

Association of Family Support in Coping with Medical Entry-Test Failure Stress with their educational engagement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan

Unsa Arif¹, Malaika Khan¹ & Asadullah²

Abstract

Admission to medical colleges is a major challenge for higher secondary school students. Parental and societal expectations, and fear of embarrassment lead to stress and depression. This study examines how social support help students deal with stress of failing National Medical and Dental College Admission (NMDCAT) Test in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan. 101 undergraduate students from various faculties of University of Peshawar participated in this quantitative research. Based on Lazarus and Folkman's Stress and Coping Theory, this study shows how the psychological impact of medical entry test failure is managed by support systems like family. Data was collected through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (from 0 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). The association of independent variable (family support in coping with entry-test failure) and dependent variable (educational engagement) was tested using a Chi-Square test. Findings showed that educational engagement had significant association with family support in stress management ($p = 0.020$), family understanding of different problems ($P = 0.025$), encouragement from family ($P = 0.049$), and family as the greatest source of support in coping with entry-test failure stress ($P = 0.028$). Results emphasized family support as key to managing stress, overcoming academic setbacks and engagement in alternate educational activities for students. Motivation, encouragement, and emotional support, which majorly comes from family, helped positive educational engagement of students. Engagement in other educational fields also helps overcome the phase of high stress due to failure in entry test.

Keywords: *stress coping mechanisms, overcoming setbacks, family support, engagement in education*

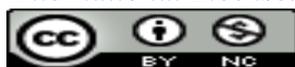
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Introduction and Literature Review

The transition from secondary education to higher studies is often marked by intense academic competition and psychological pressure. For many students, entrance examinations serve as critical gateways to prestigious professional programs, shaping not only their career trajectories but also their personal identities and social recognition. In contexts where medical education is highly valued, admission tests become more than academic assessments; they tend

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to represents decisive turning points that can influence emotional well-being, resilience, and future opportunities. Understanding how such high-stakes evaluations affect students' mental health is essential for developing supportive strategies that foster both academic success and psychological stability.

Choosing the right career holds a significant importance in any student's life as it not only impacts the economic status of a person but also determines his or her social standing in society (Edwards, 2024). Among the different fields and degrees some are highly reputable and thus in great demand making them competitive and hard to get into, like MBBS and BDS. This likeness for medical degrees can be attributed to many factors like social prestige, financial gains and better job security (Ashley & McDonald 2024).

In Pakistan, the pathway to medical college admission is through a test known as NMDCAT (National Medical and Dental College Admission Test). The NMDCAT is a highly competitive test with a narrow margin for success. Every year many students apply for the test but only a small fraction, like 35.37% in 2021, could pass the MDCAT test (Pakistan Medical Commission, 2021). The remaining students who either fail the entry test exam or their rank is so low that they are not able to secure a seat in any of the medical colleges undergo severe stress or even depression, high levels of pessimism, and loneliness (Fatima & Nadeem, 2021). Such kind of entrance exams are often perceived as "make or break" opportunity by students, in which failure cause a great trouble to their mental and emotional health (George, 2024), and this stress may further impact their ability to re-engage in alternate fields and academic pathways.

This study aligns with the study of Rakap and Vural (2024), which states that social support acts as a buffer by protecting the well-being of an individual from consequences and negative effects of stressful life events, means individuals who perceive higher levels of social support are more able to manage psychological stress. Family support is the emotional, informational, and practical assistance provided by close members of the family that helps individuals endure stress and promotes their overall well-being (Kamaryati & Malathum 2020). Moreover studies showed that family support helps as a coping mechanism for dealing with the stress of failing the entry test exam (Acoba, 2024).

Entering a degree program that was not the student's priority significantly hinders their adjustment to university life. This disconnect can significantly lower one's resilience to other typical stressors of university life, such as social adaptation and increased workload, having to network with new people thereby leading to higher anxiety and depression symptoms, making one's time in university feel overwhelming and difficult to manage (Marcotte and Diallo, 2018).

