

Beyond Aspiration Raising

A PhD project to evaluate a university-school partnership using self-determination theory

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Kings College, Guildford

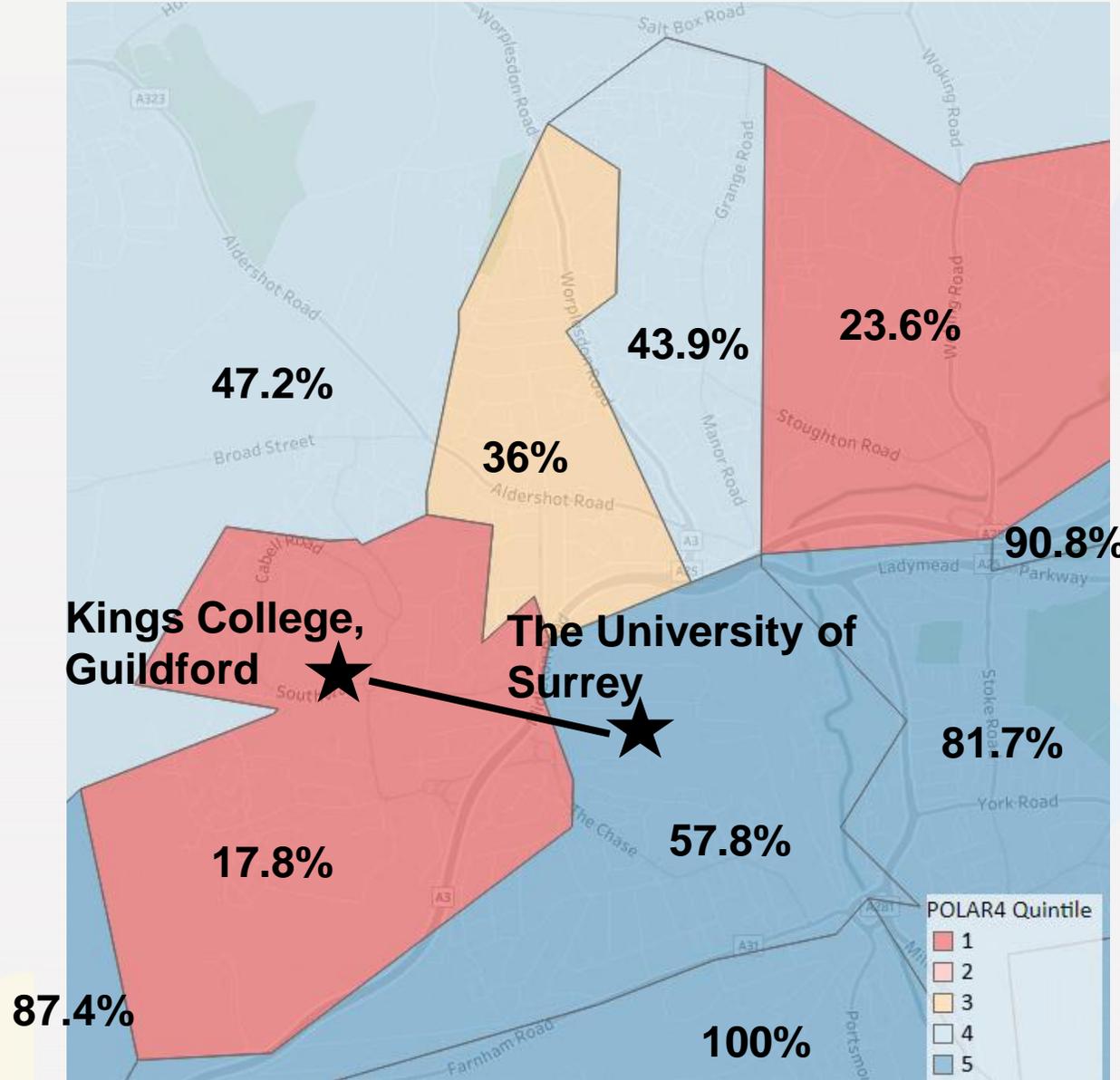


Polar 4 Quintiles, Guildford

POLAR4 Quintile

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

5 = Highest participation
1 = Lowest participation



POLAR4 Quintile

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

The Journey at Kings College, Guildford

- Prior to 2012 – 6 Heads in 5 years
- Kate Carriett – Appointed 2012
- 2012 OFSTED ‘Requires Improvement’
- Alastair McKenzie appointed Sep 2016
- OFSTED 2016 – ‘Special measures’
- Jan 2017 – Decisions, expectation and aspiration
- Feb 2017 – Hannah Trott arrives
- May 2017 – HMI Monitoring visit – ‘taking effective action’
- Sept 2017 – 100 minute lessons
- Sept 2017 - Building a culture of learning
- Dec 2017 – HMI Monitoring visit ‘taking effective action’
- June 2018 – Confirmed by OFSTED as “Good” – one of the fastest ever turn arounds of a secondary school

The WP Coordinator Role

- Employed by the University of Surrey.
- Line Managed by the Head of WP.
- Recognised as a school staff member.
- Duties and role tailored to providing attainment and aspirations support at Kings.
- Delivering the sustained programme of activities.
- Assessing ways that the whole institution can support the school.
- Getting undergraduate/postgraduate students involved in school life.
- Embedding university within school.



Background/rationale:

- Much evaluation research of WP programmes focussed on well embedded US programmes; experimental evaluation of UK based programmes is limited (Younger, Gascoine, Menzies, & Torgerson, 2018).
- Multi-component 'black-box' interventions appear to have some positive outcomes, but there is little evaluation of individual strands of these programmes to see which aspects are having an impact (Younger et al, 2018).
