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Author(s): Asma Bashir<sup>1</sup>, Ruhi Khalid<sup>2</sup>

Affiliation: <sup>1</sup>Women University Multan, <sup>2</sup>Beaconhouse National University, Lahore

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## **Role of Personality Traits and Demographic Characteristics in Psychological and Sociocultural Adjustment: Evidence from International Pakistani Scholars**

Asma Bashir<sup>1,\*</sup> and Ruhi Khalid<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Women University Multan

<sup>2</sup>Beaconhouse National University, Lahore

### **Abstract**

The current study examined the role of demographic variables (gender, age, length of stay) and personality with reference to sociocultural adjustment and acculturative stress among international Pakistani scholars. An online link was generated and 332 Pakistani international scholars were selected. Data was collected through purposive sampling technique using a consent form, demographic form, Acculturative Stress Scale for Pakistani International Students, Sociocultural Adjustment Scale-Revised (SCAS-R), and the Big Five Inventory- The BFI. According to the results, demographic variables predicted acculturative stress, while personality contributed towards predicting sociocultural adjustment. It was also observed that none of the demographic variables played a significant role in sociocultural adjustment. On the other hand, extraversion and neuroticism positively predicted acculturative stress. The current study provides important information that suggests the importance of perseverance traits in the selection of scholars by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan to study abroad. It can also provide notable guidelines to initiate counseling services for vulnerable scholars and implementation of policies at institutional and government level to facilitate their adjustment during their stay abroad.

**Keywords:** acculturative stress, demographic characteristics, personality traits, psychological adjustment, sociocultural adjustment

### **Introduction**

The eminence of international education has increased tremendously in the present era (King & Sondhi, [2018](#)). Nearly 5 million students have been

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\*Corresponding Author: [asma.bashir@wum.edu.pk](mailto:asma.bashir@wum.edu.pk)

enrolled in university-level education outside their home country. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has forecasted that student mobility is likely to reach 8 million by 2025 (OECD, [2018](#)). It plays an astounding role in the formation of a multicultural society (Su et al., [2021](#)). Statistically, thousands of international students annually depart from their home country to pursue higher education abroad (Huberts & Coningh, [2017](#)). Concomitantly, these students also play a significant role in the economic development of their country on their return home (Levent, [2016](#)). At the advent of their international exposure, international students are required to make adjustments to a new environment, with divergent educational, social, and cultural systems from their home country (Ahrari et al., [2019](#); Bashir et al., [2021](#)). This adjustment requires them to adapt to the new environment, including its social characteristics and language. Such adjustment is not only arduous but requires time, effort, and dedication (Poyrazli et al., [2010](#)). It was observed that the more time students spend in a guest country, the better their adjustment would be. However, other factors such as students' attitudes towards encountered challenges, gender, age, level and perception of acculturative stress, personality traits, lack of social support, communication problems, homesickness, and loneliness are all reported to impact their adjustment process (Berry et al., [2006](#); Bochner et al., [2001](#); Brunsting et al., [2018](#); Ward & Colleen, [2013](#); Wilson et al., [2013](#)).

It is essential to acknowledge that literature reported not all or many international students suffered from adjustment problems. Some students absorb the guest country's environment very readily. As a result, they were referred to as well adjusted (Hajara & Monica Galloway, [2018](#); Wilton & Constantine, [2003](#)). On the contrary, some students find the new environment challenging and failed to adapt to it (Conroy & McCarthy, [2021](#); Wang & Mallinckrodt, [2006](#)). Such paradoxical student attitudes towards international student adjustment highlighted idiosyncrasies in the literature regarding the factors that play a significant role in student adjustment. Literature keenly examines the perseverance, age, gender, acculturative stress, and sociocultural adjustment in such students (Duru & Poyrazli, [2007](#); Swami et al., [2010](#)) However, most studies had focused on examining these variables in isolation, not assessing the amalgamated

impact of said factors on adjustment in international students (Smith & Khawaja, [2011](#)). It was hence essential to assess the combination of these variables to obtain a holistic picture of student adjustment. The current research was conducted to assess sociodemographic variables, personality, acculturative stress, and sociocultural adjustment in Pakistan International students.

