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THE INFLUENCE OF SELF-COMPASSION AND LEARNERS' EMPOWERMENT ON STUDENTS' WELL-BEING AMONG TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT
This study aimed to determine the influence of self-compassion and learners' empowerment on students' well-being among teacher education students at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology (KCAST). This study utilized the regression analysis design utilizing correlational technique. The respondents of this study were 233 students mainly from first year to fourth year students under the Academic Year 2023-2024, first semester. The statistical data treatment used were mean to determine the level of self-compassion; the level of learners' empowerment and the other was the level of students' well-being. It also used a Pearson product moment correlation to measure the relationship between self-compassion and students' well-being; learners' empowerment and students' well-being. Findings revealed that students' overall level of self-compassion was generally at high level that means it was oftentimes manifested by the students, while the overall level of learners' empowerment is also at high level of performance which means that it is oftentimes manifested and also the overall level of students' well-being was generally at high level of performance which means that it is oftentimes manifested. On the other hand, the result revealed that both self-compassion and learners' empowerment had high significant relationship on the students' well-being which indicates that the self-compassion may affect the students' well-being; when students have a sense of self-compassion, the students will tend to show kindness, understanding and care towards themselves even in times of challenges or life adversities. Moreover, when learners are empowered, they tend to enjoy what they are learning and that enjoyment will lead the students to a healthier life throughout their journey.

KEYWORDS: *self-compassion, learners' empowerment, students' well-being, teacher education students, Philippines.*

INTRODUCTION
Students' well-being in higher education is under attention, since students' age in full time higher education generally ranges between 17-24 years and this is also the critical age for the onset of psychological problems. In addition, studies report that a substantial number of students in higher education are dealing with well-being issues such as psychological, emotional distress, feelings of anxiety, depression, and an increased risk burnout. Hence, such numbers combined with research indicating that well-being plays an important role in students' academic performance and drop-out rates that leads to increasing attention on student well-being in higher education. Furthermore, studies from various countries have indicated that well-being and mental health of students appear to be under pressure (Lipson & Eisenberg, 2018; Baik et al., 2019; Backhaus et al., 2020; Dopmeijer, 2021).

In Europe, especially in Netherlands, students face diverse well-being issues such as family problems, financial difficulties, feelings of isolation, social pressure, anxiety and stress. According to 2022 Annual International Student Survey conducted by Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg (ISO) in collaboration with the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) and Dutch Student Union, found that 59% of international students in the Netherlands reported struggling with their mental health. Additionally, according to the i-Graduate Global Student Experience survey, found that 35% of students reported feeling "always or quite often stressed or anxious" in 2021, a percentage point higher than in 2020 and four percentage points higher than before the pandemic in 2018. Moreover, an additional 42% of international students are worried they might not be able to complete their studies. However, even when they face numerous challenges such as these, only a modest percentage of foreign student's access mental health services during their studies. Furthermore, student well-being and mental health have become top-priority issues for many institutions in Netherlands (Smitjes, 2023).

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In the Philippines, especially in Manila, the state of mental health among Filipino college students remains a major concern, especially in the context of the pandemic since it has further exacerbated these issues, with a significant percentage of students experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress. Moreover, the transition to online learning and the lack of social interaction have contributed to these psychological issues. Furthermore, cases of mental health related problems have been seen to have risen, particularly among tertiary-level students (Cauilan & Reyes, 2022).

As such, conducting this study is timely since student's well-being is a concern that should not be ignored considering that there have been students who suffers from depression, anxiety, or stress due to challenges and struggles they have face in life, like academic workloads and financial problems. Also, having this study is relevant to the students as this study provide perspective in regards with their well-being. Thus, this study could be used by the institution in providing interventions and assessing the students' well-being throughout the learning process. This is also beneficial for the community because when students' well-being is stable there is a higher chance they can succeed in life, and through their success, they can help the community to change into a better place.

In connection to this, the researcher proposed this study believing that the influence of self-compassion and learners' empowerment on students' well-being among teacher education students has a big gap and never been done in the local setting. There had been studies such as the studies of Dreisoener et al., (2023), entitled "Self-compassion as a Means to Improve Job-Related Well-being in Academia", studies of Naidoo & Oosthuizen (2023), entitled "Self-compassion as a Mechanism to Facilitate the Adjustment of First-year Students to University Environments", and studies of Rofiqah (2023), entitled "The Effect of Self-compassion and Support Systems on Flourishing in Students" which focused on self-compassion but not on the significant relationship with students well-being, and the respondents were not teacher education students. The study is predicated on the idea of determining the relationship between self-compassion, learners' empowerment and students' well-being.

