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Research Paper

Cultural and Gendered Dimensions of Self-Compassion among Indian Adolescents: A Thematic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Self-compassion means being kind and understanding toward oneself, especially during the times of struggle or failure. It plays a vital role in building resilience and emotional health during adolescence. In the Indian context, adolescents understand and practice it differently depending on their cultural and gender orientations. The present study explores these cultural and gendered dimensions of self-compassion among adolescents through a qualitative research design. Sixteen adolescents were interviewed about their experiences of self-compassion; the interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis revealed four major themes: Acceptance of Imperfection, Constructive Comparison, Emotional Alleviation, and Supportive Environment. Adolescents reframed mistakes as learning opportunities, used downward comparison to cultivate gratitude, and interpreted common humanity in gender-specific ways female participants perceiving it as emotional reassurance and male participants as motivational insight. Emotional alleviation strategies highlighted a cultural shift, with both genders acknowledging crying as resilience rather than weakness. A supportive environment from parents, peers, and teachers emerged as central in nurturing self-compassion, reflecting the collectivist orientation of Indian culture. The study demonstrates that self-compassion is a universal construct, its expression among adolescents is deeply influenced by cultural values and gender orientations. The findings contribute to a richer understanding of adolescent well-being and suggest that interventions should incorporate relational and cultural contexts alongside individual skills.

Keywords: *Self-compassion, Adolescents, Indian context, Qualitative study, Thematic analysis*

The term Self-Compassion was recently developed in Western Psychology, but the underlying principles of self-kindness, acceptance and compassion towards oneself have been integral to Indian philosophical and spiritual teaching from centuries. One of the earliest sources of self-compassion comes from Buddhism (Anālayo & Dhammadinnā, 2021). The kindness meditation is an essential practice in Buddhism. This practice encouraged individuals to cultivate a sense of deep compassion and understanding towards their own suffering. Yoga and meditation are practices that originated in India and are deeply ingrained in Indian culture (Bluth & Blanton, 2014; Krishnan, 1992; Montero-

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Marin et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2021). Self-compassion refers to the ability to treat oneself with kindness, understanding, and acceptance during times of difficulty or failure. It involves recognising that mistakes and imperfections are a natural part of being human rather than a personal flaw. According to Neff (2003) self-compassion consists of three main components: self-kindness (being gentle with oneself rather than self-critical), common humanity (understanding that struggles are universal), and mindfulness (maintaining a balanced awareness of emotions instead of suppressing or exaggerating them). Unlike self-esteem, which is often based on external validation, self-compassion promotes inner strength and emotional resilience, allowing individuals to face challenges without excessive self-judgment (Marshall et al., 2015; Neff, 2011; Pandey et al., 2021; Tiwari et al., 2020).

While self-compassion is essential for overall well-being, but it becomes more important during adolescence, because it's a stage characterised by significant emotional, social, and cognitive changes (Muris et al., 2019; Neff & McGehee, 2010). It is a critical period when individuals develop their self-identity and self-perception. However, female adolescents often experience higher levels of self-criticism, body image concerns, academic pressure, and social comparison than their male counterparts (Bluth & Blanton, 2014). These challenges can lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, and emotional distress if not managed effectively. Research suggests that practicing self-compassion helps adolescents to cope with stress, regulate emotions, and build resilience, making it an important area of study in adolescent psychology (Bluth et al., 2016; Galla, 2016; Neff, 2023; Pandey et al., 2021).

Current study

Several studies have explored the role of self-compassion in adolescent mental health. Bluth and Blanton (2015) found that self-compassion is linked to lower levels of stress and depression among teenagers. Similarly, Muris et al. (2019) highlighted that self-compassion serves as a protective factor against anxiety and negative self-evaluation in adolescents. Furthermore, Galla (2016) emphasised that self-compassion fosters academic motivation and personal growth, helping students overcome setbacks without fear of failure. These studies indicate that self-compassion positively impacts emotional and psychological well-being in young individuals (Muris et al., 2019; Pandey et al., 2021; Tiwari et al., 2020).

