**Migration and Mental Health: A Review of Students in the United Kingdom**

**Abstract**

Migration for educational purposes has become a defining feature of global higher education systems, with several universities in the global north, including the United Kingdom (UK), accounting for millions of students who migrate across borders to pursue academic qualifications and broaden their opportunities. However, there is a rising concern among these students that they are at risk of mental health issues due to migration-related causes. Therefore, this study aimed to systematically review the literature on the mental health and well-being of international students in the United Kingdom. A literature search was conducted using eleven databases - APA PsycArticles, ASSIA, APA, Psycinfo, CINAHL, MEDLINE, PubMed, Scopus, British Nursing Index, AMED, Google Scholar, Web of Science - for articles published from 2010. A pre-determined set of eligibility criteria was used to screen articles, and eligible articles were quality appraised using the JBI critical appraisal check tool. Due to considerable heterogeneity, the data was narratively analysed, considering statistical significance and the text narratives. Four studies (N = 4) met the inclusion criteria. Five Major factors were found contributing to mental health outcomes in international students included cultural adjustment, language barriers, support, social networks and stigma. The study showed that international students in the UK experience mental health issues and poor well-being linked to migration. Thus, universities need to recognise the causes and make efforts to support international students better.

**Keywords:** *Migration, Mental Health, Students and United Kingdom.*

**Introduction**

Migration is a global phenomenon, with millions of individuals moving across borders for various reasons, including education (Fatoki et al., 2018). Migration for educational purposes has become a defining feature of global higher education systems, with several universities in the global north majorly the United States of America (USA), Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) accounting for millions of students who migrate across borders to pursue academic qualifications and broaden their opportunities (McAuliffe and Ruhs, 2017; Shoge et al., 2021, IIE, 2024).

Figure 1 shows international students contributed to cultural diversity, global knowledge exchange, and economic growth in host countries (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013; IIE, 2018; Universities UK, 2023; Wang et al., 2024).



**Figure 1:** Top Destinations for International Students in 2023 (Image Adapted from IIE, 2024)

However, alongside these benefits, migration often presents challenges such as cultural adjustment, isolation, language difficulties, discrimination, and even racism, particularly as these students navigate unfamiliar academic, social, and cultural environments (Sherry et al., 2010; Akanwa, 2015), all of which can have profound impacts on their mental health (Castelli, 2018).

The mental health of international students in the United Kingdom (UK) is an important topic because of the high number of international students who come to the United Kingdom every year (IIE, 2022). In fact, over the last 4 years, the UK has ranked as the top destination for international students all over Europe and ranked second and third at different times in the world according to the Institute of International Education (Fatoki et al., 2018).

The diverse backgrounds and migration experiences of this international student population necessitate a nuanced understanding of their mental health needs, as they study and integrate into the UK society (Fatoki et al., 2018). Therefore, studying this large population of students is important for research, elucidating important insights into how migration can affect the mental health of these students and how the outcomes can be improved among this population.

**Problem Statement**

One notable gap is the lack of longitudinal studies tracking the mental health outcomes of international students over time. Most research on the mental health of international students in the UK relies on cross-sectional data, which provides a snapshot of students' experiences at a single point in time. While valuable, such studies fail to capture how mental health challenges evolve throughout the migration journey from pre-arrival expectations and initial cultural adjustment to long-term acculturation and eventual re-entry into home countries (Minami et al., 2021).

**Methods**

The PEO framework (Table 1) is selected for this systematic review as it is the most suitable for conducting a qualitative analysis of the impact of migration on the mental health of international students studying in the UK. The PEO framework is a structured approach commonly used in evidence-based practice and research methodology, particularly in healthcare and related fields, to formulate clear and focused research questions (Paez, 2017).

