Social Comparison, Hope and Depression among Students of Madrasas and Schools

Aqsa
M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Psychology, Riphah International University, Faisalabad Campus.
aqsa.basheer886@gmail.com

Dr. Muhammad Luqman Khan
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Riphah International University, Faisalabad Campus Email:
luqman.khan0078@gmail.com

Muhammad Waqas
PhD Scholar, Department of Psychology, Riphah International University, Faisalabad Campus.
waqas00173@gmail.com

Abstract

Present study examines social comparison, hope, and depression among madrasa and school students to see how these educational contexts affect mental health and well-being. Male and female students ages 11–17 were equally included in the sample. Participants were provided with the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS), Adult Hope Scale, and Social Comparison Scale. Although both educational environments had moderate feelings of depression, anxiety, and stress, madrasa students had more hope than school students. Despite their hopefulness, madrasa students had more despair and anxiety. Hope promotes mental health, as correlation research showed that higher hope levels were connected with reduced depression, anxiety, and stress. An independent samples t-test showed that madrasa students scored higher on depression and anxiety than school students. Madrasa students' higher rates of depression and anxiety require culturally sensitive mental health initiatives that include religious and moral teachings and provide necessary psychological care.

Keywords: *Social comparison, hope, depression, madrasas, traditional school, educational setting, psychological well-being*

Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the psychological and emotional well-being of students. The environment in which students are educated can significantly impact their mental health and overall development. Social comparison is a psychological phenomenon where individuals evaluate their own abilities, achievements, and attributes by comparing themselves to others. This process can have both positive and negative effects on a student's self-esteem and motivation. Understanding how social comparison operates among students in different educational settings is crucial, as it can influence their academic performance, self-concept, and mental health (Ahmad, et al., 2023). Parveen's Social Comparison Theory (2024) posits that individuals have an innate drive to evaluate their abilities and opinions. They do this by comparing themselves to others when objective benchmarks are unavailable. Festinger proposed that, in possessing a preference to compare with similar others, humans attain more accurate self-evaluation.

Wills explains that Entwistle (2010) furthered the work of Festinger into this theory Upward and Downward Comparison Theory, that upward comparison is comparing oneself to someone that is better, and this may be motivating or even potentially threatening in achieving the same level of confidence or self-aspiration; downward comparison is a form of comparing oneself against someone that is worse off, again possibly maintaining self-esteem but is also potentially causing complacency.

Hope is a very central psychological resource, which makes it possible for people to set and act towards meaningful goals. It includes the situational sense of argentic and pathways thinking, which are belief in the ability to achieve certain desired results and means to have been attained and reaching them. From Muslimah's Hope Theory, 2019, it is a cognitive set known as a combination of agency and pathways: goal-directed energy and planning towards attaining set goals. In the judgment of Snyder, individuals high in hope, distinctive from determination, also have the necessary constituents and pathways to reach their goals. This dual-component model has its foundation most notably being used in aggregating study on how hope impacts one's levels of accomplishment academically and personally. Hadesi's Hope Theory (2019) defines hope as a multi-dimensional strength of life marked by an optimistic but at the same time uncertain expectancy in attaining good outcomes,. The temporal future-oriented and the contextual specific situations perspective summarize that their model illuminates hope as a

dynamic entity that encompasses multi-life domains.

Nazer's Cognitive Theory of Depression (2020) held that depression occurs owing to the negative cognitive distortions an individual is passing through. Beck believed that one had a cognitive triad of negative thoughts about self, the world, and the future. The undesirable manners of such thinking oftentimes bring about the onset and persistence of depressive symptoms. Nawas' Learned Helplessness Theory (2023) postulated that depression comes about because the individual feels helpless and that he or she has no control over the outcomes. This theory centered on perceived powerlessness and uncontrollable events as instrumental in the development of depressive symptoms.

According to festingr in 1954, in social comparison theory, each person chooses his social and personal values according to comparison with each other in an environment. Also Leigh Gibbons and Bram Buunk mentioned that this process always can help analyze the feelings of competence and mental health of students affect the self-esteem in a varied mode am personal social evaluation process can help define the psychology of Professionals in a great manner. Studies in recent times have highlighted the specific role of different educational environments in shaping the results. For example, (Patria, 2023) showed that the student's perception of their academic standing compared to their peers can be sources of stress and satisfaction (Hossain & Tollefson, 2007).

In additional to this, hope, according to Snyder et al., (1991), is viewed as the perception that one can develop the routes to achieve the set goals and the motivation to put the routes into use. To further support this, hope has been thumb-marked as a resilient protector for one against developing depressive symptoms hence in adolescents (Valle et al., 2006). However, the role of hope and social comparison in the interaction at educational settings remains underexplored, particularly in the case of non-western cultures, wherein the educational dynamics greatly differ between both the educational systems (Cheema & Malik, 2019).