Moreover, much of the existing research has focused on general adolescent populations or specific groups, such as students facing academic pressure or those dealing with clinical anxiety (Campion & Glover, 2017; Gill et al., 2018; Winders et al., 2020). Research on self-compassion among adolescents reveals important age and gender differences (Bluth et al., 2017). Older adolescents tend to have lower self-compassion levels compared to younger adolescents (Bluth & Blanton, 2014, 2015; Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017). Self-compassion is strongly associated with various dimensions of emotional well-being, including reduced stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (Bluth et al., 2016; Gill et al., 2018; Marsh et al., 2018; Neff & McGehee, 2010). Self-compassion appears to be a protective factor for psychological resilience during adolescence, particularly for females (Bluth et al., 2017; Burnett, 2015; Neff & McGehee, 2010; Pisitsungkagarn et al., 2014). Although the importance of self-compassion for adolescent wellbeing is becoming more widely acknowledged but there is a lack of in-depth research on the specific ways that how adolescents develop and practice it. The current study addressing the cultural and gendered dimensions of self-compassion among adolescents because most of the studies focus on outcomes of self-compassion (such as reduced anxiety and increased resilience) rather than how adolescents cultivate self-compassion in their daily lives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

A qualitative research design was employed to achieve the objective study. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling and were interviewed through a semi structured interview protocol. The entire procedure was reviewed and approved by the institutional Ethics Committee (No.- DHSGV/IEC/2024/02), of Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, India before conducting the study.

Participants and their recruitment

The study comprised 16 adolescents, including 9 females and 7 males, aged between 14 and 17 years (M = 15.06, SD = 1.17). Participants were enrolled in Classes IX to XII. The majority of the participants resided in urban areas, while rest of them came from rural backgrounds. These demographic details provided a diverse yet focused participant pool, suitable for exploring the thematic dimensions of the study within a relatively homogeneous adolescent age group.

Table:1 Demographic Information of the Participants (N = 16)

S. No.	Measure	Description	Frequencies		Mean	SD
			In Numbers	In Percentage		
1.	Age	14	4	25.00%	**15.06**	**1.17**
		15	6	37.50%		
		16	3	18.75%		
		17	3	18.75%		
2.	Gender	Female	9	56.25%	**0.4375**	**0.496**
		Male	7	43.75%		
3.	Education	Class IX	6	37.50%	–	–
		Class X	4	25.00%		
		Class XI	2	12.50%		
		Class XII	4	25.00%		
4.	Residence	Rural	4	25.00%	–	–
		Urban	12	75.00%		
5.	Family	Nuclear	3	18.75%	–	–
		Joint	13	81.25%		

Data collection

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, and written consent was obtained from the class teachers of the students for their involvement in the study. This ensured that the research was conducted ethically and gave importance to the welfare of the students. Semi-structured interview questions were prepared to explore self-compassion, with convenience to probe and follow up. Prior to the primary data collection, pilot interviews were undertaken to test and enhance the questions to solicit rich and informative responses.

Face-to-face interviews were held in a quiet and comfortable place that promoted trust and candid conversation. To preserve the utmost depth of participants' experiences, all interviews were audio-recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim. Every transcript was methodically structured and given a specific identifier while ensuring complete confidentiality. The first phase of analysis entailed multiple readings of the transcripts to get

used to the data and see the emerging themes. Data collection proceeded until saturation was achieved, such that no new themes appeared.

A codebook was employed to maintain detailed records of the interview process, including reflective notes on every interview and decisions made during data collection. These measures ensured a systematic and thorough approach to collecting rich qualitative data for thematic analysis. Reflexivity in this study was maintained by keeping a reflective journal to recognise and minimise researcher biases. Integrity of data collection was ensured through pilot testing of semi-structured interview questions. Thematic analysis was carried out, with peer debriefing and triangulation against literature validating the themes.

