

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Examining Self-Compassion's Mediating Effects Between Fear of Failure and Academic Self-Handicapping Among University Students

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Abstract

Academic self-handicapping behaviors exhibit complex relationships with psychological constructs, particularly fear of failure and self-compassion. This investigation examined the differential effects of fear of failure (X_1) and self-compassion (X_2) on self-handicapping tendencies (Y) among university students. The study comprised 398 participants ($n=398$; 104 males, 294 females) enrolled across five state universities in Makassar, recruited through accidental sampling methodology. Assessment instruments included the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory Long-Form (modified), the Self-Handicapping Scale (modified), and the Indonesian adaptation of the Self-Compassion Scale. Utilizing ordinal regression analysis, the results revealed a significant positive association between fear of failure and self-handicapping ($\beta = 0.058$, $p < 0.001$), while self-compassion demonstrated a significant negative relationship ($\beta = -0.045$, $p < 0.001$). The combined predictive model accounted for 22.4% of the variance in self-handicapping behaviors (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.224$). These findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of self-handicapping mechanisms and hold practical implications for developing targeted interventions within university student support services. The results may inform the design and implementation of evidence-based training programs addressing maladaptive academic behaviors among university students.

Keywords: college students, fear of failure, self-compassion, self-handicapping

INTRODUCTION

Achievement motivation theory has, since 1957, examined the dual constructs of success orientation and failure avoidance motivation (Kolditz & Arkin, 1982). High-achieving individuals characteristically select moderately challenging yet attainable tasks, whereas low achievers demonstrate a tendency to avoid ability evaluation. A noteworthy variant among low achievers involves the externalization of failure by individuals with limited self-awareness (Berglas & Jones, 1978). This defensive strategy,

termed self-handicapping, manifests as task avoidance to circumvent potential failure (De Castella, Byrne & Covington, 2013).

Clarke and MacCann (2016) delineate self-handicapping into internal and external dimensions. The internal dimension encompasses psychological processes, including emotional and cognitive components that influence emotional stability and self-esteem. External self-handicapping manifests through behavioral patterns, particularly procrastination and awareness-related behaviors, which represent observable manifestations of self-handicapping strategies.

In Indonesia, especially in the competitive context of state universities in Makassar, the link between fear of failure and self-handicapping holds unique cultural importance. The Indonesian educational system features high-stakes achievement expectations influenced by collectivist cultural values, highlighting family honor, social recognition, and filial piety (Novera, 2004). In this context, academic achievement reflects family status and societal expectations rather than just individual accomplishment Topor et al. (2010).

The academic environment in Indonesia is characterized by a high level of competition, as state

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universities, particularly those in Makassar, maintain rigorous selection processes that admit only the most exceptional students (Logli, 2015). The cultural focus on preserving "face" and evading shame imposes extra psychological pressure on students, potentially heightening fear of failure compared to more individualistic educational settings (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Buchori & Fakhri, 2018).

In this cultural context, self-handicapping behaviors may function as protective mechanisms and strategies to maintain family honor by offering socially acceptable justifications for possible academic failures (Chao et al., 2013). Indonesian students may use behavioral self-handicapping strategies, such as prioritizing extracurricular activities or citing physical illness, to justify academic underperformance and preserve their perceived competence within family and social contexts (Sutantoputri & Watt, 2013).

The etiology of self-handicapping encompasses multiple determinants (Török & Szabó, 2018), including: outcome uncertainty leading to self-efficacy doubts; perceived task difficulty that may expose ability limitations; anticipation of external evaluation; socioenvironmental pressures; diminished self-regulatory capacity; and the combination of low success orientation with heightened fear of failure.

Self-handicapping serves a dual attributional function: when experiencing failure, individuals attribute outcomes to external factors rather than ability deficits, while success enhances pride through demonstrated ability despite obstacles (Zuckerman & Tsai, 2005). Research indicates that individuals who internalize self-handicapping exhibit elevated negative affect and reduced life-planning capabilities (Ross, Canada & Rausch, 2002), demonstrate negative correlations with conscientiousness and positive associations with neuroticism (Bobo, Whitaker & Strunk, 2013), and manifest heightened anxiety coupled with insecurity (Rastegar, Afshari, Seif & Jahromi, 2012). This maladaptive strategy frequently results in compromised self-adjustment (Zuckerman, Kieffer & Knee, 1998) and may emerge as a defensive response to failure anxiety (Elliot & Covington, 2001).

