

Dealing with unfinished tasks. The role of self-compassion

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Abstract

A large body of evidence in occupational health psychology has identified unfinished tasks as a unique source of distress. There is empirical evidence for a positive link between unfinished tasks and affective rumination. Our research aims to replicate the relationship between unfinished tasks and affective rumination (H1). We also investigate boundary conditions of this link by including self-compassion as a potential buffer (H2). We investigated this idea using a cross-sectional survey ($N = 199$) in German and in English. Our sample was compromised of mostly European nationalities. In line with our first hypothesis, we found evidence that unfinished tasks are positively linked to affective rumination. Contrary to our second hypothesis, self-compassion did not have a buffering effect on the relationship between unfinished tasks and affective rumination. However, self-compassion was linked to affective rumination. Our study suggests that the link between unfinished tasks and affective rumination is rather robust and that self-compassion links to affective rumination directly.

Key words. Unfinished tasks, Affective rumination, Self-compassion

Introduction

In most European countries, people work between 36 and 40 hours per week or about one third of their week (*Hours of Work - Annual Statistics*, 2022). Considering the amount of time people spend at work, it is important to understand and study its implications on people's well-being (Weiss & Rupp, 2011). Studies on occupational health psychology suggest that multiple hindering workplace stressors exist (Goh et al., 2015; Law et al., 2020; Pindek et al., 2024).

One such workplace stressor is unfinished tasks (Syrek et al., 2017). Unfinished tasks are shown to have detrimental consequences, impairing people's ability to recover during non-work time including their quality of sleep (Syrek et al., 2017; Syrek & Antoni, 2014). Such recovery experiences are crucial for ensuring people's well-being as chronic sleep deprivations have been linked to serious health problems, depression and anxiety (Ferrara & De Gennaro, 2001; Jansson-Fröjmark & Lindblom, 2008). One proposed mechanism for these detrimental effects of unfinished tasks on sleep is rumination during off job time (Syrek et al., 2017). Rumination is commonly defined as conscious thoughts that revolve around a particular theme and that recur in absence of its immediate environmental demands (Martin & Tesser, 1996). Even though different kinds of rumination exist, we specifically pay attention to affective rumination, a negative type of rumination related to intrusive, recurrent and pervasive thoughts about work related issues in mainly affective terms (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011; Jimenez et al., 2022; Weigelt et al., 2023). Affective rumination is seen as the most detrimental kind of rumination, linked to increased burnout rates, psychosomatic complaints, and lower life satisfaction (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011; Weigelt et al., 2023). Given the potential impact of affective rumination on our well-being, this prompts further exploration into potential mitigating factors on the relationship between unfinished tasks and affective rumination.

In many domains of psychology, self-compassion has been related to lower levels of depression, anxiety and negative affect (Kotera & Van Gordon, 2021; Neff, 2023; Stutts et al., 2018; Zessin et al., 2015). Self-compassion entails lending oneself support during difficult moments or personal shortcomings. In line with control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1982) we also propose that self-compassion may be an adaptive strategy for coping with distressing events such as unfinished tasks. Both evidence of the potential benefits of self-compassion as a coping strategy in other scenarios might also further underline its relevance in the context of unfinished tasks (Játiva & Cerezo, 2014; Johnson & O'Brien, 2013; Yip & Tong M. W., 2021).

Our research aims to make vital contributions to the literature by examining the established link between unfinished tasks and affective rumination and delving deeper into its boundary conditions by specifically examining the buffering effects of self-compassion. We also extend the application of self-compassion to a previously unexplored research domain, which broadens our understanding of the term and filling in a research gap.

Unfinished tasks and affective rumination

Control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1982) proposes that a discrepancy between wanting to achieve a certain goal and having only partially achieved the goal triggers discomfort or distress. Further theorizing links unattained goals to an increased accessibility of goal related information that is difficult to ignore (Martin & Tesser, 1996). These founding ideas of occupational health psychology can also explain why specifically affective rumination during of work time can be viewed as a main consequence of unfinished tasks. In light of control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1982), affective rumination likely follows unfinished tasks because its negative emotionality best reflects the distressing nature of unfinished tasks (Carver & Scheier, 1982). This idea is further underlined as the elements of intrusiveness and

pervasiveness of affective rumination also fit well with Martin and Tesser's (1996) idea that unfinished tasks trigger goal-related thoughts that are difficult to ignore.