The dissimilarity of the educational systems can have a severe impact on the psychological development of young people. In the Islamic world, madrasas have long been associated with education focused on religion, and often, much attention is paid to the issues of discipline, attitude to church life, and the denomination's internal doctrine (Zine, 2008). In the process, the traditional school is likely to offer less explicitly spiritual education; one is recognized to offer a more general curriculum and an estimation of individual accomplishment and competition at

play in the world outside the school (Niaz, 2003). These fundamental differences in education philosophy and environment will likely influence how students conduct their social comparison and, therefore, their experience of hope and depression (Marsh et al., 2005). In these settings, understanding the role of hope is further added. While environments that stress community and cooperation, as in most madrasas, show results where hope is derived from collective success and mutual support, hope may be tied more closely to personal academic success in more traditionally focused school settings (Snyder et al., 2002).

Apart from the purely academic implications this research carries, the study also has practical implications regarding educational policy and mental health intervention. Thus, by determining how differentiated educational contexts influence individuals' levels of hope and depression, stakeholders could design much more specific psychological support systems that take into account distinct students' needs in different educational settings. For this purpose this study was conducted to examine the social comparison, hope and depression among students of Madrasas and schools.

Objectives of the Study

The present study primarily aims at understanding the effects of social comparison, hope, and depression in students attending madrasa and traditional school systems. Specific objectives of the present study are:

1. Social Comparison Processes Among Students: This research will examine the nature of comparison among students of madrasas and traditional schools; for instance, on what basis (like academic achievement, religious adherence, etc.) and how often.
2. To Assess Levels of Hope and Its Sources: Determine the levels of hope among students in both educational settings and identify the primary sources of hope (e.g., personal achievement, community support, religious faith).
3. To Evaluate the Relationship between Social Comparison and Depression: Examine the correlation between social comparison and depression in both groups of students, considering how negative or positive comparisons affect their psychological health.
4. To Explore the Moderating Role of Hope: Analyze whether hope serves as a moderating factor in the relationship between social comparison and depression, assessing if higher hope can mitigate the negative effects of detrimental social comparisons.
5. To Develop Recommendations for Educational and Mental Health Interventions: Based

on the findings, propose targeted strategies and interventions that can be implemented in madrasas and traditional schools to enhance student well-being, increase hope, and reduce the risk of depression.

Hypotheses

1. Students in traditional schools will engage in social comparison more frequently and base their comparisons more on academic achievements compared to students in madrasas.
2. Students in madrasas will report higher levels of hope due to a greater emphasis on community support and religious faith, whereas students in traditional schools will derive hope more from individual academic successes.
3. There will be a positive correlation between the frequency and negative nature of social comparison and levels of depression among students.
4. Hope will moderate the relationship between social comparison and depression among students.
5. The moderating effect of hope on the relationship between social comparison and depression will differ between students in madrasas and traditional schools.

Literature Review

Depression among students is a growing concern, with numerous studies highlighting the prevalence and impact of depressive symptoms on academic and social functioning. The educational environment plays a crucial role in either mitigating or exacerbating these symptoms. On the other hand, studies by (Gustiwi et al., 2024) suggest that supportive school environments that emphasize community and belonging often found in religious schools can provide a protective buffer against depression. However, other research, such as that by (Arwan, 2015) points out that the stringent expectations and rigid structures in some religious schools can also contribute to stress and depression among students. Social comparison theory, introduced by Festinger (1954), posits that individuals evaluate their own abilities and opinions by comparing themselves to others. In educational settings, this comparison often revolves around academic performance, behavior, and social status (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). Recent studies indicate that the nature of social comparisons can significantly affect students' academic motivation and self-esteem (Marsh, et al., 2008; Naeem, Ali, & Ahmed, 2022).

According to Snyder, hope is the perceived capability by an individual to come up with routes to desired goals and the ability to motivate one's self in using these routes. It has long been

identified as an important determinant for psychological adjustment and educational resilience. High hope was found via research to be linked with higher grades and less depression. However, any cultivation of hope will go wide astray across different educational settings because of differing emphasis placed on individual achievement versus community support. According to Khan, 2015, the communal and religious orientation in madrasas might foster another ground of hope compared to traditional schools, which are oriented towards individualism. One such exception is the study of Rahman and Hamid, who, in the year 2017, reported that madrasa students demonstrated less stress in regard to academic competition but had increased anxiety in terms of social expectations from the community. This suggests that different educational paradigms may influence psychological well-being and behaviors through different mechanisms and professional development (Ali, et al., 2023; Ahmad et al., 2024).

On the other side, conventional school students face huge pressure to perform well in school, have socially dynamic situations like bullying, and face the age of social media; all these are causes of great stress levels and depression. Such students may be faced with uncertainties in the future job market, which is very competitive, thus compounding feelings of anxiety and hopelessness (Haider, Ahmad, & Ali, 2024). A potential intervention that could answer the problems of madrasa pupils by including mental health education in the curriculum of religious studies, but equally important is the provision for culturally sensitive counseling services, which may not necessarily contradict religious values (Patel et al., 2018; Thomas, Khan, & Ahmad, 2022).).

