

Original Article

Examining the Relationship Between Public Academic Sharing and Self-Worth Among High School Students: The Role of Social Comparison and Perceived Academic Pressure

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Abstract - Increased reliance on social media during adolescence has transformed student academic performance into an often public and continuously evaluable context, but its psychological outcomes of observing academic peer success remains not well understood. To address this question, this study explored linkages between public exposure to academic accomplishment, the inclination to seek out an upward academic comparison (academic social comparison seeking), and self-worth. It also considered whether these relationships differed across: age, sex, type of school, and country of residence. A cross-sectional survey of 185 Indian and Canadian high school students (ages 14–18) measured public exposure to academic achievements using a researcher-developed scale, academic social comparison seeking (MASCS), perceived academic pressure (ESSA), and contingent self-worth across three domains (Competition, Academic Competence, and Approval from Others). Comparison seeking, but not mere exposure, was significantly associated with academic stress and with all three dimensions of contingent self-worth. It was found that not public exposure, but rather comparison seeking were associated with academic pressure and with the three different dimensions of contingent self-worth. Academic pressure was additionally associated with grade and age increases, higher scores among female participants, government/public school and Canadian vs. Indian students; in contrast, public exposure had nothing with academic stress, the Self-worth domain of Academic Competence; while school, gender, and country variables bore no relation with the tendency to seek social comparisons, and contingent self-worth as a construct. It appears, therefore, that an individual desire to compare oneself to peers has more relevance for academic stress and subsequent self-worth levels than being publicly aware of peers' academic successes. Future attempts to reduce teen academic stress will benefit more from addressing an individual peers tendency to compare rather than the degree to which academic outcomes were made public.

Keywords - Public academic sharing, Social comparison, Academic stress, Contingent self-worth, Adolescents.

1. Introduction

The classroom has always been a comparison space, but the advent of the internet has turned the comparison from a discrete, temporally bound space into an ever-open space. High School students no longer receive grades, rankings, or university admission letters in isolation but announce them publicly, often through screenshots, into their friends' group chats, class group chats, and stories on social media instantly after getting the news (Mann & Blumberg, 2022). While "public academic sharing" has become a routine practice among high school students, the psychological and physiological implications of this continuous visibility remain largely unexamined. Simultaneously, adolescent mental health appears to have declined across much of the

globe, with youth reporting that academic pressure is one of the biggest stressors (Mann & Blumberg, 2022).

This visibility is precisely due to how thoroughly intertwined social media has become with every facet of adolescent life. Almost every U.S. teenager uses one major social media network; approximately nine out of 10 teens go on YouTube, and just over 60 percent access both TikTok and Instagram, according to the latest Pew Research survey; nearly four in 10 teens "online 'almost constantly'" (2025). For teens who attend high school these days, it's difficult not to be fully immersed in social media as one's routine life - whether private or academic, with their chat groups and stories acting as their ever-present environment. In the context of near-continuous online immersion, there is a real



need to consider the psychological ramifications of not just sharing public academic information, but sharing it casually and habitually, because of how it could influence teenage social well-being.

The 2026 longitudinal study by Guo et al., which tracked over 4,700 adolescents in England, found that high levels of academic pressure at age 15 predicted elevated depressive symptoms and a greater likelihood of self-harm through the age of early adulthood. Adolescence is a sensitive developmental phase that is characterized by high levels of scrutiny faced from their peers and a still developing sense of identity, which makes their self-esteem vulnerable to sources of validation outside the individual. While significant for demonstrating academic pressure as a lasting risk factor for mental health rather than a fleeting source of stress, it raises questions about which behaviors and contexts can amplify pressures for teenagers trying to make it through school. Public academic sharing represents a key mechanism in this dynamic: making academic achievements immediately visible and benchmarked can intensify perceived pressure, which prior research has consistently linked to negative psychological outcomes for adolescents.

The scale of this pressure is not confined to any single country or school system. A school-based survey of 1,426 adolescents in Karnataka, India, found that 74% reported high levels of academic stress, with stress levels significantly predicted by factors including grade level, urban residence, and gender (Haritay et al., 2025). Findings of this kind suggest that academic pressure functions as something close to a normative experience of adolescence across widely different educational and cultural contexts, rather than a localized phenomenon specific to any one country's school system. This global consistency strengthens the case that any behavior capable of amplifying that pressure, such as the immediate and repeated benchmarking involved in public academic sharing, deserves attention as a near-universal concern rather than a niche one.

One mechanism of validation is social comparison that was conceptually laid out by Festinger (1954) in his social comparison theory. Festinger hypothesized that all humans have a natural drive to evaluate themselves relative to others especially in cases of lack of social validation or benchmarks, comparison can be upwards, where you look for validation from people of a perceived higher level of skill or downwards, where you look from those of a perceived lower level, a comparison upward especially on attributes deemed to be integral to one's own sense of self and worth such as performance or grades. The creation of public academic sharing is a breeding ground for social comparisons that turn isolated academic results into immediately available sources for peer group comparison, which already highlights youth's relative standing in the class or school year. Public academic sharing as a result is particularly suited for social

comparisons as it transforms these personal accomplishments into shareable public content readily accessible for peer interactions and comparison, in which standing between peers has long since been central.

This phenomenon is replicated in qualitative studies of teenage social media use overall. On Australian mid-adolescents, as in this group of 36 individuals, West et al (2023) have found how exposure or publicness is integral to how teenagers may gain a sense of competence and expertise in their lives, sometimes productively, sometimes stressfully. Their study confirms again that publicness per se matters, regardless of the shared content, and is psychologically activating: as they say, the very same thing when revealed in a one on one to a parent, or to a school group page would perhaps not evoke the same internal feeling about competence/effort because the latter involves potential for cumulative audience social feedback.

The question of why grades in particular have quite this much to do with adolescent psychology may be approached in more detail by application of Crocker and Wolfe's (2001) concept of contingencies of self-worth. According to this theory, overall, general levels of self-esteem are not evenly anchored in all aspects of life, but rather, are contingent upon particular realms to which the individual has learned to grant significance, as if one's relative standing within these areas can define one's self-esteem even more than one's overall levels in other, non-contingent domains. For a number of accomplished adolescents, particularly college-bound students at competitive high schools, success or failure within the realms of academic accomplishment takes on precisely that quality; academic accomplishment serves as precisely the sort of domain on which one's own self esteem is invested-not just the property of the individual to do so (though parents, teachers as well as, certainly, peer groups may play a large role in facilitating this in college applicants to high competitive schools and colleges); such a publicly available, often "on display" skill is well located to the task of further leveraging this dynamic because public sharing makes the private experience of academic evaluation the public, peer-tested, repeated examination of how one measures up on, within this contingency.

