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10-5-2018

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#### Recommended Citation

Hilty, Dale; Marchi, Erika; and Dickson, Marissa, "Evaluation of Continuous Self-Improvement, Attachment, Compassion Toward Self & Others & Self-Esteem" (2018). *Scholars Showcase 2018: Innovations in Leadership and Learning*. 38.

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# Evaluation of Continuous Self-Improvement, Attachment, Compassion Toward Self & Others, & Self-Esteem

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## Background

### Competitive Greatness

John R. Wooden's father shared two principles which were a major influence for his life: (1) "Don't try to be better than someone else, and (2) Always try to be the best you can be" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 17). The first principle was a reminder that a successful life does not find peace of mind by comparing one's self to others. There is an interconnection between the second principle and Wooden's competitive greatness construct (CG). The definition of CG: "Be at your best when your best is needed. Enjoyment of a difficult challenge" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 90).

Competitive greatness is linked to continuous self-improvement. By making the focus of life primarily on individual growth and development, there are endless opportunities to expand our skills and abilities. In Wooden's words: "We don't have be superstars or win championships to reach competitive greatness. All we have to do is learn to rise to every occasion, give your best effort and make those around us better as we do it. It's not about winning. It's about learning to give all we have to give" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 91).

### Continuous Self-Improvement (CSI)

In the academic environment, Wooden's competitive greatness can be linked to Continuous Self-Improvement (CSI). By focusing on individual growth and development, there are endless opportunities to expand our skills and abilities. A CSI nursing student functioning at an exceptional level of engagement experiences a deeper learning processing of material from textbook readings and lectures. Using an intrinsic reward system, they internalize content and concepts and continuously apply them in new, unique ways. These students appear to feel the satisfaction and receive the validation they are going to be excellent nurses. Not only do they understand the scientific and theoretical aspects of nursing, but they also demonstrate the art and caring nature of an excellent and compassionate nurse.

### Attachment

Hilty, Bumgardner, and Taylor (2018) report psychometric findings for the Nursing Attachment Styles Questionnaire (NASQ). Exploratory principal axis factor analysis revealed three common factors (i.e., secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment styles) accounting for 64% of the variability (eigenvalues = 12.455, 5.71, 2.963). Coefficient alpha reliability estimates were .93 (secure), .933 (anxious), and .947 (avoidant). Correlations with the Simpson (1990) and Carver (1997) attachment scales indicate NAQ scales appear to be measuring the three attachment constructs.

## Background (Cont'd)

### Self-Esteem

Rosenberg (1965) global self-esteem scale used as general measure of self-esteem. Hilty, Gill-Rocha, & Ross (2018) reported using SPSS 25 to evaluate the factor structure of the self-esteem scale. The exploratory factor analysis revealed support for a one-factor solution accounting for 51% of the variance. Coefficient alpha reliability estimates ranged from .855 to .902.

### Compassion & Care

Geraghty, Oliver, & Lauva (2016, p. 836) differentiate compassion and caring.

Compassion and caring are two generic terms that are separate ... Compassion has been defined as comprising attentiveness, presence and saliency, in order to anticipate the needs of patients or clients ... If care is considered an act, part of routine tasks conducted by nurses and midwives to fulfill the needs of patients, then caring can be considered a product ...

In Waterman's (2007) dissertation, nursing students emphasized Watson's Holistic Carative exemplars of respect, knowledge, being responsible, considering outcomes of caring, competence, effective communication skills (active listening, openness), developing a trusting relationship, advocating, flexibility, and assisting the patient to reach their highest level of wellness (meeting the patient's needs, implementing health teaching).

## Methods

Instrumentation used were the Wooden CG/CSI scale (Hilty, 2017), self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1985), compassion scale (Pommier, 2011), self-compassion scale (Neff, 2003), and NASQ. The Pommier (2011) and Neff (2003) compassion instruments measure compassion with overall scale and subscales. In this study, the overall scales were used to measure self-compassion and compassion toward others.

In this educational intervention, the participants (N=61) were accelerated nursing students in the Second Degree Accelerated Degree program. The CG/CSI scale was used to create two groups (e.g., high scores, moderate-low scores). Hypothesis 1: The self-efficacy, self-compassion, compassion toward others, and the three attachment styles scale would have different mean scores for the two CG/CSI groups. Hypothesis 2: The self-esteem scale would be significantly correlated with the CG/CSI, compassion, and attachment scales. Hypothesis 3: Using multiple regression with CG/CSI as the dependent variable and the compassion, attachment, and self-esteem scales as predictor variables, the outcome will be significantly different from zero.

## Results

Hypothesis 1: Using SPSS 25 (independent t-test), a significant difference was found between the CSI and the non-CSI students on the secure attachment style ( $p=.007$ ) and compassion toward other scales ( $p=.017$ ). Hypothesis 2: Using SPSS 25, no significant correlation coefficients ( $p>.05$ ) were found between self-esteem and CG/CSI ( $r=-.004$ ), Secure ( $r=.046$ ), Anxious ( $r=-.043$ ), Avoidant ( $r=.026$ ), Compassion towards Others ( $r=.08$ ), and Self-Compassion ( $r=-.163$ ). Hypothesis 3: Using SPSS 25, the overall regression was significant ( $F(6,54) = 3.034$ ,  $R\text{-squared} = .252$ ,  $p=.004$ ).

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