

Basic Psychological Needs As Predictors of Self-Handicapping Behaviors^{1*}

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to examine the relationship between the basic psychological needs related to satisfaction and frustration with various types of self-handicapping behaviors. The sample consisted of 518 adults ($M_{age} = 35.87$, $SD = 10.36$), 108 of which (20.8%) declared themselves as male. The instruments used were the Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration Scale (BPNSFS), and the Self-Handicapping questionnaire (SH). The results show that the frustrations of the basic psychological needs, on average, correlate more strongly with self-handicapping behaviors, than with their satisfaction. In addition, in the hierarchical regression models, frustrations of the basic psychological needs prove to be stronger predictors of self-handicapping behaviors than low satisfaction levels of the same needs. In general, competence frustration is the strongest predictor of all forms of self-handicapping behaviors, while relatedness frustration increases in significance in its relation to self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships. Autonomy frustration shows relevance in explaining all forms of self-handicapping behaviors, although slightly weaker than competence and relatedness frustration. These findings indicate the salience of the frustration of the basic psychological needs in various self-handicapping behaviors, and provide more detailed information on the value of each basic psychological need in the tested relations.

Keywords: self-determination theory, basic psychological needs, self-handicapping behaviors

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The two constructs explored in this study are the Basic Psychological Needs, according to the Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) and self-handicapping behaviors, with the aim of establishing and understanding the connection between these complex phenomena. Considering the wide network of human faculties that serve as a drive for different types of behaviors, the satisfaction and frustration of the basic psychological needs could provide a comprehensive clarification of the underlying factors of various self-handicapping behaviors. Since its inception (Jones & Berglas, 1978), it was stated that individuals high on self-handicapping behaviors are mostly concerned with competence, particularly in situations in which their abilities might be challenged. However, limited attention has been given to the potential influence of autonomy and relatedness on self-handicapping behaviors. We seek to confirm, but also to expand the scope of the investigation by examining the influence of competence, autonomy and relatedness as universal needs that can be either satisfied or frustrated, on self-handicapping behaviors.

Basic psychological needs theory

As a macro theory of human motivation, SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985) is concerned with issues such as personality development, self-regulation, universal psychological needs, life goals, aspirations and social conditions that have the potential to either facilitate or hinder human flourishing (Ryan & Deci, 2017). SDT maintains that a consideration of innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness is essential to understanding human motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Within the broad framework of SDT, a central “mini-theory” was formulated called Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT; Ryan & Deci, 2017) which identified the three needs and defined them as psychological nutrients essential for individuals’ adjustment, integrity, and growth (Ryan, 1995). Furthermore, a specific desire can only be assigned the status of a basic psychological need when its satisfaction is not only conducive, but essential for one’s well-being, while its frustration increases risk for a wide range of maladaptive outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory takes into account both the satisfaction and frustration of the three needs, with frustration representing a more threatening experience than merely an absence of its satisfaction (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020).

The basic psychological need for autonomy refers to a sense of volition and willingness, and, when satisfied, one experiences feelings of integrity because their actions, thoughts and feelings are self-endorsed, and authentic (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). Competence refers to our basic need to feel efficacy and mastery and produces a sense of being able to operate effectively within important life contexts

(Ryan & Deci, 2017). Relatedness denotes the feelings of warmth, bonding, care and is satisfied by achieving a connection and significance to others, resulting in a perception of belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

SDT researchers have examined the relationship between need satisfaction and various outcomes, and have repeatedly shown that need satisfaction was essential for a wide range of positive results, such as optimism (Ionescu & Iacob, 2019), well-being (Šakan et al., 2020), resilience enhancement in traumatic situations (Lera & Abualkibash, 2022).

On the other end of the spectrum, frustration of the basic psychological needs leads to various ill-being indicators, such as depressive symptoms (Pietrek et al., 2022), anxiety (Kormas et al., 2014), and gambling problems (Vuorinen et al., 2022), to name a few.

