



**SELF COMPASSION, HUMOR STYLES AND COGNITIVE  
FLEXIBILITY IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

**A Research Project Presented to**

**School of Professional Psychology**

**Bahria University Islamabad Campus**

---

**In Partial Fulfillment**

**of the Requirements for the Degree**

**of Bachelors of Sciences**

**BS Psychology**

---

**By**

**Syeda Fatima Hashmi**

**&**

**Alishba Ilyas**

**MAY, 2025**

**Submitted to**

**Ms. Sana Shaheen**

**BAHRIA SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**BAHRIA UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD CAMPUS (E-8)**

**SELF COMPASSION, HUMOR STYLES AND COGNITIVE  
FLEXIBILITY IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

**By**

**Syeda Fatima Hashmi**

**&**

**Alishba Ilyas**

**Approved By**

---

**External Examiner**

---

**Internal Examiner**

---

**(Ms. Sana Shaheen)**

**Supervisor**

---

**(Dr. Shazia Yusuf)**

**Principal/Head of Department**

**BAHRIA SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**BAHRIA UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD CAMPUS (E-8)**

**APPROVAL SHEET**

**SUBMISSION OF RESEARCH PROJECT**

Candidate's Names: Syeda Fatima Hashmi

Alishba Ilyas

Discipline: BS Psychology

Faculty/Department: School of Professional Psychology

*I hereby certify that the above candidate's work including the research project has been completed to my satisfaction and that the research project is in a format of an editorial standard recognized by the faculty/department as appropriate for examination.*

Signature (s):

Principal Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned signifies that:

1. The candidate presented at a pre - completion seminar, an overview and synthesis of major findings of the thesis and that this research is of a standard and extent appropriate for submission as a research project.
2. I have checked the candidate's research project and its scope and formal. Editorial standards are recognized by the faculty/department as appropriate.

Signature(s):

Dean/Head of Faculty/ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICATION**

We certify that the research work presented in this research project, to the best of our knowledge, is our own. All the sources used and any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged. We hereby declare that we have not submitted this material, either in whole or in part, for any other degree at this or any other institution.

Signature(s):

Syeda Fatima Hashmi \_\_\_\_\_

Alishba Ilyas \_\_\_\_\_

## DEDICATION

*This thesis is lovingly dedicated to our cherished parents, our esteemed institution, and our honorable supervisor. Your belief in us, even during the most challenging moments, inspired us to persevere and give our best. This accomplishment would not have been possible without your presence, guidance, and endless sacrifices.*

*From the depths of our hearts, we thank you.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful and Most Beneficent. All praises to Allah Almighty on whom we all depend for ultimate guidance and sustenance. Allah's blessings bestowed upon us the strength to finish the research. We would like express our deep sincere gratitude to our research supervisor Ms. Sana Shaheen, lecturer at Bahria University, Islamabad Campus, for her invaluable guidance and motivation throughout the research.

We would also like to thank all our other teachers for providing us support and guidance throughout this journey. We extend our sincere appreciations to our family members and friends for their constant support and encouragement. We thank them for their moral support and prayers in the completion of our project.

Last but not the least we would like to express our gratitude to all the participants of the study who completed the survey. Without their contribution it would be impossible to complete this thesis successfully.

**Syeda Fatima Hashmi and Alishba Ilyas**

## THESIS REVISION CERTIFICATE

It is to clarify that \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_, Enrollment No. \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ respectively, session Spring 2025 from School Of  
Professional Psychology, Bahria University Islamabad conducted their undergraduate  
thesis entitled “ Self Compassion, Humor Styles and Cognitive Flexibility in University  
Students” under Ma’am Sana Shaheen’s supervision. They have revised their thesis in  
the light of their examiners suggestions and to my satisfaction and to the best of my  
belief, its standard is appropriate for acceptance. Moreover, this thesis is an excellent  
work in terms of scope and quality for the award of the degree of BS Psychology.

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

## TABLE OF CONTENT

|                                      |      |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| <b>APPROVAL SHEET</b>                | I    |
| <b>DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICATION</b> | II   |
| <b>DEDICATION</b>                    | III  |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>               | IV   |
| <b>THESIS REVISION CERTIFICATE</b>   | V    |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES</b>                | VIII |
| <b>LIST OF ANNEXURES</b>             | IX   |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>               | X    |
| <b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>                 | XI   |
| <b>ABSTRACT</b>                      | XII  |
| <b>Chapter I</b>                     | 1    |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>                  | 1    |
| Literature Review                    | 9    |
| Theoretical Framework                | 31   |
| Conceptual Framework                 | 34   |
| Rationale                            | 35   |
| Research Objectives                  | 38   |
| Research Hypotheses                  | 38   |
| <b>Chapter II</b>                    | 39   |
| <b>METHOD</b>                        | 39   |
| Research Design                      | 39   |
| Sample                               | 39   |
| <i>Inclusion Criteria</i>            | 39   |

