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Fredrik Røed

Sander Lervik Wang

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Abstract

Even though burnout has been a hot topic of research for decades, little is known about how the construct is influenced by an individual's view of stress. In this thesis, we will attempt to further the collective knowledge of these influences, while controlling for the level of telecommuting an employee is engaged in. A cross-sectional survey was presented to a sample size totaling 166 respondents. We utilized the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) for assessing the burnout levels of respondents. The survey was translated and provided to the respondents with both the original and a translated Norwegian version. The stress mindset measure (SMM) was utilized for measuring stress mindset. Our results indicate a negative relationship between one's stress mindset and total burnout score. Also, two out of the four dimensions showed a significant relationship to the construct. Lastly, we were able to achieve sufficient reliability scores but were not able to replicate the levels of the original in the translated version of the BAT.

Introduction

Burnout has, since its introduction five decades ago become a much researched, and widely known term throughout the general population (Koutsimani et al., 2019). Our intention with this thesis is to answer the future research segment stated by Casper et al., (2017) asking future researchers to investigate the role of stress mindset in the development of employee burnout. Crum et al., (2013) conceptualize a stress mindset as to how an individual interprets stress, either if it has enhancing consequences for stress-related outcomes, or that stress is debilitating, ultimately leading to worse outcomes, such as a decrease in performance, productivity, health, and well-being. For the other construct, burnout has been defined by Schaufeli et al., (2020B) as a level of exhaustion and mental detachment which occurs due to tiredness, decreased ability to regulate cognitive and emotional processes, and mental distance. It is our attempt in this paper to enhance the understanding of how the burnout experience could be affected by someone endorsing either a stress-is-enhancing or a stress-is-debilitating mindset. There seems to be a gap in the current literature when it comes to this relationship which we will attempt to help narrow down with our findings (Ben-Avi et al., 2018; Casper et al., 2017).

The topic of burnout has sparked interest among both employees and employers (Aumayr-Pintar et al., 2018). Researchers define burnout differently but, in this thesis, we will be utilizing Schaufeli et al., (2020B) definition. It states that burnout can be defined as a level of exhaustion and mental detachment which occurs due to tiredness, decreased ability to regulate cognitive and emotional processes, and mental distance. These four dimensions, exhaustion, mental distance, and emotional- and cognitive impairment account for burnout in these authors' conceptualization (Schaufeli et al., 2020B) and will be a recurring theme throughout this thesis.

We chose to include stress mindset, a relatively new concept to see how the construct would influence the burnout experience in our sample group. As mentioned, Crum et al., (2013) define two groupings, dependent on how the individual views stress. Having an enhancing stress mindset allows for positive outcomes as the mindset helps guide the individuals to respond to the stress in productive ways (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Our reasoning for conducting a thesis based on the influences of stress mindset is because as a construct, it is a less

known area of research that most have are yet to be fully familiarized with, and secondly, it seems how we view stress can modify our responses to external stressors, allowing us to better cope with uncertainty and increased demands (Casper et al., 2017). It seems the matter in which employees view stress can modify both the behavior and outcomes in individuals. More specifically, Crum et al., (2017) found that someone who views stress as something positive, and as an area for potential enhancement of behavior produced greater cognitive flexibility when compared to those who endorse a debilitating stress mindset. Further, Casper et al., (2017) found that individuals with a stress-is-enhancing mindset make more approach-coping efforts in anticipation of perceived increases in workload. Approach-coping efforts compromise the behavioral efforts one deploys in preparation for a specified demand, and the cognitive efforts performed in preparation, such as reinterpretations of challenging situations as a chance for improvement (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). In addition, the authors state that an enhancing stress mindset has a positive relationship with task performance and vigor (Casper et al., 2017), indicating that the mindset employees possess towards stress can alter outcomes.

Speaking for the relevancy of our paper in the current environment, we are writing simultaneously as employees across the world are re-entering their company offices after a pandemic. Mid-March 2020 the pandemic threw a shadow over the whole world and words such as "cohort, quarantine, and telecommuting" became part of our day-to-day dictionary. Telecommuting was no longer an option (Regjeringen, 2022), and almost all employees were likely to turn their kitchen into an office space. Telecommuting is defined as a work practice that involves members of an organization exchanging a part of their normal working hours to work separately away from a centralized workplace (Allen et al., 2015). Now, post-pandemic, employees have witnessed the benefits of the alternative methods of work first-hand and desire updated work arrangements adapted to their newfound knowledge. Bøe, (2022) reports that people still want to have similar flexibility in terms of telecommuting, however, many employers do not agree, leading to discussions regarding the implementation of telecommuting or not (Bøe, 2022).

The context of this thesis is set a few months after the pandemic when employers are faced with decisions on how they wish to proceed. As mentioned,

Bøe (2022) claims that employees still want the flexibility they experienced, but how are the employees affected by telecommuting? Gajendran & Harrison, (2007) made the distinction between high- and low-intensity telecommuting, separating the two groups based on the majority of time spent working in company space, or away from the office. Hence, we question whether the intensity in which someone is engaged in telecommuting influences employee outcomes? An article from Wigert, (2022) shows statistics that indicate that at the start of the pandemic the number of employees working from home in a part-time solution was 32%, and they anticipate an increase to 53% in 2022 and beyond. Further, they state that 59% prefer to work in a hybrid solution, where between 10% - 99% of their time is spent remotely. These statistics further incline us to gain further knowledge on the intensity of telecommuting and its influences. Therefore, in this thesis, we would like to see how someone's stress mindset influences burnout levels in employees while accounting for telecommuting intensity.

The importance of providing a context for the specific research is stated in Johns (2006), claiming that one cannot understand a situation unless we understand the interaction of person-situation. Further, Rousseau & Fried, (2001) state that providing a context allows us to link observation to the relevant facts, events, or points of view that make possible research and theory that form part of a larger whole. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, we collected data closely following a pandemic, leaving us uncertain as to the lasting influences on the respondents. The addition of a context sets a specified environment for the reader, allowing increased applicability of results for homogenous scenarios. To control for the environmental factors, we will present telecommuting as a control variable, and through this, hopefully, increase the meaning of the results. Telecommuting will also be included in the theory section, allowing the reader knowledge and findings on the current literature.

Furthering the relevance of our paper, Campbell and Gavett, (2021) refer to a study including 1500 people across 46 countries and how their well-being has been affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. The statistics referred to in this paper state that 85% of the respondents claim their general well-being has declined since the start of COVID-19, and 89 % claim their workplace well-being has declined. Half of those answering that their general well-being had declined stated

it was due to a reduction in their mental health (Campbell & Gavett, 2021). Tying these findings to the burnout literature it is stated in (Klussman, 2008, as cited in Lauermann & König, 2016) that job burnout is an indicator of lacking professional wellbeing. The aforementioned articles manifest the relevance of researching burnout and controlling for telecommuting intensity following the pandemic.

Following up on the relevancy of our topic at this moment in time, research from Deloitte found that 50 % of their employers did not know whether the working time regulations were complied with or not, while they found that 9 out of 10 use home offices (Deloitte, 2020). The fact that 50 % of Deloitte's employees were not aware of whether their working time complied with the regulations makes us question the disadvantages and advantages of telecommuting. Ultimately, this could increase the risk of work overload for employees, an outcome that has previously been linked to burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

As of 2021, a questionnaire from NTB found that 48 % of the companies wanted to continue offering home offices to their employees (NTB, 2021). This further made us question how working externally from the company space might affect employee workload and the possible outcomes of this increase in working hours. A lot of research has been conducted and found that working too much over an extended period of time may result in experiences of burnout (Griffin, 2015; N.-C. Hu et al., 2016; Rabenu & Aharoni-Goldenberg, 2017; Sardeshmukh et al., 2012). Hu et al. (2016) found that there is a correlation between burnout and working more than 40 hours a week, and the correlation is increasing by the hours, amplifying the need for research on burnout at this point. Further, research from Palumbo, (2020) has found that it is difficult to balance telecommuting and work-life, which may lead to an increase in working hours.

When looking at the relationship between stress mindset and telecommuting much is yet to be found. To our knowledge, no article has directly referred to the relationship between the two concepts, allowing us to look at previously found outcomes of each and suggest possible influences. Firstly, an article posted by Ipsen et al., (2021) looked at some of the disadvantages of working from home in Europe during COVID-19. The author's highlight work uncertainty as to the main disadvantage of the work arrangement in the specified context. The findings of

Crum et al., (2013) suggest that an enhancing stress mindset allows employees to better sustain themselves during times of uncertainty. Considering these two findings, an argument could be made that an enhancing stress mindset allows employees tools to cope better with the uncertainty of telecommuting. This disadvantage was of more concern for younger employees in comparison to the older generation (Ipsen et al., 2021). In addition, those aged over 50 found inadequate tools to be a bigger problem in comparison. This was another disadvantage mentioned in (Ipsen et al., 2021). To draw possible relations to stress mindset one could argue that those with an enhancing mindset have been shown to make more approach-coping efforts in the face of increased workload Casper et al., (2017), and thereby, could also apply those efforts when faced with the uncertainty of telecommuting. These efforts allow the individual to organize tasks efficiently, create routines to match demands, and interpret challenges as learning opportunities (Casper et al., 2017).

With this paper, we attempt to highlight some areas within the relevant literature that to our knowledge have not yet been examined. Considering that stress mindset is a relatively new concept there are numerous factors yet to be explored, and through this paper, we hope to further our collective understanding of the influences of the concept. Even though burnout has been researched for a longer period of time, we have only been able to find two other articles that look at the direct relationship between job burnout and stress mindset. In addition, due to burnout being an issue an increasing number of individuals experience (Kelly, 2021), and that stress mindset has been found to correlate with improved health conditions (Crum et al., 2013), we believe this relationship could be valuable to examine. Following are four areas of knowledge that have not yet been examined widely, that we will attempt to gain further understanding of through this paper.

Firstly, the two articles that have previously looked at this relationship examined the influence of stress mindset to reduce the negative effects of stress (Hahm, 2016 as cited in Park & Hahm, 2019). It includes a discussion of burnout but uses the definitions of Maslach et al., (1997), as opposed to Schaufeli et al., (2020B). As we utilize the definition and method of assessment of Schaufeli et al., (2020B) the influences of stress mindset might affect burnout differently. The reasoning for expecting a different influence is due to the widened scope of

Schaufeli et al., (2020B)'s definition with the inclusion of emotional and cognitive impairment. Further, the other article examined the relationship between stress mindset and burnout (Klussman et al., 2021). In addition, Klussman et al., (2021) utilized the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory as their method of assessment, a different assessment which according to Schaufeli et al., (2020A) ignores the concept's multifaceted nature and reduces the burnout construct to mere exhaustion. These notions distinguish our thesis further from what is already known, allowing this thesis an opportunity to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship.

