



Promoting Access for Transfer Students: Examining Belonging and Student Assets that Contribute to Success

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Acknowledgement of People and Country



I wish to personally acknowledge the traditional custodians of this place and all land upon which the University is located, and pay respect to the Chumash Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, and the culture of this area, which has become a place of learning for people from all over the world.

Introduction

An
undergraduate
powered lab!



Transfer Climate Study Goals

- Conduct a mixed methods study on transfer student experiences
- Use an asset-based, multidisciplinary framework to honor intersectional identities and capture diverse experiences
- Why is this important?
 - Institutional climate and belonging are crucial for the successful transition and success of all students, and can be especially true for those with marginalized identities (Jain et al., 2020; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005)

Research Team & Funding

Leads

Vanessa Woods, Ph.D., Associate Teaching Professor, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Malaphone Phommasa, Ph.D., Assistant Dean, Academic Success Initiatives, Office of Teaching & Learning

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Graduate Students

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Undergraduate Students

Tate Universe, Transfer Student, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Mateo Requejo-Tejada, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Jose Velazquez, Psychological & Brain Sciences

**Funding for this study was generously provided by the
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

Transfer Climate Study: 2024

Snapshot of Transfer Students in the Study

Percentage of Students (n=570) Data Collected Spring 2024

Demographics of Survey Sample								
First-generation college student		Self identified as low income, working, or lower middle class			URM* (Underrepresented Minorities)		Live on campus/locally	
39%		45%			30%		87%	
Gender Identity					Effectors of Opportunity			
Female	Male	Non-binary	Diff. Identity	Trans <input type="checkbox"/>	0	1	2	3
59%	37%	2%	2%	3%	39%	29%	16%	16%

Survey (n = 570)

- 233 students expressed interest in focus group participation
- 30 selected using purposive sampling

Focus Groups (n = 23)

Transfer Climate Survey 2024

Racial/Ethnic Identity**								
Black or African American	East Asian	Indigenous or Native	Indian from India	Latin a/o/e	Middle Eastern	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	South Asian	Southeast Asian
3%	13%	2%	3%	27%	4%	2%	2%	7%

The focus group sample (n=23) was representative of the larger survey sample.

Demographics of Focus Group Sample

First-generation college student	Non-traditional student	URM*
39%	10%	33%

* URM UC Definition: Includes domestic students who self-identify as African American/Black, Native American or Alaskan Native, or Chicano/Latino (Hispanic). **Participants were able to choose multiple categories.

Survey & Focus Group Questions

- Transfer Student Context & Transfer Student Identity
- General Climate for Transfers
 - **Belonging scale**
 - **Places that feel like home open-ended question**
- Experience Transitioning to UCSB
 - **Social, Academic, Housing, Financial, Overall**
- Experiences with Networking, Connections, and Resources
- Motivations for being in college
- Comparing experience from previous institution
- Factors influencing transition
- Involvement in high impact practices
- Exploring transfer student identity and reputation on campus
- Giving voice to student experiences

Dr. Woods will moderate a few questions at the end of each section and we will have time at the end

Role of Student's Assets and Indicators of Transfer Receptivity to Successful Transitions at UCSB

Tate Universe

How Can UCSB Indicate Receptivity for its Transfer Students?

An Expectation

“An expectation for the university to proactively engage with the transfer process or to encourage and specialize in receiving transfer students” (p.11, Jain et al., 2020)

An Expectation Met?

How do we
measure
success?

Metrics which Power to The Transfer (2020) recommends for *"assessment, evaluation, and enhancement of transfer initiatives"*:

- GPA
- Pass/Fail Rates
- Student Retention
- Graduation Rates

Does these truly capture transfer receptivity? Or is this a bit sparse?

Introduction

Power To The Transfer (Jain et al., 2020)

- **Transfer students** are an intersectional student body with an abundance of varied backgrounds, and bring wealths of knowledge to US campuses
- **Transfer Receptivity** is “an imperative” for strong institutional support for transfer students
- **Universities facilitate** transfer receptiveness by being welcome to transfers, accommodating various needs for transfers, and shaping a campus climate which is receiving for transfers

Introduction

A New Critical Framework (Laanan & Jain, 2016)

- **Research on transfer student success is a high priority** for preserving equitable paths to higher education
- Our research on transfers greatly benefits from analysis engaging with a **“critical lens”**
 - This includes **Critical Race Theories (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995)** and **Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005)**
 - **Reject deficit-framed interpretations** where possible

