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Pakistani International Students' Acculturative Experiences of Studying Abroad: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Departure from one's homeland to a foreign destination is a significant challenge for any international student. The transition of adjusting to a novel educational institute and its social life in the host country is an arduous task in itself. This article reviews the literature on Pakistani international students' scholastic, social, cultural, and psychological adjustment issues as they depart on their educational journey overseas. The examination also includes an assessment of social support from family and friends as well as coping mechanisms. Acculturative stress and language proficiency have been identified as crucial variables regarding Pakistani students' adjustment to a foreign country. However, with the help of family and friends, specific coping methods along with resilience tactics reduce stress and aid in their adjustment. This is the first literature review on Pakistani international students' experiences and the challenges they face abroad. For the literature review, national and international databases such as Higher Education Commission (HEC) repository PubMed, PsycINFO, EBSCO, and CINAHL were used and Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis(PRISMA) guidelines were followed for the screening of research articles. This review may assist in charting Pakistani international students' acculturation patterns in host countries. Moreover, it may also aid Pakistani educational institutions, host nations, and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) in developing policies for Pakistani international students overseas.

Keywords: *Pakistani International Students, Educational Challenges, Discrimination, Social and Cultural Issues, Language Barriers.*

Introduction

Over the last two decades, the world has transformed into a global village. Consistent overseas connections using information technology with boundless access not limited by borders have aided education, trade, research, and the economy to all become intertwined (Knight, 2012). With reduced international barriers educationally, overseas students are expanding. Approximately 3.4 million students across the globe have left their home countries to study at various international educational institutes in the last decade. Statistics highlight that nearly half of these students preferred to study in the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia while the rest of the students were inclined towards choosing Canada, Japan, and Russia (UNESCO, 2016).International education creates bilateral improvement opportunities not only for international students but also for international educational institutions. Owing to the influx of

these overseas students, international educational institutions are making increased efforts to provide quality education. They are also improving their services to aid students enabling them to reap the benefits associated with internationalization (Pandit, 2009).Various factors attract international students to overseas educational institutions. These include the reputation of educational institutions, the provision of supreme services as well as the ranking of international universities. Under the trend of student mobility and the associated benefits attached to it, international students spend an exponential sum of money on tuition and other fees to secure admission to these international higher educational institutions (Powar, 2012). International students also contribute immensely to overseas nations. They propagate cultural variety in the host nations raising cultural awareness by sharing the native traditions and perspectives. Similarly, international students who come to campus with diverse skills and abilities enrich the intellectual capital of the host country. This assists indigenous students to work more efficiently for their country's workforce. Hence, enrolling international students benefit both international and indigenous students. While the host country benefits in terms of acculturation and economy, the international students can receive their education and degree from higher education institutions. Upon graduation, these students return home to help stabilize higher education institutions, education, and research, as well as help revive their national economy (Bashir & Khalid, 2020).

There is an increasing trend to study abroad in Asia whereby statistics show that around 60% of overseas students are from this continent(OECD, 2018). According to a recent report, China and Saudi Arabia have the highest influx of international students sent to the United States of America whereas Korea was previously competing with China to send students abroad (Alsahafi & Shin, 2016; Yan & Berliner, 2009).Many students from China, India, South Korea, and Taiwan study in the United States and its allied nations. Governing bodies of these countries help talented and worthy students with opportunities to study abroad so they contribute to the nation's stability (Cebolla-Boado et al., 2018). Given the changing demography, recent positive advances in China and Saudi Arabia suggest that their governments are investing heavily in education and research.

Pakistan has joined the rising trend of students studying abroad. Even the Pakistani government, through the Higher Education Commission (HEC), is providing opportunities to Pakistani students to study abroad. The Fulbright program, UGRAD program, and DAAD scholarship program are offered by the United States of America and Germany to Pakistani students to facilitate their education in their respective countries. As this trend grows, there is still a dearth of literature on how Pakistani overseas students adjust to their host country. Studying Pakistani international students is of utmost importance as they possess unique Muslim, geographical and cultural identities.

The Cultural Context of Pakistan

Pakistan is the second-largest Muslim-majority nation (Abidi, 2017). Being a Muslim is a distinct cultural and religious identity Worshipping at prescribed periods of the day (prayer) and certain annual worships (notably the fasting of Ramadan) are features of Pakistani Muslim students' lives that relate to their distinctive identity (Jibeen& Khalid, 2010a).Literature indicates that students from Muslim countries have been targeted because of their religious affiliation causing them to suffer from fear, hatred, and depression (Tummala - Narra & Claudius, 2013). The September 11 attacks in 2001 have had a profound negative effect on Muslims. Under the guise of this incident, Islamophobia was further fueled, and Muslim students were subjected to various negative attitudes by the people and governments of host countries (Zeenah & Colleen, 2016). These include imposing travel restrictions on Muslims, increasing restrictions on entry abroad, and tightening the immigration process. As a result of this mistreatment, students from Muslim countries face severe difficulties in accommodation, education, and adjustment abroad(Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Dimandja, 2017). In other words, because of their religious identity, Muslims face more discrimination-based issues in addition to adjusting to a new place.

Family values are a significant component of Pakistani culture. Literature has revealed that overseas Pakistani students experience difficulty assimilating into the host country due to variations in cultural customs and values (Ayyoub et al., 2019).Pakistani students belong to a collectivistic culture. Such a culture teaches them to respect elders and to follow the traditions of their ancestors. Parents, siblings, friends, and teachers are highly valued (Jibeen, 2016). All these individuals form a strong support system. Research literature purports that students belonging to collectivistic cultures face problems regarding adjustment in a collectivistic society. Research on Asian students supports these findings (Nilsson et al., 2008; Rienties & Tempelaar, 2013).It is important to see what effect this contrast between the Western individualistic cultures of the host nations has on the adjustment of Pakistani students belonging to a collectivistic culture.

Pakistan is a region of great geographical significance. It is linked to South Asia and the Middle East. Owing to this geographical bridge, Pakistani students going overseas face varying attitudes from the people of the host countries (Bashir et al., 2019; Jibeen & Khalid, 2010b). For example, Pakistan owing to its Muslim majority population and identity in Asia is associated with the Taliban Afghan, and al-Qaeda, who have religious extremist attitudes. As Islam teaches moderation, Pakistan stands with the United States in the war against religious terrorism. Due to this, Pakistani students, apart from their Muslim identity and geographical presence in a terrorism-infested region are on the receiving end of extremist attitudes from the people and governments of the surrounding and host countries (Haider, 2018). Owing to this situation, Pakistani Muslim students, belonging to the world's second-largest Islamic country, need to be studied regarding their adjustment abroad and as well as to explore how their Muslim identity interferes or facilitates their adjustment abroad. Research is now underway for Pakistani Muslim students abroad on adjustment and the elements that contribute to it. Only a few studies exist that examine this domain. Thus, additional research is needed on Pakistani students' adjustment overseas, as well as related causes and determinants.