Psychological and social adjustment are assumed to be interrelated concepts. However, theoretically, the two are separate (Furnham & Erdmann, [1995](#); Hirai et al., [2015](#)). Psychological adjustment is related to stress and coping theory. It is based on emotional reactions to problems and challenges in a new environment and is calculated by stress, anxiety, and mood-related measures. The lower the score on these measures, the better the psychological adjustment (Akhtar & Kröner-Herwig, [2015](#)). Sociocultural adjustment is grounded in social learning theory. It refers to the phenomenon to fit in the guest country. Sociocultural adjustment measures the knowledge of the problems faced in the new environment and the capabilities to deal with them. The more knowledge there is of problems and the ability to deal with them, the better the sociocultural adjustment will be (Rhein, [2018](#); Swami et al., [2010](#)). It can be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively (Bertram et al., [2014](#)). The current study measured acculturative stress through the Acculturative Stress Scale for Pakistani Muslim Students. A low score on the Acculturative stress scale would report better psychological adjustment and a high score would denote poor psychological adjustment (Bashir & Khalid, [2020](#)). The sociocultural adjustment was measured using the Revised Sociocultural Adjustment Scale SCAS-R (Wilson, 2013).

### **Literature Review**

Previous studies offer an overview of the positive and negative role of personality in cross-cultural adjustment (Duru & Poyrazli, [2007](#); Padilla et al., [1986](#); Zhang et al., [2010](#)). As personality is a combination of specific attributes, the individual's personality profile is extremely important in the new environment. Sojourners' specific attitudes and behaviors toward new environmental issues play an important role in resolving those issues and reducing the stress that results from them (Poyrazli et al., [2010](#)) Literature

reported the use of the Big 5 personality traits to review the role of personality in psychological and sociocultural adjustment. It includes the assessment of traits like conscientiousness, openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. This theory aids to understand the role of personality in cross-cultural adjustment (Nofle & Robins, [2007](#); Ward et al., [2004](#)).

Findings retrieved from previous literature on personality and their particular role in adjustment showed that high scores on neuroticism negatively affected acculturative stress and sociocultural adjustment among international students (Ebstrup et al., [2011](#)). Moreover, openness to experience gained special attention as a positive trait in the cross-cultural adjustment literature and was found to act as a strong predictor of educational and social adjustment. Individuals with the openness trait were reported to have a curious attitude towards experimenting and learning new things (Mak & Tran, [2001](#); Yakunina et al., [2012](#)). Similarly, people with conscientiousness were found to be goal-oriented, task-oriented, and believed in working hard to achieve their goals. In literature, this attitude of conscientiousness was linked to educational adjustment. Another key personality trait regarding sociocultural adjustment reported was extraversion (Brandt et al., [2020](#)). Literature reported a positive relationship between social adjustment and extraversion (Zhang et al., [2010](#)). However, the level of extroversion in individuals brought up under certain cultures, and its relevance to sociocultural adjustment requires more research. Agreeableness was another researched personality trait (Kim et al., [2016](#)). According to a study conducted on Asian International students, it was found such students adopted an attitude of compliance to authority and obedience instead of debating to avoid conflict. They obtained low scores on agreeableness and their sociocultural adjustment was affected by this behavior (Ebstrup et al., [2011](#); Roesch et al., [2006](#)). However, research is still needed in this regard. Overall, traits of extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were negatively associated with acculturative stress, while neuroticism remained positively correlated with acculturative stress. Extraversion was also found to be positively correlated with sociocultural adjustment. Students who had a high level of extraversion did not have difficulty in socializing with the host nationals and peer groups or interacting and communicating socially in the host country.