Secondly, we have chosen to utilize the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) Schaufeli et al., (2020B) as our method of burnout assessment instead of the more widely used Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Where the MBI has been the golden standard for assessing burnout since the initial research on the concept Schaufeli et al., (2020A), BAT was introduced as an alternative method of assessment, with slight differences which makes it reasonable to assume that one could achieve a broader comprehension of the construct. Some of the main differences and the criticisms of Schaufeli et al., (2020A) of the MBI will be discussed in the theory section of this thesis paper. As the burnout assessment tool is a relatively new method of assessing burnout this thesis will contribute through increased use as well as additional results on the measure's performance in the detection of burnout symptoms. In addition, to our knowledge, this is the first time the tool has been utilized to see the influences of stress mindset. Lastly, through the use of a translation-back-translation method, the survey was translated to Norwegian by Christina Nerstad. We have been able to locate a Norwegian translation of the BAT on the official website of the measurement tool (Burnout Assessment Tool, 2019), but have not found any indications implying that this version has been validated.

Thirdly, by specifying a context relevant to the current business environment, we may facilitate a fuller understanding of how the stress mindset - burnout relationship is affected by the seemingly increasing introduction of telecommuting. Post pandemic, Bøe, (2022) reports that people still want to have the same flexibility in terms of telecommuting, but employers do not agree which could lead to disagreements regarding the implementation of the work arrangement

(Bøe, 2022). To our knowledge, no other publications have examined the influences of telecommuting intensity on the relationship, differentiating our thesis further.

The last contribution we believe our thesis can provide regards the mental distance dimension of burnout and its relation to one's stress mindset. Through our search of the literature, we've not been able to discover any articles looking at the direct relationship between one's mindset towards stress and the utilization of mental distance as a coping mechanism. Mental distancing is a coping mechanism referring to a detachment psychologically from the job (W. Schaufeli et al., 2020B). Allowing an increased understanding of the mental distance-stress mindset relationship could aid both our comprehension of mental distance's inclusion in the burnout conceptualization and its occurrence in the two groups with conflicting mindsets.

Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the influences of stress mindset on burnout and the four dimensions proposed by Schaufeli et al., (2020B), and examine how these influences are affected by telecommuting intensity. In addition, we will be able to inspect how the Norwegian version of the BAT compares to the original, and, lastly, further the collective knowledge base of the mental distance-burnout relationship.

Research Question

This thesis will attempt to achieve a fuller understanding of stress mindset influences on the four dimensions of burnout. As we interpret the formulation of the authors regarding the construct being utilized as a single construct, or four dimensions vague, we also hypothesize that burnout as a single construct is influenced by one's stress mindset.

"How does an individual's stress mindset influence their experience of BAT's four burnout dimensions?"

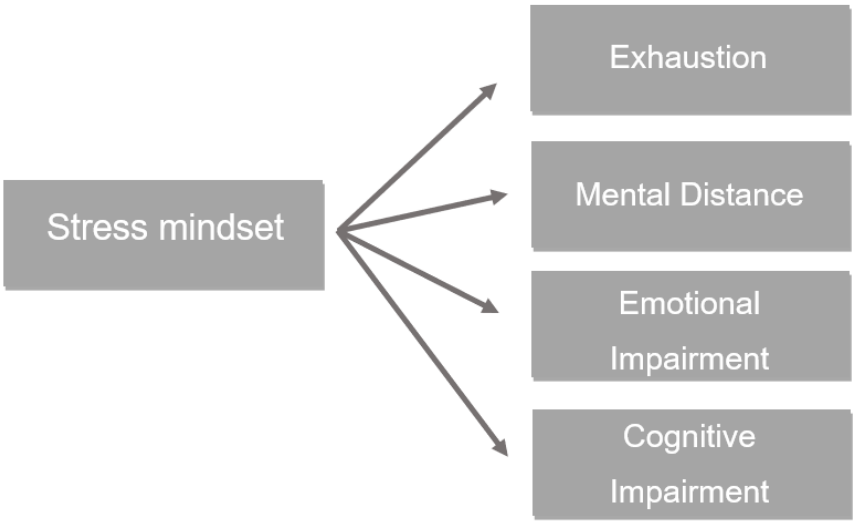

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Theory and Hypotheses

Burnout

The initial research on burnout was conducted in the mid-1970s with a focus on the fields of human services and health care, where emotional and interpersonal stressors are more apparent (Maslach et al., 2001). These commencing studies showed that the coping strategies utilized by subjects had implications on both people´s professional identity and behavior at work. Following the introduction of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) the concept gained an increasing scope of interest, expanding to other industries (Maslach et al., 2001). Through this enhanced focus on other occupations, the inclusion of more statistical tools and sophisticated methodology, as well as studies with a focus on the relationship between past work environment and current emotions and feelings of individuals, the research increased in quality (Maslach et al., 2001).

The first one to describe the notion of staff burnout was Freudenberger, (1974) whose definition surrounded an experience of failure, wearing out, and becoming exhausted through excessive demands of someone's energy, strengths, or resources (Koutsimani et al., 2019). Big parts of these initial considerations of the concept are still essential in the modern research of the term. The introduction of the MBI in Maslach et al., (1997) accompanied an updated definition, which

centered around three core dimensions of the burnout experience. The first component of this three-dimensional concept is labeled emotional exhaustion and is said to be the most prominent symptom for those experiencing burnout. Maslach et al., (2001) report that emotional exhaustion is the most widely reported and thereby also analyzed to the greatest extent. The authors define the component as one being overextended and depleted of both their physical and emotional resources. The second component is referred to as cynicism or depersonalization and is described by Maslach et al., (2001) as an attempt to distance oneself through actively ignoring the qualities which make them unique and engaging people. In addition, the author states that the component refers to an excessively detached response to aspects of the job. Finally, the last component is referred to as reduced professional efficacy. This entails the sensation that your work has lost its meaning, as well as a sense of incompetence and lack of achievement and productivity (Maslach et al., 2001). In Shirom, (1989), it is stated that due to the strong identification of emotional exhaustion with burnout, some argue the two remaining dimensions are redundant. However, Maslach et al., (2001) claim that even though the symptom is closely tied to the syndrome, disregarding the two other dimensions would be narrowing the focus too drastically, and not fully conceptualizing the phenomenon.

Since the MBI cannot be utilized in the identification of burnout as an overall syndrome in clinical practice (Eurofound, 2018, as cited in Koutsimani, 2019; Schaufeli et al., 2020B), Schaufuli et al., (2020B) proposed the burnout assessment tool (BAT) for diagnosing burnout (Koutsimani, 2019). This is because the MBI doesn't produce a single burnout score, but instead three separate scores for the three dimensions (Schaufeli et al., 2020B). In addition to this limitation, newer research has been able to establish a characterization between burnout and reduced cognitive functions (Deligkaris et al., 2014), a construct that has not been included in the MBI (Schaufeli et al., 2020B). More specifically, burnout was associated with a decrease in three main cognitive functions (Deligkaris et al., 2014). These were attention, memory, and executive functions. Executive functions refer to the ability to shift between mental sets or tasks, update and monitor working memory representation, and inhibit dominant, automatic responses when needed (Miyake et al., 2000). According to Schaufeli et al., (2020B), the exclusion of this

symptom deems the MBI out-of-date. Moreover, Wheeler et al., (2011) present some criticism regarding the formulation of some of the questions in the MBI. The authors state that the "extreme" wording of some of the answers may affect the reliability due to almost all respondents being inclined to choose a certain alternative (Wheeler et al., 2011). In addition to this limitation, questions have been raised concerning the inclusion of reduced personal accomplishment as a dimension, and if it is a constituting element of burnout (W. B. Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). Schaufeli et al., (2020B) argue that it could also be viewed as either a cause or a consequence of burnout, instead of as a significant part of the concept. A cause because the exhaustion would happen due to a lack of a personal resource such as personal accomplishment, or a consequence when reduced accomplishment happens due to poor performance caused by exhaustion mentally. Schaufeli et al., (2020B) propose a definition including four core dimensions of burnout, exhaustion, mental distance, and impaired emotional and cognitive impairment. The author claims the BAT, as opposed to the MBI, is capable of computing a single composite score of burnout. However, the distinction between someone being healthy and someone who runs a risk of being burned out requires a clinically validated cut-off score, which is not yet available for the BAT (Schaufeli et al., 2020A).

Exhaustion

The first dimension of the BAT, exhaustion is also included in the definition from Schaufeli et al., (2020B) and as in Maslach's definition, it has to do with a severe loss of energy, resulting in feelings of both physical and mental depletion. Inability to relax after work, feeling tired quickly after minimal effort at work and a general lack of energy at work are all symptoms of the syndrome in the newer definition. As mentioned earlier, exhaustion is the symptom that is most widely reported by those suffering from burnout in the workplace (Maslach et al., 2001).

In previous research, burnout has been shown to have wide relations with depression (Maslach et al., 2001). It is stated in Maslach and Leiter (2016) that the two constructs are not independent and will have implications on the other as interrelated conditions. The authors exemplify this relationship by citing a study showing that 90% of those who reported severe burnout reported a physical or mental disease, with depression being one of the two most common problems

(Ahola, 2007, as cited in Maslach and Leiter, 2016). These findings are supported by another study that showed an increase in burnout predicted an increase in prescriptions of antidepressant medication (Leiter et al., 2013).

Mental Distance

The second dimension, mental distance, can be compared to the depersonalization component of the MBI and refers to detachment psychologically from the job (Schaufeli et al., 2020A). This is indicated by a strong reluctance or aversion to work (Schaufeli et al., 2020B). Further, it is stated by the authors that one withdraws, both physically and mentally from work, while avoiding contact with others around. In addition, enthusiasm and interest in the work are reduced (Schaufeli et al., 2020B). Schaufeli et al., (2020A) state that this is a coping strategy employed by the individual to deal with feelings of exhaustion. The coping strategy however, is deemed ineffective as it can be a source of increased stress at work through being a source of increased conflict.

