

Research Paper

## Levels of Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among International Students in the UK

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### ABSTRACT

Recently, we have witnessed many students coming to the United Kingdom for further studies. This research investigates self-efficacy and life satisfaction levels among overseas students studying in the UK. This study also examines the potential differences in self-efficacy and life satisfaction levels between male and female students travelling to the UK. The research utilises a quantitative approach, employing a standardised questionnaire as the primary data collection method. The questionnaires include standardised scales to measure self-efficacy and life satisfaction. The participants consist of overseas university students enrolled in various disciplines aged 18-35 years. The analysis of the study involves descriptive statistics to explore the relationship between self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and gender. Qualitative approach was also utilised in the research where ten participants were interviewed and thematic analysis was conducted. The results will contribute to the existing literature by studying overseas students' experiences in terms of self-efficacy and life satisfaction. The research findings have implications for academic institutions and policymakers aiming to enhance university students' well-being and academic success. Overall, the study provides useful insights into university students' self-efficacy and life satisfaction of university students, emphasising the importance of gender differences in understanding their experiences. Further research and interventions can be designed based on these findings to better support the needs of international students in their personal and academic achievement.

**Keywords:** *Self-Efficacy, Life Satisfaction, International Students*

In recent years we have seen an immense increase in the number of students coming to the UK for their studies. International students make up to 20% of the student population in the UK, according to the Department of Education (August 2022). Self-efficacy plays a significant role in influencing academic success. It refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as "the belief in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 193).

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Wood and Bandura (1989) described self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 367). Schwarzer and Fuchs (1996) defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 41). It is an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and achieve desired outcomes in an academic context.

Life satisfaction can also have a significant impact on academic success. A positive and fulfilling life can create a conducive environment for better academic performance. Life satisfaction has been defined as "a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life" (Diener et al., 2002). Life satisfaction, meaning in life and hope are some of the most important factors that affect the individual's thoughts and feelings in situations of danger. Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) defined life satisfaction as "a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his own chosen criteria" (p. 71). Pavot and Diener (1993) described life satisfaction as "the cognitive and affective evaluation of an individual's life as a whole" (p. 164). This research will further educate the educational institutions and policy makers in designing interventions and support systems to enhance the overall well-being and academic success of international systems. By getting a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the experiences of the international students, this research strives to contribute to a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for students from diverse backgrounds.

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This paper will review the potential factors that may affect the relationship between life satisfaction and self-efficacy of international students in the UK. The choice to focus on self-efficacy and life satisfaction in this research stems from recognising that these psychological factors are crucial determinants of an individual's psychological well-being, success and overall quality of life. By investigating self-efficacy and life satisfaction among overseas students in the UK, this study aims to provide valuable insights into this particular population's psychological well-being and experiences. This study will target a diverse population of overseas students from different countries and academic disciplines, resulting in a representative sample and comprehensive analysis. This research uses a mixed approach by collecting data quantitatively using standardised scales to measure self-efficacy and life satisfaction levels and conducting interviews which is a qualitative method.

### *Aim of the study*

This research aims to investigate the study levels of Self-efficacy and Life Satisfaction among International students in the UK.

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### *Objectives*

- To assess the level of life satisfaction among overseas students.
- To examine self-efficacy perceptions of international students in the UK.
- To explore the potential correlation between life satisfaction and self-efficacy among this student population.

### *Hypothesis*

- Null Hypotheses (H0): There is no significant correlation between life satisfaction levels and self-efficacy among UK overseas students.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H1): A significant positive correlation exists between life satisfaction levels and self-efficacy among UK overseas students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Participants*

A convenience sample of 93 participants was employed, ensuring a diverse representation of the student population. Inclusion criteria encompass students aged 18-35, currently enrolled in a university in the UK for at least one academic year, meeting the age requirement of 18 years, participants should be current students and hail from different cultures and academic backgrounds to ensure representations across cultures. Additionally, the students should be studying in the UK for more than a year to capture diverse experiences. Exclusion criteria exclude domestic students, short-term or part-time students, participants with incomplete data entries, and participants with insufficient English proficiency to administer the scales. These criteria collectively aim to create a homogenous and comprehensive sample, focusing on the unique experiences of long-term and full-time students.

### *Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the participants*

#### **Inclusion criteria of the participants**

- The participants should be 18-35 years of age. They should be an international student at present. They should also understand and speak English. They should be from different countries and cultural backgrounds other than the UK and should be included to account for the diversity of international students in the UK.
- Participants from various educational levels such as undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programs should be included to represent a diverse student population.
- Participants should at least study in the UK for one academic year to capture the experiences of students who have sufficient exposure to the academic and cultural background.

#### **Exclusion criteria of the participants**

- Exclusion of students who are permanent residents or UK residents as this research focuses on overseas students.
- Short term study students were excluded, that is, those who are on short term programs and part time study. Excluded participants with incomplete data to maintain the reliability and validity of the study. Participants with insufficient English proficiency were not included as they may not accurately respond to the test which may affect the quality of data.

### *Materials*

Two questionnaires were used in this study along with socio- demographic details such as age, country of origin. The questionnaires used in this study are as stated below.

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- 1. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)** – The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a widely used self-report measure designed to assess an individual's overall satisfaction with life. The SWLS consists of five statements that participants rate on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The scale was developed by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen, and Sharon Griffin in 1985. Participants indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement, and their responses are summed to produce a total score ranging from 5 to 35. Higher scores indicate greater life satisfaction. The SWLS has been found to have good reliability and validity across different populations and cultural contexts. It has been used in various research studies to assess life satisfaction and evaluate interventions or factors related to well-being.
- 2. General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)**- The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) is a widely used self-report measure designed to assess an individual's perceived self-efficacy, which refers to their belief in their own ability to handle and succeed in various situations. The GSE was developed by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem in 1995. It consists of 10 items, each rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from “not at all true” to “exactly true.” The scale is designed to measure an individual's overall sense of self-efficacy, rather than focusing on specific domains. Participants rate the extent to which each statement applies to them. The responses are summed to produce a total score ranging from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating greater general self-efficacy. The GSE has demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's alpha between .76 and .90) and validity across different populations and cultural contexts (Validity: The General Self-Efficacy Scale is correlated to emotion, optimism, work satisfaction. Negative coefficients were found for depression, stress, health complaints, burnout, and anxiety). It has been used in various research studies to assess self-efficacy beliefs and their impact on behaviour, motivation, and well-being.

