

## **Personality Traits, Religious Faith, Life Satisfaction, and Perceived Stress of Personnel at Executive Positions**

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The study aimed at finding relationship among personality traits, religious faith, life satisfaction and perceived stress of personnel at executive positions. Correlational study design was used. One hundred executives from different private sector organizations of Karachi, Pakistan were selected through purposive sampling technique. Big Five Personality Inventory (Rammstedt & John, 2007), Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983), and Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (Plante et al., 2002) were administered to measure the variables. Pearson product moment correlation and Hierarchical regression analysis indicated significant predictive relationship of personality traits with life satisfaction and perceived stress. Neuroticism was found to be the only trait causing unique variance in life satisfaction and perceived stress. Further, religious faith significantly contributed an additional variance in life satisfaction and perceived stress however, no mediational role of religious faith was signified. The study findings are of great help to organizational and clinical psychologists in understanding problems of executives in organizational context of Pakistan.

*Keywords:* personality traits, life satisfaction, perceived stress, religious faith, executives

In psychological literature, personality is the domain widely studied within organizational settings (Chapman et al., 2007; Cloninger & Zohar, 2011; Josefsson et al., 2011; Moreira et al., 2014). Various aspects of personality have been studied in relation to life needs satisfaction and religion (Alahdad et al., 2014; Catipovic-Veselica et al., 1995; Judge et al., 2002; Kaiser, 1997). Psychologists in organizational settings have specifically focused on personality correlates of leaders or senior executives (Kaiser, 1997). Personality facets have also been studied with respect to health and well-being (Cloninger & Zohar, 2011; Moreira et al., 2014). Five factor model of personality (Goldberg, 1990) has earned great importance within the realm of personality studies (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; Kaiser, 1997). According to this model, big-five personality traits are categorized as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Goldberg, 1990). These personality factors are directly linked with life satisfaction (Alahdad et al., 2014; Stolarski & Matthews, 2016). Personality traits have been found to be linked with life satisfaction through persistently accessible and stable resources (Schimmack et al., 2002). Steel et al. (2008) conducted a meta-analysis to refine the relationship between personality traits and different measures of subjective well-being such as satisfaction with life. This review analyzed personality as a whole in addition to different personality traits individually. According to the findings of meta-analysis, personality traits, together as well as individually, contributed to the various aspects of well-being (Steel et al., 2008). Traits of extraversion and introversion have been studied in relation with life satisfaction while the trait of neuroticism moderated this relationship (Fadda & Scalas, 2016).

While studying the personality polygene, Weiss et al. (2016) used NEO Five-Factor Inventory and wellbeing measures. The authors found a positive association of extraversion

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with life satisfaction whereas a negative association was found between life satisfaction and neuroticism. The trait of conscientiousness has been found to be positively linked with productive outcomes such as work-life balance and negatively related with dysfunction or work-family conflicts (Haddon & Hede, 2010). Zhang and colleagues studied big-five personality traits in relation with different aspects of adjustment including life satisfaction. They found extraversion and openness to be related with all areas of adjustment whereas neuroticism and conscientiousness were found to be associated with psychological aspects of adjustment. Neuroticism and openness to experience predicted socio-cultural adjustment whereas agreeableness predicted universal adjustment and conscientiousness predicted an academic level adjustment (Zhang et al., 2010). Another investigation found that openness and conscientiousness were linked with aspects of subjective well-being whereas neuroticism and extraversion denied this relationship through mediating factors. Moreover, agreeableness was found to have no association with life satisfaction (Strobel et al., 2011). Empirical examination of big-five traits suggested that conscientiousness strongly predicted satisfaction with life. It was further found that neuroticism predicted negative emotional aspects of well-being whereas extraversion found a link with positive affective indicators of well-being. However, agreeableness and openness to experience found no associations with aspects of wellbeing (Tanksale, 2015). Similarly, Duckworth and colleagues demonstrated inconsistent associations of big-five personality traits with success outcomes and life satisfaction. Among all the traits, conscientiousness was found to be the trait having medium but stable relationship with life satisfaction. Neuroticism was found to have superior relation with life satisfaction but a weaker relationship with other success variables. Extraversion was strongly related to satisfaction with life and weakly related to positive affectivity. Agreeableness was found inversely linked with life satisfaction but it offered no variability in positive or negative affectivity. Similarly, openness was weakly and inversely associated with life satisfaction while those individuals falling low on openness were found to experience more negative affect (Duckworth et al., 2012).