There is also a dearth of literature on the interplay between age, acculturative stress, and sociocultural adjustment. However, according to the available studies, older Chinese international students had more acculturative stress than younger Chinese students did. Older students felt greater fear, hatred, and discomfort than younger students did. The results of another study were similar (Duru & Poyrazli, [2007](#); Su et al., [2021](#); Wei et al., [2012](#)). In contrast, some other studies have reported no correlation between age, perception of acculturative stress, and sociocultural adjustment (Desa et al., [2012](#); Misra et al., [2003](#); Poyrazli et al., [2002](#))

Similarly, ethnicity was reported as an important variable in adjustment literature (Su et al., [2021](#)). According to Poyrazli ([2004](#)), European students were relatively less stressed than Asian students. The study also found that students who did not get along with the people of the host country were more likely to suffer from acculturative stress. Other studies found that being European was associated with less acculturative stress (Poyrazli et al., [2004](#)). Similarly, Asian and Latin students were more stressed than European students. This was due to differences in the language issues between the guest country and the country of origin. Similarly, other studies reported that students belonging to different ethnicities reported diverse levels of stress and adjustment levels (Poyrazli et al., [2010](#); Roesch et al., [2006](#)). The key expositions for differences in the results of varying groups included cultural differences, language differences, perceived discrimination, lack of support, and lack of friends in the host country.

## **Rationale**

The purpose of the present study was also to examine demographic variables and the role of personality on acculturative stress and sociocultural adjustment among Pakistani international students. In previous research findings, the relationship between these variables was reported separately. However, there is no consensus in the literature on these variables that demands further investigation. To the best of our knowledge, the current study was the first to examine the role of personality and various demographic variables on acculturative stress and social adjustment. Thus, serves as a significant addition to the dearth of literature regarding Pakistani students' adjustment abroad. The information obtained based on these relationships would be beneficial for counseling and would inform the

mental health professionals to devise policies to improve the adjustment of Pakistani students. Above and beyond, students may also take positive steps to eliminate acculturative stress and increase sociocultural adjustment in the context of their personality traits.

In this study, specifically personality (conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience, extraversion), sociocultural adjustment (academic adjustment, interpersonal, community, and intrapersonal adjustment, ecological adaptation, language), demographic variables (age, gender, language proficiency), acculturative stress (academic stressors, environmental stressors, cultural and religious stressors, language stressors, discrimination stressors, living and financial stressors) were studied.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formed based on international literature on students belonging to the Asian region generally and limited literature on Pakistani scholars' adjustment.

1. Demographic variables have a significant effect on acculturative stress and the sociocultural adjustment
  - a. Older scholars will experience more acculturative stress than young scholars will.
  - b. Younger scholars will have a better sociocultural adjustment scale than older scholars.
  - c. A longer duration of stay will have a positive relation with acculturative stress.
  - d. Female scholars will experience more acculturative stress than male scholars would.
2. There are significant differences between female and male scholars in terms of acculturative stress
  - a. Female scholars will score low on the sociocultural adjustment scale than male scholars.

Personality traits will have a significant impact on the level of acculturative stress and sociocultural adjustment of scholars.

- a. Scholars with neurotic traits will score higher on the acculturative stress scale and low on the sociocultural adjustment scale.
- b. Extraversion will positively correlate with sociocultural adjustment and negatively with the acculturative stress scale.
- c. Extraversion has a positive and significant relationship with sociocultural adjustment and a negative significant relationship with acculturative stress.
- d. Conscientiousness will correlate positively with educational and sociocultural adjustment.