Lastly, this study will enhance academic literature within and outside the institution by disseminating its findings to research conferences and agencies, fostering scholarly interaction and the application of research insights. Consequently, the broader community will acknowledge its significance, leading to the formulation of actions and solutions for the discussed issues, and implementing the recommendations provided.

Research Objectives

This research aims to determine the significant relationship between Self-compassion, Learners Empowerment, and Students' Well-being among Teacher Education Student. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of Self-compassion among Teacher Education Students in terms of:
    1.1 self-kindness;
    1.2 common humanity; and
    1.3 mindfulness.
2. To determine the level of Learners Empowerment among Teacher Education Students in terms of;
    2.1 meaningfulness
    2.2 impact; and
    2.3 competency.
3. To determine the level of Students' Well-being among Teacher Education Students in terms of:
    3.1 joy of learning;
    3.2 school connectedness; and
    3.3 academic efficacy.
4. To determine the significant relationship between:
    4.1 self-compassion and students' well-being; and
    4.2 learners' empowerment and students' well-being.
5. To determine which domain of self-compassion and learners' empowerment that can significantly influence the students' well-being of respondents.

Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis which will be tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance stated that there is no significant relationship between the self-compassion and students' well-being as well as learners' empowerment and students' well-being. Likewise, it is stated that there is/are no domain (s) of self-compassion as well as learners' empowerment that can significantly influence the students' well-being of the respondents.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures. The final written report has a set structure consisting of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and discussion (Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sample

The respondent of the study were the Teacher Education students of Academic Year 2022-2023 First Semester of Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology in the Municipality of Kapalong, Davao del Norte. The sampling technique used to obtain sample population was simple random sampling. Precisely, the total population is 1428 having a percentage for sampling of 16.32% with the total population sample of 233. Thus, they are classified by program wherein the Mathematics students' composed of 40 respondents or 2.80% with the total population sample of 245, Filipino students composed of 59 respondents or 4.11% with the total population sample of 360,

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BEEd-Generalist students composed of 60 respondents or 4.18% with the total population sample of 366, and lastly, the English students composed of 75 respondents or 5.22% with 457 total number of population sample.

Research Instrument

The researcher utilizes adapted questionnaires from web sources to measure the variables. These adapted questionnaires that was used in this study underwent through expert validation before dissemination of the research questionnaires towards the students.

A survey questionnaire was used to gather the desired data for this study, which is consisted of three parts. The first part was the questionnaire of self-compassion that was adopted from Neff (2003). The self-compassion scale demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.093, indicating its effectiveness in accurately measuring the intended aspect of self-compassion related to teacher education students.

Furthermore, the second part employed the learners' empowerment, developed by Cakir and Erdogan (2014). Principal Component Analysis revealed the CEQ to be multidimensional, with 23 items loading onto 3 variable factors, representing the unique nature of learners' empowerment. Based on the PCA results, all of the items were positive statements. The learners' empowerment scale demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.094, indicating its effectiveness in accurately measuring the intended aspect of learners' empowerment related to teacher education students.

Moreover, the third part was the questionnaire of students' well-being that was adopted from Renshaw (2024). The students' well-being scale demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.968, indicating its effectiveness in accurately measuring the intended aspect of students' well-being related to teacher education students.

The 5-point Likert scale is a tool that enables people to express their degree of agreement or disagreement with a given statement. It offers five response options, allowing participants to convey the strength of their agreement or their emotions related to the statements. In this study we are using the 5-point Likert scale to assess how respondents perceive their learning environment, the effectiveness of their teachers, and the well-being of students (McLeod, 2023).

Data Collection

The following steps will be done to collect the data for this study.

Questionnaire Formulation and Development. The researcher searches the questionnaires from reputable journal articles and related internet research which can be positively related to the three variables.

Revision and Validation of Questionnaires. Afterwards, it is submitted to the panel of experts to be evaluated and be contextualized towards mathematics learning. The researcher follows the advice of those revision experts until it is approved for administration.

Requesting Permission to Conduct a Study. Once the questionnaire was ready for administration, the permission to administer the study in the concerned institution were secured from Vice President for Academic Affairs of the college through a formal letter.

Distribution of Questionnaires. The research instrument was given directly to the respondents via Google forms and face-to-face surveys with permission, and the study were conducted by the researcher herself.

Collection and Tabulation of Data. After performing the survey, the researcher takes and analyze the research instrument to record and tabulate the collected data or the survey responses from the respondents. The statistical data was analyzed and the results were interpreted. From the final data, conclusions were drawn, and recommendations was presented based on the results obtain.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Mean. This is used to determine the level of self-compassion, learners' empowerment and students' well-being among the respondents.

