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Newcomer University Students' Social Adjustment, Optimism, and Emotion Regulation

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Abstract:

The current study explores the relationship between optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment among newcomer university students; it also focuses on gender differences as revealed by study variables. A sample of 400 (M = 200, F = 200) freshers, ranging from 18 to 20 years, was collected from several universities in Wah Cantt and Rawalpindi using a purposive sampling strategy. The data were collected using the Life Orientation Test Revised (LOT-R), the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). Statistical analysis was used to interpret the results. No significant associations were found between study variables and there were no significant differences in study variable levels among the newcomers. The results from hierarchical multiple regression showed that optimism and emotion management were positive predictors of social adjustment among newcomer university students. One-way ANOVA findings demonstrated a substantial relationship between socioeconomic level and social adjustment. This discovery will benefit future research in this area. The current study will extend the body of knowledge and lead to future improvements.

Keywords: optimism, emotional regulation, social adjustment, university students.

新来大学生的社会适应、乐观与情绪调节

摘要:

本研究探讨了新来大学生的乐观情绪、情绪调节和社会适应之间的关系；它还侧重于研究变量所揭示的性别差异。使用有目的的抽样策略从华康特和拉瓦尔品第的几所大学收集了 400 名（M = 200, F = 200）新生样本，年龄从 18 岁到 20 岁不等。数据是使用修订的生活取向测试（很多-R）、情绪调节问卷（ERQ）和学生适应大学问卷（SACQ）收集的。统计分析用于解释结果。研究变量之间没有发现显著关联，并且新来者之间的研究变量水平没有显著差异。层次多元回归的结果表明，乐观和情绪管理是新来大学生社会适应的正向预测因子。单向方差分析结果表明社会经济水平与社会调整之间存在实质性关系。这一发现将有益于该领域的未来研究。目前的研究将扩展知识体系并导致未来的改进。

关键词：乐观，情绪调节，社会适应，大学生。

1. Introduction

Life can be very challenging for students as they transition from college to university. They will need to adjust to moving away from home, meeting and interacting with strangers, possibly from different cultures, and experiencing new interpersonal, social, and educational responsibilities. All of this can lead to confusion as the young people transition into adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Benn et al., 2005). Research findings support this understanding of the challenges faced by students during their university lives (Dyson & Renk, 2006; Pritchard et al., 2007). Such a transition requires the students to be open to the challenges and the experiences of their new environment.

The most important factor in coping with such a transition is the student's ability to respond to challenges effectively and positively. They will also need to handle their emotions appropriately if they are to adjust to the new environment. The ability to anticipate the best outcomes always and to believe that we live in the best of all possible worlds is known as optimism, which is a combination of two strongly connected phenomena. Two crucial components form the basis of optimism, namely dispositional optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985) and learned optimism (Peterson & Seligman, 1984). Optimism refers to the extent to which an individual perceives the events and situations in his or her life positively. Significantly, optimism works not by changing the challenging events or situations, but rather, by altering the manner in which someone looks at those situations and events (Trejo et al., 2015).

Research findings show that optimism performs a crucial role in a student's ability to adjust to the new academic setting (Taylor et al., 1990; Brissette et al., 2002; Scheier & Carver, 1992). Research shows that optimistic students tend to be more academically engaged than their pessimistic counterparts (Ouweneel et al., 2011). Taylor et al. (1990) found that higher levels of optimism during the initial stages of university related positively to far lower levels of psychological and emotional distress some months later. Similarly, Scheier and Carver (1992) confirmed that during their first semester at university, the optimists were far less prone to bouts of anxiety, depression, and loneliness, and they found themselves more socially supported than students with lower levels of optimism.

Optimism in university students is positively related to their emotional stability. Those individuals who are identified as more emotionally vulnerable tend to develop suppression strategies to keep their emotions in check, whereas, in contrast, individuals who employ a strategy of cognitive reappraisal are far less emotionally vulnerable and display better mental health (Mauss et al., 2007b). The process by which individuals manage their thoughts and behaviors after experiencing an emotion-eliciting event is called emotion regulation

(Gross & John, 2003). Various emotion regulation strategies can be used, the most significant of which are suppression and reappraisal. Either approach can be utilized to restore the level of emotional arousal that the individual deems tolerable (Mauss et al., 2007a).