There has been debate regarding both the definition and also the inclusion of mental distance or depersonalization in the burnout construct. The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory Kristensen et al., (2005), disregards the construct in their conceptualization, basing this on the notion that it is first and foremost a coping strategy, and should be analyzed as a distinct occurrence, not part of the burnout syndrome. This view is challenged by (Sonnentag, 2005) who argues that even though mental distancing or depersonalization is a coping strategy, it should be included as the elimination of the dimension would make it difficult to differentiate from exhaustion or fatigue.

Emotional impairment

When talking about emotional impairment one can think of an individual's functional capacity to regulate one's emotional feelings. In other words, it is associated with behavioral problems, such as sudden bursts of anger (Schaufeli et al., 2020B). Words that the participants used to describe their state of mind were *"weeping," "irritability," "anger", "hot temper," and "being emotional."* (Schaufeli et al., 2020B, p. 24). Arguably, one can assume that emotional and cognitive impairment are considered aspects of exhaustion since one who lacks the energy required for the regulation of these processes (Schaufeli et al., 2020B).

Cognitive impairment

The last dimension of burnout is cognitive impairment, which can be identified as people who experience memory loss, difficulties with concentrating, poor cognitive performance, and attention deficits in a combination with the abovementioned symptoms for each dimension (Schaufeli et al., 2020B). A study conducted by Van Dam et al., (2012) found people who experienced burnout were struggling with cognitive tasks two years later (Schaufeli et al., 2020A; Van Dam et al., 2012). It is important to highlight that they improved regarding cognitive tasks from the point where they expressed the burnout symptoms, but they were still below the average of a normal healthy individual (Schaufeli et al., 2020B; Van Dam et al., 2012). Similar conclusions were found by Jonsdottir et al., (2017) when measured three years after the individual requested help. In the next paragraph, some information on stress will be given, allowing the reader a fuller comprehension of how the construct is viewed in literature.

Stress

Stress is often viewed as something negative that we should avoid if possible and due to this, it has become something we tend to steer clear of or lessen (Park & Hahm, 2019). Even if the initial response to a stressor is positive, it is ultimately assumed that experiencing chronic stress is negative (Crum et al., 2013). This might not be the case, or it is at least not as definite as believed (Crum et al., 2013). Looking at it from an evolutionary point of view, the stress response is a way of improving physiological and mental functioning in order to meet current demands and thereby enable survival (Sapolsky, 1996). Moreover, Fay and Sonnentag, (2002) state that stress in the workplace leads to employees taking initiative, where they will be inclined to obtain the skills necessary to deal with demands. According to Crum et al., (2013) investigators have documented a concept referred to as “stress-related growth”. This is a process where stressful incidents change the individuals fundamentally for the better, through increased awareness, new perspectives, a sense of mastery, mental toughness, etc. (Park & Hahm, 2019; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004 as cited in Crum et al., 2013). These notions work as a counterargument to the belief that stress is inherently negative, by revealing numerous possible beneficial outcomes. In the next paragraph,

mindsets and how one's mindset can modify behavior and outcomes will be the focus.

Mindset

(Dweck, 2008, as cited in Crum et al., 2013) defines mindset as a lens or a mental frame that organizes and encodes information, and through this orientates the individual towards a unique way of comprehending the experience and guides towards actions and responses which correspond to the demands. To simplify, a mindset is each individual's decoding device that allows individualistic interpretations of the situation, as well as possible behavior that are needed to respond. The mindset of an individual is not inconsequential (Crum et al., 2013), meaning that how one might respond to a specific situation is dependent on their understanding of the demands, resources, and information at hand. To exemplify, Crum et al., (2013) refer to a study performed by Levy and Myers (2004) which found that those with a negative mindset about aging were less likely to take part in responsive actions such as exercising or eating healthier. Further research also found that these individuals, as one might expect, died sooner than those with a positive mindset regarding aging (Levy et al., 2002). These findings allow some understanding of how an individual's mindsets could modify their responses to external situations, ultimately affecting the outcome. Next, we want to provide some insights as to how someone's perception of stress affects the individual, and what the relevant literature has discovered until now.

Stress Mindset

Crum et al., (2013) state that what must be understood about the stress mindset is that it refers to the concept of stress itself, and not how stressful a particular situation is experienced by an individual. To exemplify, the authors state that even though an individual might find a situation extremely stressful but possess a "stress-is-enhancing" mindset, allowing the individual to expect that the stress will ultimately result in enhanced outcomes. On the other side, one with a debilitating stress mindset who experiences the same stressful situation is inclined to believe that the stress will weaken health and vitality (Crum et al., 2013). According to Crum et al., (2017) there is a growing evidence-base showing that one's mindset does not only influence outcomes regarding aging (Levy & Myers,

2004) and intelligence (Dweck, 2008, as cited in Crum et al., 2013) but also in the shaping of the stress response.

The relationship between stress mindset and burnout

In the following section, we want to summarize some of the main findings presented in the theory and literature section and utilize these as the basis for our proposed hypotheses. As mentioned previously, one of the two papers referencing the influences of stress mindset on burnout was published by Park and Hahm (2019). They cited findings that stated that people with an enhancing stress mindset have been shown to experience less job burnout compared to those with a debilitating stress mindset who experience stress and work overload (Hahm, 2016, as cited in Park & Hahm, 2019). Further, they argue that those who view stress as something enhancing through a decrease in burnout are able to perform better while being less tired and experiencing less difficulty. The authors also claim that these individuals will cope better with these stressful situations leading to improved health, even when stressed (Park & Hahn, 2019).

Next, Casper et al., (2017) found that individuals who endorsed a stress-is-debilitating mindset were less likely to deploy approach-coping efforts in the face of an increase in anticipated workload in comparison to those with an enhancing stress mindset. This, in return, led to them having an increase in perceived workload. An increase in workload has been found to contribute to an increase in burnout by consuming the capacity of individuals through their inclination to satisfy the demands of the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Laying these arguments as the basis, it may be reasonable to argue that a stress mindset might influence the individual's experiences of burnout.

Casper et al., (2017) also found that the enhanced approach-coping performed by those who view stress as enhancing influenced the overall performance at work. Work performance was found to negatively relate to emotional exhaustion, a key dimension of the burnout construct by Wright and Bonett, (1997). In addition, Maslach and Leiter (2016) state that someone who is experiencing the exhaustion dimension of burnout could be described as experiencing a loss of energy and fatigue. Thereby, one could argue that energy loss

and a drop in work performance might be outcomes of someone having a stress-is-debilitating mindset and one of the possible antecedents of burnout.

In Klussman et al., (2020) efforts are focused on fostering resilience to stress in respondents through an examination of their stress mindset and self-connection. Their findings include results indicating a positive relationship between a stress-is-debilitating and the likelihood of experiencing school- or personal burnout across. Further, the interaction of stress mindset and self-connection jointly seemed to predict both personal and school burnout (Klussman et al., 2021). While the findings are relevant to our topic, some limitations in this paper inhibit our ability to confidently manifest the results. There were only 53 usable responses, ultimately limiting the generalizability of the author's work (Klussman et al., 2021).

When examining the stress mindset of college students, Huebschmann and Sheets, (2020) found that having a stress-is-enhancing mindset mitigates the development of depressive and anxiety symptoms when faced with high levels of stress. Depression has previously been shown to have high correspondence with burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016), to the extent where there have been debates on whether the two constructs are identical (Schonfeld & Bianchi, 2016). The authors state that previous research has under-estimated the relationship between the two concepts and that burnout seems to be a form of depression. Contrary to this notion, Bakker et al., (2000) found that whereas burnout is a work-related strain, depression is context-free portraying the separation between the two concepts. The findings of these authors also suggested that depression and burnout are distinct, but related concepts. The consistency of correlation between depression and burnout, however, helps make the argument that someone with an enhancing stress mindset is less likely to develop depressive symptoms, thereby reducing the likelihood of experiencing burnout.

The other outcome specified by Huebschmann and Sheets (2020), anxiety, has also been found to correlate positively with burnout (Naisberg-Fennig et al., 1991). The findings of Vîrgă et al., (2019) are in support of these notions, highlighting that there was a positive correlation between attachment-related anxiety and burnout. Attachment-related anxiety in this study refers to the anxiety one experiences in a relationship and when having an unfavorable view of the self

(Richards & Schat, 2011). Referring to the findings of Huebschmann and Sheets (2020), one could argue that since a stress-is-enhancing mindset seems to mitigate the development of anxiety symptoms, it could also result in a decreased experience of burnout. We therefore hypothesize the following:

H1: *There is a negative relationship between a stress-is-enhancing mindset and burnout*

Even though Schaufeli et al., (2020B) clearly state that the BAT allows the computation of a single burnout score, the four distinct dimensions are a central part of the conceptualization of the construct. In order to allow better comparability across different burnout assessments, there will be a hypothesis for each of the four dimensions. Hopefully, this will give clearer indications on both how the Norwegian version of the BAT performs in comparison to the original, and how each dimension of the BAT is influenced by the individual's stress mindset.

Crum et al., (2013) provide findings that show that those who endorse a stress-is-enhancing mindset reported lower levels of depression. Using these findings as to the basis, there is an argument to be made that someone with an enhancing stress mindset will report lower levels of exhaustion, as it has been found to show links with depression with moderate to high correlations (Bianchi et al., 2015).

Further, Casper et al., (2017) found in their study that there are differences in how someone with a stress-is-enhancing, and someone with a debilitating stress mindset reacts to an increase or decrease in anticipated workload. More specifically, when someone with a stress-is-enhancing mindset experiences an increase in anticipated workload, they are more inclined to make approach-coping efforts in comparison to those with a stress-is-debilitating mindset. This will allow them to more effectively cope and decrease the perceived workload. Maslach and Leiter (2016) state that work overload contributes to burnout by depleting the capacity of people to meet the demands at work, resulting in increased chances of exhaustion. Pairing the findings of these two papers helps make the argument that those with a debilitating stress mindset, through less involvement in approach-coping efforts

have an increased chance of experiencing perceived work-overload, and thereby increasing chances of experiencing burnout.

In addition, Casper et al., (2017) found more effective approach-coping performed by those with an enhancing stress mindset led to improved performance and vigor at work. Vigor refers to a subjective experience of aliveness and energy and enables individuals more energy when approaching tasks (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). These findings are supported by Crum et al., (2013) who also found evidence that those with a positive stress mindset reported higher levels of energy compared to those with a negative stress mindset. Moreover, Wright and Bonett (1997) found a negative correlation between emotional exhaustion and work performance, making it likely to expect that having a positive stress mindset will decrease exhaustion in individuals. We therefore hypothesize the following:

H1a: *There is a negative relationship between a stress-is-enhancing mindset and the exhaustion dimension of burnout.*

As for the mental distance dimension, we were not able to retrieve evidence in literature stating a clear relationship to one's stress mindset. However, the findings of Hahm (2016, as cited in Park & Hahm, 2019) state that those with an enhancing stress mindset experienced less job burnout compared to those who view stress as debilitating. This can help make the argument that mental distance might be more utilized by those with a stress-is-debilitating mindset. We base this argument on the author seemingly utilizing the MBI as the burnout measurement in his paper, and the similarities between the mental distance dimension of the BAT and the depersonalization dimension of the MBI which was mentioned in the theory section.