Interview questions

The following open-ended questions were asked from the participants, which were adapted, elaborated, or used flexibly according to the demands of the individual context:

1. Can you tell me about a time when you faced a situation of failure or sadness?
2. How do you usually help yourself in such situations?
3. How do you remind yourself that it is okay to make mistakes and that everyone makes them?
4. Can you share an experience where you realised that others also go through struggles similar to yours?
5. How do you manage yourself without panicking during difficult times?
6. What do you usually do to help yourself when you feel sad or disappointed?
7. When you feel stressed, how do you understand your emotions and how do you regulate them?
8. Can you talk about any activity that helps you during this process?
9. How do you keep yourself balanced while working toward your life goals?
10. What advice would you give to a friend who is struggling with challenges similar to yours?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data systematically (Braun et al., 2024; Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the initial stage verbatim transcription of the interviews and multiple readings with the note-taking to familiarise oneself with the data were conducted. after finishing the transcriptions, systematically coded the data to identify key patterns about self-compassion. These codes were sorted into broader themes, and respective excerpts were labelled under each theme. Themes were inspected and revised to capture the participants' experiences in an accurate manner Subsequently, themes were named and defined explicitly following close reading of each in the context of self-compassion. The last step was to prepare a detailed report, with examples that represented the meaning of each theme. This rigorous and systematic approach facilitated a meaningful exploration of the internal and external factors that contribute to self-compassion among adolescents.

RESULTS

The thematic analysis of interview transcripts revealed four main themes and several sub-themes about cultural and gendered dimensions of self-compassion among adolescents: Acceptance of Imperfection, Constructive Comparison, Emotional Alleviation, and Supportive Environment. Each participant was assigned a code based on gender and serial

number (e.g., F1, F2 for females; M1, M2 for males). These codes have been used to preserve anonymity while allowing gendered differences to be traced.

Although both male participants and female participants identified similar lived experiences and expressions as well as some gender differences. Female participants often articulated self-compassion in terms of emotional awareness, relational reassurance, and gratitude, whereas male participants described it through resilience, practical coping, and self-improvement. The themes, subthemes, and representative quotes are presented below, with interpretive commentary to highlight their significance.

