



Effects of Housing Accessibility on the General Well-Being of International Students at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS)

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the impact of housing accessibility on the overall well-being of international students at UWS-Paisley, utilizing quantitative research methods to analyse the diverse benefits of housing accessibility for a range of international students. The study sheds light on how basic human needs like shelter are adapted to meet the evolving educational and health requirements in the UK (Scotland), where rapid economic changes intersect with deep-rooted educational cultural traditions. Through online surveys distributed to 291 international students from various backgrounds, the study focuses on factors such as psychological well-being, academic performance, cultural adaptation, and social support. The results reveal significant effects on both physical and mental health, including stress, lack of concentration, and emotional instability, on international students due to lack of access to housing. The study underscores the positive impact of housing accessibility on student life balance and academic performance, advocating for its integration into university admission processes and programs to enhance the overall educational health strategy.

Subject Areas

Sociology

Keywords

Housing Accessibility, Psychological Well-Being, Academic Performance, Cultural Adaptation and Social Support

1. Introduction

Housing plays a critical role in shaping international students' overall experience

and mental health, influencing their sense of security, comfort, and belonging in a new environment [1]. The conditions of housing affect not only students' mental well-being but also their academic success and personal growth. Besides security and comfort, factors like affordability, accessibility to campus and essential amenities, and social integration within the housing community contribute to students' general well-being. The international student population has seen substantial growth, with projections estimating a rise to 7.2 million by 2025, up from 1.8 million in 2000 [2]. This growth is linked to the economic benefits of educational trade according to the Australian Education International in 2011. Accessible housing, located near universities, can reduce stress and logistical challenges, offering convenience with amenities such as grocery stores, public transport, and healthcare. It also supports students' well-being, which is crucial for their academic performance.

The University of the West of Scotland (UWS) Paisley offers on-campus housing for students, including international students. However, securing accommodation can be difficult, especially for those arriving without prior reservations. International students often find themselves turned away upon arrival if they have not pre-booked, causing stress for those unfamiliar with local rental markets and lacking local support. Many students report that UWS reception staff, responsible for housing inquiries, are not helpful and fail to provide guidance on alternative accommodation options. In some cases, students are informed that no accommodation is available, leaving them to find housing on their own, which adds to the stress of adjusting to a new environment. This lack of support exacerbates the challenges faced by international students at UWS.

In contrast, the University of Glasgow offers a more supportive housing system, with several accommodation options specifically for international students, including both on-campus and off-campus housing [3] [4]. The university provides clear instructions for securing housing in advance and often accommodates students arriving without reservations in temporary housing until a permanent room is available. Glasgow also has a dedicated international student support team, which is not as evident at UWS. Similarly, the University of Edinburgh has a welcoming reputation for international students, offering various housing options and proactive support, including temporary housing for those without reservations [5]. The University of Stirling also offers strong accommodation support for international students, including assistance through an international student office. This contrasts with UWS, where international students often report a lack of proactive support or alternative housing options.

The General Well-Being Schedule (GWB), developed by [6], is a widely used measure of subjective well-being and psychological health. High psychological well-being, characterized by mental health, positive life outlook, and personal growth, is essential for academic success. General well-being reflects physical, mental, and emotional health, and is influenced by factors like social connections, financial stability, and the ability to manage stress [7]. International students, often facing

challenges such as cultural adjustment and language barriers, require support systems to navigate their new environment, including housing accommodations, academic advising, and healthcare. They bring diverse perspectives to educational institutions, enriching the learning experience [8]-[10].

1.1. Research Aim

This study aims to examine the extent to which accessibility of housing impacts the general wellbeing of international students at the University of the West of Scotland.

1.2. Research Objectives

- To investigate how lack of easy accessibility to accommodation affects the general wellbeing of international students.
- To determine the typical timeframe for international students to secure rental accommodation.
- To develop recommendations for improving housing policies and support services to enhance the general wellbeing of international students.

2. Literature Review

The ever-changing nature of the higher education system underscores the importance of ensuring the availability and accessibility of housing that can inspire and enhance student performance. Therefore, according to Case *et al.*, [11] and Bryant [12], housing comprises various factors that are imperative determinants of students' performance. These factors may positively or negatively contribute to achieving maximum academic performance. Housing is one of the major elements that facilitate students' performance in areas such as social aspects, the general environment, academic design, motivation, empowerment, academic-life balance, structure and culture, safety and security in terms of the availability of appropriate protective equipment as well as physical conditions under which students live to perform their duties regarding when, where and how they study. Also, other elements include security, affordability, accessibility, proximity to amenities, social support system, and physical housing environmental factors or physical conditions such as temperature, lighting, design, equipment, etc. and social conditions such as motivation, safety, relationship, supportive behavior, etc. that can be associated with the academic process or procedure.

McCartney & Rosenvasser, [13] identified two student accommodation types: private apartments and traditional units. Demand for student housing, regardless of type, is rising due to its positive impact on engagement, retention, degree attainment, GPA, and overall well-being. Traditional units feature shared facilities, while apartments offer private amenities like kitchens and bathrooms for individual or small group use. Other schools of thought suggest that students have various accommodation options, including living at home, private rentals, or university-provided housing (UPH) on campus [14]. Research shows the benefits of UPH,

such as improved educational outcomes and graduation rates [15]-[17]. UPH also enhances a university's reputation, attracting students and families with increased safety and security [18]. Given these advantages, universities should prioritize student accommodation, potentially in collaboration with private entities, for overall student success and institutional appeal.