Another finding that could be utilized to build the argument that a debilitating stress mindset leads to increased mental distance is that it seems those with a stress-is-enhancing mindset deploy more approach-coping efforts when anticipating a high workload compared to those viewing stress as debilitating (Casper et al., 2017). The opposing term is referred to as avoidance-coping efforts and explains when someone aims to remove oneself or escape a stressful situation

(Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Further, Blalock and Joiner, Jr., (2000) states that there is a great deal of evidence showing that coping strategies such as "avoidance" or "distancing" lead to an increase in a depressed mood. In their article Hudek-Knežević et al., (2006) found that avoidance-coping positively predicted the depersonalization dimension of the MBI. The definition of avoidance-coping is closely related to the concept of mental distance, where one copes with a stressful, overwhelming situation by mentally withdrawing and detaching psychologically from their work (Schaufeli et al., 2020B). Mental distance can, according to Schaufeli et al., (2020B) be seen as an ineffective coping attempt as it ultimately increases the stress at work. Based on the similarities between the concepts of mental distance included in the BAT Schaufeli et al., (2020B) and the avoidance-coping efforts presented in Casper et al., (2017), it is reasonable to assume that someone with a debilitating stress mindset is more likely to mentally distance themselves in the face of stress, as they were found to perform less approach-coping efforts. Considering the findings presented in this paragraph, we hypothesize that:

H1b: *There is a negative relationship between a stress-is-enhancing mindset and the mental distance dimension of burnout.*

In their paper Crum et al., (2017) make the distinction between threatening and challenging situations, threatening when the individual perceives the environmental demands to outweigh their own resources and ability to adequately manage and challenging when the individual evaluates their personal capital as sufficient in the face of current demands. The authors speculate that endorsing a stress-is-enhancing mindset when faced with both threatening and challenging situations could be beneficial, not due to its ability to make stress feel less threatening or negative, but through increased recruitment and enhancement of cognitive, emotional, and physiological attributes which could benefit adaptive responses in the long-run (Crum et al., 2017).

Horiuchi et al., (2018) found significant results for a stress-is-debilitating mindset and its association with more frequent use of an emotional expression. This again was associated with higher levels of irritation-anger, which could be used as argumentation for less emotional control in those who view stress as debilitating.

They adapted the conceptualization of emotional expression from Sasaki and Yamasaki, (2002, as cited in Horiuchi et al., 2018) model of coping, stating that the term is tied to one's negative feelings and thoughts. However, Crum et al., (2017), found no reason to believe that having a stress-is-enhancing mindset would decrease emotional reactions in either challenging or threatening situations. With that being said, keeping in mind the previously mentioned statement that exhaustion drains the energy an individual needs for regulation of emotional impairment, one may assume that these two may have an influence on each other in other situations separated from challenging and threatening situations. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1c: *There is a negative relationship between a stress-is-enhancing mindset and the emotional impairment dimension of burnout.*

Another important aspect of Schaufeli et al., (2020B) burnout definition concerns cognitive impairment. This is a state where the individual experiences a reduction in functional capacity in the regulation of their cognitive processes, for instance, memory or attention (Schaufeli et al., 2020A). The influences of a stress mindset on cognitive processes have been discussed in Crum et al., (2017) where the authors argue that an outcome of having an enhancing stress mindset is the ability to stay cognitively focused. Conversely, someone having a stress-is-debilitating mindset would be an antecedent of a cognitive deficit in the face of a stressor (Crum et al., 2017). Keep in mind that this is the individual's perception of how the stress might affect their current or future state, and not a determined outcome.

Crum et al., (2017) found results that indicate having a stress-is-enhancing mindset produced more cognitive flexibility than a debilitating view of stress when subjects were receiving positive feedback. In addition, the findings from (Jonsdottir et al., 2017; Schaufeli et al., 2020A; Van Dam et al., 2012) it may be reasonable to assume that cognitive impairment is more than a mere symptom of being burned out, given that when other symptoms diminish, cognitive impairment seems to be an obstacle for years to come. Based on these findings, we propose that:

H1d: *There is a negative relationship between a stress-is-enhancing mindset and the cognitive impairment dimension of burnout.*

Given the drastic change in method of work during the pandemic due to governmental restrictions (Regjeringen, 2022) we have chosen to include telecommuting as a central control variable in this thesis. In addition, it seems a great number of employees in the aftermath of the pandemic still want the same flexibility in terms of telecommuting (Bøe, 2022) indicating that an increase in the alternative work method could be expected. Therefore, in the next section, we will present what literature has found so far on telecommuting and its influences on employees engaged in the alternative work arrangement. This is mainly to account for the possible influence of contextual factors of the specified period, as well as factors tied to the specific method of work.

The stress mindset - burnout relationship and the telecommuting setting

Allen et al., (2015) define telecommuting as a work practice that involves members of an organization exchanging a part of their normal working hours to work separately away from a centralized workplace. This is usually from their own home, utilizing technology to interact with others (Allen et al., 2015, p. 44). The term is closely linked to other similar labels such as distributed work, telework, remote work, and work from home, which all often overlap, but conceptualize the work method differently (Allen et al., 2015). Throughout history, there has been little collective agreement on a single definition that includes all necessary parts, resulting in a lower degree of comparability across articles (Allen et al., 2015). In addition, the many different overlapping terms have stemmed into various definitions, furthering the problems of correspondence of research (Allen et al., 2015). A common refrain in an analysis of telecommuting research has been the incapacity to draw consistent conclusions about even the most basic outcomes (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). In our thesis, we will strictly be utilizing telecommuting as the term as this seems to be the term most used in prominent research articles.

Looking at some findings in the literature, Loughran (1998, Mann & Holdsworth, 2003) argued that telecommuting yielded savings up to 25 percent.

This study is over 20 years old, and employees are likely to have other demands, regulations and resources now than before, but it allows an indication as to how the work arrangement could benefit employers. When considering both the inflation and the cost of one office, the comparability across time could be questioned. On the other hand, companies can save a lot by downsizing square meters between different offices, electricity bills, travel costs, wear, tea and office space are some of the factors among others. There has been debate regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the work method, both sides are equipped with reasonable claims. Furthering the discussion, it seems employees often have more flexibility while working from home, in addition to the freedom of managing their own time - to some extent (Mann et al., 2000). This perceived capacity to exercise autonomy in the workplace is said to increase the chances of experiencing job engagement, as opposed to job burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Maslach et al., (2001) further state that burnout is higher in those who take a lesser part in decision making and that autonomy has been found to have a correlation with burnout, though this relationship is said to be weaker. Furthering these notions, Bakker et al., (2005) found in 18 out of 32 cases that a high workload, increased emotional and physical demands, and work-home interference did not result in high levels of burnout as long as autonomy, social support, and high-quality relations with the supervisor was present. The results of Gajendran et al., (2015), also suggest that there is a positive relationship between perceived autonomy and telecommuting intensity. Therefore, if we lay the argument that telecommuting leads to more flexibility and autonomy as the basis, one could possibly expect that those engaged in the work arrangement will be less prone to experience burnout symptoms.

A review written by Oakman et al., (2020) in the early phase of the pandemic examines the results of 23 different studies, attempting to achieve a fuller understanding of the physical and mental health influences of telecommuting on individuals. When narrowing our focus to findings related to stress, burnout, or the antecedents of burnout we can see that there are big variations in the results. Hayman (2010) found that telecommuting was associated with lower degrees of job-induced stress. These findings are supported by Major et al., (2008) whose findings indicate that 89% of the employees telecommuting were less stressed and 77% experienced increased energy levels when compared to when they worked in the office. A study by Filardi et al., (2020) states result that 95% of those

participating in telecommuting reported increased quality of life, perceived increased safety as well as a reduction in stress associated with commuting. The results from all these studies argue for the positive aspects of telecommuting when considering the mental and physical health of the employees.

Contrary to these findings, the discoveries of Eddleston and Mulki, (2017) indicate that those working from home have a harder time disengaging from work. This inability is positively related to job stress due to an increase in work to family conflict. Job stress in their paper refers to negative stress, defined as nervousness/anxiety that is associated with the job that ultimately influences the employee's emotional and/or physical health (Netemeyer et al., 2005). Further, Song and Gao, 2020) found that working from home, in general, has a negative effect on the subjective well-being of respondents and that this effect varies depending on the type of telecommuting and by day of the week. The authors were not able to find any samples which suggested that working from home during the week had any beneficial effect on subjective well-being (Song & Gao, 2020). In agreement with these findings, Windeler et al., (2017) found that telecommuting increased work exhaustion due to communication with external stakeholders becoming more challenging and requiring more effort. In addition, the authors found that the male respondents experienced higher levels of work exhaustion after they started telecommuting, while females experienced higher levels of work exhaustion when compared to those who worked from an office.

Furthering the opposing view, Vander Elst et al., (2017) found that more days of telecommuting were associated with higher levels of both emotional exhaustion and cognitive stress. Cognitive stress was measured by examining how often complaints were made. They claim this is due to lower levels of social support from colleagues when telecommuting.

In their article Gajendran & Harrison (2007) mainly place their focus on three proximal outcomes, perceived autonomy, work-family conflict, and quality of relationships. Some distal outcomes are also included, such as job performance, job satisfaction, turnover intent, and role stress. The authors found that telecommuting had beneficial influences on these distal outcomes and that these were at least partially mediated by perceived autonomy. When looking at the other proximal

outcomes, it was found that high-intensity telecommuters (more than 2.5 days a week) had beneficial influences on work-family conflict but disadvantageous influences on the quality of relationships with coworkers (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Bailey & Kurland (2002) on the other hand, did not find clear evidence that telecommuting increases productivity and job satisfaction. As mentioned previously, the inability among researchers to draw consistent conclusions on telecommuting has hurt the development of accordant findings in the field, allowing an opportunity to further examine how working from home affects various aspects of employee performance and health.

