

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Interpersonal problem solving, self-compassion and personality traits in university students

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The aim of this study was to investigate interpersonal problem solving in terms of self-compassion and personality traits. The participants were 570 (274 females and 296 males) who participated in the research voluntarily. The mean age of the participants was 21.54 years (between 17-32 years old) with a standard deviation of 2.68 years. Data were collected using Interpersonal Problem Solving Inventory, Adjective Based Personality Scale, Self-compassion Scale and personal information form. To analyze the data, Pearson conduct moment correlations, and multiple hierarchical regression analysis technique were used. As a result of the study, it was found that there was a significant negative relationship between approaching problems in a negative way and self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and responsibility. It was found that there was a significant negative relationship between lack of self-confidence and self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and responsibility. It was found that there was a significant negative relationship between unwillingness to take responsibility and self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and responsibility. Also it was found that there was a positive relationship between constructive problem solving and self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and responsibility. Besides, it was found that some approaches of self-compassion and some approaches of personality traits significantly explain interpersonal problem solving.

**Key words:** Interpersonal problem solving, self-compassion and personality traits.

## INTRODUCTION

In their daily lives, individuals encounter many problems that they need to solve. Whether individuals can solve these problems and how they do that is an important issue. Among the approaches to problem solving, cognitive problem-solving model by Heppner and Krauskopf (1987); and social problem-solving model by

D'Zurilla and Nezu (1990) stand out. Social problem solving refers to the process of coping with stressful situations with an effective coping skill, based on purposefulness, awareness, rationality and paying effort (D'zurilla and Chang, 1995).

Social problem solving model involves two dimensions;

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a-problem orientation, and b-problem solving proper. Problem orientation refers to the general attitude of individuals towards problems. Problem orientation is affected from the problems, individuals experienced in the past, and the way they coped with these problems. Problem orientation is the affective and cognitive schemas including what individuals think and how they feel about the problems in life in general terms. This dimension defines individuals' perceptions of control over the problems, and also effects the time and effort paid to solve the problem (D'Zurilla and Nezu, 1990; D'Zurilla and Chang, 1995; Maydeu-Olivares and D'Zurilla, 1996; D'Zurilla, Maydeu-Olivares and Kant, 1998; Maydeu-Olivares et al., 2000; D'Zurilla et al., 2004).

Problem solving proper and the implementation of problem solving skills refers to coping with a problematic situation and thinking rationally to find the best solution by implementing problem solving skills or techniques (D'zurilla and Chang, 1995; Belzer et al., 2002). Çam and Tümkaya (2007) discovered a five-factor structure in their study conducted to develop an inter-personal problem-solving inventory based on social problem solving model. These factors are; negative approach to the problem, insistent-persevering approach, lack of self-confidence, constructive problem solving, and unwillingness to take responsibility.

Negative approach to the problem is about intense negative feeling and ideas, such as despair, pessimism, and sadness, when encountered with an interpersonal problem. Constructive problem solving is related to feelings, ideas, and behaviors that contribute to solving an interpersonal problem in an effective and constructive way. Insistent-persevering approach refers to persistently paying effort on solving an interpersonal problem. Lack of self-confidence is the lack of confidence individuals experience in solving a problem, and unwillingness to take responsibility indicates that individuals do not take responsibility in solving a problem (Çam and Tümkaya, 2007). Interpersonal problem solving has been related to such phenomena as attachment styles (Arslan et al., 2012), aggression (McMurrin et al., 2002; Arslan et al., 2010), communication skills (Arslan, 2011), social anxiety (Hamarta, 2009), coping with stress (Arslan, 2010) and life satisfaction (Hamarta, 2009; Bedel and Isık, 2015).

Individuals may experience negative feelings such as sorrow, pain, burnout, and failure in certain periods of life. In order to cope with these negative feelings, individuals need to calm down, and relax themselves, and most importantly get rid of these negative feelings without harming themselves (Deniz et al., 2008). One of the important concepts related to coping with these feelings is called self-compassion. Self-compassion is defined as behaving oneself caringly and understandingly rather than criticizing oneself negatively; considering the negative experiences as a part of human life, and dealing with negative feelings and thoughts in a rational way rather than making much of them (Neff, 2003a). Having

self-compassion means that primarily protecting oneself from painful situations whenever possible. Therefore, preventive behaviors should be maximized in order to develop self-compassion (Neff, 2003a). Individuals with high self-compassion fully understand their problems, weaknesses, but approach themselves with compassion and understanding rather than a rough criticizing attitude. This way, self-compassion can serve as a buffer against negative situations, and individuals can develop positive feelings towards themselves when things go wrong (Leary et al., 2007).

