SELF COMPASSION LEVELS OF ERASMUS AND NON-ERASMUS STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Erasmus is a program actively applied in many universities in many focus areas since 1987 (Erasmus Program, 2017) It has been defined as '*the opportunity of students to study or gain work experience in a different European country*.' It has thirty years of background in Turkey and one of the main purposes of the program is to help participants to develop their personal, educational, and cultural conceptions. It is a varied exchange process that takes place both in educational and cultural levels. In this varied exchange environment process, participants experience many problematic or tough situations such as being away from home and familiar environment, not knowing the target language, etc. The study aims to compare the self-compassion levels of the Erasmus participants and Non-Erasmus ones. It is because self-compassion is considered as an emotional balancing strategy that transforms the negative emotions and ideas into self-acceptance and life satisfaction (Neff, 2003). Having a life-changing experience Erasmus can be said a key element in developing self-compassion levels and defining the participants `levels, Self-Compassion Scale (Deniz, Kesici & Sumer, 2008) was applied. Non-Erasmus ones, meaning the same level students but not the part of any Erasmus project, were also applied the same questionnaire to make comparisons. It seems both of the participant groups have similar problems and the difference in self-compassion levels of the participants is tried to be defined. The gathered data is analyzed in the SPSS program.

Keywords: Erasmus students, non-Erasmus students, self-compassion

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1. Introduction

Erasmus is a program that students have been increasingly attended by Turkey as well as from other European countries. Erasmus is part of the European Union projects carrying at different levels with different aims. The first participants of the Erasmus program are from the year 1987 and since then nearly two million students have attended the program. In the concept of the program, students take a part of their education in another European country. The students `participation in the Erasmus program is a short term or long-term program that aims to share knowledge, experience, and culture.

The participants of the Erasmus projects are mainly applied for an Erasmus action on the behalf of the educational institutions (Lıfelong Learning Platform, 2016) and the numbers attending the program have increased (from 10.5% up to 17%). The Erasmus program has its highest attending results in Key Action 1 and it is learning mobility of individuals in the field of education and training with the percentage 65.8 (European Commission, 2014). The majority of the participants say that they are satisfied with the Project process and they gained priceless memories during their stay. They also mention that it is a lifetime experience. The numbers show consistent with the preferences in Turkey also (Arslan, 2013). The researches show that the main problem of the Turkish participants is lack of language and it is followed by the adapting problems into the culture and the next problem is shared by few participants is the problems in adapting social life (Yücelsin Taş, 2013). The studies also showed that among the reasons for attendance to the Erasmus program some answers are; to develop their self-confidence and gaining cultural experience (Unlu, 2015). The participants feel excited about being a part of the new life, but they also have fears such as making mistakes, being psychologically or socially insufficient, etc.

The concept of self-compassion is closely related to the reactions to those experiences. Self-compassion is treating yourselves with the same kindness, concern, and support you would show to a good friend (Neff K. D., 2012). Neff (2003) defined three components of self-compassion and these are: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. These elements are making self-compassion a positive self-attitude that should protect against negative outcomes of the self-judgment, depression or isolation, etc. Erasmus participants may experience one or a few of these negative life events and also, they need self-compassion to help them overcome all of these negative effects. The three elements of self-compassion help people`s well-being (Neff & Dahm, 2015). Self-kindness includes knowing that being imperfect or having difficulties in life is inevitable. We can't always be perfect, or things may not go as the way we want. Self-kindness is the acceptance that these events can happen and instead of denying or resistance self-kindness give acceptance. One of the other elements is common humanity and it is the opposite term of isolation. Thinking that bad things happen only to us and everyone else is just perfect and fine is not rational and meaningful. It doesn't make any sense that we experience bad things, and these happen only and only to us. Common humanity as a part of the self-compassion makes us aware that these kinds of failures are just a part of

being human. This awareness helps to decrease the feeling of isolation when we are down. The last feature of the self-compassion, mindfulness is accepting the situation as they are. Pain is also a process and we should also live unhappy and painful moments as we experience joy in life.

