

Investigating Success in the Transition to University: A Systematic Review of Personal Risk  
and Protective Factors Influencing Psychosocial Success

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per the University of Chichester's Institutional Ethics Committee, as a systematic review with only secondary data, this paper was exempt from requiring ethical approval.

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## Abstract

Navigating the transition to university is a challenge for many students with numerous negative consequences if not successful. The current literature body is disparate and contains numerous methodological and analytical inconsistencies that makes it difficult to identify the most salient and effective factors that help predict transition success for students. The present study provides a systematic review of quantitative research linking personal level risk and protective factors to psychosocial success outcomes in the transition to university. Previous work has investigated factors influencing more traditional success metrics (e.g., academic achievement, completion, etc.) but the factors influencing, arguably more holistic, psychosocial success metrics (e.g., wellbeing) should also be understood. This is part of a larger review, following Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) and Synthesis Without Meta-analysis (SWiM) guidelines, preregistered on the International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews (PROSPERO, CRD42022330515), searching PsycInfo, Web of Science, and ERIC databases. Records were included if they studied ‘traditional’ first year students transitioning to university and were longitudinal in design and excluded if they looked at specific subgroups of students (e.g., international students). The search yielded 32 articles that were eligible, highlighting 96 purportedly different salient factors which are consolidated to 16 salient elements grouped around five higher order domains. The findings are discussed with a consolidation mindset that aims to move the research forward towards an evidence-based feasible and pragmatic intervention to enhance the probability of successful student transition to university.

**Keywords:** *transition, university, higher education, first year students, success, psychosocial*

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Higher education is an important contributing factor to the welfare of not just individuals but also nations. In many developed countries, 47% of citizens aged 25 to 34 have attained a higher education qualification (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2024). Those with higher education typically face a reduced risk of unemployment and enjoy improved health outcomes compared to those without such qualifications (Groot & van den Brink, 2007). Despite this, transitioning from pre-tertiary education to university comes with challenges for students. There are changes in academic contexts, but also psychological and social domains (Schulenberg et al., 2004). Baker and Siryk (1984) considered a wider lens looking at demands cutting across academic, social, personal, and institutional domains. In defining the transition to university, Gale and Parker (2014) outline three broad conceptualisations of the transition to university (Induction, Development, Becoming) in the literature and support the idea of “transition as becoming” (p. 735) and highlight how the transition is not a singular event, nor linear, nor a universal experience. Briggs et al. (2012) outline how the transition involves a personal investment and often significant social displacement all while an individual is forming a new identity as a university student. De Clercq et al. (2021) take this further to acknowledge that the transition is a process of instability (“a rupture period” p. 1) which leads to development of academic and social integration. It is important to understand when discussing this transition, we are referring to a period of adjustment that students must navigate rather than a singular point in time (De Clercq et al., 2018). In addition, the transition to university must not be viewed as innately problematic or a time of crisis but rather a time where there may be tensions, as with any transition, but that there can also be profound positive change (Gale & Parker, 2014). Utilising Baker and Siryk’s adjustment domains, Credé and Niehorster’s (2012) meta-analysis underlined that success in this transition predicts various aspects of the student experience and ultimate degree award.

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In the United Kingdom (UK), a significant proportion of students fail to return for their second year of their studies (0.4 – 32.3% depending on what institution, Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2022). These statistics do not contain those who drop out prior to completing the first 50 days of university, so the actual figure is likely to be considerably higher. Internationally, percentages of students failing to complete their degrees (see OECD, 2014) range from 48% (Slovenia) to 18% (Switzerland). External factors such as the pressures on wellbeing services at both feeder institutions and universities themselves, the rising financial burden of attending university, and competitive job market, are impacting the pressures surrounding the transition to higher education. There is, therefore, a need, driven by multiple stakeholders (e.g., students, universities themselves, feeder institutions), to develop an understanding of the complex interplay of different factors that impact the transition to university.

With negative consequences for poor adjustment to higher education, there is a growing body of literature that aims to identify student transition trajectories and facilitators that can aid the success of students adapting to university life (e.g., Dunn et al., 2022; Li, 2022). These can be broadly categorised into pre-university experiences, institutional, and personal factors. In the present work, our primary focus is on *personal level* risk and protective factors as opposed to institutional (e.g., contact time with lecturers) or pre-university (e.g., state or private schooling) factors. For example, Li (2022) identified the teacher-student relationship as a predictor of adjustment, whilst Dunn et al. (2022) highlighted depression and social support as key factors that influence success in the transition to university. In our systematic review we have applied this categorisation rather broadly and loosely in terms of factors directly relating to the individual or that the individual has some degree of influence or control over. In doing this, we acknowledge that some factors do naturally overlap these categorisations (e.g., teacher support could be institutional

as well as personal) as suggested by some theoretical frameworks such as the Educational Interface framework (Kahu & Nelson, 2018). Given this work's aim to ultimately inform person-centred interventions, our focus was on understanding factors that an individual could develop as opposed to those requiring institutional change.

### **Defining Success**

In order to identify risk and protective factors to successful transition to university, we need to define what we mean by success. Success can be defined in terms of retention beyond the first year, or qualification completion. Indeed, a central goal of higher education (particularly undergraduate level) is gaining an academic qualification, with much of the research in the education domain utilising academic grades as a success metric (York et al., 2015). The risk and protective factors of success in the transition to university as defined by academic achievement outcomes has already been reported (Ball et al., 2024). However, it should be acknowledged that this definition that focused on academic achievement lacks recognition of the wider university experience and overall wellbeing of students. In addition to attaining academic qualifications, university is also a period of identity development where personal values solidify and students navigate the transition to adulthood and independence (Patiniotis & Holdsworth, 2005; Scanlon et al., 2007). In fact, when looking at graduate attributes (e.g., self-awareness and lifelong learning, employability and professional development, global citizenship and engagement, and academic and research literacy; Wong et al., 2021) almost all of them relate to psychosocial success outcomes rather than academic achievement outcomes. As a result, researchers have also utilised various psychosocial measures of success (e.g., depressive symptoms, Jones & Schreier, 2021; positive affect, Meng et al., 2015). These more holistic outcome measures encompass the broader transition success of individuals in relation to their psychological and social functioning. Part of the aim of the authors' broader systematic review was to review the operationalisations of success,

but this is reported in a separate paper (Ball et al., 2025). This present paper, reports on the section of the systematic review focused on the psychosocial operationalisations of success which we identify as any variable relating to the psychological and social influences on an individual's thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and overall well-being.

### **Conceptual Models**

Despite substantial research, there is no consensus on a *conceptual model* of the university transition. Some use Tinto's (1982) retention model, which cites academic difficulties, unresolved goals, and lack of integration as dropout factors. However, transition success differs from retention, limiting this model's applicability and casts an overly negative view on the transition. Others employed a developmental psychopathology approach, considering developmental (i.e. into adulthood) and ecological transitions (i.e., new academic, social, living contexts) as part of psychosocial adjustment (Schulenberg et al., 2004). Positive frameworks like resiliency theory (Zimmerman, 2013) and strengths-based approaches (Soria & Stubblefield, 2015) focus on personal resources supporting adaptation to university life. The Educational Interface framework (Kahu & Nelson, 2018) explores the interaction between individual and institutional characteristics affecting student engagement and success.

Few models address the transition's temporal nature, often relying on cross-sectional data. The Transition Cycles Model (Nicholson & West, 1989) proposed four distinct phases—preparation, encounter, adjustment, and stabilization—and has been successfully applied to university transitions longitudinally (De Clercq et al., 2018). However, given it is a global framework, it focusses on higher order factors, and may overlook nuances and micro-processes in higher education, such as phase overlap (e.g. encounter and adjustment could occur concurrently) and factor interrelationships (e.g. how each phase is navigated will influence subsequent phases).

## **Previous Reviews**

It must be acknowledged that despite a substantive and growing research base, no comprehensive systematic review has been conducted to bring all the disparate constructs together to identify the key factors impacting psychosocial success in the transition to higher education. Some reviews have investigated academic performance correlates in university students in general (e.g., Richardson et al., 2012; Robbins et al., 2004). However, these reviews have no distinction of year of study (i.e. first year student data is combined with second year data to look at student success in general) and thus limits the applications of such findings in this domain. Van der Zanden et al.'s (2018) review of predictors of first year success is a good start point; however, they acknowledge that the review was “not intended to be exhaustive” (p. 58) and is, therefore, not a true systematic review. This further highlights the need for the present work.

## **Present Paper**

There is substantive stakeholder interest (e.g., students, universities, feeder institutions, wellbeing services) in transition success in higher education, yet this body of literature appears disparate. Much of the research is being conducted in silos, with differing definitions and operationalisations of key concepts. This makes developing effective interventions to facilitate success in the transition difficult. In addition, much of the research is cross-sectional in design and narrow in its scope, despite the very nature of the phenomenon being longitudinal and multifaceted.

Critically and systematically reviewing the literature is essential to create an accessible evidence base, advancing practical research with tangible benefits for students and stakeholders. To this end, this paper is part of a larger systematic review identifying personal risk and protective factors affecting students' transition to university. Focusing on personal rather than institutional factors, the review aims to pinpoint key elements for successful

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student transitions regardless of the institution attended. Specifically, this paper aims to answer the question, what are the risk and protective factors in the transition to university when success is operationalised with psychosocial outcomes?

The aim is that the results from this systematic review will create a solid foundation to move towards practical interventions to help students transition to university. By consolidating the understanding of risk and protective factors, this review will provide a stronger evidence base for designing interventions. Ultimately, the aim of this much needed systematic review, is to evaluate and advance our current disparate knowledge and inspire effective intervention programs, enabling more students to succeed in their transition and positively impact their university experience.

### **Method**

To avoid duplication, the full protocol for the search and subsequent synthesis can be found here ([https://osf.io/vxu5q?view\\_only=ee23e20f57c54891b842c92b7a4858de](https://osf.io/vxu5q?view_only=ee23e20f57c54891b842c92b7a4858de)) with a brief summary of the key elements of the protocol pertinent to this element of the review are outlined below. The review was registered with the International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews (PROSPERO; registration CRD42022330515) and followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA; Page et al., 2021) guidelines supplemented with the Synthesis Without Meta-analysis (SWiM; Campbell et al., 2020) guidance.

### **Search Strategy and Inclusion Criteria**

The search string was developed by the research team using keywords relating to the transition to university and synonyms for first year university students. The full string and the variations for the three electronic databases searched (PsycInfo, ERIC (API), and Web of Science) can be seen in Table 1.

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The eligibility criteria, as outlined in the full protocol, were applied throughout the screening process to determine eligibility of articles for inclusion in the review. Any papers which raised queries were discussed with the full research team and only retained if there was a clear argument for them meeting the criteria. Due to the number of retained records, the review groups papers into academic achievement outcomes or psychosocial outcomes. This paper focuses on the psychosocial outcomes only (for the review of academic achievement outcomes see Ball et al., 2024).