In their study, Suh & Lee, (2017) examined the differences between a group that worked more than half of their time from home to those working more than half of their time from the office. They found that there was a difference between the two groups and that those working less than 2.5 days per week from home experienced greater strain from work overload, invasion of privacy, and role ambiguity when compared to those working more than half their time from home.

To sum up this section, there seem to be conflicting arguments and findings regarding the effects of telecommuting on the individuals engaged in the work method. On one side of the argument, Hayman, (2010) found that telecommuting led to lower degrees of job-induced stress, Major et al.,'s (2008) findings suggest most who endorse this work arrangement experiences less stress and increased energy levels, and Filari et al., (2010) found numerous beneficial health outcomes. Contradictory, Eddleston and Mulki (2017) found that the inability to disengage from work led to increased stress. Their findings have been supported by Song and Gao (2020) through increased stress and decreased happiness and Windeler et al., (2017) who found increased work exhaustion.

Moreover, Gajendran and Harrison (2007) and Suh and Lee (2017) examined the intensity of an individual's telecommuting, separating between one group with those who telecommuted more than half of their time, and a second group that telecommuted less than half. The former authors found that high-intensity telecommuters experienced lower levels of work-family conflict, but coworker relationships were harmed. They also found that this group seemed to have an even greater reduction in role stress. The findings of Suh and Lee (2017)

suggest that those working less than 2.5 days from home experienced greater strain through work overload, role ambiguity, and invasion of privacy in comparison to those working more than half their time from home. These are some of the benefits found of working in a high-intensity arrangement. Others have found evidence suggesting the beneficial sides of a low-intensity arrangement in comparison to those working full-time from an office. Henke et al., (2016) found that those who telecommuted eight or fewer hours a month were significantly less likely to experience depression in comparison with those who didn't telecommute at all. These findings indicate that those involved in a low-intensity telecommuting arrangement might benefit from the hours in a non-centralized workplace in comparison to those working from the office full-time. When examining these findings, it is difficult to conclude an ideal level of telecommuting intensity. However, considering the benefits of a stress-is-enhancing mindset on various outcomes, such as performance, productivity, health, and wellbeing (Crum et al., 2013). This could imply that the challenges faced when telecommuting will be better handled by someone with an enhancing stress mindset, as they've previously shown to engage in more preparation efforts when expecting higher workloads (Casper et al., 2017).

Organizational context

Given that our collection period occurred closely succeeding a longer period where numerous employees were working from home due to governmental restrictions, we felt it was necessary to set a context in order to allow the reader increased insights into the current situation. The main restriction applying to our thesis was a requirement to work from home for all those whose work could be performed elsewhere, which occurred on a few occasions, and lastly on the 2nd of December 2021 (Regjeringen, 2022). We collected data in May 2022, only three months after the last restrictions were lifted in Norway (Regjeringen, 2022). Hence, there had been a longer period of time when employees were engaged in telecommuting, and not working from their company location. This should be taken into consideration by the reader as the pandemic was unprecedented, and even though the previously mentioned literature provides us with some indications as to the possible outcomes of telecommuting, the contextual variables in this scenario are widespread and difficult to predict. Some articles have been posted regarding the mental health and

well-being of employees following the pandemic allowing us some insights, but we can still not be sure about the continuous impact. Some findings are presented in Greenwood and Anas, (2021) whose research suggests an increased number of employees are leaving their jobs due to mental health issues. In addition, the number of respondents who reported at least one symptom of mental health conditions increased from 59% in 2019 to 76% in 2021 (Greenwood & Anas, 2021). Brunier and Drysdale, (2022) found that during the first year of the pandemic there was a 25% increase in the prevalence of anxiety and depression. Depression has previously been found to have a high correspondence with burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In addition, Naisberg-Fennig et al., (1991) found a positive correlation between anxiety and burnout, further reiterating the importance of providing the context. An important aspect of this study is therefore to consider the relationship between stress mindset and burnout by accounting for the degree of telecommuting as an important contextual variable.

Methodology

The respondents were drawn from a survey distributed online (Linkedin, Facebook, and Yammer) through our network within a time period of two weeks. The original schedule was to collect data through a collaboration with a company in the early stages of February. However, the company postponed the survey until late April, and later canceled the project a week prior to the agreed date. Given the limited time to recruit new organizations before our hand-in date for the thesis, we decided to collect data through our network, as time was of the essence. Taking time into consideration, we created and distributed a survey that fulfilled the requirements of *"Norsk senter for forskningsdata"* without the need to apply to NSD (NSD, 2022). This entails that our survey was 100 % anonymous. The post on our private platforms was deleted after closing the survey and we closely monitored the posts so that no comments on the posts could contribute to identifying respondents or their conditions.

One possible strength of gathering data from our network and not only from one organization is the fact that we wanted to reduce the potential influence of different variables, such as organizational culture, and leaders who could vary from one organization to another. The survey was confidential which is an important element in order to minimize the likelihood of the respondent answering what we

want them to answer, instead of being honest (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Due to the described circumstances, we were only able to collect data on one occasion, at a single one point in time. This resulted in us attempting to detect patterns among the different variables (cross-sectional) (Bryman et al., 2019). After closing the survey, an *outlier analysis* was performed to identify extreme values. In addition, we checked for typical patterns where respondents rushed through the survey. E.g. Answering the "*completely agree*" on all items and removing non-completed surveys. A total of 69 respondents got removed which gave us a total of 166 participants with an age variation from 18 to 56+. When using Qualtrics, we can see how long each respondent has spent taking the survey. Therefore, people who used substantially less time than the recommended time slot were removed.

56 % (*n*=93) of the respondents were females and 44 % (*n*=44) were male. 80 % (*n*=133) were permanent employees, temporary employees 5 % (*n*=9), part-time employees 14,5 % (*n*=24). An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare early and late respondents in order to test for nonresponse bias. The reason for doing this is because of the existence of several types of research which argue that late respondents are more representative of nonrespondents (Armstrong & Overton, 1977; Krishnan et al., 2006; Poppo & Zenger, 2002). There were no significant differences (Exhaustion (*p*=.96) mental distance (*p*=.64), emotional impairment (*p*=.82), cognitive impairment (*p*=.35), and stress mindset (*p*=.90)) which indicate that there are no differences between late and early respondents in this study.

Measures

All variables were measured with a seven-point Likert scale ranging from *completely disagree* (1) to *completely agree* (7). Following a two-week period during which the questionnaire was available, the data set was transferred to IBM SPSS statistics 28, where all unnecessary information and data were removed. This involved outlier analysis, typical patterns, and respondents who used a substantially shorter time than estimated to complete the survey, so these factors would not affect our data. Throughout this thesis, the following range of Cronbach's alpha measures will be utilized: Excellent ($\alpha \geq .90$), good ($.90 > \alpha \geq .80$), acceptable ($.80 > \alpha \geq .70$), questionable ($.70 > \alpha \geq .60$), poor ($.60 > \alpha \geq .50$) unacceptable ($.50 > \alpha$) (Gripsrud et al., 2016).

Burnout

When measuring burnout, we applied the validated burnout assessment tool (BAT) which Schaufeli et al., (2020B) created based on Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). It is a self-reported assessment tool, building upon a seven-point Likert scale. We used a translated version of the BAT from English to Norwegian, provided by Schaufeli and De Witte which may impact the validity and reliability (Burnout Assessment Tool, 2019). With that in mind, BAT has previously been translated to Spanish, but this did not influence the validity and reliability (Vinueza-Solórzano et al., 2021). Furthermore, the participants were also given the option to take the questionnaire in English.

The reliability of BAT ($\alpha = .75$) when combining items into one factor, is sufficient enough according to Cronbach Alpha's standard ($\alpha > .70$), and seems that the translated version of BAT is acceptable (Pallant, 2016). We also conducted reliability tests on each dimension and the results were as follows: Exhaustion ($\alpha = .83$) mental distance ($\alpha = .70$) emotional impairment ($\alpha = .68$) and cognitive impairment ($\alpha = .83$). Despite the fact that emotional impairment was lower than the recommended criteria, (Pallant, 2016), we decided to proceed with it as the BAT is a validated scale (Schaufeli et al., 2020A).

The first three questions in the survey measure exhaustion, (E.g. "At work, I feel mentally exhausted"), followed by questions four, five, and six which measure mental distance (e.g,. "I struggle to find any enthusiasm for my work"). The next three questions measure emotional impairment (e.g,. "At work, I feel unable to control my emotions"), and the last three questions measure cognitive impairment (e.g,. "At work, I have trouble staying focused"). There are two versions of the BAT, one with 23 items and one with 12 items. According to the Rasch model, the BAT12 meets all the measurement criteria required (Hadžibajramović et al., 2022). It is also timesaving in comparison to the BAT23, meaning it can be better suited for employee surveys as those longer may result in a reduced response rate. These notions led to the utilization of BAT12 as the measurement of burnout in this thesis.

Stress mindset

The framework that will be utilized to examine whether the respondents have a “stress-is-enhancing”, or “stress-is-debilitating” mindset is called the Stress Mindset Measure (SMM), and was presented by Crum et al., (2013). The framework was developed through validation across certain criteria placed by the authors. Firstly, it was established that a stress mindset is a distinct concept that factors separately from other stress-influencing variables, such as time span and gravity of the stress, and coping abilities, such as robustness and optimism (Crum et al., 2013). Further, the authors evaluated how stress mindset related to certain self-reported stress-relevant outcomes, and how the concept controlled for both gravity of stress and time span, and coping abilities utilized by the subject. Items 1, 3, 5, and 7 have been recorded as reversed values. This means that someone agreeing with the statement "The effects of stress are negative and should be avoided", is being re-coded to a lower score, even though their answer is higher on the Likert scale. By re-coding, one is able to calculate a mean which reflects the individual's stress mindset.

The assessment tool which was utilized was translated to Norwegian from English by Christina Nerstad with a translation-back-translation method. A study conducted by Karampas et al., (2020) translated from English to Greek suggests that SMM can be translated into different languages without facing difficulties. This aligns with the findings of Standford, (2022) who examined the translation of SMM to several other languages (Standford, 2022). The reliability test indicated an excellent Cronbach’s alpha (α=.91).

