

# Exploring the Role of Faith in Religion, Institutional Trust, and Humor as Coping Mechanisms for Maintaining Emotional Health among Pakistani Youth amidst War

Zartashia Munir<sup>1</sup>, Ali Mohsin<sup>2</sup>, Darkshanda Amjad<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Commerce, Government College University, Lahore, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>University of Hertfordshire, London, UK

<sup>3</sup>University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Email: z.munir2177@gmail.com, amohsin56789@gmail.com, amjadshanda@gmail.com

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## Abstract

This research aims to analyze the role of faith in religion (FR), institutional trust (IT), and humor (HM) as coping mechanisms for maintaining emotional health (EH) among Pakistani youth amidst war. This aim is divided into three measurable research hypotheses, where FR, IT, and HM as independent variables and EH as a dependent construct. The study surveys 100 Pakistani social-media users (aged 15 - 29) to test whether faith in religion, institutional trust in the armed forces, and humor are associated with stronger emotional health during wartime. Using cross-sectional questionnaires and SPSS, all three predictors show positive, significant correlations ( $<0.001$ , which is less than a threshold of 0.005) with emotional health, where humor ( $r = 84.4\%$ ) displaying the strongest effect, IT ( $r = 56.4\%$ ), and FR ( $r = 54.3\%$ ). The authors conclude that culturally tailored humor therapy, trust-building initiatives, and faith-based support can bolster youth resilience during war. For future studies, a sample size of more than 100 is suggested to generalise findings in other similar socio-cultural contexts and opt for a mixed method research to test existing theories and develop new knowledge within the domain.

## Keywords

Emotional Health (EH), Faith in Religion (FR), Humor (HM), Institutional Trust on Armed Forces (IT), Pakistani Youth

## 1. Introduction

In times of war, increased exposure to violence, disturbing news, and uncertainty about future introduce significant challenges in maintaining emotional health and resiliency among people (Schwarzer, 2024). This becomes even more problematic, when the war is between two nuclear armed-states as it spread burgeoning fear, insecurity, and negative psychological consequences. Foremost at risk of these consequences are youth, as they are already undergoing complex development stages that compounded their vulnerability to stress, depression, and long-term trauma in times of war (Slone & Shoshani, 2022). To navigate war crises, retain, support, and promote emotional well-being of youth in times of war, a sheer need of various psychological support and resiliency-building interventions are needed.

### 1.1. Research Problem

In a youth bulge country like Pakistan, where 65% of the population is under age 30 (Raza, 2025), the physiological, psychological, and emotional effect of war can be intense. In past five years, limited research within Pakistani context exists in understanding on how socio cultural factors including faith in religion (FR), institutional trust (IT), and humor (HM) can act as psychological buffer for employed youth experiencing uncertainty and trauma during war. Secondly, research work in other geographical contexts (Syria, Ukraine, Russia, and Palestine) has involved war veterans and refugees of any age group (children, adults, and old).

Likewise, prior studies have considered role of HM, FG, and IT on EH independently in studies. Understanding role of these factors as coping mechanisms comprehensively is critical for designing mental health interventions that are contextually relevant and aligns with religious, institutional, and social realities of Pakistani society. Hence, this study's contribution will address geographical gap by considering Pakistan, target population gap by involving youth (15 to 29 years old), and empirical gap by considering three independent constructs (FR, IT, and HM) comprehensively. By exploring the role of FR, IT, HM within Pakistan, this research will offer valuable insights on how youth with these socio-cultural interventions can cope from the emotional burden of warfare effectively.

### 1.2. Research Aim

The propelling aim behind this research is to explore the role of faith in religion (FR), institutional trust (IT), and humor (HM) that led strong emotional health (EH) and resiliency of Pakistani Youth despite of ongoing war and conflicts between two nuclear armed-states of South Asia, Pakistan and India.

### 1.3. Research Objectives

- To investigate the effect between faith in religion on a strong emotional health and resiliency among Pakistani Youth amidst war between Pakistan and India.
- To analyze the effect of institutional trust on a strong emotional health and resiliency among Pakistani Youth amidst war between Pakistan and India.

- To explore the role of humor as a psychological coping mechanism on a strong emotional health and resiliency among Pakistani Youth amidst war between Pakistan and India.

#### 1.4. Significance of the Study

This research will contribute valuable insights into various domains and disciplines effectively. Firstly, academicians will obtain breadth of knowledge on incorporating faith based coping strategies in collectivist societies (Pakistan) to prevent emotional distress among youth during crises. Secondly, policy makers will ascertain significance of developing and maintaining public trust in institutions (especially on armed forces) that contributes towards greater sense of security, collective efficacy, and strong emotional health among youth as well.