Housing challenges impact international students in terms of accessibility, affordability, adequacy, and suitability. These issues have personal consequences, with housing costs being a significant portion of living expenses. International students often face financial hardships due to higher tuition fees and limited income sources like teaching or research assistantships. Budgeting difficulties arise when unexpected deductions are made from stipends for tuition, leading to financial strain. Negotiating payment plans for tuition can be challenging, as administrators have limited flexibility in bending rules. A survey revealed that 40% of international students struggle to find affordable housing near campus, with 13% considering it a major issue [9]. Temporary housing options like hotels or hostels are common, but long-term solutions like on-campus residences can be costly. Off-campus living may be more economical, highlighting the need for improved information-sharing to help students navigate housing options efficiently. Additionally, students living on campus may face housing insecurity during breaks, emphasizing the need for better support structures for international students adjusting to new environments within limited timeframes.

Adequate housing, as defined by [10], includes security, provided amenities, and adherence to health and safety standards. Participants identified suitable housing based on factors like privacy, proximity to campus, environmental conditions, and family accommodations. Finding housing in a new city posed challenges, with country of origin and relationships with co-tenants influencing housing acceptability, as noted by [11]. Some international students periodically return home, expressing concerns about sharing living spaces. Housing issues also encompass commuting misconceptions, unfamiliarity with basement living, and financial constraints affecting family arrangements. Cultural adjustments, such as children having individual bedrooms, are necessary for international students [12]. These challenges highlight the importance of knowledge sharing and support for students navigating housing complexities.

2.1. Housing Accessibility Effects on International Student Wellbeing

New university students, especially first year and international students, face safety concerns in unfamiliar environments. Moving away from home for the first time can impact their sense of security, as they leave behind familiar support systems. Ensuring their safety is crucial [12] [22] [23]. The lack of accessible housing can cause homelessness, stress, financial strain, health issues, academic/job performance decline, social isolation, and reduced quality of life [24]. Accessible housing is a political priority, as highlighted by the global disability action plan [25] [26], emphasising the need to address accessibility issues in buildings for jus-

tice and equality, thus understanding general well-being is crucial to assess housing's impact.

General wellbeing refers to an overall state of health, happiness, and prosperity experienced by an individual or a community. It encompasses various dimensions of well-being, including physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects [27]. General wellbeing is characterized by a sense of fulfillment, contentment, and satisfaction with one's life circumstances and relationships. Factors that contribute to general wellbeing may include access to basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare, as well as opportunities for personal growth, social connections, and meaningful engagement in activities that align with one's values and goals. Positive mental health, a sense of purpose, resilience in the face of challenges, and a supportive social network are also key components of general wellbeing [1]. Because general well-being refers to an overall state of health, happiness, and satisfaction across various aspects of life, this paper focuses on the psychological aspects of general well-being.

Psychological wellbeing is a key element in healthcare, and it is aimed at high standards in most workplaces and institutions. Psychological wellbeing is well-thought-out as the sense of balance between the positive self and the negative self. Positive wellbeing is considered as one's functioning status which results in mental and physical healthfulness, whilst negative wellbeing is vice versa [9] [28]. Burke, Koyuncu, and Fiksenbaum, [29] described psychological wellbeing as a positive state of social, physical, and mental condition. According to them, when one is physically healthy, mentally sound, and wholeheartedly accepted by society, one is said to have good psychological wellbeing. Wellbeing is not just the absence of illness or sickness, [30]. That is, one could be free of all physical illnesses and still have low psychological wellbeing. The term is also referred to as the positive mental health of an individual [31] [32].

Several studies have revealed that there is a diverse dimension of the concept of Psychological Wellbeing [33]-[37]. The development of psychological wellbeing comes about as a result of combining the individual's identity of the self, regulation of emotions, experiences in life, and personality characteristics [38]. Psychological wellbeing aids the individual in functioning effectively. The field of psychology has lately devoted more attention to research into the positive aspects of individual growth and development, and the capabilities at work, and whether these influence their well-being [39] [40]. According to Edwards, Edwards and Fox, [25] [26], good mental health depicts high levels of Psychological Well-being. He added that an individual is categorized as having positive mental health when the individual has a positive thought of life, the individual is satisfied with happenings in life, and has a positive relationship with others.

2.2. Accommodation Availability Effects on Academic Performance

Accessibility is the interaction between the physical environment and an individual's functional capacity, known as person-environment fit. The Ecological Model

of Ageing suggests that balancing these factors can be achieved by adjusting either the person's capacity or the environment. Issues arise when environmental demands surpass the individual's capabilities, leading to challenges like navigating stairs without handrails for those with balance issues [41] [42]. Housing accessibility issues are typically addressed through individual housing modifications. Viewing accessibility as a matter of person-environment fit, enhancing the individual's functional capacity, like balance and coordination, can help reduce problems. Physical therapy for conditions like Parkinson's disease focuses on improving mobility and balance, which can benefit overall accessibility of housing and daily activities [43]. This approach, while initially focused on Parkinson's patients, underscores the importance of universal access to accommodation, including for international students. Research indicates a rising need for modern on-campus housing in higher education due to increasing student enrollment [14] [44]. Sharma [45] reports a global 160% surge in tertiary education enrollment. Scholars argue that occupants' perception of their living or working environment significantly impacts their quality of life [46]. Onibokun [47] found that a house's habitability is influenced by engineering, social-cultural, and environmental factors, with housing being just one element affecting students' performance. Literature suggests that students' housing conditions affect academic performance subjectively and objectively [48].

