The Role Of Optimism As The Mediator Between Self Compassion And Work Engagement In Female Police Officer In The Central Java

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Abstract. Married female police officers share equal workloads with other members, including maintaining public safety, enforcing laws, and protecting the public. Achieving optimal organizational performance requires a professional work attitude, reflected in work engagement characterized by openness, enthusiasm, productivity, and full involvement. Personal resources, such as self-compassion, play a significant role in fostering work engagement. Self-compassion involves a caring attitude toward oneself during challenges and viewing difficulties as part of life experiences. Optimism, a positive personal trait, also contributes to work engagement, as optimistic individuals approach work with a positive outlook and strive for the best outcomes. This study examines optimism as a mediator between self-compassion and work engagement. The participants were 90 female police officers (N = 100) from the Central Java Provincial Police (POLDA), who completed the Self-Compassion Scale (26 items, $\alpha = 0.872$), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (9 items, $\alpha = 0.85$), and Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R) (10 items, $\alpha = 0.76$). Path analysis revealed no correlation between self-compassion and work engagement (p = 0.206 < 0.05), indicating that optimism does not mediate this relationship.

Keywords: Self Compassion; Work Engagement; Optimism

1 Introduction

Human resources play a crucial role in an organization, as they are essential for achieving targets and goals within an organization. This is not limited to the Indonesian National Police (Polri). Polri members consist of male and female police officers who have the same workload without distinguishing gender. According to Article 13 of Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police, the main tasks of the Indonesian National Police are to maintain public safety and order, enforce the law, and provide protection, care, and services to the public. The increasing number of female police officers (Polwan) serving in the Indonesian National Police requires female police officers to perform their duties and responsibilities according to the regulations set, even if they are already married. A married female police officers undoubtedly has a significant role in her family to manage her household and also must be able to perform her duties and responsibilities as a police officer [1]. The dual role played by female police officers requires her to perform her role as a wife who motivates her husband and as a mother to her children, in addition to her success as a police officer, which is a crucial requirement for female police officers to enhance professionalism [2]. Female police officers who cannot perform their dual role well will lead to role conflict, which can result in negative behavior at work. Study by [3], discuss that the stress level of female police officers consists of high categories (15.56%), medium categories (75.56%), and low categories (8.89%). Married female police officers have a higher stress level compared to unmarried female police officers, which is depicted by female police officers difficulty in concentrating on their work and their superiors complaining that their performance is declining [3].

Professionalism among female police officers can be fostered through strong work engagement, a quality that reflects an employee's full involvement and positive attitude toward their work [4]. Work engagement is characterized by a commitment to solving problems, exerting maximum effort, enthusiasm for the job, and loyalty to the organization [5]. According to [6], the key components of work engagement include vigor, dedication, and absorption. Employees who are highly engaged tend to be more productive, eager to learn, adaptable, and responsive to new challenges [7]. They also demonstrate a strong commitment to their goals, consistently going beyond what is merely acceptable [8]. In contrast, female police officers with low work engagement often struggle with understanding their roles, the institution's vision and mission, and may prioritize personal interests over professional duties. These officers are more likely to exhibit dishonest behaviors, lack enthusiasm, and perform tasks without focus or motivation. Such disengagement can lead to discomfort in their roles and difficulty in maintaining their positions [3], [9].

Work engagement is shaped by multiple factors, as noted by [10], with personal resources being a key influence. Personal resources refer to an individual's ability to control and shape their environment, enabling them to positively manage their behavior. Employees with high levels of personal resources tend to exhibit resilience, self-efficacy, and confidence in achieving future success [11]. These attributes, including self-esteem and optimism, are strongly linked to work engagement. Personal resources positively correlate with an individual's attitude toward their work, contributing significantly to their overall engagement [10].

Optimism is characterized by a strong drive to think positively and the ability to find meaning in one's experiences, which in turn promotes continuous self-improvement [12]. Optimistic individuals are not deterred by failure and persist in their efforts, whereas pessimistic individuals are more likely to give up when anticipating negative outcomes, especially under high work demands [13]. Optimists tend to attribute positive events to personal, permanent, and comprehensive factors, while viewing negative events as external, situational, and temporary. This positive focus enables them to maintain energy and exhibit high levels of work engagement without succumbing to fatigue [14]. Optimism also brings tangible benefits in the workplace, such as enhanced performance and job satisfaction [15]. It is associated with high work engagement and positively influences psychological well-being [16] and motivation [17]. Ultimately, optimism fosters resilience and a proactive approach to challenges, leading to improved outcomes in both personal and professional contexts.

