Original Article

Academic Achievement as Functions of Life Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy: The case of Wolaita Sodo University first year students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of life satisfaction and general self-efficacy on academic achievement among first-year students at Wolaita Sodo University. The sample consisted of all students in the colleges, representing first-year students at the university, and their number was manageable. The study included 104 participants (56 males and 48 females). A Likert Scale questionnaire measured students' life satisfaction and general self-efficacy, while academic achievement was measured using students' cumulative grade point average, yielding quantitative data. A self-developed semi-structured interview collected qualitative data from six key informants (three male and three female students). Data on the students' academic achievements were obtained from the college registrar's office. The collected quantitative data were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, multiple linear regression, and independent t-test. All hypotheses were verified at $\alpha = 0.05$. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between students' life satisfaction and academic achievement and between self-efficacy and academic achievement. Life satisfaction and self-efficacy significantly contribute to students' academic achievements ($R^2 = 12.1\%$). Three domains of life satisfaction (university, self, and friends) were found to be the most predictive components of students' academic achievement, with beta coefficients of .25, .234, and .17, respectively. Significant sex disparities were observed in both life satisfaction and self-efficacy. Besides, the qualitative data results showed that students use different strategies to improve their life satisfaction and self-efficacy, such as avoidance, secrecy, advocacy, confrontation, and wishful thinking.

Key words*: life satisfaction, self-efficacy, academic achievement

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Education is the process of enhancing a person's ability and capacity to thrive in a certain society or culture. Higher education is essential for the development of people and civilizations of society. In Ethiopia, since the early 2000s, there have been major modifications to higher education system with the goal of increasing access to education. However, problems like packed classrooms, scarce resources, and poor infrastructure still make it difficult for students to excel academically (Hailu & Teshome, 2017). Despite these obstacles, the enrollment rates at Ethiopian universities have significantly improved. Hailu & Teshome (2017) further indicated that despite the government's commitment to expanding access, the rapid increase in student enrollment has not always been accompanied by corresponding enhancements in educational quality, (Hailu & Teshome,20017). Besides, academic standards are significantly hampered due to the emphasis on memorization over critical thinking abilities at all levels of schooling including universities.

In educational institutions, academic achievement is typically defined as a student's fulfillment of learning objectives, often assessed through grades, test scores, and overall academic performance. Various factors contribute to academic success, including socio-economic status, family background, institutional support, and personal attributes such as motivation and psychological well-being (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2008). Academic achievement is a vital element of national education as it serves as a barometer of the effectiveness of a nation's educational framework. Dambudzo (2009) asserts that parents, students, and educators have progressively prioritized students' academic achievement levels as a benchmark for success in all academic environments.

Recent research on factors influencing academic achievement in universities has increasingly focused on the roles of psychological constructs like life satisfaction and self-efficacy. These two psychological constructs have significantly impact students' academic achievement, motivation, and overall well-being. Gaining an understanding of these impacts is essential to improving student results, especially in Ethiopian universities where distinct socioeconomic and cultural factors are involved. Research has shown that higher levels of life satisfaction are positively correlated with academic performance (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Students who report greater life satisfaction tend to have better mental health, which facilitates learning and involvement in educational pursuit.

Life satisfaction is conceptualized as an individual's subjective assessment of their overall quality of life. It encompasses emotional responses and cognitive evaluations regarding one's life circumstances. Life satisfaction of university students has become an important issue for school administrators (Diener & Larsen, 1993). Improving the life satisfaction of university students should help reduce the risks of physical injury and mental disorder among students (Valois et al, 2006). As stated earlier, another psychological construct that influences academic achievement in universities is self-efficacy.

As stated earlier, another psychological construct that influences academic achievement in universities is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the confidence students have in their abilities to successfully perform specific academic tasks (Bandura, 1997), plays a crucial role in student performance. Self-efficacy is a critical factor that can significantly impact children's academic performance and learning outcomes. For example, (Pajares & Miller, 1994) highlighted that students' self-efficacy reflects their belief in their ability to successfully complete a given task. As a result, self-efficacy and the academic task, environment, or scenario are directly associated. Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in educational settings by influencing student motivation, perseverance, and resilience in overcoming challenges.