Schell and colleagues (1994) studied association of personality traits with life satisfaction and coping with stress. Those who used stress related coping strategies such as yoga exercises were found to be high on life satisfaction, spirit, and extraversion whereas low on openness and emotional instability (neuroticism) (Schell et al., 1994). By using Personality Inventory, Kikuchi et al. (2014) studied associations of personality traits and job stress. The predictive relationships were found for stress or depressive state with neuroticism while life satisfaction was found to have an inverse relationship with depressive state or neuroticism. Another study found a negative correlation of extraversion and life satisfaction with stress whereas neuroticism was found positively linked with stress (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2016). Further, patience and tolerance to daily life stressors predicted a higher satisfaction with life while the researchers controlled for personality factors (Aghababaei & Tabik, 2015).

In addition to personality traits, religiosity has also been found to serve as a protective factor in psychological distress or daily life stressors and, as well as, it had been found to have a link with different personality factors (Wang et al., 2016). While studying the psychological well-being of immigrants, Bernstein found that a stable personality, religious factors, and openness to psychological health issues play a role in stress handling of the professionals and leaders (Bernstein, 2007). A study by Yu and colleagues was conducted on hospital staff. It was suggested that work stress and religion serve as a contributing factor in satisfaction of the workers (Yu et al., 2008). Katerndahl (2008) proposed a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model in primary health care setting. The findings of study provided strong links of spiritual aspects with psychological symptoms, perceived health conditions, and life satisfaction. Hussain et al. (2011) studied the link of religious faith with post-disaster stress

and life satisfaction among survivors of natural disaster. The strengthening of religious faith among the participants was found to be linked with their previous mental health condition and post-traumatic stress (Hussain et al., 2011). Further, Cruz et al. investigated the impact of spirituality and religious coping on quality of life relating to health outcomes. According to the findings, the involvement in religious practices, religious faith, and religious coping were found to be important contributing factors in psychological health and satisfaction with life (Cruz et al., 2017). Further, research findings suggested that religious coping, stress, and anxiety have been linked with life satisfaction (Zarzycka et al., 2017). Likewise, perceived stress strongly and consistently predicted adjustment and coping outcomes such as life satisfaction and religious coping (Fitzell & Pakenham, 2010). It was found that individuals with high level of religiosity and low level of perceived stress were more inclined to flourish in their relationships, confidence level, self-image, and their aim in life. Further, religiosity was found to be a moderator between perceived stress and flourishing (Abdollahi et al., 2018).

In a recent study, big five personality traits were studied with religiosity and life satisfaction. The findings indicated that personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were positively related to life satisfaction while neuroticism was negatively related. Openness was found unrelated with life satisfaction. Traits of agreeableness and extraversion were positively related to all religious dimensions while conscientiousness was related positively to religious faith and openness to experience was found to be negatively related with personal religiousness. Neuroticism was found to be unrelated with religiosity. The study concluded that personality traits are predictors of life satisfaction and they relate positively with religiosity as well (Szcześniak et al., 2019).

### **Rationale**

Personality facets have been widely studied with different variables among leaders or senior executives in an organizational context. However, the role of personality traits and religious faith which contributes to life satisfaction and perceived stress of executives is still the area not much explored in literature. Specifically, in Pakistani culture, there is dearth of literature on personality traits and religious faith of Muslim executives. Therefore, we rationalized our study to clarify the role of personality facets in life satisfaction and perceived stress as well as to find out the interactive effect of personality traits and religious faith in relation to life satisfaction and perceived stress of executives in organizational settings of Pakistan.

### **Aim of the Study**

- To study personality traits and religious faith as predictors of life satisfaction and perceived stress of personnel at executive positions in different private sector organizations.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

- Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience of executives will positively predict life satisfaction and neuroticism will negatively predict life satisfaction of executives.
- Religious faith is likely to mediate the relationship between neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and life satisfaction.
- Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience of executives will negatively predict perceived stress and personality trait of neuroticism will positively predict perceived stress of executives.

- Religious faith is likely to mediate the relationship between neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and perceived stress.

## Method

### Research Design

The correlational study design was used in present study.