Introduction

Student Assets

- **Asset-framing:** Students earn their degree, and they earn it through self-regulation of **key assets**
 - Universities can play a supporting role for these assets, and equitably impact their transfers

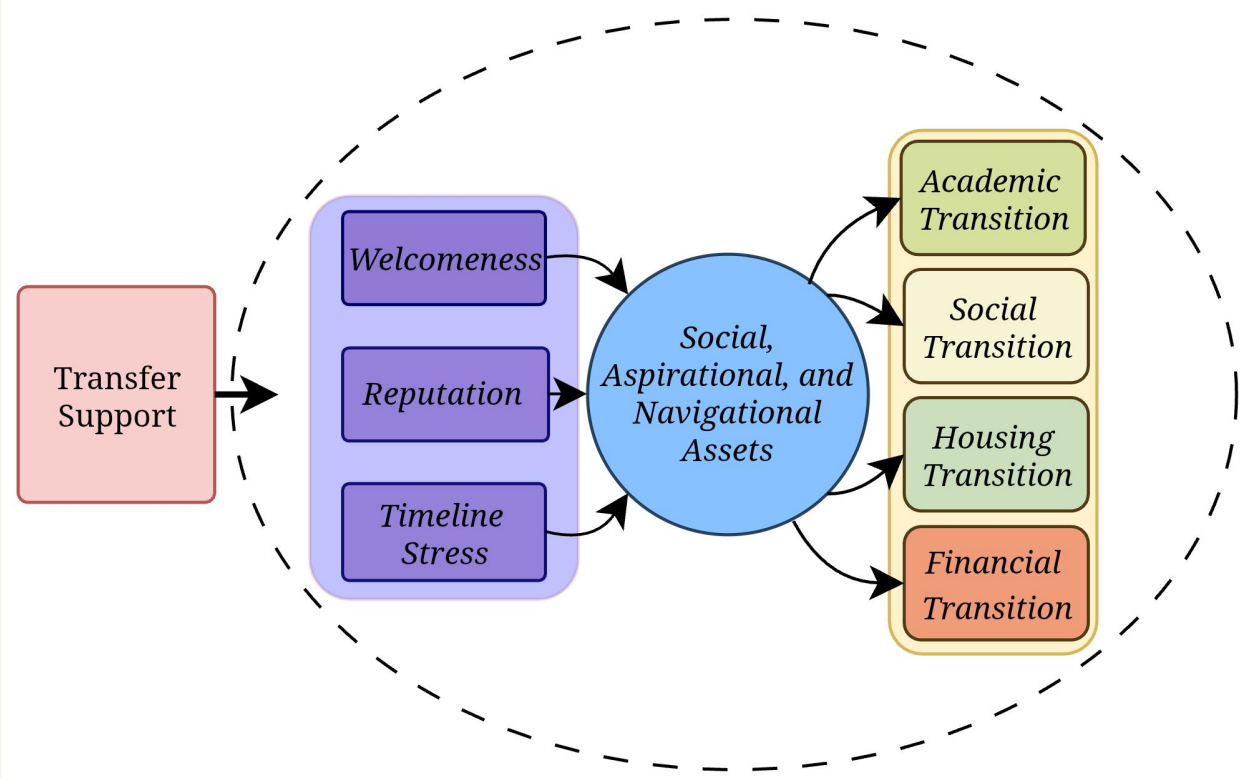
Indicating Transfer Receptivity

- A campus can have imperatives which don't trickle-down to every student
 - Are institutional efforts to reflect a welcoming environment received the same for all transfers?
- Student-centered framework stages analysis so that **only the student can tell us about their experiences**
- So what do students reflect?