In this study, the Erasmus participants are compared with the non-Erasmus participants of the education cycle. The students are all experience nearly similar processes, similar pains and concerns and failures come across no matter where we are or at which level of the education we are. Erasmus participants have extra concern materials such as being in a different culture and language environment, so this study aims to compare the self-compassion levels between them and try to define if there is a difference between the participants.

2. Literature Review

The related literature review has been carried and it is seen that the studies mainly focus on the effectiveness of the Erasmus program or self-compassion separately. The one study that carried in relation with Erasmus and self-compassion together is done by Deniz and friends (2012) and in their study, they investigate the self-compassion, life satisfaction, negative and positive effects. They conducted their study among 127 students from Turkey and 122 students from other countries. The results showed that Turkish students have higher self-compassion levels than students from other countries. They also found that female Turkish students have higher self-compassion levels than male students in other countries.

In other studies, self-compassion is evaluated as a protector against mental disorders or psychological problems. In their studies, Marshall et al. (2015) carried a longitudinal study about the effect of self-compassion levels over the protection of negative effects of low self-esteem. They carried a study among the ninth grades until they become tenth graders and the results show that the high self-compassion levels are effective among the participants of low self-esteem. The participants with high self-compassion are observed more tolerant against the negative self-judgments and they evaluate this situation as a process of growth. The self-compassion level is also studied as an emotion regulation strategy in major depressive disorder by Diedrich et al. (2014). They carried an experimental study design, although there was found to be no meaningful difference between self-compassion level and waiting condition, reappraisal condition but the intensity of the depression has a relation with the self-compassion levels. The higher the level of depression the higher is the relation between compassion.

Another study is carried among the impacts of the self-compassion and gender on the human flourishing of the students. The study reveals no difference among the male and female participants and self-compassion levels but the self-compassion levels are found to be positively correlated with the scores of human flourishing and its components (Verma & Tiwari, 217)

Persinger, J. (2012) examined self-esteem to foster self-compassion. It is discussed that self-compassion and self-esteem are different from each other, but they contribute to each other also. The experiences of social life, self-worth, personal growth is closely related to these concepts, and self-compassion minimize the negative outcomes while self-esteem has a leading role in desirable outcomes. Neff & Vonk (2009) try to relate self-esteem and self-compassion in one of their studies. They found that self-compassion is more effective in predicting rumination, anger, and narcissism related problem than self-esteem. They suggest that self-compassion can be fruitful in the establishment of a healthier self. The Self-compassion concept examined in the way its relation with attachment, depression, and quality of life (Brophy, Brahler, Hinz, Schmidt, & körner, 2020). It is found that self-compassion is an effective tool in competing with stress and emotional disorders. The results show that self-compassion has a direct effect on the quality of life, but it also has indirect effects over self-coldness.

Makadi (2018) studied Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) and Self-Compassion. The people with SAD are found to have low levels of self-compassion. The study was carried on 136 patients with different levels of SAD and it is found that self-compassion is directly related to the SAD levels of the patients. Philips (2019) investigated the interaction of formation in self-compassion mindsets with other pre-defined six components such as self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, etc. the results are found highly effective on males, older, retired and highly-educated individuals. The elements of self-compassion work in harmony with other units but especially on self-kindness. There are numerous studies on the subject but the one carried by Lopez and et al. (2016) is different because they examine the predictive value of self-compassion on depressive symptoms. They reached a high number of the adult samples (n=1736) and they applied questionnaires. It is found that the negative symptoms are highly predicted by mindfulness, but the self-compassion levels of the participants are not effective in predicting the negative effects or depressive features.

The self-compassion levels on the gender base are examined by Yarnell et al. (2019). The sample group on the study was applied questionnaires and the results show that the male participants have slightly higher values than female participants in self-identified men. This result is attributed to the high socialization of men when compared to women. However in another study, the self-compassion levels of the female students are found higher than the male students and also the participants in Turkey have higher values than the participants at other countries when they are compared in terms of their self-compassion levels (Deniz, Arslan, Özyeşil, & İzmirli, 2012). Self-compassion levels are closely related to self-esteem and self-efficacy and the female participants at the study are found to have lower mean values than male participants (Karine de Souza & Hutz, 2016). This result is attributed to the high rate of self-criticism on female participants.