Accordingly, research in occupational health psychology support our above outlined rational that affective rumination probably follows unfinished tasks. Early studies conducted by Zeigarnik (1938), showed that interrupted tasks are more easily remembered than finished ones (Lewin, 1927; Syrek et al., 2017). Early on, these findings gave initial support of the idea that rumination in general follows unfinished tasks. More recent studies have specifically focused on affective rumination, identifying it as a direct consequences of unfinished tasks or portrayed it as a mediator of unfinished tasks detrimental effects on peoples well-being (Martin & Tesser, 1996; Syrek et al., 2017; Weigelt et al., 2019). Given the theoretical background and evidence linking affective rumination to unfinished tasks, we expect:

H1: Unfinished tasks are positively related to affective rumination during off-job time.

Considering this effect, it's important to investigate its boundary conditions. A research gap can be identified when investigating potential protective factors or so-called buffers to the relationship between unfinished tasks and affective rumination. One option might be self-compassion.

Self-compassion as a buffer of the detrimental effects of unfinished tasks

Self-compassion is about supporting oneself during suffering or distress, whether from personal failures or life's challenges, and striving for self-acceptance (Neff, 2023). It is defined by six facets: (1) self-kindness (2) common humanity (3) mindfulness (4) self-judgment (5) isolation (6) overidentification (Raes et al., 2011). Core virtues of a self-compassionate person are, for instance: self-kindness which involves being supportive, caring and understanding towards one's pain rather than being self-judging, common humanity which involves viewing your personal failure as something everyone has to go through rather than feeling isolated about them, mindfulness which involves being present and aware about

current experiences in a balanced way without focusing too much on ones thoughts (Raes et al., 2011; Shapiro et al., 2006). The examples above illustrate how self-compassion might be a way to cope or deal with distressing situations through taking a more compassionate stance.

In line with control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1982) and research by Syrek et al. (2017), we assume that unfinished tasks are a distressing event, reflected by the onset of affective rumination. Self-compassion might by definition buffer this. As mentioned, self-compassion is about lending oneself support in feelings of personal shortcomings and distress and helping oneself through external challenges, two events that are conceptually very similar to the distressing nature unfinished tasks as presented by the literature above (Carver & Scheier, 1982; Neff, 2023).

Evidence on self-compassions as a coping strategy may support our idea. Játiva and Cerezo (2014) identified self-compassion to buffer the link between traumatic experiences and its effect on psychological maladjustment. Similar studies have investigated the buffering effects of self-compassion on anxiety when confronted with a distressing or negative event (Johnson & O'Brien, 2013; Neff et al., 2007). Notably, the second finding stands out because anxiety is conceptually very similar to affective rumination as they both have an element of being on edge or feeling tense and nervous (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011; Spielberger, 2013). Yip and Tong M. W. (2021), have investigated a slightly different scenario specifically stating that self-compassionate people can disengage from negative feelings following the experience of inadequacy (Miyagawa & Taniguchi, 2020; Yip & Tong M. W., 2021; Zessin et al., 2015). Therefore, even though no research has yet applied self-compassion to the scenario of unfinished tasks and affective rumination, similar scenarios show that self-compassionate people have a better ability to cope with negative experiences, experiencing fewer negative thoughts and feelings. Drawing on the rational outlined above, we expect workers high in self-compassion to be less likely to ruminate affectively when faced with unfinished tasks.

H2: Self-compassion moderates the relationship between unfinished tasks and affective rumination.

Method

Procedure

To test our hypotheses, we designed a cross-sectional survey using Qualtrics (<https://www.qualtrics.com>). Our study was part of a larger data collection effort by a group of five bachelor's students. Table A1, shows the complete set of variables captured. Our study will focus on a subset of variables captured: (1) unfinished tasks, (2) affective rumination (3) self-compassion. We recruited participants by reaching out through our social networks via social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp and Gmail. To have a larger reach of our survey, our thesis group opted for a snowball sampling technique. The survey is conducted individually and has an approximate duration of 10 minutes to complete. We provided all materials of the study in our recruitment message and the participants were given two weeks to complete the survey upon receiving the recruitment request. The participants selected their preferred language upon starting the survey. The survey was available in English and German. The recruitment message explicitly asked participants to only complete the survey if they worked at least on an approximate part-time basis. No rewards or compensation were provided for finishing the survey and no deception and debriefing were used.