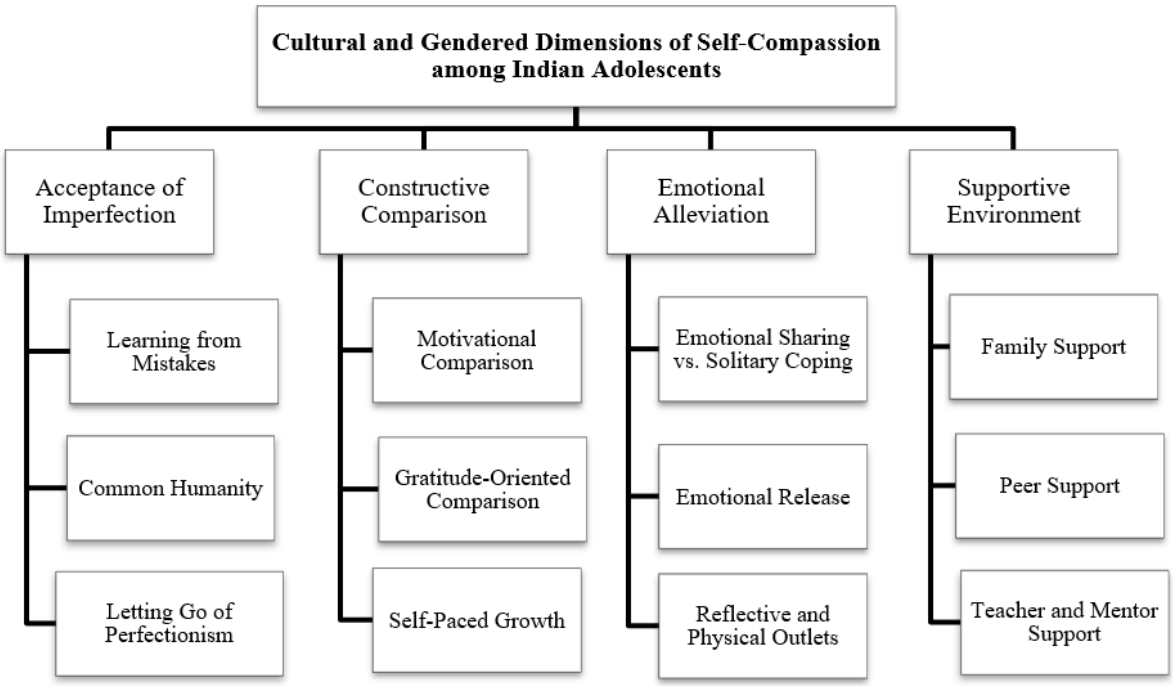

Figure: 1 Cultural and Gendered Dimensions of Self-Compassion among Indian Adolescents

Theme 1: Acceptance of Imperfection

Adolescents highlighted that one of the first steps toward self-compassion is learning to accept mistakes, flaws, and failures that are a part of natural human life. Instead of treating imperfection as a personal weakness, they reframed it as an opportunity to learn, grow, and develop resilience. For many, this perspective reduced feelings of self-blame and made them kinder toward themselves. Three subthemes emerged: learning from mistakes, recognising common humanity, and letting go of perfectionism.

Subtheme 1: Learning from Mistakes

Adolescents frequently described mistakes as essential lessons for growth rather than as evidence of failure. For many female participants, this shift helped them to release guilt and accept themselves with greater patience.

Mistakes are very normal; everyone does it. But if you do something wrong and you learn from it, then it is a good thing. (F2)

This quote illustrates how female participants viewed mistakes as teachable moments that strengthened their self-understanding and emotional maturity. For male participants, however, the same idea was expressed with a more practical and resilient orientation:

Whatever happened in the past is done. I just take the lesson and move on. (M5)
Here, the male participants' perspective shows an action-focused approach, where mistakes were quickly reframed into opportunities for self-improvement rather than prolonged self-reflection.
Overall, mistakes as lessons helped adolescents reduce guilt, enhance resilience, and develop a forward-looking mindset that supported self-compassion.

Subtheme 2: Common Humanity
Another important aspect of accepting imperfection was recognising that struggles and flaws are not unique to oneself but part of the universal human experience. Female participants often spoke of how this perspective reduced feelings of isolation:
It's easier to accept my flaws when I realise that everyone has the same struggles as me. I'm not alone in this. (F6)
This suggests that for female participants, acknowledging common humanity created a sense of belonging and emotional reassurance. Male participants also echoed this view, but their interpretation was more motivational:
When I see that others also mess up, it makes me feel it's not just me. We all have our weak points. (M7)
This demonstrates how male participants used common humanity as a way to normalise failure and strengthen their drive for personal improvement. Recognising common humanity helped adolescents feel less isolated and more connected to others, transforming self-criticism into understanding and motivating them to keep improving.

Subtheme 3: Letting Go of Perfectionism
Several participants explained that abandoning the constant pressure to be perfect brought them relief and allowed them to be kinder to themselves. For female participants, this meant a sense of emotional liberation:
Perfection is exhausting. When I let go of it, I feel happier and more relaxed. (F8)
For male participants, letting go of perfectionism was framed more practically, as a way to focus on steady growth:
If you keep trying to be perfect, you waste time. Better to focus on getting better step by step. (M6)
This indicates that female participants interpreted perfectionism as emotional stress, whereas male participants saw it as a barrier to practical progress. By releasing perfectionist standards, adolescents were able to experience emotional relief, focus on progress, and treat themselves more gently.

Theme 2: Constructive Comparison
Adolescents often engaged in comparing themselves with others, but rather than experiencing it only as a source of self-doubt, many reframed comparisons as a way to inspire growth, develop gratitude, and embrace self-paced progress. Three subthemes were identified: motivational comparison, gratitude-oriented comparison, and self-paced growth.