The Current Study

- Explore the interplay between student perception of the **transfer receptivity at UCSB**, the **strength of their own assets**, and their reflection regarding the **quality of their transitions**.
 - *Is transfer support a predictor of transition smoothness?*

Model of Conceptual Relationships



Measures: Transfer Support & Receptivity

- *Level of support for transfers on campus (0-100, Continuous)*

Transfer Receptivity Indicators

- *Perceived welcomeness for transfers on campus (1-7, Not welcome at all - Very welcome)*
- *At UCSB, transfers have a good reputation (1-7, Strongly disagree - Strongly agree)*
- *How stressful is it for you to think about your graduation timeline? (1-5, A great deal - None at all)*

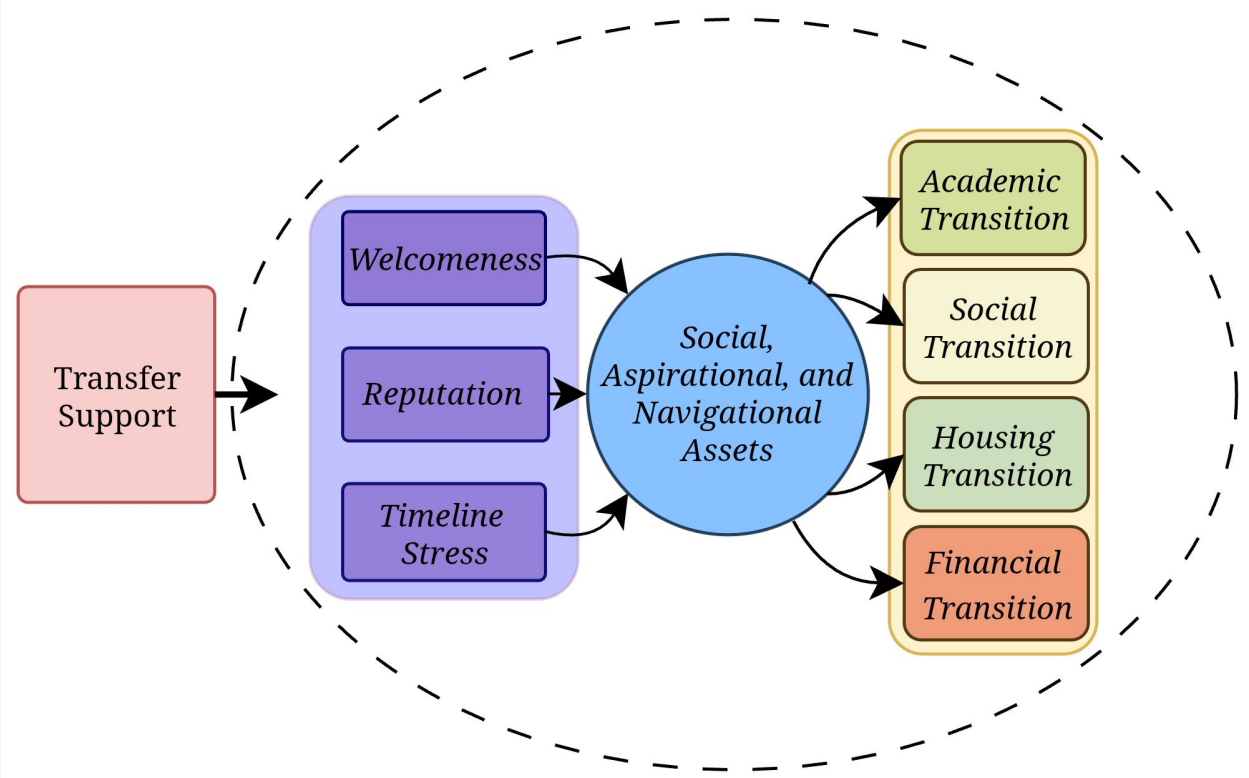
Measures: Social, Aspirational, and Navigational Assets (SANA)

- *Average Academic Self-Efficacy ($\alpha = .86$)*
- *Average Sense of Belonging ($\alpha = .92$)*
- *Average Sense of Resilience ($\alpha = .77$)*
 - (Removed from SANA due to low explained variance ($R^2 = .022$))
- *Average Navigational Items ($\alpha = .85$)*
 - *I understand where I need to go to access the resources or help I need.*
 - *I am confident navigating the academic processes at UCSB (i.e. academic petitions or major forms).*
 - *I am confident navigating the student social networks at UCSB.*