Thirdly, mental health practitioners will understand a significant role of digital humor therapy to relief emotional distress among youth in times of war. Hence, it is inferred that this research is highly significant for academicians, policy-makers, and mental health practitioners as it provides holistic understanding of faith in religion, institutional trust, and humor as coping mechanisms that protect youth from psychological stress of geopolitical tensions, including war.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Emotional Health

Emotional health, a multifaceted concept, refers to an individual's ability to understand, recognize, and manage one's emotions and moods to correctly respond during a situation/crisis (Hudson et al., 2014). It is measured through indices of happiness, anxiety, depression, stress, and satisfaction levels and encompasses mental, physical, and psychological health. Mukhtar (2020) stated that during times of national tensions or conflict, emotional health becomes a public issue which cannot be ignored as widespread stress and anxiety inserts negative connotations on physical and psychological health. Lim et al. (2022) through a secondary qualitative study has identified that depression, stress, and anxiety are high among people located in areas affected by conflict and violence. Overlooking emotional health in such times leads long-term emotional health crises and weakening social cohesion.

In traumatic experiences, emotional competence, sometimes referred to as emotional regulation, is essential for managing feelings and reactions, handling stress, maintaining hope and life satisfaction (positive outlook), and building emotional connection with others (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007; Delhom et al., 2020). It enables individuals to navigate emotional turbulence, while maintaining stability and emotional-wellbeing.

Polizzi and Lynn (2021) assessed relationship between emotional regulation and psychological resilience through a systematic review (secondary qualitative research) of 182 studies. Results indicated that emotional regulation is positively associated with psychological resilience. This research yielded that strong emo-

tional health, grounded on emotional regulation, enhance psychological resilience in individuals through efficient management of emotions, which in turn, acts as a barrier from psychological, mental, and physical harm. Hence, it is inferred that by promoting emotional health with suitable emotional competence/regulation as a coping mechanisms, individuals are better able to withstand trauma and conflict situations, including war.

## 2.2. Faith in Religion

One of a key coping mechanism, faith in religion has found to play a key role in maintaining emotional health of people in times of distressful events. It refers to the use of religious practices (prayer or fasting) and rituals (meditation or community worship) to seek support and guidance as to relief from stress during ongoing national tensions and conflicts (Jantos, 2012; Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013). In traumatic events, faith in the religion provides meaning, hope, support, and purpose to deal with violence and conflicts effectively and competitively.

There is an agreement between researchers pertaining to the role of faith in the religion (religious coping) in promoting strong emotional health in warfare. Hasanović and Pajević (2010) conducted a research to assess the role of religious moral beliefs as a strong mental health outcome and protection from anxiety, depression, alcohol and tobacco abuse among war Veterans in comorbidity in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Findings revealed that higher religious moral beliefs among war veterans enabled them to address stress and post war psychological problems, which in turn, yield better emotional health stability through efficient control of alcohol and tobacco misuse. This study identified that through religious beliefs, post-traumatic stress and misuse of drugs among survivors of war can be addressed, leading strong and positive emotional and mental health outcomes.

Similarly, Skalisky et al. (2022) through a mixed method study investigated the relationship between Islamic religious coping on emotional, mental, and psychological resilience among Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Jordan. Results indicated that Islamic religious coping through strong belief, prayer, and desire of shahadat, plays a detrimental role in efficient psychological, mental, and emotional resilience during disruptions, stress, and displacement of war among Muslim refugees. This has implied that refugees, who actively seek religion to cope from the anxiety, depression, and displacement during war, report high levels of emotional, mental, and psychological strength and resilience. Hence, faith based coping mechanism has found to be effective to manage stress and maintain emotional health during ongoing period of conflict and tensions.

*H1: Faith in the religion has a significant and positive effect on a strong emotional health among Pakistani Youth amidst war.*

## 2.3. Institutional Trust

Institutional trust in armed forces refers to the confidence of public in military, navy, and air forces to act in best interests of national security and public welfare

(Hines et al., 2015). It encompasses perception of the public about integrity, reliability, and legitimacy of these armed forces, especially in the face of adversity. A public institutional trust in armed forces in restoring peace plays a key role in national resilience, with a derivative effect on strong emotional health of its residents as well (Malešič & Garb, 2018). When levels of trust are high, resident's ability to cope with war-crises, including anxiety, stress level, and helplessness reduces, and a stronger sense of safety and security prevails (Accorsi & Krebs, 2024). This referred to a strong correlation between institutional trust and emotional health of people during national tensions.

There is a scholarly consensus upon the role of institutional trust in yielding strong emotional health in times of war. A recent research by Braun-Lewensohn et al. (2025) has analyzed the effect of institutional trust and sense of coherence on emotional resilience and mental health outcomes among Jews and Arabs during iron swords war. Based on primary quantitative research, the study inferred that Jews reported high exposure to war events as well as greater trust in military and other armed forces in the country. In this context, they exhibited strong emotional resiliency, higher sense of coherence, less psychological stress, and high national unity than Arabs participants during iron swords war in Israel.