**Table 1.**

*Systematic Review Search String for Each Database.*

| Database       | Search String                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PsychInfo      | (student# OR undergraduate#) AND (first-year OR “first year” OR freshman) AND (university OR postsecondary OR “higher education” OR “tertiary education” OR college) AND (transition* OR adjust* OR adapt* OR settle*)   |
| Web of Science | (student\$ OR undergraduate\$) AND (first-year OR “first year” OR freshman) AND (university OR postsecondary OR “higher education” OR “tertiary education” OR college) AND (transition* OR adjust* OR adapt* OR settle*) |
| ERIC (API)     | (student OR undergraduate) AND (first-year OR “first year” OR freshman) AND (university OR postsecondary OR “higher education” OR “tertiary education” OR college) AND (transition OR adjust OR adapt OR settle)         |

*Note.* # and \$ indicate searching for the exact word and the word with one wildcard (i.e., student and students), \* indicates searching looking for all possible truncations of the word (i.e., transition, transitions, transitioning, transitioned). Symbols differ due to the setup of databases. ERIC automatically applies wildcards/truncations.

### Risk of Bias

Risk of bias was assessed by applying the Risk Of Bias In Non-randomized Studies - of Exposure (ROBINS-E) tool (ROBINS-E Development Group, 2023) with a particular focus on domains 1 (confounding), 5 (missing data), and 7 (selective reporting). Due to the nature of the studies not being true studies of exposure, other domains (e.g., domain 2, risk of bias arising from measurement of the exposure) return as low risk of bias for all studies. The ROBINS-E tool provides a risk of bias for each domain and then an overall risk with four possible outcomes: Low risk of bias (except for concerns about residual confounding), some concerns, high risk of bias, and very high risk of bias. All papers retained after full text

review were assessed. Any papers returning as very high risk of bias were excluded from the synthesis. Of the studies, 20 were identified as high risk of bias primarily due to lacking information on missing data and/or limited consideration of confounds. A summary of the assessment can be seen in the supplementary materials.

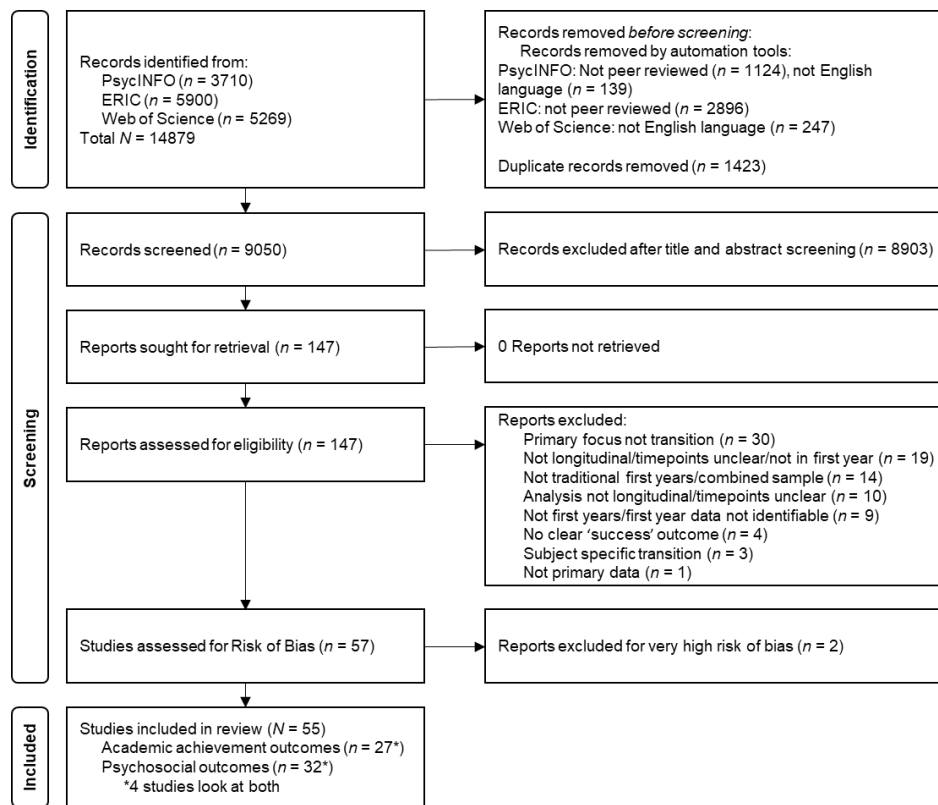
### **Data Extraction**

As the measures included in the retained studies are diverse, it was not possible to conduct a meta-analysis; instead a summary of associations and narrative synthesis is presented (McKenzie & Brennan, 2019). Data extraction focused on identifying correlations with the outcome and extracting the coefficient and corresponding significance level. Where no basic correlations were reported, alternative analyses are extracted with the aim of identifying whether it is a risk or protective factor. These associations had to be longitudinal in nature. In other words, if the outcome and factor were reported at the same time point the analysis was not extracted. Alongside this, data on the sample, study context, and measures are also recorded. Data extraction was completed manually by the first author, with the full extraction being available in the supplementary materials.

## **Results**

### **Study Selection**

After searching three databases, 14,879 records were identified. Automated filters and removing duplicates resulted in screening 9050 abstracts (see Figure 1). All full texts were retrieved resulting in reviewing 147 studies. The majority of these were excluded for their primary focus not being the transition ( $n = 30$ ), not being longitudinal ( $n = 19$ ), or not studying traditional first years or having a combined sample of different year groups ( $n = 14$ ). Two studies were rejected following the risk of bias assessment, leaving 55 retained studies, of which 32 focused on psychosocial outcomes and are discussed in this paper. These studies are identified with an Asterix (\*) in the reference list.

**Fig 1** PRISMA Flowchart Summarising the Systematic Review Screening Process

Note. Figure adapted from Page et al., 2021.

### Characteristics of Included Studies

The retained studies contained data from over 15,000 participants ( $N = 15,110$ ) covering 7 countries. Most studies were conducted in the United States of America (USA,  $n = 15$ ) and Canada ( $n = 5$ ) meaning almost two-thirds of the retained studies comes from a North American context. China is the only non-western context to feature in the retained studies ( $n = 5$ ). Participant numbers ranged from 68 to 3081 and all studies utilised surveys and self-report measures. Out of the 32 retained studies, all but 4 (Gall et al., 2000; Rector & Roger, 1996; Robbins & Schwitzer, 1988; Tao et al., 2000) were published within the last 20-years.

Table 2 summarises the key characteristics of included studies. Full data extraction can be found in the supplementary materials. As per the inclusion criteria, all studies had at least two time points, however, only five studies (Busseri et al., 2011; Conley et al., 2014; Kurtz et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2014; Levine et al., 2020) took a baseline prior to students

starting university. The time point windows varied in length from a week to multiple months. Demographic details of the samples went largely unreported, but where possible gender and age have been extracted. Notably, Li (2022) and Li et al. (2021) utilised the same participant pool and data collection procedure but the two papers report on separate variables and analyses. One study (Nightingale et al., 2013) did not include any correlational analyses so for clarity is not included in the summary results tables in the Appendix but is referred to in the textual narrative.

The retained studies utilise 33 different psychosocial outcome variables (plus some subscales), which can be seen summarised visually in the supplementary materials. There is need for discussion around having such diverse outcome measures and the implications of this, but that is outside of the scope of this paper. It is instead discussed in another section of the review (see Ball et al., 2025), although it should be noted that many of the outcome variables also appear as risk and protective factors.

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**Table 2.**

*Summary of Retained Papers Including Context, Sample, and Protocol.*

| Citation                  | Country | Educational Setting                                                                                                          | Sample   | Demographics                                   | Protocol                                                                                 |
|---------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bowman, 2010              | USA     | Nineteen institutions (11 liberal arts colleges, 2 community colleges, 3 research universities, and 3 regional universities) | N = 3081 | 1691 female<br><br>Mean age not reported       | T1 = either before or during the first 2-3 weeks on campus<br><br>T2 = end of first year |
| Busseri et al., 2011      | Canada  | 6 Universities                                                                                                               | N = 656  | 440 female<br><br>Mean age = 17.96 (SD = .69)  | T1 = summer before starting to the second week of term<br><br>T2 = end of first year     |
| Carcedo et al., 2022      | Spain   | Large university in Midwest                                                                                                  | N = 210  | 140 female<br><br>Mean age = 18.6 (SD = 1.33)  | T1 = start of year<br><br>T2 = end of semester                                           |
| Conley et al., 2014       | USA     | Private, urban, mid-sized midwestern university                                                                              | N = 2095 | 1439 female<br><br>Mean age = 18.49            | T1 = week prior to start of year<br><br>T2 = midpoint of the year<br>T3 = end of year    |
| Denovan & Macaskill, 2017 | UK      | Post-92 University                                                                                                           | N = 192  | 159 female<br><br>Mean age = 19.68 (SD = 2.91) | T1 = week 3<br><br>T2 = 6 months later                                                   |
| Dunn et al., 2022         | Canada  | Large Canadian University                                                                                                    | N = 461  | 202 female<br><br>Mean age = 18.33 (SD = .48)  | T1 = September<br><br>T2 = December                                                      |
| English et al., 2017      | USA     | No context reported beyond 'college students'                                                                                | N = 174  | 103 female                                     | T1 = weekly questionnaires over first 10 weeks                                           |

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| Citation                     | Country | Educational Setting                                                                                                      | Sample  | Demographics                                                            | Protocol                                                                       |
|------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Finkelstein-Fox et al., 2018 | USA     | University of Connecticut                                                                                                | N = 158 | No age reported<br>126 female                                           | T2 = end of first semester<br>T1 = September<br>T2 = November                  |
| Gall et al., 2000            | Canada  | University of Western Ontario                                                                                            | N = 68  | Mean age = 17.83 (SD = .50)<br>43 female                                | T1 = first four weeks of term<br>T2-4 = 5-6 weeks after<br>previous time point |
| Hiester et al., 2009         | USA     | Two institutes, one small liberal arts based college and one branch campus of a large public university in the Northeast | N = 271 | Mean age = 19 (no SD reported)<br>173 female                            | T1 = 2nd week of semester<br>T2 = 11th week of semester                        |
| Holt, 2014a                  | USA     | Small, residential, liberal arts college, North-east                                                                     | N = 93  | Mean age = 18.1 (no SD reported but all between 18 and 19)<br>60 female | T1 = beginning of semester<br>T2 = end of semester                             |
| Holt, 2014b                  | USA     | Small, residential, liberal arts college, North-east                                                                     | N = 204 | Mean age = 18.09 (SD = .53)<br>118 female                               | T1 = beginning of semester<br>T2 = end of semester<br>(approx. 14 weeks later) |
| Hope et al., 2014            | Canada  | McGill University                                                                                                        | N = 159 | Mean age = 18.1 (SD = .60)<br>114 female                                | T1 = September<br>T2 = October<br>T3 = December<br>T4 = February               |
|                              |         |                                                                                                                          |         | Mean age = 18 (SD = 1.04)                                               |                                                                                |