Dealing with such kind of issues, family support plays a great role in promoting positive educational engagement among students (Martinez-Yarza et al., 2024). Positive educational engagement refers to constructive, and motivated, involvement of a student in learning characterized by persistence, enthusiasm, and willingness to explore alternative academic opportunities after failures (Cao et al., 2024). Support from the family can come in different ways like giving emotional support by talking and listening to the individual empathizing with their pain, helping them manage their daily responsibilities and providing assistance, helping them get professional help and so on. All these efforts from family can act as a buffer against stress and help the person get out of depression and loneliness (Zhao et al., 2024).

Although a large number of studies highlight the negative psychological consequences of academic failure, limited research has explored the protective role of family support in coping with stress, specifically in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Moreover, there is a lack of

empirical work on how this support influences resilience, motivation, and willingness of a student to engage in alternate educational activities after failing a medical entry test. This gap provides a strong rationale for the current study. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between family support and their positive educational engagement in alternate fields after failure in NMDCAT.

Rationale of the Study

This research plays a significant role by contributing empirically to the existing literature through investigating the role of family support in promoting positive educational engagement of students in alternate academic fields particularly during stressful situations like failure in medical entry-test. Although many studies highlight the negative psychological consequences of academic failure, limited research has explored the role of family support during stress in building resilience, motivation, and willingness of students to engage in alternate educational activities after failing a medical entry test. This gap provides a strong rationale for the current study. The findings may guide parents, educators, and policymakers to design effective interventions for students facing academic setbacks and further highlight the importance of family support during stressful events in life.

Conceptual Framework of Study

The conceptual framework of the research includes an independent variable (family support in dealing with failure stress) and its influence on the dependent variables (educational engagement) in the context of entry test failure.

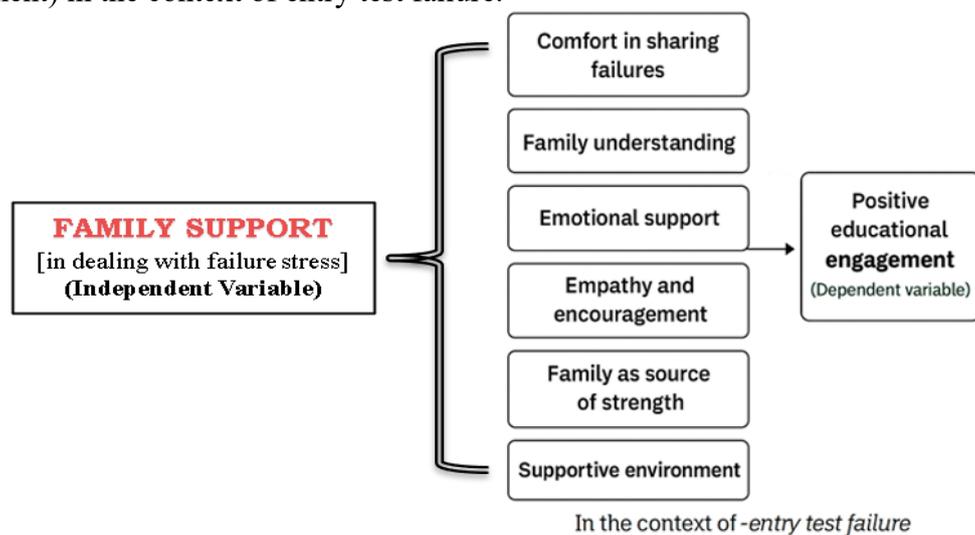


Fig 1: Conceptual Diagram

Objective of the Study

1. To examine the association between family support (comfort in sharing failures, family understanding of challenges, emotional support, empathy and encouragement, family as a source of strength, and supportive environment) and students' positive educational engagement after entry-test failure.

Hypotheses of the Study

In light of the aim of study, following hypotheses were anticipated.

- H1:** Students who feel comfortable sharing failures with their family exhibit higher positive educational engagement after entry-test failure.

H2: Family understanding of challenges is positively associated with students' positive educational engagement.

H3: Family empathy and encouragement are positively associated with students' positive educational engagement.

H4: Perceiving family as the greatest source of strength is positively associated with students' positive educational engagement.