 **Table 1:** Summary of PEO Framework.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Population** | **Exposure** | **Outcome** |
| International students studying in the UK | Migration | * Mental Health outcomes e.g., Anxiety, Depression, Sadness, Stress, Psychological distress
* Alternative Indicators of Mental Health (PTSD, suicidal ideation)
 |

**Table 2. Eligibility Criteria**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Inclusion Criteria** | **Exclusion Criteria** |
| International students studying in the UK. | Studies Focusing on Populations Other Than International Students |
| Studies that address the impact of migration on international students studying in the UK. | Research Not Addressing Mental Health Outcomes |
| Studies that address specific mental health outcomes, e,g, anxiety, depression, etc | Non-Peer-Reviewed Literature (e.g., Opinion Pieces, Letters, Editorials) |
| Studies that were published between January 2000 and 2024 to capture a comprehensive range of evidence on the impact of migration on the mental health of international students in the UK. | Experimental studies: Randomised controlled trials (RCTs), case reports, opinion pieces, editorial reviews, and theoretical papers will not be included. |

**Search Strategy**

Eleven Databases were searched using keywords, and each search term and subject heading were developed for databases used in this study (Table 4). Databases related to research in psychology were also included in the search strategy because mental health outcomes (depression, anxiety, sadness, suicidal ideation and PTSD) are related to psychology (Behrend, 2019). To guarantee a thorough search, the search was customised for each database. Medical Subject Headings (MeSH), free text terms, and the EBSCO host platform were combined with a customised search technique to perform an electronic search.

To identify relevant literature, the search strategy used a combination of keywords and Boolean operators. The keywords included "international students", “foreign students”, “overseas students”, “students from abroad”, "migration," "immigration," “emigration” "mental health," " mental health issues", and "mental health problems", "mental health disorders". The search was limited to articles published in the last twenty-four (24) years to ensure that the literature reviewed is current and adequate for the review.

For each database searched, the same search query was used for transparency and reproducibility. The combination includes the following: ("International Students" OR "foreign students" OR "overseas students" OR "students from abroad") AND ("Migration" OR "immigration" OR "emigration") AND ("Mental Health" OR "mental health issues" OR "mental health problems" OR "mental health disorders") AND ("United Kingdom" OR "UK" OR "Britain" OR "England"). All the search was conducted in November 2024, with filters applied for the year range (2000–2024), and language (English).

**Quality Assessment of Studies**

In this study, the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) was used to do a quality assessment for the review to ensure the trustworthiness, credibility, and relevance of the included studies (Shoge et al., 2021).

Each included study was evaluated using the appraisal domains and criteria; the criterion can be rated as "Yes", "No", "Unclear", or "Not Applicable". Studies with a JBI score higher than 70% were classified as having high quality, those with a score between 50% and 70% as having medium quality, and those with a score less than 50% as having low quality (Nowell et al., 2017). Table 3 below shows the domain and criteria used to assess the quality of each study using the JBI tool:

**Table 3:** JBI Appraisal Domains and Criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Domain**  | **Criteria** |
| Congruity between research methodology and philosophical perspective | Does the study align its methodology with its underlying philosophical stance? |
| Congruity between research methodology and research objectives | Are the objectives appropriate and clearly addressed using the chosen methodology? |
| Congruity between methodology and data collection methods | Are the data collection techniques consistent with the qualitative approach? |
| Representation of the voices of participants | Are participants’ perspectives authentically represented, and does the study provide adequate quotes or examples? |
| Researcher's cultural or theoretical positioning | Does the study reflect on the researcher’s influence or bias in the data collection and analysis? |
| Ethical considerations | Were ethical standards adhered to? |
| Data analysis congruity | Are the methods of data analysis consistent with qualitative principles? |
| Interpretation of findings | Are the findings substantiated by the data and adequately address the research question? |
| Use of a credible and rigorous methodology | Is there evidence of data saturation, audit trails, or triangulation to ensure trustworthiness? |
| Overall relevance and conclusions | Are the conclusions aligned with the findings and implications clearly stated? |

**Analysis of Included Studies**

A thematic analysis was conducted by reading each included study in-depth to understand its findings, context, and nuances as related to the mental health impacts of migration on international students (Soori et al., 2025). Any recurring patterns, terms, or concepts across studies were noted for later categorisation. Significant segments of data were labelled and these codes were reviewed and grouped into broader, overarching themes into meaningful categories, highlighting shared experiences across studies (Soori et al., 2025). Each theme was examined to ensure it accurately represents the data and aligns with the research question. Clear definitions were developed for each theme to clarify its meaning and scope; this stage also included creating sub-themes, and lastly, a narrative synthesis was written to present the themes. This systematic approach to thematic analysis ensures a rigorous, detailed synthesis of qualitative findings (Francke et al., 2019), helping to clarify the mental health impacts of migration on international students in the UK.