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| Citation                                            | Country | Educational Setting                              | Sample   | Demographics                                               | Protocol                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jones & Schreier, 2021                              | USA     | 4-year public university                         | N = 87   | 69 female                                                  | T0 = start of fall semester<br>T1 = October<br>T2 = February                                                            |
| Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020                            | USA     | New England University                           | N = 97   | All aged between 18 and 21<br>70 female<br>No age reported | T1 = late September - mid October<br>T2 = Mid November - early December                                                 |
| Kurtz et al., 2012                                  | USA     | Villanova University                             | N = 90   | 61 female<br>Mean age = 17.7 (SD = .44)                    | T1 = April prior to starting university<br>T2 = March of first year                                                     |
| Lee et al., 2014                                    | USA     | Large midwestern university                      | N = 1126 | 808 female<br>Mean age = 18.49 (SD = .48)                  | T1 = one week before semester starts<br>T2 = last two weeks of first semester<br>T3 = last two weeks of second semester |
| Levine et al., 2020                                 | Canada  | No context reported beyond 'University students' | N = 358  | 269 female<br>Mean age = 17.98 (SD = 1.17)                 | T1 = prior to starting first year<br>T2 = October<br>T3 = January<br>T4 = April                                         |
| Li et al., 2021; Li, 2022<br>(same data collection) | China   | Two Colleges in Guangzhou                        | N = 843  | 722 female<br>Mean age = 18.72 (SD = 0.92)                 | T1 = end of October<br>T2 = end of December<br>T3 = End of April                                                        |

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| Citation                    | Country   | Educational Setting                                               | Sample                                    | Demographics                                       | Protocol                                                              |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meng et al., 2015           | China     | Large university in east coast city of China                      | N = 474                                   | 386 female<br><br>Mean age = 18.7                  | T1 = September<br>T2 = December<br>T3 = March<br>T4 = June            |
| Mu et al., 2020             | China     | University in China                                               | N = 1128                                  | 731 female<br><br>Mean age = 18.74 (SD = .48)      | T1 = October<br>T2 = November<br>T3 = December                        |
| Nightingale et al., 2013    | UK        | University in North West of England Approx. 20,000 undergraduates | N = 331                                   | 178 female<br><br>Mean age = 20.32 (range = 18-49) | T1 = first three weeks of term<br>T2 = 3 months<br>T3 = 6 months      |
| Noyens et al., 2019         | Belgium   | Higher education institute in Flanders (dutch speaking)           | N = 930<br>385 participated in both waves | 558 female<br><br>Mean age = 18.22 (SD= .55)       | T1 = start of year<br>T2 = end of year                                |
| Perera et al., 2015         | Australia | Metropolitan university in eastern Australia                      | N = 498                                   | 311 female<br><br>Mean age = 17.87 (SD = .89)      | T1 = first week of term<br>T2 = four weeks later<br>T3 = mid-semester |
| Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 | USA       | 4-year university upper-Midwest                                   | N = 242                                   | 140 female<br><br>Mean age = 18.4 (SD = .49)       | T1 = midway through semester 1<br>T2 = a month later                  |
| Rector & Roger, 1996        | UK        | University of York                                                | N = 121                                   | 71 female<br><br>No age reported                   | T1 = 3 weeks into first semester<br>T2 = beginning of second term     |

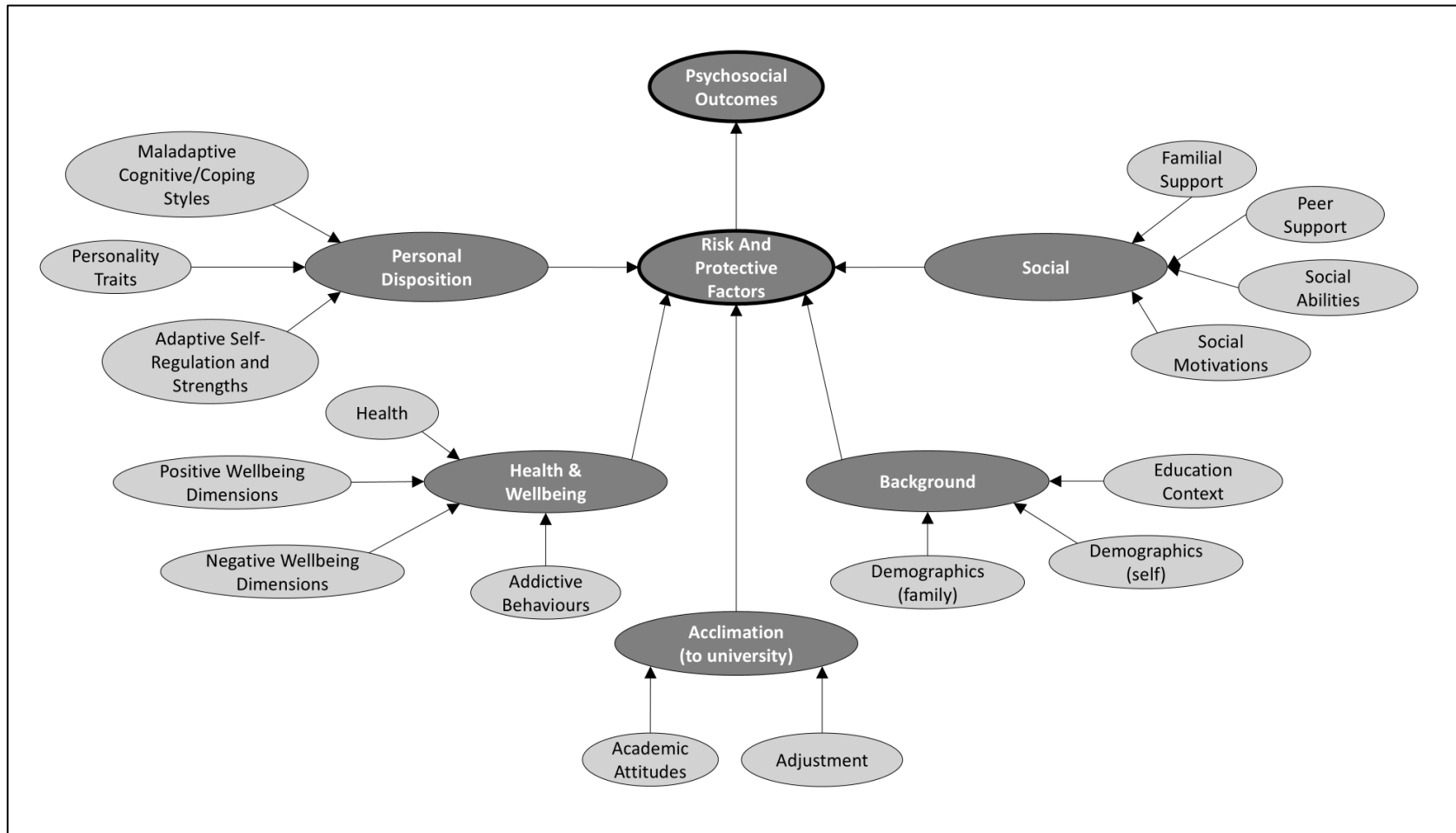
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| Citation                  | Country | Educational Setting                   | Sample                                      | Demographics                                   | Protocol                                                                        |
|---------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Robbins & Schwitzer, 1988 | USA     | Large Eastern university              | N = 88                                      | All female<br>Mean age = 17.92 (SD = .44)      | T1 = start of semester<br>T2 = end of first semester                            |
| Shell & Absher, 2019      | USA     | American College                      | N = 142<br>95 completed<br>both time points | 81 female<br>Mean age = 18.09 (no SD reported) | T1 = end of August to early October<br>T2 = End of February to beginning of May |
| Shim & Ryan, 2012         | USA     | Large state university in the Midwest | N = 276                                     | 144 female<br>All 18 at T1                     | T1 = first week of fall semester<br>T2 = January                                |
| Tao et al., 2000          | China   | Three universities in Beijing         | N = 358                                     | 225 female<br>Mean age = 18.7 (SD = .93)       | T1 = 3rd or 4th week after starting<br>T2 = end of term                         |
| Zhou & Lin, 2016          | China   | University in China                   | N = 99                                      | 48 female<br>Mean age = 18.25 (SD = .85)       | T1 = 1 month after enrolment<br>T2 = 1 month after T1                           |

*Note.* T = Time. The time points have been reported directly from the papers and not amended for cross cultural differences in academic year structures. Where number of female participants was originally reported as a percentage, this has been converted to numbers of females for consistency.

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**Fig 2** Visual Representation of Identified Risk and Protective Factor Domains in Relation to Psychosocial Outcomes



### **Risk and Protective Factors**

The included studies identified 96 risk and protective factors in relation to the psychosocial outcomes with 480 extracted coefficients. Given the paper's focus on the factors, as opposed to the outcomes, these have been grouped thematically based on the operationalisation of the factor to aid the clarity and organisation of the synthesis. If a factor was a subscale of a larger scale, it was categorised in line with the higher order scale construct (where this was the case, this is detailed as a note under the respective table). Following a thorough review of the 96 factors, the author team engaged in an iterative, interpretive process to consolidate them into overarching themes. This thematic grouping approach, guided by conceptual coherence, aimed to identify underlying domains of risk and protective factors, and was achieved through collaborative discussion and consensus among the authors. This consolidation of factors results in moving from 96 individual factors down to just 16 salient elements, grouped into five higher order domains. These domains cover personal disposition factors, health and wellbeing factors, acclimation factors, background factors, and social factors (see Figure 2). Utilising this thematic breakdown of the factors, each will be explored in turn below with a visual summary of all the identified factors presented in Figure A1.

#### ***Personal Disposition***

The personal disposition factors cover a range of factors relating to the self: personality traits, adaptive self-regulation and strengths, and maladaptive cognitive/coping styles (see Table A1). When exploring personality traits, the Big 5 personality traits were all identified as protective factors (except neuroticism), with conscientiousness showing a particularly strong influence over success. Unsurprisingly, engaging in maladaptive cognitive and coping strategies is a risk factor to success and possessing adaptive self-regulation skills is protective of success. In addition to those factors identified in Table A1, Nightingale et al.

(2013) utilised latent growth modelling in relation to adjustment profiles, finding that emotion management and emotional self-efficacy were key to the successful profiles. Interestingly, detached coping was identified as an adaptive strategy and a protective factor to success. Comparatively, the coefficients for the positive coping styles were larger than their negative counterparts, suggesting that it would be more beneficial to improve positive coping strategies rather than focus on minimising negative ones.

### ***Health and Wellbeing Factors***

When looking at health and wellbeing factors, four factor groups appear: health, positive wellbeing dimension, negative wellbeing dimensions and addictive behaviours (see Table A2). Across the groups, the direction of associations was as expected in all instances. The health and positive wellbeing dimension factors were identified as protective factors for success in the transition to university whereas the negative wellbeing dimension and addictive behaviours were identified as risk factors. Unsurprisingly therefore, we can conclude that greater health and wellbeing is associated with greater success in the transition.

### ***Acclimation Factors***

When looking at factors relating to the acclimation to university, we see two factor groups, adjustment variables and academic attitudes (see Table A3).

When looking at the adjustment variables we see the largest coefficients suggesting these variables are some of the strongest protective factors to student success. However, these measures were administered once students were at their institution and both Li et al. (2021) and Meng et al. (2015) had month long data collection windows. So, although this information cements the need for research into the transition and highlights how good adjustment has positive outcomes, it does not help illuminate a path towards an intervention to help students through this process. It should be noted that these factors are more often utilised as outcome measures than predictive factors.

When looking at academic attitudes we see a mixed picture. Having positive attitudes towards help seeking is consistently associated with success in the transition. However, having greater degree aspirations was negatively associated with psychological wellbeing and its subscales (Bowman et al., 2010), though the coefficients are all very small ( $< .04$ ). Academic amotivation was identified as having a negative relationship with social integration (Noyens et al., 2019), suggesting the lack of motivation for studies may have further implications outside of the academic realm, highlighting again the complex nature of the transition and how it spans educational and social domains.

