

## Self-Compassion from a Cultural Perspective: A Comparative Study of the Minahasa and Sundanese Ethnic Groups

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### Abstract / Abstrak

The level of an individual's self-compassion is shaped by their social environment and the cultural background in which they live. This study aims to examine the differences in self-compassion levels between individuals from the Minahasa and Sundanese ethnic groups, as well as to explore the moral and ethical values underlying self-compassion within each cultural context. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis using self compassion scale and qualitative data gathered through open questionnaire. The quantitative findings revealed a significant difference between the two groups ( $p = 0.002$ ), with individuals from the Minahasa ethnic group demonstrating higher levels of self-compassion compared to those from the Sundanese group. Qualitative results indicated that while moral and ethical values serve as the foundation of self-compassion for both groups, these values are interpreted differently according to their respective cultural frameworks. These findings highlight the importance of considering cultural context in understanding and fostering self-compassion as a crucial aspect of individual mental health.

Tingkat self-compassion individu dipengaruhi oleh ruang hidupnya juga budaya yang melatarbelakanginya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji perbedaan tingkat self-compassion antara individu serta mengeksplorasi makna nilai moral dan etika yang melandasi self-compassion dalam konteks budaya dari Suku Minahasa dan Sunda. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan campuran (mixed-method) dengan metode kuantitatif melalui skala self compassion dan metode kualitatif melalui pertanyaan terbuka. Hasil analisis kuantitatif menunjukkan terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara kedua kelompok etnis ( $p = 0,002$ ), di mana individu dari suku Minahasa menunjukkan tingkat self-compassion yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan individu dari suku Sunda. Temuan kualitatif mengungkap bahwa nilai moral dan etika menjadi fondasi utama dalam pembentukan self-compassion pada kedua kelompok, namun dimaknai dengan cara yang berbeda sesuai dengan konstruksi budaya masing-masing. Hasil ini menegaskan pentingnya mempertimbangkan konteks budaya dalam memahami dan mengembangkan self-compassion sebagai aspek penting dalam kesehatan mental individu.

### Keywords / Kata kunci

Self-compassion;  
Culture; Minahasa  
Ethnicity; Sunda  
Ethnicity; Mixed  
method;

Welas Diri; Budaya;  
Suku Minahasa; Suku  
Sunda; Metode  
Campuran

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### Introduction

Self-compassion is a psychological concept that describes an attitude of acceptance and warm regard toward oneself when facing difficulties, failures, or suffering (Neff, 2003). This concept consists of three main elements: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. Self-compassion plays an important role in psychology because it protects individuals from negative effects such as depression, anxiety, and social isolation, which are often associated with harsh

self-judgment and fragile self-esteem (Neff & Pommier, 2013).

According to an article on Kompasiana written by Nabiha (2023), mental disorders are increasingly prevalent among individuals aged 18–25 years. Data indicate that around 64.8% of young people experience anxiety problems, while 61.5% exhibit symptoms of depression. This phenomenon highlights the urgency of understanding and addressing mental health challenges among young adults, a crucial transitional phase for identity formation and independence. One of the relevant concepts in

maintaining their psychological well-being is self-compassion.

Research on self-compassion has been widely conducted both globally and locally. Globally, studies have shown that self-compassion offers significant psychological benefits compared to other concepts such as self-esteem, particularly in enhancing emotional well-being and mental health (Neff, 2011). Locally, studies have indicated significant differences in self-compassion levels based on gender. For instance, Karinda (2020) found that about 52.7% of male students and 53.6% of female students were categorized as having high levels of self-compassion.

Recent studies reaffirm the relevance of self-compassion in the context of psychological well-being and mental health. Giyati and Wibowo (2023) found a relationship between self-compassion, emotion regulation, and stress levels in early adulthood. Wollast et al. (2021) demonstrated that self-compassion moderates body surveillance and body shame across cultures. Untario et al. (2023) highlighted the effectiveness of self-compassion training in enhancing resilience among individuals facing social pressures, such as wives of individuals with drug addiction. These studies emphasize that self-compassion is not only a universal psychological construct but also essential to apply in various cultural and situational contexts to improve individual mental well-being.

Cross-cultural studies indicate that cultural values can significantly influence self-compassion levels. For example, in research on empathy among Javanese and Sundanese students, it was found that Javanese students tend to have a higher ability to understand and feel others' emotions, while Sundanese students tend to understand and place themselves in others' thoughts (Sutanti, 2020). This suggests differences in orientation toward self and relationships with others, which may influence how self-compassion is practiced and internalized in society.

Other research on cultural orientation and self-compassion shows that factors such as vertical or horizontal individualism can moderate the relationship between self-compassion, body surveillance, and body shame (Wollast et al., 2021). Women in the United States tend to have lower self-compassion levels compared to women in Thailand, who demonstrate higher levels of self-compassion. This underscores the influence of cultural context on how individuals manage negative feelings toward themselves.

