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 t(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).
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
Programme

Pre entry

Non pre entry

Social identity

Academic self-efficacy

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?