### Method

#### Sample

400 questionnaires were distributed among Pakistani international scholars enrolled in various universities across the world. These scholars were invited through an online link and agreed to participate voluntarily in the research. They were asked to provide information concerning sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, length of stay), personality traits, and acculturation experiences through psychological instruments. All the participants were informed about the objectives of the study and the confidentiality of their responses was ensured. All the scholars reported enough English Language proficiency to proceed with their studies in the host country with ease. The sample was diverse and the data was received from different countries, including Belgium (n = 27), China (n = 58), Germany (n = 37), Hong Kong (n = 42), Hungary (n = 66), Italy (n = 13), Malaysia (n = 38), South Korea (n = 51)

**Table 1**

*Demographics of the Study Participants (N=332)*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender		
Male	276	83.1
Female	56	16.9
Age		
Less than 25	108	32.5
25-30	138	41.6



<i>Variable</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
31-35	69	20.8
36-40	11	3.3
41-45	6	1.8
Length of stay		
Less than 1 year	56	16.9
1 year	64	19.3
2 year	72	21.7
3 year	78	23.4
4 year	62	18.7
Type of Degree		
Graduation	82	24.69
Masters	147	44.29
PhD	103	31.02

## Measures

### *Demographic Form*

A demographic form was used to obtain basic information from the participants regarding their gender, age, and length of stay. Age-related questions were asked as running variables.

### *Acculturative Stress Scale for Pakistani Muslim International Scholars*

The use of measures for depression, anxiety, and mood states are generally recorded in the literature as tools for psychological adjustment. However, literature recommended that to assess psychological adjustment in a novel environment, measurement of acculturative stress should be done (Demes & Geeraert, [2013](#)). This proposition was based on the premise that the presence of depression and anxiety in any sojourner does not necessarily reflect the fact that the root cause of depression or anxiety is the challenges of the new environment. In contrast, acculturative stress is a better reflection of the challenges of the new space in particular. Based on the scores recorded from these measures, acculturative stress certainly offered the best reflection of the psychological state. Therefore, it is important to use the acculturative stress scale instead of the traditional mood and depression measures. The Acculturative Stress Scale for Pakistani Muslim

International Scholars was used to hence examine the psychological adjustment of scholars. This scale was introduced specifically to assess the acculturative stress of Pakistani Muslim international students (Bashir & Khalid, [2020](#)). Scholars' responses were screened on a 5-point Likert-type scale; whereby 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. Scholars were asked questions related to 6 broad challenges whereby scholars recorded their responses in accordance. The minimum score on this scale was 24 while the maximum was 120. Subscales of this scale included academic, religious, environmental, living and finance, discrimination, and language challenges. For the current scale, the Cronbach alpha remained .82.

### ***Sociocultural Adjustment Scale–Revised (SCAS-R)***

The revised Sociocultural Adjustment Scale (SCAS-R) was used to measure sociocultural adjustment (Wilson, [2013](#)). It contained 21 items. This scale had 5 subscales, which included interpersonal community (ability to communicate easily with people), academic performance (ability to overcome educational problems), personal interest and community involvement (happily participating in the host country's community activities), ecological adaptation (understanding the guest country's environment and feeling at ease) and language proficiency (proficiency in listening, listening, writing, and understanding the languages of the guest country). Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert-type scale, which ranged from 1 (not all competent) to 5 (extremely competent). For the current study, the internal consistency of this scale was excellent ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

### ***Big Five Inventory***

The BFI (John & Srivastava, [1999](#)) is a standardized and effective measure to gauge five aspects of human personality in 44 items (John & Srivastava, [1999](#)). These included conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and extraversion. Some sample items are; “see myself as Someone Who... Is talkative; Is a reliable worker; Has a forgiving nature; Is considerate and kind to almost everyone; Makes plans and follows through with them; Remains calm intense situations.” The respondents submitted their responses on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from disagree strongly (1) to agree strongly (5). The respondents

were asked to think and indicate to what extent they agreed or disagree with a statement. The overall alpha of the scale for the current study remained at an acceptable value ( $\alpha = .70$ ).

