Mental Health and Lifestyle Journal

Year 2027
Volume 5
Issue 6

Self-Compassion and Time Perspective as Predictors of Sense of Coherence Among Married Female University Students

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Article type:
Original Research

Article history:
Received 03 August 2026
Revised 28 October 2026
Accepted 08 November 2026
Initial Publish 21 November 2026
Published online 01 November 2027

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate associations of self-compassion and five dimensions of time perspective with sense of coherence among married female university students, and to assess the additional predictive contribution of temporal orientations beyond self-compassion. A cross-sectional correlational study was conducted among 253 married female students aged 25–45 years recruited through convenience sampling from university campuses in the Tehran metropolitan area. Participants completed the 12-item Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form, 56-item Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory, and the 13-item Sense of Coherence questionnaire. Pearson correlations and hierarchical multiple regression were performed using SPSS 24; self-compassion was entered in the first block and five time-perspective dimensions in the second. Sense of coherence was positively correlated with self-compassion ($r = .37$), past-positive ($r = .33$), present-hedonistic ($r = .17$), and future ($r = .28$) orientations and negatively correlated with past-negative ($r = -.32$) and present-fatalistic ($r = -.33$) orientations. The first regression block accounted for 13.7% of variance ($R^2 = .137$); the reported final model explained 34.5% ($R^2 = .345$), representing an increase of 20.8 percentage points ($\Delta R^2 = .208$). In the second block, past-negative ($\beta = -.311$), past-positive ($\beta = .183$), present-hedonistic ($\beta = .159$), present-fatalistic ($\beta = -.194$), and future ($\beta = .160$) orientations each had reported statistically significant coefficients. A more compassionate orientation toward oneself, less aversive and fatalistic temporal framing, and more positive/future-focused temporal orientations were associated with a stronger sense of coherence. The cross-sectional design does not establish directionality, and documented scoring/reporting inconsistencies require verification before inferential claims are treated as definitive.

Keywords: self-compassion; time perspective; sense of coherence; salutogenesis; married women; university students; Iran

How to cite this article:
Majidi, M., & Esmaeilzadeh, Z. (2027). Self-Compassion and Time Perspective as Predictors of Sense of Coherence Among Married Female University Students. *Mental Health and Lifestyle Journal, 5*(6), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.61838/mhlj.356

Introduction

University life constitutes a developmental and educational context in which individuals are required to manage multiple personal, interpersonal, and academic demands simultaneously. Students are expected to organize their time, establish educational and occupational goals, cope with academic pressures, maintain interpersonal relationships, and adapt to uncertainties regarding their future roles. These demands may become more complex for married female university students because academic responsibilities may coexist with marital, family, occupational, and social commitments. The capacity to interpret these diverse demands as understandable, manageable, and meaningful can therefore be particularly important for maintaining

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psychological adaptation and functioning. Within this context, sense of coherence represents an important psychological resource because it reflects the extent to which individuals perceive internal and external experiences as structured and comprehensible, believe that adequate resources are available to cope with demands, and consider engagement with those demands meaningful (1, 2). Accordingly, identifying psychological factors associated with a stronger sense of coherence may contribute to a better understanding of how female students manage the multiple responsibilities embedded in academic and family life.

Sense of coherence is increasingly considered a relevant construct in research concerning psychological adaptation, resilience, perceived stress, and quality of life. Individuals with a stronger sense of coherence are generally better able to organize stressful experiences within an understandable framework, identify resources that can be mobilized when difficulties arise, and preserve a sense of purpose while confronting demanding circumstances. Rather than merely indicating the absence of psychological distress, sense of coherence concerns the manner in which individuals cognitively and emotionally organize their experiences and perceive their ability to respond effectively to life challenges. Research conducted in different populations has demonstrated that sense of coherence is meaningfully related to psychological resources that facilitate adaptive coping. For example, sense of coherence has been associated with self-compassion and perceived stress among individuals facing serious health-related challenges, suggesting that a coherent interpretation of life circumstances may be connected to more adaptive emotional responses to adversity (3). Similarly, findings among women have shown that sense of coherence, together with self-compassion and other personal resources, is relevant to psychological adjustment and vulnerability to depressive experiences (2).

The importance of sense of coherence also extends to broader indicators of psychological well-being. Research among women experiencing primary dysmenorrhea indicated that sense of coherence, alexithymia, and self-compassion contributed to the prediction of psychological well-being, highlighting the potential importance of coherent meaning-making and supportive self-relating under stressful physical and emotional conditions (4). In older adults with cardiovascular disease, sense of coherence has similarly been examined alongside spiritual well-being and self-compassion in relation to quality of life, with pain self-efficacy considered as an explanatory mechanism connecting these psychological resources to adaptive outcomes (5). Collectively, these studies suggest that sense of coherence is embedded within a broader system of personal resources through which individuals interpret stressful experiences, regulate their responses, and maintain adaptive functioning.