Research has shown that higher self-efficacy is associated with enhanced academic performance, as students with strong self-beliefs tend to adopt effective study habits and are more inclined to seek assistance when required (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2008). Studies have consistently demonstrated that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of academic success in students. As Abebe et al., (2021) reported that students with elevated self-efficacy levels are not only achieved better grades but also demonstrated greater persistence in overcoming academic challenges.

On top of this, as to sex difference in life satisfaction, various Studies revealed the presences of significant differences in life satisfaction between male and female students. Diener et al. (2018) and Keng et al. (2019) found that female students often report lower levels of life satisfaction compared to their male counterparts. These differences in life satisfaction may be influenced by societal expectations that dictate gender roles and the challenges of balancing academic responsibilities with personal life. In the context of Ethiopia, cultural norms can further amplify these disparities. Female students often face additional societal pressures related to traditional gender roles, which can negatively impact their overall life satisfaction (Alemayehu & Tadesse,

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2020). Gender, intersecting with other factors such as socio-economic status, adds layers of complexity to this issue.

Regarding sex difference in self-efficacy, male students generally exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy compared to female students. Factors such as confidence levels developed through educational experiences and societal reinforcement of gender roles can explain this disparity (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2008). In Ethiopia, studies suggest that female students may experience lower self-efficacy due to systemic obstacles, including restricted availability of resources and mentorship opportunities (Abebe & Hailu, 2021). These obstacles can impede their academic performance and erode their confidence in their abilities.

1.2. The Nature of Life Satisfaction among University Students

According to Diener et al. (2010), life satisfaction is the degree to which an individual feels satisfied with the overall quality of their life. Numerous studies have shown that among university students, high life satisfaction and a lack of psychological distress play a significant role in fostering academic progress and student engagement (Antaramian, 2015; Renshaw & Cohen, 2014). Furthermore, studies by Duffy, Allan, & Bott (2012) and Ojeda, Flores, and Navarro (2011) indicate that college students with high life satisfaction also typically have higher levels of academic satisfaction.

Additionally, according to Ojeda et al. (2011) & O'Sullivan (2011), life satisfaction is linked to lower academic stress, more positive academic expectations, higher academic self-efficacy, and stronger perceived progress toward goals. A university curriculum that incorporates well-being for students is more likely to prevent melancholy, encourage life satisfaction, spark collective concern, sustain creativity, adopt learning, and even increase academic achievement, according to Waters (2014). In the context of positive education, "life satisfaction" refers to the enhancement of individuals' quality of life, enabling them to live contentedly and in alignment with human values.

Life satisfaction encompasses five dimensions: family, school, friends, self, and living environment. The items in the family domain assess respondents' satisfaction levels regarding their relationships with family members and within the family unit. The school domain items evaluate respondents' satisfaction with school life, including aspects related to interest, learning, and educational activities. The friends' domain items aim to assess teenagers' satisfaction levels with

their peers. The self-domain items measure respondents' satisfaction with themselves and how others perceive them. The living environment domain questions assess respondents' satisfaction with their immediate neighborhood and the individuals residing there (Galíndez & Casas, 2011).

1.3. The Nature of Self efficacy among University Students

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977, 1986) is the primary theory on which this research is based. This theory emphasizes the interaction between behavior and environment, highlighting the behavior patterns individuals develop, such as problem-solving strategies, to adapt to their environment instead of relying on instinctual drives. Models of behavior can be developed through face-to-face experiences or by observing the responses of others, which serve as observational learning experiences that shape individual behavior patterns. This theory claims that we learn how to behave by adapting ourselves to pre-existing models. Therefore, a child can effectively learn to adapt to new behaviors by observing others, showcasing the influential role of observational learning in behavior adaptation. As Bandura puts it (1986), self-efficacy refers to personal confidence in one's abilities for the successful accomplishment of a certain task. Self-efficacy beliefs are significant influential factors in whether individuals will expend effort on a task and continue to cope with difficulty. Individuals with a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to take on challenging tasks and persevere through difficulties, whereas those with low self-efficacy tend to give up easily in the face of obstacles.