### ***Background Factors***

Within the background factors we see three distinct factor groupings, various demographic variables relating to the self and relating to the family, and factors relating to the education context of an individual both past and present, as being influential over student success in the transition to university (see Table A4). Bowman et al. (2010) investigated many of these factors against multiple outcome measures, however only unstandardised regression coefficients are reported making comparisons difficult. In addition to this, many of these variables are collected and analysed in categorical formats, further adding to the need for careful interpretation and comparison. Many of these background factors are not ones which we can influence with interventions to improve success in the transition (i.e. they are not traits or skills which can be developed). Rather these factors should be looked at to inform which subgroups of students may benefit from a tailored intervention package.

When exploring the demographic factors relating to the self, age appeared to be a protective factor in relation to psychological wellbeing (Bowman et al., 2010), where older students are associated with greater wellbeing. However, it is also positively associated with depression and stress outcomes (Busseri et al., 2011), highlighting how older students appear to report greater depression and stress, marking it as a risk factor for these outcomes. These

differing findings may relate to the nuance of the conceptual differences among the outcomes or perhaps be due to the limited variance in age within the samples. Other than with overall adjustment, gender had a negative association with all the outcomes it was investigated with. This indicates that males score lower in all outcomes than females. For the positively framed outcomes (e.g., academic adjustment), this would indicate being male is a risk factor. However, for negatively framed outcomes (e.g., depression), this would indicate being male is a protective factor. The categorical nature of Bowman et al.'s (2010) assessment of ethnicity makes generalising difficult, but broadly we can conclude that not being Caucasian (the majority ethnicity group in the sample context) is a risk factor to success.

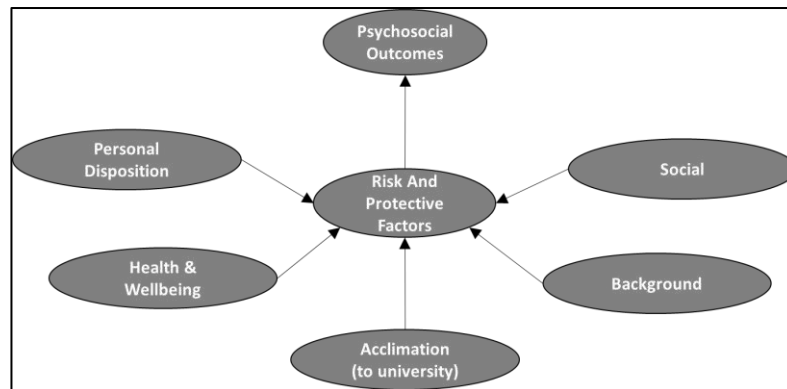
When looking at the education context variables, unsurprisingly, being a first-generation student was identified as being a risk factor for psychological wellbeing. In addition to this, being an A-grade student in high school was a protective factor for psychological wellbeing.

### ***Social Factors***

The social factors generally appear to be protective factors (see Table A5). The general assessments of social support and those that focus on familial and peer support, consistently identify that the greater the support the better the outcomes. This makes it clear that social support in all forms is a key protective factor of student success in the transition.

When exploring social skills factors, having greater skill, or confidence in social settings was identified as being a protective factor to student success. Similarly, when looking at social motivations, greater desire for developing social skills and engaging in social activities is identified as a protective factor.

**Fig 3** The PHABS-PSS (Personal disposition, Health and wellbeing, Acclimation, Background, and Social factors influencing PsychoSocial Success) Framework



## Discussion

This paper reports on part of a larger review aiming to consolidate the risk and protective factors in relation to success transitioning from pre-tertiary to university education. The present work reports the section of the review that operationalised success in the form of psychosocial outcomes. From the retained 32 studies, 96 salient factors were identified. The individual factors encompassed a broad range of concepts from physical health and depression to self-control and peer support. To aid the consolidation, these factors were grouped thematically: *Personal disposition, Health and wellbeing, Acclimation, Background, and Social factors* to create the PHABS-PSS framework (see Figure 3).

Our consolidation of this disparate literature body into five core higher order personal risk and protective factors that influence psychosocial success in the transition to university offers many potential benefits for research, practice, and dissemination. This reduced complexity makes conveying this research to diverse audiences more accessible and understandable. It also promotes an integrated perspective allowing for identifying when work is focused in one domain only, whilst also highlighting the value of holistically understanding of these five salient interconnected factors. Additionally, this approach has the potential to streamline data management and highlight broader patterns that will help predict psychosocial success in the transition (that would likely be obscured when focusing on too

many lower order factors). Ultimately this consolidation provides a more practical basis for formulating interventions with real world impact.

### **Lack of Points of Comparison**

Despite extracting nearly 500 coefficients across the 32 studies, there were very few points of direct statistical comparison due to the wide variation in outcome measures used across studies in this field. As a result, a meta-analysis was not feasible; the inconsistency in constructs and reporting standards meant that any attempt at statistical consolidation would lack robustness. This necessitated a narrative synthesis approach instead. The broader implication is that, while a substantial body of research exists, it remains fragmented. There is a clear lack of replication and methodological consistency, making it difficult to confirm findings or identify which factors are most critical to a successful transition. In addition to this, 219 of the extracted associations failed to reach the threshold for a medium effect size (.30) and only 32 breach the threshold for a large effect size (.50, Cohen, 1988). The largest of these coefficients was the association between conscientiousness and academic adjustment at .64 (Perera et al., 2015). Followed closely by narrow disengagement coping as a risk factor for academic adjustment (-.62, Perera et al., 2015) and social wellbeing as a protective factor for psychological wellbeing in a male only sample (.62, Conley et al., 2014). This latter association was replicated at other time points within the same sample twice more, each time with a coefficient of .52, making the average coefficient .55 which is still a large effect size. The association between conscientiousness and academic adjustment was also investigated by Kurtz et al. (2012) finding a coefficient of .35, however they utilised different scales to assess the variables which makes comparison of the coefficients difficult. This further highlights the issues with the disparate literature body.

### **Conceptual Overlap**

Utilising different measures to assess the same constructs further compounds the issue of identifying such a vast number of salient factors. Whenever you are working with such a large number of factors you run into issues with conceptual overlap not to mention the methodological issues such as multicollinearity. This is a particularly good example to demonstrate the issues with sister constructs (Lawson & Robins, 2021) and the jingle-jangle fallacy (Block, 2000; Thorndike, 1904). Within thematic groupings, we see overlap, for instance how distinct are social competence (Holt, 2014b) and social self-efficacy (Meng et al., 2015) and could you argue that these are accounted for in broader umbrella constructs like social wellbeing (Conley et al., 2014) and social support (Dunn et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2014; Meng et al., 2015; Tao et al., 2000; Zhou & Lin, 2016) more generally. When you then look across thematic groupings, you could also argue that homesickness (English et al., 2017) and social adjustment (Meng et al., 2015) overlap with the social constructs. The thematic groupings of the factors highlight how much conceptual overlap there is across the literature body and identifies where there is potential for more parsimonious research moving forward. You could argue that taking this approach loses some nuance of lower order factors, but it minimises issues with the jangle fallacy. Cronbach and Meehl (1955) referred to those looking at broader umbrella constructs as *lumpers* (as opposed to *splitters*, focused on fine distinctions between constructs). Given the goal is parsimony, and practical real-world interventions, we posit that taking the *lumping* approach is warranted (Lawson & Robins, 2021) and necessary for progress given the state of this literature body.

### **Timepoints**

There are additional methodological limitations of the literature body, particularly regarding the timepoints utilised. Though longitudinal research better assesses the transition than cross-sectional research, many of the first time points occurred after the start of the academic year. Indeed, only five (Busseri et al., 2011; Conley et al., 2014; Kurtz et al., 2012;

Lee et al., 2014; Levine et al., 2020) studies took a baseline prior to the start of university study. In addition to this, the time point windows also varied in length from a single week to multiple months. This makes comparison and interpretation of the findings difficult as a student assessed on day one would report different results two months later. Many of the associations correlated a time 1 measurement to a time 2 or later outcome. With many of the time 1 measurements occurring after the start of the academic year, our understanding of the pre-transition process is limited and with no baseline it is difficult to confidently explore and conclude about student success pathways. For example, college adaptation (Li et al., 2021), social and academic adjustment (Meng et al., 2015) are all identified as protective factors for life satisfaction. However, these factors, when measured in the first months of university, could be argued to be outcomes themselves and without pre-university baselines we cannot understand what predicts these first month measures. This issue with time points, and with sister constructs, and the jingle-jangle fallacy, are further compounded when many of these factors are utilised as both predictors and outcome variables. Methodologically it leads to issues and in particular makes establishing the directionality of the relationships difficult. There is also the discussion on whether two time points are enough to be considered a longitudinal design (Ployhart et al., 2015). Though a two-wave study may offer some more insight than a cross-sectional perspective, it lacks the appreciation of the evolution and change of individuals over a more considerable time period.

### **Sample Contexts**

Most of the retained studies feature a Western sample. The higher education context differs greatly, not just between the US and China, but even across the US and UK contexts there are substantive differences in the university landscape. Though this review's consolidation is valuable to moving the research forward, we must acknowledge how

findings in one higher education context may not translate to another. In addition to this, many of these associations may also hold true outside of the higher education context.

A further methodological flaw in the literature body is the limited consideration of gender differences. Some studies (Bowman, 2010; Busseri et al., 2011; Holt, 2014b) identified gender differences across several outcome metrics, yet only Conley et al. (2014) report associations with split samples. Of note is that all studies retained the traditional gender binary. To ensure research is inclusive, in future the wider gender identity spectrum should be included and explored to establish the implications for a successful transition.

### **Limitations**

An unfortunate limitation of this review is that due to space limitations and the practicalities of writing up such a large review, this paper only reports on part of a broader review. A key limitation of the current literature domain is the issues with operationalising success (Ball et al., 2025). This paper focuses on the psychosocial operationalisations, but we must also acknowledge academic achievement as metric for success. A second part of the review consolidates the risk and protective factors associated with success in the transition when operationalised as academic achievement (Ball et al., 2024). As with issues with conducting research in silos, conducting research with a narrow operationalisation of success in what is a complex domain, limits our holistic understanding of student success which is vital for intervention development.

We also made the decision to focus on personal level risk and protective factors given the desire to develop person-centered interventions as opposed to having an institutional focus. Though we stand by our decision for this focus, we acknowledge that there is overlap across institutional and personal factors. It will be particularly important to acknowledge the institutional differences when assessing the effectiveness of any interventions even if they are person-centered. A further limitation of the review is the necessity for categorisation. The

thematic groupings of the variables is the only way to ensure the ability to navigate this volume of factors, but it does have its limitations. Given the above discussion, we believe it is justified and warranted, but appreciate that there is an argument about losing the nuance of certain lower order factors when you take a *lumping* approach.