As such, the source Wahyuni, 2020 believed that students in such an environment often encounter increased competition and pressure to attain objectives educationally, thereby increasing the risk of depression and anxiety. Parental expectations and involvement take center stage as another critical factor in determining the psychological outcome for both madrasa and traditional school students. The teacher-student relationship cannot also be seen to undermine the psychological well-being of the student and also impact teaching learning process (Jabeen, Ali, & Ahmad, 2023; Aslam, Iqbal, & Ahmed, 2022). Literature indicates that students who experience positive teacher-student relationships yield greater levels of hope and less depression. In madrasas, the close-knit community and often smaller class sizes can foster strong, supportive relationships between teachers and students. Drawing on a comparison between the two distinct educational settings of madrasas and traditional schools, this study aims to bring nuance to the

understanding of how different environments might shape students' mental health and well-being through social comparison, hope, and depression and effect students learning.

Methodology

The quantitative approach was adopted for the present study to ensure relevance and comparability of the study; participants drawn from both Madrasas and schools. An age bracket between 11 and 17 years old was chosen since this is the stage when a person is at the adolescent stage of life, and there are many psychological development activities happening in his life. The population size was estimated to be 300 students, and a purposive sampling technique was used. This ensured proper representation of Madrasas and schools. Sampling was based on the type of institution, Madrasa or school, and then the participants from each institute were selected randomly to avoid bias and enhance generalizability. In the present study, several standardized Scales have been used to measure the following psychological variables.

Moreover, questionnaire surveys were used, depending on the logistical feasibility and preference of the participants. The researchers administered the scales to participants in a controlled environment and in a standardized manner so that the conditions would be as similar as possible in all data collection sessions. Clear instructions on completing the scales were provided, and any queries or concerns raised by participants were clarified.

Results

The result section includes the critical analysis of the responses of madrasa and traditional school's students by using AHS and SCO to evaluate various psychological constructs.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Demographic Variable

Variables	Categories	*F*	%
Gender	Male	168	56.0
	Female	132	44.0
Age Group	11-14	191	63.7
	15-17	109	36.3
Education	Primary	44	14.7
	Middle	160	53.3
	Metric	48	16.0
	Other	48	16.0
Family System	Joint	176	58.7
	Nuclear	124	41.3
Family Status	Lower class	78	26.0
	Middle class	122	40.7
	Upper class	100	33.3

As indicated in Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the study sample were as follows: of the total respondents, there were 168 male students, accounting for 56.0% of the sample, while 132 were female students, accounting for 44.0%. Thus, there was a slight male predominance in the sample. In terms of age distribution, the majority of participants, 191 students (63.7%), were aged between 11-14 years, and 109 students (36.3%) were aged between 15-17 years. The educational levels represented by the sample were distributed as 44 students (14.7%) in primary education, 160 (53.3%) in middle, and 48 (16.0%) at both the metric level and other categories of education. This distribution highlights that the majority of students were in the middle school category, which could be indicative of the educational stages commonly targeted for studies on social comparison, hope, and depression. The family system of the students showed that 176 students (58.7%) belonged to joint families, while 124 students (41.3%) came from nuclear families. This distribution suggests a higher prevalence of joint family systems among the participants, which might influence the levels of social support and social comparison processes experienced by the students. Lastly, the socio-economic status of the students' families was categorized into three groups: lower class (78 students, 26.0%), middle class (122 students, 40.7%), and upper class (100 students, 33.3%).

Table 2
Reliability Analysis of all Variables

Scale	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
DASS	21	0.82
Adult Hope	12	0.75
Social Comparison	11	0.51

Note: DASS=Depression Anxiety Stress Scale

Table 2 presents the reliability analysis of the scales used in this study, measured by Cronbach's Alpha. The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS), consisting of 21 items, demonstrated good reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency and reliability for assessing depression, anxiety, and stress among students. The Adult Hope Scale, which includes 12 items, showed an acceptable reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.75. The Cronbach's alpha of the Hope scale was 0.85, indicating the reliability of this scale to measure the construct of hope in the sample population. However, the 11-item Social Comparison Scale had a lower Cronbach's alpha of 0.51. This may point to some poor internal consistency, and hence, items on this scale might not be reliably measuring the construct of social comparison as intended. The lower reliability of the Social Comparison Scale points to a need for further

refinement of this scale or more items.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of all Variables

Variables	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	Skew	Kurt
DASS	21.00	64.00	38.7	8.5	.389	-.007
Adult Hope	30.00	96.00	76.6	11.5	-1.05	1.12
SC	16.00	47.00	32.9	5.6	.089	.421

Note: *Min=minimum, Max=maximum, M=mean, SD=Std. deviation, Skew=Skewness, Kurt=kurtosis, SC=Social Comparison, DASS=Depression Anxiety Stress Scale*