The idea that comparison-based academic environments affect adolescents' sense of self has a basis in previous literature, much of which focuses on comparison by parents and peers rather than a student's own public dissemination and comparison to others. Specifically, Angeles et al. (2024), a study of 200 Filipino senior high school students, found that a perceived experience of high frequency of social comparison by parents was negatively correlated with self-perceived academic efficacy and positively correlated with self-perceived academic self-handicapping. Interestingly, the study demonstrates not only that there was a difference in effect of comparison between upward contrast and upward

identification, but also a distinction in how downward contrast and identification affect students: downward contrast decreases efficacy while downward identification increases self-handicapping behaviour. This suggests that not only did comparison matter, but so did the way it was framed, which is directly relevant to how public academic sharing might work, given that grades and acceptances can be framed favorably or unfavorably relative to others, and can make others appear better or worse.

Furthermore, in a Nigerian sample of high school students, Adeniyi and Akindapo (2025) found that self-esteem and peer pressure were both positively and significantly related to adolescents' academic engagement, such that peer pressure may act as a mediator: as either promoting or inhibiting students' efforts. Taken together, these studies suggest that comparisons do not uniformly affect all adolescents, but they do influence the critical outcomes of self-worth and self-efficacy, whether from parents, peers, or plausibly, through self-directed public disclosure of their successes.

The psychological stakes can be demonstrated by research that connects low self-worth with depression directly. Bai and Liu (2026), for example, investigated two waves of data collection from 640 Chinese junior high students six months apart and demonstrated that at T1 self-worth significantly predicted T2 levels of depressive symptoms; meanwhile, academic self-efficacy – despite sharing significant conceptual overlap with self-worth – did not mediate or predict future depressive symptoms at T2. As a result, it supports the present study in highlighting that the more global evaluation of the self that one refers to here as self-worth, rather than a more domain-specific assessment that academic self-efficacy captures, has more power in protecting adolescent mental well-being.

For the purposes of this study, the central variables are defined as follows. Public exposure to academic achievements refers to the frequency with which an adolescent encounters other people's academic outcomes, including grades, exam results, certificates, awards, or university admissions decisions, shared publicly via social media, school announcements, or family and community channels. Self-worth, following Rosenberg's (1965) foundational formulation, refers to an individual's global evaluation of their own value as a person, distinct from domain-specific judgments such as academic self-efficacy. Social comparison, following Festinger (1954), refers to the general tendency to evaluate one's own standing relative to others, including comparison specifically oriented toward academic performance and achievement. Perceived academic pressure refers to an adolescent's subjective sense of stress or expectation surrounding academic performance, whether self-imposed or attributed to parents, teachers, or peers, consistent with its operationalization in longitudinal work such as Guo et al. (2026).

Taken together, previous studies offer several points that can be accepted as clearly established: 1) the academic pressure has direct and significant long-term consequences on the adolescent's mental health, 2) the comparison triggered by parents or peers produces patterned and directional effects on adolescents' self-enhancement of their self-efficacy, self-handicapping, and subsequent outcomes 3) self-worth, but not simply academic self-efficacy, predicts depressive outcomes. What has not been examined by scholars is specifically how adolescent-initiated sharing of academic information, an act which distinguishes this type of public sharing from parent-initiated and ambient peer comparison through its public and actively self-revealing nature, might correlate with adolescent's self worth, as well as how social comparison and perceived academic pressure act as the intervening mechanisms. This study contributed to fill this gap by examining the relationship between public academic sharing and self-worth among high school students. Specifically, this study examines the effect of perceived academic pressure in the relation between public academic sharing and self-worth.

This disparity is partly methodological as the existing literatures were collected from different population and methodologies: English longitudinal cohort, Philippine and Nigerian cross-sectional surveys, Australian qualitatively interviewing data and Chinese two-wave panel data; none of which was developed to distinguish self-initiated public sharing as a separate variable from comparisons initiated from parents or peer, around which these literatures were constructed. Therefore, present literature can only infer something indirectly through analogy regarding the present study's question. To fill up such a gap, this study studies the association of public academic sharing with students' self-worth in high school students. In particular, this study analyzes the impact of perceived academic pressure for the association of public academic sharing with self-worth.

2. Methodology

2.1. Aim of The Study

This study aims to explore the relationship between public academic sharing and adolescents' self-worth, in light of social comparison and academic pressure as mediators. Instead of conceptualizing public academic sharing as just an additional parent/peer-inspired, comparison-driven activity in the previous literature, the study sought to tease it out as a unique, independently initiated behavior, examining the mechanism by which and the circumstances under which it can affect the adolescent self.

2.2. Objectives

1. To examine the bivariate associations between public exposure to academic achievements and academic social comparison seeking, perceived academic pressure (educational stress), and the three dimensions of contingent self-worth (Competition, Academic

- Competence, and Approval from Others).
2. To examine whether academic social comparison seeking is associated with perceived academic pressure (total and across the five ESSA subscales) and with each dimension of contingent self-worth, and to compare the strength of these associations with those of public exposure alone.
3. To examine differences in public exposure, academic social comparison seeking, perceived academic pressure, and contingent self-worth across age groups (14–15 vs. 16–18 years), grade level (9–12), and school type (government/public, private, international).
4. To compare male and female adolescents on public exposure, academic social comparison seeking, perceived academic pressure, and contingent self-worth.
5. To compare Indian and Canadian adolescents on these same study variables.