### Sample

The study participants included 100 executives selected through purposive sampling technique from different private sector organizations of Karachi, Pakistan having age range of 25 to 62 years and organizational experience of 1 to 40 years ( $N=100$ ;  $M_{\text{age}}=36.73$  years and  $SD=9.64$ ;  $M_{\text{experience}}=7.37$  years and  $SD=6.76$ ). The detailed demographic characteristics of the participants are provided in table 1. All of the executives were Muslims and those participants having non-managerial positions in organization were excluded from the sample.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

Characteristics	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>f (%)</i>
Age (years)	36.73 (9.64)	
25 - 62		
Experience (years)	7.37 (6.76)	
1 - 40		
Gender		
Male		92 (92%)
Female		8 (8%)
Family structure		
Nuclear		59 (59%)
Joint		41 (41%)
Birth order		
First born		36 (36%)
Middle born		40 (40%)
Last born		24 (24%)
Education		
Graduation		48 (48%)
Masters		52 (52%)

*Note.*  $N=150$ ,  $M$  = Mean;  $SD$  = Standard Deviation;  $f$  = Frequency; % = Percentage

### Assessment Measures

The following assessment measures were utilized in present study.

#### *Respondent Profile Form*

It included demographic variables of age, gender, level of education (Intermediate/Graduation/Masters), family structure (Nuclear/ Joint set-up), number of siblings, birth order (first/ middle/ last born), name of organization, department, post, position in organization (managerial or non-managerial), years of experience in current and previous organization (s), and financial position (monthly income).

#### *The Big Five Inventory (BF-10); Rammstedt & John, 2007)*

The BF-10 is a short version of original BF-44. This scale was used to assess personality traits of participants on 5 dimensions including extraversion (e.g. item: is

outgoing, sociable), agreeableness (e.g., is generally trusting), conscientiousness (e.g., does a thorough job), neuroticism (e.g., gets nervous easily) and openness (e.g., has an active imagination). The scale is comprised of 10 items whereas each of the 5 personality factors includes one straight worded and an inversely scored item. Items on BF-10 are rated on 5-point scale ranging from 1 to 5. This scale is found to be a reliable and valid measure of personality traits as indicated by its significant correlations with original BF-44, retest reliability, convergent, external, and structural validity (Rammstedt & John, 2007). Reliability estimate through Cronbach's alpha is found to be  $\alpha = .57$  for current study.

***Satisfaction with Life Scale ([SWLS]; Diener et al., 1985)***

This scale evaluates participant's opinion of their life satisfaction through 5 items (e.g., in most ways my life is close to my ideal) rated on 7-points specifying 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree. This scale proves to be a reliable and valid measure of global life satisfaction as indicated by its high temporal reliability, test-retest reliability, internal consistency, and discriminant validity (Diener et al., 1985; Pavot & Diener, 1993). Cronbach's internal consistency estimate is found to be  $\alpha = .80$  for the present study.

***Perceived Stress Scale ([PSS]; Cohen et al., 1983)***

PPS-4 is the shortest version of original PPS-14 which is designed to measure respondents' self-reported level of perceived stress. The rating on items range from 0=never, 1=almost never, 2=sometimes, 3=fairly often, to 4=very often. The scale includes 2 positively worded (e.g., In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?) and 2 reverse scored items (e.g., In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?). Total score is obtained by adding the score on straight forward and reverse items and the higher score indicates high level of perceived stress. This scale is suggested as a psychometrically sound instrument indicating good reliability and validity (Cohen et al., 1983; Cohen & Williamson 1988). Reliability estimate through Cronbach's alpha is found to be  $\alpha = .70$  for current study.

***Abbreviated Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire ([SCSRFQ-5]; Plante et al., 2002)***

This scale is an abbreviated version of original SCSRFQ-10 which measures respondents' self-rated strength of religious faith. The five items (e.g., I look to my faith as providing meaning and purpose in my life) are rated on 4 points whereas 1 specifying strongly disagree to 4 specifying strongly agree. The score on 5-items is added and the higher score indicates greater strength of religious faith. This instrument has been found to be psychometrically sound, reliable, and valid instrument to be used with clinical and other populations (Plante, et al., 2002). For the current sample, Cronbach's alpha value is found to be  $\alpha = .70$  which also shows good internal consistency of SCSRFQ-5.