In tandem with this, extracting only correlational statistics can also be argued to lack nuance. The relationships between factors can be indirect and non-linear which would not be reflected in correlation coefficients. However, there is not enough consistency in the data for any more sophisticated reviews of the statistical findings. This results in correlations being a rudimentary, yet effective, method of consolidation which allows for comparison and directionality to be established. Due to the diverse variables identified, a meta-analytical approach is not possible, so we have utilised a narrative approach to ensure a meaningful summary (McKenzie & Brennan, 2023). A narrative approach does have its limitations; however, we have attempted to mitigate these by following the SWiM guidelines (Campbell et al., 2020) to supplement the PRISMA protocols (Page et al., 2021).

Systematic reviews in general share several common limitations and this review is no exception. Though reviews aim to consolidate a literature body, they are never truly up to date given the time lag between the search being conducted and the paper being published. In addition, the file drawer problem (Rosenthal, 1979) is of particular concern with review work. Given how disparate the literature body is, and the lack of replication, this could be a prevalent issue in this domain. In relation to this, there are other avenues of bias in research which are particularly compounded when completing reviews. As part of the search protocol, we implemented a risk of bias assessment utilising the ROBINS-E tool for a systematic assessment of bias. Despite an assessment and given how many papers returned a high-risk rating, we must be aware of the limits of generalisation and make conclusions with care.

### **Moving Forward**

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In future we should be striving towards more parsimonious work and trying to avoid silos of investigation to ensure we are building a connected literature body. Further work should be done to explore the PHABS-PSS framework and confirm its predictive power over students' psychosocial success in the transition to university. Methodologically, we should be ensuring time points of data collection allow for establishing true baselines prior to transition. This will allow for a stronger evidence base that is more conducive to having real-world impact and can be translated into effective intervention programmes.

More practically, the PHABS-PSS framework would suggest that practitioners should be ensuring students have or are developing a social support structure when they arrive at university. The framework also highlights that certain background characteristics and existing health and wellbeing issues can already disadvantage students in the transition. The PHABS-PSS also identifies maladaptive cognitions that are risk factors to success. More positively, the framework identifies key adaptive traits and skills that can be fostered, such as developing positive coping strategies, conscientiousness, and positive attitudes towards help seeking.

Given the limited evidence to support curriculum-embedded interventions (Upsher et al., 2022), ideally, students would possess these skills prior to starting university to set them up for the best chance of success in the transition. This would require interventions to be timed prior to student arriving on campus. Given most students have a significant time lag between accepting an offer and the start of a course, universities could be well placed to offer materials for incoming students to review in this time that are then revisited in the more traditional induction sessions once students arrive. Self-evaluation exercises could also be beneficial to enable students to identify their strengths and areas for development that would aid their success. Importantly these self-evaluation exercises must be paired with developmental exercises to ensure students do not develop fixed mindsets about their

strengths (Louis, 2011). Peer mentoring from students further into their studies would also be a sensible way to be leveraging the key influence of social support factors and support acclimation, with such interventions showing promise (Pointon-Haas et al., 2024).

### **Conclusion**

Aiming to identify, review, and consolidate the risk and protective factors of success in the transition to university, as measured by psychosocial outcomes, ultimately uncovered 96 factors. There were considerable overlaps across the factors, despite efforts to thematically group the variables, and methodological limitations. There was not consistent support for any one variable and limited strengths of associations. A lack of replication and consistency highlights a key flaw in the strength of the literature base and the ability to draw firm conclusions. Despite this, our work has identified five higher order domains that encapsulate the diverse factors that influence psychosocial success in the transition to university and created the PHABS-PSS framework. Although this review has started the consolidation process and identified thematic groups of factors, further consolidation is needed in terms of replication of these statistics to confirm that they are indeed central to student success in the transition. To this end, we believe that this consolidation of a disparate literature body will allow progress to be made in the form of more effective interventions to ensure that more students have the opportunity to succeed in the transition to university.

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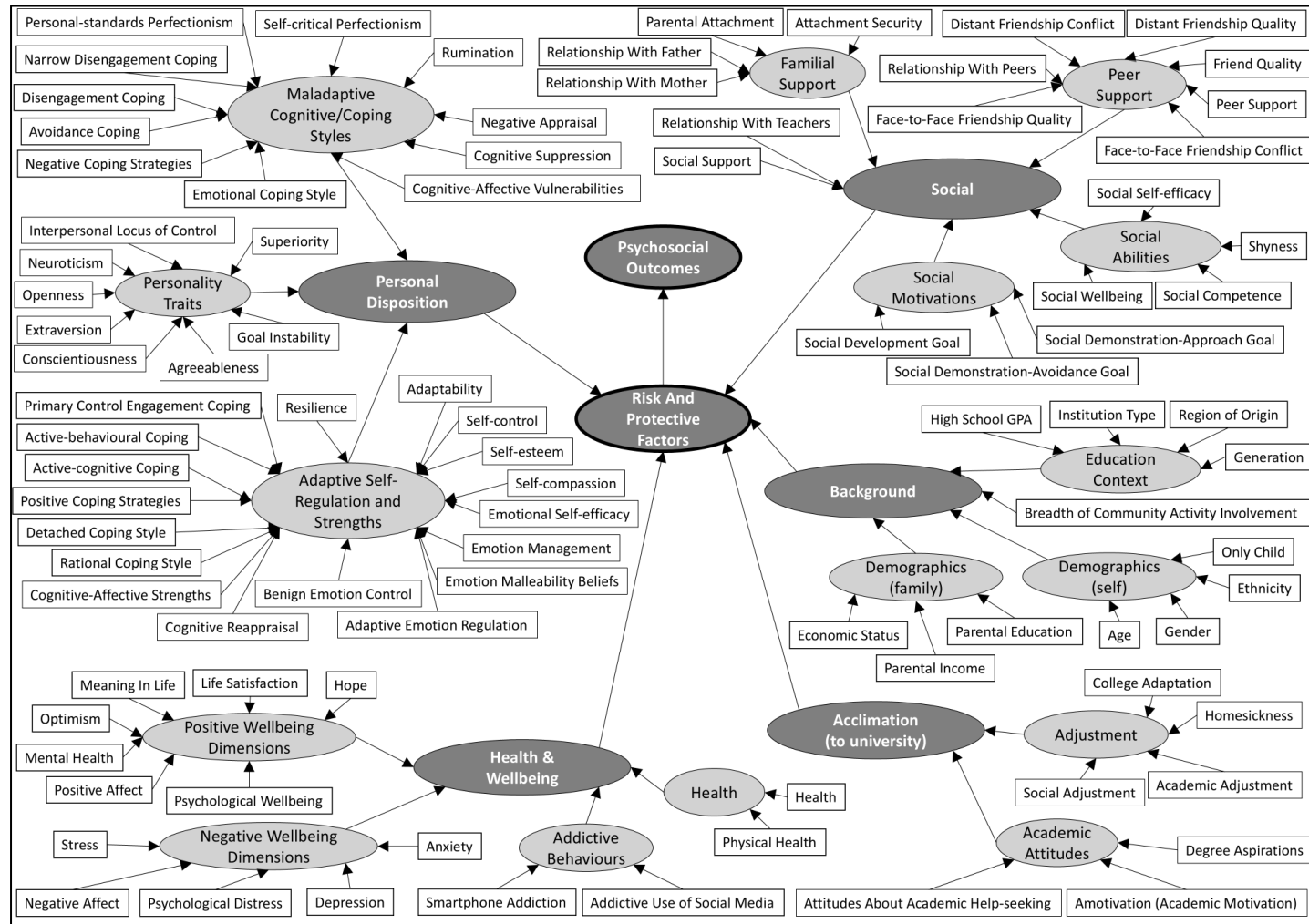
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## Appendix

**Fig A1.** Visual Representation of All Identified Risk and Protective Factors of Psychosocial Outcome



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**Table A1.**

*Summary of Personal Disposition Risk and Protective Factors of Psychosocial Success.*

| Domain                                 | Factor                         | Outcome                                    | <i>r</i>             | Citation                     |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Personality                            | Openness                       | Social Adjustment <sup>a</sup>             | 0.22*                | Kurtz et al., 2012           |
| Traits                                 | Conscientiousness              | Academic Adjustment <sup>a</sup>           | 0.64***              | Perera et al., 2015          |
|                                        |                                |                                            | 0.35*                | Kurtz et al., 2012           |
|                                        | Extraversion                   | Social Adjustment <sup>a</sup>             | 0.24*                | Kurtz et al., 2012           |
|                                        | Agreeableness                  | Personal-Emotional Adjustment <sup>a</sup> | 0.26*                | Kurtz et al., 2012           |
|                                        |                                | Social Adjustment <sup>a</sup>             | 0.24*                | Kurtz et al., 2012           |
|                                        | Neuroticism                    | Academic Adjustment <sup>a</sup>           | -0.33***             | Perera et al., 2015          |
|                                        |                                |                                            | -0.25*               | Kurtz et al., 2012           |
|                                        |                                | Personal-Emotional Adjustment <sup>a</sup> | -0.43*               | Kurtz et al., 2012           |
|                                        |                                | Social Adjustment <sup>a</sup>             | -0.33*               | Kurtz et al., 2012           |
|                                        |                                | Depression                                 | 0.27***              | Mu et al., 2020              |
|                                        | Superiority                    | Academic Adjustment <sup>a</sup>           | 0.18*                | Robbins & Schwitzer, 1988    |
|                                        |                                | Social Adjustment <sup>a</sup>             | -0.23**              | Robbins & Schwitzer, 1988    |
|                                        | Goal Instability               | Academic Adjustment <sup>a</sup>           | 0.30**               | Robbins & Schwitzer, 1988    |
|                                        |                                | Institutional Adjustment <sup>a</sup>      | 0.21*                | Robbins & Schwitzer, 1988    |
|                                        |                                | Personal-Emotional Adjustment <sup>a</sup> | 0.28**               | Robbins & Schwitzer, 1988    |
|                                        | Interpersonal Locus of Control | Psychological Distress                     | -0.28**              | Rector & Roger, 1996         |
| Adaptive Self-Regulation and Strengths | Self-Compassion                | Academic Adjustment <sup>a</sup>           | 0.28**               | Holt, 2014b                  |
|                                        |                                | Personal-Emotional Adjustment <sup>a</sup> | 0.50**               | Holt, 2014b                  |
|                                        |                                | Social Adjustment <sup>a</sup>             | 0.46**               | Holt, 2014b                  |
|                                        |                                | Identity Resolution                        | .19* <sup>b</sup>    | Hope et al., 2014            |
|                                        |                                | Life Satisfaction                          | .18* <sup>b</sup>    | Hope et al., 2014            |
|                                        |                                | Negative Affect                            | -.29** <sup>b</sup>  | Hope et al., 2014            |
|                                        | Self-Esteem                    | Depression                                 | -0.44**              | Lee et al., 2014             |
|                                        |                                |                                            | -0.59**              | Lee et al., 2014             |
|                                        |                                |                                            | -0.41**              | Lee et al., 2014             |
|                                        |                                |                                            | -0.45**              | Lee et al., 2014             |
|                                        |                                | Internalising Behaviour                    | -0.18**              | Shim & Ryan, 2012            |
|                                        |                                | Physical Health                            | -0.38***             | Rector & Roger, 1996         |
|                                        |                                | Psychological Distress                     | -0.51***             | Rector & Roger, 1996         |
|                                        |                                | Socially Anxious Behaviour                 | -0.15*               | Shim & Ryan, 2012            |
|                                        | Self-Control                   | Self-Efficacy                              | 0.18*                | Denovan & Macaskill, 2017    |
|                                        | Resilience                     | Depression                                 | -0.24***             | Mu et al., 2020              |
|                                        |                                | Self-Efficacy                              | 0.45***              | Denovan & Macaskill, 2017    |
|                                        | Adaptability                   | Life Satisfaction                          | 0.39**               | Zhou & Lin, 2016             |
|                                        | Emotion                        | Depression                                 | -0.26**              | Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020     |
|                                        | Malleability Beliefs           | Stress                                     | -0.35**              | Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020     |
|                                        | Benign Emotion Control         | Physical Health                            | 0.27**               | Rector & Roger, 1996         |
|                                        | Adaptive Emotion Regulation    | Depression                                 | *-.36** <sup>b</sup> | Finkelstein-Fox et al., 2018 |
|                                        |                                | Spiritual Peace                            | *.24* <sup>b</sup>   | Finkelstein-Fox et al., 2018 |
|                                        |                                | Stress                                     | *-.33** <sup>b</sup> | Finkelstein-Fox et al., 2018 |