Participants

We received responses from 268 persons. We a total of 69 participants. We excluded 68 participants because of incomplete data: 19 participants did not answer any questions, 11 participants gave their consent but did not participate further, 17 participants stopped the survey after consenting and filling in their demographic data and 21 participants were removed because they forgot to fill in a least one item of our core variables of interest. We

excluded 1 participant because they did not consent. After data cleaning our study included 199 participants. Our convenience sample contained people of different nationalities, most being from Germany (n=107), Austria (n=24), and Spain (n=22) (see appendix for more details on participants' nationalities). Participants from German speaking countries filled out the German version of the questionnaire and participants from non-German speaking countries completed the English version of the questionnaire. Most people were between 55 and 64 years old (32.2%). 40.2 percent of the sample were male (n=80), 59.3 percent female (n=118) and one participant identified as non-binary/other. The occupations were diverse with most people working in healthcare, education, and legal positions. Most persons were working around 40 hours a week with a mean of 39.6 hours (SD= 12.6). Participation was optional, and participants could stop the survey at any time. Our study was exempt from formal examination of the Ethics committee (BSS; RUG; research code: PSY-2324-S-0356)

Materials and measures

All of the items have an English and German version. Methods used to translate the items are specified under each specific variable. Furthermore, all variables were scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *Very seldom or never*, 2 = *Seldom*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Very often or always*).

Unfinished tasks

We measured the predictor unfinished tasks using the six-item scale by Syrek et al. (2017) ($\alpha = .93$). The original items were designed in German and adapted to English items. Participants were asked to what extent they agreed with the statements listed and were asked to think of a typical workweek when evaluating the items. Sample items include "*At the end of a working week, I have not completed important tasks that I wanted to do*" and "*At the end of a working week, I did not complete a large number of tasks that were due*".

Affective rumination

We measured the criterion variable of Affective rumination using a five-item scale developed by Cropley et al. (2012) ($\alpha = .90$). Consistent with prior research (Pauli et al., 2023; Weigelt et al., 2019, 2023) and for the sake of consistency throughout the questionnaire, the items consisted of statements rather than questions. For the German version of the questionnaire, a tested translation of Weigelt et al. (2019) was used. Pauli et al. (2023), provide evidence for measurement invariance across languages for affective rumination. In the instruction, we asked participants how their work affected them during their free time after periods of work. Sample items were *“I become tense when I think about work-related issues during my free time”* and *“I get annoyed by thinking about work-related issues when not at work”*.

Self-compassion

We measured moderating variable of self-compassion using the 12-item Self-Compassion Scale Short Form (SCS-SF) as developed by Raes et al. (2011) which they have found to be a valid and reliable ($\alpha = .87$) short version of the original 26-item Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) (Neff, 2003). Because SCS-SF (Raes et al., 2011) has no validated German translation, we shortened the German version of the SCS (Hupfeld & Ruffieux, 2011) using guidelines presented by Neff et al. (2019) to match the English version of SCS-SF (Raes et al., 2011). For context, we told the Participants that the aim of the statements was to understand how they coped with distressing events and to what extent the items applied to them. Sample items were *“I try to see my failings as part of the human condition”* and *“I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don’t like”*.

Data analysis

We used the software package IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28) for our analysis. Prior to main analysis, we reversed coded the items of self-compassion and tested the

reliability by investigating the variables Cronbach's Alpha, McDonald's Omega and the intercorrelations of our items. After, we displayed some descriptive statistics and correlations to inspect our sample's demographic data and general tendencies of variables of interest to have a more thorough analysis of our hypotheses. According to the guidelines presented by the literature, (Cropley et al., 2012; Raes et al., 2011; Syrek et al., 2017) we formed the composite scores for each variable. We used a residual plot to test the assumption of linearity and homoscedasticity, a Q-Q Plot to test normality and checked the Variance inflation factor (VIF) to test for multicollinearity. Lastly, to test our hypotheses, we performed a regression analysis. To investigate our first hypothesis, we paid attention to the slope and the t-score and the significance of the effect of unfinished tasks on affective rumination. To test our second hypothesis, we pay attention to the slope, t-score, and significance of the interactive term between self-compassion and unfinished tasks and its effect on affective rumination.