Control variables

In our study, we wanted to examine the relationship between stress mindset and burnout, but in the light of the recent pandemic, an increased number of people have changed the place in which they conduct their work (Bøe, 2022; Deloitte, 2020). Henke et al. (2016) found a relation between telecommuting intensity and depression, and in addition, telework has been found to negatively relate to exhaustion Sardeshmukh et al., 2012). Also, whether you believe stress has an enhancing or debilitating effect, seems to influence your burnout experience (Hahm, 2016, as cited in Park & Hahm, 2019). Based on these findings, in addition to the theory presented previously, we chose to include telecommuting as a central

control variable, because it is interesting to see whether telecommuting influences the relationship between stress mindset and burnout. This also includes whether you have a dedicated room to work from or if you need to work where you rest. Including these two concepts as control variables allow us increased opportunity to explain how, and what decides the correlations. From their findings, McGregor & Doshi, (2020) argue that forcing employees back to their offices may decrease their motivation. This means that the autonomy one experiences through being included in the decision of their own work arrangement could influence their motivation. Previous research also suggests that there is a modest association between concerns about job controllability (the perception of little autonomy and little decision-making latitude) and the development of burnout (Glass & McKnight, 1996; Maslach et al., 2001). Therefore, "own decision telecommuting" was included as a control variable. Working hours are also taken into consideration as Hu et al. (2016) found that there is a correlation between burnout and working more than 40 hours a week and that this correlation is increasing with the hours.

In order to provide a greater understanding of the tables, some explanation is provided. "Flex telecommuting" is to the extent the number of days people are telecommuting measured from 0 days to 7 days. "telecommuting" regards whether you have your own dedicated room when telecommuting or not. "Own decision telecommuting" is measured from *not at all* (1) *to a great extent* (5). The last variable is "employment" and comprises the three variations, permanent employee (1), temporary employee (2), and Part-time (3). In addition, we collected some demographical data which may also help us gain a further understanding of the construct. Age and gender were included as previous research has discovered some findings which indicate a relationship between burnout, and the two variables (Marchand et al., 2018)

Results

Preliminary analysis

Exploratory factor analysis

Although this thesis is using measurement tools that have already been validated, the exploratory factor analysis, hereby labeled as EFA, supports dividing the dimensions into five-factor loadings (exhaustion, mental distance, emotional impairment, cognitive impairment, and stress mindset). The reason for conducting an EFA is that a Norwegian - translated BAT has yet not been validated, although it has been translated (Burnout Assessment Tool, 2019). Therefore, to get an understanding of the behavior of each factor loading, an EFA where considered necessary. IBM SPSS Statistics 28 software was used in order to conduct EFA with a Promax rotation and a Maximum Likelihood estimation to assess the chance of observing the data given the probability distribution of the data. The application of Promax rotation was that the sample size (N) is greater than 150 participants (Neiva et al., 2004).

Prior to conducting an EFA, the suitability of data for an EFA was assessed. Bartlett's test is significant (p<.001) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy (KMO=.85) is fulfilling the requirements above .60 which gives us an indication that the analysis is suitable (Pallant, 2016). A check of scatterplots of all variables indicates a strong angle after the third factor – which is aligned with (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) suggestions. This analysis revealed the existence of five factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1 explaining 31.50 %, 49.70 %, 57.40 %, 63.30 %, and 68.40 %. Therefore, with the abovementioned result, it was decided to go forward with conducting confirmatory factor analysis, see appendix A for EFA.

Confirmatory factor analysis

In order to establish the psychometric properties, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis first hereby referred to as CFA (Farrell, 2010). This was utilized through R Studio with the following packages: Library lavaan, semTools, semPlot, Multivariate Normality Test, and Haven (Rosseel et al., 2022). The reason behind conducting a CFA is that we had assumptions about five-factor loadings (exhaustion, mental distance, emotional impairment, cognitive impairment, and stress mindset) in model 2 based on the findings from EFA. However, as Schaufeli (2020A) argued that BAT can be treated as one, we created two models (Model 1 and Model 2) to compare the fit. Following guidelines according to L. Hu & Bentler, (1999) and Marsh et al., (2005) for measuring fit indices, including Chi-squared (χ^2), degrees of freedom (df), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (< .08), followed by Tucker–Lewis index (TLI > .95), comparative fit index (CFI > .90), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) (< .08).

As illustrated in Table 1, the two models have been compared towards each other. The five-factor model (Model 2) indicated a good fit based on the output. χ^2 = 293.56; p < .001; df = 160; χ^2/df = 1.83; TLI = .90; CFI = .92 ; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .07. Model 1 indicated a worse fit based on output. χ^2 = 543.81; p < .001; df = 169; χ^2/df = 3.22; TLI = .74; CFI = .77; RMSEA = .12; SRMR = .09. In comparison, the Two factor model (Model 1) indicated a worse fit in comparison to Model 2. Based on the output from Table 1 we continue moving forward with Model 2 as it has a better fit. We also checked the modification indices, but none of the suggested modifications would have been in line with theory. We therefore decided to not modify any of the models.

Table 1 Confirmatory Factor analysis for testing which model who has a greater fit

Measurement	χ^2	*df*	*p*	*TLI*	*CFI*	*RMSEA*	*SRMR*
Model 1 Burnout and Stress mindset	543.81	169	.00	.74	.77	.12	.09
Model 2 Burnout dimension and stress mindset	293.56	160	.00	.90	.92	.07	.07

Note. χ^2=Chi square. Df = Degrees of freedom. P = significant value. TIL = Tucker-Lewis. Index CFI=Comparative Fit Index. RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual. Model 1= Burnout and Stress mindset. Model 2 = Burnout dimension (Exhaustion, Mental Distance, Emotional Impairment, Cognitive Impairment) and stress mindset

Model 2 had factor loadings ranging from .48 to .94 which is considered acceptable as the factor loadings should ideally be higher than .40 (Ulf H. Olsson, 2016). Conclusively, model 2 provided a better fit, allowing us to proceed with this model.

Descriptive analysis

A descriptive analysis was conducted through IBM SPSS statistics 28. In Table 2, all variables are presented (Gender, age, education, employment, working hour, flex telecommuting, own decision telecommuting, and telecommuting) with mean, standard deviation (SD), reliability as well as the correlations between the variables are presented, in order to see the correlation between variables. The interpretation of the correlation strength is aligned with Cohen (1988) whereas small r=.10 to 29; medium r= .30 to .49; large r=.50 to 1.0.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics, correlations, and scale reliabilities

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Gender	1.45	0.51	-													
2 Age	3.25	1.18	0.02	-												
3 Education	3.28	0.64	-0.91	-0.12	-											
4 Employment	1.34	0.72	-0.45	-0.37**	0.04	-										
5 Working hour	2.72	1.22	0.56	0.33**	0.11	-0.50**	-									
6 Flex Telecommuting	1.73	1.49	-0.49	0.01	0.17*	-0.15	0.20**	-								
7 Own Decision telecommuting	3.64	1.25	0.14	-0.30	0.17*	-0.19*	0.22**	0.43**	-							
8 Telecommuting	1.45	0.49	0.04	-0.14	-0.13	0.20*	-0.19*	-0.31*	-0.15*	-						
9 Exhaustion	2.73	1.32	0.07	-0.22**	0.01	0.11	-0.43	-0.05	-0.19*	-0.04	**(.83)**					
10 Mental Distance	2.16	1.09	0.13	-0.15	-0.06	0.15*	-0.04	-0.11	-0.12	-0.02	0.60**	**(.70)**				
11 Emotional Impairment	1.74	0.74	0.10	0.00	0.03	0.00	-0.05	-0.09	-0.17*	0.04	0.33*	0.35*	**(.68)**			
12 Cognitive Impairment	2.44	1.16	-0.41	-0.14	0.11	0.06	-0.20	-0.05	-0.05	-0.13	0.52**	0.46**	0.30**	**(.83)**		
13 Burnout Total	2.27	0.83	0.07	-0.19*	0.30	0.12	-0.39	-0.08	-0.17*	-0.60	0.85**	0.80**	0.57**	0.77**	**(.75)**	
14 Stress Mindset	3.76	1.18	-0.02	-0.07	-0.02	-0.00	0.20**	0.02	0.13	0.13	-0.28**	-0.30**	-0.09	-0.14	-0.28**	**(.91)**

Note. coefficient alphas are displayed on the diagonal. **. *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).* *. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Primary Analysis

Regression analysis

The results from the regression analysis are shown in Table 3. We checked for multicollinearity with a result of Tolerance greater than .10 (Tolerance = .93) and VIF lower than 10 (VIF = 1.60) (Pallant, 2016). This regression analysis was used in order to test Hypotheses 1 - 1d. Starting with H1, the greater the stress-is-enhancing mindset is, the less prone one will be to experience burnout. Therefore, one can say that the more enhancing an individual's stress mindset is, the less burnout one will experience (β = -.22, p < .001). Furthermore, going into each dimension, starting with H1a, the results indicate that a stress-is-enhancing mindset seems to reduce experiences of exhaustion (β = -.34, p < .001). At last, the results indicate that a stress-is-enhancing mindset seems to reduce experiences of mental distance (β = -.32, p < .001). Conclusively, based on the results, H1, H1a, and H1b were supported, and burnout, exhaustion, and mental distance seem to decrease the more enhancing an individual's stress mindset is. Further analysis did not provide support for Hypotheses H1c and H1d as both emotional impairment and cognitive impairment were deemed insignificant.

Looking at Table 2, there is good variation of findings with our control variables, also telecommuting, the most important, as this was a central control variable in this thesis. Unfortunately, we could not find any significant findings regarding high- and low telecommuting as there seems to have been a lack of respondents in the "high telecommuting" group. Looking at telecommuting in terms of own choice, the result implies that both exhaustion and emotional impairment decreases when the employees have a choice whether they can telecommute or not. Also, we see that both age and working hours seem to contribute to the reduction of burnout. Moreover, looking at each dimension, age has a significant correlation with both exhaustion and mental distance. Employment as a variable also has a significant influence on mental distance.