Three elements of self-compassion develop when individuals encounter painful or negative situations; these are self-affection, being aware of sharing, and conscious awareness. Self-affection refers to being understanding towards oneself instead of criticizing. Being aware of sharing is perception of the experiences of oneself as experiences of all people, not as individuals. Conscious awareness is avoiding over identification, and balancing feelings (Neff, 2003a).

Another concept affecting individuals' many behaviors is personality. Personality is defined as the consistent behavioral structures, and inner personality processes resulting from the individuals themselves (Burger, 2006). The most well-known approach to personality traits is the five-factor personality traits approach (McCrae and Costa, 1987). Five dimensions of personality are; neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and responsibility (self-discipline) (McCrae and Costa, 1987; McCrae and John, 1992).

1. Neuroticism Dimension: Neuroticism dimension is defined with individuals' anxious, worried, nervous and unconfident traits (Bacanlı et al., 2009). Primary indicators of neuroticism are anxiety, anger, hostility, depression, impulsivity, and defenselessness (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008; McCrae and Costa, 1987). Neurotic individuals are prone to experience long-term negative feelings and develop some behavioral pathology. They have difficulty in establishing relationships with people, and carrying these relationships in a healthy way (Bruck and Allen, 2003). Individuals with high neuroticism dimension scores are anxious, insecure, self-pitying, and emotional people; and they are more prone to stress-related psychological disorders. Individuals with low neuroticism dimension scores are calm, well-adapted, and they are not prone to extreme and discordant emotional reactions (Burger, 2006; McCrae and Costa, 1987).

2. Extraversion Dimension: Extravert individuals are social, lively, cheerful, enthusiastic, optimistic, and sociable (Bacanlı et al., 2009). Individuals with high extraversion scores are people who love fun, are talkative, and jokester, loving and social. The opposite end of extraversion is introversion; and introvert individuals are shy, distant, discreet, tight-lipped people who like being alone (Burger, 2006; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008; McCrae and Costa, 1987).

3. **Openness to Experiences Dimension:** A strong imagination, willingness to accept new ideas, multi-directional thinking, and intelligent curiosity are the features of openness to experience dimension (Bacanlı et al., 2009). It is about experiencing new feelings and ideas, and being interested in intellectual activities. Openness to experiences cover fantasizing, aesthetical feelings and activities. Individuals with high openness to experiences scores are prone to be creative, stargazer, and not conservative in ideas and thinking (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008; McCrae and Costa, 1987).

4. **Agreeableness Dimension:** Agreeableness refers to friendly, respecting, and modest behaviors. Agreeableness includes honesty, sacrifice, adaptation, modesty, over sensitivity, trust and friendship basic characteristics. It is related to intention to physical and emotional caring. Accordingly, agreeable individuals can be defined as sincere, close, friendly, and tolerant, and they are prone to pro-social behaviors. The opposite end of this dimension involves skeptical, criticizing, angry, mean, and hostile individuals (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008; McCrae and Costa, 1987; McCrae and John, 1992).

5. **Responsibility Dimension:** Responsibility dimension includes tidiness, responsibility, ambitiousness, carefulness, and being self-disciplined characteristics (Bacanlı et al., 2009). Responsibility is related with effectiveness and self-discipline. This factor involves management, effort for achievement, self-discipline, negotiation, and competence basic features. Individuals with high responsibility scores are hard-working, punctual, well-organized, ambitious, and determined (Burger, 2006; McCrae and Costa, 1987; McCrae and John, 1992). The purpose of the present research is investigating interpersonal problem solving in terms of self-compassion and personality traits.

## METHOD

The study is a quantitative research based on descriptive-correlational design which used self-administered questionnaires.

### Participants

The sample set of the research was taken from several faculties (education, science and social sciences and humanities) of Necmettin Erbakan University in Konya/Turkey by random set sampling method. The participants were 570 (274 female and 296 male) who participated in the research voluntarily. The mean age of the participants was 21.54 years (between 17-32 years old) with a standard deviation of 2.68 years.

