

## **Self-Comparison and Self-Esteem Among Healthcare Students**

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### **Original Research**

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### **Abstract**

Self-comparison is a common psychological phenomenon that can significantly impact students' self-esteem, motivation, and mental health. This study aimed to assess the extent of self-comparison among healthcare students and its relationship with self-esteem, academic performance, and emotional well-being. Additionally, it explored how self-comparison influences students' perceptions of their abilities in relation to their peers.

Using a descriptive research design, the study surveyed healthcare students in an academic setting through a structured questionnaire to measure levels of self-comparison. A quantitative approach was employed to analyze the collected data, with SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) utilized for hypothesis testing.

The findings indicated that students engaging in upward self-comparison experienced both positive and negative academic and emotional outcomes. The results suggest that the frequency and nature of self-comparison may play a crucial role in students' overall well-being and mental health, offering insights into their emotional states within a highly competitive academic environment.

**Keywords:** Emotional well-being, Health care students, Self-comparison

## **Introduction**

Self-comparison in healthcare students is a multifactorial social phenomenon with immediate impact on their academic experience and mental health outcomes (Kotera et al., 2023). This research aims at highlighting an understudied topic by investigating the multidimensional aspects of the phenomenon as it is related to mental health, the role of self-compassion, gender differences, and the experiences of atypical students to make findings that can lead to investigate educational practices and support systems in healthcare training programs (Adhikari, 2018). These are some of the key problems we need to address in order to create a healthier academic environment that supports personal growth and career preparation for the next generation of health care professionals (Shiwei Chen, 2022).

In fact, self-comparison is not just an individual activity, and by looking back at this method socially trained students are comparing themselves to others. Students often make upward comparisons comparing themselves with others they think are more competent or knowledgeable which can increase motivation, but also anxiety and stress (Guyer & Vaughan-Johnston, 2018). In contrast, downward comparisons measuring themselves against less prepared peers can boost feelings of competence and confidence. This duality demonstrates how social dynamics influence students' self-image and have the potential to impact their mental health outcomes (Yasuhiro Kotera, 2024). Mental health problems in health care students are common, with high stress, anxiety, and depression rates reported among a wide variety of disciplines, including nursing, medical, and counseling programs. Research suggests high levels of anxiety even for students entering healthcare disciplines but for nursing students in particular, these levels seem to be much higher. Gaps in academic performance combined with the challenging nature of healthcare training lead to this distress (Negm et al., 2024).

Self-compassion has been identified as a protective factor against the negative consequences of self-comparison. Studies show that healthcare students who practice self-compassion report lower levels of anxiety and depression, because they are more likely to treat themselves kindly when struggling rather than unkindly and critically. (Yasuhiro Kotera, 2024) This suggests that fostering self-compassion could be an effective strategy for mitigating the adverse effects of social comparison in healthcare education.

The effect of gender on self-comparison between healthcare students is also important. However, female medical students have been found to have poorer psychological well-being than male medical students, possibly driven by internalized social pressures to perform well (Daniel Pagnin, 2015; Shrestha et al., 2025). This gender imbalance emphasised the necessity

for specific support systems in educational institutions to adequately address the challenges faced by healthcare students.

Overall, self-comparison in healthcare students is a multifactorial social phenomenon that can directly affect their academic experience and mental health outcomes. This research seeks to shed light on an important but less studied area by exploring the different facets of this phenomenon, including its relationship with mental health, the role of self-compassion, gender differences, and the experiences of non-traditional students with the goal of providing insights that may inform educational practices and support systems within healthcare training programs. Tackling these issues is critical to developing a healthier academic climate that fosters personal development and professional readiness for future healthcare providers.

### Objectives of the study

- To assess the self-comparison among healthcare students in college
- To examine the correlation between independent and dependent variable

### Research Methods

A descriptive research design was employed for this study, utilizing a questionnaire survey approach to gather data. The study was conducted through an online Google Forms survey among bachelor's healthcare students, ensuring broad participation across various healthcare programs. The survey included questions related to demographics, self-comparison, academic performance, and emotional well-being.

The study population comprised bachelor's healthcare students aged 18 and above, with a total of over 200 students eligible for participation. The sample size was determined using the formula for a 7% margin of error, where:

$Z = 1.96$  (standard normal value for a 95% confidence level)

$p = 0.5$  (assumed proportion)

M.E = 0.07 (margin of error)

A convenience sampling technique was used, selecting students actively enrolled in bachelor's programs. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms, and participants were given 5 to 10 minutes to complete the survey during the designated response period.