Results

Reliability analysis: All concerned variables relevant to our hypotheses have shown to be of good composite reliabilities on metrics of McDonald's Omega (ω) and Cronbach's Alpha (α): Unfinished tasks ($\alpha = .868$; $\omega = .868$), Affective rumination ($\alpha = .896$; $\omega = .897$), and Self-compassion ($\alpha = .817$; $\omega = .810$). These findings indicated that all our measurements measured consistent results across all participants in our study. We also conducted a factor analysis, which indicated that the six subscales of self-compassion could not be identified (see appendix table A3, A4 and figure A3). We concluded that an overall self-compassion score is most suitable for our analysis and no further analytical steps can be inferred on its subscales. A factor analysis, separating the English from the German sample, indicated similar results for all coefficients (see appendix). We therefore omitted this distinction in the following analytical steps.

Table 1*Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Unfinished tasks	Affective rumination	Self- compassion
Unfinished tasks	2,201	,769	(,868) ^a		
Affective rumination	2,594	,855	,399 ^{***}	(,896)	
Self-compassion	3,171	,597	-,185 ^{***}	-,355 ^{***}	(,817)

Note. $n = 199$; *** $p < .001$.

^a. Along the diagonal are the composite reliabilities of the variables unfinished tasks, affective rumination, Self-compassion.

Descriptive statistics: Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics and the correlations between the variables of unfinished tasks, affective rumination, and self-compassion. The mean level of Unfinished tasks as indicated by our sample falls between “Seldom” and “Sometimes” ($M = 2.20$, $SD = .77$). Our sample reports a mean level of Affective rumination between “seldom” and “sometimes” ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .86$). Lastly, our data indicates that people are moderately self-compassionate with a portion of our sample having high levels of self-compassion ($M = 3.17$, $SD = .60$). The correlations between our focal variables have all shown to be significant ($p < .001$). In relation to our first hypothesis, the variables of unfinished tasks and affective rumination have a moderate positive correlation giving initial support for the idea that higher levels of unfinished tasks are related to increased levels of affective rumination ($r(197) = .399$, $p < .001$). The variables self-compassion and unfinished tasks have a weak negative correlation, ($r(197) = -.185$, $p < .001$). Self-compassion and the criterion variable affective rumination have moderate negative correlation, ($r(197) = -.355$, $p < .001$). This indicates that people who score higher on self-compassion report lower levels of affective rumination.

Assumptions: We analyzed the assumptions of multiple regression analysis to ensure its proper use. We tested the assumption of Homoscedasticity and Linearity by investigating the residual plot, which indicated to be approximately equal distributed and a linear association between our predictor and our criterion variables can be identified (see Appendix).

The QQ-plot, indicated that our data followed a normal distribution, following approximately the theoretical normal distribution indicated by a line (see Appendix). In Table 2, we report the coefficients of the regression analysis. The multicollinearity coefficient on the right suggest that the Variance inflation factor (VIF) is below the threshold of four, indicating no multicollinearity between our variables. Lastly, we ensured the assumption of independence of observations through our method of analysis as each participant had to perform the survey individually.

Table 2

Regression analysis (Criterion Variable: Zscore (Affective Rumination))

	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.	Collinearity	
	Coefficients		Coefficients			Tolerance	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	.012	.063		.196	.845		
Unfinished tasks	.338	.064	.338	5.322	<.001	.958	1.044
Self-compassion	-.304	.064	-.304	-4.723	<.001	.937	1.068
Unfinished tasks × Self-compassion	.067	.058	.073	1.156	.249	.967	1.035

Note. All predictor variables have been transformed into z-scores.

Table 3

Model Summary (Criterion Variable: Zscore (Affective Rumination))

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std. Error	Change statistics				
					R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig.
1	.399 ^a	.159	.155	.920	.159	37.250	1	197	<.001
2	.491 ^b	.241	.233	.880	.082	21.054	1	196	<.001
3	.496 ^c	.246	.234	.880	.005	1.336	1	195	.249

^aPredictors: (Constant), Zscores(Unfinished tasks)

^bPredictors: (Constant), Zscores(Unfinished tasks), Zscores(Self-compassion)

^cPredictors: (Constant), Zscores(Unfinished tasks), Zscores(Self-compassion), Zscores(Unfinished tasks × Self-compassion)