Table 3 Regression results for testing hypothesis

	Exhaustion	Mental Distance	Emotional Impairment	Cognitive Impairment	Burnout Total
Gender	0.23	0.18	0.18	-0.05	0.14
Age	-0.35***	-0.17*	-0.00	-0.15	-0.17**
Education	-0.04	-0.17	0.08	0.13	0.00
Employment	0.11	0.32*	0.00	0.11	0.13
Working hour	0.20*	0.21**	0.03	0.07	0.13*
Flex Telecommuting	0.00	-0.07	-0.01	-0.03	-0.03
Own Decision telecommuting	-0.21*	-0.06	-0.11*	-0.06	-0.11
Telecommuting	-0.17	-0.09	0.04	-0.33	-0.14
Stress Mindset	-0.34***	-0.32***	-0.07	-0.15	-0.22***
ΔR^2	0.20	0.19	0.06	0.08	0.18
Adjusted R^2	0.15	0.15	0.01	0.03	0.14
F	4.24***	4.11***	1.12	1.47	3.85***
ΔF	4.24***	4.11***	1.12	1.47	3.85***

*Note. * p < 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** p < 0.01 level (2-tailed). *** p<0.001 level (2-tailed). N = 166.*

One-way analysis-way analysis of covariance

As described in the context, post-pandemic may lead to a lot of uncertainty regarding the role telecommuting has on employees. In order to get a greater understanding and take into account the importance of context in the form of telecommuting, we have chosen to include one-way analysis of covariance (ANOVA) tests in order to see if there are any significant findings when comparing variables. Variables such as age, education, whether they have their own dedicated room, the variance of the number of days telecommute, to what extent they can decide to telecommute or not (own decision telecommuting), working hours, employment in terms of full-time, part-time, and temporary employee were taken into account when doing the analysis. This resulted in significant findings when asked (Please indicate to what extent you can decide how often you work from home) - read "own decision telecommuting", towards, stress mindset (F=3.30, p = .01), exhaustion (F=5.02, p < .001) and total burnout (F=3.89, p = .005). In addition, as we used our network when conducting the data, we feared the majority of the respondents would have similar education as us, although a frequency analysis showed a great distribution of people from high school, bachelor's, and master's degrees. Moreover, the ANOVA provides findings suggesting that education is significantly correlated with exhaustion. (F=2.68, p = .03).

Discussion

In this section, we will attempt to tie the theory, the findings, and our results together, and through this, provide the reader with a fuller understanding of the most meaningful contributions of this thesis. As mentioned in the introduction and

throughout, when it comes to stress mindset a great deal of knowledge is still unexplored. Therefore, our aim in this thesis has been to enlighten the relationship between stress mindsets and the influences on burnout, through the utilization of a fairly new tool of burnout assessment (BAT). In addition, we attempted to get an increased understanding of how the relationship is impacted by the degree of someone's engagement in telecommuting. It is our aspiration that this thesis will allow further knowledge within the relevant areas of research. The results of our analysis indicate that stress mindset has a negative relationship with burnout as a single construct, and two of the burnout dimensions. Also, we were able to achieve reliable data from the translated version of BAT, but the reliability scores were considerably lower than those of the original, and other translated versions.

Theoretical Implications

This thesis provides a few theoretical contributions we would like to highlight in this section. Firstly, our hypotheses were focused on burnout and the dimensions proposed by Schaufeli et al., (2020A), and how one's stress mindset influences these. Given the limited research previously performed on this relationship, our findings aid in extending the knowledge within both these areas of literature. Our findings align with those of the past, (Hahm, 2016, as cited in Park & Hahm, 2019; Klussman et al., 2021) further indicating that a stress mindset is negatively correlated with burnout. More specifically, this entails that the more someone's mindset regarding stress can be categorized as enhancing, the less likely it seemed that they were to experience burnout symptoms. This relationship has previously been tested using both the MBI and the Copenhagen burnout inventory as methods of assessing burnout, but to our knowledge, it is the first time someone has deployed the BAT. This tells us that across all three assessment methods, an individual's stress mindset influences burnout.

Specifically, when inspecting the results we were able to find a moderate negative relationship between an enhancing stress mindset and exhaustion, seemingly suggesting that exhaustion may be more apparent in those with a debilitating mindset towards stress. These associations align with our hypothesized outcome, proposing that the exhaustion component of burnout is influenced by one's stress mindset. Attempting to explain these findings could prove to be difficult given our study design and the number of possible variables which could

affect the influences. An explanation of the findings could be due to increased participation in approach-coping efforts performed by those with an enhancing stress mindset, as this has been found to positively influence the performance (Casper et al., 2017), and work performance has been found to negatively relate to emotional exhaustion (Wright & Bonnett, 1997). Further, approach-coping efforts are said to decrease workload through more effective coping (Casper et al., 2017), which leads to a lower workload. In return, work overload has been found to contribute to increased chances of exhaustion through a depletion of the capacity of employees to meet the demands set at work (Maslach and Leiter, 2016). Another explanation could be the seemingly lower levels of depressive symptoms in those with an enhancing stress mindset (Crum et al., 2013), as depression and exhaustion have been closely linked with moderate to high correlations (Bianchi et al., 2015).

The findings presented in the thesis extend the knowledge of stress mindset's influences on the exhaustion dimension, and to our knowledge is the first to look at stress mindset parallel to burnout, using Schaufeli et al., (2020B) assessment method. These findings allow us to add lower levels of exhaustion to the long list of possible beneficial outcomes of having an enhancing stress mindset. Through this thesis, we have highlighted many positive consequences of a positive stress mindset, and the associations found in our analysis further the belief that an adaptation could benefit employees. Despite individual differences regarding one's mindset, Crum et al., (2013) and Park and Hahm, (2019) argue that stress-enhancing mindset can be trained.

Besides the influence of stress mindset, we were able to find some other variables impacting the exhaustion levels. First, age showed a moderate negative effect on exhaustion, while an increase in the number of hours worked correlated positively with exhaustion. We also found significant results suggesting that the more influence employees have on the decision of their own telecommuting arrangement, the exhaustion decreases. This could be due to an increase in autonomy and decision-involvement which, when not adequately present, have been found to be two antecedents of burnout (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998).

Further, stress mindset also shows a moderate negative relationship with the mental distance dimension of burnout in our sample group. These findings are as we hypothesized and could possibly be due to an increased commitment to

avoidance-coping efforts, as opposed to approach-coping efforts as found in Casper et al., (2017). To remind the reader of the difference between the two, avoidance refers to efforts aimed at escaping a stressful situation and includes responses such as avoidance and denial (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Opposedly, approach-coping focuses on dealing with the stressful situation in a problem-focused matter, through efforts such as acceptance and support seeking (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). The findings in their article were specific to individuals who anticipated an increase in workload, but it seems likely that someone with an enhancing stress mindset, who employs approach-coping efforts are likely to engage in less mental withdrawal and psychological detachment. Another possible reasoning for this claim is based on findings by Carver and Conner-Smith, (2010) and concerns the optimism of an individual. Their findings indicate that optimism is positively associated with approach-coping, and reversely, negatively associated with avoidance-coping (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Further, optimism has been found to be an important predictor of the risk of job burnout (E. C. Chang et al., 2000). Combining these findings, one with a stress-is-enhancing mindset seems to be more engaged in the approach-coping effort, which again is positively related to optimism. On the other hand, since optimism was found to be negatively associated with avoidance-coping, and those with a debilitating mindset engage in more of these efforts, burnout symptoms may be more at risk in those with a negative stress mindset. These findings could contribute to researchers by elaborating on the association between mental distance as a coping mechanism, and the stress mindset an individual possesses.

As stated before, our output on the two variations of telecommuting intensity did not provide significant findings. It is likely this is due to the relatively small sample size, with only nine employees stating they were engaged in high-intensity telecommuting. This could imply that we overestimated the degree to which employees are currently engaged in the alternative work arrangements and that the months since the pandemic have been focused on returning to previous methods, rather than exploring new ones. Even though we were not able to find sufficient findings regarding the two different telecommuting intensity groups, we were able to find results indicating that having an influence on your own work arrangement was negatively associated with both exhaustion and emotional impairment. These results align with the notions of (McGregor & Doshi, 2020). The

output of our analysis and those of (McGregor & Doshi, 2020) makes it seem as though some of the burnout dimensions are influenced by an employee's level of autonomy. Maslach and Leiter (2016) state in their article that the perceived capacity to exercise autonomy at work increases job engagement, as opposed to job burnout. Maslach et al., (2001) also state that autonomy has a correlation with burnout. The results allow further research on the relationship between one's influence on one's own work arrangement and perceived autonomy, and the burnout dimensions of the BAT.

Further interpretation of our results suggests that three of our control variables all have weaknesses, but significant impacts on the degree of mental distancing. These were age, number of working hours, and whether the respondent was a full-time, temporary, or part-time employee. There was a negative correlation between age and mental distancing, suggesting that younger respondents could be engaging in more mental distancing while the number of working hours increased in conjunction with the use of this coping mechanism. Lastly, we found a relationship between mental distance and whether the employee was full-time, temporary, or part-time. Our output indicated that when mental distancing increases, employees become "less" full-time. To paraphrase, it seems those who are not currently in full-time positions engage in more mental distancing. In an attempt to explain this, age and, part-time and temporary employees correlated with mental distance which could be explained by the fact that younger respondents could still be in school or have not yet reached a knowledge base required for certain full-time positions yet. Furthermore, it may be plausible that employees could be utilizing emotion-focused coping alongside mental distancing. Carver et al., (1989) distinguish between problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping, whereas the latter coping is the most relevant strategy for this situation as people have a tendency to believe that stress is something that must be endured (Carver et al., 1989). Among several different strategies within emotion-focused coping, mental disengagement occurs due to an array of activities that serve to divert their attention away from the behavioral goal or the stressor that is interfering with it (Carver et al., 1989). It has previously been found that students engage in psychological disengagement as a way to self-protect from negative consequences when faced with academic underachievement (Régner & Loose, 2006). This could also be the

case in a work-setting, where employees feel as though they can't keep up with demands.

Another contribution concerns the framework we used for assessing burnout. The Norwegian version has been posted on the website of the assessment (Burnout assessment tool, 2019), but we were not able to find any evidence suggesting the publication of a validated version. When comparing the reliability output of the Norwegian survey with those of Schaufeli et al., (2020B) one can see that our translated version did not provide scores at a similar level. Where their Cronbach's alpha indicated an excellent fit those who responded to our survey ranged from questionable to excellent when examining others who have previously translated the BAT, we can see that also their level of reliability is higher than those we found. Even though three of the four dimensions were deemed *acceptable* within the Cronbach's alpha standard (Pallant, 2016), our results deviated from those of others validated versions, resulting in skepticism regarding the translation. Further, when we compared the total reliability of our survey with only those responding in Norwegian we found that the reliability of both exhaustion and mental distance decreased. This seems to suggest that some parts of the translated version are not consistent. Further investigation led us to find that removing item six would increase the reliability to an acceptable level.