2.3. Participants

Taken together, these objectives position the study as a cross-sectional, correlational investigation. Public exposure to academic achievements and academic social comparison seeking are examined as separate correlates of perceived academic pressure and contingent self-worth (Objectives 1 and 2), which allows the study to distinguish passive exposure to peers' achievements from the active tendency to seek comparison. Age, grade, school type, gender, and country are examined as group-level differences across these variables (Objectives 3-5). The sample included 185 high school students (Grade 9-12, full-time study) between the ages of 14 and 18. The sample was anticipated to be primarily composed of students living in India, given that the demographic items included various school board types (e.g., Central Board of Secondary Education [CBSE], Indian Certificate of Secondary Education [ICSE], State Board, International Baccalaureate [IB], and Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education [IGCSE]), but was open to students from other countries who were attending comparable school systems. A sample of 192 participants data was collected, however, due to incomplete responses and outliers of different countries, they were removed.

Students were recruited from common social and instant messaging platforms (e.g. Instagram, TikTok, Discord) using convenience and snowball sampling techniques rather than through schools in order to broaden the pool beyond students from a single institution, reducing the possibility of obtaining results biased by school-specific culture/climate. Inclusion criteria stated that participants currently and full-time be enrolled in a Grade 9-12 high school in a country that offers this schooling (based on perception/current enrollment) and have access to at least one form of social or group messaging app account (e.g., Facebook groups, WhatsApp group chats). It was also necessary that students be able to read and comprehend survey item responses in English.

Participants were screened against current and regular social/instant messaging usage, as the primary predictor variable, exposure to others' academic achievements, was predicated on use of these types of platforms; participants not currently or actively using any social or group chat had not been exposed to any others' achievements on a social network for the past month and were therefore screened out. After an initial qualifying survey query on age and enrollment in high school full-time, the study gave access to the main instrument. Given that the participants were minors, a rigorous screening and informed consent process was maintained (see sections 2.5 and 2.6 for details).

2.4. Instrumentation

A single, two-part self-report questionnaire was used, comprising a demographic questionnaire and four psychometric scales measuring the main study variables: public exposure to academic achievements (a researcher-developed measure), contingent self-worth (three CSWS subscales), academic social comparison seeking (MASCS subscale), and perceived academic pressure (ESSA).

2.4.1. Demographic Questionnaire

Participants responded to questions about: age group (14–15 or 16–18 years of age), gender, academic year (grades 9, 10, 11, or 12), type of school (private, government/public, international, or other), city and state (in which they were studying), Academic stream (grades 11-12 only), highest recently achieved grade range, hours of tutoring/coaching per week and participation in it, hours of daily use of Social Media (SM), most used SM application, where they often observed the academic achievements of others, and their school-board (CBSE, ICSE, State, IB, Cambridge). Information about parents' educational level was also collected. In addition to this, one question captured how often they personally shared their academic achievements online: "Never to Very Often". This will be treated as a single item self-sharing indicator, separate from the above-mentioned exposures.

2.4.2. Public Exposure to Academic Achievements

The researcher has developed a novel, ten-item measure to capture the public academic exposures of participants. Participants indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very Often), how frequently they encountered the academic achievements of other people. Unlike the question about personal sharing described above, this questionnaire asked to what extent respondents were exposed to others sharing their accomplishments in 4 contexts- namely, on social media platforms (e.g., friends posting exam scores or their achievement of securing college placements), on their campus/in their schools (e.g., announcements during assemblies for achievement awardees) on social networks of friends and family (e.g., relatives congratulating others on social media, or coaching centres posting results of successful candidates), and overall/on an average.

2.4.3. Contingent Self-Worth

Contingent self-worth was measured using three subscales of the Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (CSWS; Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003): Competition, Academic Competence, and Approval from Others. Together, the three subscales comprised 15 items (five per subscale), rated on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Higher scores indicate that a person's self-worth depends more strongly on that domain. Cronbach's alpha for each subscale.

2.4.4. Social Comparison

Academic social comparison seeking was measured using the Social Comparison Seeking subscale of the Motivation for Academic Social Comparison Scale (MASCS; Lalot & Houston, 2025). This 6-item subscale assesses the inclination to compare oneself with peers in academic settings (e.g., comparing marks and test scores). Items were rated on a 5-point scale, and one reverse-scored item was reverse coded before analysis. Higher scores indicate a stronger tendency to seek academic comparison.

2.4.5. Perceived Academic Pressure

The Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents (ESSA; Sun, Dunne, Hou, & Xu, 2011) 16-item, 5-point rating scale composed of five conceptually related factors (Pressure from Study, Workload, Worry About Grades, Self-expectation and Despondency) that measure adolescents' perceived educational pressures has been used. The ESSA has demonstrated adequate internal consistency reliability (e.g., Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale was .82 in this study) and has been used extensively in adolescent populations across different cultural backgrounds.

2.5. Data Collection Procedure

Data was gathered using one Google Form, which was distributed via social media and messaging platforms. The form started with a short paragraph describing the study, followed by an informed consent/assent section: first, a checkbox ensuring that parents or guardians read the study information and agreed to the participation of their children, and a second checkbox where the student themselves agreed to participate. After both check boxes were selected, the form continued with the eligibility question (whether the respondent was currently a high school student), followed by the demographic questions, and the six scale components as explained in section 2.4. The Google form link was circulated using a caption describing the study and the eligibility requirements through commonly used apps among high school students, including Instagram, TikTok and Discord, and participants were encouraged to also circulate it with their eligible friends. It was estimated that the Google form would be completed in about 15-20 min. All responses were collected anonymously; no names, emails or other personally identifying information was requested. The last page of the Google Form consisted of a short message thanking the

participants for their time, recalling the aims of the study and providing the researchers' e-mail address and general youth resources.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations had to be included in the design of this study since all participants were under age 18 and the study was about psychologically sensitive topics.

2.6.1. Parent/Guardian Consent and Student Assent

Each questionnaire was contained on a Google Form: a box to click signifying the student's parent/guardian was aware and agreed with participation in the study, preceded another box for the student to individually assent to study participation. Only once each box was checked would the survey continue. It is true that the self-report measures for a parent/guardian consent cannot be completely conclusive that a parent or guardian indeed read and approved of the study details; instead, it was possible for the student to click both boxes herself. This limitation, that one anonymous form without a second required check by the student about parental consent is used, is dealt with in the Limitations section.

2.6.2. Voluntary Participation

Each student completed the questionnaire entirely voluntarily. There were no social or scholastic consequences for refusal to be in the study or for ceasing participation mid-task. Participants were informed through the forms and in an introduction page about the study in its entirety.