One psychological characteristic that may be particularly important in this system is self-compassion. Self-compassion involves responding to personal shortcomings, failures, distress, and difficult experiences with understanding rather than excessive self-criticism. It incorporates an accepting and balanced awareness of emotional experience and enables individuals to recognize difficulty without becoming completely absorbed by negative evaluations of themselves. Such an orientation may be especially relevant in circumstances in which individuals are attempting to satisfy several competing expectations. Married female university students, for example, may encounter academic setbacks while simultaneously managing responsibilities associated with marriage, family relationships, employment, or parenting. Under these conditions, harsh self-evaluation may intensify the psychological burden of ordinary setbacks, whereas a compassionate orientation toward oneself may facilitate more flexible and constructive responses.

Theoretical and empirical work supports the relevance of self-compassion to the way stressful circumstances are understood and managed. In clinical psychology trainees, self-compassion has been studied in relation to sense of coherence, coping strategies, and perceived stress, indicating that compassionate self-relating may function together with coherent meaning-making and coping processes in the experience of psychological demands (6). In clinical populations, self-compassion has also been linked to factors associated with sense of coherence. Recent research involving individuals with generalized anxiety disorder demonstrated that emotion regulation, differentiation of self, and self-compassion contribute to the prediction of sense of coherence, reinforcing the proposition that the capacity to respond to oneself constructively during emotional difficulty may correspond with stronger perceptions of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaning (1).

The relationship between self-compassion and sense of coherence can be understood through several complementary psychological processes. A compassionate individual may interpret personal difficulties as experiences that can be acknowledged and managed rather than as evidence of inadequacy. This orientation can reduce the tendency to magnify failures and may help maintain a more organized understanding of challenging events. Self-compassion may also facilitate manageability because individuals who are less preoccupied with self-condemnation may be better able to identify available coping resources and engage in problem solving. Furthermore, compassionate responses to personal suffering may preserve meaningfulness by allowing individuals to continue investing in valued goals despite disappointment or stress. The observed relationships between self-compassion, sense of coherence, perceived stress, psychological well-being, and quality of life across different populations provide empirical support for examining self-compassion as a potentially important correlate of sense of coherence among university students (3, 5).

Although self-compassion concerns how individuals relate to themselves during difficulty, adaptation is also shaped by how they organize experiences across the temporal dimensions of the past, present, and future. Time perspective refers to relatively stable patterns through which individuals cognitively structure personal experiences according to temporal frames. Different people may focus predominantly on unpleasant or positive aspects of the past, emphasize immediate experiences and rewards in the present, perceive current events as largely determined by forces beyond their control, or orient themselves toward future plans and anticipated consequences. These temporal orientations can affect motivation, decision-making, emotional functioning, goal pursuit, and the interpretation of current circumstances. Consequently, time perspective may be particularly relevant to students, whose educational activities require ongoing integration of previous experiences, present responsibilities, and future aspirations.

The educational significance of temporal orientation is supported by evidence showing that the ways students perceive and organize time are associated with several aspects of academic functioning. Future-oriented individuals may be more willing to delay immediate rewards, persist in educational activities, and connect current effort with long-term goals. By contrast, maladaptive temporal patterns may contribute to avoidance, reduced engagement, or difficulty sustaining goal-directed behavior. Among university students, future time perspective has been negatively associated with academic procrastination, while mindfulness has been identified as an explanatory mechanism in this relationship (7). These findings are particularly relevant because procrastination often reflects difficulties in integrating immediate emotional preferences with future academic consequences. Similarly, research examining time perspectives and procrastination

has demonstrated that temporal orientations interact with the satisfaction of basic psychological needs in explaining procrastinatory behavior, suggesting that the influence of time perspective may depend partly on the broader motivational context within which students pursue their goals (8).

A future-oriented perspective may therefore provide students with a psychological framework through which current academic demands acquire greater purpose. When present effort is perceived as connected to meaningful future outcomes, temporary difficulties may be easier to tolerate and organize. This possibility has been addressed in intervention-oriented studies. Future perspective training has been examined as an approach for improving academic hope, psychological well-being, goal orientation, and time perspective among high school students, indicating that temporal orientation may be sufficiently malleable to constitute a meaningful target for educational and psychological interventions (9). Time perspective training has also demonstrated relevance to passion and perseverance among secondary-school students, suggesting that temporal framing may influence sustained engagement with demanding goals (10). These findings strengthen the assumption that temporal orientation is not merely an abstract cognitive preference but is closely associated with motivational and adaptive processes relevant to education.