- Some analysis of UK based programmes e.g. AimHigher- difficulty in accessing 'hard' outcome data. Some studies have addressed this using school level data (Chilosi, Noble, Broadhead, & Wilkinson, 2010; Emmerson, 2006)

Aspiration as an outcome:

- Much WP policy and activity has been focussed on aspiration raising (Harrison and Waller, 2018)
- Evidence that aspirations in low socio-economic groups are actually high, (Baker et al., 2014; St. Clair, Kintrea, & Houston, 2013) and that **expectations** of future attendance at university are low, creating an aspirations-expectations gap (Harrison & Waller, 2018; St. Clair, Kintrea, & Houston, 2013).
- A gap between aspiration and expectation of university attendance is more likely in students from a disadvantaged background (Boxer, Goldstein, DeLorenzo, Savoy, & Mercado, 2011)

A concurrence of high aspirations, high expectations and high achievement may serve as the best predictor of participation in Higher Education (Khattab, 2015).



Approach to evaluation

- Evaluate individual strands of the 'Finding our Futures' programme
- Chiefly quasi-experimental design
- Examine 'soft' outcomes:
 - aspiration and expectation of HE attendance
 - establish if there is an aspiration/expectation gap
 - is any gap in aspiration/expectation reduced after the interventions?
- Test a mechanism for change- how are the interventions acting to alter aspirations/expectations of HE attendance?

Theoretical perspective

Examination of *how* any changes in aspiration or expectation may occur is key to understanding which particular element of the interventions is effective

SELF DETERMINATION THEORY (SDT)

- Concerned with motivation type and goal setting behaviour
- These feed in to fulfilment of basic psychological needs – competence, relatedness, autonomy.
- Autonomous motivation, rooted in our own desire to achieve, and intrinsically aligned goals, aspirations driven by internal satisfaction over external reward, are predictors of goal realisation (Koestner and Hope, 2014).