In conclusion, student-related factors such as self-efficacy and life satisfaction play a crucial role in determining academic success in higher education by influencing motivation, persistence, and overall well-being. The interaction of these concepts emphasizes the importance of addressing both psychological well-being and individual perceptions of one's skills within educational frameworks. Therefore, fostering both life satisfaction and self-efficacy could create a synergistic effect that enhances academic achievement.

Thus, conducting study in the area to evaluate the influence of life satisfaction and self-efficacy on academic achievement among Ethiopian higher education students seems imperative in this connection.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

Academic achievement is a multifaceted construct influenced by various psychological and environmental factors. Among these, life satisfaction and general self-efficacy have emerged as critical psychological factors. Since academic success can have a pivotal impact on one's standing in society, it is crucial to understand what factors can influence it. It is generally known that both cognitive and affective factors are the basic determinants of academic achievement (Mehrens & Lehmann, 1969). In line with this, Entwistle (1972) & Conger (1991) reported that a significant proportion of students' academic achievement is influenced by non-cognitive variables such as attitude, personality, motivation, self-concept, life satisfaction, and self-efficacy beliefs.

Research on the relationship between self-efficacy and specific aspects of academic achievement, such as exam performance or graduation rates, has been limited in non-Western settings like Ethiopia. While life satisfaction and self-efficacy are important factors in education, research on these links within Ethiopian universities is lacking. The absence of localized research underscores the pressing need for further exploration to enhance educational practices and student outcomes. At Wolaita Sodo University, implementing successful teaching methods and student support systems requires an understanding of how these two constructs interaction and their influence on academic achievement. Despite the expanding literature on academic achievement, there is still a sizable gap in empirical studies examining the relationship of academic achievement to self-efficacy and life satisfaction among Ethiopian undergraduate students. This study aims to narrow the gap in understanding the relationship of academic achievement with self-efficacy and life satisfaction among Ethiopian undergraduate students by conducting a comprehensive analysis of their interplay and implications for educational success.

In the Ethiopian context, the independent study of the two variables (life satisfaction and self-efficacy) alongside other factors has led to fragmented insights into their individual contributions to academic achievement. For instance: Yalew, (1996) conducted study on the role of Sense of Efficacy and Self-perception of Teaching Roles in Achievement Behavior. Similarly, Shimelis & Demeke, (2017) reported the influence of Academic Self-Efficacy, Self-Concept, and Goal Orientation on Academic Achievement. Besides, Nigist, Zewdie, & Yohannes (2013) examined the relation between Life Satisfaction and Risky Behaviors. Thus, all these studies did not indicate the interactive role of self-efficacy and life satisfaction on academic achievement.

Although academic achievement is often studied in relation to other variables, the joint investigation of these issues is uncommon. These and related issues motivate the researcher to conduct the study. This study aimed at exploring the relationships of students' life satisfaction and self-efficacy to academic achievement. Accordingly, this study tried to answer the following research questions:

2. Methods

2.1. Research Approach and Design

This study employed a mixed-method research approach. Mixed research method, as defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), involves gathering, analyzing, and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a series of studies focusing on the same phenomena. In this study, a mixed- research approach with descriptive and concurrent design, a specific approach within mixed method research, was utilized. Concurrent triangulation is a mixed research technique that integrates quantitative and qualitative data to cross-validate or corroborate findings from multiple sources (Creswell, 2003). Following this approach, data collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data were conducted independently, concurrently and later integrated during the interpretation phase.

2.2. Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The target population of this study was all first-year students of Wolaita Sodo University. But the sample members of the study were students in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at Wolaita Sodo University in the 2022/23 academic year. The participants included 104 students (56 male and 48 female students). All first-year students from all departments of the college were included in this study. The research participants were divided into two groups based on their sex for analysis purpose. Due to the manageable total number of participants, the researcher decided to include all students and utilized a census sampling method to ensure comprehensive data collection.