Self-handicapping behaviors

The other important concept explored in this study are self-handicapping behaviors. Jones and Berglas (1978) argue that people have a tendency to use attributional principles in the service of self-image protection, by actively arranging the circumstances of their behavior in order to protect their conceptions of themselves as competent, intelligent etc. To put it simply, after failing to accomplish the desired task, individuals would associate their failures with the circumstances they created themselves, rather than with their own imperfections. Self-handicapping behaviors have a protective utility, because, as stated by Čolović et al. (2009), a negative evaluation of one's own abilities endangers the general perception of self-worth, and therefore, people use certain strategies to prevent or reduce the possibility of their failures to be attributed to their own competencies.

Behaviors that could serve the purpose of fulfilling self-handicapping behaviors include, but are not limited to, alcohol and drug consumption (Berglas & Jones, 1978), lower study hours (Warner & Moore, 2004), perfectionism, or a tendency to set excessively high standards (Stewart & De George-Walker, 2014), but also internal causes (Clarke & MacCann, 2016), such as anxiety or shyness (Snyder et al., 1985).

A study by Zuckerman & Tsai (2005) explored the relationship between self-handicapping behaviors and basic psychological needs and found that individuals high on self-handicapping behaviors reported a loss in competence satisfaction which, in turn, mediated the relation of self-handicapping behavior and negative mood. The study, building upon the work of Jones and Berglas (1978) stated that self-handicapping behaviors were seen as a product of overconcern with competence, in order to facilitate attributions that are favorable to self-perceived competence. Conversely, people high on self-handicapping behaviors are presumably not concerned with issues such as relatedness and autonomy (Zuckerman & Tsai, 2005). In contrast, researchers also examined the relationship between autonomous and controlled regulation within SDT and self-handicapping behaviors and found that

individuals who tend to be lower in self-determination, that is, have more controlled ways of regulation, engage in self-handicapping behaviors more frequently (Lewis & Neighbors, 2005). In addition, Knee and Zuckerman (1998) came to similar conclusions stating that individuals with high levels of autonomy and low control exhibited less self-handicapping behaviors.

The present study

The present study used a more detailed version of the self-handicapping scale which addresses both internal and external causes of self-handicapping behaviors, but also separates them into two domains: achievement situations and interpersonal relationships. Internal causes of self-handicapping behaviors include attributions to one's own personality traits or characteristics, such as shyness, clumsiness, insecurities etc. External causes of self-handicapping behaviors deal with the creation of obstacles in the outside situation itself. The domain of interpersonal relationships describes those contexts in which stable, emotional relationships are formed, and in which interpersonal problems could occur. Achievement situations relate to the attainment of goals and contexts which constantly test one's perception of personal abilities (Čolović et al., 2009).

Considering this, it seems appropriate to establish a relationship between all aspects of basic psychological needs with self-handicapping behaviors. The findings of previous research, as stated above (Knee & Zuckerman, 1998; Lewis & Neighbors, 2005; Zuckerman & Tsai, 2005), indicate that self-handicapping behaviors are strategies that are related to unmet basic psychological needs, or at least, their low satisfaction. However, some ambiguity in comprehending such a complex relationship still remains. Mainly, it is still unclear whether it is the low satisfaction or the actual frustration of the needs that better predict self-handicapping behaviors. This study seeks to expand on the existing literature by filling this gap and determining the unique contributions of both satisfaction and frustration of the basic psychological needs in their relationship to self-handicapping behaviors. Also, the basic psychological need for relatedness remains largely unexamined, hence it appears applicable to explore its connection to such strategies, given that self-handicapping behaviors could occur in interpersonal relationships, as well.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between different types of self-handicapping behaviors and the basic psychological needs and to explore the unique predictive values of both need satisfaction and frustration in relation to a range of self-handicapping behaviors in situations or contexts in which they might occur. The study was conducted on an adult sample. Consequently, by investigating these constructs within different life domains, such as employment or unemployment, adult age, and marriage, we aim to obtain a more comprehensive grasp of their nature.