On the other hand, Academic achievement signifies the successful attainment of specific goals in educational settings like schools, colleges, and universities. It encompasses various domains of learning, including cognitive skills and subject-specific knowledge. The definition of academic achievement varies based on the indicators used to measure it, such as knowledge acquisition, grades, test performance, and educational credentials [49] [50]. Academic achievement reflects a person's intellectual capacity and is crucial in determining educational opportunities and career paths. In developed societies, academic achievement, measured through GPA or standardized tests like the SAT, influences access to higher education and future vocational prospects. It also impacts a nation's prosperity, as demonstrated by the correlation between academic achievement levels and socioeconomic development. International assessments like PISA, conducted by organizations like the OECD, further highlight the significance of academic achievement on a global scale [51].

Student housing significantly impacts academic performance, as explained by Carroll's [52] model, which suggests that learning is influenced by time spent on cognitive tasks and skill development. University settings, including student housing, foster engagement in these activities, improving both learning and academic outcomes. Pascarella's [53] model emphasizes that university environments encourage interactions between students, peers, and faculty, enhancing academic experiences and personal growth. Living on campus offers valuable academic experiences and promotes personal development. It encourages interactions with diverse individuals, strengthening interpersonal relationships, increasing tolerance, and

reducing prejudice [54]-[56]. Additionally, the transition to student housing fosters greater personal autonomy [57]. Studies show that living on campus has a positive impact on academic performance. Research identifies two main effects: an immediate increase in GPA while living on campus, and a long-term effect where GPA remains higher even after students move off-campus [58].

2.3. Policies, Support Services versus Wellbeing Enhancement

The UK's devolved model, considered "permissive", allows administrations to be funded independently through the Barnett formula, not tied to UK policy goals [59]. Continuity in housing and social policies across the UK is influenced by financial constraints and reserved policy areas. Various initiatives, like Help to Buy and housing stock transfer, reflect this continuity. Post-2010 housing policies prioritize supporting low-income individuals and tenants in deteriorating rental housing, revealing political fractures. This impacts broader social policy debates, such as welfare reform [59] [60]. Understanding these political underpinnings and policy narratives is crucial, focusing on social and affordable housing, the Right to Buy policy, and private rental sector regulation [61].

Housing policy refers to a set of rules, regulations, and initiatives implemented by governments or organizations to address issues related to housing, such as affordability, accessibility, quality, and sustainability [62]. These policies aim to ensure that individuals have access to safe, affordable, and adequate housing options, as well as to promote social and economic development within communities. Housing policies can include measures such as subsidies for low-income housing, zoning regulations, rent control, and incentives for affordable housing development [62] [63].

Social support refers to feeling loved, valued, and connected within a network of assistance. It can be provided by partners, family, friends, colleagues, community ties, and even pets [64]. Different types of social support are categorized in research. Studies consistently show that social support helps reduce psychological distress like depression and anxiety during stressful times. It also aids in adjusting to chronic stressors such as heart disease, diabetes, and HIV. Additionally, social support has been linked to better physical health and longevity. In a notable study, researchers followed 7000 Californians for 9 years and found that those with stronger social ties were less likely to die prematurely [64]. This highlights the importance of maintaining social relationships for overall well-being and survival of international students. Hence, this research primarily examines how enhancing housing accessibility can enhance the overall well-being of international students at UWS. This was achieved by utilising theoretical frameworks such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Acculturation theory, and Stress and Coping theory. Many theories have advanced the link between housing and student wellbeing. The study was grounded in various organisational and management theories relating to behaviourisms, human relations, behavioural science and motivation theories, which emphasised the importance of understanding human behaviour and moti-

vating international students toward the achievement of educational success. These theories are discussed from different perspectives to support the findings and goals of the study.

3. Research Method

This chapter details the research methodology to evaluate how housing access impacts the general well-being of international students at UWS. It covers research philosophy, approach, methods, design, sampling, data collection, analysis and ethical considerations. Research methodology systematically collects and manages data to formulate theories inductively [65]. A survey study using online questionnaires was conducted among international students at UWS to gather data. Research paradigms shape scientific discoveries by guiding assumptions and principles, illuminating findings' quality and identifying gaps in evidence generation. (See **Figure 1**)



Source: Researcher, 2024.

Figure 1. Honeycomb research methodology.

Scientific research is shaped by paradigms that define elements like ontology, epistemology, methodology, and rigor, guiding the research process and ensuring quality [66]-[69]. These frameworks emphasize empirical evidence, objectivity, and the scientific method. This study adopts positivism, which prioritizes empirical evidence and scientific methods to understand social phenomena [70]. Positivism uses the hypothetico-deductive method to test hypotheses and establish relationships between variables, aiming to uncover universal principles through sys-

tematic observation and experimentation [71]. The study investigates the impact of housing conditions on the well-being of international students at UWS. Positivism aligns with this aim, as it involves systematic data collection and statistical analysis. Interpretivism, which emphasizes subjective meanings within social contexts, is unsuitable due to the study's focus on objective data [72]. This research adopts objective ontology, observing and measuring external realities independently of individual beliefs [72]. Using a quantitative approach, the study will analyse patterns and relationships between housing conditions and well-being.

