart, L. M., Peters, J. R., & Baer, R. A. (2015). Development and validation of a measure of self-critical rumination. *Assessment*, 23(3), 321–332. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191115573300>

Tamsone, L. (2015). *Sociālās salīdzināšanas un iejūtības pret sevi saistības* [Commitments of social comparison and self-sensitivity]. Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art. University of Latvia.

Received: July 02, 2021

Accepted: December 02, 2021

Cite as: Smane, I., & Svence, G. (2021). Parents' self-compassion and their perceptions of child rearing practices. *Problems of Psychology in the 21st Century*, 15(2), 94-103. <https://doi.org/10.33225/ppc/21.15.94>

Iveta Smane

Bac.psych., Student, University of Latvia, Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Arts, Imantas 7 līnija 1, Riga, Latvia.
E-mail: iveta.smane@gmail.com

Guna Svence
(Corresponding author)

PhD in Psychology, Professor, Project Leading Expert, University of Latvia, Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Arts, Imantas 7 līnija 1, Riga, Latvia.
E-mail: guna.svence@lu.lv
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8470-1450>