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| <i>Exclusion Criteria</i> | 39 |
| Operational Definitions   | 40 |
| Assessment Protocol       | 41 |
| Procedure                 | 44 |
| Ethical Considerations    | 45 |
| <b>Chapter III</b>        | 46 |
| <b>RESULTS</b>            | 46 |
| <b>Chapter IV</b>         | 56 |
| <b>DISCUSSION</b>         | 56 |
| Conclusion                | 60 |
| Limitations               | 60 |
| Suggestions               | 61 |
| Implications              | 61 |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>         | 64 |
| <b>ANNEXURES</b>          | 79 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|         |                                                                                                                                                           |    |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table 1 | Demographic Characteristics Of Study (N=304)                                                                                                              | 47 |
| Table 2 | Descriptive Analysis Of Study Variables ( N=304)                                                                                                          | 50 |
| Table3  | Pearson Product Moment Correlation Among Self Compassion,<br>Humor Styles And Cognitive Flexibility ( N= 304)                                             | 51 |
| Table 4 | Linear Regression Analysis With Dependent Variable Cognitive<br>Flexibility (N=304)                                                                       | 52 |
| Table 5 | Independent Sample T-Test Analysis Between Gender On Self<br>Compassion, Humor Styles And Cognitive Flexibility (N= 304)                                  | 53 |
| Table 6 | One Way Analysis Of Variance In Self Compassion, Humor Styles<br>And Cognitive Flexibility In University Students Across Different<br>Departments (N=304) | 54 |

## **LIST OF ANNEXURES**

|            |                                                    |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| ANNEXURE A | Permissionn For Self Compassion Scale SCS.SF       |
| ANNEXURE B | Permission For Humor Styles Questionnaire HSQ      |
| ANNEXURE C | Permission For Cognitive Flexibility Inventory CFI |
| ANNEXURE D | Informed Consent Form                              |
| ANNEXURE E | Demographic Sheet                                  |
| ANNEXURE F | Scale 1 Self Compassion Scale- Short Form SCS.SF   |
| ANNEXURE G | Scale 2 Cognitive Flexibility Inventory CFI        |
| ANNEXURE H | Scale 3 Humor Styles Questionnaire HSQ             |
| ANNEXURE I | Request For Data Collection                        |
| ANNEXURE J | Plagerism Report                                   |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|          |                                   |    |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1 | Conceptual Framework of the Study | 34 |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----|

## ABBREVIATIONS

SCS-SF                      Self Compassion Scale Short Form

HSQ                         Humoe Styles Questionnaire

CFI                         Cognitive Flexibility Inventory

CF                         Cognitive Flexibility

AFH                         Affiliative Humor

SEH                         Self Enhancing Humor

AGH                         Aggressive Humor

SDH                         Self Defeating Humor

## **ABSTRACT**

Cognitive flexibility (CF) plays a vital role in how university students manage academic stress, emotional challenges, and decision-making in a changing world. The present research investigated the relationship between self-compassion, humor styles, and cognitive flexibility (CF) in Pakistani university students. A correlational study using a cross-sectional approach was conducted. Convenient sampling was utilized to gather data from a sample of 304 university students. To assess the study variables, three standardized instruments were used: the Self-Compassion Scale – Short Form (SCS-SF), the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ), and the Cognitive Flexibility Inventory (CFI). The findings revealed a notable positive association between self-compassion and cognitive flexibility (CF). Among humor styles, self-enhancing humor was found to have a positive correlation with CF, whereas self-defeating humor exhibited a negative correlation with it. Further, analysis through regression techniques indicated that both self-compassion and self-enhancing humor were positive predictors of CF, in contrast, self-defeating humor emerged as a negative predictor. Gender-based variations were identified: male participants demonstrated greater self-compassion and tended to use aggressive and self-defeating humor styles more frequently than their female counterparts. This study provides insights into how emotional and cognitive traits interact within a collectivist and high-pressure educational context. Limitations include a geographically limited and predominantly urban, student-based sample and the correlational design also limits causal interpretation. Future studies should include diverse populations across regions and integrate additional psychological factors for a more comprehensive understanding. These findings highlight the value of fostering self-compassion and adaptive humor styles in university-based mental health programs to promote cognitive flexibility and resilience.

**Keywords:** Self-Compassion, Humor Styles, Cognitive Flexibility