Subtheme 1: Motivational Comparison
Several participants described comparison as a source of inspiration that encouraged them to put in more effort. Female participants often balanced comparison with recognition of their own strengths:
Sometimes, when I compare myself with them, I'm encouraged to try harder. I also keep telling myself that I have my strengths. (F1)

This reflects a gentle form of self-competition where external benchmarks motivated improvement without damaging self-esteem. Male participants, however, expressed comparison more competitively:

When someone's ahead of me, I don't feel jealous. I think how can I catch up? How can I beat my own record? (M3)

This demonstrates a performance-driven mindset, where comparison became a challenge to test resilience and abilities. Motivational comparison allowed adolescents to transform potential envy into constructive energy, helping them balance ambition with self-acceptance.

Subtheme 2: Gratitude-Oriented Comparison

For many adolescents, comparison also worked in a downward direction they looked at peers or others who had fewer resources, skills, or opportunities, and this gave them both gratitude and a stronger sense of self-worth. Female participants often acknowledged how such reflections made them value their lives more:

When I compare myself with others who struggle more than me, I feel thankful for what I have. (F3)

This demonstrates that comparison not only fostered gratitude but also affirmed their relative advantage, reducing self-pity and enhancing self-compassion. Male participants shared similar sentiments, framing it in problem-solving terms:

If my problem is smaller than someone else's, I know I can handle it. It's all about finding the solution. (M4)

Here, comparison with that worse off reinforced confidence in their own strength and created a sense of capability. Gratitude-oriented and downward comparison strengthened adolescents' self-worth by making them appreciate their circumstances and abilities more, thereby reducing feelings of inadequacy.

Subtheme 3: Self-Paced Growth

Some adolescents shifted away from competition altogether, emphasising that progress unfolds differently for everyone.

Everyone has their own timeline. Just because someone is ahead now doesn't mean I won't reach my goals too. (M1)

This illustrates a mature, self-compassionate perspective, where comparison was no longer about rivalry but about respecting one's own journey. Self-paced growth reflected adolescents' ability to detach from competitive pressure, fostering patience and acceptance of personal progress.

Theme 3: Emotional Alleviation

Adolescents emphasised the importance of managing their emotions as a pathway to self-compassion. Instead of suppressing distress, they developed strategies to regulate, release, or reflect on their feelings. These strategies varied across genders, with female participants leaning toward relational and reflective methods, and male participants preferring solitary or action-oriented approaches. Three subthemes were identified: emotional sharing vs. solitary coping, emotional release, and reflective and physical outlets.

Subtheme 1: Emotional Sharing vs. Solitary Coping

Female participants often shared that connection with others helped them regulate overwhelming emotions:

When I get overwhelmed, I listen to music or I speak to my best friend. It makes me calm down. (F2)

This reflects a reliance on social reassurance and shared understanding. Male participants, on the other hand, preferred solitary coping:
If I'm stressed, I put on my headphones and just zone out. It clears my head. (M7)
This indicates that male participants sought personal space and distraction as a way to regain balance. This shows that whether through connection or solitude, adolescents used self-soothing strategies that prevented emotional overload and supported self-kindness.

Subtheme 2: Emotional Release
Participants described crying as a powerful outlet that allowed them to move past distress.
Crying actually calms me down. It's like I release all my emotions, and then I can get over it. (F6)
For female participants, crying was openly embraced as a healing act. Male participants also recognised its value, though with a more restrained tone:
Sometimes, you just need to let it out. Then you can get back to normal. (M2)
This suggests that both genders saw emotional release as necessary, but female participants were more expressive, while male participants were more private in acknowledging it. Emotional release helped adolescents avoid bottling up feelings, allowing them to return to equilibrium and maintain self-compassion.

Subtheme 3: Reflective and Physical Outlets
Adolescents also relied on activities that allowed them to process or channel emotions. Female participant's spoke of journaling and reflection:
Sometimes, I write my feelings in a notebook when I'm upset. It helps me make sense of my feelings. (F9)
This illustrates the importance of introspective practices in creating self-understanding. Male participants turned more toward physical outlets:
If I feel tense, I go for a run or play basketball. It gets the stress out. (M1)
Here, physical activity acted as a release of emotional energy and a route to mental clarity. Reflective and physical outlets gave adolescents constructive ways to regulate emotions, either by gaining clarity or by channelling tension into activity.