Intervention research further suggests that modifying temporal orientations may influence academic outcomes that are directly associated with persistence and effective self-management. A comparison of time perspective therapy and mindfulness among secondary students experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder after flooding demonstrated effects on academic motivation, academic fascination, academic procrastination, and academic sustainability (11). Such evidence indicates that temporal cognition may have implications for how students approach academic responsibilities even in the presence of substantial environmental and psychological stressors. It also suggests conceptual overlap between adaptive temporal orientation and psychological capacities such as mindfulness, flexible attention, and goal-directed persistence.

The role of future orientation may be particularly significant when considered alongside positive emotional processes. Recent evidence among high school students indicates that future time perspective participates in the relationship between mindfulness and learning burnout, with academic positive emotions also contributing to the explanatory pathway (12). This pattern suggests that students who maintain awareness of present experiences while sustaining a constructive representation of the future may be better positioned to experience positive academic emotions and lower levels of burnout. From the perspective of sense of coherence, future orientation may strengthen meaningfulness by connecting present demands with valued future outcomes and may reinforce manageability by encouraging planning and anticipation of consequences.

Time perspective, however, should not be understood exclusively in terms of future orientation. Individuals simultaneously maintain representations of past experiences and present circumstances, and these different temporal orientations may have distinct psychological implications. A predominantly negative representation of the past may reinforce perceptions of instability, failure, or unresolved difficulty, whereas a positive interpretation of past experiences may contribute to continuity and psychological integration. Similarly, a present-hedonistic orientation may facilitate enjoyment and engagement with immediate experiences, while an excessively fatalistic present orientation may be associated with diminished perceptions of personal control. These patterns may be particularly relevant to sense of coherence because

comprehensibility involves interpreting experiences within an organized framework, manageability involves believing that effective responses are possible, and meaningfulness requires perceiving sufficient value in continued engagement.

The formation of time perspective itself appears to reflect broader psychological characteristics and developmental experiences. Research among university students has shown that early maladaptive schemas are associated with time perspective through life expectancy, indicating that temporal orientation may emerge partly from enduring cognitive structures concerning the self, relationships, and future possibilities (13). Such findings suggest that a person's temporal profile is connected to more fundamental beliefs and expectations and may therefore influence how current challenges are interpreted. For students managing concurrent educational and marital responsibilities, these differences in temporal framing may affect whether difficulties are experienced as temporary and manageable challenges or as evidence of persistent and uncontrollable problems.

The practical importance of adaptive temporal regulation is also consistent with the broader emphasis on life skills in educational settings. Skills such as time management, self-awareness, and social competence are increasingly regarded as important for students because educational success requires not only subject-specific knowledge but also the capacity to organize responsibilities, regulate behavior, and make decisions in accordance with longer-term objectives (14). Time perspective may provide an underlying psychological framework for these skills by shaping how individuals distribute attention between immediate demands, previous experiences, and future consequences. In this respect, examining temporal orientations can complement research focused on explicit time-management behavior by addressing the cognitive and motivational representation of time itself.

Despite growing evidence concerning self-compassion, time perspective, and sense of coherence separately, their simultaneous consideration remains comparatively limited. Self-compassion and time perspective represent conceptually distinguishable yet potentially complementary psychological resources. Self-compassion reflects the quality of an individual's relationship with the self when confronting inadequacy, distress, or failure, whereas time perspective reflects the organization of experience through temporal frames. A student may, for example, respond compassionately to academic difficulties while nevertheless interpreting the future pessimistically or approaching the present fatalistically. Conversely, an individual may maintain clear future goals while responding to setbacks with severe self-criticism. Examining both constructs therefore offers a more differentiated understanding of the psychological characteristics associated with sense of coherence than considering either construct independently.

This combined perspective is especially relevant for married female university students. Their experiences may require continuous coordination of immediate responsibilities with future educational, occupational, and family goals, while previous experiences may shape expectations concerning competence, relationships, and achievement. A stronger sense of coherence may emerge when these experiences can be interpreted as understandable, resources are perceived as sufficient to respond to challenges, and current efforts remain connected to personally meaningful objectives. Self-compassion may contribute to this process by reducing destructive self-judgment during setbacks, whereas adaptive temporal orientations may support continuity, agency, planning, and goal-directed engagement. Existing research linking self-compassion with sense of

coherence (1, 2), as well as studies demonstrating associations between temporal orientations and adaptive academic functioning (7, 8), provides a basis for investigating their combined predictive roles.