Method

Sample and procedure

The sample consisted of 518 participants, 407 (78.6%) of which declared themselves as female, 108 (20.8%) as male, and 3 (0.6%) decided not to disclose their gender. The average age is 35.87 (18-65, $SD = 10.36$). The relationship status of the participants is as follows: 179 (34.6%) are married, 159 (31%) are single, 111 (21.6%) are in a relationship, but not married, 64 (12.5%) are in a civil union, and 5 (1%) are widowed. 436 (84.2%) are employed, and 82 (15.8%) are unemployed. The sample was gathered online, participation was voluntary and participants received no compensation. Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Instruments and variables

The Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration Scale (BPNSFS; Chen et al., 2015). It contains six subscales assessing: *autonomy satisfaction* ($\alpha = .78$, 4 items, ex. I feel my choices express who I really am), *competence satisfaction* ($\alpha = .81$, 4 items, ex. I feel capable at what I do), *relatedness satisfaction* ($\alpha = .80$, 4 items, ex. I feel that the people I care about also care about me), *autonomy frustration* ($\alpha = .82$, 4 items, ex. I feel forced to do many things I wouldn't choose to do), *competence frustration* ($\alpha = .81$, items, ex. I feel like a failure because of the mistakes I make) and *relatedness frustration* ($\alpha = .71$, items, ex. I feel the relationships I have are just superficial). The provided Cronbach's alpha coefficients, from the present study, are satisfactory. Participants registered their responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 - *I completely disagree* to 5 - *I completely agree*. BPNSFS was translated and validated on a Serbian sample, providing a 6-factor solution and promising psychometric characteristics (Šakan, 2020).

Self-handicapping questionnaire (SH; original Serbian name: Upitnik za procenu samohendikepiranja, Čolović et al., 2009). It assesses four different types of self-handicapping behaviors: *external self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships* ($\alpha = .73$, 10 items, ex. I'd be more successful in romantic relationships if I weren't attracted to people who are unavailable), *internal self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships* ($\alpha = .87$, 12 items, ex. My shyness is so pronounced that it's better for me to avoid contact with others), *external self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations* ($\alpha = .77$, 5 items, ex. If I didn't have such a bad relationship with my superiors, I'd be more successful) and *internal self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations* ($\alpha = .71$, 7 items, ex. I have a tendency to give up on things if I can't do them perfectly). By summing the scores on all subscales, we get *total self-handicapping behaviors* ($\alpha = .91$). The provided Cronbach's alpha coefficients, from the present study, are satisfactory. This

questionnaire was validated by Čolović et al. (2009) on a Serbian sample showing good psychometric properties. Participants registered their responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I completely disagree) to 5 (I completely agree).

Set of questions on socio-demographic characteristics. The participants were asked to provide information about their age, gender, employment status and current relationship status (single, divorced, married, in a civil union and in a relationship, but unmarried). The socio-demographic variables were coded as follows: “gender: 1 – *male*, 2 – *female*”, “employment status: 1 – *employed*, 2 – *unemployed*”. The variable “relationship status” was recoded into binary categories with the intention of reflecting the current state of romantic partnership, i.e., single and divorced participants were lumped into one category describing those individuals who are not currently involved in a relationship, and participants who declared themselves as “married”, “in a civil union”, or “in a relationship, but not married”, were joined into a separate category. These categories were labeled as “1 – *single*”, and “2 – *in a relationship*”, respectively.

Statistical analysis

All statistical analyses were conducted in SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlations and Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (HMRA) were used.