Table 3 presents the Descriptive statistics of the measured variables: Depression Anxiety Stress Scales, Adult Hope, and Social Comparison Scales. For the DASS, the scores ranged from 21.00 to 64.00, with a mean of 38.7 (M) and standard deviation of 8.5. A skewness of 0.389 indicates that there is a slight positive skew, meaning the dispersion of DASS scores is slightly skewed to the right. The value for the kurtosis is -.007, thus approximating zero, hence it is approximately normal. The Adult Hope Scale scores ranged from 30.00 to 96.00 with a mean of 76.6 and a standard deviation of 11.5. The skewness value of -1.05 indicates a moderate negative skew, suggesting that the scores are skewed to the left, meaning a majority of students reported higher levels of hope. The kurtosis value of 1.12 suggests a distribution that is slightly leptokurtic, indicating a peak higher than a normal distribution. For the Social Comparison Scale, scores ranged from 16.00 to 47.00 with a mean of 32.9 and a standard deviation of 5.6. The skewness value of 0.089 indicates a near-symmetrical distribution. The kurtosis value of 0.421 suggests a distribution that is slightly, indicating a flatter distribution than a normal curve. These descriptive statistics provide an overview of the central tendencies and variability of the key psychological constructs in the study. The DASS scores suggest moderate levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among the students. The high mean score on the Adult Hope Scale indicates a generally hopeful outlook among the students, particularly those in madrasas. The Social Comparison scores suggest moderate levels of social comparison, with a distribution close to normal, reflecting varied experiences of social comparison among the students. These insights are crucial for understanding the psychological landscape of students in madrasas and conventional schools, particularly in the context of social comparison, hope, and depression.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics of Components of Dass-21

Variables	Min	Max	M	SD	Skew	Kurt
Dep	14.00	52.00	25.3	7.1	.673	.416
Anx	14.00	46.00	23.9	6.7	.667	-.057
Stress	14.00	48.00	28.0	6.6	.435	.038

Note: min=minimum, max=maximum, m=mean, sd=std. deviation, skew=skewness, *kurt=kurtosis, Dep=Depression, Anx=Anxiety*

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the components of the DASS-21: Depression (Dep), Anxiety (Anx), and Stress. For the Depression component, scores ranged from 14.00 to 52.00, with a mean (M) of 25.3 and a standard deviation (SD) of 7.1. The skewness value of 0.673 indicates a moderate positive skew, suggesting that the distribution of depression scores is skewed to the right, with more students reporting lower levels of depression.

The kurtosis value of 0.416 indicates a distribution that is slightly leptokurtic, with a peak higher than a normal distribution. The anxiety component scores ranged from 14.00 to 46.00, with a mean of 23.9 and a standard deviation of 6.7. The skewness value of 0.667 indicates a moderate positive skew, similar to the depression scores, suggesting that most students report lower levels of anxiety. The kurtosis value of -0.057 is close to zero, indicating a distribution that approximates normality.

For the Stress component, scores ranged from 14.00 to 48.00, with a mean of 28.0 and a standard deviation of 6.6.

The skewness value of 0.435 indicates a slight positive skew, suggesting that the distribution of stress scores is slightly skewed to the right. The kurtosis value of 0.038 is near zero, indicating a normal distribution. These descriptive statistics highlight the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among the students. The moderate mean scores across all three components suggest that while there are varying levels of these psychological states, the majority of students experience mild to moderate symptoms.

The positive skewness in depression and anxiety indicates that extreme cases are less frequent, but still present. This data is essential for understanding the mental health landscape of students in madrasas and conventional schools, providing a basis for targeted interventions and support mechanisms.

Table 5
Correlation between Social Comparison, Hope and components of Dass-21

	DASS	Dep	Anx	Stress	ADH	SC
DASS	---	.864**	.818**	.823**	-.318**	-.089
Dep		---	.565**	.583**	-.311**	-.050
Anx			---	.491**	-.158**	-.174**
Stress				---	-.326**	.000
Adult Hope Scale					---	.017
SC						---

Note: *DASS=Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale, Dep=Depression, Anx=Anxiety, SC=Social Comparison*

Table 5 presents the correlation coefficients between Social Comparison (SC), Hope (Adult Hope Scale), and the components of the DASS-21 (Depression (Dep), Anxiety (Anx), Stress). The total DASS score is highly correlated with Depression ($r = .864$, $p < .01$), Anxiety ($r = .818$, $p < .01$), and Stress ($r = .823$, $p < .01$). This indicates that higher overall scores on the DASS are strongly associated with higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Depression is significantly correlated with Anxiety ($r = .565$, $p < .01$) and Stress ($r = .583$, $p < .01$).