H5: Emotional support from family is positively associated with students' positive educational engagement.

H6: A supportive family environment is positively associated with students' positive educational engagement.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study used a cross-sectional and quantitative survey design to investigate the relationship between family support in coping with entry-test failure stress and students' positive educational engagement.

Sample Characteristics and Sampling Technique

The research involved 101 undergraduate students (Age=18-27), who had appeared for the test in the past two years (2023 and 2024). Respondents were selected through purposive sampling from various faculties of the University of Peshawar, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The inclusion criteria required participants who had previously failed the NMDCAT (medical entrance exam), or were unable to secure a seat in medical colleges and experienced post-test stress. The participants were diverse in terms of gender, and background to represent a broad spectrum of experiences. The sample size participants were determined based on the availability of respondents who met the criteria through purposive sampling.

Measures

In the present study, the following scales were used:

Demographic Information Form

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic information such as age, department, faculty, region, family size, socioeconomic status, and father's occupation.

Family Support Scale

A valid self-made questionnaire was used with a total of six questions regarding the emotional and practical support provided by family members. The questionnaire demonstrated good internal consistency for family support ($\alpha = .81$).

Educational Engagement Scale

A valid self-made scale was used to measure educational engagement of students containing total six items. This scale also demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .76$). The research focused on exploring how family support helped participants cope with failure and how it influenced their educational engagement in alternate academic fields.

Procedure

Data were collected from 101 students aged 18–27 years across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After receiving approval to conduct the study, participants were informed about the research objectives, their right to withdraw at any stage, and the assurance of confidentiality. The

questionnaire was administered primarily through a Google Form, which was distributed physically among university students and online through email and Whatsapp.

Statistical Analysis

Once completed, responses were coded, and analyzed using SPSS (26 version) software. At univariate level, the data was analyzed by counting frequencies and percentage proportion of responses on all study variables. At bi-variate level, the dependent variable (educational engagement) was indexed and cross-tabulated with the independent variable (family support). Chi-square test was applied to test the association between these variables.

Results

The demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, like their age, socioeconomic status, family, region, department, and father's occupation are as below.

Table 1

Percentage and Frequency Distribution of Respondents according to their Age Group

Sample Characteristics	Frequency (n=101)	Percentage (%)
Age Group		
18-19	16	15.8
20-21	46	45.6
22-23	39	38.6
Total	101	100.2
Faculty		
Social sciences	34	33.7
Life sciences	19	18.8
Others	48	47.5
Total	101	100.2
Family type		
Nuclear	87.1	67.3
Joint	32.7	32.7
Total	101	100.0
SES		
Lower class	1	1.0
Middle class	93	92.1
Upper class	7	6.9
Total	101	100.0
Region:		
Urban	76	75.2
Rural	25	24.8
Total	101	100.0

The age of the respondents, given in Table 1, indicates that the majority, 45.6% of the respondents, were in the age group of 20–21 years, and 38.6% represented 22–23 years, and 18–19 years (15%). Respondents were selected across various faculties. The faculty part shows that the highest number of respondents (47.5%) belonged to the English, Physics, and Food and Nutrition departments, followed by "Social Sciences" (33.7%), encompassing disciplines like psychology and sociology, and "Life Sciences" (18.8%), which includes the Pharmacy, Human Nutrition, and Anesthesia departments. Furthermore, 87.1% of respondents belonged to nuclear families, and 32.7% were from joint families. That means a large number of students belonged to the nuclear family. Data on the socioeconomic status (SES) of the respondents exhibits that 92.1% of the respondents belonged to the middle class, 6.9% to the upper class, and only 1% to the lower class. The data concluded that the majority of the students in the

educational institutes in Pakistan belonged to the middle class, followed by the lower class, and then the upper class. And finally, the region part shows that 75.2% of participants resided in urban areas, while 24.8% were from rural areas.

Perception of the respondent on family support in overcoming failure stress is covered in this section. The variable of family support was measured by asking six questions from the respondents as given below.