Correlation indices were computed to determine the strength of the association among all used variables, that is, both basic psychological need satisfaction and frustration, and all types of self-handicapping behaviors and their respective domains. In order to assess the predictive value of each need satisfaction/frustration relative to a range of self-handicapping behaviors, HMRA was used. Five different models were tested. First model used the total score on all self-handicapping behaviors as the criterion variable. The following four models were assessed using the remaining specific types of self-handicapping behaviors and their respective domains as dependent variables. In the first step, for each model, the following covariates were added: age, gender, employment and relationship status, with the removal of those participants who proclaimed their relationship status as ‘widowed’ due to a very small sample size. In the second step, autonomy, competence and relatedness satisfaction were added, and in the last step the frustration of the three needs were included.

Results

Table 1*Descriptive measures of all variables used in the study*

	<i>N</i>	min – max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sk</i>	<i>Ku</i>
Autonomy satisfaction	518	6 – 20	14.77	3.12	-.51	-.23
Competence satisfaction	518	5 – 20	16.94	2.50	-.98	1.32
Relatedness satisfaction	518	8 – 20	17.33	2.58	-1.01	.68
Autonomy frustration	518	4 – 20	11.54	3.95	.24	-.67
Competence frustration	518	4 – 20	7.77	3.57	1.08	.54
Relatedness frustration	518	4 – 19	7.63	3.00	.79	.14
External self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships	518	10 – 44	17.86	6.11	1.15	1.22
Internal self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships	518	12 – 53	22.41	9.26	.87	-.01
External self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations	518	5 – 25	10.13	4.29	.87	.34
Internal self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations	518	7 – 34	18.47	5.73	.31	-.52
Total self-handicapping behaviors	518	34 – 140	68.89	20.73	.72	.09

Note. *Sk* - Skewness; *Ku* – Kurtosis.

The descriptive measures presented in Table 1 indicate that there are no significant deviations from the normality of distribution, if we consider the acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis to fall between -2 and +2 (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014; Trochim & Donnelly, 2006).

Table 2*Intercorrelations among all variables used*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1.										
2.	.48									
3.	.43	.40								
4.	-.56	-.32	-.35							
5.	-.47	-.65	-.44	.51						
6.	-.40	-.40	-.65	.45	.54					
7.	-.24	-.24	-.32	.30	.40	.41				
8.	-.34	-.46	-.41	.38	.59	.43	.53			
9.	-.38	-.34	-.35	.45	.54	.50	.52	.60		
10.	-.28	-.40	-.27	.38	.54	.37	.48	.58	.53	
11.	-.38	-.46	-.42	.45	.64	.56	.77	.89	.77	.79

Note. 1. Autonomy satisfaction; 2. Competence satisfaction; 3. Relatedness satisfaction; 4. Autonomy frustration; 5. Competence frustration; 6. Relatedness frustration; 7. External self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships; 8. Internal self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships; 9. External self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations; 10. Internal self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations; 11. Total self-handicapping behaviors; all given correlations are significant at $p < .001$ level.

Results of the correlation analysis (Table 2) indicate statistical significance between all specific factors of self-handicapping behaviors, as well as the total self-handicapping behaviors score with all basic psychological need satisfaction/frustration variables. Self-handicapping behaviors subscales all correlate significantly and positively with autonomy, competence and relatedness satisfaction, and negatively with the frustration of the same dimensions. Total self-handicapping behaviors show the strongest positive correlation with competence frustration and with relatedness frustration. In general, basic psychological needs for competence and relatedness are more related to a wide range of self-handicapping behaviors than the need for autonomy. A range of small to moderate negative correlations between autonomy satisfaction and different types of self-handicapping behaviors were found. Correlations between autonomy frustration fall into a slightly higher range, in relation to self-handicapping behaviors.