### *Research design*

This research employs a mixed research design utilising the satisfaction with life scale (SWLC) and the general life-efficacy scale (GSE) and also conducting semi-structured interviews. The research involves the collection of socio-demographic details alongside self-report measures.

### *Procedure*

The data collection process for the study was conducted online to ensure the accessibility and convenience of the participants. Ethical consideration was prioritised before data collection, and informed consent was taken from all participants. Participants were explained the study's purpose, procedures and their right to withdraw from the study at any point. After the consent, the socio-demographic details were obtained, including their age and country of origin. The data were collected with a specific focus on ensuring diversity in the sample, considering participants from various countries, cultural backgrounds, and educational levels, including graduates and postgraduates. Exclusion was applied during the data-cleaning process to maintain the reliability and validity of the data. Participants with incomplete information were excluded from the analysis. Additionally, other exclusion criteria, such as individuals identified as domestic short-term or part-time students, were excluded from the analysis to ensure the homogeneity of the sample.

The information was collated and organised for statistical analysis after the data collection. The statistical tool Jamovi was employed to conduct correlation analysis and explore the

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relationship between life satisfaction and self-efficacy among the international student population. The results were presented in a table to facilitate a clear understanding of the findings.

In addition to the quantitative approach, a qualitative dimension was included in the study, making it a mixed study that involved conducting interviews to enrich the understanding of overseas students' experiences. The interview process aimed to provide a perspective on factors influencing self-efficacy and life satisfaction. The participants were selected from a large sample to ensure diversity in cultural backgrounds, academic levels, and gender. Participants who expressed interest in the interview were contacted separately. Informed consent for the interview was obtained, explaining the purpose of the interview, confidentiality measures and the voluntary nature of the interview. A semi-structured interview was developed, addressing questions relating to participants' academic journey, cultural adjustments, and the impact of self-efficacy on their overall well-being. Interviews were conducted online, allowing flexibility and accessibility. The interviews were transcribed verbatim to maintain the integrity of participants' responses. The participants were anonymised during the transcription process to maintain confidentiality. Transcripts were then identified thematically, identifying recurring patterns, key themes and variations in participants' experiences.

The qualitative data obtained through interviews were triangulated with the quantitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between self-efficacy and life satisfaction among overseas students. The mixed research design was aimed to offer a holistic perspective of the psychological well-being of international students in the UK. The findings from the qualitative analysis are incorporated in the overall discussion, contributing depth and context to the quantitative data.

## RESULTS

### Results

A preliminary analysis indicated that the sample consisted of N=93 overseas participants, comprising n=58 females and n=35 males, with a mean age of 24.4 years. The mean scores for self-efficacy and total life satisfaction were (M=30.3, S.D=5.32) and (M=24.3, S.D=5.69). As demonstrated in Table 1

*Table 1*

### Descriptives

	<b>Total Life Satisfaction</b>	<b>Total Self Efficacy</b>	<b>Age</b>
<b>N</b>	93	93	93
<b>Mean</b>	24.3	30.3	24.4
<b>Standard deviation</b>	5.69	5.32	5.10
<b>Shapiro-Wilk W</b>	0.980	0.961	0.756
<b>Shapiro-Wilk p</b>	0.167	0.007	<.001

Spearman correlation was conducted due to the nonnormality of data as indicated by the Shapiro-Wilk's normality test ( $p < 0.05$ ). The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and life satisfaction among overseas students ( $r(91) = 0.261$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). This indicates a moderate positive relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction among the participants.

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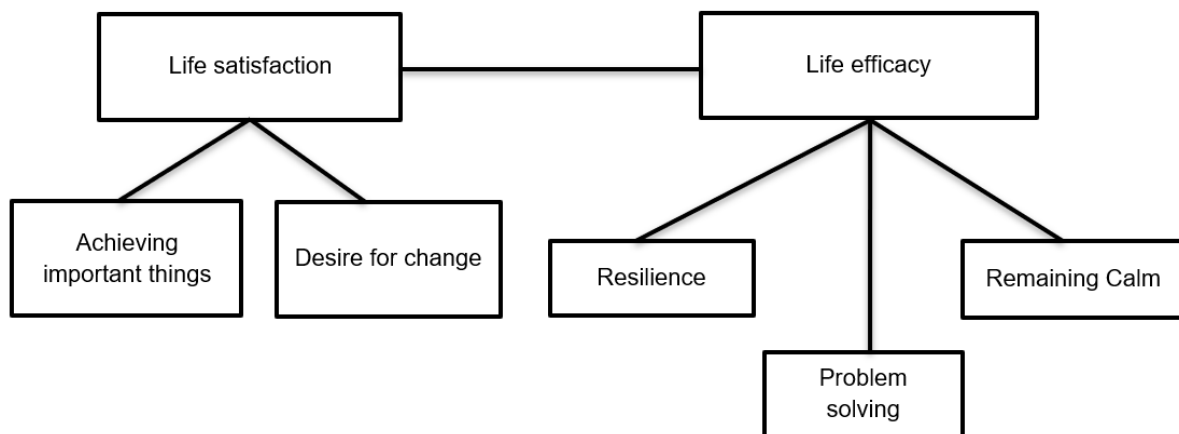
An independent t-test was examined to assess the gender differences in life satisfaction and self-efficacy among overseas students. The analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females for life satisfaction  $t(91) = 0.634$ ,  $p = 0.528$  and self-efficacy  $t(91) = 0.604$ ,  $p = 0.548$ . The effect size for these was small, with a Cohen's  $d$  value of 0.136 and 0.129. These findings suggest that gender does not significantly influence life satisfaction or self-efficacy levels among overseas students in the U.K. The assumption for the t-test was analyzed to ensure its validity. The assumption for homogeneity of variances was met for life satisfaction and self-efficacy indicated by the nonsignificant result on Levene's test  $f(1,91) = 1.401$ ,  $p = 0.240$ , and  $f(1,91) = 0.142$ ,  $p = 0.707$ . Normality assumptions were examined using the Shapiro-Wilks test. For life satisfaction, normality assumptions were met as indicated by the non-significant Kolmogorov-Smirnov ( $p = 0.345$ ), but not for total self-efficacy ( $p = 0.020$ ). As demonstrated in the Table 2