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| Domain                                  | Factor                              | Outcome                             | <i>r</i>             | Citation                 |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|                                         | Cognitive-Affective Strengths       | Cognitive-Affective Vulnerabilities | -0.22** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.23** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.18** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     | Psychological Distress              | -0.24** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.26** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.20** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.21** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.19** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.21** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.22** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     | Psychological Wellbeing             | 0.48** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.44** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.49** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.47** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.53** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.48** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     | Social Wellbeing                    | 0.38** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.31** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.44** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.39** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.39** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.40** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         | Cognitive Reappraisal               | Stress                              | -0.28**              | Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020 |
|                                         | Positive Coping Strategies          | Adjustment                          | 0.43*                | Tao et al., 2000         |
|                                         |                                     | Self-Esteem                         | 0.36*                | Tao et al., 2000         |
|                                         | Primary Control Engagement Coping   | Academic Adjustment <sup>a</sup>    | 0.59***              | Perera et al., 2015      |
|                                         | Active-behavioural coping (dating)  | Physical Health                     | 0.17**               | Gall et al., 2000        |
|                                         | Active-cognitive Coping (dating)    | Illness                             | 0.20**               | Gall et al., 2000        |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.21**               | Gall et al., 2000        |
|                                         | Active-Cognitive Coping (academic)  | Illness                             | 0.28**               | Gall et al., 2000        |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.16**               | Gall et al., 2000        |
|                                         |                                     | Mental Health                       | -0.21**              | Gall et al., 2000        |
|                                         | Avoidance Coping (living situation) | Life Satisfaction                   | -0.29**              | Gall et al., 2000        |
|                                         |                                     | Physical Health                     | -0.20**              | Gall et al., 2000        |
|                                         | Rational Coping Style               | Psychological Distress              | -0.25**              | Rector & Roger, 1996     |
|                                         | Detached Coping Style               | Psychological Distress              | -0.30***             | Rector & Roger, 1996     |
| Maladaptive Cognitive and Coping Styles | Cognitive-Affective Vulnerabilities | Cognitive-Affective Strengths       | -0.15** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.21** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.27** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     | Psychological Distress              | -0.30** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.28** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | -0.29** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.35** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.42** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.30** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|                                         |                                     |                                     | 0.40** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |

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| Domain | Factor                                | Outcome                          | <i>r</i>             | Citation                 |
|--------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|        |                                       |                                  | 0.43** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | 0.42** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       | Psychological Wellbeing          | -0.34** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.39** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.38** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.43** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.46** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.45** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       | Social Wellbeing                 | -0.25** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.28** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.32** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.34** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.32** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.34** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014      |
|        | Cognitive                             | Depression                       | 0.45**               | Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020 |
|        | Suppression                           | Stress                           | 0.42**               | Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020 |
|        | Negative Appraisal (dating)           | Physical Health                  | 0.10**               | Gall et al., 2000        |
|        | Negative Appraisal (living situation) | Mental Health                    | -0.18**              | Gall et al., 2000        |
|        |                                       |                                  | -0.19**              | Gall et al., 2000        |
|        | Rumination                            | Depression                       | 0.53**               | Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020 |
|        |                                       | Stress                           | 0.56**               | Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020 |
|        | Self-Critical                         | Depression                       | 0.47*                | Levine et al., 2020      |
|        | Perfectionism                         |                                  | 0.40*                | Levine et al., 2020      |
|        |                                       |                                  | 0.39*                | Levine et al., 2020      |
|        |                                       | Stress                           | 0.46*                | Levine et al., 2020      |
|        |                                       |                                  | 0.40*                | Levine et al., 2020      |
|        |                                       |                                  | 0.39*                | Levine et al., 2020      |
|        | Personal-Standards                    | Depression                       | 0.10*                | Levine et al., 2020      |
|        | Perfectionism                         | Stress                           | 0.10*                | Levine et al., 2020      |
|        | Negative Coping                       | Adjustment                       | -0.32*               | Tao et al., 2000         |
|        | Strategies                            | Self-Esteem                      | -0.28*               | Tao et al., 2000         |
|        | Narrow                                | Academic Adjustment <sup>a</sup> | -0.62***             | Perera et al., 2015      |
|        | Disengagement                         |                                  |                      |                          |
|        | Coping                                |                                  |                      |                          |
|        | Disengagement                         | Depression                       | 0.38**               | Lee et al., 2014         |
|        | Coping                                |                                  | 0.49**               | Lee et al., 2014         |
|        |                                       |                                  | 0.34**               | Lee et al., 2014         |
|        |                                       |                                  | 0.40**               | Lee et al., 2014         |
|        | Emotional Coping                      | Physical Health                  | 0.31***              | Rector & Roger, 1996     |
|        | Style                                 | Psychological Distress           | 0.34***              | Rector & Roger, 1996     |

Note. <sup>a</sup>Subscale of Adjustment to College. <sup>b</sup>Standardised regression coefficient. <sup>c</sup>Male sample. <sup>d</sup>Female sample.

\**p* < .05, \*\* *p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001

**Table A2.**

*Summary of Health and Wellbeing Risk and Protective Factors of Psychosocial Success*

| Domain | Factor          | Outcome           | <i>r</i>            | Citation               |
|--------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Health | Health          | Positive Affect   | 0.13**              | Meng et al., 2015      |
|        |                 | Life Satisfaction | 0.17**              | Meng et al., 2015      |
|        | Physical Health | Anxiety           | -0.27* <sup>a</sup> | Jones & Schreier, 2021 |
|        |                 |                   | -0.26* <sup>a</sup> | Jones & Schreier, 2021 |

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| Domain                        | Factor                              | Outcome                 | r                             | Citation                    |                     |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Positive Wellbeing Dimensions | Mental Health                       | Depression              | -0.26**a                      | Jones & Schreier, 2021      |                     |
|                               |                                     | Loneliness              | -0.21**a                      | Jones & Schreier, 2021      |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.29**a                      | Jones & Schreier, 2021      |                     |
|                               |                                     | Anxiety                 | -0.29**a                      | Jones & Schreier, 2021      |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.31**a                      | Jones & Schreier, 2021      |                     |
|                               |                                     | Loneliness              | -0.31**a                      | Jones & Schreier, 2021      |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.29**a                      | Jones & Schreier, 2021      |                     |
|                               |                                     | Sense of Belonging      | 0.44**a                       | Jones & Schreier, 2021      |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | 0.32**a                       | Jones & Schreier, 2021      |                     |
|                               |                                     | Psychological Wellbeing | Cognitive-Affective Strengths | 0.52***b                    | Conley et al., 2014 |
|                               | 0.54***b                            |                         |                               | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | 0.50***b                      | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | 0.38***c                      | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | 0.43***c                      | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | 0.51***c                      | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               | Cognitive-Affective Vulnerabilities |                         | -0.37***b                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.44***b                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.38***b                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.36***c                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.42***c                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.29***c                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               | Psychological Distress              |                         | -0.37***b                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.47***b                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.43***b                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.43***c                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.43***c                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.37***c                     | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               | Social Wellbeing                    |                         |                               | 0.48***b                    | Conley et al., 2014 |
|                               |                                     |                         |                               | 0.49***b                    | Conley et al., 2014 |
|                               |                                     |                         | 0.54***b                      | Conley et al., 2014         |                     |
|                               |                                     | 0.42***c                | Conley et al., 2014           |                             |                     |
|                               |                                     | 0.42***c                | Conley et al., 2014           |                             |                     |
|                               |                                     | 0.58***c                | Conley et al., 2014           |                             |                     |
| Positive Affect               |                                     | Anxiety                 | -0.16*                        | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |                     |
|                               |                                     | Depression              | -0.27***                      | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |                     |
|                               |                                     | Negative Affect         | -0.22***                      | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |                     |
| Life Satisfaction             |                                     | College Adaptation      | 0.41***                       | Li et al., 2021             |                     |
|                               | Meaning In Life                     | 0.31***                 | Li et al., 2021               |                             |                     |
|                               | Procrastination                     | -0.28***                | Li et al., 2021               |                             |                     |
|                               | Smartphone Addiction                | -0.25***                | Li et al., 2021               |                             |                     |
| Meaning in Life               | College Adaptation                  | 0.34***                 | Li et al., 2021               |                             |                     |
|                               |                                     | 0.32***                 | Li et al., 2021               |                             |                     |
|                               |                                     | 0.37***                 | Li et al., 2021               |                             |                     |
|                               | Life Satisfaction                   | 0.26***                 | Li et al., 2021               |                             |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | 0.28***                       | Li et al., 2021             |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | 0.33***                       | Li et al., 2021             |                     |
|                               | Procrastination                     | -0.35***                | Li et al., 2021               |                             |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.36***                      | Li et al., 2021             |                     |
|                               |                                     | Smartphone Addiction    | -0.28***                      | Li et al., 2021             |                     |
|                               |                                     |                         | -0.25***                      | Li et al., 2021             |                     |

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| Domain                        | Factor                  | Outcome                             | r                     | Citation                    |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Negative Wellbeing Dimensions | Hope                    | Self-Efficacy                       | -0.26***              | Li et al., 2021             |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.38***               | Denovan & Macaskill, 2017   |
|                               | Optimism                | Self-Efficacy                       | 0.28***               | Denovan & Macaskill, 2017   |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.22***              | Denovan & Macaskill, 2017   |
|                               | Psychological Distress  | Cognitive-Affective Strengths       | -0.28*** <sup>b</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.27*** <sup>b</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.28*** <sup>b</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.12*** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.23*** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.23*** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         | Cognitive-Affective Vulnerabilities | 0.38*** <sup>b</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.46*** <sup>b</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.40*** <sup>b</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.36*** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.37*** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.29*** <sup>c</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               | Psychological Wellbeing |                                     | -0.46*** <sup>b</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.53*** <sup>b</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.50*** <sup>b</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.36*** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.48*** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.40*** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               | Social Wellbeing        |                                     | -0.37*** <sup>b</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.37*** <sup>b</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.38*** <sup>b</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.31*** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.28*** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.36*** <sup>c</sup> | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                               | Anxiety                 | Depression                          | 0.46***               | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.46***               | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                               |                         | Positive Affect                     | -0.20***              | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.60*                 | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                               | Stress                  |                                     | 0.53*                 | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.52*                 | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.48*                 | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.55*                 | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                               | Depression              |                                     | 0.61*                 | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.36*                | Dunn et al., 2022           |
|                               |                         | Academic Adjustment <sup>d</sup>    | 0.46***               | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.46*                 | Dunn et al., 2022           |
|                               |                         | Anxiety                             | 0.40**                | Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020    |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.50***               | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                               |                         | Burnout                             | -0.43**               | Meng et al., 2015           |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.32***              | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                               |                         | Stress                              | -0.49**               | Meng et al., 2015           |
|                               |                         |                                     | -0.16*                | Dunn et al., 2022           |
|                               |                         | Life Satisfaction                   | -0.20*                | Dunn et al., 2022           |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.50*                 | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                               |                         | Social Adjustment <sup>d</sup>      | 0.46*                 | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                               |                         |                                     | 0.58*                 | Levine et al., 2020         |