Accordingly, examining the relative and joint contributions of self-compassion and different dimensions of time perspective may extend understanding of psychological resources associated with coherent functioning in this population. Such an investigation can clarify whether temporal orientations provide explanatory information regarding sense of coherence beyond that associated with compassionate self-relating and can distinguish potentially adaptive temporal dimensions from orientations associated with weaker coherence. This approach may also provide a foundation for future counseling and educational interventions focused on strengthening students' psychological resources, particularly through self-compassion, constructive temporal framing, future-oriented goal organization, and more flexible interpretations of past and present experiences.

Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate self-compassion and the dimensions of time perspective as predictors of sense of coherence among married female university students.

Methods and Materials

Study Design and Participants

A quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational design was used. The target population was married female students aged 25–45 years enrolled in universities in Tehran during the 2021–2022 academic year. Recruitment took place across the Islamic Azad University campuses of Islamshahr, Tehran North, Tehran Central, and Tehran South. This was an observational study with no intervention, random assignment, or follow-up measurement.

Eligible participants were women who were currently enrolled as university students, were married, and were aged 25–45 years. Declining or withdrawing participation constituted the stated exclusion condition. Convenience sampling was used. The tabulated demographic data and degrees of freedom of the regression analysis identify an analyzed sample of N = 253; the exact number initially approached, response rate, and number excluded for missing data were not established from the available participant-accounting information. No power calculation based on a prespecified effect size was reported.

The sample represented students at associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels and included women with and without children. Characteristics are summarized in Table 1. Because sampling was nonprobabilistic and campus-based, findings are most directly applicable to married female university students in these settings, rather than to all married women in Tehran or Iran.

Questionnaires were administered individually at the participating campuses. Respondents received an explanation of the study purpose and questionnaire instructions, and participation was described as voluntary. Participants were informed that they could decline or stop participation and that questionnaires would be coded without names and handled confidentially.

Data Collection Tools

Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form (SCS–SF). The 12-item version developed by Raes et al. (2011), based on Neff's original measure, assesses self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification across five response categories. In the analytic sample, the reported

Cronbach's alpha for the total self-compassion score was .76. Higher totals were treated as indicating greater self-compassion; interpretation assumes that negatively worded items were scored in the intended reverse direction.

Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory (ZTPI). The 56-item inventory measures five temporal orientations: past-negative, past-positive, present-hedonistic, present-fatalistic, and future (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). Responses are provided using a five-point agreement scale. The reported internal consistency coefficients in the analytic sample were .73, .81, .87, .64, and .79 for these five dimensions, respectively. The alpha of .64 for present-fatalistic indicates comparatively weak internal consistency and warrants caution in interpretation.

Sense of Coherence Scale (SOC-13). The short 13-item form of Antonovsky's orientation-to-life instrument was used to assess comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1993). The study documentation described seven response categories and reverse scoring of selected items. Cronbach's alpha was reported as .92. For the standard 13-item version scored 1–7, the theoretical summed-score range is 13–91; the descriptive total reported for this study falls outside that range (see Table 2). The item coding and scoring metric therefore need verification before the level of the total score can be interpreted.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics comprised frequencies and percentages for demographic variables, means and standard deviations for study measures, and Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency. Pearson product–moment correlations were calculated between self-compassion, five time-perspective dimensions, and SOC. Hierarchical multiple regression was specified with SOC as the criterion: self-compassion was entered at Step 1 and the five ZTPI dimensions at Step 2. The analysis was performed in SPSS version 24. The original statistical report supplied correlations, standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients, R^2, adjusted R^2, F statistics, and change statistics; analyses were not recomputed from person-level records.

Reported diagnostics included univariate skewness and kurtosis within ±2, variance inflation factors of 1.12–1.72, tolerances of .58–.89, and a Durbin–Watson value of 1.63. Residual and Mahalanobis-distance plots were evaluated descriptively.