Table 3

Prediction of total self-handicapping behaviors based on age, gender, relationships status, employment, satisfaction and frustration of the basic psychological needs

Block	Predictors	β	p	Model summary
1.	Age	-.08	.06	$R = .27, R^2 = .06, F(4, 503) = 9.61, p < .001$
	Gender	-.06	.16	
	Relationship status	-.18	.00	
	Employment	.13	.00	

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2.	Age	-.09	.08	$R = .57, R^2 = .32, F(7, 500) = 35.67, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .26, p < .001$
	Gender	.07	.08	
	Relationship status	-.11	.00	
	Employment	.09	.02	
	Autonomy satisfaction	-.17	.00	
	Competence satisfaction	-.25	.00	
	Relatedness satisfaction	-.24	.00	
3.	Age	-.07	.03	$R = .72, R^2 = .51, F(10, 497) = 53.99, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .19, p < .001$
	Gender	-.09	.01	
	Relationship status	-.10	.00	
	Employment	.06	.09	
	Autonomy satisfaction	-.01	.84	
	Competence satisfaction	-.04	.32	
	Relatedness satisfaction	.00	.99	
	Autonomy frustration	.15	.00	
	Competence frustration	.36	.00	
Relatedness frustration	.27	.00		

As presented in Table 3, the set of predictors explains 51% of the variance in total self-handicapping behaviors as the criterion variable, after the addition of autonomy, competence and relatedness frustration in the final step. The inclusion of the need frustration variables rendered autonomy, competence and relatedness satisfaction insignificant. With their addition, the strongest partial contribution to the model is accounted by competence frustration, followed by relatedness frustration and then by autonomy frustration. Gender, relationship status and age are also significant, indicating that younger participants, males and those who are currently not in a romantic relationship are more prone to self-handicapping behaviors in general, although their contributions are very modest.

Table 4

Prediction of internal and external self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships based on age, gender, relationships status, employment, satisfaction and frustration of the basic psychological needs

Block	Predictors	Internal self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships		External self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships	
		β	p	β	p
1	Age	-.11	.13	.03	.48
	Gender	-.01	.92	-.16	.00
	Relationship status	-.21	.00	-.23	.00
	Employment	.11	.02	.06	.12
Model summary		$R = .28, R^2 = .07, F(4, 503) = 10.75, p < .001$		$R = .31, R^2 = .10, F(4, 506) = 10.73, p < .001$	
2	Age	-.12	.02	-.05	.25
	Gender	-.01	.78	-.15	.00
	Relationship status	-.15	.00	-.20	.00
	Employment	.06	.11	.04	.32
	Autonomy satisfaction	-.10	.02	-.12	.01
	Competence satisfaction	-.27	.00	-.07	.16
	Relatedness satisfaction	-.25	.00	-.20	.00
	Model summary		$R = .57, R^2 = .32, F(3, 500) = 34.28, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .25, p < .001$		$R = .45, R^2 = .19, F(7, 503) = 17.71, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .09, p < .001$
3	Age	-.10	.01	-.04	.38
	Gender	.01	.86	-.17	.00
	Relationship status	-.14	.00	-.19	.00
	Employment	.04	.30	.02	.60
	Autonomy satisfaction	.02	.70	-.01	.86
	Competence satisfaction	-.10	.03	.06	.23
	Relatedness satisfaction	-.05	.32	-.01	.86
	Autonomy frustration	.10	.03	.11	.03
	Competence frustration	.29	.00	.23	.00
	Relatedness frustration	.25	.00	.24	.00
Model summary		$R = .67, R^2 = .44, F(10, 497) = 41.07, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .12, p < .001$		$R = .55, R^2 = .29, F(10, 497) = 21.64, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .11, p < .001$	

The results of HMRA when internal and external self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships were used as criterion variables are presented in Table 4. The predictors explain 44% of the variance of internal self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships. The strongest unique contribution is yielded by competence frustration, followed by relatedness frustration. Autonomy frustration has the lowest contribution with borderline significance. In this case, competence satisfaction remains statistically significant. Among the covariates, in the final model, age and relationship status remain relevant, meaning that younger participants, and those not involved in a romantic relationship, are more susceptible to internal self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships.