Theme 4: Supportive Environment
Adolescents consistently emphasised that self-compassion does not develop in isolation. Encouragement, reassurance, and guidance from parents, peers, and mentors created a supportive atmosphere in which they could be kinder to themselves. Three subthemes emerged: family support, peer support, and teacher/mentor support.

Subtheme 1: Family Support
Family members provided the foundation of reassurance and motivation. Female participants valued the unconditional acceptance of parents:
My parents remind me constantly that I don't have to be perfect. They make me feel safe and understood. (F1)
This highlights the importance of emotional security at home. Male participants, however, often pointed to motivational encouragement from authority figures like coaches:
My coach keeps telling me I have potential. That makes me push harder. (M5)
Here, family or authority-based support acted as a push toward resilience and achievement. Family support offered emotional safety for female participants and motivational reinforcement for male participants, both of which nurtured self-compassion.

Subtheme 2: Peer Support

Friends played a vital role in adolescents' ability to be compassionate toward themselves. Female participants emphasised emotional closeness and support during difficulties:

Having friends who are there for me when things are tough makes all the difference. (F5)

Male participants framed friendship in terms of loyalty and shared action:

My friends always have my back. We talk less about feelings but we help each other out. (M6)

This demonstrates that female participants relied on peers for emotional anchoring, while male participants valued practical solidarity. Peer support contributed to self-compassion by offering belonging, reassurance, and shared strength in challenging times.

Subtheme 3: Teacher and Mentor Support

Mentors and teachers were described as influential figures who built adolescents' confidence. Female participants often highlighted how mentors restored belief in their abilities:

Whenever I lose confidence, my mentor reminds me of my strengths. (F2)

Male participants highlighted encouragement focused on skills and potential:

Having a teacher who believes in me makes me feel like I'm capable of more than I think. (M2)

This indicates that adolescents valued guidance that either nurtured emotional confidence (female participants) or skill development (male participants). Teacher and mentor support gave adolescents the external validation needed to believe in their worth and capabilities, reinforcing self-kindness.

DISCUSSION

The study findings revealed the cultural and gendered dimensions of self-compassion among Indian adolescents. The results highlighted four major themes that shaped their experiences: Acceptance of Imperfection, Constructive Comparison, Emotional Alleviation, and Supportive Environment. The analysis also revealed differences in the ways male and female participants articulated these dimensions of self-compassion. It is evident that self-compassion in Indian adolescents carries both universal elements, consistent with Neff (2003b) conceptualisation, and culture-specific expressions, rooted in relational values and socio-cultural expectations (Montero-Marin et al., 2018; Ogbu, 1988; Verma, 2020). Gender further influenced these expressions, with females emphasizing emotional awareness and relational reassurance, while males focused more on resilience and practical coping. This study thus provided a deeper understanding of how adolescents in the Indian context construct and practice self-compassion, showing both the shared foundations and the gender-specific variations that enrich the broader conceptualisation of self-compassion.

First theme that emerged was acceptance of imperfection, where adolescents reframed mistakes not as failures but as opportunities for learning and growth. This finding resonates with Neff (2011) assertion that recognising imperfection is central to self-compassion, yet the study adds a novel dimension by showing gendered interpretations of common humanity. Female participants described it as a source of emotional reassurance and belonging, while male participants treated it as motivational insight that normalised failure and encouraged resilience. This difference suggests that while the recognition of shared humanity is universal, its meaning varies depending on gendered orientations toward emotion and achievement. Thus, acceptance of imperfection becomes both an emotional anchor for female participants and a performance-related motivator for male participants.