Additionally, a cross-cultural study by Kotera et al. (2021) found significant differences between German and South African employees in terms of mental health problems, mental health shame, and self-compassion levels. German employees exhibited higher self-compassion and lower mental health problems compared to South African employees. These findings suggest that cultural experiences can influence how individuals develop self-compassion and manage mental health in the workplace.

Further research by Kotera et al. (2020) also found differences in self-compassion levels between Dutch and Japanese workers in relation to mental health problems and work engagement. Dutch workers showed higher self-compassion, which was associated with lower mental health problems, while Japanese workers exhibited a negative relationship between low self-compassion and mental health problems. These findings support the idea that self-compassion can serve as a protective factor against mental health problems, particularly in different cultural contexts.

The Minahasa people are known for their rich local wisdom, encompassing values such as *Maesa-esa'an* (positive thinking), *Mangenangengan* (remembering kindness), and *Mapalus* (cooperation) (Umaternate et al., 2022). These values not only reflect a warm and supportive approach to social relationships but also provide important context for the internalization of self-compassion among the Minahasa. According to recent research, Mazani, a traditional Minahasan art form, serves not only as a medium of communication between humans and God but also among people (Pandaleke & Maragani, 2022). The study identified three stages in the cultural identity formation of the Minahasa through Mazani, including public perceptions of the art, thinking patterns related to its continuity, and efforts to preserve Mazani music among millennials.

Moreover, the values reflected in *Ma'kaaruyen*, a traditional Minahasan song, illustrate characteristics such as simplicity, calmness, gentleness, and mutual affection (Wibowo, 2020). Turangan et al. (2023) also highlight the "Baku Cungkel" behavior in Toure Dua Village, which, despite originating from negative emotions like envy and resentment, also reflects social dynamics in the Minahasan community.

In the context of family education among farmers in Kamanga Dua Village, democratic and authoritarian parenting styles were observed,

showing significant differences in parental approaches toward their children (Umboh et al., 2023). Democratic approaches provide children the freedom to develop their own potential, while authoritarian approaches emphasize stricter rules and control. This suggests that parenting styles can influence personal development, including aspects of self-compassion.

On the other hand, the Sundanese people have a strong cultural identity reflected in various social ethics such as hospitality (*someah*), polite speech, and respect for elders (Kembara et al., 2021). These ethics are not merely social norms but reflect deep-seated values in daily interactions. Hospitality, for instance, is not just a formality but symbolizes the warmth and peace valued in Sundanese culture. Moreover, the use of polite language and sincere respect for elders serves as a strong foundation for building social harmony and maintaining family and community integrity. Maulia et al., (2021) affirm that such traditional behaviors are not only expressions of local identity but also important foundations for maintaining social cohesion amidst modernization.

In addition to these social values, Sundanese local wisdom significantly enriches the cultural dimensions of their society (Rahmah, 2020). Principles such as *silih asah*, *silih asih*, *silih asuh*, and *silih wawangi* not only teach mutual intellectual development, sincere affection, guidance and protection, and the fostering of positive connections but also serve as the foundation for character building and attitudes passed down through generations. These values train individuals to grow intellectually and spiritually, while also fostering harmonious interactions that positively impact the wider community. Thus, the richness of Sundanese culture lies not only in its historical heritage but also in its living values, which remain relevant for the future.

This study aims to address a gap in the literature, as there is limited exploration of cultural variations in self-compassion in Indonesia, particularly between early adult individuals from the Minahasa and Sundanese ethnic groups. While research on self-compassion exists globally and locally, specific comparisons between ethnic groups in Indonesia remain scarce.

It is expected that this research will contribute significantly to the literature on self-compassion in the Indonesian cultural context. By deepening the understanding of how Minahasa and Sundanese cultural values influence the

practice of self-compassion, this study will fill an existing knowledge gap. The findings may provide insights into cultural factors that moderate self-compassion levels, as well as practical implications for developing culturally appropriate mental health interventions in Indonesia.

## Method

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with a convergent design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed simultaneously, and the results were then compared to determine whether the findings confirmed or contradicted each other. This approach was selected to gain a deeper understanding of the quantitative results by further exploring them through qualitative data.

Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method from a population of early adults belonging to the Minahasa and Sundanese ethnic groups. Selection was based on the availability and willingness of individuals to participate in the study. Inclusion criteria included individuals aged 18–25 years who self-identified as members of either the Minahasa or Sundanese ethnic group. The total sample comprised 82 participants, consisting of 41 early adults from the Minahasa ethnic group and 41 early adults from the Sundanese ethnic group. Since this study used convenience sampling, no population size estimate was available as a basis for sample calculation. However, the sample size was determined considering the time constraints of the research and participant accessibility.