At university, students encounter various new challenges, which include assuming new societal roles, adjusting to local cultural traditions, and interacting with an unfamiliar physical environment. Dealing with these transitional changes can create significant and potentially frustrating or even overwhelming setbacks for learners, which can cause feelings of homesickness, regret, or anger at leaving the comfort and familiarity of home. These emotional experiences can play a huge role in the students' dropout intentions or academic success (Respondek et al., 2017).

For coping with emotions, the process model of emotion regulation stipulates antecedent strategies, which begin well before the rise of emotion and include the selection of a situation, the modification of a situation, cognitive change, and attentional deployment, and response-based strategies, which involve curbing the expression of the emotions resulting from an emotion-eliciting event, for example, by reappraisal or suppression (Gross, 2002). These emotion regulation strategies can help students to work effectively and to adjust appropriately to their new university environment.

Adjustment is a gradual process whereby an individual copes with ever-increasing pressures, stresses, and conflicts in overcoming challenges. A person will strive to create and sustain a harmonious and peaceful relationship with his or her environment. The essence of the adjustment process lies in its two major components, the individual and his or her environment (Mutambara & Bhebe, 2012). Students' overall satisfaction with the university environment and the extent to which they participate in its social activities will determine their adjustment level (Dyson & Renk, 2006).

According to Baker and Siryk (1984), the adaptation of students to university life is a multifaceted concept comprising four chief attributes: social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, academic adjustment, and goal-orientated institutional commitment. Each student's level of adjustment will vary as compared to others, depending upon the individual's developmental stage. Dyson and Renk (2006) describe a similar concept, where each student passes through a period of developmental adjustment at a varying pace in the new university environment. Experiential data confirm the four dimensions of adjustment as including, the academic, the social, the personal-emotional, and institutional commitment (Credé & Niehorster, 2012).

In order to adjust to the university situation, students will adopt different coping strategies for the various challenges they face during this period. The social

adjustment of the university students will lead to their overall adjustment (Raju & Rahamtulla, 2007). During higher education, an increase in academic demands is coupled with an increase in new social relationships (Morris & Monroe, 2009). As a result, most students doubt their abilities to cope with the challenges of university life. It is an entirely new experience for them, especially if they depended on their parents and teachers during learning to think independently.

Hence the current study aims to identify how the ideas of optimism, social adjustment, and emotion-regulation relate to each other and further examine the impact of gender on students' level of social adjustment, optimism, and emotion regulation. As we know, newcomers face plenty of stressors in the university environment. During these periods of enhanced pressure and confusion, students must be aware of how they can make their passage from high school to university life as pleasant as possible. Taking past research in optimism and emotion regulation into account (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Kaslow et al., 1988), it can be concluded fairly certainly that students with a higher level of optimism and emotion-regulation ability tend to adapt better to the first semester/year at the University, while also exhibiting lower levels of stress as compared to individuals with lower levels of optimism. By recognizing the importance of and interrelation between optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment, educational authorities can be better equipped to work for the improvement of students' level of adjustment.

2. Methodology

2.1. Objectives

1. To identify the relationship between optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment among newcomer university students;
2. To examine gender differences in optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment among newcomer university students;
3. To identify the effect of socio-economic status on social adjustment among newcomer students.

2.2. Hypotheses

1. There will be a positive relationship between optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment among newcomer students;
2. There will be significant gender differences in optimism, emotional regulation, and social adjustment among newcomer university students;
3. Optimism and emotion regulation will positively predict social adjustment among newcomer university students;
4. There will be a significant difference in socio-economic status on social adjustment among newcomer university students.

2.3. Operational Definitions

Optimism can be defined as the belief that there can

be good things in one's life as it is the inclination of people to expect positive results in the future. It includes positive, moderately stable, and desirable future expectations. It is identified with creating optimistic assessments of situations and taking the time to efficiently connect with adjusting systems in managing stressors and doing what is appropriate during stressful situations (Scheier & Carver, 1985).

Emotion regulation refers to individuals' efforts to influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they are experienced and expressed. Such efforts may be relatively automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious (Parrott, 1993).