On the other hand, when level of institutional trust is low, citizens are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, or distress, leading weak emotional health in the face of adversity. A lower institutional trust is positively correlates with mental health problems and less satisfaction to life amidst terror attacks (Thoresen et al., 2018). A research by Bove et al. (2024) identified that institutional mistrust can increase sense of powerlessness and alienation, which in turn, negatively undermines emotional resiliency of the people in the country amidst conflict situation. These findings identified a sheer need of fostering public trust towards armed forces, particularly in times of war for both individual's strong mental health and social resiliency.

Similarly, a research by Paquin et al. (2025) has explored social and mental health outcomes to institutional trust during conflict situation from Arab, Asian, Black, White, and Mixed in Quebec, Canada. Through a primary quantitative cohort study, findings of the research deduced that low level of institutional trust leads to elevated levels of stress and social withdrawal among public. The study attributed institutional mistrust to psychological strain of expecting unfair, unreliable, and hostile treatment from these institutions during face of adversity. However, South Asian context shown greater trust towards armed institutions that aid in emotional support and recovery during stressful situations. A research by Lotito and Joyce (2025) stated that Global South exhibited greater trust towards armed forces that has developed a strong emotional endurance among people during war and uncertainty. All of these research findings implied that while sense of trauma, distress, and danger elevates during times of war, high trust in the national armed and security forces positively correlates with strong emotional health outcomes and national resilience.

*H2: Institutional Trust (Trust in the Armed Forces) has a significant and positive effect on a strong emotional health among Pakistani Youth amidst war.*

## 2.4. Humor

One of a powerful psychological coping mechanism, humor has found to play an enduring role in maintaining, supporting, and recovering emotional health amidst rising tensions. It is defined as the use of actions, words, or expressions that provoke laughter, fun, and delight in lives of people (Berger, 2017). Research indicated that people tend to high in humor are psychologically resilient, less stressful, and satisfied during distressful situations (Kuiper, 2012; Cann & Collette, 2014; Olah & Ford, 2021). This has implied that high levels of humor enable people to remain poised and calm in challenging situation despite of introducing tension and anxiety.

The outweighing benefits of humor in supporting emotional health during warfare are widespread. Kostiuk and Kostiuk (2023) stated that use of humor in war-time is effective to undermine post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The reason is that Humor elicits positive emotions in distressful event which restructures a dangerous and stressful situation from a less threatening point of view, ultimately reducing PTSD. Similarly, Petrov and Marchalik (2023) indicated that Humor is the best medicine during war as it reduces stress hormones, undermines release of endorphins, and maintains sense of normalcy despite of ongoing tensions. This, in turn, enabled people to remain persistent in problematic scenarios, cope with distress, defuse tension, reduce emotional pain, and adapt to adversity effectively. Hence, adversity can be handled effectively with the use of humor and laughter.

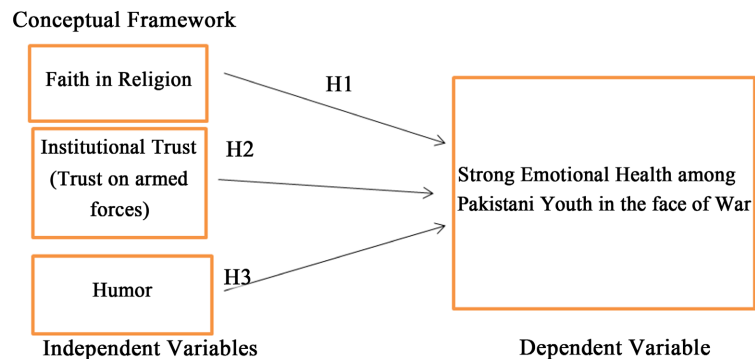
In today's digital world, humor is spread through the use of funny, laughable, and relatable posts and memes. Kyomugisha (2025) contributed that sharing of humor on social media platforms through memes that laugh-out-loud as they are relatable and share familiar grounds, develops strong emotional health and bond among people. Similarly, above shared stance is further supported by prior research studies wherein McBride and Ball (2022) exhibited that shared laughter effectively undermines group tensions in conflict scenarios as it infuses sense of community and connectedness. Within socio-cultural context of South Asia, especially Pakistan, sharing of funny memes on social media as digital humor therapy found to be a tool of emotional endurance from crisis (Shoukat & Jokhiyo, 2025). These studies highlighted that sharing of humor via memes that aligns with the socio-culture, strengthen in-group communication, which in turn reinforces emotional bonds and group identity.

A theory namely, social identify theory supports unwavering role of humor to nurture social cohesion in coping with adversity. The theory states that people derive self-esteem and sense of belongingness from the group they have established closed ties (Mumtaz, 2024). In this study's context, when people enjoy funny material in group, it ultimately induce relaxation, boost morale, improves emotional well-being, and provide a sigh of relief in people lives in times of chal-

lenging situations, which in turn strengthen social cohesion as well. From theoretical underpinnings of social identity theory, it is analyzed that humor supports emotional health in the face of warfare through multiple means including mitigating anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, fostering emotional resilience, as well as strengthening social cohesion among people.