2.6.3. Right to Withdraw

Participants were explicitly informed that their participation in the study was optional at any point that it was undertaken, up to and including after beginning the survey if they so chose; if the study began during an online survey and thus in the context of potentially hundreds of online student responses, if one wants to withdraw and it isn't known whether student responses were individually identifiable or not, there's no way to exclude these particular responses without information of student identities (another limitation; addressed in Limitations section of this paper).

2.6.4. Instructions for Questionnaire

The introduction page on the Google Form informed students about why they were participating, that responses were to be anonymous and kept confidential (see Confidentiality and Data Security), that there were no right or wrong answers in this self-report and that students should answer honestly, skip any questions they wished, and can leave the survey at any time without consequences. Furthermore, scale introductions explained the parameters for response.

2.6.5. Confidentiality and Data Security

Data obtained was kept on a password-protected and encrypted server available only to investigators of the project,

and used only in the aggregate (which eliminates risk of identifiability), on presentations and in publications.

2.6.6. Psychological Safety

In keeping with many items regarding performance and self-worth, and given the online recruiting method, an anonymous closing page offered resources for adolescent mental-health support services regionally if the student desired.

2.7. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. The significance level was set at .05 for all analyses. Pearson correlations were used to examine associations among the study variables. Independent-samples t-tests were used to compare groups by age group, gender, and country (Welch's t-test where the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met). One-way ANOVAs with Tukey HSD post hoc comparisons were used to compare grade levels and school types. Effect sizes are reported as Cohen's *d* for t-tests and η^2 for ANOVAs.

3. Results

The final sample consisted of N = 185 adolescent students. Ages were distributed across two brackets, with 76 participants (41.1%) aged 14-15 years and 109 participants (58.9%) aged 16-18 years. The sample comprised 94 females (50.8%), 89 males (48.1%), and 2 participants (1.1%) identifying as non-binary or genderfluid. Participants were enrolled across Grades 9 through 12, with the largest group in Grade 12 (35.7%). About half attended government/public schools (51.9%), followed by private (36.8%) and international schools (11.4%), and 53.5% reported attending coaching or private tuition. Participants were drawn primarily from India (n = __) and Canada (n = __), with the remainder from other countries (n = __). Full sample characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics (N = 185)

Characteristic	n	%
<i>Age</i>		
16-18 years	109	58.9
14-15 years	76	41.1
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	94	50.8
Male	89	48.1
Genderfluid	1	0.5
Non binary	1	0.5
<i>Grade</i>		
Grade 12	66	35.7
Grade 10	44	23.8
Grade 11	43	23.2
Grade 9	32	17.3
<i>School Type</i>		
Government/Public school	96	51.9
Private school	68	36.8
International school	21	11.4
<i>Attends Coaching/Private Tuition</i>		
Yes	99	53.5
No	86	46.5

Note. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Group comparisons by age, grade, school type, and country were exploratory. Tests with p-values close to .05 should be interpreted cautiously, given the number of comparisons conducted (see Section 2.7). Gender comparisons were limited to male and female participants, because the two participants who identified as non-binary or genderfluid were too few for analysis.

Table 2. Age-Group Differences in Study Variables

Variable	14–15 years M (SD)	16–18 years M (SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Public Exposure to Achievements	3.85 (0.73)	3.58 (0.82)	2.28	.024	0.34
Academic Social Comparison Seeking	3.40 (0.92)	3.69 (0.91)	−2.13	.035	−0.32
Educational Stress (Total) ^a	2.04 (0.71)	2.89 (0.96)	−6.89	< .001	−0.98
CSW – Competition	4.84 (1.14)	5.10 (1.28)	−1.41	.160	−0.21
CSW – Academic Competence	4.78 (1.14)	5.14 (1.17)	−2.05	.042	−0.31
CSW – Approval from Others ^a	4.82 (1.10)	4.39 (1.50)	2.23	.027	0.32

Note. $n = 76$ for ages 14–15 and $n = 109$ for ages 16–18. CSW = Contingencies of Self-Worth. ^aWelch's t -test was used because the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. d = Cohen's d .

Age was significantly associated with several study variables. Adolescents aged 14–15 years reported significantly greater public exposure to achievements than those aged 16–18 years, $t(183) = 2.28$, $p = .024$, $d = 0.34$. In contrast, older adolescents reported significantly greater academic social comparison seeking, $t(183) = -2.13$, $p = .035$, $d = -0.32$.

The largest age-group difference was observed for educational stress. Adolescents aged 16–18 years reported

substantially higher educational stress than those aged 14–15 years, Welch's $t(182.33) = -6.89$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.98$, representing a large effect. Older adolescents also scored significantly higher on CSW–Academic Competence, $t(183) = -2.05$, $p = .042$, $d = -0.31$. Conversely, younger adolescents reported significantly greater CSW–Approval from Others, Welch's $t(182.51) = 2.23$, $p = .027$, $d = 0.32$. No significant age difference was found for CSW–Competition, $p = .160$.

Table 3. Gender Differences in Study Variables

Variable	Female M (SD)	Male M (SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Public Exposure to Achievements	3.67 (0.78)	3.73 (0.81)	−0.48	.631	−0.07
Academic Social Comparison Seeking	3.68 (0.92)	3.45 (0.92)	1.69	.093	0.25
Educational Stress (Total) ^a	2.82 (1.00)	2.23 (0.82)	4.43	< .001	0.65
CSW – Competition	4.99 (1.16)	4.98 (1.29)	0.09	.929	0.01
CSW – Academic Competence	5.03 (1.18)	4.96 (1.16)	0.38	.703	0.06
CSW – Approval from Others	4.39 (1.36)	4.80 (1.31)	−2.08	.039	−0.31

Note. $n = 94$ for females and $n = 89$ for males. CSW = Contingencies of Self-Worth. ^aWelch's *t*-test was used because the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. *d* = Cohen's *d*.

Gender differences were observed primarily for educational stress and CSW–Approval from Others. Female adolescents reported significantly higher educational stress than male adolescents, Welch's $t(177.43) = 4.43$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.65$, indicating a moderate-to-large effect.