A deductive approach is used for theory development, starting with existing theories and literature on housing, well-being, and international student experiences. Hypotheses will be formed regarding the impact of housing on students' well-being, guiding data collection and contributing to theory development [73]. The deductive approach tests existing theories, enhancing theoretical frameworks and ensuring methodological rigor. It is preferred over inductive approaches, which begin with observations and build general theories, and abduction, which is less relevant here because the study tests pre-existing theories. Due to time constraints and the availability and willingness of students to participate, I ensure the sample remains representative of the international student population at UWS-Paisley by employing a practical stratified sampling approach. The population is predominantly Asian and African students, with smaller numbers from European, American, and Australian backgrounds. Given these proportions, I selected participants in a way that mirrors the actual distribution of students. This ensures diversity while reflecting the actual proportions of each nationality at UWS-Paisley. This research takes into account the economic background of students, including those who paid full tuition fees, those who received partial sponsorship, and those on full-time scholarships, and the age range of students.

A simple random sampling method was employed, ensuring an unbiased sample. A structured, closed-ended questionnaire, effective at UWS Paisley [74], data was gathered on demographics, housing accessibility, and well-being indicators using Likert-scale questions for detailed analysis [75] [76]. This approach minimizes variability and ensures consistency in data collection, which is crucial for statistical analysis [77]. Given time constraints at UWS Paisley [78], surveys are efficient for gathering data from diverse groups, ensuring anonymity and valuable insights [79] [80]. The questionnaire was distributed online to facilitate rapid data collection, cost-effectiveness, and access to a diverse student population compared to face-to-face methods [81]. Participants were selected from UWS Paisley, including both new and continuing students with varying housing experiences [82]. The recruitment strategy, following [83], ensures a representative sample and valid conclusions. Data analysis employed multiple and simple linear regression, along with descriptive statistics using SPSS. The main dependent variables are well-being scores and accommodation accessibility, with housing accessibility and stress measured using dummy coding (1 to 5). The t-test will assess the relationship between housing accessibility and student performance, with a significance

level of 0.05 [84]. This analysis will examine the impact of housing on students' well-being, academic performance, and other factors.

4. Results

The analysis of 291 survey responses reveals participants' views on housing accessibility's impact on physical and mental well-being. Mean scores ranged from 1.16 to 4.65, with universities receiving the highest score (4.65). Median values were 4, and standard deviations ranged from 0.5 to 1.46, highlighting variability and challenges. Skewness ranged from -2.8 to 3.1 , while kurtosis ranged from -1.63 to 10.6 , reflecting the data's deviation from normal distribution. These insights stress the importance of accessible housing and its health impacts (See **Table 1**).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

Summary														
	Que 1	Que 2	Que 3	Que 4	Que 5	Que 6	Que 7	Que 8	Que 9	Que 10	Que 11	Que 12	Que 13	Que 14
Mean					4.20	3.672	3.49	2.91	1.16	1.294	4.224	2.507	4.652	4.652
Standard error					0.06	0.056	0.08	0.09	0.03	0.099	0.063	0.086	0.037	0.04
Median					5	4	4	4	1	1	4	2	5	5
Mode					5	4	4	1	1	1	5	1	5	5
Standard deviation					1.11	0.959	1.30	1.59	0.50	0.579	1.073	1.458	0.633	0.68
Sample variance					1.22	0.92	1.68	2.52	0.25	0.335	1.15	2.126	0.401	0.463
Kurtosis					2.02	-0.66	-0.4	-1.63	8.22	2.734	2.704	-1.09	8.468	10.61
Skewness					-1.67	-0.54	-1	-0.18	3.1	1.888	-1.8	0.596	-2.44	-2.82
Range					4	3	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	4
Minimum					1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum					5	5	5	5	3	3	5	5	5	5
Sum					1219	1065	101	844	336	44	1225	727	1349	1349
Count					290	290	290	290	290	34	290	290	290	290
Confidence level (95.0%)					0.13	0.111	0.15	0.18	0.06	0.202	0.124	0.169	0.073	0.079

The correlation matrix shows: Accessibility and Duration (0.6027, moderate positive), Accessibility and Choice (0.3236, weak positive), Accessibility and Support (0.1280, weak positive), Accessibility and Cultural Impact (-0.2481 , weak negative), and Accessibility and On-campus effects (0.4035, moderate positive) (See **Table 2** and **Table 3**).

Table 2. Correlation.

	<i>Accessibility</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Choice</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Cultural impact</i>	<i>On-campus effects</i>
Accessibility	1					
Duration	0.602654708	1				
Choice	0.323633229	0.401861252	1			
Support	0.128007464	0.112873911	0.064115957	1		
Cultural impact	-0.248082627	-0.291249168	-0.252644256	-0.059644999	1	
On-campus effects	0.403494234	0.325251159	0.445617787	0.156678682	-0.313698955	1

Table 3. Analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Summary				
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Accessibility	291	1070	3.676975945	0.922881858
Duration	291	1017	3.494845361	1.678421614
Choice	291	849	2.917525773	2.52420903
Support	291	337	1.158075601	0.250788008
Cultural impact	291	1229	4.223367698	1.146486551
On-campus effects	291	732	2.515463918	2.140277284

ANOVA results show a significant difference ($F = 235.164$, $P = 4.285E-192$), indicating housing accessibility factors impact psychological well-being (See **Table 4**).

Table 4. ANOVA.

<i>Source of variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between groups	1697.702176	5	339.5404353	235.1642018	4.285E-192	2.219240373
Within groups	2512.28866	1740	1.443844057			
Total	4209.990836	1745				

The table shows ethnicity data for 291 individuals: 165 African (57%), 112 Asian (38%), 12 European (4%), and 1 American and 1 Australian (0%). This highlights a diverse sample, with African and Asian individuals forming the majority (See **Table 5**).