**Results**

This section compiles results from all stages of the systematic review process, encompassing structured search, selection process, quality assessment, data extraction, and data synthesis, all presented in tabular form along with their respective descriptions. The database search results, which include the search date, the number of results retrieved, the number of articles excluded due to irrelevancy, the number of duplicate articles, and the number of articles to be reviewed, are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4:** Results of the Systematic Search

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of database searched | Search date | Number of results retrieved | Number articles excluded  | Number of duplicate articles | Number of articles to be reviewed |
| APA PsycArticles | 4/11/2024 | 5  | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| ASSIA | 7/11/2024 | 175  | 148 | 13 | 14 |
| APA PsycINFO | 8/11/2024 | 68  | 55 | 2 | 11 |
| CINAHL | 9/11/2024 | 13 | 8 | 1 | 4 |
| MEDLINE | 9/11/2024 | 17 | 9 | 2 | 6 |
| PubMed | 11/11/2024 | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found |
| Scopus | 15/11/2024 | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found |
| British Nursing Index | 18/11/2024 | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found |
| AMED | 23/11/2024 | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found |
| Google Scholar | 23/11/2024 | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found |
| Web of Science | 24/11/2024 | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found | no papers found |
| Total |  | 278 | 222 | 19 | 37 |

Table 4 presents the results of the systematic search, which shows how the search was carried out using the strategy template in Chapter 3 to find the articles required for the review. The databases and other resources that were searched to find relevant research for this review are also displayed in the table. It also includes the dates that the searches were carried out, the number of hit searches that were found, and the articles that were eliminated because of their irrelevant titles or otherwise duplicated within the database. Electronic searches of selected databases identified 278 studies. Before the screening, 19 records were discarded as duplicates leaving 259 papers for the first screening process.

**4.1 Results of Included Studies Based on Screening Titles and Abstract and Reading Full-Text Paper**

A total of 259 papers were screened for titles and abstracts, with 222 being removed during this stage. Subsequently, 37 papers were screened for full text, and out of these, 33 were excluded during full-text screening: 14 were discarded because they were quantitative surveys, 9 were not based in the UK, 8 did not address mental health and 2 involved studies featuring non-international students. All studies explored different groups of international students from various countries studying in the United Kingdom (UK). Each study was published between 2000 and 2024 (n = 4).

**Table 5:** Authors and Year of Publication Included Studies

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Paper | Author (s) and Year |
| Paper 1 | Frampton, N., Smith, J. and Smithies, D., 2022. Understanding student mental health inequalities: International students. Student Minds. |
| Paper 2 | Siby, A., Nishanth, A., Joseph, A.M., Parakkattel, C., Noshy, M.R. and Cherian, R., 2021. Impact of student migration from India to United Kingdom. Scripta Scientifica Salutis Publicae, 7, pp.9-14. |
| Paper 3 | Bradley, G., 2000. Responding effectively to the mental health needs of international students. Higher Education, 39, pp.417-433. |
| Paper 4 | Alloh, F., Tait, D. and Taylor, C., 2018. Away from home: A qualitative exploration of health experiences of Nigerian students in UK university. Journal of International Students, 8(1), pp.1-20. |

**4.2 Methodological Assessments of Studies Based on the Joanna Briggs Institute Framework (JBI)**

Studies with a JBI score higher than 70% were classified as having high quality, those with a score between 50% and 70% as having medium quality, and those with a score less than 50% as having low quality (Nowell et al., 2017). Therefore, after completing the checklist, studies that answered "Yes" for up to 70%, particularly the critical ones, are considered high quality. Studies having less than 50% "No" or "Unclear" responses indicate methodological weaknesses (Marshall et al., 2013).

**Table 6:** Quality Assessments of Included Studies Based on The JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Study Number | Number of Yes | Number of No | Number of Unclear | Number of Not Applicable | Quality |
| Paper 1 | 8 | 1 | - | 1 | high |
| Paper 2 | 8 | - | 1 | 1 | high |
| Paper 3 | 7 | - | 2 | 1 | medium |
| Paper 4 | 9 | - | 1 | - | high |

**Identification of studies via databases**

Records removed before screening:

Duplicate records removed (n = 19)

Records identified from Databases

(n = 278)

**Identification**

Records after duplicate studies were removed

(n = 259)

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Records excluded

(n = 222)

Records screened

(n = 259)

**Screening**

Articles excluded with reasons (n=33)

Quantitative study design- (n=14)

Population not UK-based - (n=9)

Not addressing mental health - (n=8)

Non-international student – (n=2)

Articles assessed for eligibility

(n = 37)

**Eligibility**

Studies included in the review

(n = 4)

**Included**

**Figure 2** PRISMA flowchart of searches, screening and inclusion and exclusion of studies.

**4.3 Description of All 4 Included Studies Based on the PEO Structure**

Using the standardised data extraction procedure outlined in Chapter 3, the four papers were put through the extracted procedure to obtain relevant information for the review topic. All exposure for these papers is migration.

