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Basic psychological needs and self-confidence: A Relative study

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Abstract

This study examined the relative significance of various components of basic psychological needs on teachers' self-confidence, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale to measure these dimensions. The research targeted junior high school teachers in Pars Abad, with a sample size of 188 participants, determined using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) Table. Reliability was assessed and confirmed through Cronbach's alpha. For data analysis, inferential statistics were employed, and the existence of relationships between the independent variable components was established via the Pearson correlation test. Subsequently, the R statistical software was utilized to ascertain the relative weight of each component of basic psychological needs concerning the dependent variable. Findings indicated a significant relationship among the dimensions of basic psychological needs, as well as a noteworthy association with self-confidence. The results further demonstrated that the dimensions of basic psychological needs exerted varying levels of influence on enhancing self-confidence among middle school teachers in Pars Abad.

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1- Introduction

Human resources serve as the fundamental cornerstone of organizations, tasked with critical and sensitive responsibilities. The mental and psychological state of this group is crucial, as numerous factors influence their needs, motivations, and inclinations. Consequently, aspects such as job satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty to the organization—along with employees' growth and performance—are contingent upon the environment that managers foster (Naghipour, 2010). One of the key responsibilities of managers is to recognize the inherent talents of their employees and to cultivate opportunities for their development and success, thereby enhancing productivity. Achieving sustainable development in today's world is unfeasible without addressing productivity levels and

understanding the factors that contribute to its improvement. Given the significant role humans play in organizational growth, addressing their mental and psychological needs is particularly vital. As such, motivating individuals emerges as a central duty for managers. Motivations can generally be categorized into three types: physical, social, and psychological. Physical motivations include workplace welfare provisions, such as a conducive work environment, adequate lighting, and ventilation. Social motivations pertain to individual needs related to the behaviors of others, especially those exhibited by organizational leadership, which fulfill several social requirements. Meanwhile, psychological motivations refer to needs that yield mental satisfaction (Abdi and Vazifeh Damirchi, 2017). Recent research on effective job factors influencing employee enthusiasm has highlighted the significance of the basic psychological needs theory, also known as self-determination theory. According to this framework, individuals possess an intrinsic motivation to perform effectively as their fundamental psychological needs are fulfilled. These needs can be viewed as essential psychological nutrients that support ongoing growth, development, and overall well-being. Failure to meet these needs can lead to adverse psychological effects. Self-determination theory identifies three core psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy encompasses the sense of agency and affirmation regarding one's actions; competence involves the desire to master one's environment and achieve meaningful results; and relatedness pertains to the feeling of connection with others. The fulfillment of these basic psychological needs at work is positively correlated with job satisfaction, enthusiasm, and organizational commitment, while inversely related to negative psychological outcomes such as burnout (Amani and Saemian, 2021). Throughout history, individuals have developed various strategies to manage their mental and behavioral states, intentionally employing tactics to regulate their emotional and behavioral responses (Baumeister and Kathleen, 2004). On one hand, a strong belief system can enhance behavior, boost health, life satisfaction, happiness, and overall quality of life. Conversely, many challenges and difficulties individuals face stem from these very belief systems. A person's beliefs profoundly influence the balance among different life dimensions and, as behavioral patterns, enable them to achieve desired results while avoiding adverse ones (Bandura, 2001). Self-confidence and self-reliance are integral components of these belief systems, playing a crucial role in one's quality of life and the establishment of balance across various life aspects. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is the perceived capability of an individual to carry out specific actions or navigate particular situations. Beliefs in self-efficacy influence human behavior through cognitive, motivational, emotional, and decision-making processes. They impact individuals' thought processes, their motivation to tackle challenges, persistence, emotional wellness, vulnerability to stress and depression, and their decision-making capabilities in critical situations (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Bandura posits self-efficacy as foundational to human action, asserting that those with high self-efficacy tend to be innovative, reflective, and self-directed, possessing the ability to steer their actions toward desired outcomes (Feist & Feist, 2002).

The significance of basic psychological needs in relation to self-confidence is widely acknowledged. It is generally understood that when optimal conditions are established, individuals are capable of tackling any challenge. This understanding compels organizational management to prioritize the fulfillment of employee needs by thoroughly and accurately identifying them. In any organization, the human element serves as a crucial driving force that can propel it toward its goals. Often, complex organizational challenges can be addressed by effectively managing employees' mental and emotional states, fostering job motivation, and meeting their needs, leading to greater job satisfaction. As such, enhancing employee efficiency, self-efficacy, and self-confidence is vital for organizational success. By cultivating job satisfaction and addressing psychological needs, organizations can achieve significant and positive outcomes. Additionally, stress plays a critical role in organizational behavior management; due to the constantly evolving work environment, stress in relation to work-related matters is a common occurrence. This study holds importance as it aims to deepen our understanding of the factors impacting self-confidence. From a practical standpoint, it offers valuable guiding principles focused on strengthening employees' self-confidence and self-reliance. By investigating the basic psychological needs and their influence on teachers' self-confidence, the study aims to assist

them in enhancing their performance in organizational tasks. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the relative significance of basic psychological needs in fostering self-confidence among educators.

2- Conceptual Model of the Research

Self-confidence is defined as the belief that an individual possesses the necessary skills and abilities to demonstrate the behaviors essential for achieving success in their work (Colequat et al., 2010, as cited by Faizi et al., 2011). Table 1 shows Self-confidence measured through various dimensions and indicators:

Table 1- Dimensions and indicators of self-confidence

concept	dimensions	Indicators
Self-confidence	Past information	I always use past experiences to move things forward
		I learn from past successes and failures in my work
	Effective experiences	I always use the experiences of successful people in my field
		I always welcome consultation with successful people in my field
	Verbal encouragement	Encouraging organizational colleagues to move towards success motivates me
		Encouragement and praise from managers create enthusiasm for work in me
	Emotional cues	Encouragement makes me push myself towards what is best for me
		Self-confidence increases the chances of success

These indicators are measured on a five-point Likert scale with a researcher-made questionnaire derived from the model of Colequat et al. (2010).