2.3. Instruments of Data Collection

For this study, the researcher collected primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through self-administered Likert Scale questionnaires measuring life satisfaction and self-efficacy; semi-structured interviews were conducted with students. The secondary data, which included the

average academic achievement scores of students, were obtained directly from the college registrar's office to check the authenticity of the recorded GPA by students in the questionnaire.

Students' life satisfaction was measured using an adapted scale from Huebner (1994); the scale consists of 40 Likert Scale items with a range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), with a reliability index of $\alpha = 0.79$. The General Self-Efficacy Scale, developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995), was used to assess individuals' positive beliefs in dealing with challenging life situations. It consists of 10 Likert items, the sum of which yields a final composite score ranging from 10 to 40. All items were rated on a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (exactly true), with a reliability index of $\alpha = 0.76$.

To check the face and content validity of the two instruments, two educational psychology experts were consulted, and their feedback was considered. Therefore, the two instruments were validated and proven reliable, leading to the commencement of the final data collection. To assess students' academic performance, cumulative grade point averages (GPA) of two semesters directly sourced from the registrars' offices of the colleges attended by the respondents.

The study focused on maintaining the validity of a semi-structured interview guide, following a comprehensive review of related literature and evaluation by experts. To ensure qualitative trustworthiness, the study adhered to four criteria: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and conformability (objectivity).

2.4. Data Collection Procedures

With the supportive letter from the department head of Psychology and the permission of the College of Education and Behavioral Science Registrar, the average academic achievement scores of the research participants were obtained from the college registrar's office. After a brief orientation provided, only students who were willingly to participate in the study were given the questionnaire to complete in class, and this was how the primary data was gathered. Participants read an informed consent script outlining the research study's objectives, procedures, and voluntary nature.

The students completed two sections of the questionnaire: one for demographic variables, and another for ranking their level of self-efficacy and life satisfaction. The data-gathering tool was distributed to 119 students. Four students did not submit demographic data, and 11 students did

not complete the questionnaire as instructed on the first page. As a result, 15 individuals were excluded for not providing demographic data or completing the questionnaire as instructed, leaving a final sample of 104 students. In the qualitative section, six students participated to provide in-depth insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding the mechanisms they have been using to improve their life satisfaction and self-efficacy.

2.5. Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used, while inferential statistics, specifically the t-test for independent samples, compared the mean life satisfaction, self-efficacy, and academic achievement scores of male and female students. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient examined the relationships among the independent and dependent variables. The relative contributions of the independent variables, life satisfaction and self-efficacy, to the dependent variable, academic achievement, were ascertained by multiple linear regression analysis. The following assumptions were verified before the analysis began: the independent variables were not collinear, and the scatter plots were normal, homoscedastic, and linear. The alpha threshold for each statistical test used in this investigation was set at 0.05.

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) in qualitative data. This method was selected for its effectiveness in uncovering meaningful insights from one-on-one interviews. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis can be approached from a constructionist viewpoint, exploring societal discourses' role in shaping events, meanings, and experiences, or from an essentialist or realist perspective, focusing on participants' actual experiences and meanings. This study employed the realist perspective.

3. Results

The study participants' socio-demographic variables, the relationship and influence of independent variables (life satisfaction and self-efficacy) on the dependent variable (students' academic achievement) were analyzed and interpreted here. The detailed results of the qualitative data analysis focused on themes related to students' experiences with the techniques they used to enhance their sense of self-efficacy and life satisfaction was treated here.

The findings of the study were discussed in line with the existing literature. The main conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study and recommendations were forwarded.

3.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The following table shows background variables for the respondents' sex.

Table 1: Respondent characteristics in terms of sex (N = 104)

Variable	Categories	N	%
Sex	Male	56	54%
	Female	48	46%

As depicted in table1, the data indicate a distribution of participants based on sex, with 56 males (54%) and 48 females (46%). This implies a slight predominance of males over females in the sample studied. The percentage values suggest that the sample is relatively balanced but leans towards a male majority.