**Table 7:** Data Extraction of Papers Included

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Study Details** | **Study Purpose** | **Population** | **Outcome** | **Data Collection** | **Data Analysis** | **Result** |
| Frampton, N., Smith, J. and Smithies, D., 2022. Understanding student mental health inequalities: International students. Student Minds. | To explore the diverse needs of students, particularly in addressing the health inequalities they encounter, and to analyze the subsequent impact on the overall state of student mental health. | 619 international students, with 248 being from Europe, 247 from Asia and 124 being grouped as ‘Other’ (North/South/Central America, Africa, Australia/ Oceania) studying in University of Nottingham and the University of Leeds | A full spectrum of experience ranging from good mental health to mental illness. | A qualitative approach, using focus group | Thematic and content analysis | The study’s findings show that international students report higher levels of concern about a range of issues including their wellbeing, the quality of their student experience and the need for greater support. The work with the International Student Panel and conversations with experts across the sector have shown that there is still a way to go in addressing the inequalities that exist between international students and UK-domiciled students. |
| Siby, A., Nishanth, A., Joseph, A.M., Parakkattel, C., Noshy, M.R. and Cherian, R., 2021. Impact of student migration from India to United Kingdom. Scripta Scientifica Salutis Publicae, 7, pp.9-14. | The study aimed to explore the impact of migration and acculturation and compare and contrast the findings of our research with existing research to comprehend fully the impact of migration and acculturation. | 6 students (2 males and 4 females, within the age range 18–25) who had studied in the UK, and are now medical students at the Medical University of Varna, Bulgaria were interviewed about their experiences as an international student in the UK. | The study found that Indian students missed the intimacy and informality of their friendships back home, which further led to mental health issues. | A qualitative study via interviews using a semi-standardized format. | Thematic analysis | Language barriers and culture shock were the biggest struggles, according to the respondents, due to different ethnic backgrounds, cultures and values. |
| Bradley, G., 2000. Responding effectively to the mental health needs of international students. Higher Education, 39, pp.417-433. | Describes the difficulties academic staff experience when responding to students with mental health problems and considers the potential of academic staff, student groups and the policies of the institution of higher education to contribute to improvements of the welfare of international students. | Within the University (The University of Hull) where the research took place, the current student population is 13,500 of which 10% are from overseas. Of the 10%, 47% are fee paying international students principally from Malaysia, China, Cyprus, India and Singapore, 29% are EU students paying ‘home fees’ and 24% are part of ERASMUS/Socrates programmes. | International students voiced experience of a range of economic, social and academic pressures which appear to be different in degree and often in kind from those experienced by ‘home’ students. These factors in extreme cases may trigger and/or exacerbate mental health problems. | A qualitative approach, using focus group | Thematic and content analysis | This research connects its findings to the broader literature on cross-cultural awareness and counselling. This research considers strategies for addressing the welfare needs of international students, referencing the roles of academic staff, student groups, and higher education institution policies. |
| Alloh, F., Tait, D. and Taylor, C., 2018. Away from home: A qualitative exploration of health experiences of Nigerian students in UK university. Journal of International Students, 8(1), pp.1-20. | The study explored the factors that contribute to the health experience of Nigerian students in the United Kingdom. | Nine students from Bournemouth University, United Kingdom | Isolation, loneliness, social exclusion, depression, acculturative stress, security challenges, and limited healthcare access are some of the challenges faced by international students | A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews | Thematic content analysis and Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to interpret themes. | The study findings have practical implications for Nigerian students' wellbeing in a U.K. university |

**Discussion**

In this study, five themes have been identified as significant challenges that pose risks to the mental health of international students. These themes include cultural adjustment (Frampton et al., 2022; Siby et al., 2021), language barriers (Frampton et al., 2022; Bradley, 2000), support (Bradley, 2000), social networks (Frampton et al., 2022; Bradley, 2000), and stigma (Bradley, 2000; Alloh et al., 2018). These factors collectively influence the psychological well-being of international students, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and support systems to address these challenges and promote a healthier academic and social environment. This review shows that migration is linked to the mental health of international students. Most of the studies considered alluded to this, concurring that the factors that accompany migration discussed above negatively affect the mental health of international students, leading to mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, etc.