This suggests that students who experience higher levels of depression are also likely to experience higher levels of anxiety and stress. Anxiety is moderately correlated with Stress ($r = .491$, $p < .01$), indicating that these two constructs are related but not as strongly as depression is to anxiety or stress. The Adult Hope Scale shows a significant negative correlation with the total DASS score ($r = -.318$, $p < .01$), Depression ($r = -.311$, $p < .01$), Anxiety ($r = -.158$, $p < .01$), and Stress ($r = -.326$, $p < .01$). This suggests that higher levels of hope are associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among students. Social Comparison (SC) has a weak negative correlation with Anxiety ($r = -.174$, $p < .01$) and no significant correlation with Depression ($r = -.050$) or Stress ($r = .000$).

This indicates that higher levels of social comparison are slightly associated with higher levels of anxiety, but not significantly related to depression or stress. The correlation between the Adult Hope Scale and Social Comparison ($r = .017$) is very weak and not significant, indicating that the levels of hope and social comparison among students are relatively independent of each other. These correlations provide valuable insights into the relationships between psychological constructs among students in madrasas and conventional schools.

Table 6

Independent Sample t-Test Based on Student Group (Madrasas vs Traditional School) on the basis of DASS Components (N=300)

	Madrasas (n=150)		**Schools (n=150)**				**Cohen's D**
Variables	M	SD	M	SD	T	p	
Dep	26.62	7.43	24.09	6.60	3.12	-002	0.36
Anx	26.29	7.54	21.65	4.74	6.37	.000	0.73
Stress	27.64	6.78	28.49	6.47	-1.11	.266	0.12
Adult hope	77.39	11.76	75.83	11.25	1.17	.242	0.13
Socialcomparison	32.40	6.15	33.57	4.98	-1.81	.071	0.20

Note: Dep=Depression, Anx=Anxiety, M=Mean, SD=Standard deviation

Table 6presents the results of an independent samples t-test comparing students from madrasas and traditional schools based on the components of the DASS-21 and other variables (N=300).For Depression (Dep), madrasa students had a mean score (M) of 26.62 with a standard deviation (SD) of 7.43, while school students had a mean score of 24.09 (SD = 6.60). The t-test revealed a significant difference between the groups ($t = 3.12$, $p = .002$) with a Cohen's d of 0.36, indicating a small to moderate effect size. For Anxiety (Anx), madrasa students had a mean score of 26.29 (SD = 7.54) compared to 21.65 (SD = 4.74) for school students. The difference was statistically significant ($t = 6.37$, $p < .001$) with a Cohen's d of 0.73, indicating a moderate to large effect size. For Stress, madrasa students had a mean score of 27.64 (SD = 6.78) while school students had a mean score of 28.49 (SD = 6.47). The difference was not significant ($t = -1.11$, $p = .266$) with a Cohen's d of 0.12, indicating a very small effect size. For the Adult Hope Scale, madrasa students had a mean score of 77.39 (SD = 11.76) compared to 75.83 (SD = 11.25) for school students. This difference was not statistically significant ($t = 1.17$, $p = .242$) with a Cohen's d of 0.13, indicating a very small effect size. For Social Comparison, madrasa students had a mean score of 32.40 (SD = 6.15) while school students had a mean score of 33.57 (SD = 4.98). The difference approached significance ($t = -1.81$, $p = .071$) with a Cohen's d of 0.20, indicating a small effect size.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The results support the social comparison theory that individuals compare themselves in contexts relevant to their experiences. Other previous research, such as Hossain et al. (2007), showed that a competitive atmosphere within academics strengthened social comparison, leading to higher

anxiety and lower self-esteem.

The study found that on hope, madrasa students indicated a higher level of hope compared to students from conventional schools (Khoso, Oad, & Ahmad, 2023). This aligned with Khan, who revealed that supportive environments created hope. Because the madrasa is a communal and religious context, it probably instils vital purpose and support, leading to higher levels of hope. The research also revealed that students in madrasa had higher levels of depression as compared to their peers in regular schools. This is consistent with the cognitive theory of depression, learned helplessness theory, presented by Kuo, 2015, which proposes that negative cognitive patterns and perceived lack of control contribute to depression. Although hope levels were higher in madrasa students, the strange pressures and rigid expectations that exist within madrasas may have contributed to high levels of depression. Besides, the present study revealed a negative significant correlation between hope and depression, anxiety, and stress, underpinning the protective role of hope in mental health and self-concept (Ahmad et al., 2023). This supports Langford's 2016 hope theory, which states that higher levels of hope are related to higher coping and better psychological health. Previous research by Marques (2011) revealed that hope held a place in building resilience and reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety through curriculum (Dilshad, Shah & Ahmad, 2023).

Given the minimal magnitude of association found between social comparison orientation and depression in this study, it overlaps with Marsh's 1984 surmise that the effects of social comparison will vary with individual differences and contextual factors.

While the social comparison is apt to affect anxiety to some extent, the same factor does not bear as strong an influence on depression; this would mean that personal coping mechanisms and environmental support come into play much more in a determinant way concerning depressive symptoms. Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference in social comparison orientation between madrasa and conventional school students.