Fear of failure represents anticipatory anxiety regarding potential negative consequences of unsuccessful performance (Conroy, 2003). Initially conceptualized by Atkinson (1957) as a motivation to avoid loss associated with evaluative anxiety, fear of failure manifests as psychological tension in response to performance pressures. Individuals experiencing persistent external and internal pressure to achieve optimal outcomes may develop this anxiety response (Winkel, 2014). Those motivated by failure avoidance typically select non-challenging tasks with minimal failure probability. Plotnik and Kouyoumdjian (2011) posit that failure anxiety impedes goal-setting and achievement striving, with increased fear of failure corresponding to heightened self-handicapping tendencies as a self-presentational strategy (Zeidner & Matthews, 2017).

Conroy, Willow, and Metzler (2002) identify five components of failure anxiety: fear of shame and humiliation; concerns regarding estimation decrements; apprehension about diminished social influence; future-oriented anxiety; and fear of disappointing significant others.

The avoidance of negative affect, including sadness, catastrophizing, disappointment, anger, and excessive anxiety, represents a universal human tendency. These negative emotional states, rooted in fear, uncertainty, and excessive concern, can impede achievement. Self-

compassion emerges as a crucial adaptive mechanism for effectively managing obstacles rather than resorting to avoidant strategies such as self-handicapping. Petersen (2014) suggests that individuals with diminished self-compassion demonstrate increased susceptibility to self-handicapping, perceiving failures and challenges as threatening circumstances.

Self-compassion is a highly effective emotional regulation strategy. Individuals who practice self-compassion recognize that painful or sad feelings should be processed consciously as a matter of common goodness, understanding, and humanity. In other words, self-compassion enables people to transform perceived negative emotions into more positive ones. As a result, it forces individuals to directly understand the situation and take action to change himself or the environment more appropriately and effectively (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Isen, 2000). There are three components to self-compassion: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness (Neff, 2011).

Furthermore, self-compassion converts a person's negative self-affect (such as feeling inadequate because of failure or guilty regarding a deficiency committed) into a positive self-affect (such as feeling good and understanding oneself). Self-compassion allows you to feel good about yourself without having to protect or burden your self-concept. It occurs because self-compassion is not based on assessing one's own and others' performance or on conformity to ideal standards. Instead, self-compassion works by avoiding the entire evaluation process (positive or negative), emphasizing feelings of kindness and understanding of oneself and others, and believing in the concept of humanity in general (Baumeister, Bushman & Campbell, 2000; Watson & Hickman, 1995; Raskin, Novacek & Hogan, 1991).

The interplay of fear of failure, self-compassion, and self-handicapping can be examined through modern coping and emotion regulation theories. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping offers a framework for understanding student responses to academic challenges. This theory posits that individuals undergo primary appraisal, evaluating the significance of a potential stressor, followed by secondary appraisal, assessing available coping resources. These processes collectively shape their psychological and behavioral responses to stress. Students who view academic evaluations as threatening and assess their coping resources as insufficient may resort to maladaptive strategies like self-handicapping (Lazarus, 2000). This process is relevant for understanding how fear of failure acts as a catalyst for self-handicapping behaviors among Indonesian university students facing intense academic pressures in a collectivist culture.

Gross's (1998, 2015) Process Model of Emotion Regulation enhances our comprehension of the psychological mechanisms behind self-handicapping behaviors. This model identifies five categories of emotion regulation strategies: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. Self-handicapping is a strategy where students modify their academic situations to manage negative emotions linked to potential failure. Self-compassion serves as an adaptive emotion regulation strategy consistent with the cognitive change and response modulation aspects of Gross's model. Self-compassion, via self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness, enhances balanced cognitive assessments of academic challenges and fosters healthier emotional reactions to perceived failure threats (Neff & Germer, 2017).

The Emotion Regulation Flexibility model by Bonanno and Burton (2013) provides insights into why some students engage in self-handicapping while others exhibit more adaptive responses to academic pressures. This model highlights that effective emotion regulation requires the use of diverse strategies in various contexts, indicating that students with higher regulatory flexibility may better handle academic challenges without engaging in self-handicapping behaviors.