Table 5. Ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Frequency	Relative frequency	Percentage
African	165	0.57	57%
American	1	0.00	0%
Asian	112	0.38	38%
Australian	1	0.00	0%
European	12	0.04	4%
Grand Total	291	1.00	100%

The age distribution of 291 respondents shows 61.17% in the 25 - 34 age group, 17.87% in 35 - 44, 15.81% in 19 - 24, 2.41% in 45 - 54, 1.72% 55+, and 1.03% under 18. This diverse distribution highlights broad interest in housing accessibility issues across all age groups (See **Table 6**).

Table 6. Age distribution.

Age range	Frequency	Relative frequency	Percentage
18 and below	3	0.01	1.03%
19 - 24	46	0.16	15.81%
25 - 34	178	0.61	61.17%
35 - 44	52	0.18	17.87%
45 - 54	7	0.02	2.41%
55 and older	5	0.02	1.72%
Grand Total	291	1.00	100%

In a sample of 291, 53% identified as female (155), 46% as male (134), and 1% preferred not to disclose. No respondents identified as non-binary. This gender distribution provides valuable insights for analysing findings within gender demographics (See **Table 7**).

Table 7. Gender group.

Gender	Frequency	Relative frequency
Female	155	53%
Male	134	46%
Prefer not to say	2	1%
Grand Total	291	100%

In a sample of 291, 18% (52) found housing “Not accessible,” 14% (40) were “Not sure,” 51% (149) rated it “Somewhat accessible,” and 17% (50) considered it “Very accessible.” The majority (83%) rated it at least “Somewhat accessible,” highlighting varied perceptions of housing accessibility in the sample (See **Table 8**).

Table 8. Housing accessibility.

Accessibility	Frequency	Relative frequency	Percentage
Not accessible	52	0.18	18%
Not sure	40	0.14	32%
Somewhat accessible	149	0.51	83%
Very accessible	50	0.17	100%
Grand Total	291	1.00	

In a sample of 291, 16% (46) spent over 6 months searching for accommodation, 9% (26) searched for 4 - 6 months, and 60% (176) spent 1 - 3 months. Additionally, 15% (43) searched for less than a month, highlighting diverse engagement with the housing search process (See **Figure 2**).

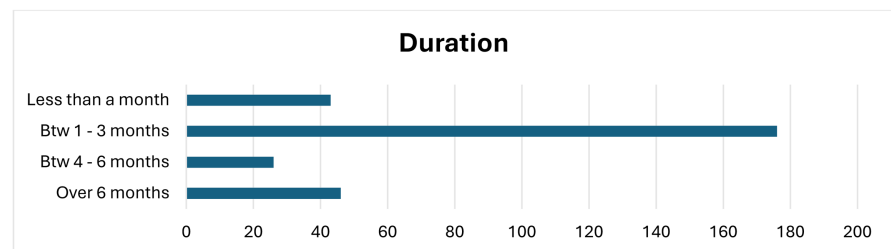


Figure 2. Timeframe to secure accommodation.

In a sample of 291, 5% (15) reported “Very less” challenges, 7% (21) experienced “Less” challenges, 37% (108) faced “Much” challenges, and 51% (147) encountered “Very much” challenges. Cumulative data shows most respondents perceived significant difficulties, with 88% reporting challenges as “Much” or “Very much” (See **Table 9**).

Table 9. Housing accessibility challenge.

Challenges	Frequency	Relative frequency	Percentage
Very less	15	5%	5%
Less	21	7%	12%
Much	108	37%	50%
Very much	147	51%	100%
Grand Total	291	1	

In a sample of 291, 38% (110) preferred “Other (Social/Private house rent),” 12% (34) chose private student accommodation, 34% (98) opted for off-campus dormitories, and 17% (49) selected on-campus accommodation. Cumulative data shows increasing preference for off-campus housing, with 100% captured by the final choice (See [Table 10](#)).

Table 10. Choice of accommodation.

Choice	Frequency	Relative frequency	Percentage
Other (Social/Private house rent)	110	0.38	38%
Private student accom.	34	0.12	50%
Off-campus dorm.	98	0.34	83%
On campus dorm	49	0.17	100%
Grand Total	291	1.00	

In a sample of 291, 49.14% perceived a “High impact” of culture on UK housing, 40.21% saw a “Medium impact,” while 5.50% and 5.15% indicated “No impact” and “Small impact,” respectively. This highlights a significant cultural influence on UK housing, with varying perceptions of its extent (See [Table 11](#)).

Table 11. Cultural impact.

Cultural impact	Frequency	Relative frequency	Cumulative frequency
No impact	16	0.05	0.055
Small impact	15	0.05	11%
Medium impact	117	0.40	51%
Highly impact	143	0.49	100%
Grand Total	291	1	

In a sample of 291, 90% (262) reported “No” support, 4% (12) received “Yes” support, and 6% (17) chose “Maybe.” Regarding support types, 76.47% (26) received “Info and Advice,” 17.65% (6) received “Temporary Accommodation,” and 5.88% (2) received “Monetary” support (See [Table 12](#) and [Table 13](#)).