The effect of Erasmus over the students are examined in a study carried by Önder and Balcı (Önder Kasapoğlu & Balcı, 2010). They applied a questionnaire on the Erasmus participants in 2007 and they found that the project has positive effects over the academic and non-academic success of the participants. Arslan (2013) carried a study to define the

perspectives of the Turkish participants on the Erasmus program and he found that the participants had a chance to get to know themselves. The project contributed to students' self-development and the students had also got a multicultural point of view. Lipowski (2012) analyzed the Erasmus participants in Poland and their problems while they are working in Poland. It is found that the participants have problems mainly related to the cultural differences and program of the studies. Language is considered one of the main problems of the Erasmus participants and the students complain mainly about the language barrier and weather conditions.

Tekin and Gencer (2013) examined the changes in the perspectives happening on the Erasmus students. They assessed the 44 Turkish students who went to Germany for the Erasmus exchange program. The participants consider the time on Erasmus as a life-changing experience, a step for the long-term relationships and they got more confident at the end of the Erasmus process. Kızılaslan (2010) investigate the effect of the Erasmus program and it was found that the participants have positive international experience within the program.

3. Material and Methods

The study is carried in a basic sampling technic and the data collection instruments were delivered in online and paper formats. The data collection process has been carried between August 10 and October 9, the participants are the Erasmus students who made their certain returns to Turkey and the participants who have never attended any of the Erasmus or student exchange program. The data were applied Normality test and the results show that the data show normal distribution (Kurtosis= .07; Skewness=.-37). The data can be said to have a normal distribution. The groups were also analyzed separately, and the Shapiro-Walk results show that the groups also have a normal distribution (Erasmus participants value for p=.392; Non-Erasmus participants value for p=.267). the test results for Shapiro-Walk are not meaningful, so it can be said that the results have a normal distribution. Data collection instruments compose of two parts. The first part is the Personal Information Form. The personal data information items are prepared by the researchers and it contains; gender, attendance of Erasmus program, and education level of the participants. The other scale is the Self-Compassion Scale consisting of 26 items and 6 sub-scales. The items are answered according to their frequency of acting by the participants. The scale is 5 Likert type and every number has an equivalence; it ranges from 1 to 5 and 1 is for 'Never' and 5 is for 'Always'. The original form was developed by Neff (2003) and the adaptation of the form has been done by Akdeniz & Deniz (2016). There are 24 items in the Turkish version of the scale and the Turkish version was applied to the participants of the current study. The Cronbach-alpha value of the current questionnaire was found as .86 and it was considered as highly reliable.

4. Results and Discussion

The data were gathered and then analyzed via a statistic program. According to research results, there are 46 (%56.8) bachelor's degrees and 35 (%43.2) associate degree participants of the research. The related data can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the Participants

	Erasmus Participants		Non-Erasmus Participants		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	23	28.39	15	18.52	38	46.91
Female	13	16.05	30	37.04	43	53.09
Total	36	44.44	45	55.56	81	100

The participants were %46.91 (n=38) male and %53.09 (n=43) female, and among the males %28.39 of the participants (n=23) are the participants of the Erasmus program while %18.52 of the participants (n=13) are Non-Erasmus participants. Among the female participants %16.05 (n=13) are Erasmus participants and %37.04 (n=30) are Non-Erasmus participants. There were 81 total participants in this study.

The study is aimed to investigate the difference between self-efficacy levels of the Erasmus participants and the Non-Erasmus participants along with defining their self-efficacy levels. The related data of the Erasmus participants' self-efficacy levels are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of the Erasmus Participants