Regression analysis: Table 2. Compromises a regression analysis based on the following standardized predictor variables: Unfinished task, self-compassion and an interaction term of the two predictor variables to predict the criterion variable of Affective

rumination. Table 3, Contains the Model summary of our regression model and contains added variance of each predictor to our model. Our first hypothesis yielded significant results, unfinished tasks are positively related to higher levels of affective rumination ($b_1 = .338$, $t(195) = 5.322$, $p < .05$). Our second hypothesis was not supported as the interaction term of self-compassion and unfinished tasks did not have a significant effect, signaling that self-compassion did not moderate the relationship between unfinished tasks and affective rumination ($b_3 = .067$, $t(195) = 1.156$, $p = .249$). We investigated the percentage of explained variance by our overall regression analysis. We found moderate levels of proportions of explained variance by our model ($R^2 = .246$, $F(3, 195) = 21.180$, $p < 0.001$). Adding, self-compassion as a predictor of affective rumination to a model containing only unfinished tasks increase 8,2% of the explained variance of our model. The change was significant ($F(3, 196) = 21.180$, $p < 0.001$). Adding, an interaction term of the predictor variables self-compassion and unfinished tasks increase our explained variance of affective rumination by 0.5%. The change was not significant ($F(3, 195) = 1.336$, $p = .249$). These results further underlie that self-compassion may not act as a moderating variable.

Discussion

The present research aimed to deepen the understanding of the link between unfinished tasks and affective rumination. More specifically, we focused on the boundary conditions of this effect, including a buffer variable of self-compassion. The result suggests that the more unfinished tasks you have, the more likely you are to ruminate about it in affective terms. This link is present irrespective of how self-compassionate individuals are.

Theoretical Implications

The results of our first hypothesis are in line with substantial research on unfinished tasks. In line with the founding ideas of Control theory, our results lend support to the idea that unfinished tasks are a distressing event that come from the feeling of not having attained

the goals one had aimed for (Carver & Scheier, 1982). Our results indicate that unfinished tasks seem to be related to some kind of pervasive and recurrent negative thoughts, which is in accordance with theoretical considerations linking unfinished tasks to an increased accessibility of goal related information (Martin & Tesser, 1996). In line with recent studies in occupational health psychology, our results also replicate the well documented relationship between unfinished tasks and affective rumination (Syrek et al., 2017; Syrek & Antoni, 2014; Weigelt et al., 2019). All in all, the results of the first hypothesis fit in well with the general scope of research that workplace stressors exist and that these have a detrimental effect on the workers mental health (Goh et al., 2015; Law et al., 2020; Pindek et al., 2024).

The results of our second hypothesis don't seem to be in line with the self-compassion literature. Our results did not support our initial considerations stating that self-compassion, which is about giving oneself support in moments of distress or personal shortcomings could also help with the distress of unfinished tasks as portrayed by control theory and evidence (Carver & Scheier, 1982; Neff, 2023; Syrek et al., 2017). Nor did our results support the idea that self-compassion can be a protective factor in the relationship of unfinished tasks and affective rumination because other literature have already placed it as a buffer of similar relationships (Játiva & Cerezo, 2014; Johnson & O'Brien, 2013; Neff et al., 2007; Spielberger, 2013; Yip & Tong M. W., 2021). Our results may be explained an article of Murphy (2021). In his articles Murphy (2021) explains that finding a moderating effect is unlikely if the moderator (self-compassion) link moderately to the criterion variable (affective rumination), as is our case. Another explanation could be that unfinished tasks are so detrimental that individual differences such as self-compassion do not influence its detrimental consequences.

Even though our results are not in line with the current literature on self-compassion as a buffer of stressor-strain relationships, this doesn't mean that self-compassion is not

important. Self-compassion significantly adds value to our model next to unfinished tasks when predicting levels of affective rumination (Table 3). Self-compassion has shown to have a moderate negative relationship with affective rumination that is of similar magnitude to unfinished tasks, meaning that people high in self-compassion are less likely to ruminate in affective terms (Table 1). Self-compassion, therefore replicates the literature's findings regarding self-compassions overall positive effects and its role ensuring workers well-being (Kotera & Van Gordon, 2021; Neff, 2023; Stutts et al., 2018; Zessin et al., 2015). Despite the non-significant results of our second hypothesis, these results indicate that self-compassion still plays an important role for workers well-being.

A final theoretical contribution is the fact that we are the first ones to formulate a German translation of the original SCS-SF by Raes et al. (2011) that prior had only existed English. Even though we did not do a thorough analysis of the German versions validity, our results indicate that our German SCS-SF translation is of good composite reliability (Table 1; see Appendix for a comprehensive factor analysis).