Social adjustment can be conceptualized as exchanging interpersonal relationships among roommates, peers, faculty, and other members belonging to a student's immediate environment combined with the immediate community (Baker & Siryk, 1984).

2.4. Participants

The purposive sampling method was used to collect data. The sample included 400 students, males ($n = 200$) and females ($n = 200$), aged 18-20. The students were from Wah, Comsats University, Agricultural University, Islamic International University, and the University of Engineering.

2.5. Instruments

Demographic Data Sheet has been used to obtain information about the participant's age, gender, socio-economic status, institute, and department.

Life Orientation Test Scale (LORT-R) (Vautier et al., 2003) originally was developed by Scheier et al. (1994). It was revised by Vautier et al. (2003) to measure the tendency of an individual to see and judge things in their most favorable aspect. It consists of 10 items. Three items measure optimism, three measure pessimism, and four serve as fillers. It is a 4-point Likert scale ranging from (0 = *I agree a lot*, 1 = *I agree a little*, 2 = *I neither agree nor disagree*, 3 = *I disagree a little*, 4 = *I disagree a lot*). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was $\alpha = .78$.

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) (Gross & John, 2003) was used to measure respondents' tendency to regulate their emotions in two ways: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. It consists of 10 items having a 7-point rating scale, ranging from 1 to 7, in which 1 indicates "*strongly disagree*," 4 "*neutral*," and 7 "*strongly agree*." Cognitive reappraisal has four items (1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10), and expressive suppression has no reversal item (2, 4, 6, 9). ERQ had high internal consistency for cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression ($\alpha = .79$, $\alpha = .73$).

Current research adopted a social adjustment subscale from *Student Adaptation to University Questionnaire (SACQ)* (Baker & Siryk, 1984) to measure social adjustment among university students. It consists of 20 items having a 9-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (*applies very closely to me*) to 9 (*does*

not apply to me at all). Cronbach's alpha of social adjustment subscales is .83 to .91.

2.6. Procedure

Permission for the data collection was obtained from the authorities of the institutes from which the data was collected. The informed consent was taken from all participants to participate in the research. Along with that, they were also permissible to leave research at any time. A brief description of the nature and rationale of the study was granted to the participants, and they were also acknowledged that the collected information will remain confidential and will only be used for academic and research purposes. Questionnaires were then given to all participants.

2.7. Data Analysis

Inferential statistical analysis techniques were used to gauge the results. Pearson correlation was applied to identify the relationship between optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment. One-way ANOVA was used to measure the difference in the study variables at the socio-economic level.

3. Results

After the collection, the data was analyzed using SPSS. Alpha reliability of optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment was computed. Descriptive statistics were calculated. Person product correlation was computed to find the relationship between the study variables. Gender differences were measured by an independent t-test. ANOVA was used for the difference in socio-economic status among study variables.

3.1. Sample Description

This section defines the demographic distribution, including the frequency and percentage of the sample that participated in the present research ($N = 400$).

Table 1. Frequency and percentages of the demographic variables ($N = 400$)

Variables	f	(%)
Gender		
Male	200	50.0
Female	200	50.0
Socio-economic Status		
High	65	16.3
Middle	323	80.8
Low	12	3.0
Degree Program		
Bs	400	100.0
Department		
Psychology	52	13.0
Mathematics	67	16.8
Computer science	82	20.5
Economic	33	8.3
Engineering	61	15.3
Physics	105	26.3
Institute		
University of Wah	123	30.8
Comsats University	63	15.8
Islamic University	73	18.3
Arid University	83	20.8

University of Engineering and Technology	57	14.2
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Notes: f - frequency, % - percentage

The frequency and percentage of the demographic variables of the subjects involved in the study are shown in the above table. The sample had 200 male and 200 female university students aged 18-20, with different socio-economic statuses: high, middle, and low. The sample was taken from Psychology, Math, Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, and Physics Departments of different universities.