Furthermore, collating and synthesizing existing research on Pakistani students is critical to understanding their adjustment patterns. This is the first attempt to collect data on the educational and social adjustment of Pakistani international students. The current study is significant because it compiles a systematic literature review on Pakistani international students. This research may aid in assisting Pakistani Muslim students' transition. This will help host institutions, Pakistani educational institutions, local governments, and politicians to guide Pakistani students studying abroad more aptly as well. It may also assist host institutions and Pakistani educational institutions to have a clear policy to abet Pakistani students. In the following section, the term acculturative stress, adjustment and adaptation have been defined, followed by general trends in studying adjustment of International and Pakistani international students, research plan, inclusion and exclusion criteria opted for the current review and findings from the literature.

Acculturative Stress and International Students from Pakistan

Acculturative stress denotes stress that occurs in response to daily life challenges embedded in the new environment or place. Various forms of acculturative stressors are rooted in the cross-cultural transition including educational challenges (e.g., new academic setup, teaching techniques, learning methods, etc),social challenges and language barriers (difficulties to communicate and establish a social network with locals), discrimination (e.g., marginalization based on racial or religious context), and general life challenges (food, accommodation and financial challenges). These challenges are more likely to occur in a minority group (Joiner Jr & Walker, 2002; Stuart & Ward, 2011). For instance, a study on Pakistani international students enrolled in Australia, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Germany, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom, identified educational, cultural and religious, financial, discrimination, environmental, and language challenges among Pakistani Muslim international students. Similarly, in Pakistani international students studying at Chinese universities, the disparity between home and host culture, homesickness, language difficulties, a lack of halal food, housing, difficulty managing groceries, expenses, and annual budgets, as well as discrimination, all contributed significantly to Pakistani

students' acculturative stress. These stressors have a detrimental effect on the students' social and psychological adjustment.

Consequently, students exhibit physical and emotional signs of acculturative stress such as anxiety, anger, a sense of loss, changes in eating and drinking habits, and physical pain. If these issues are not addressed and the symptoms persist for an extended period, international students may develop a sense of depression and may even resort to taking drugs. International students, according to studies, seek assistance from university counseling services during times of acculturative stress. There is, however, no research on how Pakistani students can obtain such assistance. This may be because Pakistani students come from a collectivistic society in which the most essential aspect is strong social relationships between family members, which serve as a buffer against acculturative stress for the students. These findings mirror the association of acculturative stress with depression and anxiety in Taiwanese (Ying, 2005), Indonesian and Korean international students (Lee et al., 2004; Lee & Ciftci, 2014; Lee, 2010), and other Asian international students (Constantine et al., 2004)enrolled in western higher educational institutions.

Acculturative Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation

Research examining the transition of international students and adjustment to their new environment is not a novel concept. Rather, it began half a century ago, particularly in the 1960s to understand the views and impressions of international students in a new environment as well as to assess the implications of this new change. Problems faced by students abroad were reviewed in different ways (Mesidor & Sly, 2016). However, in recent times, the term adjustment has been used for international students with varied implications. Although it is a complex concept, an adjustment involves better absorption of students' new environment abroad, overcoming stressors, and an ability to maintain a balance between one's environmental demands and encountered challenges(de Araujo, 2011; Mesidor& Sly, 2016).Initial studies identified various factors that affected the adjustment of students abroad, including an overview of the nature and duration of their stay abroad (de Araujo, 2011; Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

However, upcoming literature has identified more variables in this regard, including language proficiency, attitudes of host nationals towards the incoming students, difficulties forming emotional connections in a new environment, lack of knowledge of available resources, perception of cultural differences between home and host country and social support, etc (Brunsting et al., 2018; Gebhard, 2012; Wenhua & Zhe, 2013).Another perspective describes adjustment as a cross-cultural loss and purports that a person is adjusted if he/she can live in the new environment without the availability of familiar objects i.e. educational environment and social support that they had in past. In this sense, self-efficacy, personal and constructive methods are vital in adjusting for or managing emotional loss. Overall, adjustment is hence divided into three distinct sections; academic, social, and psychological adjustments. Not addressing these issues can lead to despair, anxiety, and loneliness (Ahrari et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2015).

The concept highlighted in the available literature also indicates that acculturation problems for students in the host nation vary by culture, ancestral tradition, and custom (Bashir & Khalid, 2020; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). The pressures of international students may vary between countries due to cultural variances, linguistic competence, significant disparities in surroundings, religious ideals, and social views. Many studies ignore the diverse nationality of international students and classify them as a homogeneous group. However, international literature indicates that students' background, home environment, home culture, and home country play an important role in their adjustment. Integrating students of a specific nationality with students of other nationalities may not provide accurate information about student adjustments (Jibeen & Khalid, 2010b; Masgoret & Ward, 2006). For example, Pakistani Muslim students cannot be compared with a group of South Asian students because their specific environment, needs, social values, and religious practices set them apart from other students of the same region. In examining students from variegated nationalities, specific elements of nationalities are completely ignored; leading to substandard outcomes.

Therefore, in reviewing the adjustment of international students, their nationality cannot be ignored. Hence, separate studies of international students from each nationality are emphasized highlighting their adjustment in regard to their specific culture, environment, and values (Nguyen & Larson, 2017; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007).The current study scouts literature on acculturative stressors, factors contributing to the adjustment experiences, involvement with native cultural values, and religious practices of Pakistani international students enrolled in various universities across the globe. The role of social support and coping to alleviate acculturative stress in the new environment of the host country was also examined. To the best of researchers' knowledge, there is no such study available on the topic and this is the first-ever literature review compiled to bridge the dearth of available literature on international students. It is anticipated that this review shall deliver a better understanding of Pakistani graduate Muslim international students' practices of acculturative stress and adaptability, assisting counselors, clinicians, and educational policymakers to address the needs of this underrepresented population more adequately.

Trends in studying acculturative Stress and adjustment: International and Pakistani trends

In 1950, students began traveling abroad to advance their education. Before the introduction of the student exchange programs, most studies on overseas students concentrated and explored variables on psychological and well-being issues. Early 1980s discussions included acculturation, acculturative stress, social support, and coping techniques. Recent discussions have focused on student adjustment, acculturation tactics, social assistance, and the personal abilities of sojourners (Ward & Colleen, 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). The trend to study abroad among Pakistani international students gained popularity in the early 2000s with the founding of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), causing a plethora of students interested in HEC's foreign scholarships. The trend of studying international students' adjustment issues has become common in the last decade. Between 2010 to 2018, various variables about Pakistani students' were examined including motivation, followed by their choice of foreign universities, adjustment challenges, perceived differences in host and home values, attitudes of host nationals, the impact of social media on Pakistani students' adjustment, use of coping tactics, and social support. These studies have highlighted the barriers as well as facilitators to the adjustment of Pakistani international students. The current literature has reviewed all the indigenous articles that explored the challenges experienced by the said population as well as facilitators to their adjustment abroad intending to identify future directives for research in this area. Hence, Studying Pakistani international students' adjustment, encountering challenges, and conducting a systematic literature review is extremely critical because there is limited information and knowledge available on this subject. This literature is critical in bridging the literary gap regarding Muslim students in international acculturation research.