Confidence in one's efforts can enhance motivation and foster greater commitment to continuous improvement. This positive self-assurance not only directs attention and care toward oneself but also promotes self-compassion, which plays a crucial role in enhancing self-regulation [18]. Self-compassion is defined as the ability to treat oneself with kindness and understanding during difficult times, recognizing that challenges are a part of the human experience [19]. Self-compassion is characterized by openness, self-care, non-judgment, and the acknowledgment that failure is a universal aspect of life [20]. This mindset fosters optimism and positive emotions, such as confidence and trust in one's future. Individuals with high levels of self-compassion are generally happier, more optimistic, and highly motivated to learn [21]. They view failure as an opportunity for growth rather than a setback, which drives them to continually improve without becoming discouraged by current challenges [22]. In the workplace, self-compassion has been shown to enhance employee performance, boost organizational commitment, and increase productivity [23]. Employees who approach challenges with a positive attitude and self-encouragement are more likely to stay engaged with their work, ultimately improving their work engagement [24].

The connection between self-compassion and work engagement can be understood through the lens of optimism. Numerous studies highlight the relationship between optimism and self-compassion, showing that individuals who practice self-compassion tend to treat themselves with kindness and care, fostering a sense of self-worth. This, in turn, makes them more optimistic about achieving success [25]. Optimistic individuals generally exhibit higher levels of work engagement compared to their pessimistic counterparts, as they are better equipped to mobilize resources and tackle work-related challenges.

This study focuses on the relationship between self-compassion, optimism, and work engagement among female police officers, driven by the unique dual responsibilities they face. Female officers must balance their roles at work and at home, which can significantly impact their level of engagement in their professional duties. The researchers aim to investigate whether optimism serves as a mediating factor in the relationship between self-compassion and work engagement in this context, shedding light on how these psychological factors interact within the challenging environment of female law enforcement professionals.

2 Methodology

Study design

This study employed a quantitative research design with path analysis to examine the potential positive relationship between self-compassion and work engagement, as well as the mediating effect of optimism on this relationship. Participants were recruited on a voluntary basis and provided informed consent prior to completing the survey, which included validated measures of self-compassion, optimism, and work engagement. To ensure the authenticity of responses, participants were assured that there were no right or wrong answers and were encouraged to answer each item honestly and thoughtfully.

Participant

This study involves 90 participants based on the medium effect size measurement from Cohen with a value of 0.3 using G-Power. To meet the criteria for inclusion in this study, participants are female police officers with a minimum of one year of service who are married. The sample for this study was obtained through a purposive sampling technique, which is a form of non-probability sampling. In this approach, the population is selected based on certain criteria according to the research objectives. The sampling process involves identifying members who meet the criteria through official organizational data and recommendations from direct superiors. To minimize selection bias, researchers conduct a re-examination by comparing the sample characteristics to the population to ensure that the selected sample is truly representative. The researchers ensured that all participants voluntarily consented to take part in the study before completing the questionnaire, which assessed self-compassion, optimism, and work engagement. Participants were clearly informed that their responses did not have right or wrong criteria and were encouraged to answer each item honestly. These procedures were implemented to minimize selection bias and enhance the validity of the findings, thereby improving the representativeness of the sample and the accuracy of the study's conclusions regarding the target population

Instruments

Work Engagement. In this study, work engagement was measured using the Indonesian version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), developed by Kristiana et al. (2018). The scale comprises 9 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Not at All Suitable") to 5 ("Very Suitable"). The UWES-9 includes three key dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. For this sample, the scale demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.95. Examples of items included in the scale are:

No.	Item				
1.	At work, I feel full of energy				
2.	While working, I feel strong and energized				

Table 1 Items Work Engagemen

I am enthusiastic about my job

Self Compassion. This study employed the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) developed by Sugianto et al. (2020) to assess the participants' levels of self-compassion. The SCS consists of 26 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("Not at All Suitable") to 5 ("Very Suitable"). The scale encompasses six dimensions: self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. In this sample, the scale demonstrated good reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.872. Examples of items included in the scale are:

Table 2 Items Self Compassion

No.	Item				
1.	I do not accept or judge my own weaknesses and shortcomings				
2.	When I am feeling down, I tend to obsess over and dwell on everything that is wrong				
3.	When bad things happen to me, I view life's difficulties as challenges everyone goes through				