3.2. Results of quantitative strand

The quantitative data were analyzed focusing on the basic research questions.to do so, the mean and standard deviation of the variables under considerations are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: The Mean and Standard deviation of study variables (N=104)

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Life satisfaction	104	32.28	6.415
General Self-efficacy	104	26.71	8.11
Academic achievement	104	2.80	0.35

Table 2 shows that, on average, participants reported a life satisfaction score of 32.28, with a standard deviation of 6.415, indicating moderate response variability. While some students report high levels of life satisfaction, others may report considerably lower levels, as suggested by the standard deviation. With a standard deviation of 8.11 and an average self-efficacy score of 26.71, students' perceptions of their own self-efficacy appear to vary somewhat. With a standard deviation of 8.11, self-efficacy scores are more widely distributed than life satisfaction, indicating a wider range of perspectives on people's capacity to meet objectives and overcome obstacles.

The average academic achievement score of the participants is 2.80, with a lower standard deviation of 0.35, indicating that most scores are relatively close to the mean. A standard deviation of only 0.35 indicates that academic achievement scores are relatively clustered around the mean, suggesting that most students perform similarly with less variability in their academic outcomes compared to self-efficacy. The table suggests a moderate level of life satisfaction and self-efficacy among participants, while academic achievement is relatively high but with less variability.

3.2.1. The correlation results

Table 3: Correlation of Life Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy, and Academic Achievement (N=104)

Variables	LS	SE	AA
Life satisfaction(LS)	1		
Self-efficacy (SE)	.43[**]	1	
Academic achievement(AA)	.801[**]	.64[**]	1

As revealed in Table 3, there is a strong positive relationship between students' life satisfaction and their academic achievement (r = 0.801, p < .01). This suggests that higher life satisfaction leads to better academic achievement and may play a significant role in students' academic scores. Similarly, Table 3 demonstrates that higher self-efficacy is associated with better academic achievement scores (r = 0.64, p < .01). This implies that students with high academic self-efficacy score better in their learning. Conversely, students with low self-efficacy tend to attain lower academic scores.

3.2.2. Multiple Regression results: Predictive values of independent variables on GPA

The predictive roles of the independent variables on academic achievement of students were explored using multiple regression approach for the reason that the independent variables (life satisfaction domains and self-efficacy) have significant correlation with the dependent variable (academic achievement).so, to indicate the extent of contributions of the independent variables in predicting academic achievement, regression analysis was done and the results are presented in table 4 below.

Table 4: Multiple regression on the prediction of academic achievement from life satisfaction domains and self-efficacy (N = 104).

Variables	Unstandardized (β)	Std. Error	Standardized (β)	t	p
(Constant)	67.460	5.847		11.538	.000
Self	.334	.111	.234	3.098	.002
L.envt.	-.018	.106	-.014	-.170	.866
Family	.132	.145	.075	.913	.362
University	.359	.112	.255	3.212	.002
Friends	.359	.101	.179	2.511	.003
Self-efficacy	.530	.048	.483	11.1	.003

R=.348
R^2= .121
F(6, 97) =6.653, p=.000

   a. Dependent Variable: academic achievement

As seen in Table 4, multiple linear regressions were used to ascertain the combined impacts of life satisfaction domains and self-efficacy on students' academic achievement. The goal was to determine the total contribution strength of the predictor variables to the dependent variable and to pinpoint the independent variables that most effectively account for variations in students' academic achievements.

Variation in academic scores was determined by CGPA, explained by the combined effect of the independent variables (the five domains of life satisfaction: self, living environment, family, university, and friends, and self-efficacy) included in the regression analysis. The results show that the combined effect of all these independent variables on student academic achievement is statistically significant (R^2 = .121, F6, 97 = 6.653, p < .000). This implies that the independent variables together account for 12.1% of the difference in students' academic achievement. This suggests that other factors not included in the model may influence academic achievement by around 88%.