3.2. Reliability Estimates and Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data in a study.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics ($N = 400$)

Variables	M	SD	α	Range	
				Potential	Actual
LOT-R ^a	6.67	3.71	.76	0-40	0-20
LOT-PESS ^b	4-17	2.46	.72	0-12	0-11
LOT-OPT ^c	2.49	2.20	.70	0-12	0-11
COG-REP ^d	27.12	6.42	.77	6-42	6-24
ES-SUP ^e	18.13	5.24	.74	4-28	4-28
ERQ ^f	45.25	10.44	.78	10-70	10-69
SACQ ^g	77.72	22.46	.82	20-180	20-160

Notes: ^a Life orientation test; ^b Life orientation test-pessimism; ^c Life orientation test-optimism; ^d Cognitive reappraisal; ^e Cognitive reappraisal; ^f Emotion regulation questionnaire; ^g Student adaptation to college questionnaires; α - Cronbach's alpha; M - mean; SD - standard deviation

Table 2 shows the number of items, mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha, and range. The values for reliability range from 0-1.0, and good reliability values indicate internal consistency within the scale. The reliability of the life orientation test, emotional regulation scale, and its subscales lie within an acceptable range. Overall reliability of student adaptation to college questionnaire scale is also acceptable that scale is valid for further analysis.

3.3. Correlation between Optimism, Emotion Regulation, and Social Adjustment among Undergraduates

Pearson product correlation was computed to evaluate the relationship between optimism (pessimism and optimism), emotion regulation (reappraisal and suppression), and social adjustment.

Table 3. Pearson product correlation between optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment ($N = 400$)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
LOT-R ^a	-	.82**	.77**	-.06	-.05	-.06	.40**
LOT-PESS ^b	-	-	.29**	-.00	-.01	-.01	.34**
LOT-OPT ^c	-	-	-	-	-.07	-.10*	.29**
COG-REP ^d	-	-	-	-	.60**	.92**	.18**
ES-SUP ^e	-	-	-	-	-	.87**	.12*
ERQ ^f	-	-	-	-	-	-	.17**
SACQ ^g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes: ^a Life orientation test; ^b Life orientation test-pessimism; ^c Life

orientation test–optimism; ^d Cognitive reappraisal; ^e Cognitive reappraisal; ^f Emotion regulation questionnaire; ^g Student adaptation to college questionnaires; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Table 3 showed that LORT-R-Pessimism is not associated with ERQ-Reappraisal and ERQ-Suppression, while it shows a significant positive correlation with SACQ at $p < 0.01$. Optimism shows no significant correlation with cognitive reappraisal and a significant positive correlation with SACQ at $p < 0.05$. Moreover, it is negatively associated with suppression. Cognitive reappraisal shows a significant positive correlation with both suppression and SACQ at a level of $p < 0.01$. Suppression has a significant positive relationship with SACQ at a level of $p < 0.05$. Lastly, SACQ shows a significant positive relationship with all the variables of the study.

3.4. Gender Differences in Optimism, Emotion Regulation, and Social Adjustment

To assess gender differences in optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment, an independent-samples t -test was conducted. The analysis produced results that are described in the following table.

Table 4. Effect of gender on the study variables (N = 400)

	Male	Female	t	CL (95%)	
	M (SD)	M (SD)		LL	UL
LOT-R	6.38 (3.53)	6.96 (3.88)	-1.56	-1.30	.14
ERQ	45.8 (11.5)	44.65 (9.14)	1.15	-.84	3.25
SACQ	74.6 (24.3)	80.80 (19.9)	-2.7**	-10.5	-1.78

Notes: M - mean, SD - standard deviation, LL - lower limit, UL - upper limit

Table 4 reveals the mean, standard deviation, and t and p values of males and females on optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment. The analysis produced a non-significant t value for optimism ($t = -1.56$, $p > 0.05$), a non-significant t value for emotion regulation ($t = 1.15$, $p > 0.05$), and a non-significant t value for social adjustment ($t = -2.76$, $p > 0.05$). However, a small Cohen's d effect size indicates that there is no gender difference in the level of optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment.

3.5. Predictability of the Study Variables

Regression analysis of variables reveals the effect of the independent variables, i.e., optimism and emotion regulation, on the dependent variable, i.e., social adjustment. The results of the analysis are shown in the following tables:

Table 5. Hierarchical regression analysis predicting the effects of optimism and emotion regulation on social adjustment (N = 400).