### Results

#### Demographic analysis

Table 1: Gender

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	76	33.9	33.9	33.9
	Female	148	66.1	66.1	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

The gender distribution of the respondents indicates that out of a total of 224 participants, 76 (33.9%) are male, while 148 (66.1%) are female. This suggests that the majority of the

respondents are female, comprising nearly two-thirds of the total sample. The cumulative percentage shows that after accounting for both male and female participants, the total reaches 100%, confirming that all respondents fall within these two gender categories. This distribution may reflect a higher participation rate of females in the study, which could be influenced by factors such as the demographic composition of the target population or the nature of the study topic.

Table 2 Demographic Analysis (Marital Status)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Married	16	7.1	7.1	7.1
Valid	Unmarried	208	92.9	92.9	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

The data shows that the majority of participants are unmarried (92.9%), while married individuals make up only 7.1% of the sample. The total sample size is 224, with no missing data.

Table 3 Demographic Analysis (Religious Affiliation)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Buddhist	16	7.1	7.1	7.1
	Christian	5	2.2	2.2	9.4
	Hindu	191	85.3	85.3	94.6
	Muslim	9	4.0	4.0	98.7
	Others	3	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

The data shows that the majority of participants are Hindu (85.3%), followed by Buddhist (7.1%), Muslim (4.0%), Christian (2.2%), and Others (1.3%). The total sample size is 224, with no missing data.

## Response Analysis

### Self-Comparison Scale

Table 4: How often does comparing yourself to others impact your motivation to study?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	61	27.2	27.2	27.2
	Never	24	10.7	10.7	37.9
	Often	45	20.1	20.1	58.0

	Rarely	23	10.3	10.3	68.3
	Sometimes	71	31.7	31.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (27.2%) indicated that comparing themselves to others always affects their motivation to study, while 31.7% said it impacts them sometimes. On the other hand, 10.7% reported that it never affects their motivation. The data suggests that self-comparison is a common factor influencing study motivation, particularly for a majority of the participants who are affected to some degree.

Table 5 How often does comparing yourself to others impact your motivation to study?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	37	16.5	16.5	16.5
	Never	52	23.2	23.2	39.7
	Often	28	12.5	12.5	52.2
	Rarely	52	23.2	23.2	75.4
	Sometimes	55	24.6	24.6	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

The majority of participants (47.8%) report comparing their physical appearance to others either rarely or sometimes. A significant portion (23.2%) never engages in such comparisons, while 16.5% compare themselves always. This suggests that while comparing physical appearance is common for some, it's not a frequent behavior for most participants.

Table 6 How often does comparing yourself to others impact your motivation to study?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	32	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Never	45	20.1	20.1	34.4
	Often	24	10.7	10.7	45.1
	Rarely	57	25.4	25.4	70.5
	Sometimes	66	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

The majority of participants (54.9%) report comparing their social life to others sometimes or rarely. A significant portion (20.1%) never engages in such comparisons, while 14.3% compare it always. This suggests that while social comparison is common for some students, most participants tend to compare their social lives only occasionally or infrequently.

Table 7 How much does self-comparison influence your self-esteem?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	51	22.8	22.8	22.8
	Never	22	9.8	9.8	32.6
	Often	45	20.1	20.1	52.7
	Rarely	43	19.2	19.2	71.9
	Sometimes	63	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (51%) report that self-comparison influences their self-esteem either always or often. Meanwhile, 28.1% said it influences them sometimes, and 9.8% reported it never influences their self-esteem. This suggests that self-comparison plays a key role in shaping the self-esteem of most students, though its impact varies.

Table 8 How effective is talking to friends in helping you cope with self-comparison?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	59	26.3	26.3	26.3
	Never	20	8.9	8.9	35.3
	Often	50	22.3	22.3	57.6
	Rarely	30	13.4	13.4	71.0
	Sometimes	65	29.0	29.0	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (48.6%) find talking to friends always or often effective in coping with self-comparison. Meanwhile, 29.0% find it effective sometimes, and 8.9% find it never helpful. This suggests that talking to friends is a commonly used and generally effective coping strategy for most participants when dealing with self-comparison.

