

TRANSFORMING WORK: PROFILES OF WORK INTENSIFICATION AND BURNOUT IN ON-SITE AND REMOTE WORK

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Taina Hintsa¹, Sampsa Puttonen², Petri Karkkola¹

¹ University of Eastern Finland

² University of Tampere, Finland

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BACKGROUND

The Covid-19 pandemic transformed work permanently.

Work intensification in forms of increase in work demands and pace has led to additional pressures on employees and experiences of stress.

Prolonged exposure to stress can lead to burnout. A recent study (investigating technology's impact on burn-out) showed that poor digital transformation and disorganised policies are key factors driving the increase in burnout in the post-pandemic era.

The aim of the present study was to identify work intensification profiles and study how these profiles relate to burnout in on-site and remote workers.

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METHODS

A working population based three-wave data was collected between September 2023 and in March 2024.

We used the first timepoint to examine latent profiles of work intensification and levels of burnout in on-site and remote workers.

Work intensification was assessed with the intensification of job demands scale¹ And burnout was measured with Burnout Assessment Tool² using the dimensions of exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive impairment, and emotional impairment.

The data was analyzed with Latent Profile Analysis. Number of latent profiles was determined separately in on-site and remote work.

1 Kubicek, B., Paškvan, M., & Korunka, C. (2015). Development and validation of an instrument for assessing job demands arising from accelerated change: The intensification of job demands scale (IDS). European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 24(6), 898–913. In Finnish Mauno S et. al. 2019
2 Schaufeli, W., Desart, S. & De Witte, H. (2020). The Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) – development, validity and reliability. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17, 9495. In Finnish Keltiainen & Hakonen, 2022

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DATA

- Participants n=1060 (women 50,7%)
- Way of working (number of women)
 - On-site work n=645 (342)
 - Remote n=153 (71)
 - Combination (partly on-site/partly remote) n= 116 (47)
 - Hybrid n=131 (61)
 - Other n=15 (8)
- Occupational status (number of women)
 - Manager or superior n=131 (47)
 - Expert or officer n=409 (207)
 - Employee/worker n=489 (263)
 - Other n=31 (20)

Age	On-site	Remote
18-20	21	2
21-30	164	29
31-40	152	33
41-50	147	40
51-60	110	42
61-70	45	7

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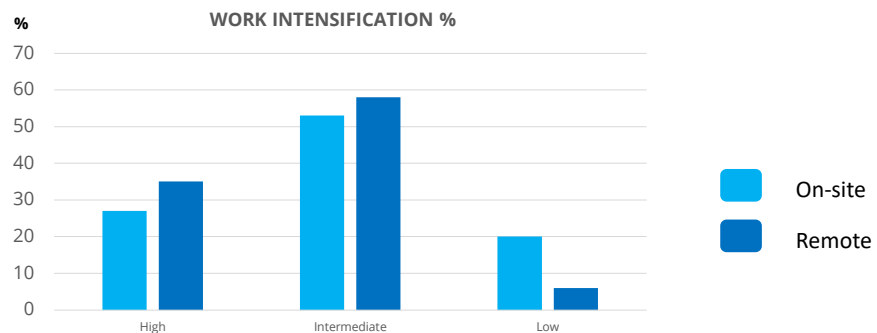
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RESULTS

The work intensification profiles were

- 1) high intensification (27 % of on-site workers, 35 % of remote workers)
- 2) intermediate intensification (53 % of on-site workers, 58 % of remote workers)
- 3) low intensification (20 % of on-site workers, 6 % of remote workers).



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WORK INTENSIFICATION AND BURNOUT

- Among both on-site and remote workers, **high work intensification was related to higher burnout.**
- Comparing the moderate work intensification profile and high work intensification profile, **exhaustion was higher in the high intensification profile.**
- Among on-site workers, high work intensification was related to **higher cognitive impairment.**

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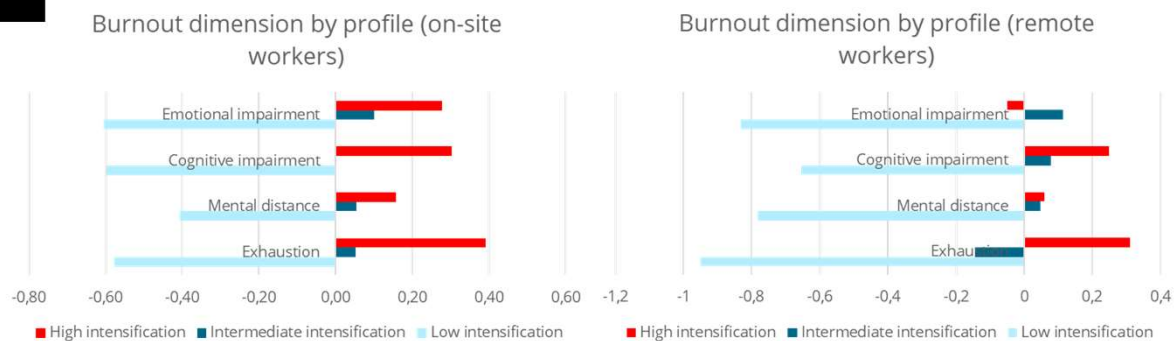
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WORK INTENSIFICATION AND DIMENSIONS OF BURNOUT



Figures show the standardised means of the four burnout dimensions among the different work intensification profiles.

It seems that in high intensification profiles, **on-site workers experience more symptoms of emotional impairment** compared to the sample mean. Remote workers do not.

These potential differences should be further examined and formally tested.

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EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

LIMITATIONS

- because no measurement invariance testing was done, it is not clear whether the profiles have the same meaning across the two groups (on-site workers and remote workers)
- the cross-sectional designs precludes conclusions about stability of the profile membership and factors facilitating transitions from one profile to another

STRENGTHS

- standard measures – comparable results
- sample size ok
- The study provides information about way of working and burnout in times of extensive increase of digital work after Covid-pandemia

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CONCLUSIONS

Low work intensification seems to be rarer among remote workers. Therefore, remote workers may be at a higher risk of burnout.

In on-site workers, high work intensification may increase the risk of

- impaired cognitive performance
- symptoms of emotional impairment

These should be considered when developing new on-site work practices.

Next research ideas: to study profiles and transitions including the two latter timepoints (spring 2024 and autumn 2024)