Data collection was conducted online using Google Forms to distribute the Self-Compassion Scale (SWD), which had been adapted and validated for the Indonesian cultural context (Sugianto et al., 2020). The questionnaire link was disseminated via social media and community groups relevant to the participants' characteristics. Before completing the questionnaire, participants were presented with a research information sheet explaining the procedures and their rights as participants. Digital informed consent was obtained before they could access the research questions. To ensure confidentiality, the information provided by participants was used solely for research purposes. From the total links distributed, the return rate was approximately 30%.

The collected data were analyzed using two approaches. First, statistical analysis was performed using an independent samples t-test

with SPSS software to compare the mean self-compassion scores between the Minahasa and Sundanese groups. Second, qualitative analysis was conducted using thematic analysis to explore patterns and themes emerging from the qualitative responses regarding self-compassion experiences.

Qualitative data were obtained from open-ended questions in the same questionnaire, which asked how participants' cultural values influenced their self-compassion. The respondents who provided qualitative responses were the same individuals included in the quantitative sample; therefore, no separate subject selection was performed for the qualitative analysis. Qualitative responses were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), which included stages of data familiarization, initial coding, theme identification and development, and interpretation of results.

However, this study has several limitations. One limitation is the restricted time and resources to collect balanced data from both groups. Additionally, there is a potential for variation in the interpretation of items in the self-compassion scale. Although the scale had been officially translated into Indonesian, participants from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds may have understood concepts such as "kindness toward oneself" or "acceptance of one's shortcomings" differently. These differences in interpretation were not due to the use of an interpreter, but rather to cultural nuances influencing how participants understood and responded to the scale items.

The psychometric test results, using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, showed that the Indonesian version of the Self-Compassion Scale (SWD) had a Cronbach's Alpha reliability value of 0.87. This supports the use of the SWD as a reliable instrument for measuring self-compassion in this study.

## Results

The calculations show that the mean self-compassion score of early adults from the Minahasa ethnic group is higher than that of early adults from the Sundanese ethnic group. Furthermore, the variation in self-compassion levels among individuals from the Minahasa group is greater compared to the variation among individuals from the Sundanese group.

Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for assessing the normality of self-compassion level data in early adults from the Minahasa and Sundanese ethnic groups, the

Minahasa group obtained a statistic value of 0.060 with a p-value of 0.200, while the Sundanese group obtained a statistic value of 0.113 with a p-value of 0.200. According to the testing criteria, where  $H_0$  is accepted if p-value  $> 0.05$ , it can be concluded that the self-compassion level data for both ethnic groups are normally distributed, as the p-values for both tests are greater than 0.05.

**Table 1**  
*Self-Compassion Level Data*

Ethnicity	Mean	Standard Deviation	S.E. Mean
Minahasa	20,1759	3,35280	0,52362
Sundanese	18,3707	1,30791	0,20426

**Table 2**  
*Normality Test Result*

Ethnicity	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	p-value
Minahasa	0,060	41	0,200
Sundanese	0,113	41	0,200

**Table 3**  
*Homogeneity Test Result*

Variabel	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
	F	Significance
Self-compassion	21,024	<0,001

**Table 4**  
*Independent Samples t-Test Results*

	T- Test for Equality of Means		
	t-value	df	Significance
Equal variances not assumed	3,212	51,898	0,002

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicates that the variances between the two groups are not homogeneous, with an F-value of 21.024 and a p-value of less than 0.001. Therefore, the results from the "Equal variances not assumed" option in the independent samples t-test were used for further analysis.

The independent samples t-test, assuming unequal variances, yielded a t-value of 3.212 with degrees of freedom (df) of 51.898 and a p-value of 0.002. Based on the testing criteria, where p-value  $< 0.05$  indicates a statistically significant difference between two groups, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in self-compassion levels between early adults from the Minahasa and Sundanese ethnic groups.



**Table 5***Themes of Cultural Influence on Minahasa Individuals*

Category	Frequency	%
Personal behavior patterns and habits	8	19.5
Personal values (ethics and morals)	9	21.9
Social interaction and relationships	8	19.5
Positive influence	10	24.4
No influence	6	14.6

**Table 6***Themes of Cultural Influence on Sundanese Individuals*

Category	Frequency	%
Influence on personal behavior patterns and habits	10	24.4
Social interaction and relationships	11	26.8
Personal values	3	7.3
Positive influence	10	24.4
No influence	4	9.7
Negative influence	3	7.3

**Themes of Influence Cultural Values on the Self**

**Table 5** presents the thematic coding results from open-ended questions addressed to 41 participants. However, 16 participants (39%) provided brief responses, stating either that cultural values had a positive influence or no influence on their self-formation as Minahasa individuals. The coding results show several values most frequently mentioned by participants, such as personal values including morals and ethics, social interaction and relationships, as well as influences on personal character such as behavior patterns, ways of thinking, and habits (**Table 5**).