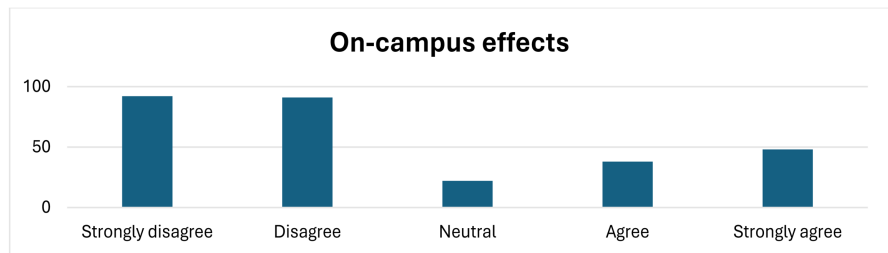
Table 12. Support and kind.

Support	Frequency	Relative frequency	Cumulative frequency
Yes	262	0.90	90%
No	12	0.04	94%
Maybe	17	0.06	100%
Grand Total	291	1.00	

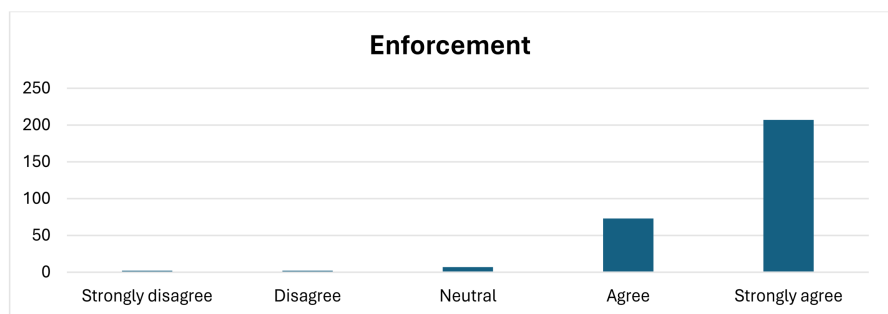
Table 13. Kind group.

Kind of supp	Frequency	Relative frequency	Cumulative frequency
Info and Advice	26	0.764705882	0.76
Temp. accom.	6	0.176470588	94%
Monetary	2	0.058823529	100%
Grand Total	34	1	

In a sample of 291, 32% (92) “Strongly disagree” and 31% (91) “Disagree” that on-campus residence positively impacts well-being. Meanwhile, 8% (22) were “Neutral,” 13% (38) “Agree,” and 16% (48) “Strongly agree.” The data reflects diverse opinions on the impact of on-campus residence on well-being, with many expressing disagreement or neutrality (See **Figure 3**).

**Figure 3.** On-campus effect.

In a sample of 291, 0.01% (2) “Strongly disagree,” 0.01% (2) “Disagree,” and 0.02% (7) were “Neutral.” 25% (73) “Agree,” and 71% (207) “Strongly agree” that universities should be forced to provide accommodation for international students, indicating strong support for this idea (See **Figure 4**).

**Figure 4.** Enforcement.

In a sample of 291, 73% strongly agree and 23% agree that universities should establish departments to address housing issues. Only 1% strongly disagree and 2% are neutral. The data indicates strong support for creating such departments to handle housing concerns effectively (See **Figure 5**).

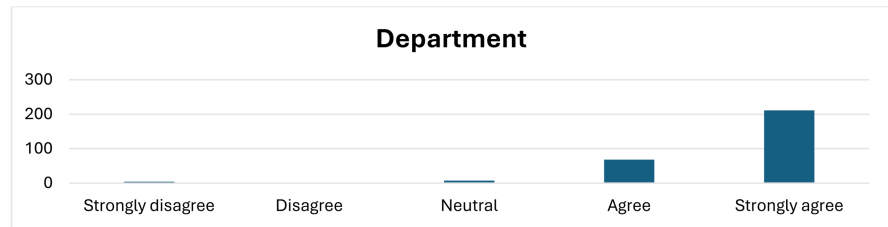


Figure 5. Department.

5. Discussion and Implications

The research conducted aimed to explore the relationship between housing accessibility and the overall well-being of international students at UWS Paisley. The study was grounded in the university's diverse cultural traditions and current enrollment requirements, to empirically validate the comprehensive benefits of housing accessibility, a significant challenge faced by many international students when they choose to study abroad, a situation widely acknowledged for its health implications. A considerable number of survey participants reported experiencing challenges related to housing accessibility, with varying durations of struggle underscoring the urgent need for attention to address this issue. The survey results indicated that perceptions of housing accessibility were not consistent—while some individuals did not view it as a problem, others identified it as a significant issue.

The findings demonstrated that housing accessibility has a positive impact on general well-being, with respondents noting increased difficulties in securing accommodation, prolonged searches, limited university support, and the overall stress it imposed on their health. The mental and emotional benefits of improved housing accessibility were evident, as participants reported stress, decreased focus, and diminished emotional well-being, aligning with the study's objective of examining how housing accessibility influences the overall well-being of international students in these contexts. Additionally, the influence of housing accessibility extended beyond personal wellness to encompass aspects of school-life balance and academic performance.