**Procedure**

Hundred senior managers at executive positions were approached from different private sector organizations located in Karachi, Pakistan. Permission was taken from their company authorities for data collection. Participants were first instructed to sign the consent form for their voluntary participation in the study. They filled out the respondent profile including demographic information and then they filled the four questionnaires used for this study. SPSS was used to analyze the data through Pearson product moment correlation and hierarchical regression analysis.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles and research guidelines of APA were followed throughout the process of conducting this research, data collection, analyses, interpretations of result, and the writing of this article. Permission was taken from authors of all the questionnaires used in this research. Consent was provided by the authorities of the selected organizations to collect data from their executives who were also provided with consent form for their voluntary participation in this research. All the participants were assured about the anonymity of data and their right to withdraw from the study anytime.

### Results

Pearson product moment correlation was run to analyze the relationship of personality traits and religious faith with life satisfaction and perceived stress.

**Table 2**

*Correlation of Personality Traits and Religious Faith with Life Satisfaction and Perceived Stress of Executives*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Extraversion	1						
2. Agreeableness	.01	1					
3. Conscientiousness	.23*	.17*	1				
4. Neuroticism	-.11	-.32**	-.35**	1			
5. Openness	-.01	.12	.06	-.19*	1		
6. Life Satisfaction	.09	.22*	.25**	-.53**	.09	1	
7. Perceived Stress	-.14	-.25**	-.22*	.36**	-.09	-.51**	1
8. Religious Faith	.05	.09	.12	-.18*	.17*	.39**	-.28**

Note. N=100

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$  (1-tailed)

In Table 1, analysis showed that personality traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness were significantly positively correlated with life satisfaction whereas extraversion and openness were insignificantly related and personality trait of neuroticism was significantly negatively related with life satisfaction. Further, personality traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness were found to have significant negative correlation with perceived stress while extraversion and openness were insignificantly related to perceived stress. Neuroticism was positively related to perceived stress. It was also clear that those executives whose religious faith was high then their life satisfaction had low perceived stress.

Hierarchical regression analysis was run to check the predictive relationship of personality traits with life satisfaction and perceived stress. In first step, personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience were taken as predictors while life satisfaction and perceived stress as criterion variables. In step two, religious faith was added into regression model as a predictor to checkout additional variance caused in life satisfaction and perceived stress. Furthermore, collinearity diagnostics were used to test if religious faith has mediated the relationship of personality traits with life satisfaction and perceived stress.

**Table 3***Personality Traits and Religious Faith as Predictors of Life Satisfaction among Executives*

Predictors	Life Satisfaction				
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t$	$F$
Step I	.29			5.51***	7.54***
Extraversion			.02	.17	
Agreeableness			.05	.57	
Conscientiousness			.07	.78	
Neuroticism			-.49**	-4.95***	
Openness			-.01	-.10	
Step II	.37	.09		4.46***	13.08***
Extraversion			.01	.09	
Agreeableness			.05	.53	
Conscientiousness			.06	.63	
Neuroticism			-.45**	-4.80***	
Openness			-.05	-.61	
Religious Faith			.31**	3.62***	

Note.  $N=100$ ; In Step 1, personality traits were entered as independent variable to predict life satisfaction. In Step 2, religious faith was entered as a predictor to contribute additional variance,  $\beta$ = Standardized coefficient beta.

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Hierarchical regression analysis in table 3 showed that in first step, personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience were found to play the role of predictors in the criterion variable of life satisfaction. Personality traits contributed to 28.6% variance in life satisfaction and the model was found to be statistically significant ( $R=.54$ ,  $R^2=.29$ ,  $F(5)=7.54$ ,  $p=.00$ ). Further evaluation of results showed that only personality trait of neuroticism contributed negatively to a unique variance in life satisfaction ( $\beta=-.49$ ,  $t=-4.95$ ,  $p=.00$ ) however, personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience did not contribute to a variance in life satisfaction ( $p>0.05$ ). Statistical analysis in step two showed that adding religious faith into the model positively contributed to an additional 8.8% variance in life satisfaction which was statistically significant ( $R=.61$ ,  $R^2=.38$ ,  $\Delta R^2=.09$ ,  $F(1)=13.08$ ,  $p=.00$ ). Further evaluation of results shows that religious faith contributed to a unique variance in life satisfaction in a positive direction ( $\beta=.31$ ,  $t=3.62$ ,  $p=.00$ ). Furthermore, analysis through collinearity diagnostics revealed the absence of collinearity showing no mediational role of religious faith in relationship of personality traits with life satisfaction ( $VIF=1.06$ ;  $t=0.94$ ).