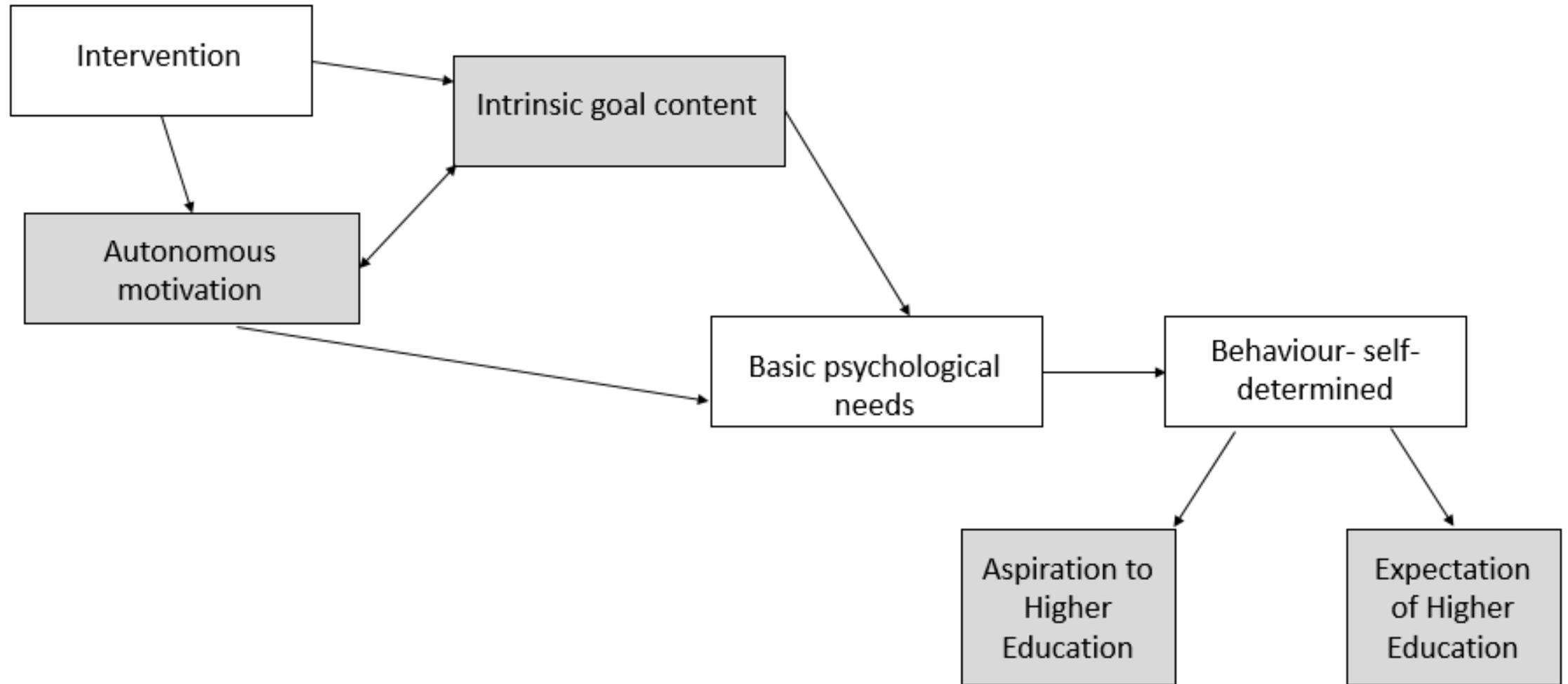
SDT and academic outcomes

- Autonomy supportive teaching associated with development of autonomous student motivation (Guay and Ratelle, 2008).
- Extrinsically regulated, controlled motivation types associated with negative behaviours e.g. school drop-out (Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997)



- Intrinsic goal contents predict deeper learning/mastery learning (Fryer, Ginns, & Walker, 2014).
- Extrinsic goals associated with poorer exam outcomes (Ku, Dittmar, & Banerjee, 2014).

Theoretical model



Sample and measures

- Intervention group sample from King's College Guildford.
- Control group sample from matched schools in Surrey area.
- Quasi-experimental design, possible RCT later in the evaluation.

Measures:

- Self-report Likert style questionnaire
- Aspirations Index – measure of goal contents
- Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Academic) – measure of motivation type
- Questions about aspirations/expectations of HE



Key aims

- Do the Finding our Futures interventions change students' aspirations or expectations of attending university?
- Is any gap in aspirations/expectations reduced?
- How might these changes occur – what is the mechanism?

Research questions

- i) Does the intervention affect aspiration and/or expectation of attending university?
- ii) Does the intervention affect goal contents or motivation type?
- iii) Are any changes in aspiration or expectation mediated through goal contents or motivation type?