

Predictors of university student well-being and post-traumatic growth in times of COVID-19 in the Netherlands.

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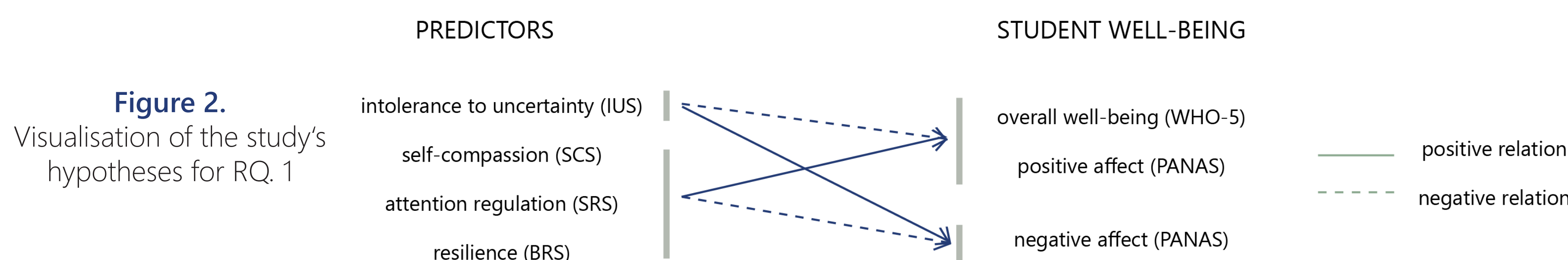
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1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND



The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected **university students' mental health** (Pierce et al., 2020). Individual factors found to be linked to student well-being encompass **intolerance to uncertainty, self-compassion, attention regulation, and resilience** (see Figure 1; Baltaci, 2021; Deniz, 2021; Li et al., 2020; White, 2022). At the same time, students may have grown due to having experienced the pandemic in terms of **post-traumatic growth** (PTG) (Baños et al., 2021).

RQ.1 How do individual factors predict students' pandemic-related well-being (Figure 2)?



RQ.2 How have students experienced PTG and how does it relate to their well-being?

RQ.3 Which positive and negative insights did students gain?