When external self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships was used as a criterion variable, the final model explains 29% of its variance, with the inclusion of autonomy, competence and relatedness frustration in the final step. Relatedness frustration has the biggest partial contribution to the model, followed by competence frustration, and, at last, autonomy frustration. Relationship status and gender were significant contributors as well, meaning that males and those who are not in a relationship are more prone to external self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships.

Table 5

Prediction of internal and external self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations based on age, gender, relationships status, employment, satisfaction and frustration of the basic psychological needs

Block	Predictors	Internal self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations		External self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations	
		β	p	β	p
1	Age	-.12	.01	.05	.23
	Gender	-.02	.69	-.04	.56
	Relationship status	-.03	.56	-.04	.40
	Employment	.14	.00	.12	.01
Model summary		$R = .21, R^2 = .04, F(4, 503) = 5.65, p < .001$		$R = .14, R^2 = .01, F(4, 506) = 2.1, p < .001$	
2	Age	-.12	.01	.04	.36
	Gender	-.03	.48	.03	.49
	Relationship status	.04	.40	-.02	.67
	Employment	.11	.01	.09	.02
	Autonomy satisfaction	-.12	.01	-.23	.00
	Competence satisfaction	-.28	.00	-.15	.00
	Relatedness satisfaction	-.11	.02	-.17	.00

		$R = .46, R^2 = .20, F(7, 500) = 19.54, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .16, p < .001$		$R = .46, R^2 = .20, F(7, 503) = 19.10, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .19, p < .001$	
3	Age	-.10	.01	.05	.16
	Gender	-.05	.21	-.07	.06
	Relationship status	.03	.40	.02	.54
	Employment	.08	.04	.06	.08
	Autonomy satisfaction	.03	.59	-.08	.08
	Competence satisfaction	-.11	.03	.05	.34
	Relatedness satisfaction	.03	.55	.06	.21
	Autonomy frustration	.17	.00	.13	.01
	Competence frustration	.33	.00	.34	.00
	Relatedness frustration	.11	.05	.28	.00
Model summary		$R = .58, R^2 = .32, F(10, 497) = 25.02, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .12, p < .001$		$R = .62, R^2 = .37, F(10, 497) = 31.21, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .17, p < .001$	

In Table 5 the results of HMRA in prediction of internal and external self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations are presented. First, the internal self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations was used as a criterion variable, and 32% of its variance is explained by the predictors. In this case, with the addition of the need frustration variables, a significant change was established. The most significant partial coefficient was competence frustration, followed by autonomy frustration, and relatedness frustration, and competence satisfaction with borderline significance. Age and employment status showed significance, with younger and unemployed participants being more likely to engage in these particular self-handicapping behaviors. However, the beta coefficient of employment status is modest.

Finally, external self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations was used as a criterion variable. The set of predictors explains 37% of its variance. The inclusion of the frustration variables in the final step rendered all basic psychological need satisfaction variables insignificant. The unique predictive value of need frustration variables is as follows: competence frustration, relatedness frustration, autonomy frustration.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to determine the unique predictive value of each basic psychological need and its satisfaction or frustration in relation to multiple types of self-handicapping behaviors.

Based on the results, it can be seen that mostly the frustrations of the basic psychological needs predict a broad array of self-handicapping behaviors, with each need having a distinctive value in relation to the specific type of self-handicapping behavior. Also, overall, need frustration seems to be more important when predicting self-handicapping behaviors than merely low satisfaction levels of the needs. In addition, basic psychological need frustration variables correlate to a higher degree with all self-handicapping behavior forms than need satisfaction variables. Moreover, competence frustration yields the highest beta coefficient in relation to total self-handicapping behaviors. Upon further inspection of the same criterion variable, relatedness frustration follows competence frustration in its predictive influence, while autonomy frustration consistently produces relatively equal partial contributions to total self-handicapping behaviors, as well as internal and external handicapping behaviors, in both achievement situations and interpersonal relationships. This is consistent with the findings of other research that states that low levels of autonomy are associated with self-handicapping behavior (Knee & Zuckerman, 1998; Lewis & Neighbors, 2005). Specifically, a sense of autonomy is established when one feels as if their actions are self-endorsed, authentic and an expression of willingness and volition. Considering this, autonomy frustration is a consistent predictor of all types of self-handicapping behaviors, most likely because such behaviors, regardless of situational circumstances, stem from a thwarted sense of personal volition. Therefore, we can conclude that autonomy frustration is related to self-handicapping behaviors, in all contexts, but less than other need frustrations.