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| Domain               | Factor                        | Outcome            | <i>r</i> | Citation                    |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------------------|
|                      |                               |                    | 0.42*    | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                      |                               |                    | 0.57*    | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                      |                               |                    | 0.58*    | Levine et al., 2020         |
|                      | Negative Affect               | Anxiety            | 0.30***  | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                      |                               | Depression         | 0.39***  | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                      |                               | Positive Affect    | -0.21*** | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
| Addictive Behaviours | Smartphone Addiction          | College Adaptation | -0.49*** | Li et al., 2021             |
|                      |                               | Life Satisfaction  | -0.27*** | Li et al., 2021             |
|                      |                               | Meaning In Life    | -0.34*** | Li et al., 2021             |
|                      |                               | Procrastination    | 0.45***  | Li et al., 2021             |
|                      | Addictive Use of Social Media | Depression         | 0.30***  | Mu et al., 2020             |

Note. <sup>a</sup>Standardised regression coefficient. <sup>b</sup>Female sample. <sup>c</sup>Male sample. <sup>d</sup>Subscale of Adjustment to College.

\**p* < .05, \*\* *p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001

**Table A3.**

*Summary of Acclimation Risk and Protective Factors of Psychosocial Success*

| Domain             | Factor                                | Outcome                                     | <i>r</i>              | Citation             |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Adjustment         | College Adaptation                    | Life Satisfaction                           | 0.47***               | Li et al., 2021      |
|                    |                                       | Meaning in Life                             | 0.42***               | Li et al., 2021      |
|                    |                                       | Procrastination                             | -0.43***              | Li et al., 2021      |
|                    |                                       | Smartphone Addiction                        | -0.48***              | Li et al., 2021      |
|                    | Academic Adjustment <sup>a</sup>      | Positive Affect                             | 0.39**                | Meng et al., 2015    |
|                    |                                       | Life Satisfaction                           | 0.44**                | Meng et al., 2015    |
|                    | Social Adjustment <sup>a</sup>        | Positive Affect                             | 0.38**                | Meng et al., 2015    |
|                    |                                       | Life Satisfaction                           | 0.39**                | Meng et al., 2015    |
|                    | Homesickness                          | Adjustment                                  | -.31** <sup>b</sup>   | English et al., 2017 |
|                    |                                       | Social Adjustment <sup>a</sup>              | -.29** <sup>b</sup>   | English et al., 2017 |
| Academic Attitudes | Attitudes About Academic Help-Seeking | Academic Adjustment <sup>a</sup>            | .23* <sup>c</sup>     | Holt, 2014a          |
|                    |                                       | Personal-Emotional Adjustment <sup>a</sup>  | 0.38**                | Holt, 2014b          |
|                    |                                       | Social Adjustment <sup>a</sup>              | 0.25**                | Holt, 2014b          |
|                    | Degree Aspirations                    | Psychological Wellbeing                     | 0.22**                | Holt, 2014b          |
|                    |                                       | Environmental Mastery <sup>d</sup>          | -.018** <sup>c</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                    |                                       | Positive Relations with Others <sup>d</sup> | -.031*** <sup>c</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                    |                                       | Self-Acceptance <sup>d</sup>                | -.021* <sup>c</sup>   | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                    | Amotivation <sup>e</sup>              | Social Integration                          | -.028** <sup>c</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                    |                                       |                                             | -0.11* <sup>c</sup>   | Noyens et al., 2019  |

Note. <sup>a</sup>Subscale of Adjustment to College. <sup>b</sup>Unstandardised regression coefficient. <sup>c</sup>Standardised regression coefficient. <sup>d</sup>Subscale of Psychological Wellbeing. <sup>e</sup>Subscale of Academic Motivation.

\**p* < .05, \*\* *p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001

**Table A4.**

*Summary of Background Risk and Protective Factors of Psychosocial Success*

| Domain                         | Factor | Outcome                      | <i>r</i>             | Citation             |
|--------------------------------|--------|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Demographics (related to self) | Age    | Alcohol Use                  | -.04* <sup>a</sup>   | Busseri et al., 2011 |
|                                |        | Depression                   | .07* <sup>a</sup>    | Busseri et al., 2011 |
|                                |        | Autonomy <sup>b</sup>        | .191*** <sup>c</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                |        | Personal Growth <sup>b</sup> | .434*** <sup>c</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                |        | Self-Acceptance <sup>b</sup> | .259*** <sup>c</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |

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| Domain                                     | Factor                        | Outcome                                     | <i>r</i>               | Citation             |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Demographics<br>(related to the<br>family) | Gender <sup>d</sup>           | Social Support                              | -.09* <sup>a</sup>     | Busseri et al., 2011 |
|                                            |                               | Stress                                      | .03* <sup>a</sup>      | Busseri et al., 2011 |
|                                            |                               | Adjustment                                  | .21* <sup>a</sup>      | Busseri et al., 2011 |
|                                            |                               | Academic Adjustment                         | -.24*** <sup>e</sup>   | Holt, 2014b          |
|                                            |                               | Depression                                  | -.11* <sup>a</sup>     | Busseri et al., 2011 |
|                                            |                               | Psychological Wellbeing                     | -.057*** <sup>c</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Personal Growth <sup>b</sup>                | -.082*** <sup>c</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Positive Relations with Others <sup>b</sup> | -.199*** <sup>c</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Purpose In Life <sup>b</sup>                | -.131*** <sup>c</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Stress                                      | -.15* <sup>a</sup>     | Busseri et al., 2011 |
|                                            | Ethnicity                     | Psychological Wellbeing                     | -.063* <sup>cf</sup>   | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Autonomy <sup>b</sup>                       | -.091* <sup>cf</sup>   | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               |                                             | .085* <sup>cg</sup>    | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               |                                             | .173* <sup>ch</sup>    | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Positive Relations with Others <sup>b</sup> | .210* <sup>ci</sup>    | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            | Only Child                    | Self-Acceptance <sup>b</sup>                | -.109* <sup>cf</sup>   | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Depression                                  | -.059* <sup>j</sup>    | Mu et al., 2020      |
|                                            |                               | Life Satisfaction                           | .14**                  | Meng et al., 2015    |
|                                            | Economic Status               |                                             |                        |                      |
|                                            |                               |                                             |                        |                      |
|                                            | Parental Income               | Purpose In Life <sup>b</sup>                | -.113*** <sup>ck</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               |                                             | -.110*** <sup>cl</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            | Parental Education            | Academic Related                            | .07* <sup>a</sup>      | Busseri et al., 2011 |
|                                            |                               | Delinquency                                 |                        |                      |
| Education<br>Context                       | Region of Origin <sup>m</sup> | Positive Affect                             | 0.1*                   | Meng et al., 2015    |
|                                            |                               |                                             |                        |                      |
|                                            | Generation <sup>n</sup>       | Psychological Wellbeing                     | -.08*** <sup>c</sup>   | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Autonomy <sup>b</sup>                       | -.139*** <sup>c</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Personal Growth <sup>b</sup>                | -.119*** <sup>c</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Positive Relations with Others <sup>b</sup> | -.155*** <sup>c</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            | High School GPA               | Psychological Wellbeing                     | -.053*** <sup>co</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Environmental Mastery <sup>b</sup>          | -.112*** <sup>co</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               |                                             | -.285*** <sup>cp</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Personal Growth <sup>b</sup>                | -.192*** <sup>cp</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Positive Relations with Others <sup>b</sup> | .157*** <sup>cp</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               |                                             |                        |                      |
|                                            |                               | Purpose In Life <sup>b</sup>                | -.112*** <sup>co</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               |                                             | -.371*** <sup>cp</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            | Self-Acceptance <sup>b</sup>  |                                             | -.060* <sup>co</sup>   | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               |                                             | -.202*** <sup>cp</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               |                                             |                        |                      |
|                                            |                               |                                             |                        |                      |
|                                            | Institution Type              | Psychological Wellbeing                     | 0.43* <sup>cq</sup>    | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Autonomy <sup>b</sup>                       | .100* <sup>cr</sup>    | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Personal Growth <sup>b</sup>                | -.101*** <sup>cs</sup> | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Positive Relations with Others <sup>b</sup> | .075*** <sup>cq</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Purpose In Life <sup>b</sup>                | .086*** <sup>cq</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Self-Acceptance <sup>b</sup>                | .089*** <sup>cq</sup>  | Bowman et al., 2010  |
|                                            |                               | Adjustment                                  | .12* <sup>a</sup>      | Busseri et al., 2011 |
|                                            |                               | Depression                                  | -.10* <sup>a</sup>     | Busseri et al., 2011 |

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| Domain | Factor      | Outcome | <i>r</i> | Citation |
|--------|-------------|---------|----------|----------|
|        | Activity    |         |          |          |
|        | Involvement |         |          |          |

Note <sup>a</sup>Standardised regression coefficient. <sup>b</sup>Subscale of Psychological Wellbeing. <sup>c</sup>Unstandardised regression coefficient. With categorical measures, a negative coefficient indicates the factor is associated with 'less' of the outcome in comparison to the reference group: <sup>d</sup>Male in comparison to female (female = 0, male = 1). <sup>e</sup>Sign reversed to ensure consistent interpretation. <sup>f</sup>Asian/Pacific Islander in comparison to Caucasian. <sup>g</sup>Hispanic in comparison to Caucasian. <sup>h</sup>Ethnicity reported as 'unknown' in comparison to Caucasian. <sup>i</sup>No reported ethnicity in comparison to Caucasian. <sup>j</sup>Not an only child in comparison to being an only child. <sup>k</sup>Low in comparison to high income. <sup>l</sup>No reported parental income in comparison to high income. <sup>m</sup>Non-local in comparison to Local. <sup>n</sup>First generation students in comparison to continuing generation. <sup>o</sup>B-grades in comparison to A-grades. <sup>p</sup>C-grades in comparison to A-grades. <sup>q</sup>Research university in comparison to liberal arts college. <sup>r</sup>Community college in comparison to liberal arts college. <sup>s</sup>Regional college in comparison to liberal arts college.

