**FinEdu STUDY**

The aim of this multidisciplinary research project is to study the educational transitions and choices that young people face after compulsory comprehensive education. Specifically, the study concerns the transition from comprehensive school to secondary education and the subsequent transition to either working life or to further education.

**Why?**

Our purpose is to identify different career pathways and the factors that explain the processes taking place in young adulthood. The aim is to investigate the educational transitions and choices of youth with a special emphasis on the role of personal goals, motivation, and subjective well-being.

How to facilitate the transition to adulthood; how to promote resilience and positive adjustment even in the face of adversity; what are the familial resources that enhance socialization, social ties that can strengthen connections to educational and workplace settings, and institutional and state policies as well as practices that can alter the trajectories of youth, especially those at risk.

**DATA COLLECTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samples</th>
<th>Time of Measurement</th>
<th>Samples</th>
<th>Time of Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample 1: General upper secondary school students</td>
<td>T1 9th grade, N = 707, BD, PQ, Age = 16</td>
<td>Sample 2: General upper secondary school students</td>
<td>T1 General upper secondary, 2nd year, N = 614, BD, PQ, Age = 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>T2 9th grade, N = 542 BD, PQ, Age = 16</td>
<td>T2 General upper secondary, 3rd year, N = 616, BD, Age = 19</td>
<td>T3 Next stage 1st year, N = 818, BD, Age = 17</td>
<td>T4 Next stage 1st year, N = 449, BD, Age = 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>T4 Next stage 2nd year, N = 749, BD, Age = 18</td>
<td>T5 Next stage 3rd-4th year, N = 422, BD, Age = 23</td>
<td>T5 Next stage 4th-5th year, N = 611 BD, Age = 21</td>
<td>T6 Next stage 6th year, BD, Age = 25</td>
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<td>T6 Next stage 7th year, BD, Age = 23</td>
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Note: Black vertical bars represent the transition points from lower secondary to secondary education and from secondary to tertiary education. BD = Basic data collection; PQ = Parental questionnaire; PD = Peer data

Table 1. A description of samples and data collection of the FinEdu study.

**RESULTS**

Our results show that adolescence is not a uniform time of disengagement and distress. A majority of students navigate through adolescence without notable problems and some of them even seem to flourish and become increasingly motivated and engaged in studying, while only some students encounter declining motivation and different types of adjustment problems.

**School burnout and engagement**

Development of reliable and quick methods for the assessment of:

1. Schoolwork engagement (the EDA inventory) comprising energy, dedication and absorption as related to schoolwork.
2. School burnout characterised by exhaustion, cynicism toward the meaning of school, and a sense of inadequacy at school.

- Both prolonged exhaustion caused by schoolwork and cynicism toward school inevitably lead to an increased sense of inadequacy.
- Burnout can lead to depression. Students who have learning difficulties often experience a sense of inadequacy, which, if prolonged, leads to depression.
- Avoidance and segregation of the groups of burned out students emerges.
- Burnout is shared in the family context.

**Student motivation and well-being**

- Four groups of students with distinct motivational profiles can be identified among lower and upper secondary school students.
- Both mastery- and success-oriented students are highly engaged in studying and find their schoolwork meaningful, although success-oriented students’ stronger concerns with performance seem to make them more vulnerable to emotional distress and burnout.
- Indifferent students acknowledge the importance of learning and doing well in school but, still, they do not necessarily thrive in school.
- Avoidance-oriented students show the most maladaptive pattern of motivation and well-being.

**Adolescents’ educational expectations and social capital**

- Adolescents’ career goal-related social ties reveal that social ties are associated with educational track after compulsory school above and beyond SES, GPA, and family structure.
- Adolescents who name a teacher or a romantic partner are more likely to enter vocational track, while adolescents who name their father are more likely to enter academic track.
- Parents’ psychological control show that the lower parents’ SES and the more psychological control they impose, the lower the educational aspirations for their children and the lower the child’s GPA. The impact of SES is partially mediated by psychological control.
- Five trajectories of educational expectations from adolescence to young adulthood emerge: stable-university (39%), stable-vocational (16%), stable-technical (24%), increasing expectations (10%), and decreasing expectations (11%).

**Well-being and the financial situation of young adults**

- Income at age 20 consists mainly of paychecks and governmental or parental aid. 65% receive income from multiple sources.
- Over one third of young adults are employed after the transition from upper secondary school, mainly in fixed term (76%) and part-time (58%) jobs.
- Five well-being trajectories across the transition to adulthood emerge: moderate-stable well-being (41%), high-stable well-being (27%), moderate-increasing well-being (17%), low-stable well-being (8%), and high-decreasing well-being (7%).
- Young adults’ subjective well-being trajectories are related to objective and subjective measures of the financial situation. The first two large classes with high and stable trajectories indicate higher objective and subjective income levels at age 22 than the other trajectories, with the exception of the “Decreasing well-being” class, which also shows high objective income level.

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**