### Instruments

*Interpersonal Problem Solving Inventory (IPSI).* This inventory was developed by Çam and Tümkaya (2007) as a tool for measuring problem solving approach and skills among university students between the ages of 18-30. The inventory consists of five sub-scales and a total of 50 items. The items vary between 1 (strongly

disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). High scores obtained for each sub-scale indicates that the characteristic about interpersonal problem solving is high. In factor analysis study of the inventory, a total of five factors which explained a total of 38.38% of the variance related with interpersonal problem solving were obtained. These factors were approaching problems in a negative way, Constructive Problem Solving, Lack of Self Confidence, Unwillingness to take Responsibility, and Insistent-preserving approach sub-scales. The number of items in each sub-scale was 16, 16, 7, 5 and 6 respectively. The correlation value calculated with total scores of the sub-scales varied between 0.22 and 0.740. Internal consistency Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the sub-scale scores of the inventory were approaching problems in a negative way =0.91, Constructive Problem Solving =0.88, Lack of Self Confidence =0.67, Unwillingness to take Responsibility =0.74 and Insistent-preserving approach =0.70. Test re-tests correlation values were calculated as a result of double application of the inventory to 60 students in four week intervals. Test re-test correlation values for the sub-scales were found to be 89, 0.82, 0.69, 0.76 and 0.70 respectively (Çam and Tümkaya, 2007).

*Adjective Based Personality Scale.* This scale was developed by Bacanlı et al. (2009). The scale is composed of 40 adjective pairs that are compatible with the concept of personality suggested by the Five-Factor Personality Theory. It is designed in the form of seven-point Likert items and is composed of 5 dimensions; that is, neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agree-ableness, and responsibility. Higher scores in a subscale mean that the personal characteristic in that subscale is dominant. It is seen that the internal reliability coefficients of the dimensions of Adjective Based Personality Scale (ABPT) range between 0.73 and 0.89. Based on the results of the factor analysis carried out to test the validity of the ABPT, 40 out of 50 pairs of adjectives were identified, and the results revealed that the five dimensions explained 52.6% of the variance in the ABPT (Bacanlı et al., 2009).

*Self-Compassion Scale.* Self-compassion Scale, developed by Neff (2003b), was validated and adapted into Turkish by Deniz et al. (2008). In the original scale, which was prepared to measure the properties of self-compassion, the respondents are asked to rate how often they acted about a given situation by using five-point Likert scale with labels ranging from "Almost never=1" to "Almost always=5". Higher scores in the scale indicate higher levels of self-compassion. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient calculated in line with analysis of the scale was found to be 0.89. In addition, internal reliability coefficient on the scale was found to be .89, and test retest reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.83 (Deniz et al., 2008).

### Data analysis

SPSS 18.0 was used in order to evaluate the data which were collected from scales employed in the research. The Pearson correlation coefficient technique was used to determine the relationship between self-compassion with interpersonal problem solving, personality traits with interpersonal problem solving. Multiple hierarchical regression analysis was used to search whether self-compassion and personality traits significantly explain interpersonal problem solving.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, inter-correlations, and internal consistency coefficients of the variables used. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics, alphas, and inter-correlations of the variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Self-compassion	-										
2. Neuroticism	-0.51**	-									
3. Extraversion	0.26**	0.05	-								
4. Openness to experiences	0.32**	-01	0.80**	-							
5. Agreeableness	0.26**	-0.08	0.54**	0.67**	-						
6. Responsibility	0.17**	0.07	0.59**	0.67**	0.62**	-					
7. Approaching problems in a negative way	-0.63**	0.40**	-0.28**	-0.31**	-0.27**	-0.22**	-				
8. Constructive Problem Solving	0.44**	-0.26**	0.24**	0.34**	0.32**	0.26**	-0.10*	-			
9. Lack of Self Confidence	-0.34**	0.19**	-0.35**	-0.40**	-0.45**	-0.37**	0.58**	-0.12**	-		
10. Unwillingness to take Responsibility	-0.34**	0.26**	-0.11**	-0.18**	-0.37**	-0.14**	0.52**	-0.18**	0.55**	-	
11. Insistent-persevering approach	.21**	-0.09*	0.29**	0.32**	0.25**	.26**	0.04	0.60**	0.10*	0.10*	-
Mean	77.81	23.46	45.15	41.52	48.63	37.14	40.04	53.91	13.36	12.53	20.94
Standard deviation	15.17	7.09	10.45	8.36	10.02	8.14	12.20	9.79	4.94	4.25	4.16
Cronbach Alpha	.78	.68	.73	.74	.76	.78	.84	.81	.64	.71	.67