		Erasmus Participants									
		Never		Occasionally		Half		Often		Always	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	When I'm feeling down, I obsess on everything wrong.	1	2.8	1	2.8	3	8.3	10	27.8	**21**	**58.3**
2	When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.	1	2.8	2	5.6	3	8.3	**24**	**66.7**	6	16.7
3	When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.	0	0	4	11.1	6	16.7	**13**	**36.1**	**13**	**36.1**
4	I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.	0	0	2	5.6	8	22.2	**16**	**44.4**	10	27.8
5	When I fail at something important to me, I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.	2	5.6	4	11.1	5	13.9	**15**	**41.7**	10	27.8
6	When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.	2	5.6	4	11.1	4	11.1	**19**	**52.8**	7	19.4
7	When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.	1	2.8	1	2.8	11	30.6	**12**	**33.3**	11	30.6
8	When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.	0	0	0	0	11	30.6	**15**	**41.7**	10	27.8

9	When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.	0	0	6	16.7	4	11.1	**19**	**52.8**	7	19.4
10	I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.	3	8.3	2	5.6	4	11.1	**21**	**58.3**	6	16.7
11	When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.	1	2.8	0	0	3	8.3	**21**	**58.3**	11	30.6
12	When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.	1	2.8	3	8.3	6	16.7	**15**	**41.7**	11	30.6
13	When something painful happens, I try to take a balanced view of the situation.	0	0	1	2.8	7	19.4	**17**	**47.2**	11	30.6
14	I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.	0	0	2	5.6	4	11.1	**20**	**55.6**	10	27.8
15	When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.	2	5.6	0	0	5	13.9	**18**	**50**	11	30.6
16	When I fail at something important to me, I try to keep things in perspective.	0	0	1	2.8	12	33.3	**19**	**52.8**	4	11.1
17	When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.	2	5.6	2	5.6	8	22.2	**17**	**47.2**	7	19.4
18	I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.	1	2.8	1	2.8	1	2.8	**25**	**69.4**	8	22.2
19	When something upsets me, I get carried away with my feelings.	3	8.3	2	5.6	3	8.3	**18**	**50**	10	27.8
20	I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.	1	2.8	3	8.3	4	11.1	**22**	**61.1**	6	16.7
21	I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.	1	2.8	2	5.6	2	5.6	**19**	**52.8**	12	33.3
22	When something painful happens, I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.	1	2.8	0	0	3	8.3	**20**	**55.6**	12	33.3
23	When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.	2	5.6	1	2.8	6	16.7	**17**	**47.2**	10	27.8
24	I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.	0	0	0	0	3	8.3	**23**	**63.9**	10	27.8

It can be seen from the table that for the first item %58.3 of the participants (n=21) said that they always obsess on everything that is wrong when they are feeling down and the second most preferred option is that they often fell this situation (%27.8, n=10). Erasmus participants said that when things are going badly for them, they see difficulties as part of their lives (%66.7, n=24). The answers for the third item distributed equally for the options 'often' and 'always' (%36.1 for each, n=13). It means the Erasmus participants feel inadequate about themselves and this makes them feel more separate from the rest of the world. The participants mostly agree that they try to love themselves when they feel

emotional pain (%44.4, n=16). Erasmus participants feel them consumed by the negative feelings at hard times (%41.7, n=15) and they generally motivate themselves motivate by telling that everybody feels the same in bad times (%52.8).

The Erasmus participants are tough themselves in hard times (%33.3, n=12), but they try to keep their emotions in balance at these times (%41.7, n=15). They tell themselves it is common to feel inadequate (%52.8, n=19). Erasmus participants are intolerant towards these aspects of their personality and they try to give the tenderness they need at these times (%58.3, n=21). Erasmus participants think that people are happier than themselves when they are having hard times (%41.7, n=15). Most of the Erasmus participants think failings are part of being a human (%55.6, n=20) but they get down on themselves at these times (%50, n=18). Almost all of the participants are cold-hearted towards themselves in times of suffering (%61.1, n=22), and the number of people who are tolerant themselves are high also (%52.8, n=19). The participants tell they have parts that they do not like at themselves, but they try to be patient (%63.9, n=23).