The second theme constructive comparison highlighted another distinctive contribution of this study. While most literature on adolescent social comparison underscores the negative effects of upward comparison participants in this study described comparison as adaptive when reframed positively (Burleson et al., 2005; Gill et al., 2018). They engaged in motivational comparison, gratitude-oriented downward comparison, and self-paced growth. Particularly the novel finding was downward comparison that helps adolescents to cultivate gratitude and enhance self-worth by recognising that others might face greater struggles. This practice reduced self-pity and strengthened resilience an underexplored pathway to self-compassion in prior research. Moreover, the emphasis on self-paced growth reflected an emerging narrative among adolescents, where life was viewed not as a race but as a personal journey unfolding at its own pace. This perspective points toward a more mature, compassionate reframing of competition in adolescence.

The third theme emotional alleviation further revealed the gendered and cultural complexities of adolescent coping. Consistent with prior research, female participants leaned toward relational and reflective strategies such as talking to friends or journaling, while male participants preferred solitary or action-oriented outlets like sports or music (Bluth et al., 2017; Matud, 2004; Sun et al., 2016). However, a novel aspect of this study was the reframing of crying as a healthy emotional release by both male participants and female participants. While female participants embraced crying openly as a healing act, male participants though more reserved also acknowledged its value as a way of regaining equilibrium. This represents a cultural shift in how emotional vulnerability is perceived, particularly for male participants in collectivist societies where expressions of sadness are often stigmatised. The recognition of crying as resilience rather than weakness marks an important departure from traditional gender norms in emotional regulation.

Finally, the fourth theme supportive environment underscored that self-compassion among adolescents is not cultivated in isolation but is deeply embedded in relational contexts. Parents, peers, teachers, and mentors played a critical role in shaping adolescents' capacity for self-kindness. Female participants valued emotional reassurance and unconditional acceptance, while male participants highlighted motivational encouragement and loyalty. Although previous Western studies often frame self-compassion as an inward, individual practice (Neff, 2003) the findings here suggest that in the Indian collectivist context, social support systems are foundational rather than peripheral. Adolescents drew strength, reassurance, and validation from family and community relationships, underscoring the cultural embeddedness of self-compassion.

The overall study findings indicate that self-compassion is a universal construct, its expression among adolescents is deeply influenced by both gendered orientations and cultural contexts. The results shed light on how adolescents learn to accept their imperfections, use downward comparison to cultivate gratitude, interpret common humanity in gender-specific ways, and even reframe crying as an act of resilience. Moreover, the central role of collectivist support systems highlights the cultural embeddedness of self-compassion in this context. Taken together, these insights extend existing research on adolescent self-compassion and suggest that interventions should move beyond focusing solely on individual cognitive-emotional skills to also incorporate the cultural frameworks and relational dynamics that shape adolescents' experiences.

Practical Implications

Findings of the present study hold practical value for educators, counsellors, and parents. Schools could incorporate workshops on emotional regulation and reframing mistakes as growth opportunities, while also facilitating peer-support programs to strengthen adolescents' networks of care. Counselling approaches might integrate culturally grounded practices such as community-based support groups that resonate with the collectivist orientation of Indian adolescents. Parents and teachers can also play a vital role by creating emotionally safe spaces that normalise imperfection and encourage self-kindness.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. The sample was drawn from a single district, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to explore how self-compassion evolves across adolescence and adulthood. Moreover, cross-cultural comparisons would further clarify the unique role of collectivist values in shaping self-compassion.

CONCLUSION

The study findings demonstrated that adolescents' self-compassion represents a dynamic process rather than a fixed trait. The results revealed that this process takes shape through personal interpretations of imperfection, constructive uses of comparison, strategies for emotional alleviation, and reliance on supportive social environments. It is evident that cultural and gendered contexts significantly influence these processes, making self-compassion both an individual practice and a socially nurtured experience. The study also brought forward new insights, such as the role of downward comparison, reframed emotional expression, and the impact of collectivist values. This research therefore provided a deeper and more contextually grounded understanding of how Indian adolescents develop kindness toward themselves, highlighting both the universal and culture-specific aspects of self-compassion.

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Conflict of Interest

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