For example, cultural differences have been shown to impact how international students seek mental health services. Most international students in the UK are young (King et al., 2010), and from Asia and Africa (IIE, 2024), and according to Lee et al. (2009), Bhugra et al. (2014) and Lipson et al. (2018), in African and Asian cultures, young people use little to no mental health services. This is because it might be considered a weakness to express emotions, in contrast to European or Western cultures (Gulliver et al., 2010; Kim et al., 1999).

This might suggest that African and Asian students might fear stigmatisation from friends, families or fellow countrymen and also lack trust in the mental health services of the UK (LI et al., 2016; Doumbou et al., 2023). Therefore, the stigma surrounding mental health remains a pervasive barrier to seeking help, particularly for international students from cultures where mental health issues are not openly acknowledged.

The reluctance of students to use counselling services due to the associated stigma and the visibility of such services underscores the need for more discreet and stigma-free support options. The broader literature confirms that stigma not only prevents individuals from seeking necessary help but also contributes to the deterioration of their mental health, emphasizing the importance of addressing these societal attitudes. Addressing this requires a two-fold approach: normalizing conversations around mental health and embedding culturally sensitive outreach into institutional practices as suggested by Armstrong-Astley et al., (2022).

Migration introduces significant cultural adjustments that often result in stress and anxiety among international students. Acculturative stress shows that adapting to a new culture can challenge one's identity, coping mechanisms, and sense of belonging (Desa et al., 2012). Frampton et al. (2022) and Siby et al. (2021) indicate that cultural differences, such as unfamiliar academic expectations, contribute to stress and anxiety among students. For instance, one student expressed how they initially underestimated the culture shock and subsequent anxiety they would face upon moving to London (Frampton et al., 2022).

This aligns with broader research that emphasises the significant impact that cultural dissonance has on mental health and how the mismatch between students’ expectations and the realities of their new environments exacerbates their emotional strain (Doumbou et al., 2023). Lim (2016) also echoes these sentiments, noting the amplified challenges faced by international students due to the compounded stress of adapting to a new environment, which can lead to significant distress. These findings point to the importance of pre-departure preparation and cultural orientation programs to reduce the psychological toll of migration.

Yeh & Inose (2012) identify language proficiency as a critical factor in reducing loneliness and promoting adjustment. This is especially important for international students as language barriers emerge as a significant impediment to social integration and self-expression (Mesidor & Sly, 2016). Language barriers significantly hinder international student’s ability to integrate socially and academically, these barriers reflect a double burden, the need to perform academically while simultaneously navigating a linguistic and cultural gap (Lai et al., 2021). Frampton et al. (2022) and Bradley (2000) document how poor language skills hinder students from fully engaging in social and academic settings.

This barrier not only affects their academic performance but also their ability to form meaningful social connections, leading to increased isolation and stress (Andrade, 2006). These struggles with racism and managing academic expectations in a second language illuminate the compounded challenges faced by students who cannot fully communicate their needs or experiences. These findings emphasise the critical importance of offering robust language support programs to improve language proficiency, foster a sense of belonging and reduce isolation (Storch & Hill, 2008).

The availability and accessibility of psychological support are pivotal in mitigating the challenges international students face. The theme of support was particularly evident in Bradley's (2000) study, his findings underline the critical role of support systems in addressing the mental health challenges of international students. However, the difficulty in engaging students with mental health challenges, such as reluctance to seek help, disclose struggles and a lack of culturally sensitive resources, often hinder effective intervention. The observations about students' unwillingness to disclose their mental health struggles and the need for a “safe place of refuge” point to systemic gaps in support structures. These findings align with wider literature, such as the WHO’s recognition of the mental health gap for migrants, which highlights how systemic barriers prevent access to timely and effective care (Akhiba et al., 2024). Moreover, the need for safe spaces mentioned by one of the students interviewed reinforces the importance of providing culturally competent mental health services that prioritise confidentiality and trust-building. This reflects the need for institutions to create culturally sensitive and accessible mental health resources that address both psychological and cultural needs.