Male adolescents, however, reported significantly greater CSW–Approval from Others than female adolescents, $t(181) = -2.08$, $p = .039$, $d = -0.31$. No significant gender differences were found in public exposure to achievements, academic social comparison seeking, CSW–Competition, or CSW–Academic Competence.

Table 4. Grade-Level Differences in Study Variables

Variable	<i>F</i> (3, 181)	<i>p</i>	η^2	Grade 9 M (SD)	Grade 10 M (SD)	Grade 11 M (SD)	Grade 12 M (SD)
Public Exposure to Achievements	2.66	.049	.042	3.76 (0.84)	3.95 (0.60)	3.63 (0.87)	3.53 (0.80)
Academic Social Comparison Seeking	2.69	.048	.043	3.28 (0.94)	3.50 (0.91)	3.51 (0.86)	3.81 (0.93)
Educational Stress (Total)	17.43	< .001	.224	2.00 (0.69)	2.11 (0.83)	2.52 (0.95)	3.10 (0.88)
CSW – Competition	2.19	.091	.035	4.75 (1.22)	5.00 (1.10)	5.39 (1.04)	4.86 (1.38)
CSW – Academic Competence	1.87	.136	.030	4.71 (1.24)	4.90 (1.09)	5.32 (1.10)	4.99 (1.20)
CSW – Approval from Others	10.66	< .001	.150	4.81 (1.08)	4.83 (1.12)	5.17 (1.23)	3.88 (1.44)

Note. $N = 185$. CSW = Contingencies of Self-Worth. η^2 = eta squared

One-way ANOVAs indicated significant grade-level differences in public exposure to achievements, academic social comparison seeking, educational stress, and CSW–Approval from Others. Public exposure to achievements differed significantly across grades, $F(3, 181) = 2.66$, $p = .049$, $\eta^2 = .042$. Academic social comparison seeking also differed significantly, $F(3, 181) = 2.69$, $p = .048$, $\eta^2 = .043$.

The strongest grade-level effect was observed for educational stress, $F(3, 181) = 17.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .224$,

indicating a large effect. Mean educational stress increased progressively from Grade 9 to Grade 12, with Grade 12 students reporting the highest level.

CSW–Approval from Others also differed significantly across grades, $F(3, 181) = 10.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .150$. In contrast, grade level was not significantly associated with CSW–Competition, $F(3, 181) = 2.19$, $p = .091$, or CSW–Academic Competence, $F(3, 181) = 1.87$, $p = .136$.

Table 5. Significant Tukey HSD Post Hoc Comparisons by Grade Level

Variable	Comparison	Mean Difference	Tukey-adjusted <i>p</i>
Public Exposure to Achievements	Grade 10 vs. Grade 12	0.42	.033
Academic Social Comparison Seeking	Grade 12 vs. Grade 9	0.52	.041
Educational Stress	Grade 12 vs. Grade 10	0.99	< .001
	Grade 12 vs. Grade 11	0.57	.004
	Grade 11 vs. Grade 9	0.53	.043
	Grade 12 vs. Grade 9	1.10	< .001
CSW–Approval from Others	Grade 10 vs. Grade 12	0.94	.001
	Grade 11 vs. Grade 12	1.29	< .001
	Grade 9 vs. Grade 12	0.92	.005

Note. CSW = Contingencies of Self-Worth. Mean differences are based on the first group minus the second group. Tukey HSD = Tukey's honestly significant difference test.

Table 6. School-Type Differences in Study Variables

Variable	<i>F</i> (2, 182)	<i>p</i>	η^2	Government/P ublic M (SD)	Private M (SD)	Internationa l M (SD)
Public Exposure to Achievements	2.45	.089	.026	3.57 (0.76)	3.84 (0.80)	3.77 (0.88)
Academic Social Comparison Seeking	1.12	.329	.012	3.64 (0.94)	3.44 (0.90)	3.69 (0.89)
Educational Stress (Total)	7.00	.001	.071	2.79 (0.97)	2.27 (0.91)	2.29 (0.77)
CSW – Competition	1.54	.216	.017	4.94 (1.31)	4.94 (1.19)	5.44 (0.87)
CSW – Academic Competence	1.84	.162	.020	5.13 (1.17)	4.78 (1.23)	5.08 (0.85)
CSW – Approval from Others	3.02	.051	.032	4.36 (1.48)	4.70 (1.25)	5.09 (0.94)

Note. *N* = 185. CSW = Contingencies of Self-Worth. η^2 = eta squared.

School type was significantly associated with educational stress, $F(2, 182) = 7.00$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .071$, representing a moderate effect. Students attending government/public schools reported higher educational stress ($M = 2.79$) than students attending private schools ($M = 2.27$) and international schools ($M = 2.29$).

Tukey's post hoc analysis indicated that government/public school students reported significantly greater educational stress than private school students, mean difference = 0.52, adjusted $p = .002$. The difference between

government/public and international school students was not statistically significant, adjusted $p = .074$, nor was the difference between private and international school students, adjusted $p = .994$.

No statistically significant school-type differences were observed for public exposure to achievements, academic social comparison seeking, CSW–Competition, or CSW–Academic Competence. CSW–Approval from Others approached but did not reach conventional statistical significance, $p = .051$.

Table 7. Correlations Among Exposure, Comparison Seeking, Educational Stress, and Contingent Self-Worth

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Public Exposure to Achievements	—					
2. Academic Social Comparison Seeking	.19*	—				
3. Educational Stress (Total)	-.02	.36**	—			
4. CSW – Competition	.21**	.27**	.28**	—		
5. CSW – Academic Competence	.11	.20**	.32**	.80**	—	
6. CSW – Approval from Others	.23**	.23**	-.02	.60**	.54**	—

Note. *N* = 185. CSW = Contingencies of Self-Worth. CSW–Competition, CSW–Academic Competence, and CSW–Approval from Others are subscales of the same instrument, the Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (CSWS; Crocker et al., 2003), so their strong intercorrelations (shaded) are expected. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

The Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationships among public exposure to achievements, academic social comparison seeking, educational stress, and three dimensions of contingencies of self-worth. Public exposure to achievements was positively and significantly associated with academic social comparison seeking, $r = .19$, $p < .05$, indicating that greater exposure to others' academic achievements was associated with a small increase in the tendency to engage in academic social comparison.