## Procedure

The sample of the study consisted of Pakistani scholars studying abroad. A purposive sampling technique was utilized. A Study link was sent to Pakistan International scholars and their informed consent was obtained. A disclaimer indicated that Pakistani immigrant scholars were ineligible as participants were posted on the link's page. Reminders were also sent to the scholars for participating in the study at different times, and honorary certificates were also offered. There were various problems in accessing online data, such as a slow response rate and receiving fake data. However, the process of response submission had been monitored since the data link was sent to keep the existing data safe. The minimum time to complete the survey was 20-25 minutes. Excessive deviated responses from this duration were discarded. In addition, responses submitted within a few seconds or minutes before the completion and average duration were also discarded. It was assumed that the scholars submitted the response without reading it with just one click, so such entries were deleted. The study link remained open for 3 months. However, only one entry was allowed by each student. Correlation analysis was conducted to understand the nature of the relationship between scholars' study variables. In addition, regression analysis was also used to determine predictors.

## Results

A Pearson Correlation matrix was generated using the study variables. Demographic variables exhibited a relationship with acculturative stress and sociocultural adjustment in the proposed direction. The results showed that age was positively correlated with acculturative stress ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ). Similarly, Personality traits have shown a significant relationship with acculturative stress and sociocultural adjustment of scholars in a hypothetical manner. Negative significant correlations were observed between acculturation stress and extraversion ( $r = -.20, p < .001$ ), conscientiousness ( $r = -.14, p < .05$ ). Acculturation stress had a positive correlation with neuroticism ( $r = .27, p < .001$ ). Extraversion ( $r = .24, p <$

.001), conscientiousness ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ), and openness ( $r = .20, p < .05$ ) were positively correlated with sociocultural adaptation, whereas neuroticism was negatively correlated with sociocultural adaptation ( $r = -.25, p < .001$ ).

**Table 2**

*Correlation Matrix among Demographics, Personality, Acculturative Stress, and Sociocultural Adaptation (N=332)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Gender	1	-.01	.04	.07	.06	-.06	.07	.05	.24**	.03
2 Age		1	.19**	.18**	-.05	-.16**	.06	-.03	.08	-.05
3 Length of Stay			1	.06	.01	-.06	-.10	-.02	.03	-.02
4 Acculturative Stress				1	-.22**	-.20**	-.02	-.14*	.28**	-.08
5 Sociocultural Adjustment					1	.24**	.15**	.24**	-.25**	.21**
6 Extraversion						1	.18**	.28**	-.38**	.30**
7 Agreeableness							1	.50**	-.34**	.32**
8 Conscientiousness								1	-.37**	.54**
9 Neuroticism									1	-.34**
10 Openness										1

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### Regression Analysis

After controlling the variables in Model 1, the variables of the model i.e. gender, age, and length of stay jointly explained the  $R^2 = .038$  variation in the outcome variables i.e. acculturative stress. That is, in model 1, 3.8 % variation was explained by the outcome variable. Overall, this model produced significant results.  $f(3,328) = 4.307, p < .001$ . Similarly, in model 2, Personality traits were entered according to which  $R^2 = .12$ , i.e. 12.1 % variation in the outcome variable, was explained by model 2. This model was also significant.  $f(8,323) = 5.564, p = .000$ . Similarly, the impact of personality traits on acculturative stress was explored. The results revealed that personality traits had a significant impact on acculturative stress and

neuroticism proved to be a positive predictor of acculturative stress ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 3**

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Acculturative Stress Predicted through Demographic variables and Personality Traits (N=332)*

Variables	Acculturative stress		
Controls	$\beta$	$R^2$	f
(Constant)			
Demographics		0.038	4.307**
Length of Stay	0.026		
Gender	0.070		
Age	0.175**		
(Constant)		0.121	5.564***
Length of Stay	0.034		
Gender	0.005		
Age	0.133		
Extraversion	-0.093		
Agreeableness	0.108		
Conscientiousness	-0.107*		
Neuroticism	0.248***		
Openness	0.064		
Adjusted $R^2 = 0.029$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.099$			