Table 2*Feeling Comfortable in Telling Family Members about Failures and Setbacks*

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	36	35.6
Agree	8	7.9
Neutral	34	33.7
Disagree	16	15.8
Strongly disagree	7	6.9
Total	101	100.0

The results related to sharing failures with family are presented in Table 6, which shows that 35.6% of the respondents strongly agreed and 7.9% agreed that they were comfortable sharing their failures with family, while 33.7% were neutral, 16% disagreed, and 7% strongly disagreed to the statement indicating that a good number of students (43.5%) feel comfortable discussing their setbacks with family.

Table 3*Family Understood the Challenges Faced due to Entry Test Failure*

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	34	33.7
Agree	31	30.7
Neutral	21	20.8
Disagree	9	8.9
Strongly disagree	6	5.9
Total	101	100.0

The data about the family's understanding of challenges are shown in Table 7, which indicated that 33.7% of respondents strongly agreed and 30.7% agreed with the statement that their family understood their challenges of failure. However, 20.8% were neutral, 8.9% disagreed, and 5.9% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.*Got Emotional Support from Family after Failure in Entry Test*

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	36	35.6
Agree	30	29.7
Neutral	20	19.8
Disagree	9	8.9
Strongly disagree	6	5.9
Total	101	100.0

The data regarding emotional support from family are highlighted in Table 8. The data revealed that 35.6% of respondents strongly agreed that they received emotional support from their family after failure, followed by 29.7% of respondents who agreed with the statement. However, 20% of respondents were neutral, 8.9% disagreed, and 5.9% strongly disagreed with the statement that they received support from family after failure.

Table 5.

Family Shows Empathy and Encouraged during a Time of Disheartenment after Failure in the Entry Test

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	38	37.6
Agree	26	25.7
Neutral	27	28.7
Disagree	4	4.0
Strongly disagree	4	4.0
Total	101	100.0

The findings on family empathy and encouragement presented in Table 9 indicate that 37.6% of the respondents strongly agreed and 25.7% agreed with the statement. However, 28.7% were neutral, 4% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table 6

Family as the Greatest Source of Strength and Support in Coping with Entry-Test Failure Stress

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	47	46.5
Agree	27	26.7
Neutral	16	15.8
Disagree	5	5.0
Strongly disagree	6	5.9
Total	101	100.0

The data regarding family as a source of strength is highlighted in Table 10. The data indicated that 46.5% of students strongly agreed, and 26.7% agreed that their family was a major source of strength and support for them, while 15.8% of respondents were neutral, 5.0% disagreed, and 5.9% strongly disagreed to this statement.

Table 7

Family Provided a Supportive Environment that Helped Cope with Failure Stress Effectively

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	40	39.6
Agree	31	20.7
Neutral	17	16.8
Disagree	8	7.9
Strongly disagree	5	5.0
Total	101	100.0

Data from Table 11 demonstrated that most participants felt that their family provided a supportive environment to help them manage stress after failure. Specifically, 39.6% strongly

agreed and 30.7% agreed that their family was supportive. In contrast, 16.8% were neutral, 7.9% disagreed, and 5.0% strongly disagreed to it.

Bivariate analysis aims to find the association between the dependent variable (educational engagement) and the independent variable (family support in dealing with failure stress) through cross-tabulation (chi-square test). The detail of each variable is discussed below. The association of educational outcomes and family support are given in Table 8 and explained below.