Based on **Table 5**, individuals from the Minahasa ethnic group appear to be strongly influenced by their culture in terms of instilling moral and ethical values, with 21.9% of respondents mentioning this. One participant stated:

"The cultural values I embrace greatly influence me, for example, morals and ethics... we can make a difference in how we treat ourselves and others."(M5)

"A fairly strict culture, teaching responsibility from a young age, has made me able to survive and accept everything that happens."

"Nilai budaya yang saya anut sangat mempengaruhi diri saya, contohnya moral dan etika... kita jadi bisa membuat perbedaan dalam bersikap terhadap diri sendiri maupun orang lain" (M5).

"Budaya yang cukup keras, diajarkan tanggung jawab sejak kecil, membuat saya bisa survive dan menerima semua yang terjadi."

Cultural values were also perceived to significantly influence their socializing and social interactions by 19.5% of respondents, as expressed by another participant:

"With the value of Mapalus, I have become a person who is sensitive to the environment... as well as developed a sense of mutual help." (M39)

"Dengan adanya nilai budaya Mapalus, saya menjadi pribadi yang peka terhadap lingkungan... serta timbul rasa tolong-menolong" (M39).

**Table 6** presents the thematic coding results from open-ended questions addressed to 41 Sundanese participants. However, 17 participants (41.4%) provided brief responses regarding the role of cultural values in shaping their identity as Sundanese individuals, whether the influence was positive, nonexistent, or negative.

The coding results show that the most frequently mentioned category relates to the influence of Sundanese culture on social interaction and relationships (26.8%). As one respondent expressed:

"...my culture teaches me to respect others and maintain good relationships with them. This helps me build and sustain healthy social relationships..." (S11)

"...budaya saya mengajarkan saya untuk menghargai orang lain dan menjaga hubungan yang baik dengan mereka. Ini membantu saya dalam membangun dan mempertahankan hubungan sosial yang sehat..."(S11)

In addition, Sundanese respondents considered their culture to influence their behavior patterns, ways of thinking, and habits (24.4%), as illustrated by the following response:

"The cultural values I embrace influence me starting from my habits and also my mindset." (S23)

"Nilai budaya yang saya anut mempengaruhi diri saya mulai dari kebiasaan dan juga pola pikir" (S23).

The influence of culture on personal values (morals and ethics) was relatively less recognized, with only 7.3% of respondents mentioning it. As one participant explained:

“...my personality is not entirely from my genetics but also the environment that influences me. In the Sundanese community, people will always be respected because ethics and attitude have become ingrained in the culture...” (S10)

*“... kepribadian saya tidak sepenuhnya dari genetik saya namun juga lingkungan yg mempengaruhi saya. Di lingkup Sunda orang akan selalu dihormati karna etika dan attitude sudah menjadi budaya yg tertanam ....” (S10)*

Another interesting response concerned the perceived negative influence of Sundanese culture (7.3%):

“...too coercive; we want to live freely without any constraints. Times have changed; it’s not all about strictly following that culture, but preservation also needs modernization.” (S12)

*“...terlalu bersifat memaksa, kami ingin hidup bebas tanpa ikatan apapun. Jaman sudah berubah tidak melulu soal anutan budaya tersebut, namun utk melestarikannya juga perlu dengan modernisasi” (S12)*

Qualitative analysis revealed that both Minahasa and Sundanese participants view cultural values as a framework shaping how they treat themselves and others, which is central to self-compassion.

Among Minahasa participants, moral and ethical values are understood as a compass for maintaining behavior aligned with social norms, encouraging them to uphold personal integrity while respecting others. Environmental sensitivity, manifested in the Mapalus tradition, fosters a sense of community connectedness and reduces feelings of isolation during difficulties. Responsibility, instilled from a young age, shapes resilience and acceptance of life experiences—traits closely related to the dimensions of self-kindness and mindfulness in self-compassion.

Among Sundanese participants, cultural values influence social relationships, particularly in maintaining good and harmonious interactions with others. Personal values are understood as the internalization of tradition that provides stability and continuity, helping individuals accept themselves within a familiar cultural framework. A supportive social environment is seen as a

source of positive role models, fostering self-empathy when facing failure or hardship.

A commonality between the two ethnic groups lies in the understanding that moral and ethical values are pillars for interacting with oneself and others. The difference lies in value emphasis: Minahasa highlights collective care (Mapalus) and personal responsibility that strengthen resilience, while Sundanese culture emphasizes tradition preservation and social harmony, which reinforce self-acceptance.

These findings indicate that, although the manifestations of cultural values differ, both contribute to shaping the dimensions of self-compassion—self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness—which may influence the self-compassion levels of early adults in each cultural group.

### Theme of Individual Responses to Failure or Life Difficulties

**Table 7** presents the thematic coding results from open-ended questions addressed to 41 Minahasa participants. All participants responded to the question, “How do you usually respond when facing difficulties or failures in life?”; however, two participants (4.9%) gave answers that were irrelevant or did not clearly reflect a response to the question.