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Similarly, Hierarchical Regression Analysis predicted the Sociocultural Adjustment Predicted through demographic variables and Personality Traits. The results revealed that demographic variables did not predict sociocultural adjustment. However, sociocultural adjustment was largely predicted through personality traits. Personality traits predicted

sociocultural adjustment  $F(8,323) = 5.527, p = .000$ , interpersonal communication  $F(8,323) = 4.174, p = .000$ , academic adjustment  $F(8,323) = 5.498, p = .000$ , personal interest and community involvement  $F(8,328) = 4.262, p = .000$ , ecological adaptation  $F(8,323) = 2.136, p < .05$  and language adaptation  $F(8,328) = 2.883, p < .001$ . Particularly, extraversion proved to be a significant positive predictor of sociocultural adjustment ( $\beta = .141, p < .001$ ) whereas Neuroticism turned out to be a negative predictor of sociocultural adjustment ( $\beta = -.167, p < .001$ ). Overall, demographic variables contributed to acculturative stress and personality traits to sociocultural adjustment.

**Table 4**

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Sociocultural Adjustment Predicted through demographic variables and Personality Traits (N=332)*

Variables	Sociocultural Adaptation		
Controls	$\beta$	$R^2$	f
(Constant)			
Demographics		.006	0.655
Length of Stay	0.022		
Gender	0.056		
Age	-0.051		
(Constant)		.120	5.527***
Length of Stay	0.028		
Gender	0.101		
Age	-0.010		
Extraversion	0.141**		
Aggression	-0.006		
Conscientiousness	0.114		
Neuroticism	-0.167**		
Openness	0.050		

Variables	Sociocultural Adaptation
<sup>1</sup> Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = -.003, <sup>2</sup> Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .099	

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Gender (0=male, 1=female),

<sup>1</sup>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> for model 1 (demographics), <sup>2</sup>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> for model 2 (personality traits)

## Discussion

The main objective of this study was to examine the role of personality traits (conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness), demographic (age, gender, length of stay) on psychological adjustment (Acculturative stress), and sociocultural adjustment (sociocultural adjustment scale-SCAS-R).

According to the first hypothesis, the psychological adjustment of Pakistani international scholars was predicted through demographic variables. The current results highlighted that the duration of stay in the host country contributed to overcoming language challenges and reduced acculturative stress. The results confirmed the findings from earlier studies that showed a negative relationship between the length of stay and language stress (Al Abiky, [2021](#); Duru & Poyrazli, [2007](#); Hajara & Monica Galloway, [2018](#); Iorga et al., [2020](#); Mori, [2000](#)). Similarly, Age is signified to be a positive predictor of acculturative stress. This denoted that older scholars experienced more acculturative stress than younger scholars did. The results confirmed the earlier studies and were meaningful in the Pakistani context (Akhtar & Kröner-Herwig, [2015](#); Duru & Poyrazli, [2007](#); Ye, [2006](#)). As male students grow older, societal expectations require them to look after their families. Increment in responsibilities overburdens such students and causes their educational abilities to suffer. As individuals grow older, learning abilities are likely to diminish (Al-Krenawi et al., [2021](#); Khalid, [2011](#); Khosrojerdi, [2015](#); McDermott-Levy, [2011](#); Mukminin et al., [2013](#); Tineo et al., [2021](#); Zeenah & Colleen, [2016](#)).