Pearson-r. This is used to determine the significant relationship between self-compassion and students' well-being as well as learners' empowerment and students' well-being of the respondents.

Regression. This is used to determine the significant influence of self-compassion and learners' empowerment on students' well-being of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Level of Self-Compassion in Terms of Self-Kindness

Self-Kindness	Mean	Description
1. Trying to love myself when I am in pain or feeling emotional.	4.21	High
2. Giving myself tender care when going through a tough time.	4.20	High
3. Being kind to myself when experiencing suffering or stressful things in life.	4.03	High

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4. Being tolerant of my own flaws and imperfections.	3.47	High
5. Trying to understand those aspects of my personality that I don't like.	3.82	High
OVERALL	**3.94**	**High**

Table 3. Level of Self-Compassion in Terms of Common Humanity

Common Humanity	Mean	Description
1. Considering that the challenges we face is a natural part of life that everyone experiences.	4.13	High
2. Reminding myself that there are lots of people in the world who can feel down anytime like I am.	4.14	High
3. Reminding myself that feelings of inadequacy is shared by most people, not only myself.	3.77	High
4. Reminding myself that failing an exam or test is part of the human condition.	3.87	High
5. Reminding myself that when things are not going to happen according to my plan, maybe someday they will.	4.39	Very High
OVERALL	**4.06**	**High**

Table 4. Level of Self-Compassion in Terms of Mindfulness

Mindfulness	Mean	Description
1. Trying to balance my emotions when someone upsets me.	4.06	High
2. Trying to balanced view of the painful situation that happens to me.	3.85	High
3. Trying to keep things in perspective when I fail at something important to me.	3.88	High
4. Trying to acknowledge my feelings with curiosity and openness, especially when I'm feeling down.	3.81	High
5. Trying to remind myself that I should not take revenge on someone who hurts me.	4.12	High
OVERALL	**3.94**	**High**

Table 5. Summary on the Level of Self-Compassion

Indicators	Mean	Description
Self-Kindness	3.94	High
Common Humanity	4.06	High
Mindfulness	3.94	High
OVERALL	**3.98**	**High**

Level of Self-Compassion among Teacher Education Student.

The respondents demonstrated a high level of self-compassion in common humanity, self-kindness, and mindfulness. This indicates they often show compassion for themselves during difficulties, viewing it as a source of hope to overcome challenges. Marsh et al. (2018) similarly found that self-compassion reduces anxiety and fear of failure while promoting kindness and motivation.

Aligned with Ferreira et al. (2021) and Chip et al. (2021), self-compassion helps individuals recover from adversities by reframing challenges as opportunities for growth. Students with high common humanity recognize challenges as universal, fostering acceptance, empathy, and connection, as supported by Katy (2019) and Ling et al. (2021).

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The study also revealed high self-kindness, with students valuing kindness to themselves as essential for well-being. Bowling (2021) and Siegle (2023) emphasized that self-kindness improves mental health, combats loneliness, and enhances connections with others.

Lastly, mindfulness was rated high, reflecting students' ability to stay present and non-judgmental. This aligns with Kabat-Zinn (2018) and Moore (2023), who noted mindfulness aids emotional regulation, stress management, and mental health.

Table 6. Level of Learners' Empowerment in Terms of Meaningfulness

Meaningfulness	Mean	Description
1. Valuing the tasks given by our instructor in the class.	4.47	High
2. Looking forward to go to school and learn.	4.50	High
3. Finding our class interesting.	4.12	High
4. Finding that the information given by our instructor is useful.	4.53	Very High
5. Finding that this course will help me achieve my future.	4.24	High
OVERALL	**4.37**	**Very High**

Table 7. Level of Self-Compassion in Terms of Impact

Impact	Mean	Description
1. Feeling I have an impact that can make a difference in how things are done in our class.	3.90	High
2. Feeling that my participation has an impact on the success of the lesson in our class.	3.86	High
3. Feeling that I have an impact on the way things are run in our class.	3.75	High
4. Feeling my decisions have an impact on our class.	3.70	High
5. Feeling I have an impact that can create a supportive learning environment.	3.99	High
OVERALL	**3.84**	**High**

Table 8. Level of Learners' Empowerment in Terms of Competence

Competence	Mean	Description
1. Feeling confident that I can adequately perform my responsibilities as a student.	4.10	High
2. Possess the necessary skills to perform in our class.	3.88	High
3. Feeling capable of achieving my goals in our class.	4.00	High
4. Having faith in my ability to do well in our	4.23	High
5. Feeling very competent in this course.	3.64	High
OVERALL	**3.97**	**High**

Table 9. Summary on the Level of Learners' Empowerment

Learners' Empowerment	Mean	Description
Meaningfulness	4.37	Very High
Impact	3.84	High
Competence	3.97	High
OVERALL	**4.06**	**High**

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Level of Learners' Empowerment among Teacher Education Students. The respondents' level of learners' empowerment was generally high, as shown by their ratings on meaningfulness, impact, and competence. Empowered students view their instructors, learning environment, and learning process positively, feel competent, find tasks meaningful, and recognize their contributions.