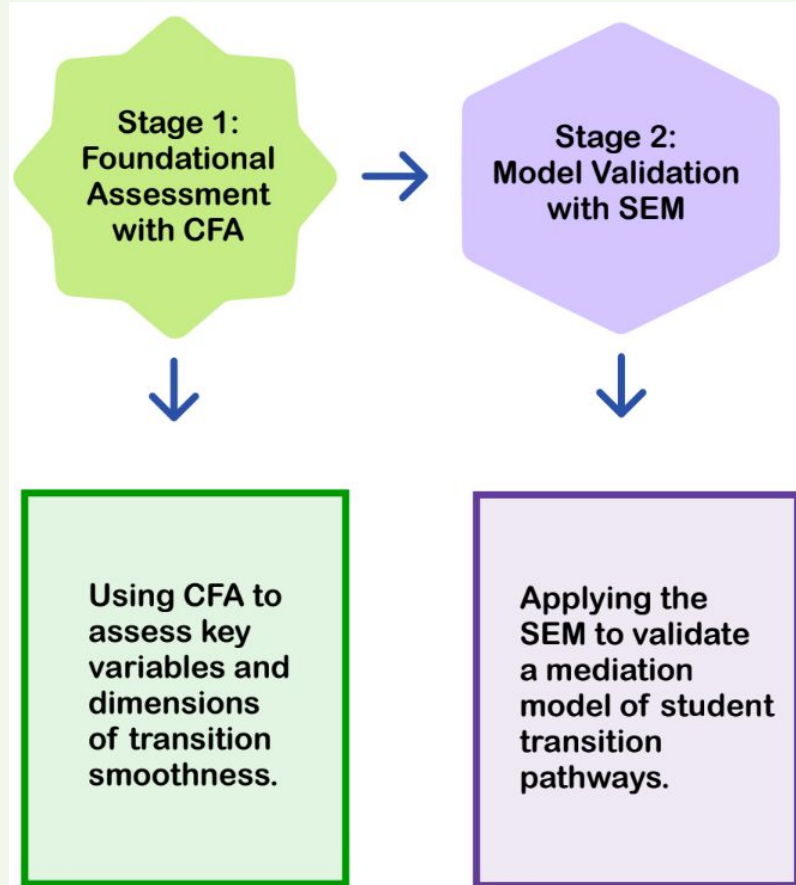
Measures: Transition Smoothness

- Y_{acad} : *My academic transition to UCSB was smooth*
- Y_{soc} : *My social transition to UCSB was smooth*
- Y_{hous} : *My housing transition to UCSB was smooth*
- Y_{fin} : *My financial transition to UCSB was smooth*
 - All were on a 1-7, SD -SA