When examining the value of each predictor in relation to internal and external self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships, it becomes apparent that the predictive relevance of relatedness frustration significantly increases to the point of being nearly equal to competence frustration. The prominence of the partial contributions of relatedness frustration might be explained by the proposition that the basic psychological need for relatedness is concerned with feelings of connection to others, belonging, forming partnerships etc. Therefore, those individuals whose need for relatedness is frustrated also tend to engage in self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal contexts, possibly in order to provide justifications as to why this essential need is being frustrated.

The predictive power of competence frustration remains robust in relation to self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships, most likely due to the belief that the establishment of such relationships requires specific skills, which could be attributed to a sense of competence. Specifically, when individuals experience competence frustration and perceive themselves as failures, it might contribute to a pronounced tendency to engage in self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships as well. Competence satisfaction also remains a relevant predictor of internal self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships, indicating that low levels of the need for competence also lead to self-handicapping behaviors in this context. Hence, such behaviors, when used in interpersonal relationships, could also arise from a frustrated need for competence, and to a lesser degree, its low satisfaction levels. This could be attributed to the relevance of competence

in forming and maintaining such relationships and the likelihood of the already mentioned overlap between achievement situations and interpersonal relationships. This finding further corroborates the results of other studies which established a link between self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships (Chang, 2021; Siciliano, 2016), and suggests that others might place value on one's competencies and efficacy which might contribute positively to interpersonal relationships.

In addition, individuals who are single have a pronounced tendency to self-handicapping behaviors in interpersonal relationships, possibly because they view such a relationship status as undesirable, and are seeking attributions both internally and externally for the given circumstance. Males also engage in self-handicapping behaviors more than females, which is in line with the findings of other researchers (Dietrich, 1995; Hirt et al., 1991; Čolović et al., 2009).

In both internal and external self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations, competence frustration remains the single largest predictor, confirming the findings of previous researchers (Jones & Berglas, 1978; Zuckerman & Tsai, 2005) which state that those engaging in such behavioral schemes are mostly concerned with their self-image of competence. One could come to the conclusion that this most often occurs when one experiences the frustration of the need for competence, in order to facilitate justifications for undesirable outcomes based on a lack of mastery, abilities etc. In addition, low levels of competence satisfaction also predict internal self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations, but in an inferior manner compared to competence frustration. Theoretically, this finding is very consistent, because the self-handicapping behavior variables related to achievement situations emphasize self-efficacy, competence, success in important life contexts, and personal habits related to situations in which personal skills and mastery could contribute to accomplishment.

However, in the case of both external and internal self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations, relatedness frustration is also a relevant predictor, likely due to the possibility of attributing an undesirable outcome in achievement situations to the influence of individuals with whom our relationship is of unsatisfactory quality (e.g., one fails to get a promotion because their boss dislikes them). This finding suggests plausibility of an existing overlap between certain achievement situations and interpersonal relationships.

Also, employment status becomes relevant, with the state of current unemployment being a significant predictor of internal self-handicapping behaviors in achievement situations. One could assume that this finding is related to the negative way in which society, and the individual view unemployment, making it an undesirable outcome.