Practical implications

Given the relevance of the concepts highlighted in this thesis, there may be considerable takeaways that could potentially benefit practitioners. Firstly, reaching a broader understanding of burnout symptoms and the influences of these could allow professionals increased opportunity for detection, both in themselves and others. When also considering the rise in both recognition and concern for well-being in the workplace, employers and employees may benefit from a broader knowledge (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Johnson et al., 2018). The same authors found that those who felt that their mental health was supported were less likely to miss work, as well as less likely to experience mental health symptoms. Greenwood and Anas (2021) recommend employers progress from viewing mental health as an individual challenge to a collective priority. Further, we found that age showed a small to moderate negative relationship with exhaustion, mental distance, and burnout. These findings suggest that younger employees might be more exposed to the experience of burnout symptoms, although there are other possible explanations

that could influence the results. Regardless, practitioners could consider these findings and follow up on employees accordingly.

Secondly, finding that a stress mindset had a significant negative influence on burnout as a single construct, and two of the burnout dimensions of Schaufeli et al., (2020A) can contribute to practitioners. Following the increased recognition and attention on employee mental health and well-being, employers are, and will continuously be in need of newer measures that can assist employees to cope better. An introduction of stress mindset could help employers immensely in the facilitation of a more positive view of stress in their employees. As mentioned in Schaufeli et al., (2020A) mental distancing is deployed as a coping mechanism to deal with exhaustion, but the strategy is deemed ineffective as it ultimately results in increased and intensified stress. Employers could utilize these findings and allow their employees an opportunity to comprehend and observe the beneficial outcomes of a more enhancing stress mindset, hopefully resulting in motivation for adaptation. One concrete suggestion to employers is arranging training programs or such to aid employees in transitioning to a more enhancing stress mindset. Crum et al., (2013) showed in their study that an individual's stress mindset can be altered through exposure to short multimedia film clips. These film clips were selectively oriented to one of the two stress mindsets, with factual information biased towards an enhancing approach. Those who experienced an increased enhancement of stress mindset also self-reported corresponding changes in work performance and psychological symptoms (Crum et al.., 2013).

The third practical contribution of this thesis regards organizations that are either currently engaged in or are contemplating making alternative work methods for employees permanent. Even though we were not able to obtain a sample size sufficient to find significant results for telecommuting intensity, we were able to see a relationship between the influence someone has on their own work arrangement and two of the burnout dimensions. These were exhaustion and emotional impairment, which both showed a negative correlation in our results. This could be due to increases in autonomy and decision-making influences of the employee. Findings mentioned previously (Maslach et al., 2001) have shown that autonomy has correlated with burnout and that if autonomy is present, high levels of burnout were not as evident (Bakker et al., 2005). The work of these authors

could assist in explaining our findings, and joint, it can help guide practitioners manage alternative work arrangements.

Limitations and Future Research

There are certain limitations in this thesis that should be mentioned and considered by the reader. Firstly, given that our study was cross-sectional there are certain limitations that should be considered. First, we collected data at a single time restricting our ability to draw causal inferences (Levin, 2006). Ultimately, this entails a limited ability for us to draw solid conclusions based on the results provided. This is supported by Specter (1994) who states that the design does not allow confident causal conclusions. The authors also mention that there are too many alternative explanations for results given in a cross-sectional design, both in terms of the cause-effect relationship and the direction of causality. Also, given the nature of the cross-sectional design, the respondents could possibly be exposed to multiple situational factors which could inflict with responses (Levin, 2006). As these factors are difficult to control, there is a possibility the responses could fluctuate and be different at another point in time. Future research should consider the shortcoming of this thesis and could benefit from collecting information from different sources. In their analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2012) found that the relationships among widely studied constructs were influenced strongly by whether they were all gathered from one source or different sources.

Another limitation of our thesis concerns the cross-sectional design and the possible occurrence of common method variance (CMV). When self-report surveys are utilized to collect data at the same time, from the same respondent, CMV could be a concern (S.-J. Chang et al., 2010). Chang et al., (2010) state that the presence of CMV creates a false internal consistency, resulting in an apparent correlation between variables that are generated by their common source. Thereby, the occurrence of CMV could either inflate or deflate the relationship between constructs in our output (Chang et al., 2010). This was taken into consideration ahead of time and prepared for by reassuring the respondents of their anonymity through information given on the first page of the survey. On this page, we also asked them to be honest and transparent in their responses and stated that the data would be handled confidently. Lastly, we deleted the survey as soon as we reached

the deadline, as well as closely monitored our posts for potential comments. Future research could reduce the potential occurrence of CMV to a greater degree if they were to utilize a longitudinal design instead of a cross-sectional design. One reason is that included in the longitudinal design is a collection on separate occasions, which decreases the respondent's engagement in cognitive accessibility of responses (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Thereby, separating the times of collection allows previously recalled information to leave the short-term memory.

We offered both a Norwegian-translated version as well as the original English burnout assessment tool to the respondents. Translation of Schaufeli et al.,'s (2020A) burnout measurement method has been performed multiple times prior (Angelini et al., 2021; de Beer et al., 2020; Vinueza-Solórzano et al., 2021). Vinueza-Solorzano et al., (2021) found support for both reliability and validity of their translated version, allowing an increased likelihood of reasonableness across languages. However, it should be considered that the authors of this version employed two certified English-to-Spanish experts of translation (Vinueza-Solorzano et al., 2021), while our Norwegian version was retrieved from the official site of the assessment without validation to our knowledge (Burnout assessment tool, 2019). To control for this limitation, we conducted both an EFA and a CFA analysis and found that the preferred model included all four dimensions of burnout, rather than the construct as a single score. In addition, Vinueza-Solorzano et al., (2021) sent a back-translated version of the BAT-23 back to the original authors for approval, an act we have not performed with our version of the BAT-12. These notions could have affected our scores and are worth mentioning as possible limitations. For those utilizing the Norwegian version of the BAT in the future, we advise an increasingly thorough analysis of the reliability of questions. Even though our results were deemed acceptable, clear deviations from the original, as well as other translated versions were shown. Especially question six, the last of the mental distance dimension proved to significantly change the reliability. In addition, Schaufeli et al,. (2020B) took into consideration the treatment of people who have been treated for burnout. We did not ask our participants whether they had been treated for burnout throughout the past five years (Schaufeli et al., 2020B).

Our measurement for stress mindset has also been translated to Norwegian. Even though this version had not been validated previously we wanted to see whether there was a difference between the English and Norwegian participants in terms of answering stress mindset. An independent T-test was conducted to compare those who took the questionnaire in English and Norwegian to see whether there were any significant differences between languages. This resulted with no significant differences in a Norwegian stress mindset (M = 3,87, SD = 1.19) and English stress mindset (M = 3.34, SD = 1.05). As such, this implies that there were no differences between the two surveys.

Also, self-reports of negative features of the work situation, as well as negative affective reactions might be influenced by negative affective emotions (Burke et al., 1993). On the contrary, the author states that positive aspects of the situation at work and positive affective reactions could both be influenced by positive affectivity. Previously, negative affectivity has been found to inflate the relationship between employee stress expression and the expression of depression, the amount of negative affect at work, and job and life satisfaction (Brief et al., 1988). Conversely, Jex and Spector (1996) and Chen and Spector (1991) could not find any influence of negative affectivity on job strain variables and self-reported job stress. Given the similarity of these constructs and burnout, these findings should be mentioned in case they had an impact on our results.

Prior to this research, we wanted to test the two subscales of stress mindset separately. Enhancing stress mindset and debilitating stress mindset. However, after conducting an EFA and CFA, we found that all stress mindset items were loaded on the same factor. Therefore, it could not be possible to treat stress mindset as two separate variables, (stress enhancing mindset), and (stress debilitating mindset) as multicollinearity would occur. A collinearity Diagnostics analysis provided us with the output eigenvalue of .02 and condition index of 21.00. This gives us reasons to assume multicollinearity as the condition index should not be greater than 15 (Regorz, 2020). Moreover, looking at our collinearity diagnostics, two variables (Stress debilitating mindset and stress enhancing mindset) have variance proportions of .79 and .87. Despite being under the limit of .90, Regorz, (2020) argues for decreasing the number to .70 which still can give an indication of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2014; Regorz, 2020).

Furthermore, we initially had an agreement with a company that our survey would be distributed internally within their organization. After the company withdrew shortly prior to the collection period agreed, we were left short on time and had to collect data from our own sources instead. This resulted in completely anonymous data and a total sample size of 166. As our sample size was on the lower side, we ended up without sufficient numbers of participants for the two telecommuting intensity groups. As such, future research should obtain samples from a bigger group in order to determine whether high- or low telecommuting intensity has any effect on burnout when considering stress mindset. Ideally, this study would include the increased size of both of the telecommuting intensity groups.

In terms of generalization of the result, most of our participants were from Scandinavia with those answering in Norwegian equaling N=133, while the English questionnaire was taken by 33 participants. One can not know which country or culture our respondents are from as all of the data from the questionnaire is anonymous. According to Hofstede Insights, (2021), there are several different cultures, and it is reasonable to assume that they all perceive stress differently. Consequently, this result may mostly apply to cultures that share similarities in stress perceptions with Scandinavian countries. A further generalization is difficult to obtain with a cross-sectional study, especially with a smaller sample size. Therefore, we propose that future research should emphasize other methods of assessment to examine these associations in order to provide more generalizable results.

Conclusion

A post pandemic timeslot created an unforeseen dilemma where employees wanted to telecommute more than ever (Bøe, 2022). In line with previous research, our results implied that the more influence employees have on the decision of their own telecommuting arrangement, the exhaustion decreases (-.21). Furthermore, although the Norwegian translated BAT proved reliable, it still creates a research foundation going forward due to the differentiation between the translated

Norwegian BAT, when compared to the other translated BAT's (Angelini et al., 2021; de Beer et al., 2020; Vinueza-Solórzano et al., 2021). Conclusively, our results indicate a decrease in burnout when having stress is enhancing mindset.

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Appendix A

Measurement	Factor				
	Stress Mindset 1	*Exhaustion 2*	*Cognitive Impairment 3*	*Emotional Impairment 4*	*Mental Distance 5*
SMM8	.85				
SMM1_Recoded	.80				
SMM_4	.79				
SMM7_Recoded	.77				
SMM_2	.76				
SMM3_Recoded	.71				
SMM_6	.68				
SMM5_Recoded	.57				
BAT_1		.84			
BAT_2		.79			
BAT_3		.64			
BAT_11			1.00		
BAT_10			.88		
BAT_12			.41		
BAT_7				.68	
BAT_8				.63	
BAT_9				.58	
BAT_5					.63
BAT_4					.54
BAT_6					.52

Note. Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization. Factor loadings less than .40 are not shown