Table 8

Association between Positive Educational Engagement and Family Support

Statement	Attitude	Positive Educational Engagement			Statistics
		HPEE	MPEE	LPEE	
I feel comfortable telling my family members about my failures and setbacks.	SA	26 (72.2%)	5 (13.9%)	5 13.9%	x ² = 18.165 ^a p = 0.020
	A	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0 0.0%	
	N	11(32.4%)	15 (44.1%)	8 23.5%	
	DA	10 (62.5%)	4 (25.0%)	2 12.5%	
	SDA	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	2 28.6%	
My family understood the challenges I faced due to entry test failure.	SA	25 (73.5%)	6 (17.6%)	3 (8.8%)	x ² = 17.541 ^a p = 0.025
	A	17(54.8%)	11 (35.5%)	3 (9.7%)	
	N	7 (33.3%)	8 (38.1%)	6 (28.6%)	
	DA	2 (22.2%)	4 (44.4%)	3 (33.3%)	
	SDA	1 (16.7%)	3 (50.0%)	2 (33.3%)	
I got an emotional support from my family after failure in entry test.	SA	22 (61.1%)	10(27.8%)	4 (11.1%)	x ² = 9.786 ^a p = 0.280
	A	16(53.3%)	8(26.7%)	6(20.0%)	
	N	10(50.0%)	7(35.0%)	3(15.0%)	
	DA	3(33.3%)	5(55.6%)	1(11.1%)	
	SDA	1(16.7%)	2(33.3%)	3(50.0%)	
My family showed empathy and encouraged me during a time of disheartenment after my failure in the entry test.	SA	28(73.7%)	8 (21.1%)	2 (5.3%)	x ² = 15.560 ^a p = 0.049
	A	11 (42.3%)	10 (38.5%)	5 (19.2%)	
	N	11 (37.9%)	11 (37.9%)	7 (24.1%)	
	DA	1 (25.0%)	2 (50.0%)	1 (25.0%)	
	SDA	1 (25.0%)	1 (25.0%)	2 (50.0%)	
I believe my family was the greatest source of strength and support in coping with entry-test failure stress.	SA	30 (63.8%)	12 (25.5%)	5 (10.6%)	x ² = 17.180 ^a p = .028
	A	15 (55.6%)	8 (29.6%)	4 (14.8%)	
	N	3 (18.8%)	8 (50.0%)	5 (31.2%)	
	DA	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	0 (0.0%)	
	SDA	2 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	3 (50.0%)	
My family provided a supportive environment that helped me cope with failure stress effectively.	SA	24 (60.0%)	11 (27.5%)	5 (12.5%)	x ² = 8.904 ^a p = 0.350
	A	17 (54.8%)	10 (32.3%)	4 (12.9%)	
	N	8 (47.1%)	6 (35.3%)	3 (17.6%)	
	DA	1 (12.5%)	4 (50.0%)	3 (37.5%)	
	SDA	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	2 (40.0%)	

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, DA = Disagree, SDA = Strongly Disagree, HPEE = High Positive Educational Engagement, MPEE = Moderate Positive Educational Engagement, LPEE = Low Positive Educational Engagement

A significant ($p = 0.020$) association was found between family support and stress management through positive educational engagement. This shows that those students who feel comfortable sharing their problems and failures with their family tend to engage more easily in alternate fields or educational activities and they can manage the failure stress more effectively, resulting into high positive educational engagement in them. Moreover, a significant ($P = 0.025$) relation was found in the study between the family understanding of different problems and the positive educational engagement. This result clarifies that family understanding of academic challenges is highly linked to positive educational engagement after a huge setback, and a child having an understanding family can effectively cope with post-failure depression, self-doubt, and hopelessness. Furthermore, a significant ($P = 0.049$) association was established between empathy and encouragement from the family and positive educational engagement. A significant ($P = 0.028$) link existed between family as the greatest source of support in coping with entry-test failure stress and positive educational engagement. Conversely, a non-significant ($p = 0.280$) relationship was found between emotional support from the family and positive educational engagement to manage stress. Similarly, a non-significant ($P = 0.350$) association was found between a supportive environment provided by family and positive educational engagement.

Discussion

Age is one of the most important demographic factors that impact individuals' significant life choices and decisions, especially in the context of their field and career. It is evident from these results that this study focused on the age group of adolescents (age 18–19) and early adults (typically 20–27 years old), which is the prime age for making significant decisions about the future and choosing the career path. Most decisions at this age are based on emotions because the emotional brain, particularly the prefrontal cortex, is still growing until the mid-20s (Steidinger, 2025). Age group of 20–21-year-old young adults are more prone to career stress which can negatively affect their careers in the future; hence, proper importance should be given to addressing stress among this specific age group to improve their long-term career outcomes and mental well-being (Cook et al., 2025).

