

# THE ROLE OF PARENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED SATISFACTION IN SUPPORTING THEIR OPTIMAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOLING

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## PERSPECTIVES

Parents play a central role in their child's schooling and academic success (Pomerantz et al., 2012; Ratelle & Duchesne, 2017). Hence, understanding the factors that promote or hinder parents' ability to adequately support their child's is essential.

According to self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2017), individuals have innate psychological needs for:

- **autonomy** (i.e., acting volitionally)
  - **competence** (i.e., interacting with one's environment in an efficient way)
  - **relatedness** (i.e., develop positive, reciprocal relations with significant individuals)
- When these needs are satisfied, individuals behave more optimally and engage more positively with others (e.g., with their child).

Research showed that specific parental behaviors can contribute to their child's need satisfaction, motivation, and adjustment in school (Pomerantz et al., 2012; Ratelle & Duchesne, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2017):

- **autonomy support** (i.e., offer their child opportunities to hold age-appropriate responsibilities, recognize their child's perspective)
- **involvement** (i.e., providing emotional and tangible resources to their child)
- **structure** (i.e., managing the family environment to make it predictable, having clear rules and expectations).

### OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

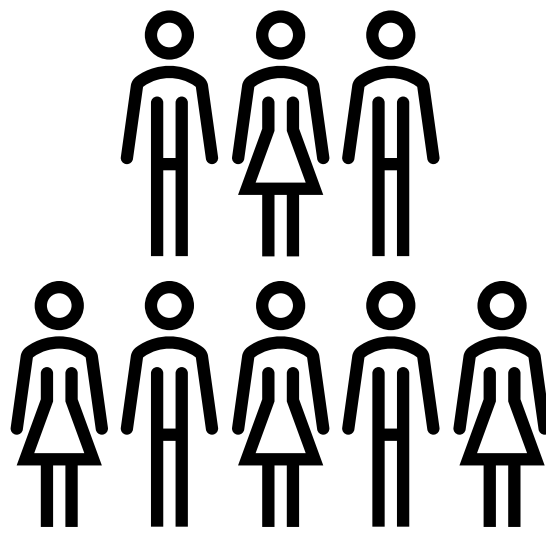
- The goal of this study was to test the role of parents' psychological need satisfaction and frustration in the context of their involvement with their child's schooling in predicting these positive behaviors.
- Based on SDT, we posit that parents' psychological need satisfaction in their school involvement will be a proximal predictor of their parental behaviors.

## METHOD

Data came from a longitudinal study that used a representative stratified sample.

### PARTICIPANTS:

1,448 parents (76% women ;  $M_{age} = 38.1$ ,  $SD = 5.7$ )  
90% speak French at home



Target child (37% girls)

- 55% child in grade 1 ; 45% child in grade 2
- 44% had a formal diagnosis (e.g., ADHD, anxiety) and 14% had special needs



### MEASURES:

Online questionnaire completed at two time points:  
T1 : October 2020 ; T2 : June 2021

**Sociodemographics:** (parent gender, age, language, child gender, special needs, grade).

### Parent needs satisfaction and frustration (T1)

(adapted scale based on Chevrier & Lennegrand, 2021; Brenning et al., 2018)

- **autonomy satisfaction** (4 items;  $\alpha = .86$ ); **frustration** (4 items;  $\alpha = .86$ )
- **competence satisfaction** (4 items;  $\alpha = .92$ ); **frustration** (4 items;  $\alpha = .89$ )
- **relatedness satisfaction** (4 items;  $\alpha = .83$ ); **frustration** (4 items;  $\alpha = .94$ )

### Parenting behaviors (T2)

- **autonomy support** (Mageau et al., 2015; 13 items;  $\alpha = .89$ )
- **involvement** (adapted scale based on Mageau et al., 2015; Grolnick et al., 1991; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988; 6 items;  $\alpha = .84$ )
- **structure** (adapted from Ratelle et al., 2018; 12 items;  $\alpha = .90$ )

## RESULTS

Figure 1

Means and confidence intervals of psychological needs (T1) and parenting behaviors (T2) by parent's gender and child's special needs status.