Model of Conceptual Relationships

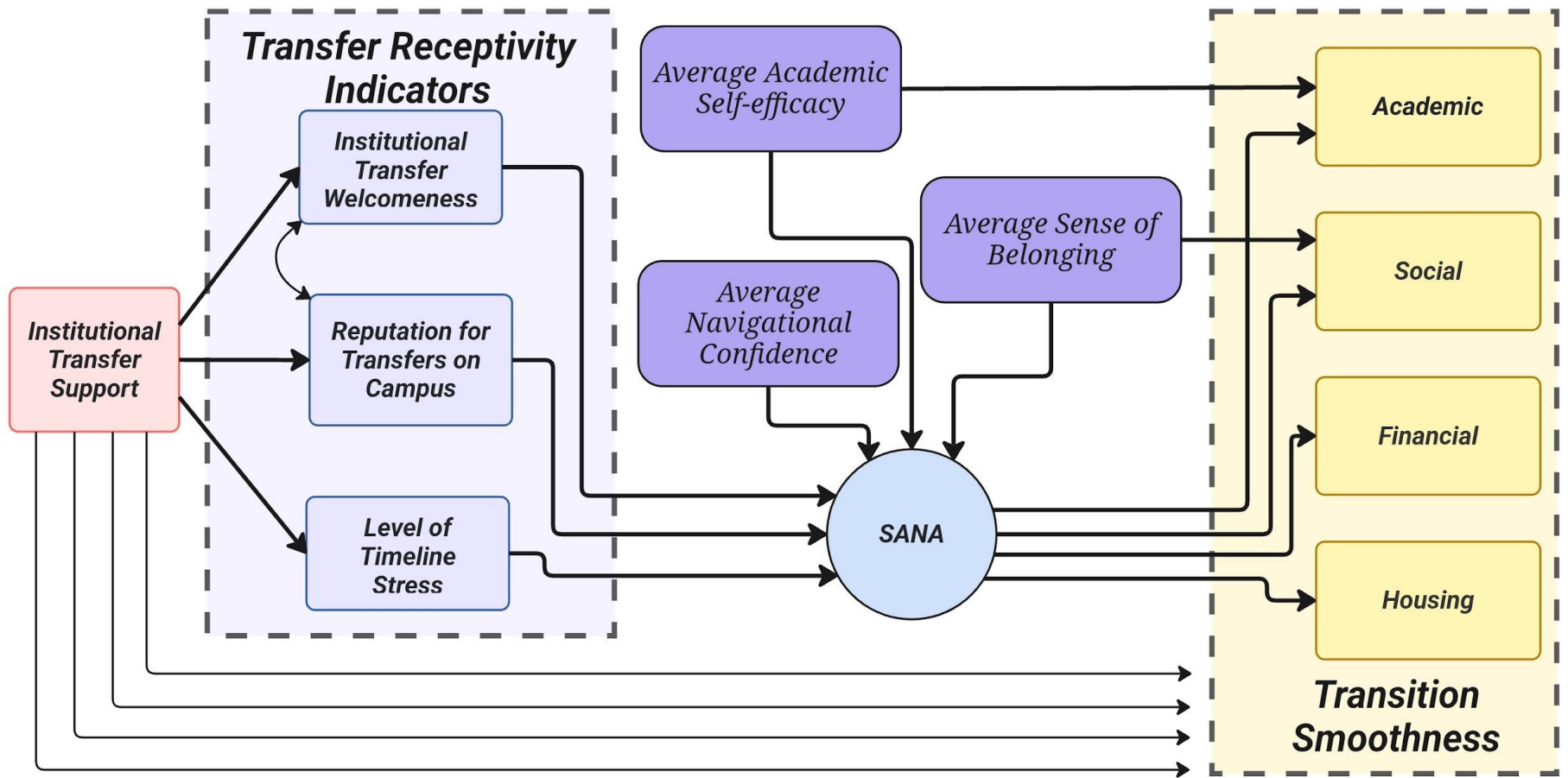


Methods: Order of Analyses



Method: Data Analysis

- Analyses completed using MPlus 9, SPSS 31, and Microsoft Excel
- Maximum Likelihood Parameter Estimates for robust analysis, using FIML for missing data
- Bootstrapping to 5,000 samples



Results - Fit Indexes Stage 1

- Bootstrapped confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) validated the measurement model (see table), establishing the SANA latent factor as an adequately reliable construct via McDonald's Omega ($\omega = .70$, 95% CI [.650, .742]).
- CFA also validated the scales for *academic self-efficacy* ($\omega = .86$, 95% CI [.847, .879]), *sense of belonging* ($\omega = .92$, 95% CI [.906, .934]), *resilience* ($\omega = .77$, 95% CI [.721, .806]), and *sense of navigational confidence* ($\omega = .85$, 95% CI [.822, .871]).

Variable	Standardized Results		
	β	Confidence Intervals	S.E.
<i>Navigational Confidence at the University</i>			
<i>NAV1 - I understand where to go to access resources I need.</i>	.776	[0.725, 0.824]	.030
<i>NAV2 - I am confident in navigating academic processes.</i>	.910	[0.871, 0.947]	.023
<i>NAV3 - I am confident in navigating student social networks.</i>	.733	[0.678, 0.786]	.033
<i>Social, Aspirational, and Navigational Assets (SANA)</i>			
<i>Average Academic Self Efficacy</i>	.557	[0.483, 0.626]	.044
<i>Average Sense of Belonging</i>	.726	[0.638, 0.810]	.052
<i>Average Navigational Confidence</i>	.698	[0.620, 0.775]	.047
<i>Average Sense of Resilience</i>	.147	[0.056, 0.234]	.054
<i>SANA' (re-specification excluding Sense of Resilience)</i>			
<i>Average Academic Self Efficacy</i>	.560	[0.487, 0.629]	.044
<i>Average Sense of Belonging</i>	.737	[0.650, 0.821]	.052
<i>Average Navigational Confidence</i>	.686	[0.612, 0.758]	.045
<i>Transition Smoothness</i>			
<i>Academic Transition (Y_{acad})</i>	.538	[0.459, 0.615]	.047
<i>Social Transition (Y_{soc})</i>	.648	[0.574, 0.718]	.043
<i>Housing Transition (Y_{hous})</i>	.727	[0.660, 0.790]	.040
<i>Financial Transition (Y_{fin})</i>	.520	[0.434, 0.596]	.049

