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WE HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT OUR FUTURE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research deal with the durable psychological effects of political unstable situation on the Pakistani youth, and the focus of the study would be the students of the universities and the recent graduates between 18 and 30 years of age. The study will utilize the six-stage approach to thematic analysis method described by Braun and Clarke (2006) and the research will depend on the use of semi-structured interviews of fifteen purposively selected participants who live in politically driven areas. The results indicate the generalized psychological distress in the terms of anxiety, stress, and depressive symptoms, as well as high levels of academic performance and career planning disturbances such as low concentration, low motivation, and plans to emigrate. Although coping skills, like avoidance of media sources, spirituality, personal interests, peer discussions were of minimal relieve, institutional support barley survived. The majority of the respondents indicated that their universities do not provide mental health information and counseling and referral programs. With these identified gaps in the systems, respondents came forward with practical policy suggestions such as creation of campus counseling services, adding mental health courses to academic curriculums, and increasing the participation of youths in policy making bodies. This research indicates how there is a strong necessity to restructure the system to tackle the issue of youth mental health within politically instable environments. It appeals to educator, policymakers, and healthcare practitioners to work together to create sustainable, youth-oriented interventions. With the focus on lived experiences, the study provides critical information on the development of culturally responsive mental health support systems in the nations experiencing constant sociopolitical insecurity.

Keywords: Political instability, youth mental health, psychological distress, coping strategies, academic performance.

Introduction

The population of Pakistan is extremely young: more than 64% of the citizens are aged below 30 years (Gasper, 2022) This demographic structure is a challenge as well as opportunity to the national development. The prospects of the young in innovation, economic development and social development are important. They are, however, also



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quite sensitive to sociopolitical upheavals, which may affect their mental wellbeing, grades and future goals in a negative way. Political instability in Pakistan (Ahmad et al., 2024). There is a history of political instability in Pakistan that has been defined by the occurrence of leadership changes, conflicts with institutions and discontinuities in policy that create insecurity and nervousness to the population (Waseem, 2022). Political turmoil is not only an issue of governance or an economic issue, but also it is increasingly perceived as a health issue affecting a wide population. Studies conducted across the world revealed that exposure to conflict related political violence, conflict or chronic instability increases the incidence of anxiety, depression and stress in youth (Kira et al., 2022). Studies in Pakistan show that this trend is still observed: university students living in politically unstable regions have serious mental health issues associated with environmental instability (Nabeel et al., 2025). The current barriers are exacerbated by the lack of appropriate mental health systems, stigma around psychological pain, and no formal training on how to deal with it or be resilient (Dayani et al., 2024). Although more attention has been given to mental health among young people across the world, few studies have undertaken a qualitative challenge of examining the experiences of the Pakistani youth between pressures of this kind. The ratios of anxiety or depression may be measured in quantitative studies, but they may fail to capture how political instability is experienced in minute details in everyday lives, academic careers, coping mechanisms, and future aspirations. Little evidence is also provided on the perceptions of the young population regarding institutional reactions (or their lack) to their mental health demands. As Waqar interpreted stress, lacking culturally driven, situation awareness-specific knowledge, interventions will become inefficient or poorly focused (Waqar et al., 2024). In this paper, this gap is filled with a qualitative in-depth effect on the psychological wellbeing of Pakistani students in universities and those who have just graduated between the ages 18-30 of the impact of political instability in Pakistan. It does not only get the shape of psychological distress experience by young people but also their coping measures, the inadequacy of institutional assistance, and what they would suggest about changing the policy with semi-structured interviews and a theme analysis. This study hopes to educate educational, health, and policy systems about mental health interventions to be youth-centred and culturally appropriate by prioritizing their voices. It is an important question to be answered particularly in view of the frail mental health system in Pakistan. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), mental health services are highly inadequately resourced and there are less than 500 trained psychiatrists to provide mental health services to a population of more than 220 million (Organization, 2022). Fewer educational institutions incorporate any mental health teaching or include any counseling support given the increasing body of evidence that doing so enhances the experiences of young people who encounter systemic stress (Dayani et al., 2024). Without tending to these needs, the country may not only suffer at the individual level, but at a higher level, there would be a societal burden, such as lower educational productivity, brain drain by immigration abroad and the lowering of civil participation. The current study is thus timely as well as policy relevant. It provides evidence of the reforms that can be effected in both the educational and health sector (Kapadia, 2024) by recording the experiences of the youth and the policy proposals that they are making. It also points at the importance of multi-sectoral cooperation of educators, policymakers, healthcare professional, and youth themselves in co-creation of sustainable, youth-friendly structures of mental health support (Feng et al., 2020). Although the stress and anxiety experienced by the Pakistani students have been quantitatively measured in the past, the lack in qualitative knowledge exists regarding the role of political instability in developing their daily life, coping strategies,