**Table 2 Independent Samples T-Test**

	Student's t	df	p	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
<b>Total Life Satisfaction</b>	0.634	91.0	0.528	0.136
<b>Total Life Efficacy</b>	0.604	91.0	0.548	0.129

### Qualitative results

A thematic analysis was conducted for the finding the results of the interviews. The findings revolved around the two main themes, life satisfaction and life efficacy, which further got divided into five main themes which were then subdivided into nine themes. They are given



**Figure 1 Flowchart showing the different themes**

### Life satisfaction and ideal conditions:

The following questions were asked to the participants and their responses are given below. The questions are Do you think your life is close to ideal in mist ways?; Do you think the conditions of your life are excellent? Are you satisfied with your life?

Participant 1 expresses that their life is not currently close to their ideal, rating it as in the middle position. When asking about conditions of life they mentioned dissatisfaction with certain aspects like their job and academics. They attribute their dissatisfaction partially to being in a different country for study purposes and cite cultural differences as a factor. Despite this, they express contentment with aspects like friendships and home life. The participant indicates that they are not dissatisfied with their life but are okay with it for now. They describe themselves as going with the flow.

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Participant 2 expresses a moderate level of satisfaction with their life, acknowledging that it could be better but indicating contentment with the current situation. They express satisfaction with their life overall, despite acknowledging areas for improvement.

Participant 3 expresses a gap between their ideal life expectations and the reality they experience, especially after moving to the UK. They acknowledge the challenges and complexities faced, including difficulties in finding a job, managing domestic chores, and adjusting to the new environment. While not meeting their ideal, Participant 3 expresses a level of satisfaction with their current life situation. They highlight achievements such as achieving financial independence and pursuing their career goals, albeit with ongoing efforts to reach higher satisfaction levels.

Participant 4 doesn't perceive their life as close to ideal, acknowledging both growth and challenges experienced over the past year. They express moderate satisfaction with their life, highlighting areas of improvement such as achieving a good job and having a good partner. Participant 5 expresses contentment with their life and doesn't feel the need to adhere strictly to a predetermined ideal. They emphasize being adaptable to life's circumstances. They consider the conditions of their life to be excellent, highlighting satisfaction with work, education, and overall well-being. While generally satisfied with life as an international student, they express a desire to be closer to family, indicating a source of mild dissatisfaction.

Participant 6 demonstrates a remarkable ability to adapt to new environments and overcome challenges. They discuss their experiences with unexpected events, such as handling last-minute deadlines and managing group projects with uncooperative team members. Their proactive approach to problem-solving and willingness to take on additional responsibilities highlight their resilience in the face of adversity.

Participant 7 mentioned her life isn't ideal yet, missing the ease and travel opportunities she had before coming to her current location. She hopes her life will improve in a year or two. While not considering her life excellent, she believes achieving her ideal would make it so. She feels lonely and values quality relationships, missing the close bond she had with a friend in her home country. Despite these challenges, she is generally satisfied with her life compared to other international students she knows.

Participant 8 displays a flexible mindset regarding their life ideals, acknowledging that perceptions of an ideal life change over time. They emphasize the importance of progress toward their evolving ideals, indicating a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances and aspirations. While they recognize improvements in certain aspects of their life after moving to the UK, such as opportunities for personal growth and career advancement, they also highlight challenges and uncertainties, particularly regarding accommodation and future prospects. This mixed perspective suggests a nuanced evaluation of their current life conditions.

Participant 9 expresses dissatisfaction with their current life, particularly regarding education and workplace. They feel that their life does not align with their ideal, as it falls short of their expectations.

Participant 10 expresses dissatisfaction with their current life situation, feeling that they could have made better choices. They express regret about not achieving their ideal life and

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feel that they could have done better if they had made different decisions. Before coming to their current location, Participant 10 had certain expectations about their academic and professional pursuits. However, they feel that the reality has not matched their expectations, leading to disappointment and a sense of being unfulfilled. While Participant 10 acknowledges the change in lifestyle that comes with their current situation, they also feel that it has come at a cost. They mention sacrificing connections with family and friends back home, indicating a sense of loss and isolation.

### *Attainment of Important Things:*

The following questions were asked to the participants and their responses are given below. The questions are, have you gotten the important things you wanted in your life?

Participant 1 The participant mentions that they have not yet achieved the important things they desire in life, indicating that they are still in the process of achieving them.

Participant 2 mentions achieving their goal of getting a job in the UK, which they consider their dream job. While they haven't achieved all their important goals yet, they mention gaining independence and learning new skills like cooking, which they consider significant accomplishments.

Participant 3 mentions that moving abroad has made her independent and not dependent on her parents, which is a step toward attaining the important things in life, like getting a PhD.

Participant 4 mentioned that she hasn't achieved all the important things she wants in her life yet. She's still striving for a few key goals. One of the main things is securing a good job that would enable her to be independent and earn enough to support her family. Additionally, finding a good partner is another significant aspiration. Altogether, these are the main things she's looking forward to achieving.

Participant 5 feels they haven't achieved all their important goals yet, particularly in terms of career and education, but recognize that it's a work in progress.