This aligns with Fabris et al. (2023), who emphasized that positive teacher-student relationships enhance empowerment, engagement, and motivation. Buttner et al. (2019) also noted that supportive interactions boost self-esteem, belongingness, and learning enthusiasm.

High meaningfulness indicates students value their learning experiences. Mizan (2023) stressed connecting lessons to real-world contexts fosters critical thinking. Hornstra et al. (2020) added that linking lessons to experiences and goals enhances engagement.

Students' recognition of their impact shows the value of participatory learning. Brent and Felder (2019) found student-centered approaches increase engagement and contributions. Johnson and Lee (2021) highlighted that giving students choices fosters ownership and active participation.

Lastly, high competence reflects students' confidence in their abilities. Ryan et al. (2020) linked competence to motivation and growth, while Rahmawati (2018) emphasized its role in skill development and performance.

Table 10. Level of Students' Well-Being in Terms of Joy of Learning

Joy of Learning	Mean	Description
1. Feeling excited to learn new things and gain knowledge in our class.	4.48	Very High
2. Feeling really interested and happy in the things I am doing at school.	4.21	High
3. Enjoying working with my projects and assignment in our class.	3.92	High
4. Feeling happy working and learning at school.	4.15	High
5. Feeling happy and enjoying the things I do at school.	4.12	High
OVERALL	**4.18**	**High**

Table 11. Level of Students' Well-Being in Terms of School Connectedness

School Connectedness	Mean	Description
1. Feeling like I am belonged at my school.	3.98	High
2. Feeling I am connected at my school.	4.00	High
3. Feeling like people at my school care about me.	3.82	High
4. Feeling I can really be myself at school.	3.97	High
5. Feeling I am treated with respect and love at my school.	4.27	Very High
OVERALL	**4.01**	**High**

Table 12. Level of Students' Well-Being in Terms of Academic Efficacy

Academic Efficacy	Mean	Description
1. Willing to do my task on time so that I can get good grades.	4.16	High
2. Doing my best to accomplish my schoolwork at school.	4.35	Very High
3. Doing well in answering all of my assignments.	4.08	High
4. Getting good grades in our class because of my school performance.	4.07	High
5. Doing well in crafting my projects.	3.97	High
OVERALL	**4.13**	**High**

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Table 12. Level of Students' Well-Being in Terms of Academic Efficacy

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3. Doing well in answering all of my assignments.	4.08	High
4. Getting good grades in our class because of my school performance.	4.07	High
5. Doing well in crafting my projects.	3.97	High
OVERALL	**4.13**	**High**

Table 13. Summary on the Level of Students' Well-Being

Students' Well-Being	Mean	Description
Joy of Learning	4.18	High
School Connectedness	4.01	High
Academic Efficacy	4.13	High
OVERALL	**4.10**	**High**

Level of Students' Well-being. The respondents' well-being was generally high, leading to better academic performance, employment opportunities, and social engagement. Happy and healthy students showed improved focus, motivation, and coping skills.

Halwachi (2023) emphasized the link between well-being and academic success, as safe environments enhance learning and foster resilience. Similarly, Cardenas et al. (2022) highlighted schools' role in supporting well-being through awareness and emotional development programs.

Students also exhibited high joy in learning, enjoying their subjects and engaging actively. Mehta and Fine (2021) noted that joyful learning nurtures curiosity and creates meaningful, enjoyable experiences.

School connectedness was also high, with students building positive relationships and performing better. Sawyer et al. (2022) and Allen et al. (2021) linked this connection to improved mental health, resilience, and long-term well-being.

Table 14. Significant Relationship between Self-Compassion and Students' Well-Being

Variable	Mean	R-Value	P-Value	Decision @=0.05
Self-Compassion	3.98			
		.507	**<.001**	**H. Rejected**
Students' Well-Being	4.10			

Correlation between Self-Compassion and Students' Well-Being. The study found a high, positive, and significant relationship between self-compassion and students' well-being among teacher education students. Higher self-compassion levels improve well-being, reduce academic stress, and promote healthy learning goals.

Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory highlights self-efficacy's role in fostering self-compassion, enabling effective coping. Beato et al. (2021) noted self-compassion buffers negative emotions by moderating reactions to setbacks.

Neff's (2022) Self-Compassion Theory emphasizes treating oneself kindly during failure, enhancing resilience, and managing academic stress and anxiety.

Bluth et al (2018) identified self-compassion as crucial for reducing stress, anxiety, and burnout, fostering kindness and care during challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Table 15. Significant Relationship between Learners' Empowerment and Students' Well-Being

Variable	Mean	R-Value	P-Value	Description @=0.05
Learners' Empowerment	4.06			
		.694	**<.001**	**H. Rejected**
Students' Well-Being	4.10			

Correlation between Learners' Empowerment and Students' Well-Being. The study revealed a high, positive, and significant relationship between learners' empowerment and students' well-being. Empowerment fosters motivation, determination, and access to resources, enhancing well-being.

Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory highlights that empowered students feel competent, socially connected, and confident in tackling challenges, improving emotional well-being.

Diale and Sewagegn (2019) emphasized that empowerment boosts motivation, academic success, and emotional stability by giving students ownership of their learning.

Comer's (1960) Social-Emotional Learning Theory links empowerment to emotional regulation and resilience, helping students overcome challenges and promoting well-being beyond the classroom.

Table 16. Significant Influence between Self-Compassion and Students' Well-Being

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	P- Value	Decision @=0.05
Self-Compassion (Constant)	**Beta**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
Self-Kindness	0.178	0.057	0.213	<.002	Ho Rejected
Common Humanity	0.144	0.054	0.174	<.009	Ho Rejected
Mindfulness	0.209	0.052	0.259	<.001	Ho Rejected
Dependent Variable:					
Students' Well-being					

Note: R= 0.508, R^2=*0.259* F- ratio=26.616 P- value= <.001

Domain of Self-Compassion that significantly predicts the Students' Well-Being among Teacher Education Students. The regression analysis shows that self-compassion self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness significantly predicts teacher education students' well-being, with 50.7% of their well-being attributed to self-compassion. This rejects the null hypothesis, confirming a strong relationship between self-compassion and well-being.

Self-kindness significantly impacts well-being, supporting Chau et al. (2022), who found it enhances well-being in challenging situations. It acts as a buffer against adversity, promoting emotional and social adjustment (Beshai et al., 2018).

Common humanity also influences well-being but contradicts Heckert (2020), who emphasized shared human experiences fostering connection, belonging, and inclusivity.

Mindfulness significantly affects well-being, aligning with Cronkleton (2022), who found mindfulness improves mood, reduces stress, and regulates emotions, leading to better overall well-being.

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Table 17. Significant Influence between Learners' Empowerment and Students' Well-Being

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	P- Value	Decision @=0.05
Learners' Empowerment	**Beta**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)					
Meaningfulness	0.145	0.051	0.166	<.005	Ho Rejected
Impact	0.238	0.5	0.313	<.001	Ho Rejected
Competence	0.259	0.049	0.337	<.001	Ho Rejected
Dependent Variables:					
Students' Well-being					

Note: R= 0.698, $R^2=0.488$ F- ratio=72.610 P- value= <.001

Domain of Learners' Empowerment that significantly predicts the Students' Well-Being among Teacher Education Students. The regression analysis shows that learners' empowerment meaningfulness, impact, and competence significantly predict teacher education students' well-being, with 69.4% of their well-being attributed to empowerment. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming a strong relationship between learners' empowerment and well-being.

Meaningfulness significantly affects well-being, supporting Gravett and Winstone (2022), who found that meaningful learning experiences arise from authentic interactions with educators and peers, fostering a deeper connection and sense of purpose.

Impact also influences well-being, aligning with Fordham (2021), who noted that students' sense of impact in their lessons, along with positive student-teacher relationships, boosts engagement, inclusivity, and success in the classroom.

Competence is a significant predictor of well-being, as shown in Ryan et al. (2020). Students' competence contributes to motivation, achievement, and growth, with effective classroom environments allowing them to express and develop their skills and knowledge.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the significant role of learners' empowerment through meaningfulness, impact, and competence in predicting students' well-being among teacher education students. The strong relationship between these factors suggests that fostering authentic learning experiences, positive student-teacher interactions, and opportunities for students to feel competent can greatly enhance their overall well-being. These insights emphasize the importance of creating supportive and inclusive educational environments that empower students to thrive both academically and personally.

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