Practical implications

The link between unfinished tasks and affective rumination is very relevant to the workplace when considering the detrimental effects of affective rumination on workers well-being (Syrek et al., 2017; Syrek & Antoni, 2014). Even though our findings are limited in our ability to make practical predictions on the drivers of unfinished tasks, it seems clear that unfinished tasks need to take an important role in future discussion, as they are the main driver of threatening consequences to our well-being. Due to the positive relationship of self-compassion and affective rumination, there is valid leverage for the use of self-compassion interventions to lower affective rumination. Because self-compassion does not significantly buffer the impact of unfinished tasks on affective rumination, practitioners should be careful to not use these interventions to neutralize the harm associated with unfinished tasks.

Strengths and limitations

This study proposes several noticeable strengths. First, our study utilized both original English and German translations of reliable and valid measurements to adapt two surveys in either language, thereby extending our survey reach. All translated German measures have shown to measure their construct with good composite reliability, marking an important strength of this research. A Second notable strength is our studies large sample size, which gives our study more confidence in our results and predictions. A third strength is the use of a cross-sectional design to investigate our hypotheses. Cross sectional designs use little resources and time and are an efficient tool to gain fist insights into unexplored topics using covariances and opening future research opportunities (Spector, 2019).

Several limitations also need to be mentioned. The use of a snowball sampling technique resulted in a convenience sample which poses the common limitation of having WEIRD data. This means that our data mainly draws on a Western, highly Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic population. Important literature signals the differences between western and eastern workplace culture, which questions the generalizability of our findings (Andrade, 2020; Chandra, 2012). Even though the use of Cross-sectional design is appropriate for our research design, it also poses several challenges. Cross sectional designs are often tainted by the Recall bias, which refers to the fact that recalling past information in surveys has shown to be inaccurate and biased (Coughlin, 1990). The recall bias mainly questions the validity of our predictions as we have mostly asked participants to recall past information. Our study may also be influenced by the common method bias, which explains that using one single method to measure multiple constructs, may inflate correlations and thereby our findings (Podsakoff et al., 2024; Spector, 2019). One last major challenge of cross-sectional designs are the inability to make causal inferences between variables because they cannot establish temporal recondense and account for third variables (Antonakis et al.,

2014; Kesmodel, 2018; Spector, 2019). This limits our ability to clearly state whether unfinished tasks cause affective rumination or whether affective rumination might cause unfinished tasks. Finally, a last drawback can be identified in the choice of measurement for Self-compassion. Using the SCS-SF (Raes et al., 2011) has shown to be of good composite reliability for the overall self-compassion score but doesn't differentiate well between its subscales when investigating its factor analysis (see Table A3, A4 and Figure A3 in Appendix). Even though using a general factor is reasonable based on our factor analysis and is consistent with the literature (Raes et al., 2011), this limitation hinders us from making further inferences on these facets of self-compassion and getting a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms of the disposition. For further discussion on the facets of self-compassion see (Muris et al., 2016; Neff, 2016).

Avenues for future research

The findings of the present study open possibilities for future research. Drawing on the limitation that the SCS-SF (Raes et al., 2011) doesn't differentiate between sub facets, future research should either restrict themselves to the original SCS (Neff, 2003) or further efforts have to be made to refine the SCS-SF (Raes et al., 2011). Furthermore, due to the detrimental nature of the relationship between unfinished tasks and affective rumination, understanding what exactly unfinished tasks are, how they come about whether they can be avoided or not could be valuable research. Drawing on the limitation of recall bias and the inability of making causal predictions of cross sectional surveys (Coughlin, 1990; Kesmodel, 2018), further studies can investigate the detrimental effects of unfinished tasks in an experimental setting or maybe using a diary study over a longer period of time in order to shed light on the actual situational impacts of unfinished tasks at the end of each workday (see Spector, 2019).

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Appendix

Table A1

Complete variable set of the survey

Unfinished tasks
 Affective rumination
 Psychological detachment
 Self-compassion
 Peace of mind
 Stress mindset
 Needs based off job crafting