Participant 6 mentioned that before coming to the UK, he wasn't particularly strong academically but was very involved in extracurricular activities. He ran a travel and adventure company, did freelancing, and took on various internships. Upon arriving in the UK, he became dedicated to learning new subjects like economics and accounting. During his undergraduate studies, he developed a method for learning, dedicating one or two hours to a specific subject or skill he wanted to improve. For instance, to enhance his communication skills, he recorded himself to identify mistakes. He considers himself good at learning new things and applying a structured approach to mastering them.

Participant 7 mentioned that she has achieved many of her important goals in life so far and feels she has even surpassed her expectations. Looking forward to the next year, she remains optimistic about what lies ahead.

Participant 8 mentioned that he has achieved some important goals, such as earning a scholarship to study abroad and working as an assistant psychologist. However, he finds the pay unsatisfactory and has ongoing concerns about his job. He noted that his desires evolve; after achieving one goal, new ones arise. This continuous pursuit means he is always seeking more, making it an endless journey until he finds contentment with what he has.



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Participant 9 mentioned that the most important thing in life, according to her, is happiness and a peaceful atmosphere. She emphasized that money and material wealth are not as crucial as emotional well-being and a sense of contentment, which she believes contribute significantly to a fulfilling life for oneself and others around them.

Participant 10 mentions that she has attained some things and tries not to miss out on important things. However, she mentions that everything important to her is not with her yet.

### *Desire for Change:*

The following questions were asked to the participants and their responses are given below. The questions are, if you could live your life over, what would you change? or won't you want anything to change?

Participant 1 mentions that if given the chance to live their life over, they would like to make significant changes, such as pursuing a different course of study and possibly returning to their home country earlier.

Participant 2 express contentment with how their life has turned out and indicate no desire to change anything if they could live their life over.

Participant 3 says that she doesn't want to change anything in her life and would like to go with the flow.

Participant 4 mentions that if she could live her life over, she might make some changes. She would prefer a place with more nightlife, as the current location lacks it, which she finds personally important. Additionally, she would choose a place that makes it easier and quicker to travel to her family. Being a city person, she misses the noise and vibrancy of city life, and finds the current location depressing, especially at night.

Participant 5 mentions that, if she were to live her life again, there are some decisions she would change, but not everything. Just minor decisions that make her cringe when she looks back, questioning why she made them, reflecting her immature side. These are decisions from when she was younger, not the bigger, more recent decisions. Overall, she believes everything is good as it is now and there are no major decisions she would change.

Participant 6 mentions that if he could live his life over, he wouldn't want to change anything. He is confident and doesn't regret any decisions in his life.

Participant 7 mentions that if she could live her life over, she would change the decision to move to another country for high school, considering it one of the worst decisions of her life. Having grown up in one place and completed studies until a certain grade there, she regrets leaving for the new location. She feels she missed out on valuable time with loved ones and believes her life might have been better if she had stayed in her hometown. She also thinks she would have had different opportunities and friendships if she hadn't made that decision.

Participant 8 humorously mentioned wanting to know the answers to every test beforehand to get good marks. He reflected that if he hadn't chosen psychology and had pursued a government job or engineering, he likely wouldn't have come to the UK. However, given the

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state of psychology in India, if he had to choose psychology again, he would still choose to come to the UK or perhaps America, where the field is more valued and respected.

Participant 9 mentioned that if she had the chance to live her life again from the beginning, she desired to be more responsible in her actions. While acknowledging her current level of responsibility, she felt that she could improve in this aspect. She didn't mention any specific regrets but focused on the idea of personal growth and taking more responsibility in various aspects of her life.

Participant 10 mentions that she would like to rewrite everything from the very beginning of her life, that is from her childhood. She even mentions that she would have been better in her mother country.

### ***Handling Difficult problem:***

The following question was asked to the participants and their responses are given below. The question is, can you manage to solve difficult problems in your life, or do you need to try harder, if possible could you share some examples. Can you handle whatever comes your way?

Participant 1 expresses confidence in their ability to manage and solve difficult problems, acknowledging that they may initially feel low but ultimately believe in their ability to overcome challenges. Ultimately, the participant believes they can handle whatever comes their way, showing a resilient attitude towards life's challenges.

Participant 2 mentions they can solve problems, they also acknowledge struggling with anxiety and overthinking at times, seeking support from their mother to alleviate these feelings.

Participant 3 admits to initially ignoring difficult problems, preferring to let them unfold before addressing them. They illustrate this with an example of emotional processing after a loss.

Participant 4 express confidence in their ability to solve difficult problems, although they admit it can be challenging and sometimes require support from friends or family. They acknowledge that finding solutions to problems may take time, depending on the complexity of the issue, but express confidence in their problem-solving skills. Despite recognizing that challenges may be difficult at times, they also express confidence in their ability to handle whatever comes their way.

Participant 5 feel capable of managing chaotic situations effectively but struggle with straightforward problems, indicating a preference for complexity over simplicity in problem-solving. They also believe in handling challenges in their own way, acknowledging that everyone has their unique approach to problem-solving.

Participant 6 mentions that he can handle difficult problems in his life. While he manages tasks like time management, learning, cooking, and laundry well, his biggest challenge is dealing with rejection, which he fears and wants to overcome. He accepts challenges as they come and is willing to put in extra effort to succeed, emphasizing persistence and learning from each experience.

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Participant 7 mentions that solving difficult problems is like a piece of cake for her, as she feels confident in overcoming challenges wherever they arise. She emphasized her ability to tackle issues quickly and efficiently, always finding a plan to address them head-on. One recent example she shared was the challenge of securing a job, which initially seemed daunting, but she managed to navigate through multiple opportunities and is now faced with the decision of choosing among 23 offers. She attributes her problem-solving skills to the resilience she developed during her two years in a foreign country, which made her adaptable to unfamiliar environments.

Participant 8 can solve difficult problems, though it requires effort. Adjusting to the culture in the UK was tough, especially since he was used to being very social. He had to get used to being alone and tried new approaches like meditation. Professionally, he faced many rejections before securing an assistant psychologist position, applying to over 130 jobs. Despite the challenges, he values the lessons learned and feels stronger for it.