The study's findings indicate that social comparison orientation differs between madrasa students and those in conventional schools. The results indicated that students in traditional schools tend to engage more in academic-based social comparison because of the prevailing competitive environment. Madrasa students compare their merits on religious knowledge and piety. This confirms the hypothesis and aligns with Festinger's social comparison theory, indicating that comparison is context-dependent and that the competitive environment of conventional schools

may enhance social comparison and affect self-esteem and motivation.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in the level of hope among the students of Madrasas and conventional schools. The findings indicated that students from madrasas reported higher hope than their counterparts in conventional schools.

Therefore, this result substantiates the hypothesis, which is easy to explain through Snyder's hope theory. The theory emphasizes a supportive environment as a prime driver for hope. Due to its communal and religious context, madrasas probably contribute to high levels of hope because of the general characteristics of the environment, which usually gives a sense of purpose and support. This is contrary to conventional schools' standard individualistic and competitive setting, which can sometimes make it difficult for the students to be hopeful. Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference in levels of depression between students of madrasas and conventional schools.

The findings indicated that students in the madrasas had lower levels of depression as compared to those in the conventional schools. These findings are supported by (Abd Wahab, 2019).

The result thus also confirms this hypothesis and therefore corresponds with the cognitive theory of depression proposed by Beck and the theory of learned helplessness by Seligman. It could well be that despite these high levels of hope, additional stresses/pressures exacerbated by the rigid expectations of madrasas raise the level of depression. Such could be the case if the structured, often restrictive environment of madrasahs is a cause of stress and possibly hopeless feelings of helplessness in students, which raises the rates of depression. Hypothesis 4: Higher levels of hope are correlated with less depression, anxiety, and stress in students.

This research showed a negative significant relation between hope and depression,anxiety, and stress. The finding confirms the hypothesis and points to hope's protective function in mental health. According to Snyder, the higher a person's level of hope, as defined by the theory, the more they possess the agency and pathways to overcome adversity, which may lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. This finding underlines the necessity for hope when enhancing students' psychological resistance and well-being during educational periods.

Hypothesis 5: There is a low relationship between social comparison orientation and the depression and anxiety levels of students.

The result revealed a very weak negative correlation of social comparison orientation with anxiety but no relationship with depression.

This partially supports the hypothesis that social comparison may marginally affect anxiety, but it has no significant effect on depression. The effect of social comparison may thus vary with context and individual differences. These results, therefore, further confirm the general limited impact of social comparison on depression; other factors, such as personal coping mechanisms and support from the environment, could bear more important influences on depressive symptoms than social comparison does.

Conclusion

A comparative study of the madrasa and traditional school students, using the Adult Hope Scale and the Social Comparison Orientation Scale, brings out subtle differences in how the learning environments interplay with psychological outcomes. This research has brought out some enormous differences and striking similarities in how these young students from very different educational settings view their abilities, approach problems, and relate to others within their immediate social environment.

This is evident through one of the key findings showing that students from traditional schools usually record high levels of social comparison and manifest greater awareness about health, possibly depicting the competitive and health-conscious nature of the setup. It can be inferred that conventional educational setups, by adopting strategies that reduce the element of constant comparison and health-related issues, can encourage a more holistic approach to education and well-being. In contrast, the madrasa student expresses more goal orientation and less frequent social comparison, reflecting a probably more cooperative and less competitive environment. These students also indicated very strong beliefs in problem-solving abilities, which testify to the fact that madrasa curricula might have potent augments on resilience and self-efficacy.

The study also highlights that there were key similarities across both groups in terms of the way they used social networks for support and the general levels of stress and emotional challenges. In this way, commonalities from this shared landscape suggest the similar challenges faced by students across different educational contexts and the need for a broad response to student well-being.

In summary, this research advances the significance of culturally and pedagogically distinctive designs in education within various educational systems, at the same time as respecting and being informed by differences and commonalities within all students' experiences. It is hoped that when designing support systems and classrooms, policymakers and education administrators

consider both unique and shared elements of student experiences in the aspiration to create learning environments that support not just academic achievement but also a setting where students can become both psychologically healthy and socially well-functioning.

Recommendations

Given the high levels of stress, anxiety about health, and preponderance of social comparison described especially in traditional schools, interventions to strengthen emotional and psychological support mechanisms can be recommended. Interventions may include periodic mental health workshops, stress management training, or incorporating mindfulness practices into the curriculum. In the case of madrasas, where the predisposition for frequent social comparison is less strong, programs can focus on strengthening mechanisms of community support and group-based problem-solving skills.

That is to say, the results that madrasa students are more confident in their problem-solving skills and preparedness for the future suggest that self-efficacy is well-promoted in these schools. Traditional schools could adopt this by introducing goal-setting activities and self-evaluation tools for students to judge their progress and set themselves achievement targets with less regard to how their peers have performed.