Public exposure to achievements was also positively associated with CSW–Competition, $r = .21$, $p < .01$, and CSW–Approval from Others, $r = .23$, $p < .01$. However, its associations with educational stress, $r = -.02$, and CSW–Academic Competence, $r = .11$, were not statistically significant.

Academic social comparison seeking showed a moderate positive correlation with educational stress, $r = .36$, $p < .01$, suggesting that adolescents who more frequently seek academic comparisons also tend to report greater educational stress.

Academic social comparison seeking was also significantly and positively associated with CSW–Competition, $r = .27$, $p < .01$, CSW–Academic Competence, $r = .20$, $p < .01$, and CSW–Approval from Others, $r = .23$, $p < .01$.

Educational stress was positively associated with CSW–Competition, $r = .28$, $p < .01$, and CSW–Academic Competence, $r = .32$, $p < .01$. However, its relationship with CSW–Approval from Others was not significant, $r = -.02$. This suggests that greater educational stress is related particularly to contingencies of self-worth based on competitive and academic competence-related evaluations, rather than approval from others.

Among the three CSW dimensions, CSW–Competition and CSW–Academic Competence demonstrated a strong positive correlation, $r = .80$, $p < .01$. CSW–Competition was also strongly associated with CSW–Approval from Others, r

$= .60$, $p < .01$, while CSW–Academic Competence showed a moderate-to-strong positive association with CSW–Approval from Others, $r = .54$, $p < .01$. These findings indicate substantial overlap among the dimensions of contingent self-worth, particularly between competition and academic competence.

Overall, the findings indicate that academic social comparison seeking is an important correlate of both educational stress and contingencies of self-worth. In contrast, merely being exposed to others' achievements showed relatively weak associations with the study variables, suggesting that the tendency to actively engage in academic comparison may be more closely related to stress and self-worth processes than exposure alone.

Table 8. Correlations Between ESSA Subscales and Exposure/Comparison Variables

ESSA Subscale	Public Exposure	Social Comparison Seeking
Pressure from Study	.01	.34***
Workload	-.03	.30***
Worry about Grades	-.06	.35***
Self-Expectation	-.03	.32***
Despondency	.00	.31***

Note. N = 185. ESSA = Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

To further probe which facets of educational stress were most implicated, correlations between the ESSA subscales and both Public Exposure and Academic Social Comparison Seeking were examined (Table 8). Academic Social Comparison Seeking was significantly, positively correlated with all five ESSA subscales, with the strongest association observed for Worry about Grades, $r(183) = .35$, $p < .001$. Public Exposure to Academic Achievements showed weaker and largely non-significant associations with the ESSA subscales, including Despondency, $r(183) = .00$, $p = .970$.

Table 9. Differences in Study Variables Between Indian and Canadian Participants in the Present Sample

Metric Variables	India		Canada				
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p
Public exposure to academic achievements	39.09	7.30	33.95	7.81	129.38	4.15	<.001
Social comparison scale	21.58	4.96	21.83	5.97	118.83	-0.27	.785
Educational Stress Scale	36.39	12.50	48.06	15.56	115.78	-5.00	<.001
Contingencies of self-worth scale	68.37	8.76	68.86	11.38	112.07	-0.29	.77

To examine whether the country was associated with the variables used in the study, independent samples t-tests were conducted on the four composite study variables comparing Indian and Canadian students (these were the largest country

groups in the sample). Contrary to predictions, Indian students were found to be more exposed to achievement in their daily lives compared to Canadian students, $t(129.38) = 4.15$, $p < .001$. Indian adolescents of this sample likely

confronted achievement-related content in daily life (coming from peers, schools and family members) far more frequently than Canadian adolescents in this study. Educational stress was found to operate in the reverse direction; Canadian students had higher levels of educational stress than Indian students, $t(115.78) = 5.00, p < .001$. This difference was large and counter to conventional notions that education in South Asian countries is especially stressful. No country differences were found in the use of comparing-up in the achievement domain, $t(118.83) = -0.27, p = .785$, nor in the reliance on external sources of worth, i.e. Contingencies of self-worth, $t(112.07) = -0.29, p = .77$. Although Indian and Canadian students differ in the degree to which they encountered others' accomplishments, and the amount of stress they perceived, the two groups did not seem to differ in terms of their underlying drive to compare themselves with their peers, nor the degree to which their self-worth was contingent on achievement.

4. Discussion

4.1. Summary of Key Findings

This study examines how adolescents' exposure to other students' academic achievements, both online and in everyday school life, relates to academic social comparison, academic stress, and self-worth. A few patterns stood out. First, simply being exposed to others' achievements had almost no relationship with the other variables in this study, including academic stress. Second, actively seeking out comparisons with peers' grades was a much more meaningful factor, showing consistent links to greater stress and to all three dimensions of contingent self-worth measured here. Third, demographic factors, particularly age and grade level, mattered a great deal, with academic stress rising substantially as students got older, while gender, school type, and country each shaped the picture in smaller but still notable ways.

4.2. Exposure vs. Actively Comparing Yourself to Others

Some of the more important conclusions to draw from this research involve the difference between seeing someone else succeed in a public setting and actually "comparing." Exposure to others' public success showed only a weak association with social comparison seeking and essentially no association with stress, the key outcome. By comparison, social comparison seeking, whether toward another student or toward oneself for not performing to one's own standards, showed significant, robust associations with stress and with contingent self-worth. This implies that reading a classmate's posted grades is not in itself what generates stress. That appears only to happen when a student acts on that information and actively brings comparison into his or her own mind. It does complicate some elements of social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), which simply argues for the importance of having others available as targets for comparison, versus having the pull to engage in that comparison (as suggested by Gibbons & Buunk, 1999, when

developing the INCOM scale, which suggests that comparison tendencies are more closely linked to well-being than the presence of targets). However, a large amount of literature suggests that even browsing social media casually "without actively engaging with it" can elicit envy and upward comparison, which then leads to lower psychological well-being (Krasnova et al., 2013; Verduyn et al., 2015). Those authors would argue that exposure should have played a more significant role here. It may be the case that content focused specifically on academic achievement, compared to a wider variety of social media content about appearance, lifestyle, or relationships, requires the active comparative push. Research is certainly warranted to test that possibility.