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• **This is good!**

Variable	Standardized Residual	S.E.
<i>Navigational Confidence</i>		
NAV1 - I understand where to go to access resources I need.	.65 [0.725, .575]	.030
NAV2 - I am confident in navigating through complex processes.	.68 [0.871, .489]	.033
NAV3 - I am confident navigating through different social networks.	.67 [0.678, .666]	.033
Average Academic Self Efficacy	.557 [0.483, 0.626]	.040
Average Sense of Belonging	.726 [0.638, 0.810]	.040
Average Navigational Confidence	.698 [0.612, 0.786]	.045
Average Sense of Resilience	.77 [0.056, 0.234]	.054
SANA' (re-specification excluded)		
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Academic Transition (Y_{acad})	.538 [0.459, 0.615]	.047
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Housing Transition (Y_{hous})	.727 [0.660, 0.790]	.040
Financial Transition (Y_{fin})	.520 [0.434, 0.596]	.049

Results - Fit Indexes Stage 2

- Chi-square test was significant, $\chi^2(18) = 84.638$, $p < 0.001$ which is typical among large samples
- A parameter-to-case ratio of 9.71, RMSEA of 0.082 (90% CI [.065, .100]), and a TLI of 0.870 indicated **mediocre-to-adequate fit**
- A CFI of .958 and SRMR of .032 demonstrated a **just-identified or “saturated” model** (cite).

Results - Fit Indexes Stage 2

- Chi-square test was significant ($\chi^2(15) = 84.638, p < 0.001$) which is typical among large samples
- A parameter-to-case ratio of 9.7, RMSEA of 0.062 (90% CI [.065, .100]), and a GFI of 0.870 indicated **moderately good fit**
- A GFI of .95 and SRMR of .02 demonstrated a **just-identified** or "saturated" model (cite).

VERIFIED

Results

- Structural regression provided support for the hypothesized serial chain of Transfer Receptivity Indicators on *SANA*. Specifically, the bootstrapped model had evidence of mediation across all four transition outcomes.
- While the direct effect of Transfer Support was found to be insignificant for all four transition variables, the overall indirect effect of Transfer Receptivity Indicators and *SANA* was consistently positive and significant, as were the total effects across all four outcomes.
- **This suggests that when we think about what is affecting the different transition smoothness for transfers that transfer receptivity is important mostly because it is positively affecting student's level of assets (*SANA*) which is then positive affecting their transition**

Results - Total and Indirect Effects

Path	Standardized Effects			
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Y_{acad}	.358	.04	.000	[.292, .425]
Y_{soc}	.353	.04	.000	[.286, .416]
Y_{hous}	.247	.04	.000	[.175, .316]
Y_{fin}	.162	.05	.0000	[.087, .237]

Results - Total and Indirect Effects

Path	Standardized Effects			
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Y_{acad}	.262	.04	.000	[.188, .339]
Y_{soc}	.281	.05	.000	[.203, .364]
Y_{hous}	.207	.05	.000	[.124, .292]
Y_{fin}	.225	.06	.000	[.137, .317]

Results - Total and Indirect Effects

Serial Mediation Total Effects

Path	Standardized Effects			
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Y_{acad}	.358	.04	.000	[.292, .425]
Y_{soc}	.353	.04	.000	[.286, .416]
Y_{hous}	.247	.04	.000	[.175, .316]
Y_{fin}	.162	.05	.0000	[.087, .237]

Serial Mediation Overall Indirect Effects

Path	Standardized Effects			
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Y_{acad}	.262	.04	.000	[.188, .339]
Y_{soc}	.281	.05	.000	[.203, .364]
Y_{hous}	.207	.05	.000	[.124, .292]
Y_{fin}	.225	.06	.000	[.137, .317]

