

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION AND RESILIENCE AMONG BREAST CANCER PATIENTS, MEDIATING EFFECT OF BODY SURVEILLANCE AND BODY SHAME

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Abstract

Introduction Breast cancer is a highly prevalent cancer in females. Self-compassion refers to how we relate ourselves in instances of inadequacy, or personal suffering. Resilience means positive adjustment in the stressful situation. Body surveillance, the habitual and constant monitoring of the body and Body shame is the act of subjecting someone to criticism for supposed bodily faults. **Purpose** To examine whether body surveillance and body shame mediated the relationship between self-compassion and resilience among breast cancer patients. **Methods** A total of 120 women with breast cancer completed self-report measurements of demographic, Self-Compassion Scale, Brief Resilience scale and Objectified Body Consciousness scale from multiple hospitals. Data analysis was performed by correlation analysis and process MACRO to verify the relationship between variables and mediating variables. **Conclusion** The pilot study stated that Cronbach's alpha reliability of self-compassion scale is 0.54, brief resilience scale is 0.67 and objectified body consciousness scale is 0.87. The result indicated that the links of self-compassion and resilience was partially mediated by body surveillance and body shame. Self-compassion can partially counteract patients' irrational perceptions of their appearance and improve their resilience by reducing body surveillance and further reducing body shame.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Breast cancer remains one of the most prevalent cancers affecting women worldwide. In 2020, approximately 2.3 million new cases were diagnosed globally. Beyond its physical toll, breast cancer challenges psychological well-being, affecting self-concept and mental health (Ayub, 2023). Understanding psychological factors such as self-

compassion and resilience is crucial for supporting affected individuals.

Self-compassion means treating yourself gently and politely as you would treat a dear friend going through the same tough situation. Many patients blame themselves for getting breast cancer or for how it affects their lives. Self-compassion is like a shield against that self-blame. Dealing with breast cancer is

really stressful and can make a person anxious. Self-compassion includes things like mindfulness, meditation, which can overcome the overwhelming emotions. Self-compassion is like giving yourself a warm hug during the toughest time.

Resilience refers to positive adjustment or bounce back from stressful and problematic situations. Resilience is a sustainable coping style. It is the ability of persons to have biological, mental and spiritual balance in hazardous conditions (Molina, 2014) Resilience for someone with breast cancer is like having an inner strength that helps them bounce back from tough parts of dealing with their diagnosis, treatment and recovery. Resilience helps the patients to deal with all the emotional ups and downs associated with breast cancer. breast cancer treatments involve changes and many unexpected things happen sometimes, resilience helps to adjust with these changes.

Body surveillance refers to increased awareness and scrutiny individuals have regarding their own bodies, often due to societal norms and expectations. In context of breast cancer patients, body surveillance can be increased monitoring of physical changes such as scars, changes in breast shape and size and concerns about hair loss due to chemotherapy. Breast cancer patients encounter body shame due to changes in their appearance resulting from treatment and therapies. These changes can affect their sense of identity and femininity and leading to feeling of embarrassment.

Problem Statement

To examine the relationship between self-compassion and resilience among breast cancer patients and to determine the mediating roles of body surveillance and body shame.

Objectives

Following objectives are proposed for the study:

- To explore the connection between self-compassion and resilience among breast cancer patient.
- To identify the link between resilience, body surveillance and body shame.
- To find the mediation role of body surveillance and body shame upon self-compassion and resilience.

Hypothesis

Following hypothesis are generated from aforementioned objectives:

H1: Self-compassion and Resilience will be significantly link with each other.

H2: Resilience will be significantly correlated with body surveillance and body shame.

H3: Self-compassion and Resilience will be mediated by Body Surveillance and Body Shame.

Operational Definition

Self-compassion Self-compassion is basically being kind toward oneself at the time of suffering and any failure. (Neff, 2003). It will be measured through the self-compassion scale. The Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) is a tool designed by psychologist Kristin Neff.

Resilience Resilience is ability of a person to adapt challenges of life in positive way. Resilience is a coping ability of an individual. (Psychiatry. 2023). Resilience will be measured by Brief Resilience Scale developed by Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008).

Body Surveillance and Body Shame

Body Surveillance is the assessment of physical appearance to conform with societal expectations. (Health., 2022) Body shaming is action of humiliation or form of bullying on the basis of physical defaults. (anad, n.d.). Body surveillance and body shame will be measured by Objectified body consciousness scale developed by McKinley and Hyde (1996)

Literature Review:

The breast cancer women's well-ness is a critical area of study, with factors such as self compassion, resilience, body surveillance and body shame playing vital roles. In Pakistan, one in nine females are diagnosed with breast cancer. Due to increase rate of breast cancer among Pakistani women the study focuses to investigate the awareness about causes, symptoms and awareness which help in early diagnosis of breast cancer the study conclude that awareness of breast cancer is minimum in Pakistani population. Outreach initiatives can increase the understanding of breast cancer symptoms. (Shoukat, 2023).