Participant 9 mentions they have faced challenges in education, workplace, and interpersonal relationships and are sources of dissatisfaction. They express frustration with the lack of fulfilment in these areas, citing issues with education not meeting expectations and challenges with workplace dynamics, such as unruly behaviour from people in workplace.

Participant 10 mentioned that she can handle difficult problems, especially those requiring logical thinking, with confidence. However, when it comes to emotional or interpersonal issues involving people, she finds herself more challenged. She expressed that her emotions sometimes interfere with her decision-making process in these situations, making it harder for her to find solutions she feels confident about.

### *Dealing with Opposition*

The following question was asked to the participants and their responses are given below. The question is, if someone oppose you, do you think you can find the means and ways to get what you want?

The participant 1 acknowledges that their response to opposition depends on the situation and the person opposing them. They consider factors like the correctness of the opposing viewpoint and their confidence in their own decisions.

Participant 2 believes they can find means and ways to get what they want, indicating confidence in their problem-solving abilities.

Participant 3 mentions that if she wants to do something, she will do it. However, it might be difficult to oppose her parents, but in other cases, she can deal with opposition.

Participant 4 demonstrates a resilient attitude towards opposition, stating that they would find ways to achieve their goals even if faced with obstacles from others.

Participant 5 prefers not to engage in convincing others to change their decisions and is more inclined to accept opposing viewpoints, especially regarding significant life choices.

Participant 6 mentioned that he can find ways to get what he wants even if someone opposes him. He has learned to handle criticism and disagreements effectively. He knows how to

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break down opposing views and settle differences, aiming for a good conversation without conflicts. Ensuring that they work towards a positive result is very important to him.

Participant 7 confidently stated that she can find ways to achieve her goals despite opposition. She emphasized her determination not to be deterred by what others say and expressed a firm belief in pursuing what she wants with enthusiasm. She mentioned that while she may share her perspective, she does not feel compelled to impose her ideas or viewpoints on others who hold different opinions.

Participant 8 mentions that if someone opposes him, he evaluates the validity of their reasons and prefers to engage in a constructive debate rather than an argument. If the issue isn't crucial, he is willing to adjust. He believes in sticking to his aims and accomplishing his goals. He draws motivation from quotes and interviews, such as focusing on the path rather than obstacles, which helps him stay focused and overcome challenges. He maintains a positive mindset, believing that doubting himself would hinder his progress.

Participant 9 acknowledged that if someone important opposes her plans, such as her parents objecting to pursuing a different field for her master's degree, she would prioritize seeking their approval rather than proceeding against their wishes. She emphasized the significance of commitment and dedication in achieving her goals, stating that without interest or dedication, she wouldn't pursue a goal merely for the sake of it being a goal.

Participant 10 noted that her approach to opposition depends significantly on the person opposing her. If the individual is someone close or important to her, she tends to be more submissive and accommodating. However, if the opposition comes from someone she doesn't know well or doesn't consider significant, she is less likely to accept it without question. She emphasized the importance of context and the relationship with the person who opposes her in determining her response.

### *Goal Persistence*

The following question was asked to the participants and their responses are given below. The question is, do you think you can stick to your aims and accomplish your goals?

The participant 1 expresses confidence in their ability to stick to their goals and accomplish them, regardless of obstacles.

Participant 2 describe themselves as a determined person who can stick to aims and accomplish goals once they've made a decision.

Participant 3 maintains a future-oriented perspective, emphasizing their commitment to achieving their goals despite obstacles. They express a sense of responsibility and determination to succeed, even in the face of uncertainty.

Participant 4 mentions that their aims may change over time, they express determination to accomplish their goals through hard work and effort.

Participant 5 mentions they've achieved goals in the past, they currently don't have specific long-term goals and are comfortable with a more relaxed approach to life planning.

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Although Participant 6 mentions not having a long-term plan, they exhibit a goal-oriented mindset focused on achieving short-term objectives. They discuss setting clear goals for themselves, breaking down tasks into manageable steps, and prioritizing their efforts accordingly. This goal-oriented approach helps them stay focused and motivated to accomplish tasks efficiently.

Participant 7 expresses satisfaction with their life achievements so far and acknowledges the importance of setting and achieving goals. They demonstrate a proactive approach to problem-solving and express confidence in their ability to overcome obstacles and accomplish their objectives, such as securing a job and pursuing further goals in the future.

Despite facing setbacks and uncertainties, Participant 8 expresses determination to achieve their goals, whether it's academic success, career advancement, or personal fulfilment. They emphasize the dynamic nature of their aspirations and the importance of perseverance in pursuing them.

Participant 9 mentions pursuing higher education in a different field as a personal goal and express a desire to achieve financial stability and happiness.

Participant 10 believed she could stick to her aims and accomplish her goals. She expressed confidence in her ability to work hard persistently and stay committed to her objectives. Regarding her endeavours at that time, she remained optimistic that if the goal was attainable, she would continue striving until she succeeded.

### ***Efficient Problem solving and coping with unforeseen situations***

The following questions were asked to the participants and their responses are given below. The questions are, can you deal efficiently with unexpected events, can you solve most problems if you invest necessary effort, do you think you handle the unforeseen situations?

Participant 1 believes they can efficiently deal with unexpected events and solve most problems with the necessary effort, drawing from past experiences.

Participant 2 mentions that she can overcome unforeseen situations. They recount an incident of handling an unexpected event, demonstrating resilience and ability to handle unforeseen situations. They express confidence in their ability to handle whatever comes their way, showing a resilient attitude towards challenges.

Participant 3 mentions that she would like emotional support in difficult situations. She mentioned that her parents are her backbone, and she will need them all the time. She also mentioned that it was difficult for her when she moved to the UK and had to face some difficult situations.

Participant 4 mentions that there were indeed unforeseen situations she had to handle, not necessarily involving her directly but with a friend. There was an unfortunate and unpredictable circumstance she had to deal with alongside her friend. Initially, she was worried, but she realized she needed to handle it, and she did.