According to the research outcomes, easy access to housing may aid in managing and navigating the school-life interface, which holds significance at UWS Paisley. The study's results indicated that housing accessibility is not solely a socio-cultural issue for international students but a fundamental human need that can impact the well-being of both the host country's residents and international students. These findings lay the groundwork for Chapter 5, which will engage in discussions, interpret the data within the framework of existing literature, and explore the implications for future research and policy development. The research findings align with the study's objectives, suggesting that housing accessibility can serve as an effective strategy for enhancing physical health, reducing mental stress, and fostering a harmonious relationship between international students and the host country's residents. As the research progresses to the subsequent chapter, the

aim is to integrate these insights into a cohesive discussion that not only contextualizes the study's findings within the broader discourse of occupational health and well-being but also underscores the cultural significance of housing accessibility within UWS's distinctive socio-economic context.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The data on housing accessibility reveals a mixed view on how easily students can access accommodation. A significant portion of respondents (18%) reported that housing is "Not accessible" to them, while 14% were "Not sure" about the accessibility of housing. On the other hand, 51% of respondents found housing to be "Somewhat accessible," indicating that, while available, it may not be ideal or easy to access for all students. Finally, 17% of students reported housing as being "Very accessible," suggesting that a smaller proportion found the accommodation process relatively smooth and convenient. Overall, the data highlights that while a majority of students perceive housing as somewhat accessible, there is still a notable portion of the population facing barriers to fully accessible housing. The researcher conducted a specific comparison of students with good housing access versus those with poor access, and the key metrics or outcomes that typically highlight these differences include:

Mental Health and Stress Levels: Students with poor housing access often report higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Housing instability or dissatisfaction with accommodation can create a sense of insecurity, impacting overall mental health. On the other hand, students with stable, good-quality housing tend to experience lower stress levels and better mental well-being.

Academic Performance: Housing quality and stability can affect students' academic success. Poor housing access such as overcrowded or unsafe living conditions often leads to distractions and difficulties focusing on studies. Students in stable housing environments tend to perform better academically, as they are able to dedicate more energy to their coursework.

Social Integration: Those with better housing access are often more socially integrated, as they have stable living situations that allow them to participate in campus events and activities. Poor housing access, especially in isolated or inadequate accommodations, can lead to social isolation and difficulty forming connections with peers.

Physical Health: Poor housing conditions such as dampness, overcrowding, or lack of basic amenities can lead to physical health issues like respiratory problems, poor sleep quality, and higher susceptibility to illnesses. Students with good housing access are generally healthier and have better overall physical well-being.

5.2. Association with the Maslow Hierarchy of Need Model

The Need Model in social health offers a comprehensive framework for analysing the various factors impacting well-being [85]-[87]. Review prior research on housing accessibility issues among UWS international students aligns with this

model, highlighting safety, aesthetic, cognitive, and self-transcendence needs that influence overall health. The study findings supported Maslow's theory in terms of the hierarchy of basic needs, with a greater total effect observed for issues related to physiological needs on housing accessibility compared to cultural differences. This suggests a potential deviation from Maslow's proposed hierarchy in the environmental context, indicating a different order of importance among needs. An interesting discovery from the study was the causal relationship between needs, contrary to Maslow's assertion that basic needs are not causally dependent on each other. While Maslow suggested that needs emerge sequentially following gratification, the study revealed that fulfilling one need could impact the fulfilment of others, indicating a causal link between needs [88]. This insight challenges traditional views on the independence of basic needs and highlights the interconnected nature of human needs in influencing well-being.

5.3. Association with the Stress and Coping Model

This framework offers a comprehensive understanding of the interactions among various factors that impact the well-being of international students at UWS. Stress encompasses three main components: a stimulus event, the process of understanding this event and its context, and the reactions it triggers within us [89]. For an event to be considered stressful, it must overwhelm the review system with an influx of information. This can result in various biological responses like sweaty palms and a racing heart, as well as psychological responses such as nervousness. Stress impacts human behaviour, leading us to avoid social interactions, and affects cognitive performance, making concentration difficult. According to [89], stress arises when individuals perceive a life circumstance as exceeding their resources. Lack of access to housing is one such circumstance that can induce stress. Coping involves individuals' attempts to manage stress, regardless of whether their coping strategies are adaptive or not [90]. Effective coping requires considering the intensity of the stressor, the context of coping, and an individual's expectations regarding coping mechanisms. Research indicates that international students experiencing housing accessibility issues face stress and may require coping strategies. Understanding the origins of stress and one's typical reactions to it is crucial in developing effective coping mechanisms, aligning with the principles of the discussed model.

5.4. Association with the Acculturation Model

Acculturation involves cultural and psychological changes resulting from interactions between different cultural groups and their members [91]. This process includes shifts in behaviour, such as food, dress, language, values, identities, and housing, leading to adaptation to intercultural encounters. These changes impact the health and wellbeing of individuals involved. This assertion aligns with the research findings.

5.5. Benefits for Physical Health

The psychological aspect of the Need Model has been noted to bring about significant mental changes, as indicated by respondents. This aligns with the findings of [92], demonstrating that access to housing significantly reduces the occurrence of mental illnesses like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among international students. Hale *et al.*, [93] also support the physiological benefits of housing accessibility, emphasizing the importance of meeting basic needs like food, water, shelter, and rest for improved physical health, energy levels, focus, productivity, and overall well-being. Addressing these physiological needs serves as a foundation for addressing higher-level needs in the hierarchy. Additionally, the psychological impact of physical health improvements should not be overlooked. Access to housing not only enhances physical capabilities but also fosters positive self-perception and mental well-being, which are crucial for psychological health. This is consistent with the arguments of [94], who suggest that the mental health advantages, such as stress reduction, associated with housing access are closely intertwined with its physical benefits.