Table 3: Distribution of the Non-Erasmus Participants

| | | Non-Erasmus Participants | | | | | | | | |
| | | Never | | Occasionally | | Half | | Often | | Always | |
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	When I'm feeling down, I obsess on everything wrong.	6	13.3	**18**	**40**	8	17.8	11	24.4	2	4.4
2	When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.	4	8.9	10	22.2	8	17.8	**14**	**31.1**	9	20
3	When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.	5	11.1	7	15.6	**14**	**31.1**	9	20	10	22.2
4	I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.	7	15.6	**14**	**31.1**	12	26.7	7	15.6	5	11.1
5	When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.	4	8.9	8	17.8	9	20	**18**	**40**	6	13.3
6	When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.	5	11.1	8	17.8	9	20	**13**	**28.9**	10	22.2
7	When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.	5	11.1	12	26.7	6	13.3	8	17.8	**14**	**31.1**
8	When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.	4	8.9	10	22.2	**12**	**26.7**	11	24.4	8	17.8
9	When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.	3	6.7	10	22.2	11	24.4	**17**	**37.8**	4	8.9

10	I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.	4	8.9	5	11.1	12	26.7	**15**	**33.3**	9	20
11	When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.	9	20	11	24.4	**13**	**28.9**	9	20	3	6.7
12	When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.	7	15.6	8	17.8	**14**	**31.1**	8	17.8	8	17.8
13	When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.	4	8.9	**17**	**37.8**	6	13.3	12	26.7	6	13.3
14	I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.	4	8.9	11	24.4	**12**	**26.7**	**12**	**26.7**	6	13.3
15	When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.	5	11.1	**11**	**24.4**	8	17.8	10	22.2	**11**	**24.4**
16	When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.	2	4.4	11	24.4	**14**	**31.1**	12	26.7	6	13.3
17	When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.	8	17.8	9	20	**13**	**28.9**	11	24.4	4	8.9
18	I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.	6	13.3	**13**	**28.9**	12	26.7	11	24.4	3	6.7
19	When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.	7	15.6	4	8.9	9	20	**14**	**31.1**	11	24.4
20	I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.	6	13.3	11	24.4	8	17.8	**15**	**33.3**	5	11.1
21	I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.	4	8.9	8	17.8	**19**	**42.2**	11	24.4	3	6.7
22	When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.	7	15.6	4	8.9	11	24.4	11	24.4	**12**	**26.7**
23	When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.	3	6.7	6	13.3	14	31.1	**15**	**33.3**	7	15.6
24	I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.	2	4.4	7	15.6	**20**	**44.4**	13	28.9	3	6.7

When the distribution of the non-Erasmus participants is analyzed it is seen that majority of them feel down when something goes wrong (%40, n=18) and they also understand that people go difficult times from time to time (%31.1, n=14). Non-Erasmus participants feel cut off from the rest of the world in hard times (%31.1, n=14). Non-Erasmus participants do not try to love themselves when they are in emotional pain (%31.1, n=14) also they feel inadequate at times like these (%40, n=18).

Non-Erasmus participants do not feel themselves alone in hard times (%28.9, n=13) but they are tough on themselves at these difficult times (%31.1, n=14). They try to keep their emotions in balance when they get upset (%26.7, n=12) and they remind themselves that such feelings can be shared by many people (%37.8, n=17) but they are intolerant towards these aspects of their personality (%33.3, n=15). Many non-Erasmus participants are cold-hearted towards themselves in times of suffering (%33.3, n=15) but they are tolerant of their flaws (42.2, n=19). They mostly feel alone in times of failure (%33.3, n=15) and they try to be patient to themselves (%44.4, n=20).

Table 4: Self-Compassion Levels Difference Between Participants

Groups	N	Mean	Std.	t	df	p
Erasmus Participants	36	3.93	.40721	7.201	79	.00*
Non-Erasmus Participants	45	3.13	.56274			

*p<.05; p=.00

The participants` self-compassion levels at the study are examined and it is seen that the difference between the Erasmus and Non-Erasmus participants of the study is statistically meaningful (p=.00, p<.05; n=81). It is seen that the mean values of the two groups are slightly different and the value of Erasmus participants is higher than the Non-Erasmus participants (Mean Erasmus:3.93 >Mean Non-Erasmus).

