

# Doctoral experience –survey

Preliminary findings

Social Science Doctoral Students

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# Background

- Research on doctoral education since 2006-
- Main areas of interest: engagement, well-being, supervision, scholarly communities as learning environments, doctoral student learning.
- Multimethod systemic designs
- Surveys, video data, interviews etc.
- Data collected from
  - Researcher communities
  - Supervisors
  - Doctoral Students
  - Post docs

# Comparable measures

## Finnish data

- Motivation
- Key experiences
- Academic writing
- Engagement
- Burnout
- No post doc data
- More extensive measures on supervision
- No measures on perceptions about research

## Spanish/UK data

- Motivation
- Key experiences
- Academic writing
- Engagement
- Burnout
- More extensive measures on national/international collaboration
- No measures on doctoral courses

# Participants

- Altogether 236 social science doctoral students from two major multidisciplinary research intensive universities from Finland
  - University of Oulu (n=127)
  - University of Helsinki (n=109)
- The participants were majoring in Social sciences
- The participants included 183 women (77.5%) and 53 men (22.5%), age mode: 30-34 years
- Data were collected with the modified version of doctoral experience-survey via online survey.

# Demography of the participants

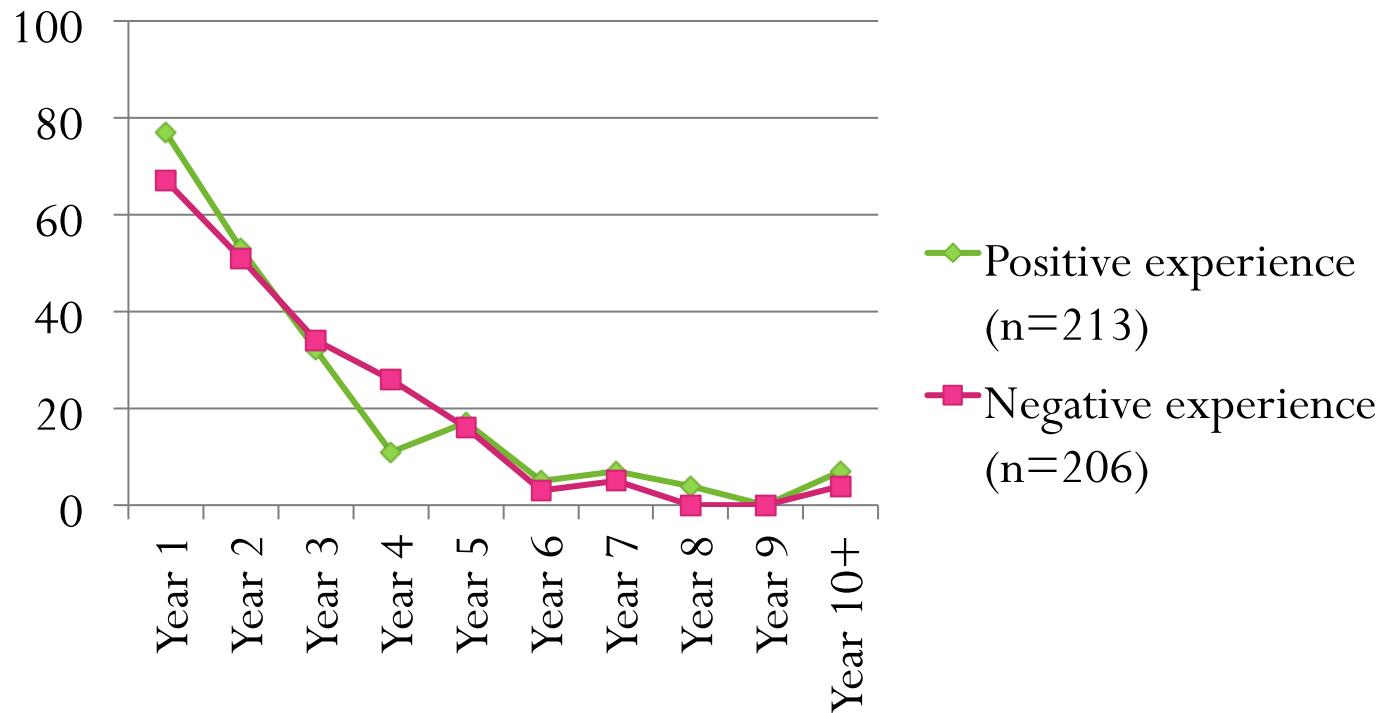
	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Thesis format</b>	Monograph	77	33.0
("don't know" n=7; 3%)	Article(s)	149	63.9
<b>Research group status</b>	Alone	181	76.7
	In Group	10	4.2
	Both	45	19.1
<b>Full-time / Part-time</b>	Full-time	120	52.4
	Part-time	109	47.6
<b>"Country of origin"</b>	Domestic	220	93.2
	International	16	6.8