Findings and Results

The 253 respondents were aged 25–45 years. The largest age category was 31–35 years (33.6%), followed by younger than 30 years (28.9%), 36–40 years (26.5%), and older than 40 years (11.1%). Bachelor's degree students comprised 61.3% of the sample; 37.2% of participants had no children. Table 1 presents the full tabulation.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants (N = 253)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Age	Below 30 years	73	28.9
	31–35 years	85	33.6
	36–40 years	67	26.5
	>40 years (up to 45)	28	11.1
Education	Associate degree	15	5.9
	Bachelor's degree	155	61.3
	Master's degree	71	28.1
	Doctoral level	12	4.7

Children	None	94	37.2
	One	87	34.4
	Two	56	22.1
	More than two	16	6.3
Marriage duration	1–3 years	53	20.9
	4–6 years	78	30.8
	7–10 years	79	31.2
	More than 10 years	43	17.0

Means, standard deviations, and reliability coefficients are given in Table 2. Self-compassion had a reported mean of 37.04 (SD = 9.22), and the ZTPI dimensions showed varying mean totals consistent with their different item counts. Internal consistency was generally acceptable except for the present-fatalistic scale (α = .64). The SOC score requires particular caution: the reported mean of 99.84 exceeds the maximum 91 for the stated SOC-13 metric, so neither the absolute level nor a normative classification can be reliably inferred until scoring has been audited.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and internal consistency

Variable	M	SD	Cronbach's α
Self-compassion	37.04	9.22	.76
Past-negative	33.82	6.75	.73
Past-positive	32.17	6.94	.81
Present-hedonistic	51.28	8.65	.87
Present-fatalistic	25.77	5.61	.64
Future	39.44	8.16	.79
Sense of coherence (reported)	99.84	10.89	.92

As shown in Table 3, SOC was positively correlated with self-compassion ($r = .37, p < .01$), past-positive ($r = .33, p < .01$), present-hedonistic ($r = .17, p < .01$), and future ($r = .28, p < .01$). SOC was negatively correlated with past-negative ($r = -.32, p < .01$) and present-fatalistic ($r = -.33, p < .01$) orientations. In absolute terms, the largest of these reported bivariate associations involved self-compassion, followed by past-positive and present-fatalistic orientations.

Correlations among the predictors were heterogeneous. For instance, past-negative and present-hedonistic orientations correlated at −.51, whereas present-hedonistic and present-fatalistic orientations correlated at −.46. These relations underscore the need to distinguish bivariate associations from regression coefficients adjusted for the other entered predictors. The reported future orientation–self-compassion correlation (.11) did not meet the marked significance thresholds.

Table 3. Pearson correlations among study variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Self-compassion	—						
2. Past-negative	−.14*	—					
3. Past-positive	.25**	−.04	—				
4. Present-hedonistic	.13*	−.51**	.19**	—			
5. Present-fatalistic	−.23**	.35**	−.13*	−.46**	—		
6. Future	.11	.08	.25**	.25**	−.14*	—	
7. Sense of coherence	.37**	−.32**	.33**	.17**	−.33**	.28**	—

At the first step, self-compassion was entered as the sole predictor. The model summary reported $R^2 = .137$, adjusted $R^2 = .133$, and $F(1, 251) = 39.81$, $p < .001$. The regression coefficient row reported $b = .283$, $SE = .065$, $\beta = .240$, $t = 4.38$, $p = .001$. For a model with one predictor, however, the coefficient-based t

statistic is not numerically compatible with the reported model F and R^2. These entries are retained in Table 4 as reported, rather than replacing them with reconstructed values.

After adding the five time-perspective dimensions, the full model reported $R^2 = .345$, adjusted $R^2 = .329$, $F(6, 246) = 21.63$, $p < .001$. The increase in explained variance was $\Delta R^2 = .208$, with reported $\Delta F = 15.66$, $p = .001$. In that model, higher past-negative ($\beta = -.311$) and present-fatalistic scores ($\beta = -.194$) were associated with lower SOC, whereas higher past-positive ($\beta = .183$), present-hedonistic ($\beta = .159$), and future scores ($\beta = .160$) were associated with higher SOC. All five ZTPI coefficients were reported as statistically significant. Because the self-compassion coefficient in the full model was not supplied, its independent contribution after entry of the ZTPI dimensions cannot be established from the available regression table.