4.3. Academic Pressure and Self-Worth Tied to Performance

Social comparison seeking was significantly related to all three dimensions of contingent self-worth included in this study, while self-presentation seeking was related to only some of the dimensions. The three types of academic stress, in turn, are differentially related to the dimensions of contingent self-worth. Specifically, competition-based and academics-competence based self-worth were related to academic stress, but self-worth based on approval from others was not. Self-worth based on approval is unrelated to academic stress, may not be surprising when conceptualizing stress within Crocker and Wolfe's (2001) model: this type of contingent self-worth should not put one in positions in which their Worth is at risk under circumstances of competition or perceived ineptitude.

Moreover, such findings might serve to suggest the students most vulnerable to academic stress are those that pin their self-worth on being superior to others or on being skilled, not on whether or not the instructor approves of the content of their work. The lack of an association between academic competence and approval-based contingent self-worth is interesting. Such a finding suggests that the student's sense of what makes him competent at his or her job and those that rely on praise from those around for their sense of self are quite different people, and they also seek different information for confirmation. Crocker et al. (2003) also found that individuals contingent on academic performance-based contingent self-worth experienced more depression than did those for whom approval from others is important.

However, there is a significant disconnect in the results here and some other findings in the contingent self-worth literature, specifically in terms of the association between approval-based contingent self-worth and emotional stress. A body of research has established links between approval contingent self-worth and increased emotional symptoms, such as depressive symptomology and other measures of distress. The effect size of the relationship between these two variables is sometimes reported as strong as is the correlation between competitively contingent or academically

contingent self-worth and emotional symptoms (Sargent et al., 2006). Future research should investigate whether this finding reflects the fact that academic stress specific to this particular set of instruments will not capture approval-based vulnerability which only shows itself as general emotional distress or depressive symptomology not so narrowly to a given task may be the culprit, or something that is unique to the present population in this research study; regardless, this is another point at which the findings deviate from those previously documented and should be interpreted in light of these discrepancies. Indeed, the relationships between approval contingent and academically competent based contingent self-worth are so highly correlated in this sample that they are very well likely tapping the same underlying factors and should, for any future analyses that conceptualize them as the same thing.

4.4. Grade and Age Differences

Academic stress increases markedly with age, and this finding, also the largest effect that was found in the entire survey, is unsurprising in light of developmentally defined patterns of adaptation (Guo et al., 2026) and the challenge that, by the time they reach their later school years, students are facing end-of-year exams and college entrance procedures simultaneously. Two related patterns were a little more unexpected. Students younger than older peers were a little more exposed to peers' triumphs (but a lot less likely to seek comparisons with these findings). They were also somewhat less likely to seek out this comparative input; their engagement with the social world seemed to be slightly more or less selective on the basis of competence relevant for the achievement domain as they grew younger. Furthermore, the basis of the adolescents' contingent self-esteem shifted as a function of age: Older students relied more on academic success and younger students on others' approval to define themselves. What this suggests is that the social and relational basis of adolescents' self-worth and the more specific, competency-based foundation for that self-worth tend to cross over around the time adolescence transitions from childhood into the later adolescent years in their school experiences, perhaps as the adolescent becomes less in need of approval from family and more in need of competence.

4.5. Gender Difference

The gender differences found were smaller and less consistent than the age and grade-level differences, but were not nonexistent. Caution should be taken in interpreting the gender-level effects due to relatively small and disparate gender subgroups. The clearest gender difference found was that females reported significantly greater levels of academic stress than males, corroborating previous research suggesting that women experience school-work place differently than men, with current studies confirming gender disparity across numerous contexts and cultures (García-Moya, 2025). More importantly, male students reported slightly more than

females that their self-worth was more dependent on the approval of others, contrary to the stress result.

No significant gender differences were found in exposure or comparison-seeking, implying no significant variation in exposure to other people's performance or tendency to seek comparative information. Thus, the manner of exposure and seeking, as well as their processing, do not greatly differentiate between genders, but it appears that stress load varies significantly with gender. This result is not consistent, however, with some of the previous findings of research; a few studies reported higher rates of academic stress among males compared to females (Choudhuri & Mishra, 2024), and other research found no significant gender differences.

4.6. School Type Differences

Students from government/public schools experienced a significant amount greater academic stress than their counterparts in private schools, and a small significant amount more than students at international schools. There were no differences found across school types for any of the three other domains; there were no significant differences in exposure, compare-seeking or in the three dimensions of contingent self-worth. This indicates that the differences in stress between types of schools can likely be explained by more systemic differences in school type than by the amount of achievement-related material with which the students are exposed to or actively compare their performance with.

This interpretation is relatively consistent with previous research on school counseling resources, indicating that schools in resource-poor environments (predominantly public schools composed largely of lower SES individuals) fare far better in students-per-counselor ratios, and lower student-per-counselor ratios lead to poorer student adjustment outcomes (Donohue et al., 2022), partially demonstrating the resource perspective in this case.

On the contrary, this is a strong line of research indicating that rich, achievement-focused schools, disproportionately private and elite institutions, provide their students with a distinct and harsh style of pressure which may include higher clinical rates of anxiety and depression on many of the students present (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005) as, the authors attribute, to more inherent psychological differences in highly pressured academic culture within more privilege, elite private schools than to structural differences.

The discrepancy in the findings with previous research may be based on a disparate distribution of private schools within my dataset than the schools represented in the past research, or my findings indicate the particular form of pressure found within private and elite schooling are not generally transferable.

4.7. Country Differences

Since participants were drawn from a few different countries, country-level differences were also examined, focusing on India and Canada as the two largest national groups in the sample. There was a significant interaction between countries and the pattern of scores across the four composite variables, indicating that the two countries did not simply differ by a flat amount, but differed in different directions depending on which variable was considered. The overall main effect of the country was only borderline significant, which makes sense given that some variables favored one country, some favored the other, and some showed no difference at all, partially canceling each other out when combined.

Broken down further, two patterns stood out. Indian students reported meaningfully greater public exposure to academic achievements than Canadian students, plausibly reflecting the more frequent presence of coaching institutes, school newsletters, and family-driven public celebration of academic success described in the open-ended context of this literature. More surprisingly, Canadian students reported meaningfully higher academic stress than Indian students: a substantial gap that runs against common assumptions about academic pressure being especially intense in South Asian educational contexts. Social comparison seeking and contingent self-worth did not differ meaningfully between the two countries.