Table 9 How frequently do you feel the need to compare yourself in social settings?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	32	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Never	38	17.0	17.0	31.3
	Often	27	12.1	12.1	43.3
	Rarely	46	20.5	20.5	63.8
	Sometimes	81	36.2	36.2	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (36.2%) feel the need to compare themselves sometimes in social settings, while 20.5% feel the need rarely. Only 14.3% feel the need to compare themselves always in social situations. The data suggests that while social comparison is a common experience for many, it is not constant and varies widely across individuals.

Table 10 To what extent do you feel the need to compare yourself to others in academic settings?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	41	18.3	18.3	18.3
	Never	36	16.1	16.1	34.4
	Often	31	13.8	13.8	48.2
	Rarely	52	23.2	23.2	71.4
	Sometimes	64	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A large portion of participants (51.8%) feel the need to compare themselves to others in academic settings either sometimes or rarely. However, 18.3% feel the need to compare themselves always, indicating that academic comparison is a significant factor for some students. Meanwhile, 16.1% never feel the need to engage in such comparisons. This suggests that academic comparison is a common but not universal experience.

Table 11 How often do you compare your grades with those of your classmates?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	45	20.1	20.1	20.1
	Never	38	17.0	17.0	37.1
	Often	39	17.4	17.4	54.5
	Rarely	50	22.3	22.3	76.8
	Sometimes	52	23.2	23.2	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

The majority of participants (45.5%) report comparing their grades either sometimes or rarely with classmates, while 20.1% compare always. A smaller group (17.0%) never compare their grades. This suggests that grade comparison is a common behavior, but not universal, with many students engaging in it intermittently.



Table 12 Do you feel inspired by comparing yourself with others?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	34	15.2	15.2	15.2
	Never	60	26.8	26.8	42.0
	Often	35	15.6	15.6	57.6
	Rarely	31	13.8	13.8	71.4
	Sometimes	64	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

While a significant portion (28.6%) feels sometimes inspired by comparing themselves to others, 26.8% never feel inspired by such comparisons. The data suggests that for many students, self-comparison has the potential to motivate and inspire, but it's not a universal experience, with varying levels of inspiration across the sample.

Table 13 How often do you compare your personal life to that of your classmates?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	25	11.2	11.2	11.2
	Never	78	34.8	34.8	46.0
	Often	23	10.3	10.3	56.3
	Rarely	55	24.6	24.6	80.8
	Sometimes	43	19.2	19.2	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (34.8%) never compare their personal life to that of their classmates. However, 24.6% compare rarely, and 19.2% compare sometimes, indicating that self-comparison in personal life is a relatively infrequent behavior for many students. Only a small group (11.2%) always compare their personal life.

Table 14 How often do you compare your leadership skills with others?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	46	20.5	20.5	20.5
	Never	39	17.4	17.4	37.9
	Often	41	18.3	18.3	56.3
	Rarely	38	17.0	17.0	73.2
	Sometimes	60	26.8	26.8	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	



A significant portion of participants (26.8%) sometimes compare their leadership skills, while 20.5% always engage in such comparisons. However, 17.4% never compare their leadership abilities. This indicates that leadership comparisons are fairly common, though not universal, with many students engaging in this behavior intermittently rather than consistently.

Table 15 To what extent do you think self-comparison leads to self-improvement?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	63	28.1	28.1	28.1
	Never	21	9.4	9.4	37.5
	Often	39	17.4	17.4	54.9
	Rarely	40	17.9	17.9	72.8
	Sometimes	61	27.2	27.2	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (28.1%) believe that self-comparison always leads to self-improvement, while 27.2% think it happens sometimes. However, 9.4% feel it never contributes to self-improvement, suggesting that while many students view self-comparison as a positive force for growth, there is still a notable percentage who do not see it as beneficial. Overall, the data indicates a generally positive outlook on self-comparison for personal development, though its effectiveness is not universally agreed upon.

Table 16 Do you feel more anxious about your future after comparing yourself others?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	49	21.9	21.9	21.9
	Never	44	19.6	19.6	41.5
	Often	33	14.7	14.7	56.3
	Rarely	40	17.9	17.9	74.1
	Sometimes	58	25.9	25.9	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (25.9%) sometimes feel more anxious about their future after comparing themselves to others, while 21.9% always feel anxious. However, 19.6% never experience increased anxiety due to self-comparison. This suggests that self-comparison has a considerable impact on the anxiety levels of many students, though its effect varies widely, with some students not experiencing any anxiety at all.