Search Strategy

This literature review discusses the positive indicators and stressors of psychosocial adjustment of international students from Pakistan. We searched for empirical research using online databases including Google Scholar, PsycINFO, ProQuest psychology, and journals recognized by the Higher Education Commission. Numerous terms related to the issue were subsumed in the database. These included Pakistani International Students, Pakistani Muslim International Students, Pakistani Students' Acculturative Stress, Pakistani Students' Adjustment, and adjustment Factors, Pakistani students' migration trends, etc. Additionally, some other terms were employed such as Pakistani students' coping techniques, social support, and so forth. The search resulted in empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals between 2001 and 2020,. The present study was assessed and agreed to by the Board of Advanced Studies (BASR) of the researchers' parent university.

Description of Pakistani international students, Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

For the current review, Pakistani international students refer to those students who traveled overseas to obtain Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. degrees, intending to return after completing their studies, holding citizenship of Pakistan, excluding dual nationality holders. The current analysis of the literature focuses exclusively on research that examines acculturation patterns and problems for exclusively Pakistani overseas students. The protocol to select and review articles for the current study used PRISMA guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis).These involved (a) outlining subject and inclusion/exclusion criteria (2) determining data collection sources and processes(3) selecting appropriate literature, (4) collecting articles(5) analyzing and screening articles (PRISMA, 2015). The flow of the article selection process follows the PRISMA steps (diagram1).

Overall, around 72 studies have been conducted. These studies are found through various search engines and popular databases. The preliminary screening resulted in the elimination of 15 articles due to the irrelevancy of research objectives (i.e. studies conducted on first or second-born immigrant students on the diverse issue).Thus 57 articles were screened further. This screening was performed based on defined inclusion and exclusion criteria set for the current study. This thorough screening left 17 pieces of research including qualitative (n= 9), quantitative articles (n=3), and mixed-method study design (n=3). Hence, only seventeen of these studies were included in the analysis as these selected studies were conducted on purely Pakistani international students' adjustment factors, acculturative stress experiences, use of social support, and coping strategies. Cited book chapters and articles published in local newspapers about Pakistani Muslim International students were also used for reference purposes. After the bibliographic search, the titles, abstracts, and references of all papers were examined. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, these 17 pieces of research gave critical information about the topic's importance.

The following inclusion criteria were used in particular.

a. A research article that examined the acculturative stress of Pakistani international students, and in which many facets of Pakistani students' acculturative stress and adjustment, including educational, psychological, and social factors, were discussed.
b. A research article that provided first-hand information from Pakistani international students on their acculturation journey and covers relevant aspects i.e. motivation, stress, coping, and support system contributing to the adjustment for Pakistani students studying and those who have studied abroad.
c. A research article that was published in peer-reviewed journals. Peer-reviewed publications seek the opinion of experts to help researchers refine their work. The researchers then refine their work further in light of suggestions they receive from experts in a field.

Exclusion Criteria

Articles were excluded based on the following exclusion criteria.

a. Research articles that researched immigrant Pakistani students.
b. Survey data released by funding agencies on Pakistani students' experiences abroad.
c. Research articles where research was conducted on South Asian international students and where a few Pakistani students were included to represent Pakistan in their sample. The literature has revealed that the results of such studies where a few students from a particular population are included may not be representative of a particular population and have generalization issues.

The article screening procedure was performed systematically. In the initial “identification phase”, the obtained articles were studied carefully to comprehend their content for relevancy. In the second “summaries phase”, the relevant information of each extracted and the selected articles were placed in a

table format. This information included Author(s), title, study design, sample variables, and major findings of results (see table 1).

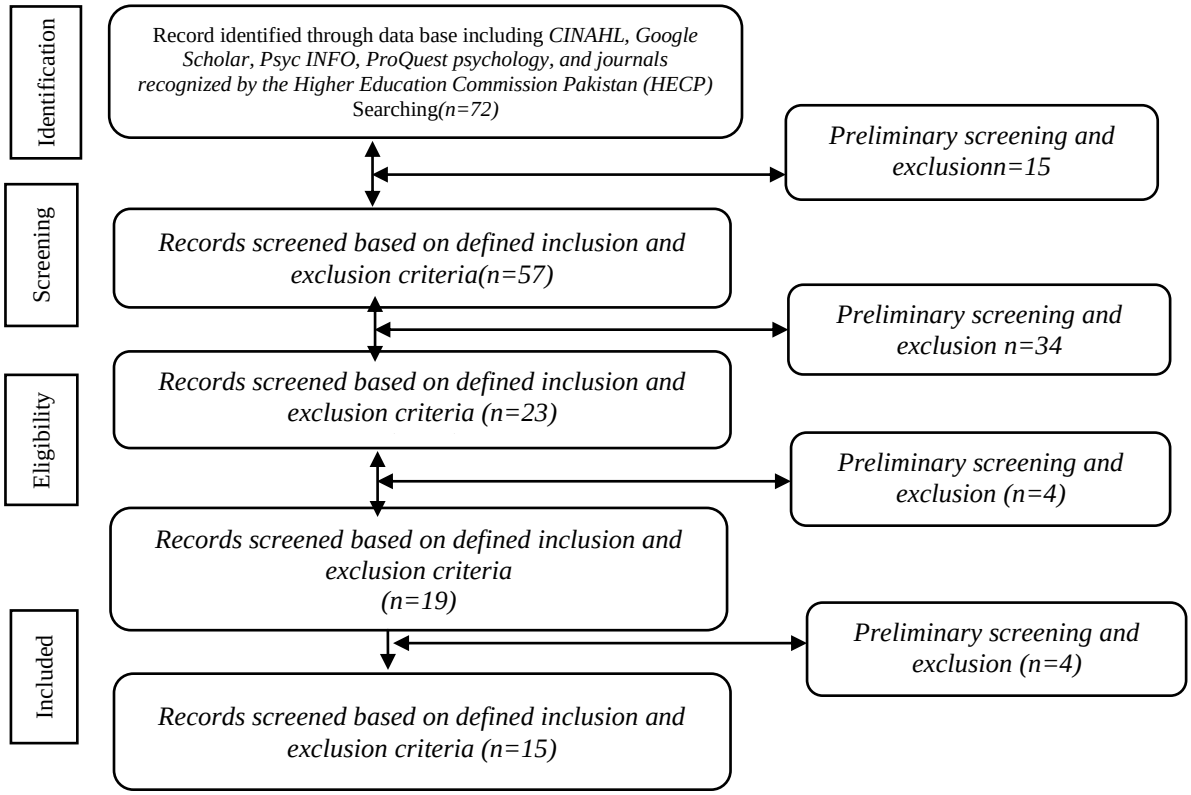

Fig. 1. PRISMA flowchart demonstrating the study selection

In the final "analysis phase", categories were formed based on factors identified in the available research. This analysis resulted in the extraction of 10 themes contributing to the acculturative stress experience of Pakistani international students. These themes are discussed in the findings and discussion section.