Table 4 also reveals the independent contribution of each predictor variable to the dependent variable. Self-efficacy (β = .483, p = .003) was the strongest predictor of students' academic achievement, followed by university domain (β = .255, p = .002), self-perception (β = .234, p =

.002), and friends domain or relationship with peers (β = .179, p = .003). Here, it can be inferred that students' self-efficacy, or strong belief in their ability to succeed and accomplish academic tasks, and their resilience in the face of challenges play a significant role in their academic achievement and success. Likewise, the university domain implies students' satisfaction with university life in terms of interest, learning, educational activities, resources available (such as libraries and tutoring), and overall academic climate. A supportive university environment can enhance student learning experiences and promote success.

Similarly, students' self-domain of life satisfaction implies their assessment of their own life quality and fulfillment, particularly in relation to personal goals, values, and self-perception, which correlates with better academic outcomes. Correspondingly, the social support provided by peers is vital for academic success. Friends can offer emotional support, study partnerships, and motivation. Positive peer relationships often foster a collaborative learning environment that can enhance understanding and retention of material, leading to better academic scores for students.

3.2.3. T-test Results on sex differences in the variables

As shown in Table 5, the independent t-test analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female students' mean scores across all domains of life satisfaction (self, university, family, friends, and living environment) and general self-efficacy. Female students' mean score in self-perception (M = 22.03) was significantly higher than male students' mean score (M = 18.96). This indicates that female students, with a higher mean score in self-perception (M = 22.03) compared to male students (M = 18.96), prioritize their quality of life, fulfillment, personal goals, values, and self-perception more than male students. This is supported by a t-value of -2.88*, alpha = 0.05 level of significance.

Table 5 also shows that in the university domain of life satisfaction, female students' mean score (M = 19.35) is significantly higher than male students' (M = 16.2) at a significance level of 0.05, with a t-value of 3.01 and a p-value of 0.003. This suggests that female students are particularly influenced by university-related issues such as interest in courses, engagement in educational activities, access to resources like libraries and tutoring services, and the overall academic environment.

Table 5: Independent sample t - test results on sex difference in life satisfaction domains, self-efficacy and academic achievement (N = 104).

Variables	Sex	N	Descriptive statistics –test Mean	SD	Independent sample t analysis t-value	p-value
Self-domain	M	56	18.96	5.75	-2.88	0.005
	F	48	22.03	3.50		
University domain	M	56	16.26	5.29	-3.01	0.003
	F	48	19.35	4.13		
Family domain	M	56	14.91	5.22	-2.84	0.005
	F	48	17.74	3.74		
Friends domain	M	56	16.26	5.29	-3.01	0.003
	F	48	19.35	4.13		
Living environment domain	M	56	10.84	4.32	2.69	0.008
	F	48	8.68	2.68		
General self-efficacy	M	56	25	8.58	-2.21	0.0295
	F	48	28.42	7.64		
Academic achievement	M	56	2.82	.39	.374	.432
	F	48	2.79	.31		

*NB: N = Population, M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, *P < 0.05*

Table 5 revealed that female students scored significantly higher than male students in the family domain of life satisfaction, with a mean score of 17.74 for females compared to 14.91 for males, a t-value of -2.84*, and a p-value of 0.005. This suggests that female students place a high value on their relationships with family members, which significantly impacts their overall life satisfaction. The family domain of life satisfaction includes emotional support, communication patterns, expectations from family members, and financial support. For instance, emotional support from family members can help students manage university stress, while effective communication can enhance student satisfaction.

The independent t-test analysis showed a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students in the friend's domain of life satisfaction, as shown in Table 5. In other words, the female students' mean score (M = 19.35) is significantly higher than that of the male students (M = 16.26), supported by a t-value of -3.01* and a p-value of 0.003 at a significance level of 0.05. This finding suggests that female students are more susceptible to peer pressure than male students.

Table 5 indicates a statistically significant difference between male and female students' mean scores for life satisfaction in the living environment domain. Male students scored significantly higher (M = 10.84) than female students (M = 8.68), with a t-value of 2.69* and a p-value of 0.008 at a significance level of 0.05. This suggests that male students' higher scores in the living environment domain reflect the positive influence of factors such as housing quality, social interactions, and access to resources on their overall well-being and quality of life.