Optimism. The study utilized the Indonesian version of the Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R), developed by Suryadi et al. (2021), to measure participants' levels of optimism. The LOT-R comprises 10 items, including three positive items, three negative items, and four neutral items. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("Not at All Suitable") to 5 ("Very Suitable"). In this sample, the LOT-R demonstrated adequate reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.76. Examples of items included in the scale are:

Table 3 Items Optimism				
No.	Item			
1.	In uncertain times, I usually expect the best			
2.	If something bad is going to happen to me, then it will happen			
3.	I enjoy spending time with my friends*			

*are neutral items.

Procedure

The procedure for this study are following this steps: 1) Planning, which involves identifying the phenomenon that occurs, selecting the measurement instruments that will be used, analysis techniques, and methods of measurement suitable for the research objectives; 2) Adapting the measurement instruments from variables studied by other research; 3) Collecting data directly from female police officers at the Central Java Police Headquarters; 4) Verifying and validating the collected data to ensure accuracy and consistency; 5) Analyzing the data using statistical techniques, including normality tests, linearity tests, and hypothesis testing; 6) Interpreting the results of the data analysis in the

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context of the research objectives, drawing conclusions based on the findings; 7) Preparing the research report.

1.1 Data Analysis

This study uses path analysis to analyze the data. The researcher chooses JASP 0.18 for Windows to help analyze the data.

1.2 Participant's characteristics

This study involves female police officers working at the Central Java Police Headquarters. Of the 90 participants, the average age is 35 years (SD = 9.25 years). Approximately 20% of the participants have work experience of 1-4 years, while 31.1% have work experience of 5-8 years, and the remaining 47.77% have more than 10 years of work experience.

3 Result and Discussion

The assumption test is performed initially to ensure that the data meets the necessary conditions before proceeding with the hypothesis test. The normality test employs the Shapiro-Wilk method to determine whether the data set conforms to a normal distribution or exhibits non-normality. In this study, the normality test results indicated that the data for optimism (p = 0.066 > 0.05), self-compassion (p = 0.586 > 0.05), and work engagement (p = 0.109 > 0.05) were all normally distributed. A linearity test was conducted to examine the linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The results showed that the variables of optimism and work engagement, as well as self-compassion and work engagement, satisfied the linearity criteria, each with a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value of 1.001 > 0.01. Hypothesis testing was performed to explore whether there is a statistically significant positive correlation between self-compassion and work engagement, and whether optimism serves as a mediator in this relationship. This analysis aimed to provide insights into the causal relationships between these variables and their potential influence on work engagement.

Table 4. Path Coefficients Results

Exogenous Variable		Endogenous Variable	β/r	р
Self Compassion	\rightarrow	Optimism	0.010	0.727
Optimism	\rightarrow	Work Engagement	0.105	0.321
Self Compassion	\rightarrow	Work Engagement	0.037	0.206

Based on the path coefficients results, it is found that self-compassion does not have a significant relationship with work engagement (p = 0.206 < 0.05), and also self-compassion does not have a significant relationship with optimism (p = 0.727 < 0.05), and further, optimism does not have a significant relationship with work engagement (p = 0.312 < 0.05).

Evogonoug Vorioblo		Endogonoug Voriable	95% Confidence Interval	
Exogenous Variable		Endogenous Variable	Lower	Upper
Self Compassion	\rightarrow	Optimism	-0.047	0.068
Optimism	\rightarrow	Work Engagement	-0.099	0.309
Self Compassion	\rightarrow	Work Engagement	-0.020	0.094

Table 5. Confidence Interval

The relationship is also supported by the lower and upper bounds of the 95% Confidence Interval in the estimation of the direct effect between self-compassion and work engagement. The 95% Confidence Interval ranges from -0.020 to 0.094, which includes zero, indicating that this direct effect is not statistically significant. Similarly, for the mediating effect through optimism to work engagement, the 95% Confidence Interval ranges from -0.005 to 0.007, which also includes zero, suggesting that the mediating effect is not significant.