Self-handicapping is a psychological issue, and research for college students in Indonesia is still in its early stages. College students, on the other hand, are expected to excel academically. One of the entry pathways for public universities in Indonesia is through the achievement pathway, which demonstrates this. Students must also have a high cumulative grade point average, particularly at state universities. This causes a number of academic issues. Students' academic performance suffers as a result of poor mental health and well-being (Bruffaerts et al., 2018). College students who have mental health issues are twice as likely to drop out (Hartley, 2010), and depression and suicidal thoughts are associated with a lower GPA (De Luca et al., 2016). Thus, mental health and academic performance are inextricably linked. This has become a focus of this research because students with psychological issues in the academic setting have an impact on their performance and their surroundings, including universities. The primary concern is that universities are not currently designed to meet all of the personal needs and mental health issues of students from the beginning of their studies (Dekker et al., 2020). Thus, focusing on these psychological issues may provide new opportunities to prevent and treat academic problems in a less stigmatizing way for students.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to examine the relationships between fear of failure, self-compassion, and academic self-handicapping among university students.

Instruments and Data Analysis Techniques

Data collection was conducted using three psychometric instruments. Fear of failure was assessed using a modified Indonesian version of the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (Long-Form) originally developed by Conroy, Willow, and Metzler (2002). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) resulted in the elimination of seven items from the original 23-item scale due to insufficient factor loadings (< 0.5). The retained 16 items demonstrated robust factor loadings ranging from 0.588 to 0.823. The measurement model exhibited satisfactory fit indices (CFI = 0.913, IFI = 0.915, RMSEA = 0.078).

Self-compassion was measured using an adapted Indonesian version of the Self-Compassion Scale (Sugianto, Suwartono, & Sutanto, 2020; originally developed by Neff, 2003). CFA results necessitated the removal of seven items from the initial 25-item scale due to subthreshold factor loadings (< 0.5). The final 18-item version demonstrated adequate psychometric properties with factor loadings ranging from 0.510 to 1.000. Model fit indices indicated strong construct validity (CFI = 0.922, IFI = 0.924, RMSEA = 0.054, GFI = 0.904).

Self-handicapping was assessed using a modified version of Rhodewalt's (1990) Self-Handicapping Scale, previously refined to 13 items based on recommendations by Clark and MacCann (2016). Following CFA, five items

were eliminated due to insufficient factor loadings (< 0.5). The final eight-item scale exhibited robust psychometric properties with factor loadings ranging from 0.548 to 0.882. The measurement model demonstrated adequate fit (CFI = 0.902, IFI = 0.903, GFI = 0.910). Statistical analyses employed ordinal regression to examine: (1) the relationship between fear of failure and self-handicapping, and (2) the association between self-compassion and self-handicapping.

Research Target/Subject

Participants in this investigation comprised undergraduate students actively enrolled across five state universities in Makassar, Indonesia. The selection of Indonesian state universities as the study population was predicated on their distinctively competitive academic environment, characterized by rigorous admission protocols and stringent selection criteria. These institutions maintain a structured academic culture that mandates strict adherence to attendance policies and prescribed completion timelines. Within this high-stakes educational context, students face substantial performance pressures that potentially influence their academic task completion and overall achievement. Through accidental sampling methodology, the study recruited 398 participants. The demographic composition of the sample, including gender distribution, age stratification, institutional affiliation, and academic year classification, is delineated in Table 1.

Table 1
Participants Data (N=398)

Demographic Respondent	of	Total	(%)
Sex			
Male		104	26
Female		294	74
Age			
17		4	1
18		44	11,1
19		96	24,1
20		105	26,4
21		60	15,1
22		44	11,1
23		36	9
24		7	1,8
25		2	0,5
Public Universities			
UNM		316	79,4
UNHAS		51	12,8
UINAM		17	4,3
PNUP		8	2
STIA LAN		6	1,5

RESULTS

In this study, the hypothesis test was evaluated using ordinal regression analysis. The results of the data analysis are presented in the table 2. Based on the data in table 2, a model match test with a p-value greater than alpha (0.05) indicated that, with a 95% level of confidence, the employed model matched the ordinal regression model. The coefficient of determination for the Cox and Snell model is 0.172, and the McFadden coefficient of determination is 0.129, as shown in Table 3. The Nagelkerke coefficient of determination is 0.224, or 22.4%, indicating that the free

variable has an influence strength of 22.4% on the bound variable. The remaining 77.6%, on the other hand, is influenced by factors not included in the model test.

According to table 4, the significance value of the variable fear of failure is 0.001 and the significance value of the variable self-compassion is 0.000. The p-values < alpha (0.001 < 0.05) and (0.000 < 0.05) indicate that the fear of failure variables have a significant effect on self-handicapping. In addition, the self-compassion variable has a substantial effect on self-handicapping.