\*\*p < .01, \* p < .05.

correlations among the variables. Approaching problems in a negative way ( $r = -.63$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), lack of self-confidence ( $r = -0.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), unwillingness to take responsibility ( $r = -0.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found negatively and constructive problem solving ( $r = 0.44$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), insistent-persevering approach ( $r = 0.21$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found positively associated with self-compassion. Approaching problems in a negative way ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), lack of self-confidence ( $r = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), unwillingness to take responsibility ( $r = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found positively and constructive problem solving ( $r = -0.26$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), insistent-persevering approach ( $r = -0.09$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were found negatively associated with Neuroticism. Approaching problems in a negative way ( $r = -0.24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), lack of self-confidence ( $r = -0.35$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), unwillingness to take responsibility ( $r = -0.11$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found negatively and constructive problem solving ( $r = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), insistent-persevering approach ( $r = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found positively associated with extraversion. Approaching problems in a negative way ( $r = -0.31$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), lack of self-confidence ( $r = -0.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), unwillingness to take responsibility ( $r = -0.18$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found negatively and constructive problem solving ( $r = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), insistent-persevering approach ( $r = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found positively associated with openness to experiences. Approaching problems in a negative way ( $r = -0.27$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), lack of self-confidence ( $r = -0.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), unwillingness to take responsibility ( $r = -0.37$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found negatively and constructive problem solving ( $r = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), insistent-persevering approach ( $r = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found positively associated with agreeableness. Approaching problems in a negative way ( $r = -0.22$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), lack of self-confidence ( $r = -0.37$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), unwillingness to take responsibility ( $r = -0.14$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found negatively and constructive problem solving ( $r = 0.26$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), insistent-persevering approach ( $r = 0.26$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were found positively associated with

responsibility. There were also significant correlations between dimensions of personality traits.

When Table 2 is examined, it was seen that self-compassion entered the model, developed to explain *approaching problems in a negative way*, in first was seen to be significant in the model ( $R^2=0.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Personality traits entered the model in second step was found to be significant in the model, ( $R^2=0.43$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The sub dimension of personality traits; neuroticism ( $\beta=0.15$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was assumed to be significant.

When Table 3 is examined, it is observed that self-compassion entered the model in first was found to be significant in the model ( $R^2=0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Personality traits entered the model in second step was found to be significant in the model, ( $R^2=43$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ). The sub dimension of personality traits; neuroticism ( $\beta=-0.10$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and openness to experiences ( $\beta=-0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were assumed to be significant.

When Table 4 is examined, it was seen that self-compassion entered the model, developed to explain lack of self-confidence, in first was seen to be significant in the model ( $R^2=0.11$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Personality traits entered the model in second step was found to be significant in the model, ( $R^2=0.28$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The sub dimension of personality traits; neuroticism ( $\beta=0.10$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) responsibility ( $\beta=-0.12$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and agreeableness ( $\beta=-0.27$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were assumed to be significant.

When Table 5 is examined, it is observed that self-compassion entered the model in first was found to be significant in the model ( $R^2=0.11$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Personality traits entered to the model in second step was found to be significant in the model, ( $R^2=24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The sub dimension of personality traits; neuroticism ( $\beta=0.10$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and agreeableness ( $\beta=-0.44$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were assumed to be significant.

When Table 6 is examined, it was seen that self-compassion entered the model, developed to explain

**Table 2.** Multiple hierarchical regression analysis on approaching problems in a negative way.

		R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>	B	β	t	p
1	Constant				79.40		38.10	0.00
	Self-compassion	63	40	40	-0.50	-0.63	-19.28	0.00
2	Constant				76.93		21.47	0.00
	Self-compassion				-0.41	-0.51	-12.81	0.00
	Neuroticism				0.25	0.15	3.82	0.00
	Extraversion	66	43	42	-0.12	-0.10	-1.86	0.06
	Openness to experiences				-0.01	-0.01	-0.16	0.88
	Agreeableness				-0.04	-0.03	-0.63	0.53
	Responsibility				-0.09	-0.06	-1.32	0.19