Participant 5 mentions that while she can handle unforeseen situations, it's not always guaranteed. If the situation interests her, then she is more likely to tackle it. However, she acknowledged that not all situations would capture her interest or energy to solve. If a

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situation is chaotic, she might be more inclined to engage with it, though she is uncertain about why she responds this way. Overall, she conveyed a readiness but also an uncertainty about consistently handling all unforeseen circumstances.

Participant 6 mentions that he can handle unforeseen and unpredictable situations. Similar to previous experiences, he feels capable of managing these challenges effectively.

Participant 7 is skilled at managing unexpected events and solving problems efficiently. Despite challenges like caring for her grandparents and learning to cook during emergencies, she adapted quickly. In the UK, she coped with accommodation issues by using friends' facilities. While she hasn't faced major unexpected events recently, she believes she could handle them, though she might initially be surprised. She acknowledged that personal emergencies, like a family crisis, could briefly impact her emotionally.

Participant 8 mentions that he can deal efficiently with unexpected events and solve most problems with necessary effort. In the last two years, he faced several challenges: a breakup after a long-term relationship, which he overcame with the support of friends; an unexpected romantic relationship with his best friend; and securing a job after multiple rejections due to visa issues. These experiences have demonstrated his ability to handle unforeseen situations by accepting them, finding support, and staying open to new opportunities.

Participant 9 expresses uncertainty about efficiently handling unexpected events, noting that such situations would likely cause worry and concern due to their unexpected nature. If faced with an unforeseen problem, she indicated she would initially attempt to understand its source and then seek a solution accordingly. However, she acknowledged that depending on the complexity of the issue, she might need to seek assistance to resolve it effectively.

Participant 10 expresses confidence in her ability to handle unexpected events and solve problems with dedication. Reflecting on the past nine months, she did not encounter significant unexpected challenges. She acknowledged feeling anxious about upcoming events but moved on quickly once they passed, avoiding dwelling on them. Her strategy involved proactive planning and having contingency plans (Plan B) in place for important matters. While initial concerns about unexpected events arose, she managed to resolve them without letting them linger in her mind. Overall, her approach demonstrated a proactive and adaptable attitude toward handling challenges.

### ***Remaining Calm***

The following question was asked to the participants and their responses are given below. The question was, can you remain calm when facing difficulties because you think you have got good coping abilities?

Participant 1 express confidence in their ability to remain calm when facing difficulties, though they may initially feel low before overcoming challenges.

Participant 2 generally remain calm when facing difficulties, they admit to sometimes getting into a negative mindset where they perceive their life as bad.

Participant 3 mentions that she feels like she can stay calm in difficulties and believes that she has good coping abilities.

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Participant 4 acknowledges that they may not remain calm initially when facing difficulties but believe in their coping abilities to eventually deal with the situation.

Participant 5 tends to remain calm outwardly, even during stressful situations, although they may feel intense emotions internally.

Participant 6 mentioned that his ability to remain calm when facing difficulties depends on the situation. If it relates to his work, he remains calm, as his brain is trained for that. However, in his personal life, especially with emotional issues, he sometimes struggles initially but can deal with it better after giving himself some time.

Participant 7 believes she can remain calm in most situations, except when people irritate her or involve her in their problems unnecessarily. She clarified that she doesn't get angry or upset easily but finds it challenging when others' issues affect her indirectly. While she prefers to handle her own problems independently, she occasionally seeks help for clarification or minor issues. She values self-reliance and prefers not to depend on others unnecessarily.

Participant 8 mentioned that he tends to remain calm when faced with difficulties, even when others around him may be panicking. While he acknowledges that he might feel unsettled after the immediate crisis passes, he has a habit of compartmentalizing during the critical moments to focus on the problem-solving process. Afterward, he takes time to reflect on the events internally. Overall, he described himself as able to handle challenges efficiently and calmly in the moment.

Participant 9 admitted that remaining calm in difficult situations is challenging for her, noting that her initial reaction would typically be feeling stuck. She explained that her next steps would involve seeking solutions and understanding the reasons behind the situation to navigate through it.

Participant 10 mentioned that maintaining calmness during challenging situations is a natural trait for her. Despite feeling chaotic internally, she emphasized that her exterior demeanour remains composed and collected, making it difficult for others to discern when she is facing difficulties or trouble.

### ***Finding multiple solutions***

The following question was asked to the participants and their responses are given below. The questions were, when you are confronted with a problem are you able to find several solutions?

Participant 1 mentions their ability to generate multiple solutions to problems before deciding on the best course of action.

Participant 2 mentions being able to find several solutions to problems, citing an example of having to vacate accommodation and finding alternative arrangements.

Participant 3 demonstrates confidence in their problem-solving abilities, stating that they are a good problem-solver with multiple ideas to address issues. They exhibit a proactive approach to finding solutions and express willingness to take on leadership roles when necessary.

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Participant 4 confidently mentioned that she believes she can handle whatever comes her way. Although it may be hard sometimes, she is confident in her ability to manage.

Participant 5 mentioned that she can handle whatever comes her way in her own manner, just as everyone has their own way of dealing with problems. She acknowledges that even freezing in the moment can be a part of handling situations. She appreciates that this too is a valid way of coping. Concluding on a positive note, she affirmed her confidence and readiness to face challenges. While they may fixate on a single solution initially, they struggle to explore alternative solutions if the first one doesn't work, leading to feelings of disheartenment.

Participant 6 mentioned that he can find multiple solutions when faced with problems. For example, during a six-month entrepreneurship project, only two team members, including himself, were contributing near the end. With just two days left, they had to complete numerous tasks. As the product lead, he prioritized tasks, wrote down what needed to be done, found several solutions, and focused on the best ones, ensuring the project was ready in time.

Participant 7 mentioned that when confronted with a problem, she has a lot of plans and solutions in mind. She described herself as someone who continuously generates ideas and options to address the issue at hand.

Participant 8 mentioned that he is skilled at quickly identifying multiple solutions when faced with problems, employing a holistic approach by considering various perspectives and breaking down issues into manageable parts. He emphasizes the importance of having contingency plans (Plan B, Plan C) to adapt if initial solutions fail. While confident in handling most challenges efficiently, he acknowledges limitations in extreme scenarios such as war but feels adept at managing everyday difficulties effectively.