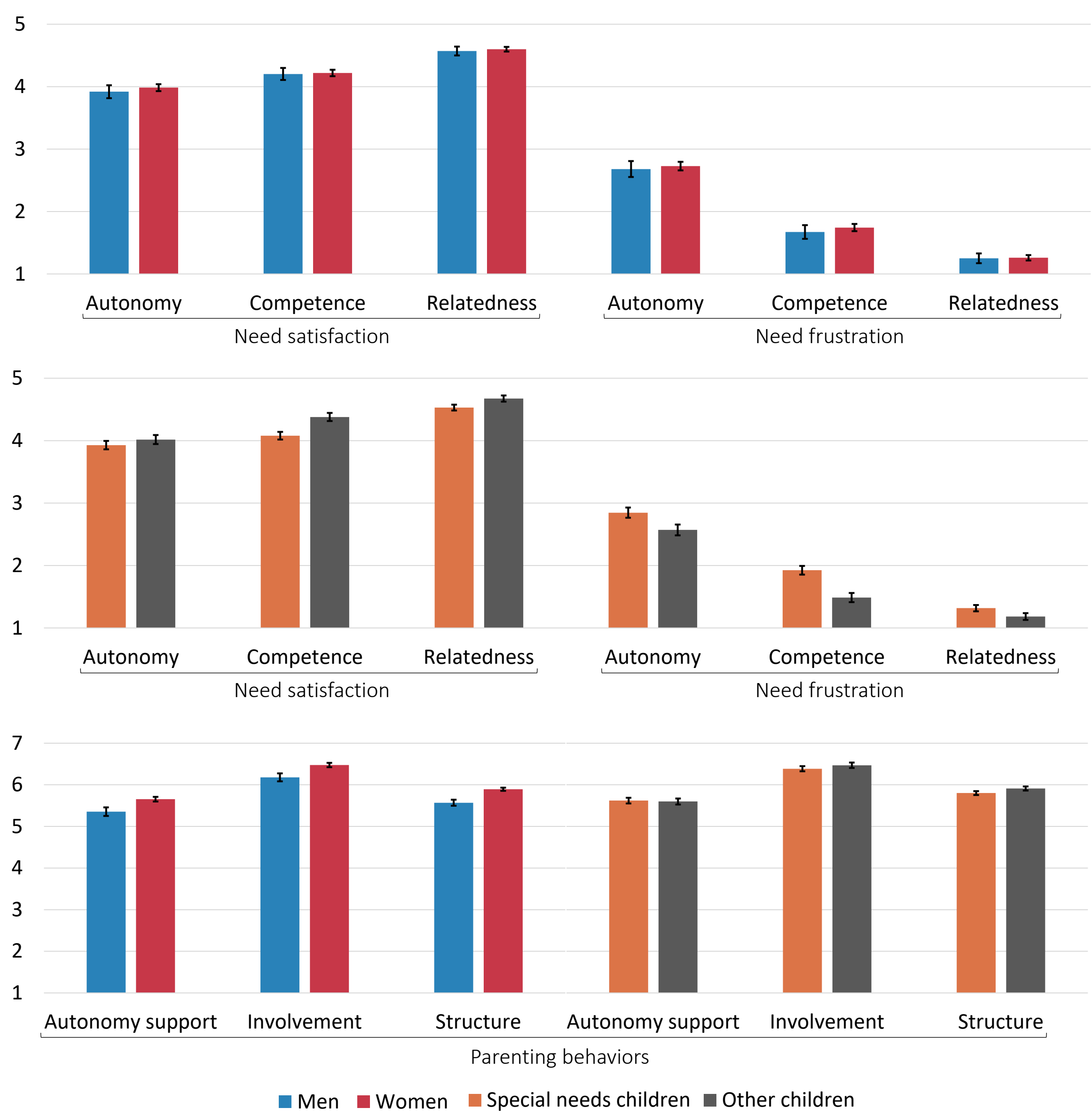


Table 1

Standardized regression coefficients for predicting parenting behaviors (T2) from parental psychological need satisfaction and frustration (T1).

	$\beta$	$SE$	$p$	$R^2$	$p$
<b>Autonomy support (T2)</b>				.08	.000
Autonomy – satisfaction (T1)	.13	.04	.003		
Competence – satisfaction (T1)	.15	.05	.003		
Relatedness – satisfaction (T1)	.09	.05	.051		
Autonomy – frustration (T1)	.03	.04	.502		
Competence – frustration (T1)	-.02	.05	.694		
Relatedness – frustration (T1)	.07	.04	.106		
<b>Involvement (T2)</b>				.17	.000
Autonomy – satisfaction (T1)	.06	.04	.117		
Competence – satisfaction (T1)	.06	.05	.230		
Relatedness – satisfaction (T1)	.27	.04	.000		
Autonomy – frustration (T1)	-.06	.04	.116		
Competence – frustration (T1)	-.05	.05	.333		
Relatedness – frustration (T1)	-.02	.04	.714		
<b>Structure (T2)</b>				.13	.000
Autonomy – satisfaction (T1)	.13	.04	.002		
Competence – satisfaction (T1)	.18	.05	.001		
Relatedness – satisfaction (T1)	.08	.05	.089		
Autonomy – frustration (T1)	.04	.04	.317		
Competence – frustration (T1)	-.10	.05	.042		
Relatedness – frustration (T1)	.03	.04	.454		

Note.  $\beta$ s  $\geq 0.10$  represent effect sizes that are at least small and are considered predictors for interpretation (bold font).

## DISCUSSION

Our results show that when parents' psychological needs are met, they are more likely to adopt positive parenting practices with their child. Specifically, when parents' autonomy and competence needs are met, they are more supportive of their child's autonomy and are more structuring with their child. Similarly, when their relatedness need is met, parents are more involved with their child.

These findings have important implications for interventions to improve the quality of parental involvement in their child's schooling.

- (1) Educate teachers about the importance of supporting parents' autonomy and avoiding any form of control;
- (2) Encourage teachers to develop a positive relationship with their students' parents
- (3) Inform school stakeholders about the importance of school climate, including how welcoming they are to parents and how open they are to parents' involvement in their child's school.