Academic setbacks, like MBBS admission failures, can affect the focus of the students on their main studies and overall progress. Support from institutes and departments is key to helping students through these challenges. By creating a supportive environment, institutions can help students stay focused, engaged, and resilient, regardless of their field. Institutions should not only focus on academic support but also foster a sense of connection and community among students. When students feel connected and supported, they are more-likely to overcome setbacks and remain engaged in their studies (Pires & Chapin, 2022).

The SES status impacts the academic performance of the students. Upper and middle-class families are more likely to provide better education, resources, and opportunities, while lower-class families struggle to get the most basic resources for their education. Low academic performance at school might be greater in students whose parents have low income, low levels of education, and are employed at low-status jobs. This idea is validated by research done by Begum et al., (2024), that students from lower socio-economic classes experience higher stress and poor mental health due to financial constraints and limited resources. In contrast, middle- and upper-class students have better access to support and resources, leading to better mental health and stress resilience outcomes.

There is a significant difference among the population based on their residency in urban and rural areas. This difference may indicate that urban students, who dominate the sample, have generally better access to educational institutes, schools, colleges, and universities, which can impact their academic performance. On the other hand, students who live in rural areas may face difficulties with limited access to quality education, fewer resources, and less exposure to diverse learning opportunities. Since students in rural areas go through many

limitations related to their education and awareness regarding test trends and scoring trends and come from different family dynamics, it could all impact their coping mechanisms and their perception of support.

Rural students usually have poorer mental health compared to students in urban settings due to limited access to resources and support, which highlights the importance of considering geographical context (Tripathy and Sahu, 2021). Results of this study indicate that a good number of students (43.5%) feel comfortable discussing their setbacks with family, which indicates that for such a situation in life, the family served as a safe place for emotional expressions like talking about the setbacks, fears, guilt, etc. related to academic failure. It is important to have somebody openly communicate about failures to manage stress. The responses that show students avoid talking to parents about their setbacks indicate they are not comfortable with family either because their parents are strict, judgmental, or have very high and unrealistic standards for their children, which might exacerbate their stress levels. These results are supported by Butler *et al.* (2022) who reported that open communication among family members plays a vital role in mitigating stress, especially in students who experience academic challenges and foster resilience in young individuals during times of academic pressure and failure.

Emotional expression is very important for building one's ability to cope with stress. Individuals who openly express their emotions have higher resilience in the face of stress compared to people who suppress their emotions (Polizzi & Lynn, 2021). It is clear from the data that the majority of students (64.4%) considered their family as strong support, and they must have understanding families who comprehend and understand their challenges related to failure in the entry test exam. This perception of support is crucial for managing stress and emotional recovery. Conversely, the neutral responses might indicate the lack of communication with parents or the lack of engagement from family in the lives of the students. Meanwhile, the respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed didn't feel any sense of understanding from their parents. This could be due to different expectations regarding support among the students and their families or a lack of awareness about the stressors involved in exam failures.

Empathetic responses among family members can increase their resilience against stress and help them navigate through hard times better (Thaddeus, 2024). It is revealed from the data that parents and family support significantly help students manage stress. The majority of the respondents, *i.e.*, 65.3% agreed that their family understood their challenges after entry test failures and considered their family as a major source of strength and support. Family support helps improve the ability of a student to manage stress and prevent serious mental health problems in a child (Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024). Parents' beliefs and attitudes toward goals and achievements greatly impact the children's point of view related to their own intellectual abilities and intelligence and the importance of learning and education (Jafari, 2024). However, some of the respondents completely disagreed with the family's support and some were neutral. They might have never experienced the family as a source of strength and encouragement, or they may perceive that the family could not understand them in their difficult situation.

Family life and parental relationships play an important role in overall well-being and adaptation. The result suggests a significant number (63.3%) of respondents felt that their family showed empathy and encouragement after failure in the entry test, which also proves how much family support and encouragement helps children to deal with stress in such situations of hopelessness where life seems to be ending and the future looks darker. These findings align with the previous research that also shows the important role of family support in eliminating exam failure stress and highlights that the more support, encouragement, and help students receive from their families, the better they believe they can manage difficulties

that come their way and promotes strong bond and resilience in the children (Gao & Liu, 2025). The data confirmed that almost 73.2%, which is more than half, agreed to the statement, which means family is usually the closest individuals in any student's life who wish well on them and their mental wellbeing. For other respondents who disagreed, either they may have found other sources of strength like teachers or friends or they could have no source of strength at all, making them feel isolated and making the journey of coping with exam stress harder.