In the second hypothesis, it was proposed that personality would play a significant role in the psychological and sociocultural adjustment of Pakistani international scholars. The findings indicated exactly in harmony with the findings of previous studies. Personality traits served as a strong predictor of acculturative stress (Poyrazli et al., [2010](#); Ramdhonee &

Bhowon, [2012](#)). More specifically, neuroticism emerged as a positive predictor of acculturative stress which was confirmed in prior research (Kertechian, [2018](#); Komarraju et al., [2011](#); Bhatti et al., [2017](#)). Literature provided reasons for this relationship. Individuals with an evident trait of neuroticism were prone to increased sensitivity whereby when faced with stressful situations, they experienced more anxiety than others did. Similarly, anxiety and stress affected their ability to endure situations, learn new skills, and focus well. As a result, these individuals proved to be easy targets for acculturative stress and experienced academic challenges and environmental issues comparatively more than other scholars experience. According to the results of a similar study, students with high levels of neuroticism were more likely to experience acculturative stress as a result, their ability to cope with new situations and use coping mechanisms was negatively affected (Mangold et al., [2007](#)). Similarly, Conscientiousness proved to be a negative predictor of Acculturative stress. A possible justification for these results is that individuals with the conscientiousness trait tend to plan, organize and prioritize tasks. These elements enable success in their psychological and social adjustment. In addition, conscientious individuals were seen as more capable to adapt to a new environment; enabling them to interact and connect with new people better than others. These results of Pakistani scholars corroborate the findings of studies in international literature.

Likewise, considering the relationship between personality traits and sociocultural adjustment, the current findings were also consistent with previous literature that highlighted a deep connection between personality traits and sociocultural adjustment. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience proved to be positive predictors of sociocultural adjustment, while neuroticism proved to be a negative predictor of sociocultural adjustment. The results of the study further showed that extraversion was a strong predictor of sociocultural adjustment. These results were in line with the results in prior literature (Hirai et al., [2015](#); Przepiorka et al., [2020](#); Zhang et al., [2010](#)). Extraverted scholars adapted quickly to their surroundings and thus did not face many problems in the new academic and social field. They did not find it difficult to meet new people in the new environment. This social interaction provided help to the



scholars to be socially adjusted. Therefore, people with extraversion traits were found to be the best fit for a new environment.

## Implications

The present study holds these important implications for Pakistani scholars, Pakistani educational institutions, educational counselors, and educational policymakers.

1. The role of scholars is most important in the adjustment process. Scholars pursuing foreign education should adopt a more realistic approach. The characteristics of the host country, educational system, and required abilities on the individual's part should be very thoroughly evaluated (Preston & Wang, [2017](#)). Scholars must develop a broad sense of challenges that they may confront during their course of study and enable themselves to better deal with them.
2. For scholars who plan to go abroad for education, their personality traits must be examined. This may aid to identify the specific personality traits in each student, especially those who are more vulnerable to acculturative stress, counseling them psychologically and academically, enhance their coping skills to ultimately facilitate them in adjusting to the host country (Duru & Poyrazli, [2007](#)).
3. Although host universities may not be able to find the perfect solution to the problems faced by incoming scholars, they may adopt some traditional and non-traditional methods that can facilitate the transition and adjustment of incoming scholars. For instance, Cultural and religious backgrounds should be considered while facilitating the scholars, particularly in social interactions and occasional receptions, administrative bodies should encourage such arrangements that are in line with the needs and traditions of all scholars.

## Conclusion and Future Directives

The present study examined the role of sociodemographic variables and perseverance traits of Pakistani scholars in their psychological and social adjustment. According to the results, scholars who had negative persistent traits such as neuroticism needed to take steps to improve their adjustment. In this regard, policymakers, the Pakistani government, educational institutions of the host country, and the government of the host country

shoulder the responsibility to take initiatives to improve the adjustment of these scholars. In addition, cross-cultural orientation program training should be organized at the institutional and government levels for the scholars who plan to study abroad. Such programs may help scholars better understand their environment before they leave the country. The Government of Pakistan and the educational institutions of the guest countries need to work together in this regard to formulate program planning, content, and execution so that scholars, the economy, and educational institutes may benefit from student mobility. Steps should particularly be taken to facilitate female Muslim international scholars enabling them to carry their complete attire and religious obligation with mental ease and peace.

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