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and encounters with institutional governing bodies (Khalily, 2011). This paper aims at closing that gap through a participant-centered exploration in detail.

Research Objectives

To investigate whether there is any impact of the political instability on the mental health of university students and fresh graduates of Pakistan. In order to explore how political uncertainty interferes with the academic performance in the students, their concentration, and motivation. To investigate coping mechanisms followed by the youth to cope with political fear and anxiety. To identify the perceived importance of educational institutions and media in the creation of stress among the young. With the aim of gathering youth-lease suggestions on how institutions and policymakers should respond to enhance the mental health of the younger generation.

Research Questions

What does Pakistani youth experience and think about political instability? So, what are the psychological issues that arise out of political insecurity? They may include feelings of anxiety, stress or depression. What are the impacts of political instability on the academic performance of students and their career placements? How do young people cope with political pressure? In this respect, how do educational institutions and media affect the mental health of the youth? What are the obstacles of gaining professional mental health support? What are the youth suggestions that could be made so as to make better mental health policies and institutional practices?

Literature Review

The issue of political instability is taking momentum to be appreciated highly as a social determinant of mental health and with more so among the youthful populations in fragile states. Evidence across the globe shows that being exposed to a long conflict, violence, and political uncertainty leads to high anxiety rates, depression, and trauma in children and adolescents (Betancourt et al., 2013) South Asian studies also point to the role that being chronically unstable, communal tensions, and dysfunctional governance play in bringing broad-based psychological distress, as young people mention interrupted education, a hopeless perspective of the future, and fragile social solidarity (Siriwardhana et al., 2014). These results point to the need to have mental health responses that are contextually relevant to the stressors that are generated by political and social unrest. Instead, an actual history that describes the aspect of political instability as a characteristic feature of the governance in Pakistan has been known as the attribute that consists of multiple changes of leadership, the contradictions of that system and the epidemic of the volatility of policies (Waseem, 2022). There are empirical studies that prove that this atmosphere is harmful to the psyche of young people. Qamar report high stress levels, anxiety, and depression amongst the medical students in the politically-instable areas (Qamar, 2025), whereas political uncertainty destroys academic motivation and career planning of university students (Nabeel et al., 2025). Most of this work is based though on quantitative survey data, and does not give attention to what constitutes a lived experience of being young and dealing with such volatility. The Pakistani mental healthcare system is undeveloped and lacks psychosocial support incorporation in schools. The need of qualitative research focusing on young people and youth voices to understand the processes of emotional wellbeing, coping behaviors, and anticipations of institutional assistance in terms of political instability are evident to understand the foundations of culturally responsive youth-centred approaches to mental health promotion (Dayani et al., 2024).



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Research Design

A qualitative design based on thematic analysis was used in this study to research the impact of political instability on youth in Pakistan. In order to explore lived experiences, emotions and strategies among young people in a politically risky environment, a qualitative method was selected. The research focused on individual meanings, personal experiences and patterns that are not always picked up by numbers-based methods. The first research step involved evaluation of samples and participants. Participants were selected for the study by purposive sampling according to being university students, recent graduates, between 18 and 30 and from the politically active or affected parts of Pakistan. Both male and female participants were included, for reasons of diversity, as a total of 15 individuals were selected. The sample was created by including learners from diverse areas of study and higher education institutions.