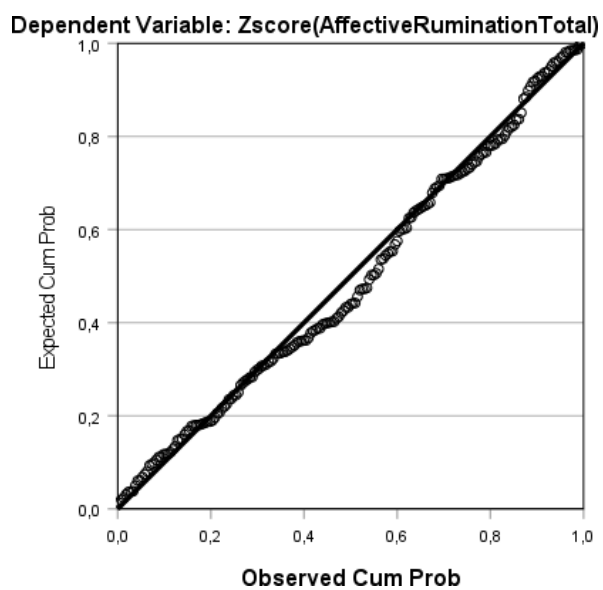
Table A2

What is your nationality?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Germany	107	53.8
	Austria	24	12.1
	Spain	22	11.1
	Belgium	9	4.5
	Poland	7	3.5
	Estonia	3	1.5
	France	3	1.5
	Italy	3	1.5
	United states	3	1.5
	Greece	2	1
	Netherlands	2	1
	Switzerland	2	1
	Bulgaria	1	.5
	Croatia	1	.5
	Denmark	1	.5
	Finland	1	.5
	Hungary	1	.5
	Lativa	1	.5
	Lithuania	1	.5
	Portugal	1	.5
Romania	1	.5	
Russia	1	.5	
United Kingdom	1	.5	
Missing	System	1	.5
Total		199	100.0

Figure A1

Q-Q plot of the standardized residuals

**Figure A2**

Residual plot for the regression analysis

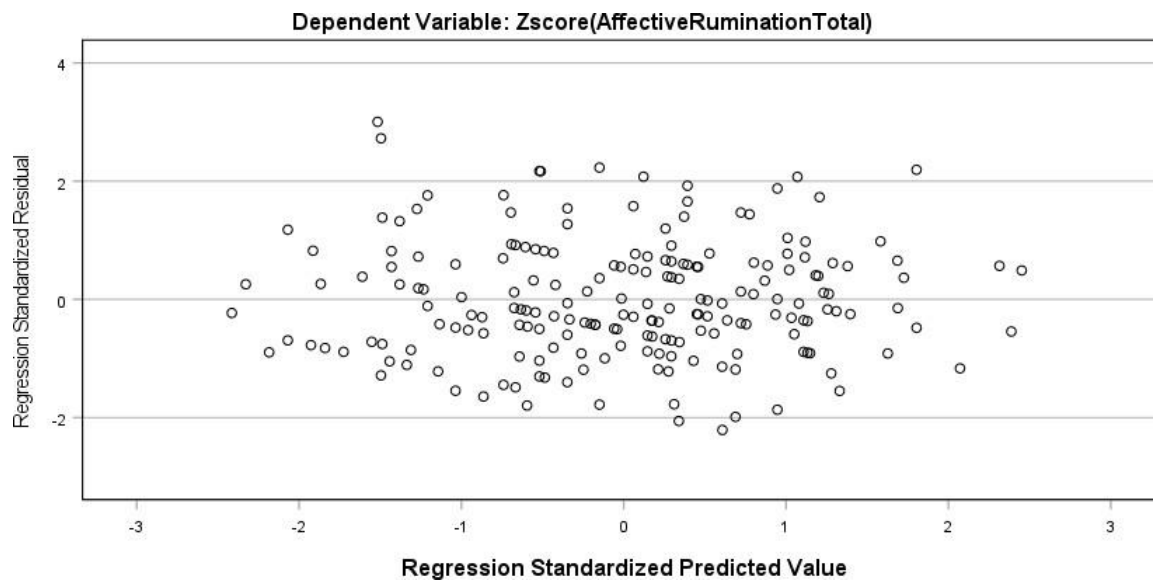


Table A3*Eigenvalues, Percentage of explained variance and cumulative variance of 12 item SCS-SF*

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.075	33.959	33.959
2	1.658	13.817	47.8
3	1.102	9.183	57.0
4	.834	6.952	63.9
5	.804	6.701	70.6
6	.746	6.218	76.8
7	.648	5.400	82.2
8	.498	4.152	86.4
9	.493	4.110	90.5
10	.437	3.644	94.1
11	.404	3.365	97.5
12	.300	2.500	100.0