Findings and Discussion

The review discusses the literature on challenges and facilitators in educational, social, and cultural adjustment, the buffering effect of social support on acculturation issues, the students' use of coping and appraisal, the shortcomings in the available studies, and future suggestions.

Annexure 1summarizes 10 emerging themes from research on Pakistani Muslim International students. Each of these seven themes is examined in light of available literature concerning Pakistani Muslim students, particularly overseas students in general. These topics include language proficiency, social and educational hurdles, prejudice, peer group relationships, acculturative stress, and duration of stay.

Major Themes

Educational Stressors and the Adjustment

Educational challenges arise from variations in teaching methods, the language of instruction, exam administration, and differences in course material between the host and home countries. An inability to handle these differences contributes to academic stress. One of the most challenging elements for students studying abroad is to adjust academically(Elias et al., 2011). Academic adjustment refers to an ability to adapt to the teaching pattern, examination system, and learning mode of the host institution (Anderson &Guan, 2018).It involves a learning process that eventually results in improved learning and the development of coping strategies meant to achieve adequate academic growth which also affects mental and social health. Upon entering the new institution, international students are exposed to a new academic life that presents many challenges and obstacles for international students. For instance, A study conducted on Asian international students revealed that adjustment to the new academic environment at Australian universities proved challenging for the students as the new academic system was different from their educational setup back home (Ahrari et al., 2019; Nayak &Venkatraman, 2010).Consequently, academic challenges become the major cause of stress for incoming international students.

Literature has revealed that academic success is vital to Pakistani students because it reflects their traditions and culture. Pakistani students are from Asia, where success is constantly encouraged. Similarly, due to their collectivist culture, Pakistani students view academic success as a way to make their families proud. Nonetheless, perfectionism is a trait shared by Pakistani and Asian students. This urges students to consistently strive to attain the greatest results (Li & Campbell, 2006). With this background, overseas students' educational transition becomes critical, and the likelihood of them being influenced by educational stressors increases.

Literature on Pakistani students' academic journey abroad has revealed that they faced educational challenges in Dutch higher education institutes. Students struggled with the instructive system, taking part in the exam, and working in groups. They blamed the differences in the academic setup of the host country's education system against Pakistan's education system. The students overcome these issues through personal effort and system comprehension (Bashir et al., 2019). The results are similar to a study conducted by Janjua, Malik, and Rahman (2011) that indicated a non-familiarity with the academic system, differences in the teaching methods and learning techniques among host and home countries and problems to complete group assignments had an inverse impact on educational adjustment of international students In Pakistan (Janjua et al., 2011).

Consequently, uncontrolled pressures lead to acculturative stress, academic failure, and even academic disintegration. According to a report on Pakistani students, the majority of students were unable to prove themselves on the biggest recruitment forum to hire faculty for various academic institutions in the country owing to disruptions (Ali et al., 2013). A plea for government action has been made in this regard. Additionally, Pakistani students studying in Chinese universities overcame academic hurdles through personal work and motivation with some even receiving university recognition. Similarly, another study found that Pakistani students had a great time studying overseas. They had to adapt their learning, reading, and writing styles, moving away from traditional rote learning towards conceptual learning to assimilate into the system offering them practical experience (Staton & Jalil, 2017).

Qualitative research of Pakistani students revealed that not all foreign universities are the finest, and that prospective students should research their choices effectively before applying. Students should preferably choose a university that has an established program in their field of choice rather than a university starting a new program or one with an affordable fee structure. Studying at a top-ranked university in their home country may improve students' skills. The assistance students receive from host teachers or supervisors is also a factor in their academic adjustment at the host institution. Students' educational adjustment may

elevate if they get support and cooperation from their host teachers and supervisors. Teachers' knowledge of course subjects, personal attention, and impartiality are valued in Pakistani education. Pakistani students who received such support praised their host country's teachers and teaching methods.

Sociocultural Stressors and the Adjustment

For effective survival overseas, students need to create an effective social network. Language, culture, tradition variations, types of interactions with people in the host nation, and attitudes toward cultural norms, values, and traditions are all elements that impact the sociocultural adjustment of international students (Hirai et al., 2015; Swami et al., 2010). These issues seem particularly acute when students arrive in the host country; causing them to feel lonely and struggle to become accustomed. Nevertheless, cultural variations between home and host cultures accentuate these issues (Wang, 2009).

It has been observed that the perception of cultural disparity between home and host country results in more efforts on the sojourners' part to understand and absorb the host culture (Redmond, 2000; Reilly, 2012). Thus, their adjustment process gets slower. Furthermore, a clash between the cultural values of home and host country, for instance, differences in moral beliefs and religious obligations of the sojourners' native and host country, can have a detrimental impact on the social, emotional, moral, and psychological adjustment of the international students. The available literature has exposed that non-western international students faced significantly more challenges in the said areas compared to native students and international students from other western countries (Rienties & Tempelaar, 2013).

Research shows that Pakistani international students enrolled in Australian universities observed noticeable cultural differences between their native and host countries. These differences required adjustment to the new environment. Reporting the differences, students found that men and women had the same civil liberties, individuals maintained a practical approach to the daily routine, and were free to choose their religion based on their approach towards life. The lack of gender discrimination between men and women was another noticeable cultural shock. Both genders played conjugal roles at home and work. Men were not given preferential treatment. In Pakistani society, men are essentially the breadwinners while women are homemakers (Khalid, 2011). Pakistani Muslim students had to learn to give up feelings of pride and superiority over females to adapt to the new role in the host country. Overall, students overseas reported that the key features of the host society were individualism, assertiveness, and independence, which hindered their full integration into the Western world. Pakistani nationals are reported to be collectivistic and interdependent individuals who relied on the social support system of friends and family (Ayyoub et al., 2019).

English Language Proficiency Stressors and Adjustment

Language is critical for student adjustment. A lack of competency in the country's language, particularly English, impacts both the educational and social facets of adjustment for students (Duru & Poyrazli, 2007). For instance, on the academic front, these international students may struggle to understand lectures, and assignments, and even feel discouraged to raise questions in the classroom. Academic success requires students to excel in all of these areas. The results of worldwide research demonstrate that students belonging to non-English speaking countries struggle academically due to language barriers more than other international students if they seek admission in countries where English is the primary mode of educational and general communication (Genç & Bada, 2010; Hajara & Monica Galloway, 2018; Sawir, 2005). Similar results have been found in research studies conducted on Asian International students belonging to Taiwan, China, and Korea, whereby English language competence is linked to the best overseas adjustment, and language challenges have an adverse impact on adjustment overall(Dao et al., 2007; Kwon, 2013; Preston & Wang, 2017; Rhein, 2018; Wang et al., 2012). A review of research conducted on Pakistani international students has shown that English language proficiency facilitated their academic and social integration. Language skills assisted students to communicate with professors in the

classroom and give them the confidence to discuss any issue with peers and other international students (Staton & Jalil, 2017). Another study found that language proficiency aided Pakistani students' academic integration at Dutch higher education institutes along with improving their interpersonal communication with peers and enhancing involvement in community service (Bashir et al., 2019). Similarly, Pakistani students who joined Australian universities with the best IELTS results (a standard test meant to measure English language proficiency and used as a prerequisite to seeking admission in international institutes particularly the USA, the UK, and English-speaking countries) did not encounter any difficulty with academic integration. Similar results were reported for Pakistani international students who joined the educational institutes in the United Kingdom (Ayyoub et al., 2019).