The analysis reveals that optimism does not mediate the relationship between self-compassion and work engagement, as no significant correlation was found between self-compassion and work engagement. This finding aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, which identifies job demands and job resources as key factors influencing work engagement. Job demands encompass the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of work that require sustained physical and mental effort, often leading to exhaustion. In contrast, job resources are the elements that support goal achievement, reduce workload, and promote personal growth and development, acting as a buffer against the negative effects of job demands and enhancing employee engagement. Additionally, personal resources such as self-esteem and optimism are also thought to impact work engagement [10]. However, the study indicates that external factors, particularly job demands, have a much stronger impact on work engagement compared to internal factors like self-esteem and optimism. In this context, self-compassion and optimism do not significantly influence work engagement, suggesting that the pressures of job demands may outweigh the benefits of personal resources in determining employee engagement.

This study's findings contrast with those indicating that self-compassion enhances work engagement by fostering positive coping strategies that reduce negative emotions in the workplace [24]. The divergence in findings suggests that other factors may play a significant role in shaping work engagement among female police officers. Firstly, workplace intimidation has been identified as a key factor, significantly predicting psychological stress and reducing work engagement [26]. Female officers often operate in environments characterized by high pressure and demands, which can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed. This persistent stress contributes to emotional exhaustion, reducing the effectiveness of self-compassion and negatively impacting their engagement at work as their energy is depleted more rapidly while performing their duties. Secondly, the rigid, formal, and hierarchical organizational culture within police forces can diminish professional involvement. Such environments often foster competitive behaviors and lack social support, making it difficult for officers to treat themselves with kindness. The rigidity and lack of flexibility in decision-making further erode job motivation and engagement. Additionally, negative workplace conditions, such as bullying and organizational stress, can further suppress job involvement [27]. Another crucial factor is compassion fatigue, as the high-pressure demands of policing, combined with the need to maintain a professional demeanor, can erode work motivation over time [28]. This leads to compassion fatigue, where officers become emotionally drained, resulting in decreased engagement. Gender differences also play a role in work engagement. Gender differences also influence work engagement, with male officers typically exhibiting higher levels of engagement compared to their female counterparts, partly due to the differing tasks and roles assigned to each gender [24]. These disparities create additional pressures for female officers, further complicating their ability to stay engaged at work. Finally, role conflict is a significant challenge for female police officers. The tension between professional responsibilities and family obligations often leads to stress and lower work engagement. Female officers must manage the demands of their jobs while balancing their roles as mothers and wives, a conflict that has been shown to contribute to work-related stress [29]. This finding is consistent with research highlighting how role conflict exacerbates workplace stress among female officers [28]. Factors such as workplace intimidation, rigid organizational culture, compassion fatigue, gender differences, and role conflict seem to outweigh the positive influence of self-compassion on work engagement in this study. These external pressures may deplete female police officers' energy and motivation, limiting the effectiveness of internal resources like self-compassion.

The work environment for police officers is marked by intense pressure and frequent exposure to critical and hazardous situations. Officers are routinely involved in addressing criminal behavior, supporting victims, and confronting life-threatening scenarios while attempting to apprehend offenders [28]. Additionally, police officers experience fear and anxiety from threats of riots and instances of intimidation, which heighten their sense of vulnerability and burden [30]. These pressures contribute to the development of compassion fatigue, where the necessity to maintain a professional demeanor in the face of daily high-stress situations results in diminished work motivation and emotional exhaustion [28].

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the analysis did not account for potential confounding variables such as job stress, role conflict, and gender differences, which may influence the relationship between self-compassion, optimism, and work engagement. Future studies should control for these factors to better understand their impact. Second, the findings are specific to female police officers in Central Java and may not be generalizable to other populations or regions. To improve the external validity of the results, similar research should be conducted in different locations or with diverse groups of female police officers for comparative analysis. Third, the study did not examine the impact of work duration on work engagement, an important factor that could influence outcomes. Fourth, the study's sample was limited in diversity due to its focus on a single characteristic, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Lastly, the sample size was relatively small, suggesting the need for future research to include a larger and more varied sample to enhance the robustness of the results.

4 Conclusion

In summary, this study found no significant relationship between self-compassion and work engagement mediated by optimism among female police officers. Optimism did not mediate the relationship between self-compassion and work engagement, as there was no significant correlation between these variables, consistent with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory.

The findings contribute to the literature by highlighting that personal factors like selfcompassion and optimism may not play a substantial role in enhancing work engagement among female police officers. Instead, other factors, such as compassion fatigue, gender, and role conflict, may have a more pronounced impact on the work dynamics and engagement levels of female police officers.

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