**Table 4***Personality traits and Religious Faith as Predictors of Perceived Stress among Executives*

Predictors	Perceived Stress				
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$t$	$F$
Step I	.16			3.12**	3.70**
Extraversion			-.06	-.66	
Agreeableness			-.15	-1.47	
Conscientiousness			-.08	-.75	
Neuroticism			.28**	2.66**	
Openness			-.01	-.12	
Step II	.21	.04		3.71***	5.00**
Extraversion			-.06	-.62	
Agreeableness			-.14	-1.45	
Conscientiousness			-.07	-.64	
Neuroticism			.26*	2.44*	
Openness			.02	.19	
Religious Faith Score			-.21*	-2.24*	

Note.  $N=100$ ; In Step 1, personality traits were entered as independent variable to predict perceived stress. In Step 2, religious faith was entered as a predictor to contribute additional variance.

$\beta$ = Standardized coefficient beta.

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  (1-tailed).

Hierarchical regression analysis in table 4 showed that in step one personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience were found to be predictors of perceived stress. Statistical analysis shows that personality traits significantly contributed to 16.4% variance in perceived stress ( $R=.41$ ,  $R^2=.16$ ,  $F(5)=3.70$ ,  $p=.00$ ). Further evaluation of results shows that only personality trait of neuroticism significantly and positively contributed to a variance in perceived stress ( $\beta=.28$ ,  $t=2.66$ ,  $p=.01$ ) however, personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience did not contribute to a unique variance in perceived stress ( $p>0.05$ ). In step two, statistical analysis showed that religious faith significantly and negatively contributed to an additional 4.3% variance in perceived stress ( $R=.46$ ,  $R^2=.21$ ,  $\Delta R^2=.04$ ,  $F(1)=5.00$ ,  $p=.03$ ). Further evaluation of results shows that religious faith contributed to a unique variance in perceived stress ( $\beta=.21$ ,  $t=-2.24$ ,  $p=.03$ ). Furthermore, statistical analysis of collinearity diagnostics indicated the absence of a mediational role of religious faith in the relationship of personality traits with perceived stress ( $VIF=1.06$ ;  $t=0.94$ ).

### Discussion

It is clear from the results that our first hypothesis is partially proved since the personality traits as a whole have been found to predict life satisfaction whereas neuroticism was the only trait uniquely and negatively contributing to this predictive relationship whereas other personality traits insignificantly contributed to this prediction. The findings of present study are partially consistent with the findings of Szcześniak et al. (2019) in that they also found insignificant relationship of openness and negative relation of neuroticism with life satisfaction. Contrarily, positive association of agreeableness and conscientiousness were reported (Szcześniak et al., 2019). Consistent to the correlations found in present study, agreeableness (Zhang et al., 2010) and conscientiousness (Strobel et al., 2011) were found positively linked with life satisfaction whereas extraversion (Strobel et al., 2011) and



openness (Tanksale, 2015) found insignificant association with life satisfaction. Global associations of personality traits with life satisfaction are explained through persistently accessible and stable resources (Schimmack et al., 2002) as different personality traits link with life satisfaction differently. For instance, Schimmack et al. (2004) examined particular aspects of personality traits such as positive emotional state is the characteristic of extraversion which facilitated its link with life satisfaction (Schimmack, Oishi, Furr, & Funder, 2004). According to Tanksale (2015), cultural differences could be a contributing factor in discrepant correlations of personality traits among different populations. As we lack previous research evidence from Karachi, the findings of present study provide support for cultural aspect as a major contributing factor linking agreeableness and conscientiousness with life satisfaction and perceived stress in Pakistani population however these relationships lack predictive power. Further, the relationship of agreeableness and conscientiousness with life satisfaction has been explained by ecological and instrumental factors. Such as Jokela (2015) reported conscientiousness to be linked with life satisfaction among people living in areas with lower economic status, unemployment, and where people had more programs available to support their income. Moreover, agreeableness was found related to life satisfaction among people having large family size and living in areas with cheap residential land (Jokela et al., 2015).