However, research conducted on Pakistani international students drew attention to two important aspects of language proficiency. First, results of a quantitative inquiry revealed that even with high scores on English language proficiency tests like the TOEFEL, Pakistani international students experienced issues getting into US colleges, and they had to pay a high tuition fee and enroll in an introductory course to make up for this deficit (Ayyoub et al., 2019). The reason behind this phenomenon could be that IELTS tests are generally considered a gateway to English-speaking universities. Students who intend to get enrolled in foreign universities seek admission in IELTS coaching classes to fulfill the admission criteria of foreign universities or even to secure a local HEC scholarship. These coaching classes are meant to improve test-taking skills as they deal with test-taking tactics, strategies, simulation techniques, and time management during the IELTS test. These coaching classes do not aid in the improvement of linguistics and the basic language skills of the enrolled students. Language abilities are essentially developed during school and primed during college years. Literature has revealed that traditional English courses taught at Pakistani universities prove inadequate in inculcating the necessary ability and writing skills among the majority of postgraduate students (Akhter, 2013; Saba, 2017). This insufficiency places Pakistani students in a disadvantageous position causing them to suffer a language barrier. Similar results have been reported among Malaysian international students in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, Chinese international students studying in Germany, France, Netherlands, Spain, and Belgium, and Turkish international students in Canada and Ankara (Ahrari et al., 2019; Cao et al., 2016; Nazir, 2018; Swami et al., 2010).

Another aspect highlighted while conducting a review of studies was that besides English language proficiency, the importance of the local language of host nations' proficiency in the adjustment of Pakistani students held equal importance (Dörnyei, 2014; Swami, 2009).Research on Pakistani students has shown that, in addition to the English language used in higher educational institutions, competency in the native language of the land remained vital in adjusting overseas (Noreen et al., 2019; Shan et al., 2020). A study on Pakistani students in Austria found that while English proficiency was crucial for academic and psychological integration, an inability to speak the local language i.e. German language was detrimental to the social adjustment of Pakistani international students (Ayyoub et al., 2019).

Similarly, Pakistani students in the Netherlands experienced lower social and educational adjustment in Dutch higher educational institutes and Dutch society respectively. Their inability to understand the Dutch language hindered their interaction with the peer group. Students also claimed that they could not understand some of the questions and answers given by the Dutch teachers. Socially, they had trouble understanding broad directions, which hampered their social integration (Bashir et al., 2019).The overseas students' prospective Pakistani students have some basic knowledge of the host language before they intend to study in a country where the local language is different than their home country’s language. The results lend support to international literature that command over local language proficiency facilitates students to establish a network with host nationals and peers in the classroom, thus aiding their sociocultural, psychosocial, and psychological adjustment (Cao et al., 2018; Kwon, 2013; Sümer et al., 2008; Swami et al., 2010).

Conversely, Pakistani students who had a basic knowledge of the host language or countries who have a compulsion to have comprehension in the host language of the country were better adjusted in the host country. For instance, Pakistani students in Chinese universities who were fluent in both English and Chinese had no issues with education or socialization (Noreen et al., 2019; Shan et al., 2020; Su, 2017). There is a need to conduct additional research in this area so students and host institutions may competently guide incoming students. Overall, low language proficiency causes tension, despair, and anxiety in international students, according to research. As a result, international students have adjustment issues. For quicker adaptation and adjustment to the host academic institution and society, students must be equipped well before their departure (Preston & Wang, 2017).

Religious/Cultural Stressors and Adjustment

Muslim international students have been subjected to offensive language and offensive behavior since the 9/11 attacks. In addition, Muslims face difficulties in their religious practices, especially in praying five times a day and fasting during Ramadan. Omani Nursing school female students, while sharing their experiences during training in the US stated that the people of the host country were not aware of their religious practices nor were they aware that Muslim men and women do not have mixed relationships (McDermott-Levy, 2011).Similarly, a Pakistani study reported difficulty in practicing religious practices mainly fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. These students were occasionally provoked with bothersome inquiries from their peer group and requiring them to explain their religious practices. This process of explaining repeatedly created significant stress among Pakistani students (Ayyoub et al., 2019).

It was also a great concern for the Pakistani students to find alcohol in food even ice cream. However, owing to their flexible and patient approach, they managed to overcome the differences over time (Haider, 2013).In the same way, Pakistani Muslim international students experience various difficult situations such as a lack of praying space on campus as well as food donations from other students during Ramadan. A few students also reported exclusion from peer groups due to a conflict of interest between them and their peer group.

Similarly, owing to hostile attitudes towards the Muslim community, Muslim women are required to adapt to their environment to feel safe in the host country. This includes adapting to the native dressing of the host country instead of their full dress and hijab to avoid facing hostile attitudes. Adaptation to western attire was also required to avoid any unpleasant incidents and anti-muslim sentiments. The available research on the Muslim community since 9/11 suggests that hostile attitudes towards Muslims result in difficulties in psychological, cultural, and social adjustment, and at the same time create distress and mental health challenges among this community (Capstick, 2015; Aloud & Rathur, 2009; Duru & Poyrazli, 2011; Moradi & Talal Hasan, 2004; Rousseau, Hassan, Moreau, & Thombs, 2011). These cultural and religious stressors made students uncomfortable causing them to experience a period of cultural and religious shock. Gradually, students develop a balance between their traditions and values and the western environment by living in and accepting it. The student's family and friends help them keep this equilibrium.

Attitudes of the Host Nationals and their Role in Adjustment

Locals in the host nation play an unparalleled role in the adjustment of international students. Typically, the non-availability of support or perception of cultural differences could have a detrimental impact on the establishment of social networking with local students for international students (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Ariari et al, 2019). The attitudes of the host country's citizens influence the adaptation of new international students. Pakistanis students have been reported as kind and outgoing personalities(Haider, 2013). However, based on the findings of student experiences, Pakistani students studying in Dutch higher educational institutions encountered a restrained social system and their peers did not accept them. Likewise, students indicated that Austrian society is guarded towards Muslim students. The host country's

restrained attitude and lack of communication with Muslim Pakistani students raised concerns among Pakistani students. The foreign atmosphere and cultural differences did not bother these Pakistani students as much as their peers' restrained attitudes and lack of communication (Ayyoub et al., 2019).This caused Muslim students to create a social network of fellow Pakistani international students in the host country.