Data Collection

The information was gathered through semi-structured interviews, allowing those taking part to discuss openly and still keep the important research topics in mind. We had each interview for about 30–45 minutes, either in person or over a secure video conference platform, depending on when and where the participant was available. With the participants' agreement, all interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed exactly as they occurred for analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The purpose of the study, the option for confidentiality and the ability to withdraw from the study without effects were all explained to everyone before interviews occurred. Participants in online interviews gave consent by email or over the phone, while those attending in person gave written consent. Pseudonyms were given to all participants so that anonymity was maintained in both the transcription and final report.

Data Analysis

Six-phase thematic analysis based on (Braun & Clarke, 2006) guide was performed on the interview transcripts. Seeing data for yourself Creating the first set of codes • Looking for themes • Checking themes • Giving a name to and defining themes The firm prepares a report. The way I coded involved allowing themes to emerge from the data, rather than trying to fit the data into ideas that were already in my mind. We used Navigo to organize and handle our data systematically. All final themes were approved by peers and compared to the original data to confirm they made sense. Is The Data Trustworthy to verify accuracy of the data, we showed participants summaries of their interviews and checked their reactions? The team maintained dependability by thoroughly documenting every part of the research and all of their decisions. The authors included detailed explanations of participants' settings and what they experienced, so readers could judge how the findings could be applied in other areas.

Results

Table 1: Perceptions of Political Instability and Uncertainty (n-15)



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Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme	Frequency
Political Instability	Frequent Government Changes	4
	Weak Law and Order	3
	Lack of Clear Policy Direction	3
	Institutional Conflict	3
	Public Distrust in Institutions	2

Many participants shared that political instability was a major problem because of the consistent change to the government. This lack of a fixed policy line made it uncertain for build-up plans in the future. A respondent in the study put it this way: “The leader we have now might not be the leader we have next month. Whenever a new government takes office, policies are changed and we don’t know what our lives will be like going forward”. Someone else contributed by saying, “It’s as if there is no flow when I’m living in the city. It all starts with one party, only for the other to shut it down. Plan anything that is supposed to last a while?”.

Those engaging in the protests said the law and order system is unfair, as justice is often carried out faster for those in power than for ordinary citizens. Because people don’t fear the law, crime keeps going up. People in power control every decision which leaves the rest of us to deal with the consequences. “The justice system doesn’t protect the interests of ordinary individuals. If you don’t know anyone who can help, then reporting anything isn’t worth it”. People mentioned that better direction for education and employment sector policies is needed. Students said that unexpected shifts in policies affected their learning activities. One of them mentioned, each year the government introduces a fresh education policy.

If some exams are canceled and others aren’t, what is a student meant to do? Many say, “There are talks about reforming, but little truly happens. It’s just a lot of talking on television”. Institutional conflict was also said to contribute to instability. According to the respondents, there was clear tension among the judiciary, government and military. There’s always a struggle between the government, the judiciary and the army. It seems like an argument for power and the people caught in the middle keep changing minds”.

Another pointed out,

“There isn’t much trust between the institutions.” How should we trust their motives?”. As a result of such instability, people are losing trust in many institutions. Many people participating said they had lost belief in democracy and saw government promises as fake. One person taking part reported: Many people don’t believe in the power of voting or democracy anymore. They believe decisions have been made secretly before any public discussions even start. Another expressed, “These days, people don’t believe what government representatives promise. There have been too many promises that weren’t kept”

Table 2: Psychological Distress and Academic Disruption (n-15)

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme	Frequency
Psychological Distress	Anxiety	15
	Stress	15



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	Depression	15
Performance Disruption	Reduced Focus and Concentration	8
	Lack of Motivation and Interest	5
	Missed Deadlines or Decline in Academic Output	4
	Performance Not Affected	1
Future Planning Disruption	Plans to Migrate or Study Abroad	9
	Uncertainty About Career Path	4
	Delay or Change in Higher Education Goals	2
	No Impact on Future Plans	0

People involved in the study said that political instability profoundly affected their mental health. All respondents pointed to emotional upset as a source of anxiety, stress or depression because of the situation in the country. You could see that what they lived through together directly impacted their emotional and mental health. George said in his description that “There’s nothing stable in this country and it makes me always worry about my future”.