Table 17 How often do you compare your ability to handle stress with others?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	32	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Never	40	17.9	17.9	32.1
	Often	29	12.9	12.9	45.1
	Rarely	57	25.4	25.4	70.5
	Sometimes	66	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (29.5%) sometimes compare their ability to handle stress, while 25.4% rarely do so. However, 17.9% never compare their ability to manage stress, indicating that self-comparison on stress levels is not a universal behavior. The data suggests that stress comparison is common, but its frequency varies, with many students comparing themselves occasionally or rarely.

Table 18 To what extent do you think self-comparison helps you set higher standards for yourself?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	58	25.9	25.9	25.9
	Never	25	11.2	11.2	37.1
	Often	44	19.6	19.6	56.7
	Rarely	40	17.9	17.9	74.6
	Sometimes	57	25.4	25.4	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (25.9%) believe that self-comparison always helps them set higher standards, while 25.4% think it helps sometimes. However, 11.2% feel it never contributes to setting higher standards, indicating that while many students see self-comparison as a tool for improvement, there is variability in how helpful they find it in motivating themselves to set higher goals.

Table 19 How often do you reflect on the outcomes of your self-comparison to make improvements?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	47	21.0	21.0	21.0
	Never	24	10.7	10.7	31.7

Often	48	21.4	21.4	53.1
Rarely	35	15.6	15.6	68.8
Sometimes	70	31.3	31.3	100.0
Total	224	100.0	100.0	

A significant portion of participants (31.3%) sometimes reflect on the outcomes of their self-comparisons, while 21.4% do so often and 21.0% always reflect. However, 10.7% never reflect on the outcomes, suggesting that while many students engage in reflection as part of their self-comparison process, the extent of this reflective practice varies. The data highlights that a majority of students (73.7%) do reflect at least sometimes, indicating a tendency to use self-comparison as a tool for self-improvement.

Table 20 To what extent do you think comparing yourself to others makes you more productive?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	40	17.9	17.9	17.9
	Never	42	18.8	18.8	36.6
	Often	35	15.6	15.6	52.2
	Rarely	43	19.2	19.2	71.4
	Sometimes	64	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

The majority of participants (28.6%) believe that self-comparison sometimes enhances their productivity, while 19.2% find it rarely helpful. A smaller group (17.9%) think it always boosts their productivity, but 18.8% feel it never helps. This suggests that self-comparison can have a variable impact on productivity, with most students finding it sometimes useful, though not universally so.

### Significant correlation between academic self-comparison and motivation among healthcare students.

Table 21 Significant correlation between academic self-comparison and motivation among healthcare students.

Correlations		
	How often does comparing yourself to others impact your motivation to study?	How often do you compare your grades with those of your classmates?

How often does comparing yourself to others impact your motivation to study?	Pearson Correlation	1	.442**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	224	224
How often do you compare your grades with those of your classmates?	Pearson Correlation	.442**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	224	224
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The table shows a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.442$ ) between how often individuals compare themselves to others and how often they compare their grades with classmates. This correlation is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong likelihood that the relationship is not due to random chance. Both variables were measured in a sample of 224 participants. The positive correlation suggests that as students frequently compare themselves to others, they are also more likely to compare their grades with classmates. The significance level of 0.01 further supports the reliability of this finding.

#### Correlation between self-comparison and self-esteem among healthcare students.

Table 22 Significant correlation between self-comparison and self-esteem

Correlations			
		How much does self-comparison influence your self-esteem?	Does comparing yourself make you question your abilities?
How much does self-comparison influence your self-esteem?	Pearson Correlation	1	.390**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	224	224
Does comparing yourself make you question your abilities?	Pearson Correlation	.390**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	224	224
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The table shows a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.390$ ) between how much self-comparison influences self-esteem and whether comparing oneself leads to questioning abilities. This correlation is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong likelihood that the relationship is not due to random chance. Both variables were measured in a sample of 224 participants. The positive correlation suggests that individuals who experience

a greater influence of self-comparison on their self-esteem are also more likely to question their abilities. The significance level of 0.01 confirms the reliability of this finding.

### Correlation between self-comparison and emotional well-being (frustration and jealousy) among healthcare students.

Table 23 Significant correlation between self-comparison and emotional

Correlations			
		Do you feel jealous of your peers after comparing yourself to them?	Does comparing yourself with others lead to frustration?
Do you feel jealous of your peers after comparing yourself to them?	Pearson Correlation	1	.491**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	224	224
Does comparing yourself with others lead to frustration?	Pearson Correlation	.491**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	224	224
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The table shows a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.491$ ) between feeling jealous of peers after comparing oneself to them and experiencing frustration from self-comparison. This correlation is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.000, suggesting that the relationship is highly unlikely to be due to chance. The sample consists of 224 participants. The positive correlation indicates that individuals who feel more jealousy after self-comparison are also more likely to experience frustration. The significance level of 0.01 further supports the reliability of this finding.

### Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the pervasive nature of self-comparison among healthcare students and its multifaceted impact on their motivation, self-esteem, emotional well-being, and academic performance. The results indicate that self-comparison is a common phenomenon, with a significant portion of students engaging in both upward and downward comparisons. Upward comparisons, where students compare themselves to peers they perceive as more competent, were found to have both positive and negative effects. While such comparisons can enhance motivation and drive self-improvement, they can also lead to increased anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt. Conversely, downward comparisons, where

students compare themselves to those they perceive as less competent, were associated with increased confidence and reduced stress, though they may also foster complacency.

The study also revealed that self-comparison significantly influences self-esteem, with a notable correlation between the frequency of self-comparison and the tendency to question one's abilities. This aligns with existing literature suggesting that self-comparison can either bolster or undermine self-esteem, depending on the context and individual differences. Furthermore, the findings underscore the role of self-compassion as a protective factor, with students who practice self-compassion reporting lower levels of anxiety and depression. This suggests that fostering self-compassion could be an effective strategy for mitigating the adverse effects of self-comparison in healthcare education.

Gender differences were also evident, with female students reporting higher levels of psychological distress compared to their male counterparts. This may be attributed to internalized social pressures and societal expectations, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive support systems in educational institutions. Additionally, the study found that talking to friends is a commonly used and effective coping mechanism for dealing with self-comparison, emphasizing the importance of social support in promoting emotional well-being. The findings also shed light on the dual nature of self-comparison in academic settings. While some students reported that comparing their grades and academic performance with peers motivated them to set higher standards and improve their performance, others experienced increased anxiety and frustration. This duality suggests that the impact of self-comparison is highly individualized, with some students benefiting from the competitive drive it fosters, while others struggle with the emotional toll it takes.

## **Conclusion**

This study provides valuable insights into the complex relationship between self-comparison, self-esteem, and emotional well-being among healthcare students. The findings reveal that self-comparison is a double-edged sword, capable of both motivating and demoralizing students depending on the context and individual differences. While self-comparison can drive self-improvement and enhance academic performance, it can also lead to increased anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt, particularly in high-pressure academic environments.

The study highlights the importance of fostering self-compassion and resilience among healthcare students to mitigate the negative effects of self-comparison. Additionally, the findings underscore the need for gender-sensitive support systems and the promotion of social support networks to enhance emotional well-being. By addressing these challenges, educational institutions can create a healthier academic environment that supports both personal growth and professional development.

## **Recommendations**

1. **Promote Self-Compassion Training:** Educational institutions should integrate self-compassion training into their curricula to help students develop a kinder and more

- understanding attitude toward themselves. This can reduce the negative emotional impact of self-comparison and enhance overall mental health.
2. **Implement Gender-Sensitive Support Systems:** Given the higher levels of psychological distress reported by female students, institutions should develop gender-sensitive support programs that address the unique challenges faced by female healthcare students. This could include counseling services, mentorship programs, and workshops on coping with societal pressures.
  3. **Encourage Peer Support Networks:** The findings suggest that talking to friends is an effective coping mechanism for dealing with self-comparison. Institutions should encourage the formation of peer support networks and provide platforms for students to share their experiences and challenges in a supportive environment.
  4. **Foster a Growth Mindset:** Educators should promote a growth mindset among students, emphasizing that abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort and learning. This can help students view self-comparison as an opportunity for growth rather than a threat to their self-worth.
  5. **Provide Mental Health Resources:** Institutions should ensure that students have access to mental health resources, including counseling services, stress management workshops, and mindfulness training. These resources can help students manage the emotional challenges associated with self-comparison and academic pressure.
  6. **Encourage Reflective Practices:** Educators should encourage students to engage in reflective practices, such as journaling or self-assessment, to help them process the outcomes of self-comparison and identify areas for improvement. This can promote a more constructive approach to self-comparison and enhance self-awareness.
  7. **Create a Balanced Academic Environment:** Institutions should strive to create a balanced academic environment that minimizes unhealthy competition and promotes collaboration among students. This can be achieved through group projects, peer mentoring, and collaborative learning activities.



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