Table 4. Reported hierarchical regression coefficients predicting sense of coherence

Step and predictor	b	SE	β	t	p
Step 1: Self-compassion	.283	.065	.240	4.38	.001
Step 2: Past-negative	−.501	.098	−.311	−5.11	.001
Step 2: Past-positive	.402	.121	.183	3.32	.001
Step 2: Present-hedonistic	.200	.085	.159	2.35	.020
Step 2: Present-fatalistic	−.319	.102	−.194	−3.13	.001
Step 2: Future	.419	.150	.160	2.80	.005

Table 5. Reported model summary and incremental prediction

Model	R^2	Adj. R^2	F(df)	ΔR^2	ΔF
Step 1: self-compassion	.137	.133	39.81 (1, 251)	—	—
Step 2: + five ZTPI dimensions	.345	.329	21.63 (6, 246)	.208	15.66

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationships of self-compassion and five dimensions of time perspective with sense of coherence among married female university students and examined whether temporal orientations contributed additional predictive information beyond self-compassion. The findings showed that sense of coherence was positively correlated with self-compassion, past-positive orientation, present-hedonistic orientation, and future orientation, whereas past-negative and present-fatalistic orientations were negatively correlated with sense of coherence. Among the bivariate relationships, self-compassion showed the strongest positive association with sense of coherence, while past-positive and present-fatalistic orientations also demonstrated notable relationships. Hierarchical regression analysis further indicated that self-compassion alone accounted for 13.7% of the variance in sense of coherence. After the five time-perspective dimensions were added, the reported explained variance increased to 34.5%, representing an additional 20.8 percentage points of explained variance. In the final model, past-negative and present-fatalistic orientations showed negative standardized coefficients, whereas past-positive, present-hedonistic, and future orientations showed positive coefficients. These findings suggest that both the manner in which individuals respond to themselves during difficulty and the temporal framework through which they interpret experience are meaningfully associated with their perception that life is comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful.

The positive association between self-compassion and sense of coherence is consistent with theoretical expectations and previous empirical findings. Self-compassion enables individuals to respond to mistakes, difficulties, and personal inadequacies with understanding rather than excessive self-criticism. Such an

orientation can contribute to a more organized and less threatening interpretation of stressful experiences and may therefore support the comprehensibility component of sense of coherence. A compassionate stance toward the self may also reinforce manageability because individuals who are not overwhelmed by self-condemnation may be more capable of recognizing available psychological and interpersonal resources. The present finding is consistent with research showing that self-compassion is positively related to sense of coherence and negatively related to psychological distress. In patients with generalized anxiety disorder, self-compassion was identified alongside emotion regulation and differentiation of self as a predictor of sense of coherence (1). Similarly, among cancer patients, self-compassion and sense of coherence were both related to lower perceived stress, indicating that these resources may contribute to more adaptive responses to difficult life circumstances (3).

The present result also corresponds with findings reported in women and medically vulnerable populations. Narimani and Ghaffari demonstrated that sense of coherence and self-compassion were associated with postpartum depression, indicating that women who possess stronger internal psychological resources may be less vulnerable to maladaptive emotional outcomes during demanding life transitions (2). Likewise, sense of coherence and self-compassion contributed to the prediction of psychological well-being among girls with primary dysmenorrhea (4). In older individuals with cardiovascular disease, self-compassion and sense of coherence were also examined as determinants of quality of life, with pain self-efficacy functioning as an important intermediary psychological resource (5). Although these populations differ from married female students, the convergence of findings suggests that self-compassion and sense of coherence may operate as mutually reinforcing psychological resources across contexts characterized by stress and role demands.

The relationship between self-compassion and sense of coherence may also be explained through coping processes. Individuals with greater self-compassion tend to acknowledge distress without magnifying its implications for personal worth. This balanced response may protect against the cognitive disorganization that can accompany excessive self-criticism and may allow stressful events to be interpreted as temporary, understandable, and manageable. Research involving clinical psychology trainees has shown that self-compassion is related to sense of coherence, coping strategies, and perceived stress, supporting the proposition that compassionate self-relating may influence how individuals process and respond to demanding experiences (6). For married female university students, who may simultaneously manage academic responsibilities, intimate relationships, household obligations, and sometimes parenting or employment, self-compassion may therefore serve as an important psychological resource for maintaining a coherent perception of life circumstances.

The negative association between past-negative orientation and sense of coherence was another important finding. A past-negative time perspective reflects a tendency to interpret previous experiences through an unfavorable, regretful, or distress-focused framework. When individuals repeatedly emphasize adverse memories or unresolved failures, their personal history may appear less coherent and more threatening. This may weaken comprehensibility by making current experiences seem connected to persistent patterns of difficulty rather than to understandable and bounded life events. It may also reduce meaningfulness when previous experiences are interpreted primarily as evidence of failure or loss. The negative regression coefficient observed for past-negative orientation suggests that this temporal tendency may represent an

important correlate of diminished sense of coherence even when other time-perspective dimensions are considered simultaneously.