**Table 3.** Multiple hierarchical regression analysis on constructive problem solving.

		R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>	B	β	t	p
1	Constant				31.75		16.49	0.00
	Self-compassion	0.44	0.20	0.19	0.29	0.44	11.72	0.00
2	Constant				27.51		8.40	0.00
	Self-compassion				0.20	0.31	6.92	0.00
	Neuroticism				-0.14	-0.10	-2.25	0.03
	Extraversion	0.51	0.26	0.25	-0.08	-0.09	-1.44	0.15
	Openness to experiences				0.24	0.20	2.85	0.01
	Agreeableness				0.09	0.10	1.86	0.06
	Responsibility				0.08	0.07	1.31	0.19

**Table 4.** Multiple hierarchical regression analysis on lack of self-confidence.

		R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>	B	β	t	p
1	Constant				21.89		21.43	0.00
	Self-compassion	0.34	0.11	0.11	-0.11		-0.37	0.00
2	Constant				27.47		16.78	0.00
	Self-compassion				-0.06	-0.17	-3.82	0.00
	Neuroticism				0.07	0.10	2.25	0.03
	Extraversion	0.53	0.28	27	-0.04	-0.09	-1.50	0.14
	Openness to experiences				-0.01	-0.02	-0.23	0.81
	Agreeableness				-0.13	-0.27	-5.23	0.00
	Responsibility				-0.07	-0.12	-2.22	0.03

insistent-persevering approach, in first was seen to be insignificant in the model ( $R^2=0.04$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Personality traits entered the model in second step was found to be significant in the model, ( $R^2=0.12$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The sub dimension of personality traits; openness to experiences ( $\beta=0.15$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) was assumed to be significant.

## DISCUSSION

According to the findings obtained in the present

research, there are negative correlations between negative approach to the problem and self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness, and responsibility; and there is a positive correlation between negative approach and neuroticism. Additionally, self-compassion and neuroticism explain negative approach at a significant level. Negative approach to the problem is related to intense negative feelings and ideas, such as despair, pessimism and sorrow, when encountered an interpersonal problem (Çam and Tümkaya, 2007). Accordingly, it was an

**Table 5.** Multiple hierarchical regression analysis on unwillingness to take responsibility.

		R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>	B	β	t	p
1	Constant				19.92		22.71	0.00
	Self-compassion	0.34	0.11	0.11	-0.10	-0.34	-8.59	0.00
2	Constant				20.99		14.51	0.00
	Self-compassion				-0.07	-0.23	-5.08	0.00
	Neuroticism				0.06	0.10	2.17	0.03
	Extraversion	0.49	0.24	0.23	0.03	0.08	1.23	0.22
	Openness to experiences				0.04	0.08	1.15	0.25
	Agreeableness				-0.19	-0.44	-8.38	0.00
	Responsibility				0.03	0.06	1.21	0.23

**Table 6.** Multiple hierarchical regression analysis on insistent-persevering approach.

		R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>	B	β	t	p
1	Constant				16.52		18.52	0.00
	Self-compassion	0.21	0.04	0.04	.06	.20	5.04	
2	Constant				13.01		8.58	0.00
	Self-compassion				.03	.09	1.85	0.07
	Neuroticism				-.03	-.05	-1.06	0.29
	Extraversion	0.35	0.12	0.11	.04	.09	1.32	0.19
	Openness to experiences				.07	.15	1.91	0.05
	Agreeableness				.02	.04	0.63	0.53
	Responsibility				.04	.07	1.23	0.22

expected result that positive personality traits; self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, and responsibility are positively correlated. Neuroticism defines anxious, and insecure individuals (Burger, 2006; McCrae and Costa, 1987). Anxious and insecure individuals are expected to present a negative approach to problems, considering that negative approach to problems involves pessimism, lack of confidence in problem solving skills, getting easily angry or worried when encountered problems (D<sup>†</sup> Zurilla and Chang, 1995) Another finding of the present research that, there are positive correlations between constructivist problem solving and self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness, and responsibility; and a negative correlation between constructivist problem solving and neuroticism. In addition, self-compassion, neuroticism, and openness to experiences explain constructivist problem solving at a significant level. Constructive problem solving refers to feelings, ideas, and behaviours that contribute to solving an interpersonal problem in an effective and constructive way (Çam and Tümkaya, 2007). On the other hand, compassion is defined as behaving oneself caringly and understandingly rather than criticizing oneself negatively; considering the negative experiences as a part of human life, and dealing