Based on **Table 7**, the tendency toward acceptance emerged as the dominant category. A total of 29.3% of participants expressed an attitude of openly and sincerely accepting reality before moving on to the next stage. As one participant stated:

“Not dwelling on failure but improving and accepting the existing reality without hindering myself from moving forward.” (M20)

*“Tidak berlarut-larut dalam kegagalan tapi memperbaiki dan menerima realita yang ada tanpa menghambat diri saya untuk maju kedepan.” (M20)*

The category of reflection ranked second at 26.8%. This response reflects efforts to contemplate experiences, seek meaning, and understand the causes of difficulties as a basis for self-improvement. An example response is:

“Reflect for a moment and try to correct the mistake.” (M31)

*“Renungkan sejenak, dan berusaha memperbaiki kesalahan tersebut.” (M31)*

**Table 7**

*Themes of Minahasa Individuals' Responses to Failure or Life Difficulties*

Category	Frequency	%
Staying calm	5	13.9
Patience	3	11.1
Rising again	7	22.2
Acceptance	12	27.8
Surrender	1	8.3
Reflection	11	16.7
No response given	2	4.9

**Table 8**

*Themes of Sundanese Individuals' Responses to Failure or Life Difficulties*

Category	Frequency	%
Patience	6	14.6
Gratitude	1	2.4
Worship	1	2.4
Rising again	21	51.2
Indifference	3	7.3
Calming oneself	8	19.6
Silence	4	9.8
No response given	1	2.4

**Table 9**

*Themes of Actions Taken by Minahasa Individuals to Care for Themselves Under High Pressure*

Category	Frequency	%
Sleeping	8	19.5
Healing	23	56.1
Being alone	4	9.8
Worship	3	7.3
Catharsis	3	7.3

Next, the category of rising again (17.1%) described efforts to try again, improve the situation, and remain optimistic despite failure. One participant expressed:

"Never lose spirit and keep trying again." (M27)

"Tidak pernah patah semangat dan terus coba lagi." (M27)

Table 8 presents the thematic coding results from open-ended questions addressed to 41 Sundanese participants. All participants responded to the question, "How do you usually respond when facing difficulties or failures in life?"; however, one participant (2.4%) gave an irrelevant answer or did not clearly reflect a response to the question.

Based on Table 8, the tendency toward rising again was the dominant category. A total of 51.2% of participants expressed an attitude of trying again, improving the situation, and continuing to

make efforts despite facing failure. As one participant stated:

"... refocus on what I can do and fight again." (S1)

"... kembali fokus pada apa yang bisa saya lakukan dan berjuang kembali." (S1)

The category of calming oneself ranked second at 19.6%. This response describes strategies for managing emotions before taking the next step, such as calming the mind, giving oneself time, or seeking positive aspects. An example is:

"Trying to calm myself first, then thinking of something good that could be a solution to help me rise again." (S28)

"Mencoba menenangkan diri terlebih dahulu, kemudian memikirkan sesuatu yang baik dimana hal tersebut bisa menjadi solusi yang bisa membuat diri saya bangkit kembali." (S28)

Next, patience (14.6%) reflects acceptance of difficulties while remaining steadfast and not rushing into decisions. One participant explained:

"... patient in facing it, and of course grateful for the difficulties I encounter, because they help me grow and move forward." (S14)

"... sabar untuk menghadapinya, dan tentunya bersyukur atas kesulitan yang saya dapati, karna itu membuat saya berkembang dan ingin maju." (S14).

These findings show that Sundanese participants tend to prioritize active efforts to rise again after failure, while some opt for emotional regulation strategies such as calming oneself or being patient before taking further action.

The thematic analysis results reveal that both ethnic groups exhibit distinct forms of self-compassion, shaped by different value orientations and adaptive strategies in responding to life difficulties or failures.

In the Minahasa group, the dominant themes were acceptance (29.3%) and reflection (26.8%). This suggests that self-compassion among early adults of the Minahasa ethnic group tends to be grounded in open acceptance of reality and meaning-making through reflective processes. Acceptance indicates mindfulness—the ability to recognize and acknowledge difficult experiences without excessive resistance. Reflection, on the other hand, demonstrates self-kindness expressed through constructive self-evaluation, aimed at improving circumstances without falling into excessive self-criticism.