*H3: Humor as a coping mechanism has a significant and positive effect on a strong emotional health among Pakistani Youth amidst war.*

## 2.5. Conceptual Framework



## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Research Philosophy

A Positivism research philosophy is used in this research study to explore all the four research hypotheses. The rationale behind its use is grounded in study's objective nature that supports construct measurement through large volumes of numeric data, obtained through survey/questionnaires (Park et al., 2020). Likewise, this philosophy facilitates the researcher to either affirm or reject possible relationship between independent (faith in religion, institutional trust, and humor) and dependent (strong emotional health) variables, through testing of hypotheses.

### 3.2. Research Approach

A deductive research approach is employed in this study to explore socio-cultural and psychological factors leading strong emotional health of Pakistani Youth in the face of war. The significance behind its adoption in the study is that this approach enables the researcher to test proposed statements (drawn from existing scholarly studies) through real-time and context-specific numeric data. Similarly, this "top down approach" ensures findings align or contradict with current plethora of the knowledge, through hypotheses testing, leading reliable findings (Woiceshyn & Daellenbach, 2018; Casula et al., 2021). This, in turn, reflects that research is grounded on "present scholarly studies" as it strengthens a link between theory and empirical data as well as yield reliable outcomes.

### 3.3. Research Method

A quantitative research method is deployed in the study to contribute meaning-

fully in the academia. The rationale behind its use is that this method allows the researcher to measure study's variables (independent and dependent) as a human behaviour in a quantifiable and observable manner (Plonsky, 2017). Similarly, this method supports efficient data collection, secure data handling, as well as undermine human bias through statistical analysis of the data. Furthermore, statistical analysis yield comprehensive understanding between independent and dependent variable relationship (Ghanad, 2023), which, in turn, promotes, real-time, valid, and generalizable outcomes.

### 3.4. Research Tool

An "Online Questionnaire" as Google Forms is used as a research tool in this study. This tool is sent to the most suitable and knowledgeable respondents via a link on Email, Whatsapp, Instagram, and Facebook. The rationale behind its use lies in its cost-effectiveness as data is collected from a diverse and large sample with low cost, less time, and less energy (Dewaele, 2018). Likewise, this tool further ensures "response anonymity" during analysis that minimizes bias and promotes validity in research findings (Iwaniec, 2019).

A self-developed scale for all study's variables included EH, FR, IT, and HM based on literature review is used in the study. The scale entails most relevant close-ended questions to explore the impact of FR, IT, and HM on EH among Pakistani Youth amidst War. This tool is comprised of five sections with 20 close-ended questions on a five point Likert Scale (1. Strongly disagree to 5. Strongly Agree). The first includes, respondent introduction (name, age, gender, educational, and resident status), second includes emotional health (7), faith in religion (4), institutional trust (4), and humor (4) as study's constructs as follows:

- Emotional Health (Mood management, Stress handling, Endure positivity, Emotional support to others, and Emotional Regulation).
- Institutional Trust (Strong trust, Institutional decisions are considered logical, and Active role of institution develops emotional security).
- Faith in Religion (Faith in Almighty, Opt for prayer, recitation, and fast, and Desire of Shahadat).
- Humor (Humor to reduce stress, Consider Humor as Emotional escape, Strengthen social cohesion).

### 3.5. Time Frame

A cross-sectional time-frame is used to measure the effect of faith in religion, institutional trust, and humor as coping mechanisms on the emotional health of Pakistani youth amidst war. The implication behind this time-frame is that as all the study's independent as well as dependent variables are not dynamic with respect to time and season, which in turn, facilitates data collection once throughout the research to save researcher's time (Cohen et al., 2017). Likewise, one-time data collection in research ensures speedy, efficient, and cost-effective data collection in comparison to longitudinal studies. However, Park et al. (2020) provided that

this time frame is subject to limitation as it lags behind in outlining casual interface (which variable causes other).

### 3.6. Data Collection

The data is collected in this study through primary means by using an online questionnaire in Google Forms sent via Email, Whatsapp, Facebook, and Instagram. The significance behind its use is that it yields real-time context specific data to explore effect between independent and dependent variables of the research (Heap & Waters, 2019). Likewise, this first-hand data offer unique and tailored insights within Pakistani context in the face of war that effectively and competitively answers all of the three research objectives to address study's aim.

#### 3.6.1. Target population

This study's target population is the Youth of Pakistan.

#### 3.6.2. Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling strategy is deployed to gather data in this research study. This strategy enables the researcher to yield data from the most suitable and specific participants that are high in knowledge and experience pertaining to the examination under consideration (Campbell et al., 2020). The niche of this research meeting the criteria for the research is as follows;

- Residents of any province of Pakistan.
- Age Group:15 to 29.
- Users of Social Media, including X (Twitter), Instagram, and Facebook.

The rationale of purposively drawn niche in the study will ensure that participants are well experienced to the context, which in turn, provides specific and meaningful information (Lim, 2025) to effectively explore the impact of FR, IT, and HM on EH among Pakistani youth amidst war. Likewise, using specific niche as respondents saves data collector's resources (financial and non-financial) as well as yield valid, reliable, and generalisable results within the context.