This surprising direction deserves some scrutiny against the wider literature, which is genuinely mixed on this question, rather than uniformly supporting the assumption that Asian educational systems are the more pressured ones. On one hand, other research specifically on Indian adolescents has documented very high rates of academic stress, with roughly three-quarters of students in one large school-based sample reporting high stress (Haritay et al., 2025), suggesting the relatively lower stress reported by Indian students in this particular sample is not necessarily representative of Indian adolescents generally. On the other hand, cross-national data from international assessments has repeatedly found that several East Asian education systems report anxiety levels above the international average despite, or perhaps partly because of, their high academic performance, a pattern sometimes described as a paradox given how well those systems otherwise perform (OECD, 2023). Taken together, this body of work suggests that both India and several East Asian systems are capable of producing high academic stress under the right conditions, which somewhat undercuts the idea that stress maps cleanly onto a single "which country is more competitive" narrative, and makes the higher stress found among Canadian students here more of a genuine, literature-defying anomaly than a predictable result. As noted elsewhere, the Canadian subsample in this study was drawn from a fairly narrow geographic cluster rather than a broad national sample, so this

finding should be treated as suggestive rather than conclusive pending a more representative sample. A separate analysis by the school board was not conducted, owing to a substantial imbalance in group sizes across boards.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Significance of the Study

This study drew a distinction between two aspects of social comparison that are often combined in the literature (see, e.g., Buunk & Gibbons, 2007): exposure to peers' academic success (public exposure) and seeking academic comparison with peers (comparison seeking). In this cross-sectional sample of 185 adolescents, comparison seeking and public exposure related to and partially predicted educational stress and CSW-Academic Competence differently. Exposure to peer success was not related to either variable, and was only weakly related to comparison seeking, CSW-Competition, and CSW-Approval from Others ($r = .19$ to $.23$). Comparison seeking was moderately related to educational stress ($r = .36$), significantly related to all five of the ESSA subscales, and weakly or moderately related to each of the three CSW dimensions ($r = .20$ to $.27$).

Educational stress accounted for the greatest number of group differences. It was higher among older and higher-grade adolescents, among girls, and among government/public school participants. Within this sample, Canadian participants also reported experiencing more educational stress than Indian participants.

These results add descriptive clarity to the literature: in this sample, the tendency to seek comparison was more strongly related to educational stress and contingent self-worth than the mere extent of exposure to peer success. These findings are consistent with that is more indicative of importance than simply being exposed to a comparison target (Festinger, 1954; Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). However, given that these analyses were correlational, no directional or causal conclusions can be drawn.

5.2. Implications

These findings imply that attempts to diminish the visibility of academic success, in the form of limiting how frequently students talk about their grades or awards, perhaps alone, will be of little value, given that the visibility was weakly linked to outcomes in this study concerning self-esteem and stress. Perhaps, instead, what will be far more effective are interventions designed to equip students to manage their own inclination to actively compare themselves and their tendency to invest self-worth (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001) exclusively in a subset of domains. Also, the strong increase of stress over the school years, especially among the subset of students for whom competition & academic prowess—as opposed to being liked—has come to define their self-worth, implies that older adolescents facing huge transition points (Guo et al., 2026), for whom it will be

necessary to reconsider self concept, will need particular support and support attention to how their self worth is structured-rather than simply how much stress they feel. The school type and country level patterns here also suggest that the relationship between student and school or culture is even more complex, not necessarily intuitive, and perhaps that even we, as researchers, should be less willing to assume which students are described, based on the type of school, and country they were from, as “most” at risk.

5.3. Limitations

Limitations Design: Data are correlational and cross-sectional; the direction of associations cannot be inferred. More stressful students may be more likely to compare, and comparison seeking may be linked to increased stress, or some third variable may be driving both. This study cannot make causal claims.

Sampling and generalizability: Samples were gathered via convenience and snowball sampling on social media; sampling bias may limit generalizability.

India-Canada comparison: Samples were recruited in the same way, but the Canadian sample was geographically limited, which hampers generalizability. Results describe these samples alone and cannot be extended to national populations. Country may also be confused with school type, grade, and age. Some subsamples were small or unequal; the 2 non-binary or genderfluid participants were omitted from gender comparisons.

Multiple testing: Many tests were run; the grade, country, and subscale comparisons and the ESSA scale correlations were exploratory.

Some p-values were just under .05, which reflects Type I error. The comparisons that were most robust (educational stress among the demographic groupings, and CSW-Approval from Others for grade) may be replicable, but smaller effects should be taken as provisional. Measurement: Public exposure was assessed with a novel researcher-created scale that has not been validated; all measures were self-report.

Self-worth was only measured in terms of CSWS subscales, not global self-esteem, so the present results cannot speak to the latter. The Competition and Academic Competence scales

had a high correlation ($r = .80$), indicating broad similarity in this sample. Parental consent was indicated on an anonymous online form and could not be verified.

5.4. Future Directions

First, future studies should use regression-based analyses to examine how public exposure, academic social comparison seeking, and educational stress jointly relate to self-worth. They should also include a validated measure of global self-esteem alongside contingent self-worth, which was the only form of self-worth assessed here.

Second, because this study is cross-sectional, longitudinal and experimental designs will be needed to determine the order of the relationships between comparison seeking and educational stress. This cannot be established from correlational data.

Third, exposure to peers' academic achievements was unrelated to educational stress in this sample, whereas much of the earlier literature on passive social media use has linked exposure to poorer well-being (Krasnova et al., 2013; Verduyn et al., 2015). Experimental research could test whether achievement-related content differs from lifestyle or appearance-based content, or from social media content in general.

Fourth, the higher educational stress in the Canadian subsample and the lack of association between approval-based contingent self-worth and educational stress (contrary to Sargent et al., 2006) should be tested in larger and more balanced samples. Replication would show whether these results are more general or specific to this sample.

Finally, future studies should recruit through schools as well as online channels, across multiple regions and countries, to reduce the clustering and selection bias of convenience sampling. They should also measure personal sharing of one's own achievements more thoroughly than the single item used here, and compare it with exposure to others' sharing.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest with regard to the publication of the paper.

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