**Table 10**

*Themes of Actions Taken by Sundanese Individuals to Care for Themselves Under High Pressure*

Category	Frequency	%
Exercising	6	14.6
Sleeping	7	17.1
Self-reward	9	22
Confiding in friends or professionals	3	7.3
Being alone	6	14.6
Crying	2	4.9
Worship	6	14.6
Listening to music	3	7.3

**Table 11**

*Themes of How Minahasa Individuals Appreciate and Celebrate Life Achievements*

Category	Frequency	%
Self-reward	15	36.6
Bersyukur	20	48.8
Berbagi	4	9.8

**Table 12**

*Themes of How Sundanese Individuals Appreciate and Celebrate Life Achievements*

Category	Frequency	%
Meeting with friends	1	2.4
Sleeping	3	7.3
Self-reward	15	36.6
Self-appreciation	6	14.6
Gratitude	12	29.3
No response	4	9.8

Conversely, in the Sundanese group, the dominant themes were rising again (51.2%) and calming oneself (19.5%). This indicates that self-compassion among early adults of the Sundanese ethnic group is more often manifested through an orientation toward self-restoration (active coping) combined with emotional regulation strategies. Rising again reflects the self-kindness dimension that motivates individuals to keep making efforts and seeking solutions, while calming oneself reflects emotional management that allows space before taking further steps—aligned with the principle of common humanity in viewing difficulties as a natural part of life.

This comparison shows that although both groups display elements of self-compassion, the emphasis differs. The Minahasa group highlights acceptance and reflection as the initial foundation before taking action, while the Sundanese group emphasizes rising again and active efforts as the primary response. These differences may reflect the influence of each group's cultural values—

Minahasa culture tends to integrate mindfulness and self-reflection as strategies for facing challenges, while Sundanese culture prioritizes rapid self-restoration supported by emotional regulation.

#### **Theme of Actions Taken by Individuals to Care for Themselves Under High Pressure**

Table 9 presents the thematic coding results from open-ended questions addressed to 41 Minahasa participants regarding how they care for themselves when experiencing pressure or stress. All participants responded to this question.

Based on Table 9, the tendency toward engaging in healing activities emerged as the dominant category. A total of 56.1% of participants reported choosing activities such as going for a walk, shopping, watching movies, eating favorite foods, exercising, or having me time to distract themselves from stress. One participant stated:

“... going to see city lights and the beach, going to the mall, shopping, watching movies, eating my favorite food, and drinking matcha.” (M13)

“..., pergi melihat citylight dan pantai, pergi jalan-jalan ke mall, shopping, nonton film, makan makanan favorite dan minum matcha.” (M13)

The category of sleeping ranked second at 19.5%. This strategy was used by participants to calm themselves and restore energy when facing pressure. As expressed by one participant:

“Calming myself down by sleeping.” (M18)

“Menenangkan diri dengan tidur.” (M18)

Next, the category of being alone (9.8%) reflects participants' need to withdraw from their surroundings temporarily to clear their minds. One participant described it briefly:

“Being alone.” (M3)

“Menyendiri.” (M3)

These findings indicate that Minahasa participants tend to rely on healing-based strategies and enjoyable activities to reduce stress, while some also pursue spiritual practices and emotional expression as forms of self-care.

Table 10 presents the thematic coding results from open-ended questions addressed to 41 Sundanese participants regarding how they care for themselves when experiencing pressure or stress. All participants responded to this question.

Based on Table 10, the tendency toward self-reward emerged as the dominant category. A total



of 22.0% of participants reported engaging in activities such as eating favorite foods, shopping, or doing things that improve their mood. One participant stated:

“I will try to pamper myself with things that can improve my emotional mood, such as watching movies, eating my favorite foods, washing dishes, and sleeping all day.” (S10)

*“Saya akan mencoba memanjakan diri saya sendiri dengan hal-hal yang dapat meningkatkan mood emosional saya. Seperti menonton film, makan makanan fav, mencuci piring, dan tidur seharian.” (S10)*

The category of worship ranked second at 14.6%. This strategy was used by participants to calm their hearts, strengthen their faith, and seek inner peace when facing pressure. As expressed by one participant:

“Praying and reciting dzikir to Allah.” (S11)

*“Solat dan dzikir kepada Allah.” (S11)*

Next, the category of being alone (14.6%) reflects participants’ need to withdraw from their surroundings temporarily to clear their minds. One participant explained:

“I usually isolate myself to calm down or do other activities that keep me from thinking about the problem.” (S30)

*“Saya biasanya, menyendiri untuk menenangkan diri. Atau melakukan aktivitas yang lain, yang membuat diri saya tidak memikirkan masalah tersebut.” (S30)*

These findings indicate that Sundanese participants tend to rely on self-reward strategies and enjoyable activities to reduce stress, while some also engage in spiritual practices, rest, or seek social support as forms of self-care.

Thematic analysis results reveal that both ethnic groups display distinct self-care strategies, shaped by different value orientations and adaptive habits in responding to pressure or stress.

In the Minahasa group, the dominant themes were healing (56.1%) and sleeping (19.5%). This suggests that self-care among early adults in Minahasa is often based on seeking positive distractions and recreational activities to divert attention from stress. Healing reflects an orientation toward mood recovery through enjoyable activities such as going for a walk, shopping, watching movies, or enjoying favorite foods. Sleeping serves as a way to calm oneself

and restore energy, representing self-kindness by giving the body the opportunity to rest.