Further, neuroticism is the most widely studied personality trait which is strongly linked with life satisfaction and possess predictive power apart from gender, age, geographical, cultural, or external environment factors (Boudreau et al., 2001; Chapman et al., 2007; Fadda & Scalas, 2016; Jokela et al., 2015; Judge et al., 2002). Schimmack et al. (2004) examined particular aspects of neuroticism which play a role in life satisfaction. According to the authors, the depressive or negative emotional facet of neuroticism causes this negative relation (Schimmack et al., 2004; Tanksale, 2015). Further, neurotic people rely on their memories of negative emotional experiences and past failures such as in academic life (Schimmack et al., 2002), which may affect their perceptions related to life satisfaction. This link is further supported by the genetic research as Weiss et al. (2016) found personality polygenes of neuroticism which play role in reduced life satisfaction (Weiss et al., 2016). Boudreaue et al (2001) suggested that executives who are high on neuroticism have less successful careers in terms of intrinsic dimensions such as job and life satisfaction (Boudreau et al., 2001). Those executives possessing trait of neuroticism even don't get satisfaction through monetary benefits such as increments in their salary (Boyce & Wood, 2011a) and this negativity is likely to affect their global evaluations of life satisfaction.

Further, according to our second hypothesis the findings provide additional support for religious faith to influence the predictive relationship with life satisfaction. It has been suggested that high religious faith in executives predicts high satisfaction with life. The religious beliefs can be considered as the source of personality development as we found openness to experience as the single personality trait linked with religious faith. Religious faith despite finding some positive associations with personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Szcześniak et al., 2019) lacks the mediational role between personality traits and life satisfaction. It has been suggested that the variance caused in life satisfaction is due to the dependence of life satisfaction over religious faith which is independent of personality traits. Various studies provide support for the religious means linking with higher life satisfaction. This link has widely been established in health care settings (Aghababaei & Tabik, 2015; Ballew et al., 2012; Bernstein, 2007; Brillhart, 2005; Bussing & Recchia, 2016; Cruz et al., 2017; Fitzell & Pakenham, 2010; Hussain et al., 2011; Katerndahl, 2008; Yu et al., 2008) and current study affirms religious benefits for executives in organizational settings as well. Consistent to the findings of previous studies conducted on Islamic cultures, our findings provide support for Muslim religious practices in Pakistani

culture (Abdel-Khalek, 2010; Cruz et al., 2017). People who have strong religious faith in Islam report themselves to be more contented and healthier (Abdel-Khalek, 2011, 2014; Abdel-Khalek & Lester, 2012; Baroun, 2006; Rizvi & Hossain, 2016). Religious people are also high on sympathy, love, gratefulness, forgiveness, optimism/hope, and loyalty. Further, these benefits are valid for those who not only have religious faith but also incorporate religious practices in their daily life (Berthold & Ruch, 2014). In religious cultures, those who practice and implement religion are treated by people with more respect, which could be another reason why they are more satisfied with life (Stavrova et al., 2013).

Similarly, the third hypothesis has also been partially proved as it was found personality traits globally predicting perceived stress where neuroticism produced significant positive effects on perceived stress level of executives. It can be suggested in light of advance analysis that certain personality traits though linked positively with life satisfaction and negatively associated with perceived stress, still do not produce significant effects to the extent of prediction. There can be other stronger contributing factors than personality traits which can affect the perceived stress level of executives such as unfavorable organizational circumstances (Jokela, 2015) and diverse cultural representation (Boudreau, Boswell, & Judge, 2001) which play role in the lives of people living in Karachi, Pakistan. Despite, the stressful conditions are increased in Karachi such as heavy traffic jams, load shedding of electricity, high inflation, low employment rate, and high poverty rate; executives who are low on neuroticism tend to handle their stress effectively and show higher satisfaction with life. Instrumental factors may also come to play as Boyce and Wood (2011a) suggested, executives who are high on conscientiousness, when they get increases in their salaries; they show high level of life satisfaction (Boyce & Wood, 2011a). This may also be the reason for their reduced level of stress. Further evidence on what kind of characteristics conscious and agreeable people do possess which help them get more satisfaction from life and lower level of stress; is provided by different studies such as, conscious and agreeable people are friendly, responsible, effective decision maker, careful, dependable, success oriented, and consistent. They are likely to maintain a work-life balance by effectively handling the stress related to their work-family conflicts (Haddon & Hede, 2010); and they are more adjusted in their academic and general life functioning (Zhang et al., 2010) therefore, they are more satisfied with life and likely to handle external stressors effectively despite unfavorable circumstances (Jokela, 2015). Conscious people have devotion towards their work and they strongly aspire for professional growth hence at the start of their career, they handle the workplace challenges in an effective way to attain a high level of satisfaction from their booming profession later in their professional careers (Aniței et al., 2013). Their commitment towards work predicts less occupational stress (Khodabakhshi, 2013). Agreeable people show less stressful reactions both physiologically and psychologically (Bibbey et al., 2013); they adapt to stressful life circumstances more quickly and hence resume losses in their life satisfaction rapidly (Boyce & Wood, 2011b). Likewise, a strong connotation of personality traits predicting high level of perceived stress comes from the fact that people with high neuroticism face hard time in getting through challenges and failures. They may react emotionally in situations where tactful handling is required. Consequently, they are likely to experience high level of strain (Aniței et al., 2013). Further, damaging consequences of neuroticism are characterized by the low cortisol level resulting in more physiological reactions which create high level of stress (Bibbey et al., 2013). High level of neuroticism predicts maladjustment in socio-cultural, psychological, and global spheres (Zhang et al., 2010).