\**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001

**Table A5.**

*Summary of Social Risk and Protective Factors of Psychosocial Success*

| Domain   | Factor                     | Outcome                               | <i>r</i>               | Citation             |
|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Familial | Attachment                 | Loneliness                            | -0.241**               | Carcedo et al., 2022 |
| Support  | Security                   | Social Anxiety                        | -0.218**               | Carcedo et al., 2022 |
|          | Parental                   | Academic Adjustment                   | 0.25**                 | Holt, 2014b          |
|          | Attachment                 |                                       |                        |                      |
|          | Alienation <sup>ab</sup>   | Adjustment                            | 0.43*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Academic Adjustment <sup>f</sup>      | 0.29*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Institutional Adjustment <sup>f</sup> | 0.35*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Personal-Emotional                    | 0.39*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Adjustment <sup>f</sup>               |                        |                      |
|          |                            | Social Adjustment <sup>f</sup>        | 0.38*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Psychological Distress                | -0.37*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            |                                       | -0.28*** <sup>cd</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Depression <sup>g</sup>               | -0.33*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            |                                       | -0.36*** <sup>cd</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Obsessive-Compulsive <sup>g</sup>     | -0.42*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            |                                       | -0.28*** <sup>cd</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Somatisation <sup>g</sup>             | -0.29*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Self Competence                       | 0.48*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            |                                       | 0.44*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Friendships <sup>h</sup>              | 0.40*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            |                                       | 0.34*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Intellectual <sup>h</sup>             | 0.41*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Romantic Relationships <sup>h</sup>   | 0.29*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Scholastic <sup>h</sup>               | 0.44*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Self-Worth <sup>h</sup>               | 0.36*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            |                                       | 0.40*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          | Communication <sup>a</sup> | Adjustment                            | 0.32*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Institutional Adjustment <sup>f</sup> | 0.30*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Personal-Emotional                    | 0.24*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Adjustment <sup>f</sup>               |                        |                      |
|          |                            | Social Adjustment <sup>f</sup>        | 0.32*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Psychological Distress                | -0.36*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Anxiety <sup>g</sup>                  | -0.30*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Depression <sup>g</sup>               | -0.29*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Obsessive-Compulsive <sup>g</sup>     | -0.36*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Phobia <sup>g</sup>                   | -0.30*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Somatisation <sup>g</sup>             | -0.30*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|          |                            | Self Competence                       | 0.38*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |

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| Domain                   | Factor                       | Outcome                                    | r                      | Citation             |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
|                          | Trust <sup>a</sup>           |                                            | 0.33*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Friendships <sup>h</sup>                   | 0.33*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.29*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Intellectual <sup>h</sup>                  | 0.31*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Scholastic <sup>h</sup>                    | 0.37*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Self-Worth <sup>h</sup>                    | 0.22*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.28*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Adjustment <sup>f</sup>                    | 0.38*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Academic Adjustment <sup>f</sup>           | 0.25*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Institutional Adjustment <sup>f</sup>      | 0.35*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Personal-Emotional Adjustment <sup>f</sup> | 0.29*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Social Adjustment <sup>f</sup>             | 0.35*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Psychological Distress                     | -0.28*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Depression <sup>g</sup>                    | -0.21*** <sup>cd</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Obsessive-Compulsive <sup>g</sup>          | -0.27*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Phobia <sup>g</sup>                        | -0.20*** <sup>ce</sup> | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Self Competence                            | 0.45*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.35*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Friendships <sup>h</sup>                   | 0.34*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.31*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Intellectual <sup>h</sup>                  | 0.34*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Romantic Relationships <sup>h</sup>        | 0.29*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Scholastic <sup>h</sup>                    | 0.36*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.24*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              | Self-Worth <sup>h</sup>                    | 0.34*** <sup>ce</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.29*** <sup>cd</sup>  | Hiester et al., 2009 |
| Relationship with Father | Relationship with Father     | College Adaptation                         | 0.33***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.32***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              | Life Satisfaction                          | 0.22***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.25***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              | Meaning In Life                            | 0.22***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.28***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              | Procrastination                            | -0.29***               | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              | Smartphone Addiction                       | -0.26***               | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              |                                            | -0.29***               | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          | Relationship with Mother     | College Adaptation                         | 0.33***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.36***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              | Life Satisfaction                          | 0.21***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.31***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              | Meaning In Life                            | 0.23***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.28***                | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              | Procrastination                            | -0.30***               | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              | Smartphone Addiction                       | -0.31***               | Li et al., 2021      |
| -                        | Teacher-Student Relationship |                                            | -0.31***               | Li et al., 2021      |
|                          |                              | Academic Adaptation                        | 0.47***                | Li, 2022             |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.39***                | Li, 2022             |
|                          |                              |                                            | 0.35***                | Li, 2022             |
|                          | Peer Support                 | Adjustment                                 | 0.18*                  | Tao et al., 2000     |
|                          |                              | Self-Esteem                                | 0.18*                  | Tao et al., 2000     |
|                          |                              | College Adaptation                         | 0.23***                | Li et al., 2021      |

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| Domain           | Factor                  | Outcome                                    | r         | Citation                    |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
|                  | Relationship with Peers | Life Satisfaction                          | 0.24***   | Li et al., 2021             |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.2***    | Li et al., 2021             |
|                  |                         | Meaning In Life                            | 0.14***   | Li et al., 2021             |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.16***   | Li et al., 2021             |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.18***   | Li et al., 2021             |
|                  |                         | Procrastination                            | -0.2***   | Li et al., 2021             |
|                  | Friend Quality          | Smartphone Addiction                       | -0.1**    | Li et al., 2021             |
|                  |                         |                                            | -0.1**    | Li et al., 2021             |
|                  |                         | Internalising Behaviour                    | -0.27**   | Shell & Absher, 2019        |
|                  |                         | Loneliness                                 | -0.35**   | Shell & Absher, 2019        |
|                  | Distant Friendship      | Anxiety                                    | 0.31***   | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                  | Conflict                | Depression                                 | 0.26***   | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                  | Distant Friendship      | Anxiety                                    | -0.15*    | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                  | Quality                 | Depression                                 | -0.18**   | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                  | Face-to-Face            | Positive Affect                            | 0.30***   | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                  | Friendship              | Anxiety                                    | 0.20***   | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                  | Conflict                | Depression                                 | 0.16*     | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                  | Face-to-Face            | Anxiety                                    | -0.18**   | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                  | Friendship              | Positive Affect                            | 0.27***   | Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012 |
|                  | Quality                 |                                            |           |                             |
|                  | Social Support          | Adjustment                                 | 0.48*     | Tao et al., 2000            |
|                  |                         | Academic Adjustment <sup>f</sup>           | 0.16**    | Tao et al., 2000            |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.22*     | Dunn et al., 2022           |
|                  |                         | Institutional Adjustment <sup>f</sup>      | 0.34***   | Tao et al., 2000            |
|                  |                         | Personal-Emotional Adjustment <sup>f</sup> | 0.27***   | Tao et al., 2000            |
|                  |                         | Social Adjustment <sup>f</sup>             | 0.48***   | Tao et al., 2000            |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.28*     | Dunn et al., 2022           |
|                  |                         | Positive Affect                            | 0.28**    | Meng et al., 2015           |
|                  |                         | Life Satisfaction                          | 0.35**    | Meng et al., 2015           |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.30**    | Zhou & Lin, 2016            |
|                  |                         | Self-Esteem                                | 0.36*     | Tao et al., 2000            |
|                  |                         | Anxiety                                    | -0.34***  | Tao et al., 2000            |
|                  |                         | Depression                                 | -0.23**   | Lee et al., 2014            |
|                  |                         |                                            | -0.46**   | Lee et al., 2014            |
|                  |                         |                                            | -0.36**   | Lee et al., 2014            |
|                  |                         |                                            | -0.37**   | Lee et al., 2014            |
|                  |                         |                                            | -0.15*    | Dunn et al., 2022           |
|                  |                         |                                            | -0.41***  | Tao et al., 2000            |
| Social Abilities | Social Wellbeing        | Burnout                                    | -0.12*    | Dunn et al., 2022           |
|                  |                         | Cognitive-Affective Strengths              | 0.37***e  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.40***e  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.40***e  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.37***d  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                  |                         |                                            | 0.44***d  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                  |                         | Cognitive-Affective Vulnerabilities        | 0.39***d  | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                  |                         |                                            | -0.32***e | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                  |                         |                                            | -0.37***e | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                  |                         |                                            | -0.25***e | Conley et al., 2014         |
|                  |                         |                                            |           |                             |

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| Domain             | Factor                  | Outcome                                    | <i>r</i>              | Citation             |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Social Motivations |                         | Psychological Distress                     | -0.28*** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | -0.33*** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | -0.27*** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | -0.36*** <sup>e</sup> | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | -0.38*** <sup>e</sup> | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | -0.31*** <sup>e</sup> | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | -0.30*** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | -0.36*** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | -0.35*** <sup>d</sup> | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         | Psychological Wellbeing                    | 0.52*** <sup>e</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | 0.62*** <sup>e</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | 0.52*** <sup>e</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | 0.41*** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | 0.54*** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    |                         |                                            | 0.46*** <sup>d</sup>  | Conley et al., 2014  |
|                    | Social Self-Efficacy    | Positive Affect                            | 0.41**                | Meng et al., 2015    |
|                    |                         | Life Satisfaction                          | 0.30**                | Meng et al., 2015    |
|                    |                         | Academic Adjustment <sup>f</sup>           | 0.31**                | Holt, 2014b          |
|                    | Social Competence       | Personal-Emotional Adjustment <sup>f</sup> | 0.31**                | Holt, 2014b          |
|                    |                         | Social Adjustment <sup>f</sup>             | 0.49**                | Holt, 2014b          |
|                    | Shyness                 | Internalising Behaviour                    | 0.49**                | Shell & Absher, 2019 |
|                    |                         | Loneliness                                 | 0.50**                | Shell & Absher, 2019 |
|                    |                         | Life Satisfaction                          | -0.4**                | Shell & Absher, 2019 |
|                    | Social Development Goal | Prosocial Behaviour <sup>i</sup>           | 0.14*                 | Shim & Ryan, 2012    |
|                    |                         | Overt Aggressive Behaviour <sup>i</sup>    | 0.15*                 | Shim & Ryan, 2012    |
|                    |                         | Popularity <sup>i</sup>                    | 0.14*                 | Shim & Ryan, 2012    |
|                    |                         | Prosocial Behaviour <sup>i</sup>           | -0.12*                | Shim & Ryan, 2012    |
|                    |                         | Social Competence                          | -0.16**               | Shim & Ryan, 2012    |
|                    |                         | Internalising Behaviour <sup>i</sup>       | 0.14*                 | Shim & Ryan, 2012    |
|                    |                         | Popularity <sup>i</sup>                    | -0.17**               | Shim & Ryan, 2012    |
|                    |                         | Prosocial Behaviour <sup>i</sup>           | -0.19**               | Shim & Ryan, 2012    |
|                    |                         | Socially Anxious Behaviour <sup>i</sup>    | 0.18**                | Shim & Ryan, 2012    |
|                    |                         |                                            |                       |                      |
|                    |                         |                                            |                       |                      |
|                    |                         |                                            |                       |                      |

Note.<sup>a</sup>Subscale of Parental Attachment. <sup>b</sup>Reverse scored so a higher score is interpreted as less alienation. <sup>c</sup>Partial correlations controlling for institution (recruited from two schools). <sup>d</sup>Female sample. <sup>e</sup>Male sample. <sup>f</sup>Subscale of Adjustment to College. <sup>g</sup>Subscale of Psychological Distress. <sup>h</sup>Subscale of Self Competence. <sup>i</sup>Subscale of Social Competence

\**p* < .05, \*\* *p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001