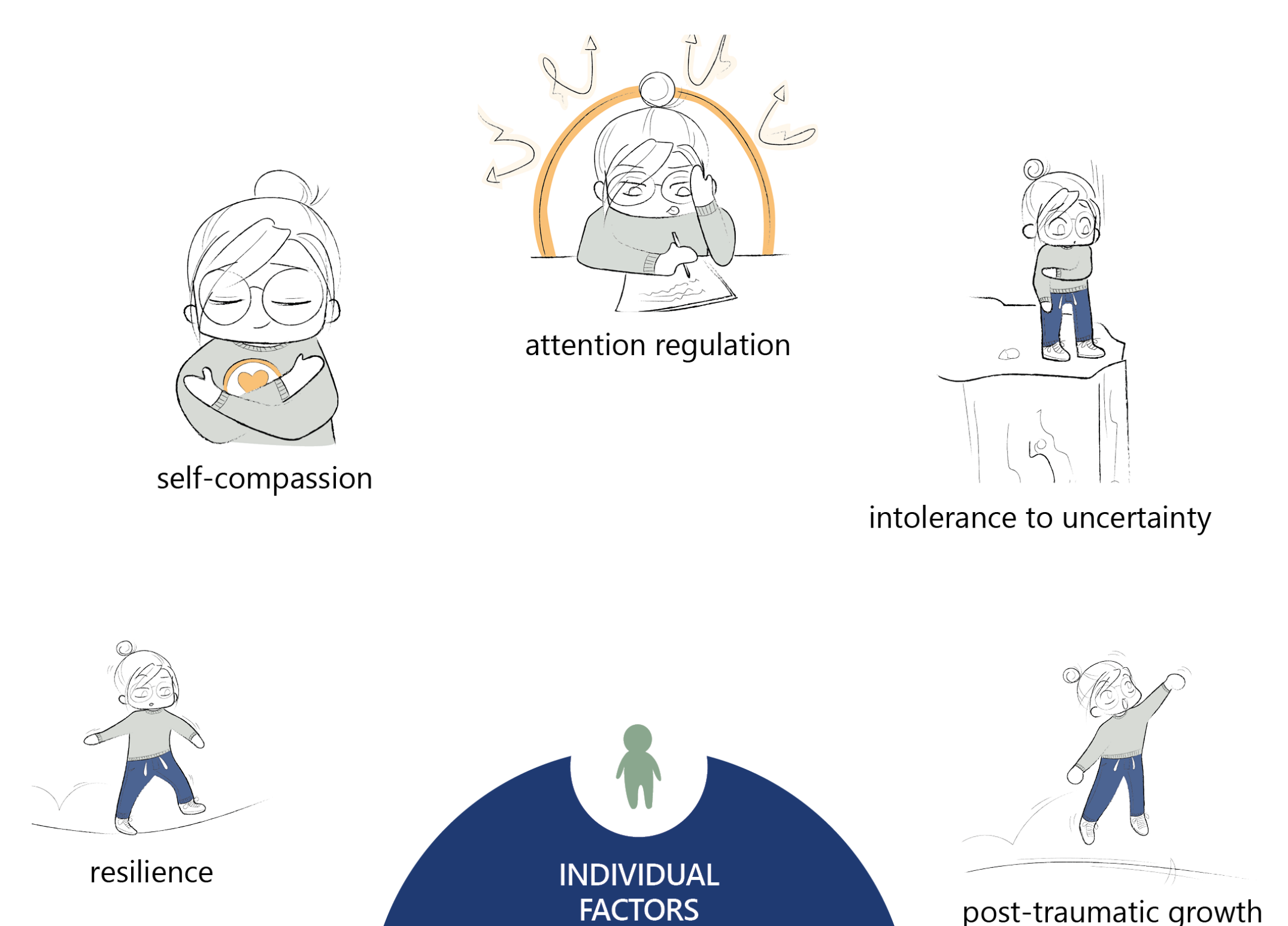


Figure 1. Individual factors investigated

2 METHOD

Design: mixed-method survey with quantitative measures (see Figure 2) including Posttraumatic Growth Inventory, and qualitative open-ended questions.

Sample: University students of a Dutch university ($N = 653$, $M_{age} = 22.1$, $SD = 2.8$, $n_{woman} = 406$, $n_{other} = 11$)

Analysis: multiple regression for quantitative measures, thematic analysis for qualitative data

3 RESULTS

Individual factors: Attention regulation and self-compassion predicted overall and emotional well-being the most, resilience only emotional well-being, and intolerance to uncertainty only negative affect (see Table 1).

Post-traumatic growth: Only predicts overall well-being and positive affect, with "Relating to Others" as strongest and "Personal Strength" as weakest predictor.

Students' positive and negative insights coincided with PTG, as students stress increased appreciation and mentioned all three post-traumatic growth subscales:

"With the recorded lectures and online tutorials, it has allowed me to have a life that doesn't revolve around school." (Life Values and Opportunities)

"Getting to know many people much better." (Relating to Others)

"I also found out that I am stronger than I thought after all." (Personal Strength)



Table 1. Results of the multiple regressions for the individual factors; with individual factors (Model 2), overall post-traumatic growth (PTG, Model 3), and PTG subscales (Model 4).

Model	β WHO-5			β pos affect			β neg affect		
	2	3	4 ¹	2	3	4 ¹	2	3	4 ¹²
Individual Factors									
Prospective anxiety	.03	.01	.00	.07	.04	.04	.06	.06	-
Inhibitory anxiety	-.06	-.08	-.07	-.07	-.09*	-.09*	.10*	.10*	-
Attention regulation	.38**	.38**	.38**	.37**	.36**	.37**	-.23**	-.23**	-
Self-compassion	.25**	.19**	.19**	.25**	.18**	.17**	-.33**	-.33**	-
Resilience	.08	.09*	.10*	.09*	.10*	.10*	-.10*	-.10*	-
Post-traumatic growth									
Overall PTG		.21**			.28**			-.00	
Relating to others			.16**			.18**			-
Personal strength			.04			.02			-
Life values & opportunities			.05			.15**			-
adjusted R^2	.43	.47	.47	.40	.47	.48	.47	.47	-

Note. $p = * < 0.05$, $** < 0.01$; Model 1 including students' sociodemographic information is not displayed due to clarity

¹ Model 4 was run as an alternative to Model 3, also following Model 1 and 2 and including the PTG subscales instead of the overall score

² We did not run Model 4 for Negative Affect given that PTG did not have any significant influence already in Model 3

4 CONCLUSION

Main insights: Attention regulation and self-compassion as main predictors; students report a positive well-being impact (qualitatively); they appear to have grown, particularly regarding life appreciation and relating to others

Take-home-message: Promoting student well-being in academia can and should particularly target attention regulation and self-compassion; post-pandemic academia can benefit from insights that students took away from the COVID-19 period

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