A different respondent said, “The news causes stress for me every single day.” You can’t concentrate well when you’re not sure what type of crisis will arrive next. One source discussed the extreme emotional inexhaustibility. I often find myself stressed for days simply observing the current political condition. As well as causing emotional troubles, political instability has visibly affected how participants do at school and work. Most said that they could not focus as much or work effectively as before, because of the difficult national situation. I am having trouble keeping my attention still. I struggle to focus on my studies because I’m always thinking about what’s happening in the country.

Some participants said they were experiencing a loss of motivation to work on what they needed to do. As one claimed, there are days when I really do not feel like going to class or handing in my work. What difference does it make if tomorrow holds so much uncertainty? Others accepted that they missed due dates and did not do well in school. I missed several of my assignments last semester.

Because of all the stress over the ongoing political turmoil, I haven’t been able to work as effectively. Just one respondent said their results were not altered.

“I try not to pay attention to what’s happening around us and concentrate on my job”.

Additionally, because of political instability, these youths have begun to seek different futures. Many participants said they hoped to leave Lebanon or study in another country because they saw no real hope there. Right now, I’m studying for immigration exams. I’m not sure there is a future for me anymore, living here.

A number of participants mentioned confusion or ambiguity about possible careers. “At first, my goal was civil service, but since then I am struggling to decide what to do next. Now, all of this doesn’t seem safe or fulfilling.” Some cited that they were uncertain enough to reconsider or postpone their university plans as a result of the problems. “I had decided to apply for a Master’s at this university, but I put it on hold. I don’t know which



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choice to make anymore”.

Interestingly, all of our participants believed that their future plans would be impacted by the political situation. Because of instability, youth face different mental hardships such as mood swings, less productivity and modifications to their life ambitions. They reflect what it means to deal with difficulties inside and also face challenges affected by the unexpected events in politics.

Table 3: Coping Strategies and Social Impact (n-15)

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme	Frequency
Coping Mechanisms	Avoiding News	5
	Focusing on Studies	3
	Engaging in Hobbies	2
	Prayers/Spiritual Practices	3
	Physical Exercise	2
	Social Interaction on Politics	Positive Support
	Negative Impact	4
	Avoidance of Discussion	5
Social Media Engagement	Yes – Increases Pressure	7
	Yes – Helpful	2
	No	6
Media and Political Influence	Yes – Media/Leaders Increase Anxiety	13
	No Response Given	2

The people participating in the study found many ways to cope psychologically with political instability. According to their answers, the participants tried to balance their emotions in different ways, depending on the situation. Many participants said that they did not look at the news at all. Many people said that having to deal with constant political turmoil, inflated news headlines and tough news every day increased their worry. One person who participated NCD

explained, “I don’t pay attention to the news anymore. This only makes me worry even greater and feel more uncertain about what’s coming”.

Many people say they feel both helpless and angered after watching political talk shows. “I find it better for me to stay away from it to maintain my peace”.

They make it clear that the quantity of news and negativity in political talk have encouraged youths to cut back on their media use to keep their minds healthy. In contrast, a few participants made an effort to shift their focus to more useful activities. A total of three participants found that concentrating more on their studies helped them cope better. As an illustration, one group suggested in this way. “I usually escape the turbulence of politics by reading a lot of books. Learning new things allows me to feel a bit in charge”. As a result of the national uncertainty, people are choosing to develop themselves to remain stable. Two of the participants said they use activities like painting, reading or listening to music to manage their stress. One stated, I turn to painting when my thoughts become too



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Doing so helps protect you emotionally by preventing too much psychological stress. Opinions about using social media to talk about politics were also diverse. Some participants (seven) admitted to talking politics on the internet and understood it put more stress on their minds. Posting thoughts about politics on Twitter used to stress me out, so I stopped. On the internet, people spread negativity and hate too much. For these groups, online expression made the pressure they faced even greater. On the other hand, a couple said finding a voice by participating online gave them confidence.