This interpretation is compatible with research indicating that maladaptive cognitive structures can shape temporal orientation. Yarandi and Madahi found that time perspective among university students could be predicted from early maladaptive schemas through life expectancy, suggesting that temporal attitudes may partly reflect more deeply rooted beliefs about the self, relationships, and future possibilities (13). If previous experiences are organized through rigid negative schemas, individuals may find it more difficult to construct a coherent and adaptive interpretation of current circumstances. Such patterns may be particularly consequential for students because their academic functioning often requires them to interpret previous successes and failures in ways that support continued effort rather than reinforce discouragement.

Past-positive orientation, in contrast, was positively related to sense of coherence. A positive orientation toward the past may help individuals integrate previous experiences into a stable and meaningful personal narrative. This does not necessarily imply idealizing the past or ignoring difficulties; rather, it may reflect the ability to derive continuity, positive meaning, and psychological resources from earlier experiences. When individuals can identify supportive relationships, successful adaptations, meaningful achievements, or lessons learned from previous challenges, the past may function as a source of comprehensibility and manageability. Such an interpretation is compatible with the broader pattern of evidence showing that adaptive temporal framing contributes to psychological functioning and goal-directed behavior. Time perspective appears to influence how individuals organize current effort and connect it with broader meanings and expectations, particularly in educational settings (9, 10).

The negative relationship between present-fatalistic orientation and sense of coherence was also theoretically meaningful. Present fatalism is characterized by the belief that current circumstances are largely controlled by external forces and that individual effort has limited capacity to influence outcomes. This orientation stands in direct tension with the manageability component of sense of coherence, which involves confidence that sufficient resources are available to meet environmental demands. Individuals who believe that outcomes are predetermined or beyond personal control may be less likely to perceive themselves as capable of influencing academic, relational, or personal circumstances. Consequently, they may experience demands as less manageable and their efforts as less meaningful. The relatively strong negative association observed between present-fatalistic orientation and sense of coherence in the current study supports this conceptual connection.

The findings related to the present and future dimensions also deserve attention. Present-hedonistic orientation showed a small but positive association with sense of coherence. This result suggests that engagement with enjoyable immediate experiences does not necessarily conflict with coherent functioning. When present-focused enjoyment is balanced and does not become impulsive or disconnected from longer-term goals, it may contribute to positive emotional experiences, interpersonal engagement, and restoration from ongoing responsibilities. For married female students, the ability to experience pleasure and satisfaction in everyday activities may provide emotional resources that help sustain engagement with academic and family responsibilities. However, the comparatively smaller magnitude of this association indicates that present-focused enjoyment may be beneficial primarily when integrated with other adaptive temporal orientations rather than functioning as a dominant motivational pattern.

Future orientation was positively associated with sense of coherence both at the correlational level and in the reported regression model. This result is consistent with the assumption that a future-oriented individual is more likely to plan, anticipate consequences, organize current behavior around long-term objectives, and interpret present demands within a broader developmental framework. Such processes are particularly relevant to meaningfulness because current academic effort may become more worthwhile when it is perceived as connected to future educational, occupational, or family goals. Future orientation may also support manageability by encouraging planning and preparation rather than passive reaction to immediate demands.

The present finding corresponds with previous research on academic functioning. Li et al. found that future time perspective was associated with lower academic procrastination among nursing students, with mindfulness contributing to the explanatory pathway (7). This suggests that students who maintain a clearer connection between current behavior and future outcomes may be less likely to postpone academic responsibilities. Similarly, research has shown that the relationship between time perspective and procrastination varies according to the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, highlighting the importance of temporal cognition in motivational self-regulation (8). These findings support the current result by suggesting that future orientation may strengthen psychological organization and goal-directed behavior, both of which are conceptually relevant to sense of coherence.

Interventional findings provide further support for the adaptive significance of future and balanced temporal perspectives. Future perspective training has been associated with academic hope, psychological well-being, goal orientation, and time perspective among students (9). Time perspective training has also demonstrated beneficial relationships with passion and perseverance, two characteristics that facilitate sustained engagement with long-term educational goals (10). Furthermore, comparison of time perspective therapy with mindfulness showed improvements in academic motivation, academic fascination, procrastination, and academic sustainability among students experiencing post-traumatic stress symptoms (11). These results suggest that temporal orientations are not merely descriptive personality tendencies but are related to academic adaptation and may be responsive to psychologically informed interventions.

Recent evidence also provides a possible emotional explanation for the association between future orientation and stronger psychological functioning. Future time perspective has been shown to participate in the relationship between mindfulness and learning burnout through academic positive emotions (12). A constructive representation of the future may therefore promote positive emotional engagement with present academic activities and reduce the experience that educational demands are exhausting or meaningless. For the participants in the present study, maintaining a future-oriented perspective may similarly allow present responsibilities to be viewed as purposeful investments rather than isolated burdens. This interpretation is consistent with the meaningfulness component of sense of coherence.

