

# Basic psychological needs

Basic psychological needs, as defined in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), are fundamental psychological requirements that contribute to human well-being and optimal functioning. SDT is a theory of motivation and personality that emphasizes the importance of three innate and universal psychological needs. These needs are considered essential for individuals to experience self-motivation, personal growth, and a sense of well-being. The three basic psychological needs identified in SDT are:

Autonomy

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Competence

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Relatedness.

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These three basic psychological needs are considered essential for promoting psychological well-being, motivation, and optimal functioning. When these needs are satisfied, individuals are more likely to experience positive emotions, engage in activities for intrinsic reasons, and pursue personal growth and development.

Conversely, when these needs are thwarted or not adequately met, individuals may experience negative outcomes such as decreased motivation, feelings of frustration, and diminished well-being. Self-determination theory has been applied in various fields, including education, work, healthcare, and sports, to understand and enhance motivation and overall psychological functioning.

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Self-regulated learning (SRL) can enhance students' learning process. Students need support to effectively regulate their learning. However, the effect of learning climate on SRL behavior, its ultimate effect on learning and the underlying mechanisms have not yet been established. We explored these relationships using self-determination theory.

**Materials and methods:** Nursing students (N = 244) filled in questionnaires about SRL behavior, perceived learning, perceived pedagogical atmosphere and Basic Psychological Needs (BPN) satisfaction after their clinical placement. Structural equation modelling was used to test a model in which perceived pedagogical atmosphere affects SRL behavior and subsequent perceived learning through BPN satisfaction.

**Results:** The tested model had an adequate fit (RMSEA = 0.080, SRMR = 0.051; CFI = 0.972; TLI = 0.950). A positively perceived pedagogical atmosphere contributed to SRL behavior, which was fully explained by BPN satisfaction. SRL partially mediated the contribution of pedagogical atmosphere/BPN to perceived learning.

**Conclusions:** A learning climate that satisfies students' BPN contributes to their SRL behavior. SRL

behavior plays a positive but modest role in the relationship between climate and perceived learning. Without a culture that is supportive of learning, implementation of tools to apply SRL behavior may not be effective. Study limitations include reliance on self-report scales and the inclusion of a single discipline <sup>1)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup>

Stoffels M, Koster AS, van der Burgt SME, de Bruin ABH, Daelmans HEM, Peerdeman SM, Kusurkar RA. Basic psychological needs satisfaction as a mediator between clinical learning climate, self-regulated learning and perceived learning in the nursing education context. *Med Teach*. 2023 Dec;45(12):1364-1372. doi: 10.1080/0142159X.2023.2225729. Epub 2023 Jun 20. PMID: 37339482.

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