Table 2
Goodness of Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	607,313	668	0,955
Deviance	458,514	668	1,000

Table 3
Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	0,173
Nagelkerke	0,224
McFadden	0,129

Table 4
Estimates Parameter

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.
Threshold	[SH]	-0,503	1,378	0,133	1	0,715
Location	FOF	0,058	0,017	12,024	1	0,001
	SC	-0,045	0,012	14,206	1	0,000

The following describes the formation of an ordinal regression model. The "+" value in the fear of failure variable reported in the ordinal regression model means that the fear of failure variable positively influences the self-handicapping variable. In contrast, the "-" value in the self-compassion variable in the ordinal regression model indicates that the self-compassion variable has a negative influence on the self-handicapping variable. The Nagelkerke R² value of 0.224 suggests that roughly 22.4% of the variance in academic self-handicapping behaviors among participants is attributable to the joint effects of fear of failure and self-compassion.

$$\text{Logit (p1)} = -0,503 + 0,058x \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Logit (p1)} = -0,503 - 0,045x \quad (2)$$

In ordinal regression analysis, this pseudo-R² value indicates a moderate effect size, implying that these two psychological constructs significantly contribute to the understanding of self-handicapping tendencies among university students in Makassar. It is essential to note that 77.6% of the variance is not accounted for by the existing model. The significant unexplained variance indicates that there are additional factors, apart from fear of failure and

self-compassion, that affect academic self-handicapping behaviors. Moreover, although the existing model reveals statistically significant relationships among the variables, the moderate R² value indicates that interventions focused solely on fear of failure and self-compassion may be of limited efficacy unless other contributing factors are also considered.

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this investigation demonstrate a significant positive correlation between fear of failure and self-handicapping behaviors among public university students in Makassar City. The data suggest a proportional relationship wherein elevated levels of fear of failure correspond to increased manifestations of self-handicapping tendencies, with the inverse relationship similarly observed. Furthermore, the results indicate that while fear of failure functions as a primary catalyst for self-handicapping behaviors among university students, self-compassion emerges as a protective psychological mechanism that may attenuate these maladaptive patterns.

Self-handicapping represents a complex behavioral phenomenon characterized by the strategic creation or claim of impediments as justification for potential performance deficits in evaluative contexts. This maladaptive strategy manifests in various forms, including compromised study habits, diminished task engagement, motivational deficits, substance use, and persistent dissatisfaction. Notably, individuals employing self-handicapping strategies do not explicitly acknowledge failure but readily accept it when attributable to identifiable obstacles. Conversely, achievement in spite of these self-imposed barriers can enhance self-esteem, demonstrating resilience in the face of adversity.

The propensity for self-handicapping appears to be modulated by the interaction between heightened fear of failure and diminished self-compassion. This defensive mechanism serves to preserve self-esteem in individuals who, constrained by fear of failure, demonstrate reluctance toward genuine achievement efforts. Conversely, individuals with elevated self-compassion exhibit greater capacity for accepting and learning from setbacks, thereby reducing their susceptibility to failure anxiety and subsequent self-handicapping behaviors.

Self-handicapping, as conceptualized by Berglas and Jones (1978), constitutes the deliberate construction or assertion of performance barriers to protect perceived competencies. McCrea, Hirt, and Milner (2008) posit that this behavior emerges as a self-protective mechanism aimed at preserving self-respect and maintaining positive self-perceptions of ability, particularly in contexts where individuals harbor doubts about their competence.

The strategic implementation of self-handicapping enables individuals to attribute failure to external obstacles rather than inherent ability deficits. Petersen (2014) notes that successful performance despite self-imposed barriers can paradoxically enhance pride in one's abilities. Research has demonstrated the efficacy of self-handicapping in preserving self-esteem and perceived competence when confronting failure, particularly among individuals with heightened failure anxiety (McCrea, 2008).

Fear of failure represents a crucial antecedent in the development of self-handicapping behaviors. Contemporary research demonstrates that students experiencing elevated academic anxiety exhibit increased propensity for self-handicapping as a defensive strategy to

protect self-worth from potential academic shortcomings (Jia et al., 2020; Schwinger et al., 2014). The apprehension of perceived incompetence can precipitate procrastination and the creation of performance obstacles, facilitating external attribution of failures rather than ability-based explanations (Izadpanah & Charmi, 2022; Freire et al., 2016). This cyclical pattern of fear-induced self-handicapping can precipitate progressive effort withdrawal, ultimately exacerbating feelings of inadequacy and fostering academic disengagement (Izadpanah & Charmi, 2022).