This study is not without its limitations. First, the sample doesn't adequately represent the parameters of the entire population. The educational background of the participants, and other relevant measures of socio-economic status were unknown. These particular measures could prove useful when assessing various links to self-handicapping behaviors and the basic psychological needs. Also, the Self-handicapping questionnaire used in this study is different from that of other

researchers (e.g., Clarke & MacCann, 2016; McCrean et al., 2008), so further studies are required in order to provide more adequate comparisons between the instruments. Additionally, the high correlations between the first and second order factors bring into question the usage of the subscales, i.e., such high correlations could indicate redundancy of the subscales. Therefore, studies that further elaborate the dimensionality of the scale are needed, and caution is advised when making inferences related to the specific domains of the scale.

Conclusion

The findings of this study shed further light on the wide range of effects that frustration of the basic psychological needs has in relation to various self-handicapping behaviors and the contexts in which these forms of behaviors could be used. It also contributes to a more detailed comprehension of self-handicapping behaviors by expanding the knowledge of the many possible underlying factors that could serve as a drive for such behavior. Therefore, we conclude that various self-handicapping behaviors are principally driven by a sense that our basic psychological needs are being frustrated. Such a result further corroborates the hypothesis within SDT which states that the frustration of the basic psychological needs leads to maladaptive behaviors. It is worth noting that, according to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017), basic psychological needs, and their satisfaction or frustration, are susceptible to the influence of environmental and cultural factors, meaning that they might, in turn, also have an effect on self-handicapping behaviors. The possible practical implication of these findings is in the development of interventions that could prevent self-handicapping behaviors from occurring.

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Bazične psihološke potrebe kao prediktori samohendikepirajućih ponašanja

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Apstrakt

Cilj ovog rada bio je da se ispituju relacije između bazičnih psiholoških potreba i različitih oblika samohendikepirajućih ponašanja. Uzorak se sastojao od 518 ispitanika ($M_{\text{starost}} = 35.87$, $SD = 10.36$), od kojih je 108 (20.8%) muškog pola. Korišćeni su sledeći instrumenti: Upitnik za merenje bazičnih psiholoških potreba (BPNSFS) koji meri: zadovoljenje potrebe za autonomijom, kompetencijom, i povezanošću, kao i osujećenost istih, i Upitnik za procenu samohendikepiranja (SH) koji meri: samohendikepiranje spoljašnjim i unutrašnjim uzrocima u interpersonalnim odnosima, i samohendikepiranje spoljašnjim i unutrašnjim uzrocima u situacijama postignuća. Rezultati pokazuju da osujećenost bazičnih psiholoških potreba, u proseku, jače korelira sa samohendikepirajućim ponašanjem, nego zadovoljenje potreba. Takođe, putem višestruke hijerarhijske regresione analize registrovano je da je u objašnjenju samohendikepirajućih ponašanja parcijalni doprinos osujećenosti bazičnih psiholoških potreba veći nego niski nivoi zadovoljenja potreba. Osujećenost potrebe za kompetencijom je najjači prediktor svih oblika samohendikepirajućih ponašanja, dok vrednost osujećenosti potrebe za povezanošću raste pri predviđanju samohendikepirajućih ponašanja u interpersonalnim odnosima. Osujećenost potrebe za autonomijom je značajan prediktor svih oblika samohendikepirajućih ponašanja, ali u slabijoj meri od osujećenosti ostale dve bazične psihološke potrebe. Ovakvi rezultati svedoče o važnosti osujećenosti bazičnih psiholoških potreba pri objašnjenju različitih oblika samohendikepirajućih ponašanja, i pružaju dublji uvid u faktore koji stoje u osnovi ovakih ponašajnih strategija. Takođe, doprinose proširenju postojećeg znanja tako što osvetljavaju značaj pojedinačnih bazičnih psiholoških potreba u odnosu na samohendikepirajuće ponašanje i različite kontekste u kojima se javljaju.

Ključne reči: teorija samoodređenja, bazične psihološke potrebe, samohendikepirajuće ponašanje

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