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood

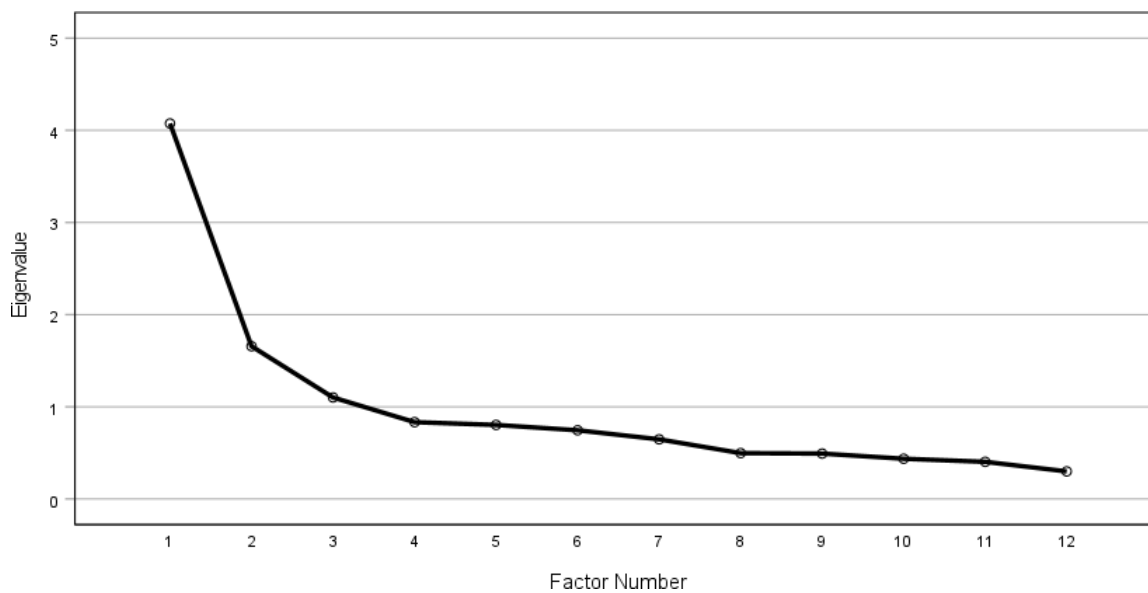
Figure A3*Scree Plot*

Table A4*Rotated Factor matrix^a*

	Factor		
	1	2	3
When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.	.579		
I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.		.446	
When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.			.590
When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.	.474		
I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.		.796	
When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.		.445	
When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.			.752
When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.	.652		
When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.	.607		
When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.		.500	
I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.	.793		
I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.	.646		

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

^aRotation converged in 5 iterations.

We first conducted an exploratory factor analysis, separating German and English samples to analyze if there are any systematic differences in our samples based on language of the questionnaire and whether the translations into German items were reliable. Results showed no significant differences and overall similar results across languages, indicating that translation of our items into German, did not compromise the items reliability. We therefore

omitted this distinction, further conducting a factor analysis of self-compassion using the entirety of our data.

When analyzing the Eigenvalues (Table A3) and the Scree Plot (Figure A3), The 12 item SCS-SF (Raes et al., 2011) seems to consist of three factors.

Table A4, represents rotated factor loadings. The first factor seems to be about being judgmental about one's own flaws and inadequacies. Items loading on the factor are "*I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies*" (Loading = .793); "*When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.*" (Loading = .579); "*When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.*" (Loading = .474); "*When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure*" (Loading = .652); "*When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong*" (Loading = .607); "*I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like*" (Loading = .646). In the self-compassion literature this might represent being uncompassionate or having a lack of self-compassion (Muris et al., 2016; Neff, 2016, 2016).

The second factor seems to be about being self-compassionate in general. Following items loading on the factor "*I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.*" (Loading = .446); "*I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.*" (Loading = .796); "*When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.*" (Loading = .445); "*When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.*" (Loading = .500).

The third factor is about having ones emotions in balance and can potentially be identified to be the sub facet of mindfulness of the SCS-SF (Raes et al., 2011). Items loading on the factor are "*When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.*" (Loading

= .752); “*When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation*”
(Loading = .590).

These results indicate that the SCS-SF (Raes et al., 2011) as portrayed by the literature seems to have trouble differentiating between the 6 subfaces of self-compassion (Neff, 2003). Based on these results Our analysis only focused on overall self-compassion as we could not find evidence for sub facets. These results may even beg the question whether Self-compassion is made up of 6 distinct subfaces. As mentioned before the translations do not seem to be the issue, as the either sole English or German sample did not show to have any major differences. For further reading on the discussion on the facets of self-compassion see (Muris et al., 2016; Neff, 2016, 2023).