Variables		B (SE)	β	95%CI	
				UL	LL
Model 1	Constant	61.78 (2.12)		57.61	65.95
	LOT-R	2.39 (4.84)	.39***	1.84	2.93
	R ²	.39			
	ΔR^2	.16			

Continuation of Table 5

	F	.73.89***			
Model 2	Constant	41.32 (4.85)		31.79	50.86
	LOT-R	2.4 (.27)	.41***	1.94	3.01
	COG-REP	.733 (.16)	.21***	.42	1.04
	R ²	.45			
	ΔR^2	.20			
	F	20.14***			

Notes: The table shows just significant results. B - coefficient, SE - standard error, β - beta, LOT-R - life orientation test, COG-REP - cognitive reappraisal, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5 shows hierarchical regression in predicting the effects of optimism and emotion regulation on social adjustment. Model 1 shows that the impact of life orientation on social adjustment added 16% variance, revealing that optimism is positively related to social adjustment. In Model 2, cognitive reappraisal added 20% variance, revealing that emotion regulation is a significant positive predictor of social adjustment with $F = 48.91***$, $p < .001$.

3.6. One-way Analysis of Variance to Determine the Mean Difference between the Socioeconomic Status and Social Adjustment

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of the three categories of socioeconomic status (i.e., high, middle, and low). For testing the hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance was used where socio-economic status with three categories (high, middle, and low) was the independent variable, and scores on student adaptation to university questionnaires were taken as the dependent variable. The result obtained from the one-way analysis of variance is given in Table 6.

Table 6. One-way analysis of variance of three factors of the participants' socioeconomic status (N = 400)

Variable	High (n = 65)	Middle (n = 323)	Low (n = 12)	F	η^2
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)		
SACQ	71.792 (23.3)	78.17 (22.1)	97.69 (11.3)	7.291 (.001)	0.97

Notes: The table shows just significant results. SACQ - social adjustment, M - mean, SD - standard deviation, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 6 has shown that there is significant difference in high socioeconomic status ($M = 71.79$, $SD = 23.32$) with middle socioeconomic status ($M = 78.17$, $SD = 22.15$), and low socioeconomic status ($M = 97.69$, $SD = 11.35$), table also showed the outcome variable social adjustment i.e. $F = 7.291$ ($p < 0.001***$). Pairwise comparisons across gender difference categories in relation above variables have been presented in Table 7.

Table 7. One way analysis of variance of three factors of the participants' socioeconomic status (N = 400)

Variable	Group i-j	i-j (SE)	95%CI	
			LL	UL
SACQ	High -Middle	-6.38 (3.00)	-13.45	.69
	High -Low	-25.89* (6.95)	-42.25	-9.54
	Middle -Low	-19.52* (6.5)	-34.81	-4.21

Notes: SACQ - social adjustment, CI - confidence interval, LL - lower limit, UL - upper limit, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .000$

Table 7 indicated that social adjustment significantly differs, with high and middle socio-economic status as high < middle (-6.38), SE (3.00). Results also showed that social adjustment is significantly higher in low socio-economic status as compared to a high socio-economic status high < low (-25.89*), SE (6.95) and middle socio-economic status middle > low (19.52*), SE(6.50).

4. Discussion

The current research aimed to examine the relationship between optimism, emotional regulation, and social adjustment among newcomer university students. The present study aims to explore the role of demographics (gender, socioeconomic status) for the study variables. The ability to adjust to changing educational situations is influenced by the concept of optimism. The lower the levels of psychological suffering and the more social support students have when they first start university, the more optimistic they become (Taylor et al., 1990; Brissette et al., 2002; Scheier & Carver, 1992).

Adjusting well to the new university environment requires a variegated and flexible set of responses to the changing demands. Students face several new challenges such as interacting with an unfamiliar physical space, taking on new social roles, and navigating cultural norms. In addition, the curriculum and extra-curricular activities are likely to be less structured and more varied on a day-to-day basis than what students experienced pre-university.

Given the transitional changes, students often experience setbacks that are frustrating or overwhelming, prompt homesickness, or invite feelings of anger or regret for deciding to leave the familiarity and comfort of home. In fact, these emotional experiences can predict the student's performance and intentions to dropout (Respondek et al., 2017).