The importance of temporal orientation is also consistent with calls to strengthen time management, self-awareness, and other life skills among students (14). Although behavioral time management and psychological time perspective are not identical constructs, both concern the regulation of present actions in relation to priorities and future consequences. Students who are able to integrate their past experiences, present activities, and anticipated goals may be better equipped to coordinate multiple roles and responsibilities. The current finding that the five temporal dimensions collectively added substantial

explanatory information beyond self-compassion supports the view that temporal organization represents a distinct component of psychological adaptation.

Taken together, the hierarchical regression findings are particularly important because they indicate that self-compassion and time perspective should not be regarded as interchangeable constructs. Self-compassion explained a meaningful proportion of variance in sense of coherence, but the addition of the five temporal orientations increased the reported explained variance from 13.7% to 34.5%. This suggests that how individuals treat themselves during difficulty and how they cognitively organize the past, present, and future may represent complementary aspects of coherent functioning. Self-compassion may primarily shape emotional responses to personal difficulty, whereas temporal orientation may influence continuity, agency, planning, motivation, and the attribution of meaning across time. The combined consideration of these constructs therefore provides a broader account of individual differences in sense of coherence among married female university students.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional and correlational design does not permit conclusions about causal direction; therefore, it cannot be determined whether self-compassion and adaptive temporal orientations strengthen sense of coherence or whether individuals with stronger sense of coherence subsequently develop more compassionate and adaptive ways of relating to themselves and time. Second, convenience sampling from university campuses in Tehran limits the generalizability of the findings to married female students in other regions, educational systems, age groups, or cultural contexts. Third, all variables were measured using self-report questionnaires, which may have introduced common-method variance, response biases, and socially desirable responding. The relatively low internal consistency reported for the present-fatalistic dimension also warrants caution. In addition, potentially relevant variables such as socioeconomic status, employment, number and age of children, perceived marital quality, social support, psychological symptoms, and current academic stress were not included in the regression model. Finally, the reported sense-of-coherence descriptive score and some regression statistics require verification against the original scoring procedure and statistical output; therefore, absolute score interpretation and some inferential conclusions should be treated cautiously until the underlying scoring and analysis are confirmed.

Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to clarify the temporal ordering among self-compassion, time perspective, and sense of coherence and to determine whether changes in these constructs predict subsequent psychological adaptation. Experimental and intervention studies could examine whether increasing self-compassion or modifying maladaptive temporal orientations produces measurable improvements in sense of coherence. Future research should recruit larger and more diverse samples across multiple universities, cities, and cultural contexts and should include comparisons between married and unmarried students, female and male students, and student and nonstudent populations. Researchers may also examine potential mediating and moderating mechanisms, including emotion regulation, mindfulness, perceived stress, academic hope, social support, marital satisfaction, resilience, and self-efficacy. Structural equation modeling could be used to test more comprehensive explanatory models. It would also be useful to examine balanced time perspective rather than only separate temporal dimensions and to investigate whether flexibility in shifting among past, present, and future orientations is more strongly associated with sense of coherence than any single orientation. Finally, future studies should carefully verify instrument

scoring, report reliability and validity indices for the study sample, and use prospective power analysis and probability-based sampling whenever feasible.

The findings suggest several potential applications for university counseling and student-support services. Counselors may assess both the ways students respond to personal difficulties and the temporal frameworks through which they interpret academic, family, and interpersonal experiences. Programs designed for married female students could include self-compassion exercises aimed at reducing harsh self-criticism, increasing balanced emotional awareness, and encouraging constructive responses to setbacks. Time-perspective interventions may help students identify excessively negative interpretations of the past, challenge fatalistic beliefs about the present, develop realistic and meaningful future goals, and connect current academic responsibilities with longer-term personal values. Universities may also integrate time-management, goal-setting, self-awareness, and psychological flexibility training into student-support programs. Because married students may manage overlapping academic and family roles, interventions should emphasize realistic planning and flexible prioritization rather than simply increasing productivity. Group counseling, psychoeducational workshops, and individual counseling could be used to strengthen supportive self-relating, perceived personal agency, and meaningful future orientation, thereby potentially enhancing students' ability to perceive demanding life circumstances as more understandable, manageable, and worthwhile.

Acknowledgments

The authors express their deep gratitude to all participants who contributed to this study.

Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

Funding

This research was carried out independently with personal funding and without the financial support of any governmental or private institution or organization.

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