Participant 9 tackled problems by exploring multiple solutions, recognizing that complex issues often necessitated diverse approaches. While acknowledging human achievements like reaching the Moon, she also acknowledged human limitations in solving every challenge. Her method involved delving deeply into understanding problems before attempting to find solutions, demonstrating a balanced perspective on problem-solving capabilities and constraints.

Participant 10 described her resilience as a result of personal growth rather than challenging circumstances, having had a privileged upbringing. Over time, she has developed patience and mental strength, realizing that problems often appear larger in the moment than they actually are. Her strategy involves tackling issues methodically, believing that attempting to solve them leads to finding solutions. While she believes in a higher power for peace of mind, she emphasizes personal responsibility in addressing challenges before seeking guidance through prayer. Her approach combines self-reliance with spiritual belief, reflecting a balanced perspective on overcoming difficulties.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the t-test indicate that there are no significant gender differences in either life satisfaction or self-efficacy among overseas students in the UK. These findings suggest that gender does not play an important role in predicting the levels of life satisfaction or self-efficacy among international students within the context of this study. The small effect size



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further indicates that the difference between the scores for males and females is negligible. Our findings both support and contradict previous research, which indicates no significant difference in self-efficacy between young males and females, but a notable difference in life satisfaction based on gender (Jayesh & Thomas, 2022). There is further evidence of higher level of life satisfaction in males than in females (Gupta & Kriti, n.d.). It is possible that other factors such as individual differences, cultural factors, and social support networks may have influenced the effect of gender differences on psychological well-being among international students, mitigating any gender-based disparities.

It is important to consider the cultural and contextual factors that may influence the relationship between self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and gender. The sample in this study was from diverse cultural backgrounds, each bringing unique perspectives and experiences that could impact the self-efficacy beliefs and life satisfaction levels. Cultural norms and values play an important role in shaping individuals' perception of self-efficacy and well-being. Research suggests how cultural dimensions significantly influence student self-efficacy (Jin et al., 2023). Furthermore, the context of studying in the UK, with its specific academic demands and social environment, could influence the experience of students coming from a certain background. UK's higher education system, characterised by a higher level of academic rigour and independent learning, may pose challenges to students who are accustomed to different educational practices. The literature review identifies academic challenges as a major issue for international students, alongside teaching practices and classroom dynamics (Ecochard & Fotheringham, 2017). Research further suggests the importance of educational practices in enhancing students' self-efficacy beliefs, which can contribute to improved well-being and academic performance (Lera et al., 2022). Additionally, the process of acculturation, involving adaption to a new culture can significantly impact an individual's level of self-efficacy and life experiences, a study reveals that self-esteem partially mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and sociocultural adaptation (Gebregergis et al., 2020).

Higher levels of self-efficacy were associated with greater life satisfaction among the participants. The correlation coefficient of 0.261 suggests that the variation in life satisfaction can be explained by variance in self-efficacy scores among the overseas student population. This finding supports the notion that self-efficacy beliefs play a role in shaping individuals' overall satisfaction with their life circumstances, particularly among international students studying in the UK. These results support previous research findings which suggest a correlation between life satisfaction and self-efficacy. Studies revealed that the self-efficacy of young adults significantly predicts their life satisfaction (Savi Çakar, 2012). A general sense of satisfaction with one's life can boost self-esteem in young people who are aware of their strengths and talents. Similarly, lower life satisfaction can result in lower self-esteem when individuals undervalue their abilities (Szczęśniak et al., 2021).

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the experiences of overseas students in terms of self-efficacy and life satisfaction. The positive correlation between self-efficacy and life satisfaction indicates that interventions aimed at enhancing students' life efficacy beliefs may also contribute to improving their well-being and satisfaction. While the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between life satisfaction, self-efficacy, and gender differences among overseas students, there are further avenues for further research that can enrich our understanding of these constructs. Firstly, longitudinal studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how life satisfaction and self-efficacy evolve among international students. Tracking these constructs over time can

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provide a better understanding of any changes and psychological well-being among these students, and also identify critical periods where targeted interventions are most needed.

Secondly, future research could also explore the role of other factors, such as academic stress, cultural differences, individual differences, and social support in shaping self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Understanding how these variables interact with self-efficacy and life satisfaction can provide a more holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the international students. Lastly, comparative studies across different countries and educational contexts could help identify best practices to support overseas students. By examining how life satisfaction and self-efficacy are influenced by cultural contexts and academic systems, researchers can identify strategies that are effective in promoting the well-being and academic success of international students in various settings.

### *Interviews*

The qualitative report explores various facets of participants' lives, focusing on their perceptions of life satisfaction, attainment of important goals, desire for change, handling difficult problems, dealing with opposition, goal persistence, efficient problem-solving in unforeseen situations, remaining calm during difficulties, and ability to find multiple solutions. Overall, the findings reveal a spectrum of experiences and perspectives, reflecting the complexity and diversity of individual responses to life's challenges.

#### **1. Life Satisfaction and Ideal Conditions:**

The participants were asked if they think their life is close to ideal in most ways, if they think the conditions of their life are excellent, and if they are satisfied with their life. The participants exhibit varying levels of life satisfaction, with some feeling moderately content while recognizing areas for improvement and others expressing dissatisfaction due to unmet expectations in academics, careers, and personal life. Common themes include adapting to new environments, particularly for international students, facing challenges such as job hunting and cultural differences, and balancing aspirations with current realities. Despite the difficulties, some participants highlight positive aspects like friendships, home life, financial independence, and personal growth, showing adaptability and resilience. Overall, satisfaction ranges from moderate contentment to dissatisfaction, influenced by the gap between ideal and current life conditions.