The present study hypothesized that there is positive relationship between optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment. However, findings indicated that an optimistic individual has higher social adjustment but it's not necessarily evident that they are also regulated emotionally. The hypothesis proposed to be investigated in this study, was not approved. It is supported by down-regulating emotional reactions, which is more in line with East Asian collectivistic cultural standards, whereas WEs are more motivated to

express their feelings in accordance with their own well-being and thus do not have the same tendency to limit their emotional control (Liddell & Williams, 2019). As the researchers do not measure emotional control, the idea can be further explored in future research.

The findings suggest that social adjustment is associated positively with pessimism, optimism, reappraisal, and suppression (Table 3). However, no literature findings support this evidence. Furthermore, it can be justified as the response bias has occurred during the data collection process via survey online. The results also showed no significant gender differences among the study variables (Table 4). The explanation for there being no significant difference in optimism levels between males and females is the generational change in optimistic disposition in the population. Leong et al. (1997) found no significant gender differences in social adjustment and emotion regulation.

In the current study, another hypothesis was also to predict the effects of optimism and emotional regulation with the outcome variable of social adjustment. Hierarchal linear regression analysis depicted that optimism and emotion regulation showed a 20% variance in the outcome variable of social adjustment. Past studies indicated that optimism is related to (a) the greater use of coping strategies to manage stressors (Nes & Segerstrom, 2006) and (b) better social adjustment to stressful events in university (Brissette et al., 2002; Scheier & Carver, 1992). Moreover, the transition to university is a crucial period, where the social adjustment of students is critical (Credé & Niehorster, 2012).

Other hypotheses of the study were to find out the impacts of socio-economic status on social adjustment among newcomer university students. The hypotheses were accepted according to the results of the study. Most newcomer students had significantly low differences in social adjustment and socio-economic status; social adjustment was more significant in students with low socio-economic status than those with high socio-economic status. However, social adjustment was more significant in students with middle socio-economic status than those with low socio-economic status, and the difference was significantly low. There existed non-significant differences between social adjustment of high and middle socio-economic status for social adjustment. It can be justified that many impediments to higher education exist for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, including college choice, parental financial aid, and realistic career plans (Ali & Bakar, 2019). Students with a low socioeconomic status (SES) experience a negative impact on their academic performance since their basic requirements are not met, and, as a result, they do not perform well academically (Sirin, 2005). According to Zafar and Ali (2018), students from low socioeconomic backgrounds face environmental difficulties that lead to poor emotional control, which has a severe impact on their social adjustment.

5. Conclusion

The objective of the study was to explore the relationship between optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment among new university students. Results indicated that there was no significant relationship between optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment. The findings reveal that there were no significant differences based on gender in these study variables. Further results suggest significant differences across socioeconomic status regarding social adjustment. Overall, the present study is valuable in understanding the role of optimism, emotion regulation, and social adjustment in the collectivistic context of Pakistan.

The following are the limitations of the current study and suggestions for improvement. First, participants may not have answered the questionnaires accurately and provided wrong information because of a poor understanding of the questions. Another possible limitation was that the large number of surveys in which students had to fill out questionnaires, which resulted in a lack of focus on the questions and an increase in random responses.

The study focused on a small number of demographic characteristics that could be included in a larger study with more dynamic demographics in the future. Since data was gathered online, response bias has led to undesirable results. It is recommended that further studies can replicate this study using physical data collection to produce more reliable results. It is required to apply this study on larger samples to aim for more generalizability of results. It is suggested to use shorter measurement scales for target variables, to avoid random responses by participants. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, several limitations were encountered when conducting research; the epidemic made it more difficult to meet the expected population, and, as a result of the shutdown, the research was significantly delayed, resulting in a time constraint.

An important implication of these findings is that university orientation and transition programs should last at least through the first semester of a student's first year, if not the full year. The findings are especially important for developing and implementing interventions for first-year students in order to reduce attrition or a poor adjustment to college life. Furthermore, these findings are significant because colleges want first-year students to have a favorable experience at the university, with high levels of social and emotional adjustment. It is essential for classroom facilitators to encourage an open, respectful, and supportive environment in order to reduce stress. Having more classroom involvement rather than lectures may help students adjust more effectively.

Authors' Contributions

Ms. Haleema Khawar was responsible for topic selection and theme framework, Ms. Ayesha Khan for

data analysis and results, Ms. Aaisha Shaukat for methodology, Ms. Sania Parveen for data collection, and Ms. Farah for discussion and conclusions.

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