The manifestation of self-handicapping extends beyond mere reactivity to failure anxiety, encompassing a complex interplay of personality traits and individual differences. Research indicates that students exhibiting an external locus of control demonstrate heightened susceptibility to self-handicapping behaviors compared to their internally-oriented counterparts, attributing academic outcomes predominantly to external variables rather than personal agency (Sabboh & Ojo, 2023). Moreover, perfectionism demonstrates a significant positive correlation with self-handicapping tendencies, suggesting that individuals who maintain unrealistic performance standards may employ self-handicapping as a compensatory mechanism for managing potential failure-related stress (Alaloğlu & Bahtiyar, 2020a, 2020b).

Self-compassion emerges as a significant protective factor against self-handicapping behaviors. Characterized by self-directed kindness during instances of failure and the recognition of imperfection as an inherent aspect of human experience, self-compassion has been empirically linked to enhanced collegiate adjustment and reduced self-handicapping propensities (Aydin, 2023; Zhang et al., 2016). This adaptive psychological construct facilitates the attenuation of negative emotional responses to academic stressors, thereby diminishing the likelihood of engaging in self-handicapping behaviors (Barutçu Yıldırım & Demir, 2019; Chi et al., 2024). Additionally, individuals with elevated self-compassion demonstrate reduced tendency to perceive academic challenges as threats to self-concept, mitigating the fear of failure that typically precipitates self-handicapping strategies (Zhang et al., 2016). Research consistently demonstrates an inverse relationship between self-compassion and self-handicapping behaviors, with increased self-compassion corresponding to decreased engagement in self-handicapping practices (Alaloğlu & Bahtiyar, 2020a).

The dynamic interaction between fear of failure and self-compassion proves fundamental in elucidating academic self-handicapping mechanisms. While fear of failure potentially catalyzes maladaptive coping strategies, including self-handicapping, self-compassion functions as a protective mechanism fostering resilience and adaptive responses to academic challenges. This bidirectional relationship suggests that interventions targeting the enhancement of self-compassion among students may effectively reduce self-handicapping behaviors and optimize academic outcomes (Djajadisastra, 2017).

The present investigation reveals a significant negative association between self-compassion and self-handicapping among university students in Makassar, indicating an inverse relationship wherein elevated levels of self-compassion correspond to decreased manifestations of self-handicapping behaviors. Individuals exhibiting high self-compassion demonstrate reduced preoccupation with self-presentation concerns, diminished anxiety regarding evaluative standards, and enhanced problem-management capabilities, thereby reducing the perceived utility of self-handicapping strategies. The absence of self-handicapping necessity among self-compassionate individuals facilitates

enhanced self-awareness and psychological integration (Barutçu Yıldırım & Demir, 2020).

In addition, those with a high level of self-compassion interpret failures or situations that threaten self-esteem and maintain motivation in the face of failure. Individuals with a high level of self-compassion will endeavour to have a realistic view of themselves and will not feel the need to defend themselves when experiencing loss. Using self-handicapping to protect one's self-esteem in the face of potential failure will impair one's ability to accurately assess one's strengths and vulnerabilities. Individuals with limited self-compassion are more likely to perceive a task situation as unfavourable to themselves. Individuals view failure in their responsibilities as detrimental to their self-esteem, so they engage in self-handicapping as a means of self-protection if they encounter poor performance outcomes.

The inverse relationship between self-compassion and self-handicapping can be explained through established psychological theories. According to Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), self-compassion likely supports autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs that underpin intrinsic motivation. Students using self-compassion in academic settings may experience greater learning autonomy, develop more accurate self-assessments, and maintain healthier academic relationships, reducing their need for self-handicapping behaviors.

Similarly, the Broaden-and-Build Theory (Fredrickson, 2001) suggests self-compassion functions protectively by fostering positive emotional states (self-kindness, common humanity awareness, mindfulness). These positive states expand students' cognitive and behavioral repertoires, enabling more adaptive coping strategies when facing academic difficulties. This expanded set of responses decreases reliance on defensive mechanisms like self-handicapping. Through consistent practice, these positive emotional responses build durable psychological resources such as resilience and constructive coping skills that further protect against maladaptive academic behaviors.