My opinion online gives me a sense of being heard, even when I don’t change anything.

Six users said they decided to completely stay away from political discussions on social media to avoid trouble or stress. I keep my page free from anything political. All the problems and stress aren’t worth your time”. Participants nearly all felt that political leaders and news media play a key role in initiating youth anxiety. Thirteen participants pointed out that media and leaders are making the situation seem much scarier for people. Everything I read or hear just reflects the idea that everything is crumbling. It’s always tiring to witness. Another group explained that living with mental illness made them afraid day after day. Our leaders cause us to fear, instead of encouraging us to trust. That doesn’t show leadership; it reveals manipulation. Just two people were unable to respond to this question, but the agreement across cases confirms that external political messages and people’s psychological states are closely connected. The main point of Theme 3 is that young people create their own methods to deal with the high pressure they feel. But it reveals that the pressure of emotions, screens and exposure to media commonly prevents politically aware youth in Pakistan from coping.

Table 4: Institutional Role and Support Systems (n-15)

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme	Frequency
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Institutional Role and Support	No Awareness Provided	13
	Limited Peer or Spiritual Support	2
	Absence of Mental Health Curriculum	Mentioned in analysis (qualitative)
Mental Health Support Seeking	No Therapy or Counseling Taken	13
	Tried Personal Coping Strategies	2
	No Access to Professional Services (Implied)	Mentioned in analysis
Government and Policy Response	Establish Counseling Centers	5
	Include Mental Health in Educational Curriculum	2
	Organize Awareness Campaigns	2
	Engage Youth in Policymaking	2
	Improve Access to Mental Health Services	2

No one seemed to indicate that their workplaces supported them when dealing with political stress and doubt. From the fifteen participants, thirteen indicated that their schools or universities had never organized awareness programs, workshops on mental health or offered counseling to students dealing with political turmoil. A clear lack of action by institutions reveals a broader problem with guidelines meant to protect student health. A participant said, “Mental health and political stress have never been talked about at our university.” It feels as though they just want us to solve the problem ourselves. A second comment was that “There is not a single poster or pamphlet about managing stress.” Mental health isn’t something that seems to cross their minds. Only a small number of people mentioned that peer discussions or religious routines helped them, although these were not part of an organized program.

I confide in one of my close friends when I’m really stressed, but that’s just not meant for everyone. We are provided no emotional support by the university.

The point was frequently made by participants that a mental health curriculum is lacking, since little importance is given to strengthening students’ minds intense political settings. Key topics such as mental well-being, stress and crisis are not addressed in any lesson plans. Everything we experience feels like pressure, but there’s not much emotional support”. Thirteen of the survey respondents said they had never received any psychological help for dealing with political anxiety. The reasons were a lack of information, feeling stigmatized in society and trouble getting needed services.

I’ve never considered trying therapy, as we aren’t taught to think about it. Besides, there’s no one around on campus to help either. Another can’t imagine where to look for counseling services even if she wanted to find them. We’re not offered this, nor does the college ever talk about it”.

Only two people in the study talked about how they use personal skills or friends for support.



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From time to time, I talk to my cousin so I can get some of it off my chest. That was about the closest I've ever been to therapy.

In response, it became clear that having access to mental health services remains a major problem due to infrastructure limitations. Many students said there wasn't any place—inside or outside the school—where they felt they could safely and affordably address their mental health concerns. Such a gap is especially important considering the major mental stress caused by political events, as mentioned in earlier themes. After being asked, participants offered several precise suggestions for the government or policymakers. Twenty-five of the participants disputed this claim, saying that mental health counseling centers should be set up in schools and universities. A trained counselor should be present on every campus. You can make a difference by yourself". Two respondents suggested that mental health topics be part of the curriculum because we learn almost everything else but not how to cope with stress or crisis. This problem needs to be fixed.