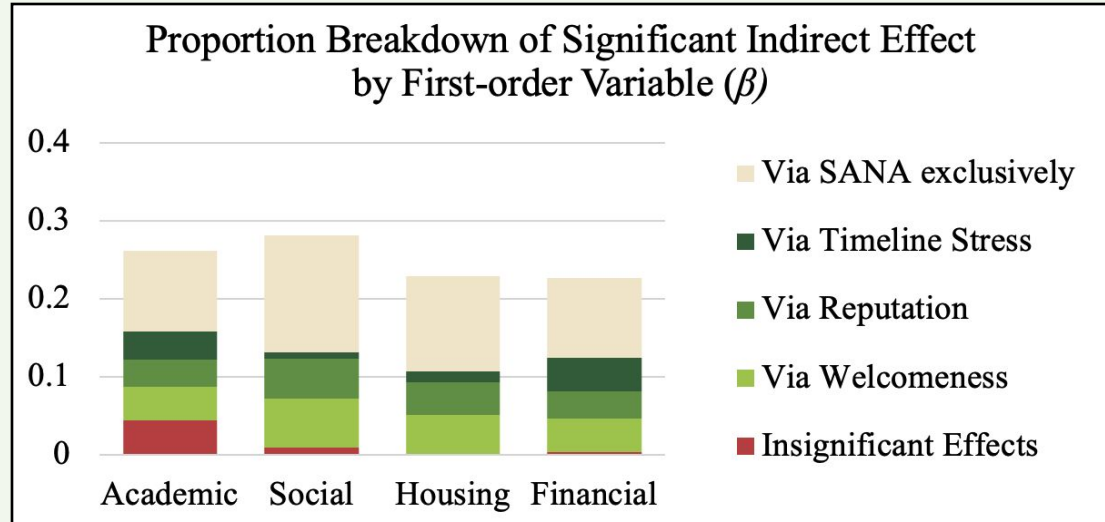
Results - Total and Indirect Effects

Serial Mediation Total Effects				Serial Mediation Overall Indirect Effects			
Path	Standardized Effects	SE	95% CI	Path	Standardized Effects	SE	95% CI
Y_{acad}	.358	.04	[.282, .428]	Y_{acad}	.262	.04	[.188, .339]
Y_{soc}	.353	.04	-.000 [0.286, .416]	Y_{soc}	.281	.05	-.000 [0.203, .364]
Y_{hous}	.247	.04	-.000 [0.175, .316]	Y_{hous}	.207	.05	-.000 [0.124, .292]
Y_{fin}	.162	.05	-.000 [0.087, .237]	Y_{fin}	.225	.06	-.000 [0.137, .317]

VERIFIED

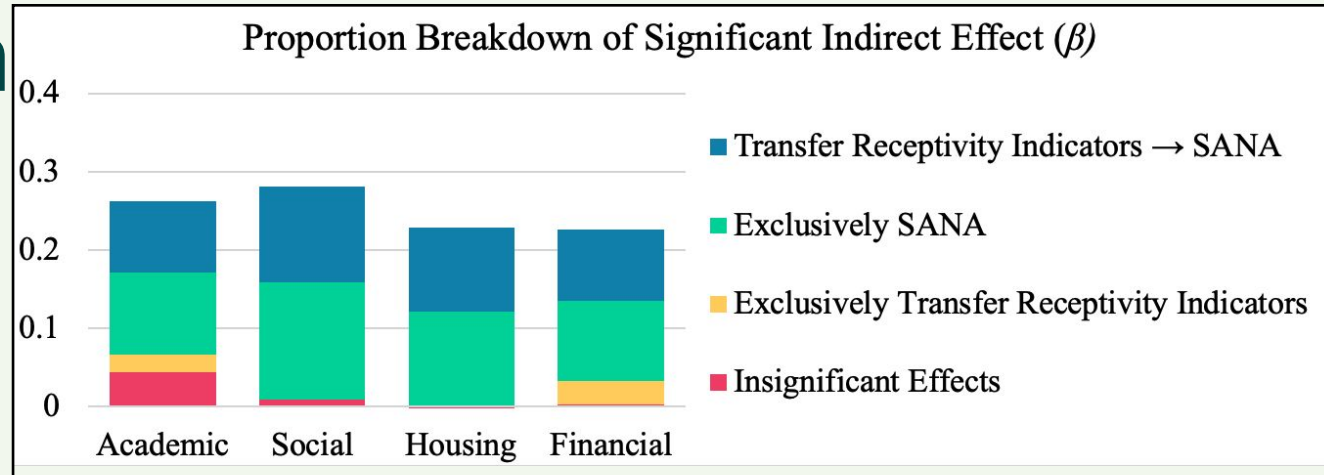
Evidence for Mediation Indirect Effect

Note. Red portion represents indirect effects which were not significant.