#### 3.6.3. Sample Size

A 120 sample size is deployed in the study due to resource and time-efficiency.

### 3.7. Data Analysis

A primary data gathered through online questionnaire is further analyzed by employing statistical software, namely SPSS. This software effectively analyzes large volumes of unstructured data and yield meaningful outcomes through charts, tables, and graphs (data visualization) (McCormick & Salcedo, 2017). Likewise, this analysis tool establish link between effect of faith in religion, institutional trust, and humor as coping mechanisms on the emotional health of Pakistani youth through correlation, regression, and ANOVA tests.

### 3.8. Ethical Considerations

To ensure participants are voluntarily contributing in the research without coer-

cion or greed, an informed consent is obtained from them in writing. The aim of the research and significance of contributing in the study is clearly communicated with participants (Edwards, 2020). Basic demographic information, including gender, name, residential status, education, and age is obtained by ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of respondents. Likewise, participants are allowed to withdraw at any time of the research without any consequences (Cortina, 2020). All the gathered and analyzed data is kept secured for academic and research purposes only, whose access is confined with the researcher only.

## 4. Data Analysis

### 4.1. Quantitative Results

#### 4.1.1. Response Rate

To achieve our estimated standard of 100 responses, questionnaires in Google docs were sent to 115 most suitable respondents meeting the criteria as mentioned in research methodology. Out from 115, 100 responses in full were received, leading response rate of 86.95%. This response percentage was good enough to precede further statistical research. Sataloff and Vontela (2021) identified that for a primary quantitative research via questionnaires, a response rate of 60% and more is ideal. Therefore, 86.95% response rate persuaded to apply various statistical tests by using SPSS to address aim of the study as well as accept or reject hypotheses effectively.

#### 4.1.2. Reliability Statistics

A reliability test in SPSS, measured by cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), analyses the internal consistency of the questionnaire. It implied that, this test measures the extent to which items of the questionnaire are linked with each other (Roni & Djajadikerta, 2021). A reliability test of the questionnaire comprised of 4 items, including emotional health, institutional trust, faith in religion, and humor is found to be 0.870 (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Reliability statistics.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of items
0.870	0.881	4

Ahmad et al. (2024) stated that Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) values greater than .70 are commonly acceptable, values between 0.80 to 0.89 exhibit good internal consistency, and values of 0.90 to higher, consider as exceptional, revealing strong consistency of the instrument. Hence, 0.870 value of a reliability test falls within good internal consistency category, highlighting that emotional health (EH), faith in religion (FR), institutional trust (IT), and humor (HM) are highly consistent and linked with each other.

### 4.1.3. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Following is the demographic profile of respondents, including gender, age, education, and residency status of respondents (**Table 2**).

**Table 2.** Demographic profile of respondents.

Gender of Respondents		
Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Male	66	66
Female	34	34
Total	100	100
Age Group of Respondents		
15 - 18	24	24.0
19 - 22	36	36.0
23 - 26	32	32.0
27 - 29	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0
Education of Respondents		
Matriculation	2	2.0
Intermediate	31	31.0
Bachelors	55	55.0
Masters	12	12.0
Total	100	100.0
Residency Status of Respondents		
Punjab	98	98.0
Sindh	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

**Table 2** identified that out of 100 responses, 66% male and 34% females have participated in the research **Figure 1**.

Similarly, the table highlighted that age group of 19 - 22 with 36% has found to be the highest contributor in the research. Similarly, age group of 23 - 26 with 32%, 15 - 18 with 24%, as well as 27 - 29 with 8% have provided valuable response in the research **Figure 2**.

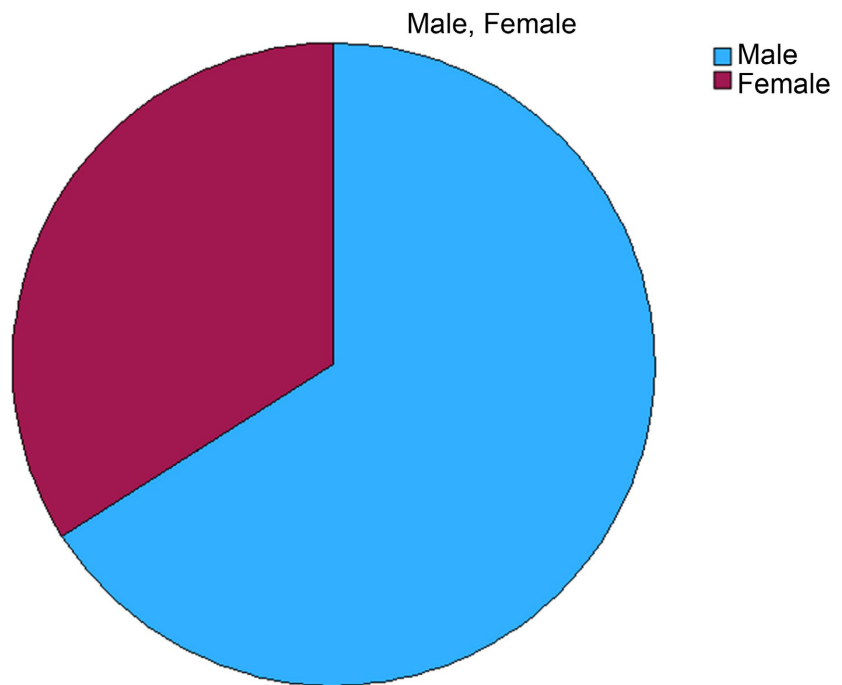


Figure 1. Gender of respondents.

