We first examined the factor structure of the 8 APSI items. Despite the fact that this scale is used widely to measure Sense of Identity in adolescence a review of the literature shows that this scale has never been analysed properly for it psychometric properties. Because it contains many of the ideas that are seen as contributing to a sense of purpose such as values and morals (Heine et al. 2006 ), understanding of self and fit in the world (Steger,20??, Wong, 20??), we see this as a scale that represents purpose in life. In any event based on the literature and how this measure is used in practice (Lounsbury et al., 2007, Lounsbury et al., 2004) we tested a one factor model using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) the fit was reasonable but the items clearly did not all load on one factor (see table 1).

Eiganvalues suggested there was one factor but parallel analysis suggested four factors. The first eigenvalue showed that the first factor explained 51% of the variance, the second 16% of the variance, and a third factor 10% of the variance. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using oblimin rotations was used to examine two, three and four, factor solutions. None of these resulted in an excellent fit based on REMSEA, TLI and CFI fit indices.

During several steps, a total of four items were eliminated because they did not contribute to a simple factor structure and failed to meet a minimum criteria of having a primary factor loading of .4 or above, and no cross-loading of .3 or above. The item “Spent more time with girlfriend/boyfriend” did not load above .3 on any factor. The item “Found a way to relax” had factor loadings between .3 and .4 on both Reference to Others and Problem-solving. “Improved my relationship with others” had similar factor loadings, between .4 and .5, on Reference to Others and Problem-solving. Finally, “Prayed for help and guidance” had a primary factor loading of .53 on the Non-productive factor (which was well defined by 7 other items) and a cross-loading of .37 on Problem-solving coping for the varimax solution. In addition, this item had a floor effect, with 42% of students reporting not using this strategy at all.

A principle-components factor analysis of the remaining 14 items, using varimax and oblimin rotations was conducted, with the three factors explaining 49% of the variance. An oblimin rotation provided the best defined factor structure. All items had primary loadings over .5 and only one item had a cross-loading above .3 (Kept fit and healthy), however this item had a strong primary loading of .74. The factor loading matrix for this final solution is presented in Table 1.