In contrast, in the Sundanese group, the dominant themes were self-reward (22.0%), worship (14.6%), and being alone (14.6%). These findings indicate that self-care among early adults in the Sundanese ethnic group is more often manifested through rewarding oneself and spiritual approaches to calm the heart. Self-reward reflects the self-kindness dimension of pampering oneself with enjoyable things, while worship reflects the search for inner peace through spiritual connection. Being alone serves as an emotional regulation strategy by creating distance from stressful situations before re-engaging with others.

This comparison shows that although both groups use enjoyable activities as a stress-reduction strategy, their emphasis differs. The Minahasa group focuses more on recreational activities (healing) and physical recovery through rest, while the Sundanese group emphasizes self-reward and spiritual support as part of the recovery process. These differences may reflect the influence of each group’s cultural values, with Minahasa tending to prioritize entertainment and physical relaxation as coping strategies, while Sundanese culture integrates spirituality and self-indulgence into everyday self-care.

### **Theme of Ways Individuals Appreciate and Celebrate Life Achievements**

**Table 11** presents the thematic coding results from open-ended questions addressed to 41 Minahasa participants regarding how they appreciate and celebrate small achievements in life. All participants responded to this question.

Based on **Table 11**, expressing gratitude emerged as the dominant category. A total of 48.8% of participants chose to express gratitude to God or to themselves for the achievements they had attained. One participant stated:

“Of course, always expressing gratitude (alhamdulillah) to Allah SWT for His blessings and mercy, as I am still given the pleasure and enjoyment He bestows.” (M4)

*“Tentunya selalu mengucapkan syukur alhamdulillah kepada Allah SWT atas berkat dan rahmatnya saya masih bisa dikasih kenikmatan yang diberikan.” (M4)*

The category of self-reward ranked second at 36.6%. This strategy was used by participants to give themselves appreciation through enjoyable activities such as shopping, eating favorite foods,

or engaging in activities they enjoy. As one participant expressed:

“I give myself a self-reward by shopping and eating.” (M13)

“*Saya self reward yaitu shopping dan makan.*” (M13)

Next, sharing (9.8%) reflected a form of celebration carried out by sharing happiness with others, either materially or non-materially. One participant briefly stated:

“Giving alms.” (M38)

“*Bersedekah.*” (M38)

These findings indicate that Minahasa participants tend to celebrate small achievements by expressing gratitude and giving themselves rewards, while some also choose to share happiness with others as a way to appreciate their achievements.

Table 12 presents the thematic coding results from open-ended questions addressed to 41 Sundanese participants regarding how they appreciate and celebrate small achievements in life. All participants responded to this question.

Based on Table 12, self-reward emerged as the dominant category. A total of 36.6% of participants reported giving themselves rewards through enjoyable activities such as buying desired items or food, shopping, or visiting favorite places. One participant stated:

“I give myself a self-reward, such as going to my favorite place or buying my favorite food.” (S3)

“*Saya memberikan self-reward pada diri saya sendiri, seperti pergi ke tempat favorit atau membeli makanan favorit.*” (S3)

The category of gratitude ranked second at 29.3%. This strategy was used by participants to express thankfulness, either verbally or through actions such as giving alms or celebrating in a modest way. As expressed by one participant:

“Of course, by being grateful. Usually, there is a small celebration by giving alms, buying nice snacks, or giving enough rest time for my tired body.” (S15)

“*Tentunya dengan bersyukur. Biasanya sih ada perayaan kecil-kecilan dengan bersedekah, jajan enak, ataupun kasih waktu istirahat yang cukup untuk badan yang lelah.*” (S15)

Next, self-appreciation (14.6%) reflects participants' efforts to give themselves positive

affirmation or non-material rewards. One participant described it briefly:

“Hugging myself while saying, ‘Thank you for fighting this far, you’re great, you’re amazing, keep going.’” (S33)

“*Peluk diri sendiri sambil bilang ‘terimakasih sudah berjuang sejauh ini, kamu hebat, kamu keren, semangat’.*” (S33)

These findings indicate that Sundanese participants tend to celebrate small achievements through enjoyable self-reward activities, while some also choose to express gratitude or give themselves personal appreciation as a way of acknowledging their accomplishments.

Thematic analysis results show that both ethnic groups display distinct strategies for celebrating achievements, influenced by value orientations and ways of expressing appreciation toward themselves and others.

In the Minahasa group, the dominant themes were gratitude (48.8%) and self-reward (36.6%). This suggests that appreciation for achievements among Minahasa early adults is often expressed through gratitude, both verbally and through actions such as praying or holding small celebrations. Self-reward is used as a form of self-appreciation through enjoyable activities such as shopping, eating favorite foods, or other recreational activities. The category of sharing (9.8%) also reflects the value of togetherness, where some participants choose to share happiness with others through almsgiving or gifts.

