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### Exploring the Association Between Humility and Self-Compassion

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## Introduction

Humility is a multidimensional construct that refers to a person's ability to acknowledge the limitations of their abilities, knowledge, and achievements. It involves a modest and unpretentious view of oneself and a willingness to learn from others and accept feedback (Huynh et al., 2020; Huynh & McCutcheon, 2021; Nielsen & Marrone, 2018). Experiences of failure, setbacks, or challenges that lead to a realization of one's limitations and a recognition of the role of others in one's success may affect one's experience of humility. Self-compassion is a concept in which a person understands their shortcomings and responds to the self kindly. It involves recognizing one's own pain and responding to it with vigilance (Neff, 2003). That is, as individuals improve on the ability to accept their shortcomings without judging themselves harshly, they may be more likely to face their limitations and recognize the role of others in their success.

## Hypothesis

We hypothesized that self-compassion and humility will be positively correlated, such that people who are more self-compassionate will also tend to be more humble.

## Methods

**Participants.** Adult participants ( $N = 256$ ;  $Mage = 44.31$ ,  $SDage = 11.21$ ; 50.00% female) were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Participants completed an online survey to receive a monetary reward.

**Measures.** The participants were asked to complete three different scales: The Relational Humility scale ( $\alpha = .95$ ), The State Humility scale ( $\alpha = .80$ ), and The Self-Compassion scale ( $\alpha = .94$ ). We used the Self-Compassion scale (Neff, 2003) to measure self-compassion, which includes six subscales: self-kindness (5 items,  $\alpha = .94$ ), self-judgment (5 items,  $\alpha = .94$ ), common humanity (4 items,  $\alpha = .89$ ), isolation (4 items,  $\alpha = .90$ ), mindfulness (4 items,  $\alpha = .87$ ), and over-identification (4 items,  $\alpha = .91$ ). Because there are known discrepancies in how well each scale may represent self-reported humility, we used two distinct measures of humility. To function as self-report, all scales were reworded to be from the participant's perspective. Participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with the items on each scale.

## Results

	Self-Kindness	Self-Judgment	Common Humanity	Isolation	Mindfulness	Over-Identif.
Rel. Hum.	.23**	-.19**	.17**	-.17**	.26**	-.19**
State Hum.	.13*	-.13*	.03	-.07	.08	-.14*

## Results, cont.

Bivariate correlations were conducted in IBM SPSS to examine the associations between the study variables. The trend that was consistent in this study was that self-compassion was positively related to humility as measured by The Relational Humility scale ( $r$ s between .17 - .26,  $p < .001$ ), but was only related to three of the subscales when we used the State Humility Scale ( $r$ s between .13-.14,  $p < .05$ ).

## Discussion

-Our findings provide initial evidence for the fact that self-compassion could potentially lead people to be more humble. When people are able to be kind to themselves, find common humanity in their failures, and be mindful in their approach to different life circumstances, they may also find that they are able to see themselves more accurately and appreciate others more deeply. However, experimental data are needed to determine the causal direction. Additionally, this study was conducted online, which could lead to questions about the validity of the responses.

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