Flexibility is the ability of a person to safeguard their mental wellbeing in the face of hardship, like receiving a cancer diagnosis. Resilience mechanisms allow us to reframe adversity so that it can be viewed as an opportunity to grow and even learn. Psychology and psychiatry have frequently discussed the detrimental effects of having cancer. Resilience and self-compassion showed a strong positive correlation in this study, suggesting that women who are kinder to themselves may be able to self-evaluation and exhibit greater self-compassion, possess increased resistance to breast cancer. Additional discoveries studies additionally revealed that breast cancer patients who were more self-compassionate feel less anxious and depressed and improve the quality of life. (Bogdan, 2011).

In different Indeed, self-compassion can assist individuals in sustaining their more efficiently in terms of health. Since this strategy is beneficial, they should be aware of their living circumstances, treat others with common sense, be gentle to themselves, and approach issues head-on without making snap decisions (Terry, n.d.)

The research study was conducted in 2021, in Egypt to evaluate the link between striving for perfection, self-kindness and body satisfaction among women with Mastectomy. A descriptive correlation study was conducted at general surgery out patients' clinics. The study indicates positive correlation between self-acceptance, adaptive perfectionism and body perception. 5 Relationship between self-compassion and resilience among breast cancer patients, mediating effect of body surveillance and body shame.

Moreover, explained that improved self-compassion and adaptive perfectionism had high frequency positive effects on body image satisfaction. (El-din, 2021) Body image disturbance was found to be positively correlated with body scrutiny, body mockery, and less self-compassion. On the other hand, body image disturbance was significantly correlated with less self-compassion. Through the progressive mediation of body satisfaction and body surveillance, self-compassion indirectly predicts negative disturbances to one's body image. (Boquiren, 2013). In 2018, research was conducted in Poland to investigate that Psychological Resilience

is a Protective Factor for the Body Image in Post-Mastectomy Women with Breast Cancer.

The study gives European statistics of breast cancer. The different emotions, thoughts, and behaviors depend on different psychological factors. Improving a patient's capacity for self-compassion may help them feel less self-conscious about their bodies and less shaming for them.

Methodology and study design

A study design was quantitative and moreover correlational for examining the connection between resilience and self-compassion in patients with breast cancer. Questionnaires was employed to measure the variables under study, and informed consent was obtained before distributing the questionnaires. Participants manually filled out the questionnaires. The study was unfolded in two phases. In the initial pilot study, data was collected from 50 participants to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement scales. Subsequently, in the second phase, data was collected from 70 participants for hypothesis testing.

Sample size

Relationship between self-compassion and resilience among breast cancer patients, mediating effect of body surveillance and body shame Sample of 120 female breast cancer patient's age ranging from young to late adulthood.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling and convenient sampling technique was employed. Convenience sampling allows researchers to select participants based on accessibility, making it more convenient to recruit individuals within their reach. Given the intricate nature of psychological constructs involved in the study, purposive and convenience sampling facilitates the timely collection of data, especially when specific criteria are challenging to meet through other sampling methods.

Research Instrument

Three instruments are used in present study

Self-compassion Scale

The Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) is a tool developed by psychologist Kristin Neff to measure one's level of self-compassion. It assesses various components, including self-kindness, mindfulness, and common humanity. Individuals can use it to gain insights into their self-compassion and well-being. The purpose of this scale is to measure and assess one's level of self-empathy. The scale can be a valuable tool for individuals, therapists, and researchers to explore and enhance emotional well-being and resilience.

Brief Resilience Scale

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) is a tool designed to measure the resilience. It contains of six items and assesses factors such as personal competence and the ability to adapt positively to challenging situations. The BRS is a brief and easy-to-administer self-report scale.

Objectified Body Consciousness Scale

The Scale (OBCS) is a psychological measurement tool designed to evaluate a person level of body consciousness, particularly in relation to external perceptions and objectification. It helps researchers and practitioners understand how people perceive and experience their own bodies in social contexts. (McKinley & Hyde, 1996)

Data Collection Procedure

Following ethical approvals, a focused outreach campaign was used to recruit volunteers. Validated

instruments were used to provide baseline evaluations for the objectified 10 Relationship between self-compassion and resilience among breast cancer patients, mediating effect of body surveillance and body shame body consciousness, self-compassion, and brief resilience scores after obtaining informed consent. Structured questionnaires were used to gather demographic data from participants.

Phase 1: Pilot study Data from 50 participants were collected through self-reported questionnaire for reliability testing.

Phase 2: Main study Data from 70 participants were collected for hypothesis testing

Data Analysis

After collecting data is analyzed using SPSS. This method is efficient for getting accurate results for research. The study analyzes demographic profiles, self-compassion, brief resilience, and Objectified Body Consciousness among breast cancer patients, using descriptive statistics, inferential techniques, and comparative analyses. To evaluate the relationship Correlational Analysis was used and to explore mediating effect Regression Analysis along with Process MACRO were used.

Hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 was analyzed by correlational analysis.

Hypothesis 3 was analyzed by regression analysis along with process MACRO.