Conversely, Pakistani students studying at Chinese institutions reported a good social network. Students reported receiving full support from Chinese nationals which helped them to adjust well to the new environment and gain familiarity with the new culture and its interesting elements (Noreen et al., 2019; Shan et al., 2020). However, further research is required on the host country's stance toward Muslim students. Muslim students' religious and national identities hamper their relations whereby people from Western countries prefer individuals like themselves rather than outsiders. Literature states a justification for this ingroup and outgroup preference that less cultural disparity among home and host countries encourage students to facilitate one another. Hence, the adjustment process becomes stress-free. For instance, Muslim international students arriving in Taiwan found Taiwanese students facilitating them to help arrange places to pray and search for halal food, than those described in studies in Canada and the United States (Nguyen & Larson, 2017).

Discrimination Stressors and Adjustment

Aside from sojourners' factors, the associated factors like the host country's attitude and their treatment of arriving students are also significant. Perception of discrimination has been considered an influential factor in the adjustment of incoming international students. The available literature has exposed that incoming students experienced prejudice and biased behavior from their host nationals based on their ethnicity, nationality, and cultural differences (Lee & Rice, 2007). Consequently, such experiences endanger the incoming students' interaction with the host nationals and the establishment of social networks leading to negatively impacting the well-being and adjustment of incoming students. Literature has revealed that students from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East allegedly faced discrimination. Muslims tolerate verbal abuse, harsh words, negative attitudes, and even physical attacks due to their affiliation with the Muslim community. This affiliation also limits work opportunities for Muslims in the host country. Similarly, studies on Japanese and Malaysian international students revealed that they too were exposed to derogatory behaviors based on their cultural values (Bonazzo & Wong, 2007; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007).On similar lines, a group of Pakistani students studying in America stated that their identity as Pakistani and affiliation with the Muslim community put them under constant stress. They experienced a constant struggle to uphold their ancestral customs and values in Western civilization while battling the level of adaptation to the host culture and its values. Students also struggled with how Western society would perceive their desire to hold on to their own culture amidst the secular society. Such struggles had aroused clashes between Pakistani Muslim students with the American society; posing issues, and threats to them (Haider, 2013, 2018).

Pakistani students added that their nationality and religious affiliation have been attached to extremist behaviors arousing suspicion in the eyes of local citizens and increasing their struggle to adjust owing to the stigma attached to their national and religious identity. Students were of the view that even if they did not identify with their appearance, like men without beards or women without the hijab, their Muslim identity caused issues (Haider, 2018) Globally, the Institute of Economics and Peace ranks Pakistan third in the global terrorism index. As a result, these students were aware that their religious and national identities are not considered acceptable in the western world. Consequently, they had to defend their nationality and religion along with regular challenges of the new place. Such a situation made them vulnerable to experiencing acculturative stress. However, instead of surrendering to the situation, the Pakistani students were determined to keep working to improve Muslim students' image and dispel any misconceptions. This study's findings reaffirm the findings of other research on Muslim students in Western nations who reported discriminatory behavior and hatred from the host nationals due to their Muslim identity (Jibeen, 2011; Stuart, 2014; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013; Zeenah & Colleen, 2016).

Similarly, students studying abroad in non-English speaking countries reported being subjected to overt discrimination by their host peer group. They blamed the media for provoking prejudice and derogatory behaviors toward Muslims. Reports of Muslim involvement in terrorism in any country, especially among students and Pakistanis residing in remote parts of the West, cause major problems for them (Haider, 2013). As a result, they struggle to adjust. Local governments and officials must develop strategies to foster goodwill between Muslim international students and host nations. Muslim international students should not suffer due to acts of extremists who use the name of Islam to justify their brutal thoughts and acts.

Choice of Acculturation Strategy and Adjustment

Berry (1997) presented four types of acculturation strategies that international students adapt to adjust to the host environment. International students have a preference for one particular strategy to adjust to the host country. These include assimilation (to prefer the host country's values to practice native country values), integration (to have an equal preference for native country and host country values), separation (to have a preference for native country values over host country values), and marginalization (no preference for host country or host country values)(Berry, 1997). However, individuals may choose multiple strategies depending on the encountered situations. Research demonstrates that some students may assimilate on work but separate when it comes to religion. On the same lines, another group of Pakistani international students in America adheres to the host country's culture of mingling, making friends, and attending parties but avoids drinking alcohol and maintaining sexual relations with the opposite sex (Haider, 2013). This requires further examination as this dimension has not been reported in other international student groups.

Length of Stay

The duration of a student's stay in a foreign country is determined by the student's adjustment and acculturative stress. The available literature revealed that a longer duration of stay had been associated with better adjustment as students started adjusting over time (Hajara & Monica Galloway, 2018; Wilton & Constantine, 2003). On the other hand, students with short-term stays showed better adjustment in the host country as they were aware that they had to go back soon eventually (Sawir et al., 2008). Literature is divided regarding the length of stay. The evidence for Pakistani students revealed that the first three to six months were difficult for Pakistani students in terms of transition. The international students' adjustment improved with time. However, the students highlighted in a qualitative study that a prolonged stay in the guest country inculcates elements of the host culture in their personalities endearing it impossible to adhere to ancestral values and traditions entirely (Bashir et al., 2019). Further research needs to be conducted in this regard.

Acculturative Life Changes, Self-Appraisal, and Coping among International Students from Pakistan

Difficulties and problems continue to be a part of international students' educational journeys. However, by comparing students' reactions, responses, and coping techniques to these sufferings and challenges, the severity of the problems is reduced to a certain level. Additionally, students' reactions to these stressful experiences alter the type of stress they experience. While stress does pose a problem in the lives of international students, if managed well, the consequences of stress are mitigated adding to personality development. Pakistanis have used a variety of coping mechanisms, including humor, to overcome obstacles abroad. Other international students have similar coping mechanisms.

Religious coping has been commonly used among Muslims to overcome daily life challenges. Religious coping denotes the use of behavioral and mental methods to overcome daily life challenges through religious beliefs and practices (Pargament & Raiya, 2007). Literature indicates that individuals use various ways to cope when encountering challenges including prayers, acceptance, involvement in religious

observes, or seeking support from spiritual leaders. Pakistani Muslim students seek to deal with daily life issues through Islamic means. They believe that hardship is a natural part of life. Only Allah Almighty can assist them while their efforts are also essential (Haider, 2013) Thus, Pakistani students receive assistance from their religion to cope with stress. They also employed resilience strategies. This suggests that the suffering of these students if handled ineptly will have a detrimental effect on their adjustment. Another group of Pakistani students gained strength from their families as they considered their parents as a reflection of Allah Almighty.

Additionally, when examining Pakistani international students and Asian students, the literature reveals that students develop emotional control. They feel that it is completely their responsibility to maintain their psychological strength. Pakistani culture typically reflects the notion that assistance from family, friends, or even professional services are essential to improve one's well-being or overcome obstacles. This type of assistance is viewed as humiliating and impolite in other Asian societies such as China. Similarly, discussing your difficulties with family members was restricted in this regard when students are overseas to ensure that their family is not inconvenienced by them. Students, particularly male students hold on to the same notion in which the males of the home attempt to resolve their problems privately rather than publicly using emotional suppression as their coping style. However, additional research is required in this area.