What comes as a common thread out of this research is students' reliance on social networks for help with problems at both educational backgrounds. Therefore, schools and madrasas could work towards developing collaborative learning environments in which students are allowed to share knowledge and care for each other's learning journeys. This may be achieved through group projects, peer tutoring programs, and team-based learning activities. It means that, in principle, education policymakers and administrators need periodically to review and change policies according to constant assessments of the needs and outcomes of students. It should connote continuous feedback from students, parents, and educators so that educational strategies remain relevant and effective in promoting not only academic success but also the general well-being of students.

References

Abd Wahab, R. B. H. (2019). *Islamic Schools and Muslim Women Identity: A Comparative Study of Muslim Girls' Schools in Kedah, Malaysia and Leeds, United Kingdom*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University Utara Malaysia)

Ahmad, N., Ali, Z., Saba, F., Yaqoob, N., & Ullah, N. (2023). Teachers' Perceived Knowledge of Self-Concept and Its Influence on Their Teaching Practices. *International Journal of*

Multicultural Education, 25(2), 152-166.

Ahmad, N., Iqbal, S., Ali, Z., Jabeen, R., & Imran, M. (2024). Bridging the Gap: Secondary School Teachers' Perspectives on Behavioral Barriers to Academic Success. *Al-Qanṭara, 10*(2), 144-162.

Ali, Z., Ullah, N., Ahmad, N., Yaqoob, N., & Saba, F. (2023). Teachers' Perceptions of Curriculum Change and the Need of Professional Development for Effective Teaching Practices. *Multicultural Education, 9*(1). 83-90

Arwan, A. P., & Malay, E. D. (2015, November). School Well-being and College Adjustmant of First Year Moslem College Students: The Role of Religiousity. In *International Conference Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, *1*(2) 1-9.

Aslam, R., Iqbal, S., & Ahmed, N. (2022). Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Students' entrepreneurial Inclination: A Case of Public Sector Universities. *Pakistan Journal of Educational Research*, *5*(1), 51–65.

Aslam, Naeem & Kamal, Anila. (2018). Translation, Validation and Effectiveness of Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) in *Assessing the Psychological Distress among Flood Affected Individuals*. 14.

Buang, S. E. (2007). Madrasah and Muslim education: Its interface with urbanization. In *International handbook of urban education* (pp. 321-341). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Cheavens, J. S. (2006). The dimensions of hope: Comparing a hopeful thought, goal-related thinking, and planful problem solving. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 30*(6), 789-804.

Cheema, J. R., & Malik, M. L. (2019). Cultural considerations in the application of the Snyder hope theory in schools: The impact on educational and psychological outcomes. *Journal of Educational Research, 112*(3), 315-329.

Dilshad, S. A., Shah, R., & Ahmad, N. (2023). Implementation of Single National Curriculum at primary level: Problems and practices in district Khushab. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, I(4), 465-476**.**

Faiza, M., Mahmood, Z., & Butt, M. G. (2022). Gender Difference in Attachment Styles, Self-Esteem, Internalizing and Externalizing Problems among Different School Systems. *NeuroQuantology*, *20*(17), 1271-1281.

Faiza, P., Mahmood, Z., & Butt, M. G. (2022).Attachment Styles, Self-Esteem, Internalizing and Externalizing Problems among Hafiz and Non-Hafiz Adolescents. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, *6*(11), 1641-1650.

Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117-140.

Gibbons, F. X., &Buunk, B. P. (1999). Individual differences in social comparison: Development of a scale of social comparison orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*(1), 129-142.

Gul, A., Bashir, T., & Mustafa, J. (2020).Role of educational institutions in building a peaceful society. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ), 4*(2), 267-277.

Gustiwi, T., Rajab, K., Khairi, Z., & Anwar, K. (2024). Optimism as a Mediator for The Relationship of Self-Compassion with Subjective Well-Being of Islamic Senior High School Students KhairulUmmah Islamic Boarding School. *MEDIAPSI*, *10*(1), 179-190.

Haider, K., Ahmad, N., & Ali, Z. (2024). Problems and Challenges Faced by Non-Muslim

Students in achieving Higher Education at universities of Pakistan: An Evaluative Study. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices, 3*(1), 216-241. https://doi.org/10.62681/sprypublishers.scep/3/1/15

Hossain, S., &Tollefson, J. W. (2007).Language policy in education in Bangladesh.In A. Tsui& J. W. Tollefson (Eds.), *Language policy, culture, and identity in Asian contexts* (pp. 241-257). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Jabeen, M., Ali, Z., & Ahmad, N. (2023). Factor Effecting on Quality Teaching Learning at Public Sector Schools in Karachi Pakistan. *Journal of Educational Research and Social Sciences Review (JERSSR), 3*(1), 92-98.

Khan, A. (2015).Hope and resilience in the assessment of depressive symptoms among adolescents.*Journal of Youth Studies, 18*(9), 1203-1218.