Table 1

Reliability analysis of Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) (N=50)

	α	No. of items
Self-compassion scale	.636	26

Above table 1 indicates the reliability analysis of self-compassion scale, the value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.636 which indicates the good reliability.

Table 2

Reliability analysis of brief resilience scale. (N=50)

	α	No. of items
Brief resilience scale	.671	6

Above table 2 indicates the reliability analysis of brief resilience scale, the value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.671 which indicates the good reliability.

Table 3

Reliability analysis of Objectified body consciousness scale (N=50)

	α	No. of items
Objectified body consciousness scale	.873	17

Above table 3 indicates the reliability analysis of objectified body consciousness scale, the value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.873 which indicates the good reliability.

Table 4

Correlation between resilience and self-compassion (N=120)

	Resilience R	P
Self-compassion	1.00	.654

The above table 4 shows the result of Pearson correlation of resilience and self-compassion among the breast cancer patients. The value of correlation is (r=1.00) shows statistically strong positive correlation between two variables whereas the p value is (p=0.654) which is >0.05 that means the relationship is statistically significant.

Table 5

Correlation between resilience and body surveillance /body shame (N=120)

	Resilience R	P
Body surveillance / body shame	1.00	0.755

The above table 5 shows the result of Pearson correlation of resilience and body surveillance / body shame among the breast cancer patients. The value of correlation is (r=1.00) shows statistically strong positive correlation between two variables whereas the p value is (p=0.755) which is >0.05 that means the relationship is statistically significant.

Table 6

Mediation effect of a body surveillance and body shame upon self-compassion and resilience. (N=120)

Relationship	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect effect	confidence interval 95% LL	UL	T	conclusion
Resilience Body surveillance and body shame Self- compassion	-.0199	-.0222	.0023	-.0196	.0272	-.4500	Partial Mediation

Above table 6 indicates that body shame and body surveillance have negative indirect effect on self-compassion and resilience, suggesting that the relationship between self-compassion and resilience is partially mediated by body surveillance and body shame. This indicate that as self-compassion increases, body surveillance and body shame decrease which in turn leads to a decrease in resilience.

Discussion

The present study explored the relationship between self-compassion and resilience among female breast cancer patients, with a focus on how body surveillance and body shame mediate this relationship. Previous research highlights the alarming prevalence of breast cancer, with over 1.1 million diagnoses globally and approximately

410,000 deaths annually (Fiza Ayub, 2023). Cultural beliefs and low literacy rates in countries like Pakistan contribute to diagnostic delays (Sulhera Khan, 2023), emphasizing the need for awareness and early detection initiatives. Additionally, women who practice greater self-compassion report lower levels of anxiety and depression (Raque-Bogdan et al.), and high self-compassion combined with adaptive perfectionism is associated with better body image satisfaction (El-Din, 2021).

The findings of this study confirmed the first hypothesis, showing a significant positive correlation between self-compassion and resilience ($r=1.00$, $p<0.05$). This suggests that women who are more resilient tend to be more self-compassionate and can better cope with the emotional challenges of breast cancer. Therefore, interventions aimed at boosting self-esteem, such as forming support groups and promoting acceptance, can play a crucial role in helping patients manage stress and health challenges effectively.

The second hypothesis was also supported, revealing that resilience is significantly associated with body surveillance and body shame ($r=1.00$, $p<0.05$). Increased resilience appears to lower body shame and reduce the tendency toward constant body monitoring. Conversely, lower resilience can lead to heightened self-criticism and vulnerability to societal pressures regarding physical appearance. Building resilience can thus protect women from internalizing negative body perceptions, enhancing their overall psychological health.

Lastly, the third hypothesis indicated that body surveillance and body shame partially mediate the relationship between self-compassion and resilience. Reducing bodily monitoring and negative self-perception can further strengthen resilience among breast cancer patients. The study underscores the importance of fostering resilience and self-compassion through counseling, support groups, and body positivity workshops. Creating a supportive environment and providing early education about breast cancer are essential steps toward improving patients' mental and emotional well-being.

Recommendations

Future researchers can further study this population along with variables such as social support, body

perception and dread of occurrence. This study covers only hospitals of twin cities Rawalpindi and Islamabad further data can be collected from different regions.

The study is quantitative and moreover correlational further research can be conducted on intervention plan and qualitative study can be implemented.

Different interventions and strategies can be developed and this involve psychological support programs, counselling, or educational initiatives to deal with the fear and uncertainties linked with the progression of their disease.

Investigate how these relationships vary across diverse populations, considering factors such as age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and cultural backgrounds. This could provide a detailed insight of the self-empathy and endurance in breast cancer patients.

Conclusion

In breast cancer patients, body monitoring and body shame negatively impact self-control and resilience; however, fostering self-compassion can help mitigate these effects and enhance resilience. By addressing physical concerns through self-compassion-focused interventions, patients can develop greater courage, self-acceptance, and emotional strength. Strategies such as promoting counseling, support groups, and body positivity can help shift patients' focus from appearance to overall well-being, encouraging self-kindness and challenging harmful societal beauty standards.

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