In line with the fourth hypothesis of this study, the findings provide support for the religious faith causing additional variance in perceived stress. It is suggested that strong

religious faith provides buffer for reduced stress among executives. Religious faith has positive influence on mental distress as it provides a sense of purpose and meaning in life, develops the ability to adjust in stressful circumstances through alternative positive activities, promotes fair values e.g., creativity, tolerance, serenity, will power, sincerity, openness, compassion, wisdom, calmness, trust, and pleasure; which help people in protecting themselves from psychological disturbance or daily hassles and in improving their hedonic well-being (Aghababaei & Tabik, 2015; Chaudhry, 2008; Wang et al., 2016). Further, Fitzell (2010) suggested religion as a form of coping in face of stress through appraisal and adjustment in life (Fitzell & Pakenham, 2010). Religious practices that help people in life satisfaction and stress management may include daily prayers, attendance at mosque, meditation/ listening to religious music or other religious coping strategies, support system, secure relationship with God (Bradshaw & Kent, 2017), religious beliefs such as; there is a God who will reward/punish, utilizing a strong connection with high power in day to day life, faith as a source of strength and relieve in face of difficulties (Baetz et al., 2002; Barkin et al., 2015; Boey, 2003; Bradshaw et al., 2015; Cruz et al., 2017).

Moreover, the findings of present study help us understand additional characteristics of senior executives. It had been observed that with increasing age and experience at workplace, the executives became more satisfied with life and they exhibited low level of neuroticism and stress and a higher level of religious faith (Chapman et al., 2007; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). The entry level employees face challenges and stress at work through misinterpretation of responsibilities, overestimation of tensed situations, uncertain relationships with supervisors, and errors in work which are reduced with increasing age and experience at workplace. However, the senior executives gain resistance to pressures (Aniței et al., 2013), have more adherence to existential approaches (Berman et al., 2004), enjoy monetary and other benefits (Boudreau et al., 2001) such as high educational level (Chapman et al., 2007), better status, high income and family-role involvement (Coke, 1992), greater wisdom and creative activities (Webster et al., 2014) which ultimately increase their level of satisfaction with life. Further, the findings are supported through Erickson's stages of psychosocial development. Executives at the peak of their career and life path get satisfaction of their needs leading towards ego-integrity, which is also negatively related with personality disposition of neuroticism (Westerhof et al., 2017). Further, those executives who are more into religious activities enjoy benefits of psychological adjustment (Arshad & Uzair, 2017).

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the present study conclude that personality traits have significant predictive relationship with life satisfaction and perceived stress. It was further indicated that neuroticism is the only personality trait which produces unique variance in life satisfaction and perceived stress. Moreover, religious faith significantly contributes to an additional variance in life satisfaction and perceived stress among executives of Pakistani organizations.

## **Implications of the Study**

Implications of this study are apparent from its results as it will be of great help for human resource management, as well as for the organizational and clinical psychologists in understanding characteristics of executives. The findings are very important in promoting personality development, well-being, spiritual growth, and harmony of higher managerial staff in private sector organizations of Pakistan.

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