Two participants pointed out that there should be nationwide efforts to make talking about mental health and getting help a regular part of everyday life.

Health and election ads are common, so we need a similar campaign telling youth that asking for help is okay. Some more thoughts were put forward such as letting young people help shape policies and increasing access to reasonably priced mental health care. If decisions are taken about us, we should take part in the discussion, another participant added,

"If a person is seeking assistance, it's often too pricey. People think that subsidizing mental health services for students should be part of the government's role.

They reveal the need for urgently reforming systems to support young people facing the political situation. As a whole, shows that the situation for youth mental health in Pakistan is fragile, especially as the nation deals with problems of uncertain governance. Each participant realized what the issue was and came forward with steps that could help, suggesting how schools, universities and government could provide support.

Table 5: Conclusion and Recommendations (n-15)

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme	Frequency
Institutional Awareness Gaps	Lack of Awareness Programs	13
	No Formal Support Structures	Mentioned in analysis
	Mental Health Not Integrated in Curriculum	Mentioned in analysis
Mental Health Support Access	No Therapy or Counseling Sought	14
	Peer Support or Self-Help Tried	1
	No Institutional Referral or Access	Mentioned in analysis
Policy Response to Youth Anxiety	Need for Counseling Centers	12
	Youth Mental Health Awareness Campaigns	Mentioned in analysis
	Youth Involvement in Policymaking	Mentioned in analysis



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Many participants stated that educational institutions were not well equipped to address political problems and nervousness. Thirteen participants stated that no campaigns to raise awareness had occurred at their educational institutions. What this means is education providers do not explain, understand or treat the mental health issues that arise in kids living through political upheaval.

It was pointed out at the event that there are no initiatives on stress management or political education at our university. So much falls on us by ourselves”.

Added another, “The subject of mental health or dealing with national questions isn’t included in our curriculum.” What we’re told to do is just to perform”.

A number of participants said that there were no official support systems in place at their institutions. They pointed out that there are not enough trained counselors, supportive referral procedures or partnered organizations for psychological support. Should a breakdown happen, there’s nowhere a student can turn.

I received no support or advice all I hear is silence.

There were also concerns that mental health education is completely missing from the curriculum, despite being important at this time. “We should study mental health, because these are extremely tough times for the country,”.

More than fourteen of the participants told me they had not looked for help from a psychologist in coping with political anxiety. This resulted from being shamed, not having access to help and feeling Nothing from the system. No one’s ever mentioned counseling to me, so it’s never caught my interest. People never say, “It’s normal to ask for help”.

One Student said, “Campus does not provide any office for mental health support.” If I wanted support, I wouldn’t know where to look.

A single participant said they turned to their roommate for some peer support. It was useful to some extent, albeit not enough to be called professional guidance.

Some found that since no institutional referral system was set up, they ended up managing any psychological distress by themselves. Expert participants shared advice for making better national and state policies. Twelve participants agreed that counseling centers should be set up in schools. A mental health counselor should be accessible everywhere at university. Participant 1 said, “It’s important to have professionals involved, not just talk to friends”

Being without these services came to be seen by many as a failure to attend to a worsening problem affecting young people. In addition, a great number of participants stressed that it is important to hold awareness campaigns for youth regarding mental wellness. Using both radio broadcasts and digital sites is a good way to reach the audience, they noted. Just like public attention is drawn to health and polio, we should address student mental health with them as well. A few experts felt young people should have a say in deciding policies for their benefit and for their future.

We are discussed in policies often, but we seldom join the actual discussion. That must be addressed”. It describes the big divide between the needs of students and the actions taken by educational leaders or governments. Although students notice their own psychological difficulties, they often feel that their needs go unrecognized. Not only do their experiences reveal a lack of proper systems, but they also explain how effective steps can be taken to fill the gap between youth mental health and policies in Pakistan.