Table 5 also shows a significant difference between male and female students' mean scores in general self-efficacy. The female students' mean score (M = 28.42) is significantly higher than the male students' mean score (M = 25), with a t-value of -2.21* and a p-value of 0.0295 at the 0.05 level of significance. These findings suggest that female students exhibit higher self-efficacy beliefs related to academic achievement, indicating a stronger belief in their ability to succeed and greater resilience in overcoming challenges compared to male students.

Finally, Table 5 shows no statistically significant difference between female and male students in their academic achievement scores. This indicates that male students (M = 2.82) and female students (M = 2.79) have similar academic achievement scores, with t = .374 and p = 0.432, showing no significant difference between the groups. Despite differences in other psychological and social variables, both male and female students demonstrate similar performance in academic achievement as measured by CGPA Scores.

3.3. Results of the Qualitative Strand

The finding from qualitative study also supplements the quantitative findings. Accordingly, an interview part showed that participants used different strategies to improve their life satisfaction and self-efficacy. Some typical statements raised by interviewees regarding these strategies are:

> *"I say one thing to myself: in order to have a healthy and successful life at the university, I should leave nuanced family issues to them and focus on my education rather than being overwhelmed by each and every family issue." (P1 Male).*

> *"I have my own criteria for selecting true friends. I have close friends who meet these criteria and avoid those who don't. This helps me lead a good life at the university." (P2 Male).*

"In order to improve my self-efficacy and life satisfaction, I discuss and work with friends who perform better than I do, and I confront relevant authorities to exercise my rights properly" (P3 Female).

"I stop comparing myself with others and try to do things to my maximum effort, leaving the difficult ones. On the other hand, I ignore uncomfortable conditions rooted in my family, friends, university, and community because I believe I can't bring about any change." (P4Female)

"I always lead my life with a plan, and I'm committed to implementing things as per my plan. This helps me improve my life satisfaction and self-efficacy during my stay at the university." (P5 male).

"Most often, I ignore others' suggestions about my lifestyle and educational accomplishments. This helps me have a better life on campus and enables me to exert my full potential in my education." (P6 Female).

From the finding it can be deduced that respondents employed various strategies to enhance their life satisfaction and self-efficacy. The main strategies identified were avoidance, secrecy, advocacy, and wishful thinking.

- Avoidance and withdrawal: Most respondents avoided challenges related to the university, friends, living environment, and family. For example, they refrained from inquiring about their rights on campus and left certain responsibilities to their families. They also preferred friends with similar non-challenging and carefree characteristics.

- Secrecy: Respondents also keep their weaknesses and shortcomings regarding their education and personal lives secret to survive at the university. They avoid discussing their personal lives and educational issues with friends, teachers, families, and other concerned parties.

- Advocacy and confrontation: Few respondents fight for their rights at the university and discuss issues with friends to improve life on campus and develop self-efficacy. In addition, they consult student affairs bodies and other concerned entities to create a better teaching and learning environment at the university.

- Wishful thinking The findings in this study also showed that respondents try to develop wishful thinking, such as "We will have a better life in the future if we work hard today," to escape their hopelessness and weaknesses.

4. Discussions

The study investigates the influence of life satisfaction and general self-efficacy on first-year students' academic achievement at Wolaita Sodo University, focusing on the relationship, extent, predictive domain, sex differences, and strategies used to improve these issues, referencing existing literature. This research showed that life satisfaction and general self-efficacy were positively and significantly correlated with students' academic achievement scores. In essence, students with higher levels of life satisfaction and self-efficacy have been excelling academically compared to those with lower levels of satisfaction.

As Pavot & Diener (2008) affirmed that elevated levels of life satisfaction are linked to improved academic performance. Teshome et al. (2021) discovered a similar correlation, indicating that Ethiopian university students with higher subjective well-being levels performed better academically. Likewise, Abebe & Hailu (2020) highlighted that social support systems in Ethiopian schools play a crucial role in enhancing student happiness and academic performance. Studies by Huebner (1991) and Suldo & Shaffer (2008) also underscored comparable outcomes in their research.