Interest	Mean	SD
F1: I am inspired by the work as researcher. (item 17)	5.74	1.27
F1: After graduating I want to get a post-doc at a university. (9)	4.71	1.90
F1: I want to work in a research community. (4)	4.95	1.73
F1: I want to contribute to my field of research. (15)	5.65	1.39
F1: I am inspired by my research topic. (1)	6.52	0.67
F2: I want to get a better position. (2)	5.04	1.69
F2: I want to get a better salary. (5)	4.26	1.78
F2: My job prospects are better after doctoral degree. (16)	3.79	1.84
F2: Degree is required in my future work. <sup>a</sup> (13)	3.72	2.08
F2: I want to have a doctoral degree. (7)	5.77	1.40
F3: Finding out new things is fascinating. (8)	6.49	0.80
F3: I want to develop my skills. (6)	6.52	0.69
F3: I want to develop myself. (10)	6.52	0.74
F3: I want to complete what I started. (11)	6.28	1.04
F3: I enjoy intellectual challenges. <sup>b</sup> (3)	6.40	0.82
F3: My research is useful for others. <sup>b</sup> (12)	5.82	1.12
I did not have other career prospects in sight. <sup>c</sup> (14)	2.17	1.74

# Interest in doctoral studies

- Three factor structure was detected:
  - F1: Research interest
  - F2: Instrumental interest
  - F3: Development interest
- Students with....
  - instrumental interest were more likely to consider dropping out than those with research or development interest ( $p < .01$ )
  - research ( $r = .14, p < .05$ ) or development interest ( $r = .14, p < .05$ ) were more satisfied with their doctoral studies. Satisfaction with doctoral studies.
  - research interest were more satisfied with the supervision ( $r = .14, p < .05$ )

# Temporal location of critical experiences





# Satisfaction with doctoral studies and supervision, attrition and change of supervisor

		Mean	SD
Satisfaction with doctoral studies		4.57	1.30
Satisfaction with supervision		5.34	1.54
		Frequency	Percentage %
Dropout consideration	Yes	72	31.6
	No	156	68.4
Change of supervisor	Yes	46	19.5
	No	161	68.2
	Has considered	29	12.3

- Full-time doctoral students were more satisfied with their doctoral studies ( $p < .05$ ) than part-time students.
- Part-time students were overrepresented among those who had considered dropping out of doctoral studies ( $p < .05$ , adj. res. 2.0).

# Frequency of supervision

Daily	1.3%
Weekly	20.2%
Monthly	30.9%
Once in every other month	18.5%
Once in six month	19.3%
Seldom	9.9%

Typical source of supervision: Two or more supervisors (58.9%),  
[one supervisor (39.4%)]

Less frequent supervision was related to consideration of dropping out, lower levels of satisfaction with supervision and doctoral studies

# Perceptions on academic writing

Writing scales	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Procrastination					
2. Creative activity	-.14*				
3. Perfectionism	.40**	-.04			
4. Negative thoughts	.42**	-.24**	.24**		
5. Blocks	.73**	-.09	.40**	.37**	
6. Productivity	-.58**	.27**	-.13*	-.27**	-.57**

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

# Experienced engagement, burnout and stress

- Engagement: vigor, dedication and absorption
- Burnout :exhaustion, cynicism and inadequacy
- Stress: one item stress.
- Those who have considered dropping out experienced less engagement ( $p < .001$ ), more burnout ( $p < .001$ ) and more stress ( $p < .01$ )
- No significant differences between full-time/part-time students
- Those students who receive supervision seldom (less frequently than once in six months) experienced less dedication ( $p < .05$ ) and more cynicism ( $p < .01$ ) than those who receive support more often

# Satisfaction, engagement, burnout, stress, interest in doctoral studies

SCALES	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. F1 I-RESSEARCH											
2. F2 I-INSTRUMENTAL	.21**										
3. F3 I-DEVELOPMENT	.46**	.06									
4. SATISFACTION DS	.14*	.00	.14*								
5. SATISFACTION SUP	.14*	0.04	.01	.57**							
6. E-VIGOR	.39**	-.03	.46**	.26**	.18**						
7. E-DEDICATION	.46**	-.02	.47**	.28**	.25**	.83**					
8. E-ABSORPTION	.37**	-.01	.44**	.18**	.13	.74**	.69**				
9. EXHAUSTION	-.01	.11	-.10	-.23**	-.15*	-.41**	-.33**	-.19**			
10. CYNICISM	-.31**	.02	-.31**	-.37**	-.33**	-.59**	-.67**	-.38**	.38**		
11. INADEQUACY	-.21**	.06	-.22**	-.30**	-.28**	-.56**	-.55**	-.39**	.69**	.58**	
12. STRESS	.05	.15*	-.07	-.21**	-.16*	-.35**	-.25**	-.14*	.74**	.32**	.55**