with negative feelings and thoughts in a rational way rather than making much of them (Neff, 2003a). Extraversion includes being social, lively, cheerful, enthusiastic, optimistic, and sociable. Openness to experiences is defined with a strong imagination, willing to accept new ideas, multi-directional thinking, and intelligent curiosity (Bacanlı et al., 2009). Agreeableness defines negotiating, sincere, friendly and tolerant individuals (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008; McCrae and Costa, 1987; McCrae and John, 1992). Individuals with high neuroticism dimension scores are anxious and insecure people (Burger, 2006; McCrae and Costa, 1987). Considering all these, individuals with high self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness, and responsibility are expected to prefer constructivist problem solving behaviors in case of a problem-solving situation. Considering that neurotic individuals have difficulty in establishing relationships with people, and maintaining these relationships in a healthy way (Bruck and Allen, 2003), neurotic individuals are expected to exhibit less constructivist problem solving behaviors, which can explain this finding of the present research.

According to the findings obtained in the present research, there are negative correlations between lack of

self-confidence and self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences and agreeableness; and a positive correlation between lack of self-confidence and neuroticism. Additionally, self-compassion and neuroticism explain lack of self-confidence at a significant level. Some previous researches (Saricaoğlu and Arslan, 2013) found that, individuals with a positive self-perception had more self-compassion. An insecure approach refers to individuals' lack of self-confidence in solving a problem (Çam and Tümkaya, 2007). Accordingly, insecure individuals are expected to have less positive personality traits, such as self-compassion, openness to experiences, extraversion, agreeableness, and responsibility.

Another finding of the present research is that, there are negative correlations between unwillingness to take responsibility in problem solving and self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness, and responsibility; and a positive correlation between unwillingness to take responsibility and neuroticism. Additionally, self-compassion, neuroticism, agreeableness, and responsibility explain unwillingness to take responsibility in problem solving at a significant level. Unwillingness to take responsibility refers to not taking responsibilities in problem solving (Çam and Tümkaya, 2007). Individuals with high self-compassion exhibit responsible behaviors when they encounter problems (Neff, 2001; Neff and Harter, 2002a; Neff and Harter, 2002b). Responsible individuals are neat, tidy, ambitious, careful, and disciplined (Bacanlı et al., 2009). Therefore, individuals, who are unwilling to take responsibility in problem solving, are expected to have less self-compassion, be introvert, not open to experiences, have less agreeableness and responsibility, and more neurotic characteristics. Likewise, Schmutte and Ryff (1997) found in their study that environmental authority and life purpose were strongly correlated with responsibility at a significant level.

The last finding of the present research is that, there are positive correlations between insistent-persevering approach and self-compassion, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and responsibility; and a negative correlation between insistent-persevering approach and neuroticism. In addition, self-compassion, and openness to experiences explain insistent-persevering approach at a significant level. Insistent-persevering approach refers to persistently paying effort on solving an interpersonal problem (Çam and Tümkaya, 2007). Self-compassion includes dealing with negative feelings and thoughts in a rational way rather than making much of them (Neff, 2003a). Extravert individuals are optimistic and sociable (Bacanlı et al., 2009). Openness to experiences refers to intention to experiencing new feeling and ideas (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008; McCrae and Costa, 1987). Agreeable individuals are friendly, while responsible ones are hardworking, punctual, well-organized, ambitious and determined. On the other hand, neurotic individuals are anxious, nervous and insecure (Burger, 2006; McCrae and Costa, 1987;

McCrae and John, 1992). Considering all these, individuals, who exhibit insistent-persevering approach in problem solving, are expected to have high self-compassion, extraversion, and openness to experiences, agreeableness, and responsibility.

The present research is limited to revealing the interaction between personality traits, self-compassion and interpersonal problem solving, through investigation the relationships between these concepts. The present research does not cover how individuals solve their interpersonal problems. To offer a general evaluation of the findings of the present research; we can say that there are positive relationships between positive dimension of interpersonal problem solving and positive personality traits, and self-compassion. Additionally, negative interpersonal problem solving approaches are related with negative personality traits and low self-compassion. These findings indicate that, having positive self-compassion and personality traits can contribute to individuals' solving the problems they encounter in a more positive manner. In accordance with these findings, we can suggest that trainings to develop self-compassion and positive personality traits and investigation the effects of these on interpersonal problem solving can provide more explanatory results. Finally, including approaches and implementation that take self-compassion and personality traits into consideration in psychological counseling and guidance studies on interpersonal problems solving can be useful.

### Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflicts of interest.

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