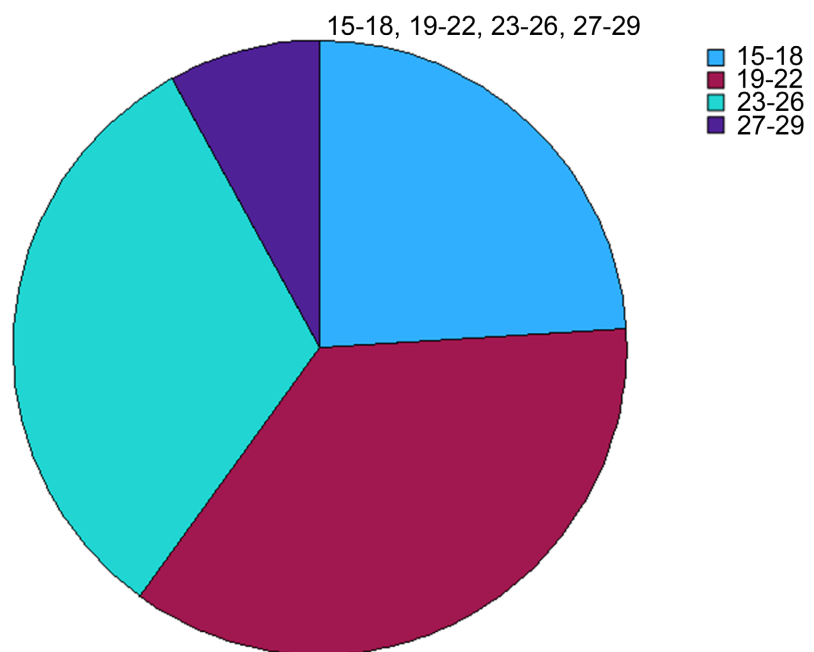


Figure 2. .Age group of respondents.

Furthermore, the table presented that 55% respondents with educational background of bachelors have contributed most in the research. Likewise, 31% with intermediate, 12% with Master's, and 2% with matriculation academic background have provided their stance in the research. Lastly, the table indicated that 98% of respondents belong to Punjab, whereas 2% from Sindh province have contributed in the research.

#### 4.1.4. Correlation Test

A correlation test measures the strength to which study's independent variable exerts an influence on dependent constructs through "Pearson Correlation" as well as the extent of relationship significance through "Significance 2-tailed" (Kafle, 2019). In this study's context, this test will measure whether faith in religion, institutional trust, and humor exhibits a relationship with emotional health. Pearson correlation with 0.534 indicated that faith in religion (FR) has a moderate positive relationship with emotional health (EH), which is statically significant ( $<0.001$ ) as well. This implied that with the increase in FR, EH will be improved among people amidst war (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Correlations.

		EH	FR	IT	HM
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.534	0.566	0.844
EH	Sig. (2-tailed)		$<0.001$	$<0.001$	$<0.001$
	N	100	100	100	100

Similarly, Pearson correlation with 0.566 indicated that institutional trust (IT) has a moderate positive relationship with emotional health, which is statically significant ( $<0.001$ ) as well. This result inferred that with an increase in IT in times of war, EH among people will likely to be improved. Lastly, Pearson correlation with 0.844 indicated that humor (HM) has a strong positive relationship with emotional health, which is statically significant ( $<0.001$ ) as well. This concluded that high use of HM as a coping mechanism will yield strong EH among people in times of conflict and tensions.

Abu-Bader (2021) stated that correlation test plays a pivotal role in identifying the strength of effect between independent and dependent variables, where Pearson correlation value less than 0.50 indicates a weak and value above 0.50 to higher indicates a moderate to strong relationship. Therefore, it is deduced that HM (0.844) exerts a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with EH, whereas FR (0.534) and IT (0.566) exerts a moderate positive relationship with EH, which is statistically significant as well (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Summary of correlation test.

Independent-Dependent Variable Effect	Strength and Direction
FR-EH	Moderate positive and statistically significant
IT-EH	Moderate positive and statistically significant
HM-EH	Strong positive and statistically significant

#### 4.1.5. Regression

In SPSS, regression analysis is initiated to assess the influence of independent var-

iable (IV) over dependent variable (DV) in the research (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2019). Results in this test are examined based on Pearson Correlation (R), R<sup>2</sup>, standardised beta coefficient (β), t-value, and significance level. Kafle (2019) provided that the influence between IV and DV is assessed through correlation coefficient, where, value approximately to 1 indicates a strong relationship and a 0 value identifies no relationship at all.