#### **2. Attainment of Important Things:**

The participants were asked if they had gotten the important things they wanted in their lives. The participants mention varying degrees of achievement regarding their important life goals. Several are still in the process of attaining their key aspirations, particularly in career and education, and are focused on becoming independent and supporting their families. Some have made significant strides, such as achieving dream jobs, gaining independence, or earning scholarships, yet continue to pursue new goals. Others emphasise personal growth and happiness over material achievements, while a few feel they have surpassed their expectations but remain optimistic about future accomplishments. Overall, most participants view their journeys as ongoing, continuously striving for more while adapting to evolving aspirations.

#### **3. Desire for Change:**

The participants were asked what if they could live their lives over, what would they change? Or would they not want anything to change? The participants had mixed feelings about changing their pasts. Some expressed a desire for significant changes, such as

pursuing different studies, staying in their home country, or choosing different locations to live. Others mention minor adjustments to decisions made in their youth or regret certain life choices, like moving abroad for high school. A few participants are content with their life choices and would not change anything, valuing the lessons learned and personal growth. Additionally, some reflect humorously on trivial changes, while others emphasise the desire for personal responsibility or regret not taking different career paths. Overall, the responses highlight a blend of contentment and regret, with varying degrees of willingness to alter past decisions.

#### **4. Handling Difficult Problems:**

The participants were asked if they could manage to solve difficult problems in their lives or if they needed to try harder. The participants exhibited varying abilities to handle difficult problems, with some demonstrating confidence and resilience, while others acknowledged needing additional effort or support. Several participants expressed confidence in their problem-solving skills, often relying on resilience, support from friends or family, and a positive attitude toward challenges. Examples include managing unexpected events, overcoming job rejections, and tackling daily tasks like time management and cooking.

Others admit to struggling with certain aspects, such as anxiety, overthinking, emotional processing, and interpersonal issues, highlighting the need for support or alternative strategies. Some prefer complex problems over straightforward ones, indicating a unique approach to problem-solving. Despite initial challenges, participants often find ways to adapt, learn, and grow from their experiences, emphasising persistence and the importance of handling whatever comes their way.

#### **5. Dealing with Opposition:**

The participants were asked what they would do if someone opposed them and if they could find the means and ways to get what they wanted. For this, Participants show varied responses to dealing with opposition, influenced by the situation and the individuals involved. Many express confidence in finding ways to achieve their goals despite opposition, highlighting resilience, determination, and effective problem-solving skills. They often consider the validity of opposing viewpoints and prefer constructive debate over confrontation. Some participants prioritise seeking approval from important people, like family members, while others are more inclined to pursue their goals independently. A few avoid engaging in conflicts and choosing to accept opposing viewpoints, especially in significant life choices. Overall, responses range from assertive pursuit of goals to careful consideration of relationships and context when facing opposition.

#### **6. Goal Persistence:**

The participants were asked if they thought they could stick to their aims and accomplish their goals. The participants generally express confidence in their ability to stick to their aims and accomplish their goals. Many describe themselves as determined and proactive, emphasising their commitment to achieving their objectives despite obstacles. They highlight the importance of setting clear goals, breaking down tasks, and maintaining a focused, goal-oriented approach. Some participants acknowledge that their aims may change over time but remain committed to working hard and persevering. A few prefer a more relaxed approach to life planning, while others emphasise short-term objectives and incremental progress. Overall, they demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility and optimism in their ability to achieve personal, academic, and career-related goals.

### 7. Efficient Problem-Solving: Coping with Unforeseen Situations

The participants were asked if they could deal efficiently with unexpected events and solve most problems if they invested the necessary effort and if they could handle unforeseen situations. Most participants expressed confidence in their ability to handle unforeseen situations and solve problems efficiently, often drawing from past experiences and relying on support systems. While some seek emotional support or are selective about engaging with certain challenges, others are proactive, adaptable, and employ contingency plans. Despite varying degrees of confidence and approaches, they generally demonstrate resilience, determination, and a readiness to tackle unexpected events.

### 8. Remaining Calm:

The participants were asked if they could remain calm when facing difficulties and if they think they have good coping abilities. The participants generally express confidence in their ability to remain calm when facing difficulties, though their methods and initial reactions vary. Some initially feel low or struggle with emotional issues before overcoming challenges, while others maintain an outward calm despite internal stress. A few seek support or compartmentalise their feelings to manage the situation effectively. Overall, they demonstrate good coping abilities, with many emphasising self-reliance, problem-solving, and the importance of staying composed during crises.

### 9. Finding Multiple Solutions:

The participants were asked if they could find several solutions when confronted with problems and if they could handle whatever came their way. The participants generally demonstrate a strong ability to find multiple solutions when faced with problems, emphasising their proactive and resourceful approach to challenges. They describe generating ideas and plans to address issues from various angles, highlighting their confidence in handling whatever comes their way. Their methods include prioritising tasks, considering different perspectives, and having contingency plans in place, showcasing resilience and adaptability in problem-solving. Overall, they exhibit a readiness to confront and resolve difficulties through strategic thinking and practical action.

### *Significance and Scope:*

This research holds significance in both academic discourse and practical implications in supporting international students within the UK. The study offers valuable insights to the understanding of factors that influence their experience and overall quality of life. Educational institutions and policy makers can gain insights to design targeted interventions, support systems and services tailoring to the unique needs of international students. Beyond its immediate context the scope of the research extends globally offering a cross-cultural perspective on the well-being of the international student population. Furthermore, the study also offers scope for future research endeavours and holds the potential to influence policy decisions related to supporting the diverse needs of international students in higher education.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research contributes to the existing research by examining the levels of self-efficacy and life satisfaction among overseas students in the UK and exploring the role of gender in shaping these experiences. These findings reveal a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and life satisfaction, underscoring the importance of fostering self-efficacy beliefs to enhance the overall well-being of international students. The results of this study have important implications for academic institutions and

policymakers, highlighting the need for tailored support and interventions to support international students. By creating supportive academic environments and implementing inclusive policies, universities and policymakers can help enhance the well-being and academic success of international students. Future research should also explore the complex interplay of factors influencing self-efficacy and life satisfaction among overseas students, providing deeper insights to their unique experiences.

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