

Psychological and contextual factors on satisfaction in HE: A longitudinal study

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Aims

- To discuss the factors impacting transition and satisfaction at the University
- To present the findings of a longitudinal study exploring the impact of pre-registration programmes on transition to HE
- Across two types of programmes at UoC and Edge Hill

Transitional processes

- Transition and adjustment – many factors that can cause stress e.g. personal, academic, accommodation, new learning environment
- One factor which may facilitate effective transition is sense of belonging or sense of identity as a student
- Difficulties in adjustment - lack confidence in ability and potential to thrive in an HE environment.

Expectations and Experiences

- Changing context of HE – tuition fee rises
- Affected expectations (Bates & Kaye, 2014a) and motivations (Kaye & Bates, in press). Affects staff through increased demands and pressure (Bates & Kaye, 2014b)
- Consumer driven – KIS, NSS etc.

When “I” becomes “we”

- Peer relationships and sense of belonging foster successful transition experiences
- Sense of positive social environment has been found to be an important determinant of students' choices of specific HEIs (Kaye & Bates, in press)
- Previous research has considered how aspects of social identity support numerous university experiences, including transition, well-being , commitment to attend university, commitment to study and satisfaction (e.g. Wilkins, et al., 2015).



Pre-entry programmes

- Residential Summer School (Year 12 Applicants)
- Head Start (Online Programme)

Effective transition

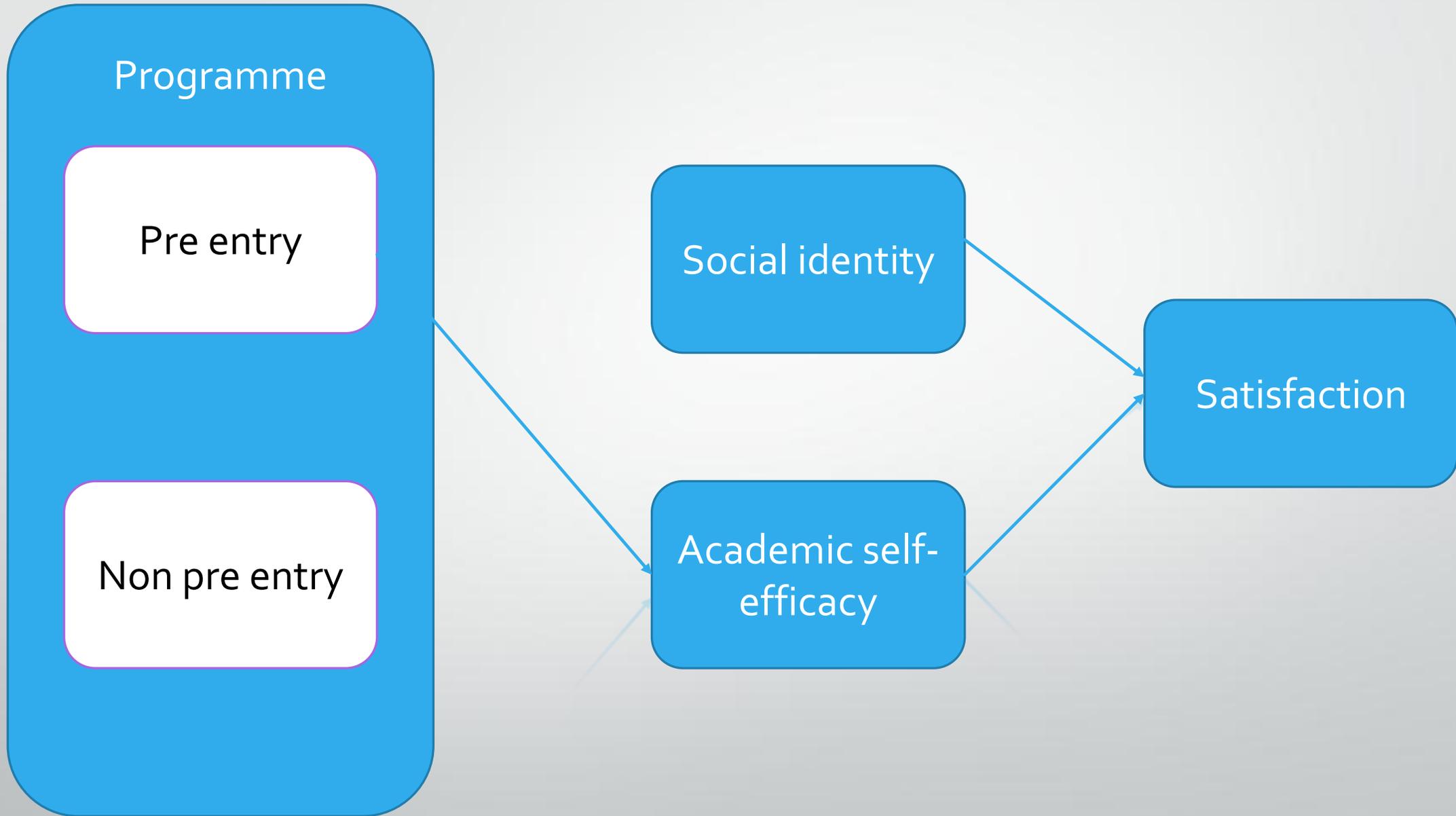
- Impact of effective transition:
 - Retention
 - Satisfaction
- Positive impact for students, staff, institutions