A more intriguing discovery in this regard is that various students studying abroad were found to be using drugs to manage acculturative stress. Literature finds justification for the use of drugs in lack of information on the differentiation between psychological and physical symptoms of depression. The primary reason for this is that the stressors of life are imperceptible to the naked eye, but the nervous system is impacted the most. As a result, students frequently report bodily discomfort (pain/discomfort). They utilize medicines to alleviate physical symptoms associated with stress. Hence, it is advisable to consult a psychologist before starting medication. Students cannot differentiate between psychological and physical symptoms of anxiety and stress often.

The influence of social support on acculturative stress and depression in international students from Pakistan

Mutual findings in several acculturation models, including by Berry (Berry, 1997), Ward et al. (2001), and Safdar et al. (2010) demonstrate an inverse relationship between social support and acculturative stress. Literature also demonstrates an indirect association for the same relationship (Berry, 1997; Brisset et al., 2010; Ward, 2001)Since Pakistani students is Asian too, the literature on Asian students mentions four distinct types of support including domestic family, friends, and students settled in the host country as well as other international students visiting the host nation.

According to a survey of Asian students, Australian universities were more receptive to Asian students who received assistance from both domestic and overseas students. In this regard, Pakistani students, like other Asian students, can become accustomed to the best in the country with the assistance of social support. Friendships, family support, teachers, and supervisors significantly influence the students' educational adjustment. Spouse assistance has been critical for married Pakistani students. Additionally, Pakistani students also claimed to receive assistance from their Pakistani friends and professors positively impacting their adjustment (Abbas, 2015; Bashir et al., 2019; Bashir & Khalid, 2020; Jibeen, 2016; Su, 2017)

Limitations and Suggestions for the Future

The current review has identified research conducted on Pakistani students. Suggestions are being made to address future work's inadequacies. All of the research mentioned was qualitative, employing a survey approach or self-constructed questionnaire. Additionally, while qualitative research provides the finest knowledge base for any area for which no prior knowledge exists, adequate protocols must be developed in

this regard. Numerous studies currently underway lack research methods or study manuals. It is extremely difficult to reproduce such studies. Similarly, generalizability is a concern in qualitative research.

Moreover, the research cited was conducted in various countries. This makes it challenging to derive a definitive conclusion on the acculturation trend of Muslim Pakistani students. Apart from the scales utilized in the self-reported measurements, the stressors are limited and generic, failing to capture the distinctive stresses encountered by Pakistani Muslim students. As a result, future research must be conducted using a mixed-method approach to research this understudied community. According to the researcher's knowledge, only one study employed a mixed-method strategy. However, further investigations must be replicated with a new sample size to determine the validity of the research findings.

It is essential to note that the majority of reported research examined Pakistani students' overall adjustment without referring to any particular acculturation paradigm. However, many critical things are overlooked as a result of this method. There is a need for extensive research on many areas of adjustment, such as academic, religious, and social, of Pakistani overseas students, taking into account their unique national and religious identities, to bridge the dearth in literature. In this regard, certain common acculturation models should be evaluated to determine whether Muslim students' adjustment is comparable to that of other overseas students or to that of other Asian students.

The majority of the issues and acculturation obstacles encountered by students have been discussed in these studies. Additionally, research must be compiled that examines students' motives for studying abroad, as well as their learning and application upon return including the adjustment period between the host and home countries. There is a need for longitudinal studies in this area to obtain the complete picture and to examine both sides of the adjustment. In this manner, students will be able to receive further instruction in this area, and institutions will have the opportunity to establish the most effective guidelines possible. These types of studies will also be beneficial for government bodies.

It would be diminutive to attribute student adjustment solely to the host country's competition; rather, the student's personality, socioeconomic situation, educational background, age, and married or unmarried status all impact their adjustment. It is critical to review these variables throughout the adjustment study and to make them the subject of future research in this area. Thus, the adjustment process can be analyzed in terms of both environmental and personal aspects.

Without a doubt, the current study has contributed to filling a dearth in the literature on Pakistani international students. However, educational institutions, policymakers, and higher education institutions in Pakistan must collaborate in this area and continue to document the acculturative experiences of students studying abroad and returning students. These experiences should be compiled to help future generations through various parts of pre-arrival preparations, host country adjustment, and post-arrival adjustment. Future research will surely assist students not only in adjusting to the greatest countries but also in gaining valuable insight into educational experiences at the best colleges.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to establish the acculturation challenges for overseas students from Pakistan. The current study finds educational, sociocultural adjustment, and local language challenges, as well as discrimination against Muslims that Pakistani students faced that, were similar to other Asian international students. However, some features were unique to Pakistani international students i.e. religious challenges, difficulties practicing religious observers, pragmatic approach towards host nationals irrespective of their hostile attitudes, and use of multiple coping strategies. Similarly, besides their unique identity, Pakistani students revealed characteristics of Asian identity similar to other Asian international students i.e. being recognized as being “collectivistic and family-oriented” “perfectionistic in academics” and an approach of “save the face” as the majority of students were of the view to solve their problems at

their own to not bother their families while they were away from them. Themes emerged from this evaluation, indicating the importance of developing a program for Pakistani international students to facilitate their studies abroad. For instance, when language barriers pose significant difficulties for students, institutions sending and receiving students must provide free preparatory courses or refresher courses in foreign languages for overseas students.

There is a need to establish courses in both the indigenous language and the language used in the host country's educational institutions so that students can master them both for better assimilation. There is a need to implement social support services to help students integrate academically, economically, socially, and culturally. Similarly, the host university and its local government agencies must take real actions to prevent discrimination, foster positive relationships with the guest students' international peers, and alleviate guest students' homesickness aiding guest students to acclimate easily and benefit from the campus diversity. Overall, it is highlighted that holistic information about the social and educational environment in the guest country before leaving the home country plays an important role in facilitating the adjustment of students in the guest country.