Discussion

Through the exploration of five overarching themes, this study found that political



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instability badly affects the emotional, academic and social aspects of youth in Pakistan. The outcomes are adding to a growing set of research on the effects of political situations on mental health, mainly in parts of the world with unstable governments and weak organizations. A key finding showed that anxiety, stress or depression related to political events was experienced by each participant of the survey. This same result was found by Khan (2024) who determined political instability to be strongly associated with emotional disorder and declining mental health among students attending university. Youth appear to feel more helpless and hopeless because of leadership changes, new rules and news supply that stirs strong emotions. This study helps by making clear that adults feel deep distress about their situation and link it to since worries about what lies ahead.

The second biggest issue was related to the disruption of education and performances. Students said they had trouble focusing, were less motivated and sometimes failed to complete work in time, similar to what Ali and Hussain (2024) found: political problems put an extra cognitive load on students, distracting them from their studies. It has been demonstrated in this study that mental bandwidth lost because of politics, while possibly not affecting most, nonetheless reduces performance even among capable people. Another theme related to this was planning disruption in the future. Many individuals said they are thinking of moving or studying abroad because they do not have confidence in Pakistan's current situation. They show that a growing number of youth are mentally leaving their country, believing their safety is better protected abroad. As Waseem (2020) explained, this is because people begin to feel distanced from society and their country.

It was also important to notice how people react and manage stress. In an effort to cope, many youths disengaged from news, chose hobbies or study time and relied on spiritual or exercise routines. Despite how these techniques worked temporarily, they failed to help people with more serious emotional problems. Social interactions, it turned out, had positive effects for some and led to worse situations for others, as some found comfort by chatting about politics and others saw relationship problems growing. According to Waqar. (2024), close discussions about politics within families and with peers may help or burden the family and community during political unrest. It was most concerning to see that there was no official backing for the cause. Most youth respondents said that their schools did not run awareness programs, did not provide mental health courses and did not make counseling available.

The findings in this report are similar to those of Ahmed and Saeed (2024), whose research showed that Pakistan's education system does not consider how psychological factors affect students. There was no support for mental health, so youth felt all alone and neglected. It was also made worse by having no real way to get a referral and by feeling therapy was hard to access because of expenses or cultural reasons. People involved offered suggestions for steps the government and schools can take, like founding counseling centers, including mental health in education and allowing youth to be part of policymaking. They are in line with what WHO and regional studies urge by recommending psychosocial support systems for people in unstable political situations (World Health Organization, 2022). The result of this discussion shows that political instability is linked to a crisis of youth mental health, not just to how governments are managed. They suggest that a joint effort by educators, policymakers, mental health or medical experts and civil actors is urgently needed to keep the new generation in Pakistan well.

Conclusion

The results reveal the major psychological effects political instability has on Pakistani



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youth. From fifteen qualitative interviews, the research found that uncertain and unstable political situations bring about strong emotions, lower school achievement and damaged the ambitions of young Canadians. The findings reveal that anxiety, stress and depression are common for Pakistani youth, who have to deal with the turmoil of their political world. People revealed they felt less interested in learning, together with an unwillingness to identify with their nation, shown in their wish to move away, put their studies on hold or remain uninvolved in civic matters. Although their ways to deal with stress were different, most were not designed to help solve the major cause of stress in their society. It was found here that the majority of schools failed to provide any support for mental health, teaching ways to relieve stress or offering safe spaces for students. Importantly, none of the youth interviewed in this study gave up, but instead shared clear enhancements for public policies.

They involved opening counseling centers for mental health in schools, adding support for emotional health in the academic curriculum and letting youth take part in making decisions affecting the nation. This study indicates that, although disappointed with politics, Pakistani youth are ready to engage if the system is made to suit them. In other words, understanding political instability in Pakistan should now include more than just governance and the economy. Mental health risks affecting the country's largest segment—its youth—are becoming a meaningful national concern. For youth to grow and thrive, policymakers, schools and healthcare providers must act quickly together and create safe places for them to grow.

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