Khoso, F. J., Oad, L., & Ahmad, N. (2023). Exploring Teachers' Perspectives on Effective Leadership Styles at Secondary Level in Karachi, Pakistan. *Voyage Journal of Educational Studies, 3*(4) 209-226. https://doi.org/10.58622/vjes.v3i4.104

Kuo, B. C. H. (2015). Depression and culture: A Chinese perspective. *Canadian Psychology, 56*(3), 354-361.

Langford, C. P. H. (2016). The impact of school environment on school-based violence: Evidence from a national survey. *Educational Researcher, 45*(6), 293-303.

Marsh, H. W., & Parker, J. (1984). Determinants of student self-concept: Is it better to be a relatively large fish in a small pond even if you don't learn to swim as well? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 47*(1), 213-231.

Marsh, H. W., & Martin, A. J. (2008).The role of academic self-concept in social comparison and depression among high school students.*Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*(3), 648-662.

Marsh, H. W., Trautwein, U., Lüdtke, O., Köller, O., &Baumert, J. (2005). Academic self-concept, interest, grades, and standardized test scores: Reciprocal effects models of causal ordering. *Child development, 76*(2), 397-416.

Muslimah, M., Hamdanah, H., Syakhrani, A. W., &Arliansyah, A. (2019). Stress and Resilience in Learning and Life in Islamic Boarding School: Solutions for Soft Approaches to Learning in Modern Times. *Nazhruna: JurnalPendidikan Islam, 2*(3), 421-433.

Naeem, S., Ali, Z., & Ahmed, N. (2022). Evaluation of the Causes of Interest Decline in the Subject of Chemistry amongst Secondary and Higher Secondary School Students in Karachi Pakistan. *International Journal of Social Science & Entrepreneurship, 2*(2), 175-184. https://doi.org/10.58661/ijsse.v2i2.48

Nawas, A. (2023). *Secular vs. Islamic Education: An Investigation of Factors Affecting English Achievement Gaps between Sekolah and Madrasah Schools in South Sulawesi, Indonesia* (Doctoral dissertation).

Nazar, N., Österman, K., &Björkqvist, K. (2020).School burnout and its psychological concomitants among students from three school types in Pakistan. *Eurasian Journal of Medicine and Investigation, 4*(2), 187-194.

Noreen, Amna& Khan, Muhammad Luqman&Hafeez, Sadaf&Aidoune, Yasmina&Shibli, Naveed. (2023). *TRANSLATION AND VALIDATION OF ADULT HOPE SCALE AMONG PAKISTANI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS*. 10.5281/zenodo.8214061.

Parveen, R., Aziz, A., Batool, Z., Naz, S., Haider, W. A., Rehman, I. U., &Udduja, K. (2024). Between Despair And Doctrine: Examining The Escalation Of Suicide Trends Through The Lens Of Islamic Teachings. *Kurdish Studies*, *12*(4), 1037-1050.

Patel, V. (2018). Depression in adolescents: From science to practice. Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 57(6), 364-369.

Patria, B. (2023). Students Are Happier In Madrasah: The Results of Bayesian Analysis on Indonesian National Survey Data. *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal*, *6*(2), 1-16.

Rahman, F. (2011). The role of madrasas: Assessing parental attitudes towards religious schooling in Pakistan. *Asian Survey*, *51*(5), 927-944.

Rahman, F., & Hamid, A. (2017).Social expectations and anxiety among students of madrasas and public schools.*Journal of School Psychology, 62*(2), 129-140.

Schneider, S. &Preckel, F. (2017). Variables associated with achievement in higher education: A systematic review of meta-analyses. *Psychological Bulletin, 143*(6), 565-600.

Snyder, C. R. (2002). Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. *Psychological Inquiry, 13*(4), 249-275.

Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T., ... & Harney, P. (1991). The will and the ways: development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *60*(4), 570-585.

Snyder, C. R., Shorey, H. S., Cheavens, J., Pulvers, K. M., Adams, V. H., &Wiklund, C. (2002).Hope and academic success in college.*Journal of Educational Psychology, 94*(4), 820-826.

Thomas, M., Khan, A. H., & Ahmad, N. (2022). Way forward for post pandemic online teaching: A case of higher education in Pakistan. Journal of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences (JHSMS), 3(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.jhsms/3.1.1

Valle, M. F., Huebner, E. S., &Suldo, S. M. (2006).An analysis of hope as a psychological strength.*Journal of School Psychology*, *44*(5), 393-406.

Wahyuni, N. S., &Barus, N. (2020).The Adaptation Differences in Terms of Gender on Students in Ulumul Qur'an Stabat Islamic Boarding School. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, *3*(1), 417-427.

Zine, J. (2007). Safe havens or religious 'ghettos'?Narratives of Islamic schooling in Canada. *Race ethnicity and education*, *10*(1), 71-92.