In contrast, in the Sundanese group, the dominant themes were self-reward (36.6%), gratitude (29.3%), and self-appreciation (14.6%). These findings indicate that celebration of achievements among Sundanese early adults tends to focus on giving themselves gifts or enjoyable experiences, both materially and non-materially. Gratitude holds an important place as a form of acknowledgment for achievements, sometimes accompanied by symbolic actions such as small celebrations or sharing. Meanwhile, self-appreciation reflects internal positive reinforcement, such as giving oneself affirmations or hugs.

This comparison shows that while both groups rely on self-reward and gratitude as their primary ways of celebrating achievements, their emphasis differs. The Minahasa group highlights spirituality through expressive gratitude and the habit of sharing with others, whereas the Sundanese group emphasizes direct self-

appreciation, both materially (self-reward) and non-materially (self-appreciation). These differences may reflect the influence of each group's cultural values, with Minahasa placing gratitude and togetherness at the core of celebration, while Sunda integrates self-indulgence and personal appreciation as a form of acknowledging achievements.

### Discussions

An independent samples t-test on the total self-compassion scores revealed a significant difference between the Minahasa and Sundanese groups ( $p = 0.002$ ). The Minahasa group tended to have higher levels of self-compassion compared to the Sundanese group. This finding reinforces the role of cultural values in shaping how individuals perceive and treat themselves. Qualitative results revealed that in both groups, moral and ethical values serve as the main foundation, but are interpreted through different cultural nuances.

In Minahasa society, moral and ethical values are integrated with collectivist culture such as *Mapalus*, which fosters cooperation, care, environmental awareness, and social responsibility (Umaternate et al., 2022). These values are reflected in their approach to facing difficulties by accepting the situation and engaging in reflection—an adaptive approach aligned with the local wisdom of *Maesa-esa'an* (positive thinking) and *Mangenang-genangan* (remembering past contributions), which emphasize awareness, appreciation of process, and re-interpretation of life experiences. When facing pressure, they tend to calm themselves, rest, or engage in meaningful activities.

In contrast, in Sundanese society, moral and ethical values are intertwined with traditions, customs, and a social environment that upholds the principles of *someah*, *silih asah*, *silih asih*, *silih asuh*, and *silih wawangi* (Kembara et al., 2021; Rahmah, 2020). These values encourage responses to difficulties through resilience and self-soothing, as well as self-care via positive activities and maintaining social relationships. Both the Minahasa and Sundanese communities value themselves through self-reward and gratitude, and celebrate achievements with gratitude and sharing, which strengthen social bonds and collective identity.

These results can be explained using Neff's (2003) self-compassion theory, which comprises three core elements: self-kindness, common

humanity, and mindfulness. Among Minahasa respondents, the values of *Mapalus* and *Maesa-esa'an* (positive thinking) directly reflect self-kindness and common humanity, with an emphasis on social support and collaboration. Among Sundanese respondents, the principles of *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh* also reflect these elements, but are more often manifested through warm interpersonal relationships and religious practices that strengthen mindfulness.

Understanding these differences in manifestation is important because it shows that while the concept of self-compassion is universal, the ways it is expressed in daily behavior are strongly influenced by cultural context. This finding has practical implications for the development of self-compassion enhancement interventions. For example, training programs in Minahasa could leverage the strength of cooperation and social support values, while in Sunda they could integrate religiosity and mutual care principles that are already embedded in daily life.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations. First, the internalization of cultural values mentioned by respondents was not verified through in-depth interviews, so it cannot be confirmed to what extent these values are truly practiced. Second, the study sample is not fully representative of the entire population of Minahasa and Sundanese early adults, and therefore the findings cannot be fully generalized. Third, the qualitative analysis is descriptive in nature and does not include statistical tests, so interpretation should be made with caution.

For future research, it is recommended to use triangulation methods with in-depth interviews to verify the internalization of cultural values, expand participants to other ethnic groups, and apply a longitudinal design to track changes in self-compassion over time. This would allow for a deeper and more applicable understanding of the role of culture in shaping self-compassion across various social contexts in Indonesia.

### Conclusion

This study demonstrates that there is a significant difference in self-compassion levels between early adults from the Minahasa and Sundanese ethnic groups. Overall, individuals from Minahasa exhibit higher levels of self-compassion compared to their Sundanese counterparts. These findings make a significant contribution to our understanding of self-compassion within specific

cultural frameworks. The study also affirms the relevance of Kristin Neff's self-compassion theory in the Indonesian context, highlighting that local cultural values can support the elements of self-kindness and common humanity. The results provide an empirical basis for the development of more effective, culturally grounded mental health interventions, enriching the psychological literature with more inclusive and diverse perspectives.

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