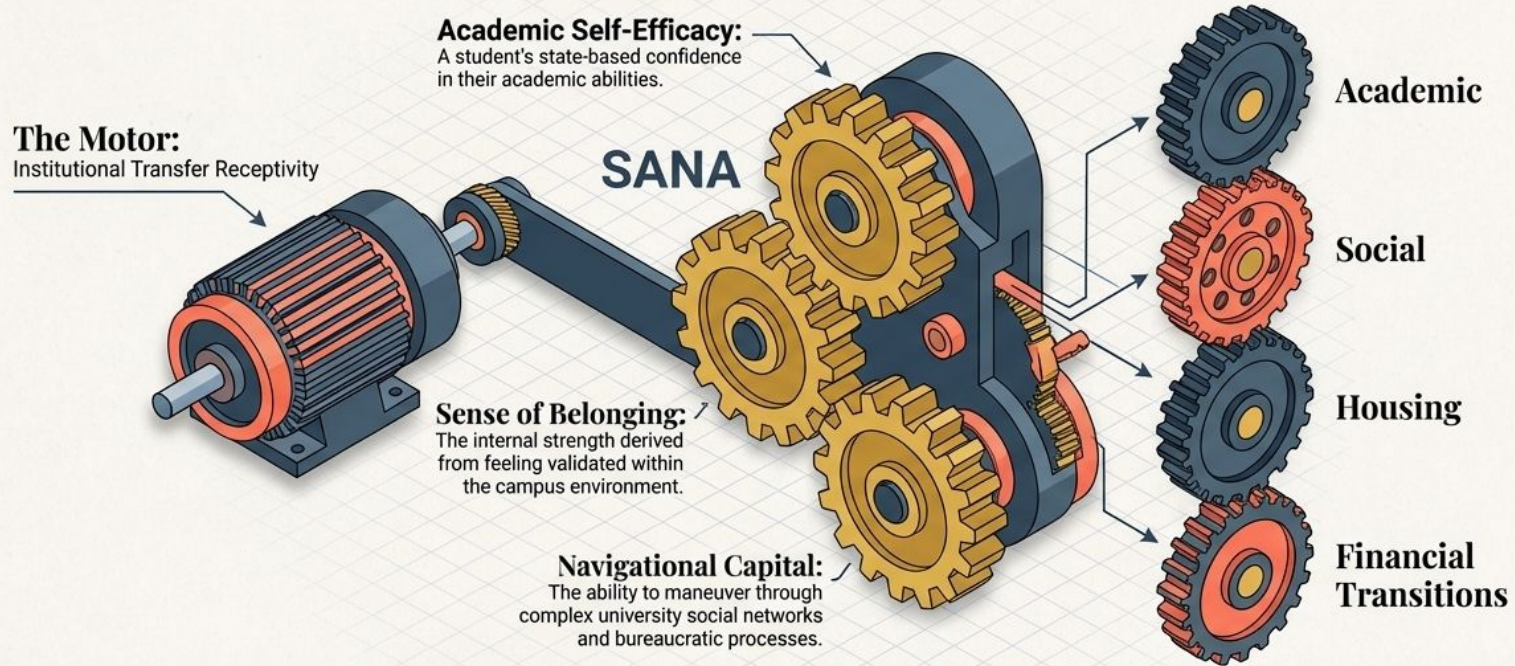


Evidence for Mediation Indirect Effect

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The SANA Gearbox: Cultivating Internal Architecture



Students' internal assets (SANA) are highly vulnerable to environmental quality. When the institution applies a Transfer Receptive Culture, it turns these gears, directly powering a smoother transition process.

Takeaways

What does this mean for instructors, and student support staff?

Faculty & Staff can be transfer receptive when:

- They successfully translate feelings of welcome, support a positive reputation for transfers, and communicate support to reduce stress coming from transfer timelines.
- Support students in the development of SANA
 - Develop higher levels of self-efficacy, belonging, and navigational capital
- This reinforcement & these affirmations are essential for supporting the assets of students

Discussion

- Find more items which creatively measure indicators of transfer receptivity as received by the student
- Assess same items with other campuses, broaden to multiple UCs to assess differences in climates
- Consider the *SANA* construct, and determine if this relevance to student outcomes is consistent for non-transfers; can be applied outside of transfer research

Reflection

- It's really fun to apply yourself and learn something! Self-discipline is a muscle and you don't have to whip it into shape; you can nurture it.
- Quantitative stats only tell a portion of the story- I think mixed-methods approaches likely accomplish more and give more accurate depictions of landscapes in the 21st century
- MPlus is way, way better than R for SEM. Just. Incomparable.

Questions?