This research contributes novel insights to the field of educational psychology by examining the complex interplay between fear of failure, self-compassion, and academic self-handicapping within Indonesian state universities. While previous studies have explored these variables in isolation or paired relationships, this study is the first to integrate all three constructs within a competitive Asian academic environment. The research employs a unique methodological approach through ordinal regression analysis and culturally adapted measurement scales, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding how protective mechanisms like self-handicapping interact simultaneously with both negative (fear of failure) and positive (self-compassion) psychological factors in academic settings.

The findings have significant implications for both theory and practice in higher education. Theoretically, this study advances our understanding of self-handicapping by demonstrating its dual relationship with fear-based and compassion-based psychological processes, while highlighting the crucial role of cultural context in academic self-protective behaviors. From a practical standpoint, based on research findings, the researchers recommend implementing several evidence-based interventions in Indonesian universities to address fear of failure and self-handicapping while fostering self-compassion. These include adapting Neff and Germer's (2017) Mindful Self-Compassion protocol into structured eight-week workshops featuring meditations, exercises, and discussions tailored to academic contexts with cultural adaptations for Indonesian

collectivist values. Universities could also introduce cognitive-behavioral interventions during orientation and ongoing seminars to develop growth mindsets and resilience, helping students reframe academic setbacks as learning opportunities through cognitive restructuring and progressive exposure to challenges.

The researchers also suggest establishing structured peer mentoring where trained senior students guide younger peers, while providing faculty development focused on creating psychologically safe learning environments through growth-oriented feedback and assessment design. Digital platforms with self-guided modules on self-compassion and adaptive academic behaviors could offer scalable support, complemented by study skills programs that integrate psychological techniques for managing perfectionism and anxiety. Additionally, culturally-responsive group counseling sessions could address the unique pressures related to academic achievement, family honor, and social expectations in Indonesian contexts.

These interventions should be implemented using a tiered approach, with universal preventive measures for all students and targeted interventions for those showing elevated self-handicapping tendencies. Comprehensive program evaluation through both quantitative and qualitative methods would be crucial to refine these approaches and ensure their effectiveness within Indonesian higher education institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that fear of failure and self-compassion play significant roles in academic self-handicapping among university students. The findings reveal a positive relationship between fear of failure and self-handicapping ($p < 0.05$), indicating that students with higher levels of fear of failure are more likely to engage in self-handicapping behaviors. Conversely, self-compassion shows a negative relationship with self-handicapping ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that students with greater self-compassion are less likely to employ self-handicapping strategies. Together, these factors account for 22.4% of the variance in academic self-handicapping behaviors, highlighting their substantial but not exclusive influence on this phenomenon.

These results have important implications for higher education institutions, particularly in competitive academic environments. Universities should consider implementing preventive measures and support programs that address both the reduction of fear of failure and the cultivation of self-compassion among students. This dual approach could be more effective than traditional interventions focusing solely on academic performance. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of considering psychological factors in academic support services, suggesting that universities need to develop more comprehensive student support systems that integrate both academic and psychological assistance.

Future research should explore additional factors that might influence academic self-handicapping, such as institutional culture, peer relationships, and family expectations. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable in understanding how these relationships evolve over students' academic careers. Moreover, investigating the effectiveness of interventions designed to reduce fear of failure while enhancing self-compassion could provide practical insights for educational practitioners. Finally,

cross-cultural studies comparing these relationships across different educational systems could further enrich our understanding of academic self-handicapping in various cultural contexts.

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DECLARATION

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Ethics approval was obtained from the Research and Community Service Institution of Universitas Negeri Makassar and the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Negeri Makassar. All participants provided written informed consent before participating in the study. The research was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Consent for Publication

All participants provided written consent for the publication of study findings and any accompanying images, while maintaining their anonymity and confidentiality.

Availability of Data and Material (ADM)

The data and materials are not available online. However, researchers can be contacted for data requests.

Competing Interests

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Authors' contributions

Nurfitriany Fakhri conceived and designed the study, supervised the research process, and led the manuscript preparation. Khalida Muhajirah conducted the statistical analyses and contributed to writing the initial draft. Lukman Nadjamuddin provided critical feedback and assisted in manuscript revision. Sahril Buchori contributed to data collection and methodology refinement. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript. The corresponding author is Nurfitriany Fakhri.

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Sahril Buchor obtained his doctoral degree in Guidance and Counseling from the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, focusing on the framework of peace education in elementary schools. With a commitment to fostering peaceful learning environments, he has published several research articles and authored books on the concept of peace in educational settings. His contributions not only enhance academic discourse but also serve as practical guides for implementing peace education in schools, promoting emotional and social well-being among students.

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