5.6. Benefits to Mental Health and Feelings

Students at UWS have reported devolved mental health and emotional well-being, which is in line with the Needs Model and the Stress and Coping Model. The survey results indicate an increase in stress levels and decreased emotional regulation, supporting the idea that psychological factors significantly impact overall health. These findings are consistent with the research of [95] and [96], highlighting the role of housing in enhancing psychological resilience and emotional stability. The communal aspect of housing accessibility aligns with the social dimension of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model. Building a supportive community through shared experiences with peers facing similar housing challenges can foster emotional well-being, as noted by [97]. Literature review suggests that establishing a support network is essential for sustaining the mental health benefits associated with housing.

The holistic impact of housing accessibility on physical, mental, and social well-being underscores a comprehensive approach rooted in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the Stress and Coping Model. Empirical evidence from UWS international students highlights the diverse effects of housing, addressing physical ailments common among migrants and students while also serving as a therapeutic solution for mental and emotional stress. These findings, in line with established models, emphasize housing as a crucial component of overall health practices. Literature supporting these insights emphasizes the importance of integrating housing accessibility into strategies for international student health. By contextualizing these benefits within existing models, it becomes clear that wellness programs for students should take a more inclusive approach to health, encompassing all aspects of human well-being.

5.7. Practical Implications

The results of this study align with previous research on the impact of housing on the overall well-being of international students, particularly within the unique socioeconomic environment of UWS Paisley. These findings are in line with [97], who have shown how housing can reduce stress and enhance life satisfaction. These studies emphasize the importance of integrating housing accessibility into university departmental initiatives to foster a balanced approach to academic and personal life. In Paisley, a city characterized by the rapid growth of international students and traditional values, housing challenges are not just practical but also culturally significant. Housing serves as a bridge between fundamental life needs and traditional customs that prioritize holistic wellbeing. The experiences of international students in Paisley, in terms of housing access and rental, reflect a cultural adaptation where age-old practices are utilized to mitigate the pressures of modern urban living. This cultural context is crucial as it offers insights into how traditional behaviours can be reinvigorated to enhance productivity and achieve a better work-life balance in contemporary settings.

Furthermore, the survey revealed that individuals who secure housing quickly and easily tend to be more productive in both their academic pursuits and personal lives. Clark and Kearns, [98] have demonstrated that accessible housing correlates with improved mental clarity, focus, and job satisfaction. The findings from UWS Paisley add a new perspective to this discourse, suggesting that in challenging environments like Scotland, where the climate may be less accommodating for individuals from Africa and Asia, housing accessibility not only benefits personal well-being but also plays a significant role in professional success. Participants reported spending more time searching for accommodation, leading to inefficiencies in time management and hindering their ability to cope with work and academic stress. This decline in productivity was particularly evident among African and Asian international students at UWS, where traditional study and work cultures often overlook student and employee well-being in organizational strategies. The provision of housing accessibility could be seen as a grassroots approach to enhancing corporate culture, aligning it more closely with global health and wellness trends [99].

This study sheds light on demographic trends in housing accessibility at UWS and their implications for occupational health. Young professionals, especially those in early career stages, are seeking housing not only for physical health benefits but also to better balance work and personal responsibilities [100]. This shift in generational attitudes reflects a growing embrace of holistic health practices among younger students and workers, who are disproportionately affected by professional stress in rapidly urbanizing areas. Implementing these findings could influence future corporate wellness initiatives and public health policies in Scotland, advocating for the integration of housing accessibility and similar measures to enhance productivity and student-life equilibrium. This could set a precedent for other urban regions with similar socioeconomic contexts, demonstrating the

efficacy of traditional approaches in modern occupational health systems. Consequently, the study not only reaffirms the established benefits of housing accessibility but also underscores its adaptability and relevance within Paisley's unique cultural and economic landscape.

6. Conclusions

The results illustrate housing as a potent remedy for the physical and mental challenges of contemporary educational life, deeply ingrained in UWS's cultural framework. The chapter summarizes the physical and psychological benefits of housing accessibility, including enhanced physical and mental clarity, stress relief, and emotional well-being, in line with previous theoretical discussions. The research underscores the cultural significance of housing and its potential role in current health paradigms, suggesting a more nuanced perspective on its role in educational and occupational health within the dynamic societal structure of the UK.

This study carries significant implications for health policy and wellness program development, particularly within the socio-cultural landscape of UWS Paisley. The findings advocate for the integration of traditional practices like easy access to housing into health interventions, as well as the creation of environments that foster overall well-being. By incorporating housing accessibility into health programs as a culturally relevant practice, a model for well-being consistent with the UK's community values and daily life is established. This approach promotes culturally responsive health initiatives, utilizing housing as a blueprint for global health promotion endeavors. The study's results urge policymakers to prioritize housing accessibility as a fundamental element of campus and workplace health, anticipating a shift towards culturally inclusive health practices that enhance academic performance and elevate quality of life.

7. Suggestion

University administrators must support international students in finding accommodation by collaborating with housing authorities and student support services. This partnership can help address challenges such as unfamiliarity with local housing markets, legal complexities, and language barriers. Universities should provide tailored housing resources like online databases listing verified rental properties, guides on local neighbourhoods, and tips for assessing rental agreements. Hosting workshops to educate students about tenant rights and how to navigate lease terms can further ease the process. Collaborating with local landlords is also essential, as universities can create a preferred list of landlords who understand the needs of international students, such as flexible lease terms and fair rent prices. Universities can negotiate discounts or group insurance rates with landlords, ensuring affordability and protection. Additionally, offering language support or legal assistance helps students overcome communication or legal hurdles. Through these collaborative efforts, universities can streamline the accommodation search process, making it more accessible and less stressful for international students.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors confirm that they have no conflicts of interest.

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