On top of this, the research indicated that self-efficacy was significantly and positively related to the academic achievement scores of students. Studies conducted by Bong (2001) & Yalew E (2003) supported this result. For instance, Bong (2001) provided evidence corroborating the positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic achievement. Furthermore, Yalew (2003) conducted study at Bahir Dar University employing a rigorous methodology reported positive influence of students' self-efficacy on their academic achievement, as assessed by grade point average (GPA).

This study has shown a significant correlation between three life satisfaction domains (university, self, and friends) and the academic achievement of students. This finding is similar with the study conducted by Teshome & Yared (2020) revealing that Ethiopian university students who reported higher levels of life satisfaction in the domains of university, self, and friends achieved significantly better grades than those with lower satisfaction levels. Besides, Abate (2019)

focusing on the crucial role of social support networks among Ethiopian students, reported that strong friendships led to increased life satisfaction and consequently improved academic performance. Furthermore, the observations by Smith and Jones (2021) reinforce the notion that positive friendships are linked to higher GPA scores through enhanced emotional support.

The study also reveals significant differences in life satisfaction between male and female students. Female students showed higher scores in the family, self, university, and friends domains. But, male students had higher scores only in the living environment domain. This finding contradicts to the results of Diener et al. (2018) & Keng et al. (2019), who observed that female students typically express lower levels of life satisfaction than their male peers.

At the same time, the results of this research demonstrated a significant difference between female and male students in general self-efficacy. These findings imply that female students showed significantly better self-efficacy beliefs for their academic achievement than male students. An inconsistent finding with this study was reported by Pintrich & DeGroot (1990), who showed that female students exhibit low self-efficacy in natural science subjects. Shimelis & Demeke (2017) also found a contrasting result; they discovered that female students had lower self-efficacy than their male counterpart colleagues.

 The study also shows that both sexes perform similarly in academic achievement, despite differences in other psychological and social variables. In accordance to this, Alemayehu & Tadesse (2019) also noted that both sexes performed equally, indicating that sex difference does not inherently determine academic success. Likewise, Mekonnen et al., (2020) discovered no significant differences in academic achievement between male and female students at several Ethiopian universities. Furthermore, Hyde (2016) synthesized numerous studies across different countries and concluded that while there may be slight variations in specific subjects or contexts, overall academic achievement between the two sex groups tends to be similar when accounting for external factors.

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- There was a positive and significant relationship between students' life satisfaction, self-efficacy, and academic achievement. In other words, students with high levels of life satisfaction and general self-efficacy performed well in their academic achievement scores.

- Among the five life satisfaction domains, three were found to be the most predictive in determining students' academic achievement: the university domain, the self-domain, and the friends' domain. These were identified as the most influential components of students' academic achievement.

- The results also revealed that female students were more influenced by most life satisfaction domains than male students and demonstrated better general self-efficacy in their academic achievement than their male classmates. But, significant sex differences were not observed in the academic achievement scores of the students. This meant that both sexes performed identically in their academic tasks.

- Finally, students employ various strategies to enhance their life satisfaction and self-efficacy skills. The major strategies were voidance, secrecy, advocacy, confrontation, and wishful thinking. Besides, it was found that participants lack knowledge or awareness about appropriate mechanisms that enable to improve life satisfaction and self-efficacy skills.

6. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions made above, the following recommendations were provided:

1. Students should be equipped with knowledge and awareness to enhance life satisfaction and self-efficacy, as these factors play a crucial role in academic success. The university administration, student psycho-social support and counseling service center, gender office, and other stakeholders should collaborate to provide short-term training and awareness programs.

2. It is essential for teachers to closely monitor and mentor students to enhance their life satisfaction and general self-efficacy. By doing so, students can realize their potential to pursue their academic responsibilities.

3. Finally, the government, especially the Ministry of Education (MoE), in collaboration with universities, should implement induction and life skills training programs for students at least two times annually foster student life satisfaction and self-efficacy.

Disclose Conflicts of Interest

This paper is free of conflict of interest.

Authors' Contribution

All authors contribute equally.

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