Results with R = 0.534 (Pearson correlation) and β = 0.534 (standardised beta coefficient) identified that Faith in Religion (FR) has a moderate positive relationship with Emotional Health (EH). The R<sup>2</sup> = 0.285 revealed that 28.5% variance in EH is introduced or explained by FR effectively. Likewise, the t = 6.25 and standard error of estimate = 0.4047, both exhibited that the predictor is reliable as analysed numerically. Lastly, p = <0.001 indicates FR and EH exhibits a statistically significant relationship with each other. Hence, it can be inferred that higher the FR, the higher EH will be among people in times of war (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Summary of hypothesis 1 regression results.

*H1: Faith in religion (FR) has a significant and positive effect on a strong emotional health (EH) among Pakistani Youth amidst war.*

Forecaster	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	t	Standard Error	Significance level
Faith in Religion	0.534	0.285	0.534	6.25	0.4047	<0.001
EH				8.982		<0.001

- Moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between FR and EH.
- Hypothesis Accepted

Results with R = 0.566 (Pearson correlation) and β = 0.566 (standardised beta coefficient) identified that Institutional Trust (IT) has a moderate positive relationship with Emotional Health (EH). The R<sup>2</sup> = 0.354 revealed that 35.4% variance in EH is introduced or explained by IT effectively. Likewise, the t = 6.803 and standard error of estimate = 0.39445, both exhibited that the predictor is reliable as analysed numerically. Lastly, p = <0.001 indicates IT and EH exhibits a statistically significant relationship with each other. Hence, results highlighted that enhanced IT in times of war can significantly improve EH among people (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Summary of hypothesis 2 regression results.

*H2: Institutional Trust (IT) has a significant and positive effect on a strong emotional health (EH) among Pakistani Youth amidst war.*

Forecaster	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	t	Standard Error	Significance level
Faith in Religion	0.566	0.321	0.566	6.803	0.39445	<0.001
EH				10.124		<0.001

- Moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between IT and EH.
- Hypothesis Accepted

Results with  $R = 0.844$  (Pearson correlation) and  $\beta = 0.844$  (standardised beta coefficient) identified that Humor (HM) has a strong positive relationship with Emotional Health (EH). The  $R^2 = 0.712$  revealed that 71.2% variance in EH is introduced or explained by HM effectively. Likewise, the  $t = 15.566$  and standard error of estimate = 0.25684, both exhibited that the predictor is reliable as analysed numerically. Lastly,  $p \leq 0.001$  indicates HM and EH exhibits a statistically significant relationship with each other. Therefore, it is deduced that Humor as a key coping mechanism plays a noteworthy role in improving emotional health of people in times of war (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Summary of hypothesis 3 regression results.

*H3: Humor as a coping mechanism has a significant and positive effect on a strong emotional health among Pakistani Youth amidst war.*

Forecaster	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	t	Standard Error	Significance level
Humor	0.844	0.712	0.844	15.566	0.25684	<0.001
EH				9.818		<0.001

- Strong positive and statistically significant relationship between HM and EH.
- Hypothesis Accepted

## 4.2. Discussion

All of the three study's research hypotheses have been accepted based on reliability, correlation, and regression results in SPSS.

The first study's hypothesis, Faith in religion (FR) has a significant and positive effect on a strong emotional health (EH) among Pakistani Youth amidst war, has been accepted. This finding is consistent with studies of Hasanović and Pajević (2010) and Skalisky et al. (2022). All of these studies have statistically and non-statistically inferred the predominant role of prayer, faith in Almighty, and desire of shahadat to cope form depression, stress, and displacements of war, that ultimately yield psychological, mental, and emotional resilience among Muslims. These studies supported the fact the FR during traumatic event provides meaning and emotional support to cope with ongoing tensions effectively.

This finding has contributed novelty in the academic context by highlighting that integration of faith oriented mental health support systems in improving emotional health is not only a moral or cultural construct, but a significant contributor of emotional resilience in collectivist societies, including Pakistan amidst warfare.

The second study's hypothesis, Institutional Trust (IT) has a significant and positive effect on a strong emotional health (EH) among Pakistani Youth amidst war, has been accepted. This finding aligns with prior studies of Thoresen et al. (2018), Bove et al. (2024), Braun-Lewensohn et al. (2025), and Paquin et al. (2025) that stated high level of public trust in armed forces contributes to greater emotional resilience of the youth in times of war. All of these studies supported the fact that

active role of armed forces in wartime strengthen national security, hope, and sense of pride among people, which in turn, lessens their anxiety and stress during ongoing tensions.