Method

- $N = 88$ (time 1 = 131) = 67.18% follow-up rate; most were “traditional students” (straight from school, but 20 were mature students).
- Pre-entry = 22% of sample had engaged in one of these
- Measures:
- Social identity
- Academic self-efficacy = Academic Self-efficacy Scale (Schmitt, 2008).
- Satisfaction = First Year Experience in Australian Universities Scale (FYEQ; James, Krause, & Jennings, 2010).
- Time 1 (Nov, 2014) – Time 2 (March, 2015)

Results

- Pre-entry students reported higher self-efficacy and higher satisfaction at the start of the academic year - no difference for social identity
- At the end of the academic year, pre-entry and non-pre-entry students reported similar levels of self-efficacy, satisfaction and social identity
- At time 1 – academic self-efficacy predicted satisfaction
- At time 2 – in-group affect predicted student satisfaction



Implications?

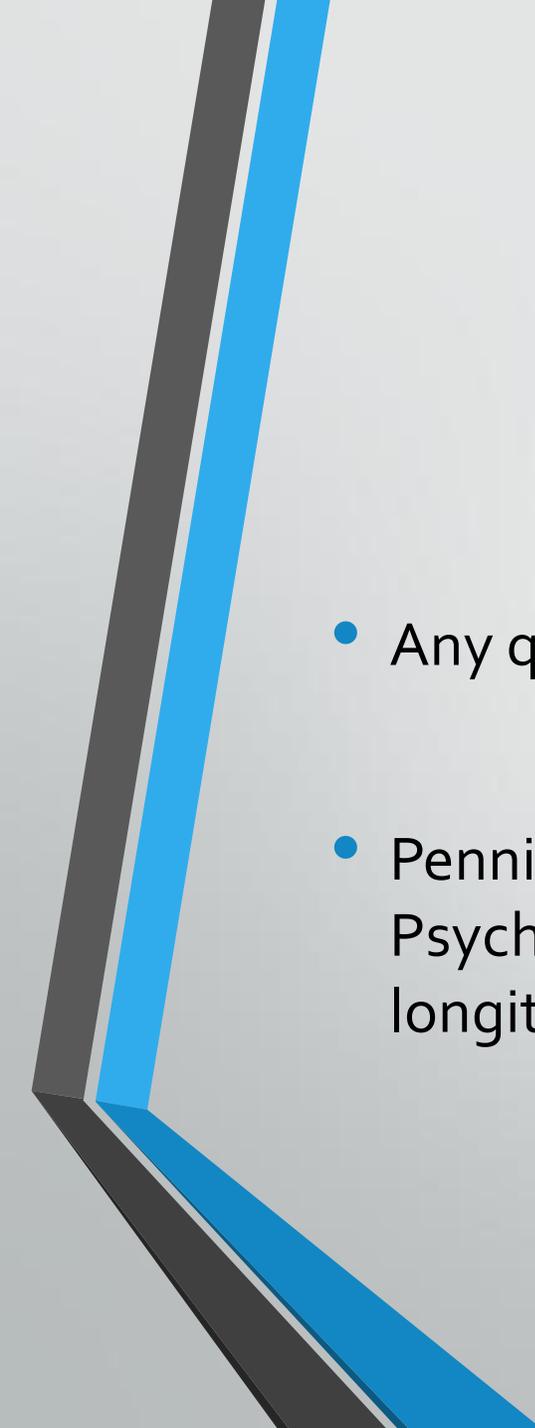
- Academic self-efficacy is related to student satisfaction at T₁ – may suggest that confidence is an important factor in successful university transition (e.g., Chemer et al., 2001).
- Academic resilience fostering adjustment? Academic self-efficacy plays a substantial role in academic achievement
- What mechanisms are pre-entry programmes providing for self-efficacy enhancement in academic skills? Different subjects? Vocational?
- A lack of academic preparation results in issues with retention (Longden, 2006).

Implications?

- Social identity was important for satisfaction later in the academic year – identity development across the year
- How are we supporting group-based or collectivist opportunities?
- How can we promote university/student identity more effectively in pre-entry and induction events?

Conclusion

- Findings demonstrate some considerations around fostering these factors at different time periods
- Pre-entry programmes are fostering academic self-efficacy which in turn is helping develop satisfaction and skills
- Limitations – sample, broader range of factors to consider? E.g. multifaceted nature of student satisfaction
- Future? Measure findings against retention figures, qualitative data



Thank you!

- Any questions?
- Pennington, C. R., **Bates, E. A.**, Kaye, L. K. & Bolam, L .T. (2015)
Psychological and contextual factors on satisfaction in Higher Education: A longitudinal study. *Manuscript under review in Studies in Higher Education.*