Table 1: Studies conducted on Pakistani Students

	Author	Title	Study Design and Sample	Variables	Results
1	Hamrick (2007)	The College Choice Experiences of Pakistani Undergraduates in the United States.	Qualitative n = 40	College choice to study abroad	The results of the qualitative research revealed that various factors contribute to university selection university among Pakistani students. These include cost and quality of education, leading position and ranking of the university, parental and social support.
2	Haider (2013)	Keepers and explorers: An Acculturation Case Study of the Multi-Faceted Identity of Pakistani Graduate Students	*n* = 28 Pakistani students (n = 13 female and n = 15 male) Qualitative	Acculturation experiences, use of acculturation strategies	The results of the study regarding the adjustment experiences of students studying at a United States university showed that Pakistani students had to adopt different and new traditions to adjust to American society, while strictly adhering to some native religious and social traditions, such as not establishing sexual relations with the opposite sex, no use of alcohol, etc. The adjustment of Muslim female students was different from that of male students.
3	Jehangir & Khan (2015)	English language proficiency: Social and Academic Adjustment of Pakistani Postgraduate Students Abroad	Quantitative (n = 225)	Social and academic adjustment, language proficiency	The results of the study revealed that the language proficiency test, IELTS, contributed to the academic adjustment of Pakistani students; however, the IELTS test did not contribute to the social adjustment of Pakistani scholars.
4	Abbas (2015)	International Educational Exchange Programs as a Modality of Public Diplomacy: An In-Depth Analysis of The Fulbright Pakistan Program	Survey (n=136)	Participants' perceptions pertaining to the US and the attitudes of host nationals toward Muslim students	The study examines the educational and political implications of the Fulbright scholarship program on Pakistani students' post-9/11 terrorist attacks. Results showed that scholarships offered to Pakistani students by the US have provided opportunities for Pakistani students to establish good relations with Americans; aiding their adjustment in the US. These programs have also been successful in transforming Pakistani students' opinions about America positively. However, Pakistani students expressed concerns about US policies towards Pakistan and US-Pakistan relations.

5	Capstick (2015)	Perceptions of Pakistani students in Pakistan and in the UK	Qualitative	Adjustment experiences	The survey-sought information on employability from Pakistani students studying in the United Kingdom. The results indicated that, in addition to theoretical knowledge in higher education institutes, practical knowledge about how to utilize their skills is imperative to achieve better employability. When students were asked to rank parents, religion, friends, moneymaking, and leisure moments according to their importance in adjustment, the students preferred parents and religion over other areas.
6	Su (2017)	The Intercultural Adaptation of Pakistani Students at Chinese Universities	Mixed design (n =247) for quantitative inquiry and (n = 10) for qualitative inquiry (2 female and 8 male)	Intercultural adaptation, local language barriers	This research showed that students who had prior traveling experience had improved sociocultural adjustment. Students who had little proficiency in the Chinese language experienced problems with interpersonal communication with people. According to the students' responses, although they adjusted academically and socially, they faced challenges due to language issues, maintaining relationships with teachers, the difference in university timings, and different food choices.
7	Staton & Jalil (2017)	International Graduates: Pakistani Fulbright Alumni on Their Return to Pakistan	Qualitative inquiry (n = 6) (n = 3 female n = 3 male)	Social and learning experiences, academic adjustment	The results of this study showed that Pakistani students studying abroad reported a positive impact on their personality and professional activities. Instead of studying via only lectures and teacher-oriented learning, the students gained knowledge in a real-life setting using student-oriented learning methods. These scholars are teaching their students in the same way.
8	Haider (2018)	Double Consciousness: How Pakistani Graduate Students Navigate Their Contested Identities in American Universities	*n* =28 Pakistani students (13 female and 15 male) Qualitative	Discrimination, the cultural and religious identity of Pakistani scholars	This study showed that Pakistani Muslim students have to endure the negative attitudes of host nationals daily because of their ethnicity and religion. Males suffered worse attitudes than women did because men were involved in past terrorist incidents. Similarly, students were discriminated against more when using their religious signifiers. They developed a kind of dual identity to adjust to the host culture while facing negative attitudes.
9	Ayyoub, Khan, & Riaz (2019)	Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Adjustment Issues in Austria: The Case Study of Pakistani Ph.D. Scholars	Qualitative inquiry (n =7) (n =1 female n= 6 male)	Academic, social (language barriers and differences in religion), and cultural experiences	The results of the study showed that Pakistani students suffered psychologically from homesickness. Socially, the English language facilitated the students, but due to low proficiency in the German language, the students faced problems. These students faced adjustment issues due to differences in religious and social traditions as well.
10	Bashir et al., (2019)	Academic challenges as perceived by Pakistani international students in Dutch Higher education Institutes	Qualitative (n=10) (3 female and 7 male)	Academic challenges (examination, group study, class participation)	The qualitative study is based on Pakistani students' academic experiences in Dutch higher education institutions. Findings indicated that Pakistani students experienced increased problems due to the disparate examination systems and syllabi of both nations. Moreover, inadequate writing abilities, low classroom involvement, and an inability to work in groups in Pakistani education hindered their adjustment in the host country's academia. The assistance of friends, teachers, family,

					and the passage of time aided Pakistani students in comprehending the distinction between the guest country's and native country's education systems.
11	Noreen et al., 2019	The Intercultural Adjustment of Pakistani Students at Chinese Universities	Qualitative inquiry (n =15) (n = 2 female, n = 13 male)	Educational, cultural, and social experiences	This qualitative study examined the adjustment of Pakistani students in Chinese universities. The key focus was placed on the educational, social, and cultural experiences of Pakistani students, their life satisfaction along with their social relations with Chinese students. Pakistani students did not express any risk during their stay in China and reported their satisfaction in all these fields.
12	Anjum, Aziz & Castano (2019)	The Role of the Fulbright Program in Building Positive Perception and Ally Image of the US Among Pakistani Scholars	Cross-sectional Mixed design Pakistani Fulbright scholars (81 men, 67 women)	Social experiences	This research examined Pakistani Fulbright scholarship holders' adjustment in the host country. According to the results of this study, frequent interaction with host nationals gave students of both groups opportunities to come closer to each other. The students who had frequent interactions and increased contact with American host nationals had a positive attitude towards them than those who had less interaction with American host nationals.
13	Shan, Hussain, & Sargani (2020)	A mix-method investigation on acculturative stress among Pakistani students in China	Mixed (qualitative and quantitative) n = 203)	Language challenges, acculturative stress, homesickness	This research showed that Pakistani students in China experienced differences in the culture of the home and host country, homesickness and language issues. However, unlike the majority of the findings through acculturative stress for international students, hatred, fear, remorse, or apprehension did not contribute to the acculturative stress of Pakistani students in China.
14	Bashir & Khalid (2020)	Development and Validation of the Acculturative Stress Scale for Pakistani Muslim Students	232 Pakistani international students (n =200) (n= 32 female , n = 200 male)	Acculturative stress, language barriers, academic issues, cultural challenges, discrimination	This research highlighted that Pakistani Muslim students have a distinct religious and cultural identity as residents of Pakistan, the world's second-largest Islamic country. In this regard, the first acculturative stress scale was developed. The results of this scale indicated that Pakistani Muslim students had educational, social, housing, and financial difficulties, as well as cultural and religious changes while studying overseas.
15	Haider (2020)	Gendered Acculturation: Pakistani International Graduate Students Navigating US Culture	Qualitative (n = 28) (n = 13 female and n= 15 male)	Mulsim and Pakistani identity in the host country	Based on Berry's acculturation theory, this study examined the selection of acculturation attitudes for Pakistani overseas students adjusting to life in the United States of America. In this study, interview questions inquired about the Pakistani students' religious, social, and traditional values. Students reported that they adopt a variety of attitudes depending on the situation, taking into account their traditions and values as well as the requirements of the host country. Pakistani men and women insisted on adhering to their traditions when it came to sex and relationships with the opposite sex.

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