Research done by Benito-Gomez et al. (2022) backs this claim that parents are usually the biggest source of strength and support for students dealing with academic stress, and in the absence of support from family, they turn to other people like mentors, friends, etc. for emotional and academic guidance. About more than half of the respondents, i.e., 70.3%, claim that the supportive environment provided by their families helped them cope with the stress. The measure of these responses showcases the pivotal role played by the family in coping with academic setbacks such as entry test failure. On the other hand, the respondents who did not receive environmental support from family not only had no assistance while dealing with such a traumatic time in their academia but also had the stress of their parents' unhappiness on top, which may have increased their stress level. The absence of support from parents can increase the stressful environment for young adults dealing with exam failure and make it hard for them to recover (Deng et al., 2022).

Family support plays a major role in times of psychological stress, especially due to failures and setbacks, to help individuals deal with stress. They influence the ability to cope with the problems by providing emotional, mental, and financial support, listening to our problems, and understanding the situation. It helps regain focus and motivate individuals by showing the right direction. A strong bond with the family can help us re-engage in the educational activities and start working again with confidence. Social support greatly influences the students' ability to cope with stress and recover from setbacks. Strong bonds among family members and healthy relationships with parents can act as key helping factors against behavioral and psychological issues, such as school disengagement, while also promoting resilience and positive psychological outcomes (Roman et al., 2025). Family support improves the ability of a student to manage stress and prevent serious mental health problems in a child (Bachman et al., 2024).

The result makes it clear that students whose family showed empathy and encouragement during the time of disheartenment after failure were more likely to deal with the stress, get back to their normal lives, and be healthily engaged in alternative fields, especially in their education. The findings also suggest that parents who offer encouragement, reassurance, and guidance help individuals find a healthy way out of the stress, regain their confidence, and explore alternative educational pathways to continue their education. When families provide encouragement and practical support, such as creating a peaceful study environment and offering emotional support, it helps students to deal with challenges like exam failures with less anxiety and depression (Deng et al., 2022).

It is inferred from this study that social support from the family is one of the greatest strengths on which a student can rely. There is a strong link between family support while dealing with the entry-test failure stress and positive educational engagement. This support helps students cope with the stress due to entry test failure and aids positive educational engagement by making up the mind to explore other good fields or careers.

Conclusion of the Study

This study shows the significant impact of family support in the educational engagement of a student in other fields after failure in the MDCAT or any other medical entrance test. The study revealed that overall, more than half of the respondents (60.5%) were able to manage their stress with the help of family support and showed better engagement in other fields after not getting selected in medical school.

Strengths of the Study

Despite the limitations, the study has several strengths that makes it important like being highly relevant by focusing on one of the major issues in Pakistani academic context. It also focuses on a culturally significant factor like family support in coping with NMDCAT failure. Furthermore, the study uses a structured, quantitative approach with valid statistical analysis making it evidence-based.

Limitation and Suggestions of Study

The limitations of this study include reliance on self-report data, which may introduce bias, social desirability, or inaccurate recall; therefore, future research should incorporate multiple data sources such as observational methods or supervisor ratings to improve accuracy. Another limitation is that data were collected from a single city using purposive sampling, which restricts generalizability; expanding sampling to multiple cities and diverse institutions would enhance representativeness. Finally, the study did not consider other forms of support such as peer or teacher support, which may also influence workplace stress management; thus, future studies should examine broader support systems to provide a more comprehensive understanding of stress management among mental health professionals.

Implications of the Study

Counseling of parents and family members for improved motivation, encouragement, and emotional support from family, and engagement of stressed children in positive educational activities or alternate fields to help them in overcoming that phase of high stress of students due to failure in entry test were the recommendations in light of the study.

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