A lack of social support compounds the psychological and emotional burdens of international students, as these students report feelings of exclusion and marginalisation (Frampton et al, 2022). The misalignment between their cultural values and the dominant social norms in the UK might deepen their sense of alienation. Social integration is a critical protective factor for mental health, and its absence increases vulnerability to loneliness and depression (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015). For example, the constant reminders of their 'outsider' status through visa checks and other institutional practices, contribute to a sense of exclusion (Domínguez et al., 2022).

This highlights the necessity for universities to foster inclusive environments that support the building of diverse social networks. Frampton et al. (2022) and Bradley (2000) underscore the importance of social networks in mitigating stress and anxiety among international students. However, the difficulty in establishing these networks due to cultural differences and social anxiety is a major challenge. The lack of alignment between students’ social expectations and their experiences is well documented in studies of international students both in the UK and other European and American countries (Furnham, 2002; Domínguez et al., 2022; Hyseni Duraku et al., 2024), where international students often study.

The range of challenges faced by international students, including cultural adjustment, language barriers, and lack of support, significantly affects their mental health. As noted by Frampton et al. (2022), Bradley (2000), and Alloh et al. (2018), international students experience acculturative stress, which can lead to depression, loneliness, and loss of self-worth. These findings highlight the intersecting challenges that international students face, including cultural shock, dietary changes, sleep disturbances, and racial discrimination. For example, migrant international students might experience a compounded burden due to systemic racism (Lee & Rice, 2007; Gillborn, 2014). The additional burden of adjusting to new lifestyles and academic demands can further exacerbate these issues, highlighting the need for comprehensive support mechanisms to address these multifaceted challenges[1]. This is the same as findings from other studies conducted among international students studying elsewhere in Europe and America (Lee & Rice 2007; Dombou et al., 2023)

In a broader context, all of these themes can be linked to migration and are consistent with other research on international students' mental health in regions like America and other parts of Europe (Mori, 2000; Lee et al., 2004; Domínguez et al., 2022; Dombou et al., 2022; Dombou et al., 2023), which identifies stigma, language barriers, and cultural adjustment as significant challenges that migration has caused. Although international studies consistently emphasise the necessity of inclusive social settings and diverse and culturally responsive learning environments, identifying how these settings meet the needs of international students is important for understanding their mental health. Therefore, addressing these issues requires a comprehensive strategy that considers the unique circumstances of international students and advocates for policies and procedures to enhance their mental health and overall well-being.

**Strengths and Limitations**

The primary strength of this review is its methodological approach, following a pre-defined protocol that enabled the selection of qualitative methodology articles that fit set eligibility criteria. However, there are several limitations in this review. First is the potential for missing of articles not published in the English language, as only studies written in English were considered. By only including articles written in English, we may have overlooked relevant studies published in other languages. Another limitation is the search strategy. Although 11 Databases were searched for this review, human errors might have caused the missing of relevant articles, especially those that might have been removed because of keywords that were not present in the title or abstract of such articles. Also, it is noteworthy that only one person carried out the review, and this might have contributed to the human errors.

**Conclusions**

The four studies identified and included in this study were all qualitative, and they revealed how migration influences the mental health of international students in the UK. Four major themes were synthesised - cultural, psychological, systemic, and institutional factors – exploring how they interplay with migration. As explained by this review's themes, the review examined how these themes shaped international students' challenges and lived experiences, which contributed to mental health outcomes. The findings in this study reveal insights into the mental well-being of international students, underscoring the need for structural, cultural, and institutional changes to address the mental health needs of these students as it is essential to their well-being and vital to both their academic success and eventual integration into the UK society.

**Limitations**

The focus on the UK may not account for differences in mental health challenges faced by students in other countries with distinct educational systems, immigration policies, or cultural contexts.

The included studies primarily featured students from Asia and Africa, potentially overlooking experiences of students from other regions (e.g., Latin America, Middle East).

**Future Outlook:**

Future research should focus on more diverse cultural groups, particularly non-European international students.

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Details of the AI usage are given below:

1.

2.

3.

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