ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND BURNOUT PROFILES AMONG FINNISH UNIVERSITY AND APPLIED-UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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STUDY ENGAGEMENT AND BURNOUT AMONG STUDENTS
ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND BURNOUT

- **Study engagement**: positive, fulfilling study-related state of mind
- **Study burnout**: prolonged negative response to emotional and interpersonal stressor
  - e.g. ongoing difficulties in coping with the pressure to achieve with studies
- Multidimensional theory of engagement and burnout
- Demands-resources model
  - Study engagement and burnout are parallel processes
  - Demands – burnout – drop-out, lower well-being
  - Resources – engagement – study achievement, higher well-being

STUDY ENGAGEMENT

• Three dimensions
  • **Energy**: high levels of vigor and energy while studying
  • **Dedication**:  
    • Positive cognitive attitude toward studying in general  
    • Perception of studying as meaningful  
    • Sense of significance, enthusiasm, challenge, and inspiration  
  • **Absorption**: being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one’s studying so that time passes quickly

(Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2012)
STUDY BURNOUT

- Three dimensions
  - **Exhaustion:**
    - study related feelings of strain
    - chronic fatigue resulting from overtaxing work with studies
  - **Cynicism:**
    - indifferent or a distal attitude toward studying in general
    - Loss of interest in one’s academic work, and not seeing it as meaningful
  - **Inadequacy / lack of study related efficacy:**
    - Diminished feelings of competence
    - Less successful achievement
    - Lack of accomplishment in studies

(Salmela-Aro, Kiuru, Leskinen, & Nurmi, 2009)
FINNISH UNIVERSITY AND APPLIED-UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

- Tertiary level education
- Straight after secondary level, only 30% of young people continue at tertiary level
  - gap year(s)
- University entrance mainly after age 20
- Finnish Student Health Service
  - National Student Health Survey
RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

1. What kinds of latent profiles of academic engagement and burnout can be identified among university and applied university students?
   – Expected to find similar profiles that have been found in previous research among students (Tuominen-Soini & Salmela-Aro, 2013)
METHODS, PARTICIPANTS

- National Student Health Survey 2008, 2012, 2016 (Finnish Student Health Service)
- E-mail and paper questionnaires
- Undergraduate students under age of 35 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n (EDA &amp; SBI)</td>
<td>5005 (50.2 %)</td>
<td>4324 (43.4 %)</td>
<td>3110 (31.1 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender (female)</td>
<td>63.5 %</td>
<td>63.0 %</td>
<td>65.4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age (whole sample):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 25 years</td>
<td>57.6 %</td>
<td>57.8 %</td>
<td>58.0 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-29 years</td>
<td>31.3 %</td>
<td>30.3 %</td>
<td>27.3 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-34 years</td>
<td>11.0 %</td>
<td>11.9 %</td>
<td>14.7 %</td>
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</table>
STUDY ENGAGEMENT INVENTORY
(Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2012)
9 items
- **Energy** “When I study, I feel that I am bursting with energy”
- **Dedication** “I am enthusiastic about my studies”
- **Absorption** “Time flies when I’m studying”

Range: 1 (completely disagree) – 6 (completely agree)
- One dimensions of overall study engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2016</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach α</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.94</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
STUDY BURNOUT INVENTORY
(Salmela-Aro, et al., 2009)
9 items

- **Exhaustion** with studies “*I feel overwhelmed by the work related to my studies*”
- **Cynicism** towards the meaning of studies “*I feel that I am losing interest in my studies*”
- Sense of **inadequacy** as a student “*I often have feelings of inadequacy in my studies*”
- Range: 1 (completely disagree) – 6 (completely agree)
- Three dimensions of study burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Cronbach α</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequacy</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.74</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LATENT PROFILE ANALYSIS

- Person-oriented method
- Aims to recover hidden groups from observed data
- Model-based modification of cluster analysis
RESULTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Exhaustion</th>
<th>Cynicism</th>
<th>Inadequacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaged-exhausted</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inefficacious</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burned-out</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SIZE OF THE PROFILE GROUPS

- Engaged: 38%
- Engaged-exhausted: 33%
- Inefficacious: 22%
- Burned-out: 7%
PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
NEED OF TARGETED INTERVENTIONS
Engaged-exhausted

Inefficacious

Burnout, cynicism

DEMANDS
- **Workload** – too many demands exhaust
- Insufficient **control** over the resources
- Lack of intrinsic and extrinsic **reward**
- Loss of positive connections with others – lack of thriving **community**
- Conflicting **values**
- Lack of mutual respect and **fairness** between people
CHANGE THE INDIVIDUAL OR THE ORGANIZATION?
Engaged-exhausted

- Change the individual
- It is possible to learn to cope with stress and reduce exhaustion

Inefficacious

- Individual interventions
- Self-compassion
- Depression prevention

Burnout, cynicism

- Change the organization
- Promote meaning and purpose
- Promote engagement with studies
- Community and values
- High risk for drop-out
DISCUSSION

• Limitations
  – Skewed data
• But there is a need for targeted engagement promotion and burnout prevention interventions
• More research and development are needed on targeted interventions
THANK YOU

Contact me!
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@Elina_ma
CHANGE THE INDIVIDUAL OR THE ORGANIZATION?
PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT OR PREVENT BURNOUT?
PERSON-ORIENTED RESEARCH

- The main interest
  - meaningful groups of individuals
  - typical patterns that appear in subgroups of individuals
- The research paradigm
  - The individual is the focus
    - Seen as a functioning totality
- Room for different types of individuals rather than compressing everyone into one mean

ENGAGED-EXHAUSTED

- **Workload** – too many demands exhaust
- Changing individual – it is possible to learn to cope with the demands and reduce exhaustion
INEFFICACIOUS
- Insufficient control over the resources
- Lack of intrinsic and extrinsic reward

Individual interventions
- Self-compassion
- Depression prevention
BURNED-OUT
- Loss of positive connections with others – lack of thriving 
  community
- Conflicting values

CYNICAL
- Lack of mutual respect and 
  fairness between people
BURNED-OUT AND CYNICAL
- ? Changing the organization
- Promote meaning and purpose
- Promote engagement with studies
- Community and values
- High risk for drop-out

Study engagement

Small effect

Exhaustion

Medium effect

No effect

Inadequacy

Medium effect