5. Conclusion

The current study focuses on the difference between the self-compassion levels of Erasmus and Non-Erasmus participants. Self-compassion has three main elements, and these are; self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness (Neff, 2016). Self-kindness means showing understanding and being kind towards oneself in times of failure. If people respond with self-criticism, negative judgment, and rumination it means they have low levels of self-kindness and indirectly, it means they have a low level of self-compassion. The other part of self-compassion is common humanity and it means to be able to see one`s failures, imperfections as a part of being human. People who have high self-compassion levels evaluate their failures as a means of learning and developing. Being mistaken and sometimes having failures are elements and crucial parts of being human. The other element of self-compassion is mindfulness and it means the belief of handling difficult situations. If you have a high level of self-compassion it means that you feel ready to welcome the pains, guess them in your inner world and then move on to the next step in your life.

The study is carried among the volunteer participants and compare the levels of their self-compassion in the terms defined above. The results show that the mean score of the Erasmus participants is higher than the Non-Erasmus participants. When the questionnaire items are separately studied, there are some items that both groups of the participants share the common results and there are some items that they have different results. Both of the groups in the survey feel that 'when something bad happens it is

shared by the majority of the people (item 2)', 'the feeling after a bad event is shared by other people also (item 6)' and they share the common understanding that the failings are part of being human. When the literature is reviewed there is not any study to compare the levels of self-compassion in Erasmus students or others in the same study. The studies mainly are focused on gender differences, relation with self-compassion and well-being, and other psychological elements. In this sense, the shared items can be interpreted that the participants have common humanity when they feel failed or when they fail. They try to overcome the feeling of failure with the help of their common human understanding.

The results of the questionnaire items generally seem in harmony among both groups, but the Erasmus participants have higher scores on some items. For example, Erasmus participants try to be more loving towards themselves in times of mental break downs. The Erasmus participants are more kind to themselves when they suffer. Some of the studies support that the Erasmus participants developed themselves in terms of coping with the problems, having self-confidence, and taking responsibility (Demir & Demir, 2009). The students challenge with many problems and it can be said that these problems are more challenging problems than Non-Erasmus participants. Such as the problems with language is the major and one of the most important problems mentioned at many studies related with the Erasmus Program (Tekin & Hiç Gencer, 2013) (Kızılaslan, 2010) (Yücelsin Taş, 2013) (Deniz, Arslan, Özyeşil, & İzmirli, 2012) (Lipowski, 2012). The other problem is the cultural differences between countries. The Non-Erasmus participants do not have a language barrier or solid cultural differences as in the Erasmus participants (European Union Life Long Learning Programme, 2016). These challenges of the Erasmus Participants let them have higher sell-compassion levels because the challenging situations raise awareness on the participants, and they know themselves better and more. They can have a more realistic and effective point of view on the real-life challenges and their abilities.

The Non-Erasmus participants have lower scores at some items when compared to Erasmus participants. Non-Erasmus participants feel less compassionate when they feel pain (item 4) and they also fail to get a balanced view in these times (item 13 and item 18). Non-Erasmus participants have lower scores in the items related to the concept of being kind to themselves in times of emotional pain. It can be said that Non-Erasmus participants think the situation is the worst they come across, but Erasmus participants are in a culturally different and varied situation and they are with other Erasmus participants. It means that they can observe and see people having similar problems with them, but the non-Erasmus participants do not have this chance. Non-Erasmus participants may not observe that many people have similar concerns, problems, and so on. This makes them feel lonely and they tend to think that the problems just happen to them only. The literature reviews are carried and there is found no similar study or finding related to this situation.

As the results show that at some items both of the groups get similar scores and these scores are generally related to the acts in dealing with the problems. The concept of

the problems seems to be the same except for the differences in being in a different cultural context. It can be said that they share these results because of the similar problem they encounter. The study reveals that Erasmus participants have higher scores than Non-Erasmus participants, and it can be said that they are more capable of handling painful emotions and they are more aware of the process. The studies carried among the depressive people have high levels of anxiety, also have low self-compassion levels (Neff, 2016). The study can not be generalized but can be further studied in detail by comparison of the countries and time. The study is also important because it shows that the more the participants experience and observe familiar problems around them the more, they feel self-competent themselves. The problems in this way can be evaluated as a way of learning.

6. About the Author(s)

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