In collectivist societies like Pakistan, armed forces are considered to be protectors. Developing and maintaining trust towards them in times of war can act as a psychological buffer that undermines anxiety, stress, and depression among youth. This finding adds a new perspective in academic context by identifying that trust building initiative towards armed forces of the country should be considered in psychological support frameworks to improve and develop strong EH of youth during war.

The third study's hypothesis, Humor as a coping mechanism has a significant and positive effect on a strong emotional health among Pakistani Youth amidst war, has been accepted. This finding is consistent with researches of [McBride and Ball \(2022\)](#), [Petrov and Marchalik \(2023\)](#), as well as [Kostiuk and Kostiuk \(2023\)](#) that presented during traumatic situations, high use of humor maintain calmness, offer assurance, and develop strong social ties instead of bringing tensions chaos, and stress among people. These studies and research finding supported the fact that humor is a best emotional escape to cope with depression, tensions, and stress of warfare effectively.

Humor has exhibited a stronger association with EH than FR and IT due to its overwhelming and instantaneous benefits in dealing with stress and depression during chaotic situation. From theoretical underpinnings of "Relief theory and Cognitive Reappraisal Framework", humor therapy is considered as most effective coping mechanism to present a chaotic event in a less threatening point of view to undermine stress and fear among people ([Troy et al., 2018](#)). This therapy via digital platforms has reduced emotional strain and developed social cohesion among Pakistani people (who are active social media users) more effectively than passive forms of coping mechanisms from stress, including FR and IT during war.

From 2007 to present, Pakistanis have experienced "War on Terror" that has developed strong nerve, emotional endurance, and psychological resilience within the nation. Instead of getting panic, Pakistani's have learned to cope from warfare tensions through use of humor and spread of memes that laugh-out loud. This finding contributes in literature by identifying the significance of digital humor therapy for mental health practitioners for holistic emotional well-being of Pakistani youth in times of warfare. Hence, it is deduced that by using and spreading of humor during war, emotional health of people can be maintained, supported, and recovered effectively.

Based on these findings, my research contributed a demographic dimension in the literature by highlighting that respondents with gender (66% of male) education (55% of bachelor's), age group (36% of 19 - 22) and belongs to Punjab (98%), are more likely to be influenced by the use of HM as a coping mechanism, IT, and FR to sustain EH amidst warfare. Grounded on this novel insight, this research extends knowledge in developing targeted interventions that are demographically

responsive (male) and effectively strengthen emotional health among educated, young, and residents of Punjab in times of war. These interventions may include culturally tailored digital humor therapy, trust building initiative towards armed forces, and faith based mental health support programs.

## 5. Conclusion

The study has explored the role of faith in religion (FR), institutional trust (IT), and humor as coping mechanisms for maintaining and supporting strong emotional health among Pakistani youth amidst war between Pakistan and India in detail. Relying on a quantitative research method, data collection through a survey (Online Google Docs) from 100 purposively drawn respondents (Pakistani youth), and data analysis via correlation and regression SPSS test, useful insights have been achieved.

All of the three study's hypotheses have been validated with a significance value of  $<0.001$ , which is less than a threshold of 0.005, indicating a statistically significant relationship between study's independent and dependent constructs. These results have not only found to be consistent with prior research studies, but contributed new insights within Pakistani context and among youth demography. Firstly, the study contributed that among 100 Pakistani youth respondents; about 66% male, 55% with bachelors, and 98% residents of Punjab, and 36% age group of 19 - 22 have opted for humor, institutional trust, and faith in religion as a coping mechanism to maintain strong emotional health and resiliency during war between Pakistan and India.

The most significant role in enduring strong emotional health among Pakistani youth has been induced by the use of humor as SPSS result through Pearson Correlation (R) indicated its effect by 84.4%. Secondly, institutional trust on armed forces has found to play a pivotal role in supporting and strengthening emotional health of Pakistani youth during war, as correlation and regression result through Pearson Correlation (R) indicated its effect by 56.6%. Thirdly, faith in religion has found to note-worthily maintain and develop strong emotional health among Pakistani youth during war, as SPSS result through Pearson Correlation (R) indicated its effect by 53.4%. Hence, in the light of these statistical insights it is inferred that humor, institutional trust, and faith in religion are most effective coping mechanisms to be used to maintain, strengthen, and support emotional health during war among Pakistani youth.

## Limitations and Future Recommendations of the Study

The study involves limitations in relying on 100 responses only and using a mono-research method (quantitative) to test relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study. Future studies are required to opt for a sample size of more than 100 to generalise findings in other similar socio-cultural contexts, use qualitative research method to generate new knowledge, or apply a mixed method research to test existing theories and develop new knowledge within the

domain. Likewise, Punjab dominated sample considered as limitation because it has restricted generalisation of results at national level. Future studies should entail a more comprehensive sample by considering other provinces including Sindh, Balochistan, KPK, and Gilgit Baltistan. Lastly, other variables, including state leadership as an institutional trust and perception of India as undisputed economy should be deployed to assess its relationship with enduring emotional health and resiliency among Pakistani youth during war.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest over this research paper publication.

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