Basic psychological needs are deep within the human being and are therefore innate in every individual (Rio, 2006). These needs are defined based on the self-determination theory of Dessie and Ryan (1985). According to this theory, all humans have three fundamental and universal psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and these needs are food for survival, growth, and perfection (Deci et al., 2001).

- Need for autonomy: The need for autonomy is the desire to be self-initiated in carrying out activities and the cause and origin of one's behavior rather than being controlled by external factors (Deci and Ryan, 2011).
- Need for competence: reflects the need for an individual to be effective in interactions with the social environment, to have the opportunity to practice and express one's abilities, to be able to achieve desired outcomes, and to feel capable of influencing and mastering the environment (Desi and Ryan, 2002).
- Need for connection and belonging: includes the need to have positive relationships and a sense of belonging to a group or society, as well as a feeling of acceptance by people who share interests with the individual (Salehi et al., 2013). Basic psychological needs are the score that an individual obtains in response to the Basic Psychological Needs Questionnaire (Desi and Ryan, 2000).

Conducting scientific and systematic research necessitates a theoretical and scientific framework, known as a conceptual model. The conceptual model employed in this study is as follows:

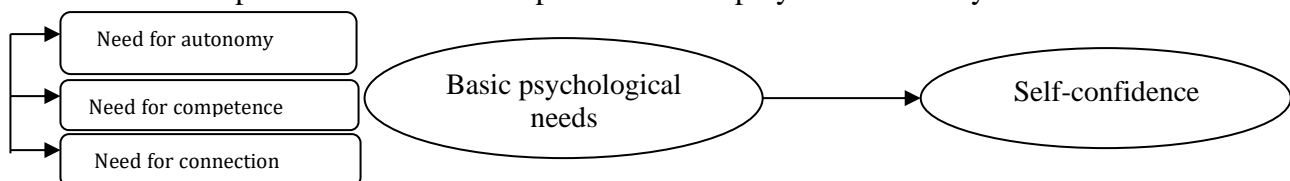


Figure 1- Conceptual Model of the Research

Standard questionnaires were employed to assess each of the research variables. Specifically, the basic psychological needs were measured using the standard questionnaire developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), while self-confidence was evaluated using the questionnaire created by Colequat et al. (2010). Based on the operational model outlined above, the main hypothesis is stated as follows: The impact of the dimensions of basic psychological needs on self-confidence varies in significance and is not uniform.

3- Methodology

This study is categorized as descriptive research, as it relies on data obtained through sampling from the community. To explore the distribution of characteristics within the statistical population, this research takes the form of a correlation survey conducted cross-sectionally. The statistical population includes approximately 368 teachers from girls' first secondary schools in Pars Abad counties. The sample size was determined using the Morgan 188 table. For data collection, a standardized questionnaire was utilized to assess the research variables.

Self-confidence: This questionnaire is measured on a five-option Likert scale and with a researcher-made questionnaire that is derived from the model of Colequat et al. (2010).

Basic Psychological Needs: Basic psychological needs are the scores that an individual obtains in response to the Basic Psychological Needs Questionnaire (Desi and Ryan, 2000).

To assess content validity, the questionnaires were submitted to three knowledgeable professors in the management field for their review. Following their evaluation and necessary revisions, all professors approved the set of questions, thereby confirming the content validity of the questionnaires. For reliability assessment, Cronbach's alpha was employed, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2- Calculated Cronbach's alpha for each of the variables

coefficient variable	Cronbach's alpha
Basic psychological needs	0.815
Self-confidence	0.796

Inferential analysis employed Pearson's correlation coefficient, and the statistical software R was utilized to assess the relative significance of each independent variable in relation to the dependent variable. In this software, following the Johnson model proposed by Ulrike (2006), specific statistical codes (packages) were applied to evaluate the relative weight of each variable and its contribution to R^2 .

4- Research Findings

Initially, to evaluate the relative importance of the dimensions of basic psychological needs, it is essential to establish the degree of correlation among these dimensions. The concept of relative importance is applicable only when the dimensions of the independent variable exhibit a strong and significant interrelationship. To investigate the relationships among the dimensions of basic psychological needs, the Pearson correlation test was conducted, and the results are presented in Table (3).

Table 3- Correlation coefficient between components of basic psychological needs and self-confidence

		1	2	3	4
Need for competence (1)	r	1			
	Sig.				
Need for autonomy (2)	r	0.458	1		
	Sig.	0.000			
Need for connection (3)	r	0.584	0.645	1	
	Sig.	0.000	0.000		
self-confidence (4)	r	0.310	0.368	0.374	1
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	

**Significance of the test at the significance level of 0.01

The results of Table (3) showed that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of basic psychological needs, considering the significance level obtained, which is less than the standard significance level of 0.01. To test this hypothesis, first the correlation coefficient between the independent variables themselves is calculated, so that if a correlation is observed between the independent variables, the relative importance method is used. The table above shows the correlation coefficient of the research variables, the correlation between the independent variables, in some cases this coefficient is very high (for example, the correlation coefficient between the need for relatedness and affiliation and the need for competence is 0.655).

Table (3) shows the correlation coefficient of the research variables, the correlation between the independent variables, in some cases this coefficient is very high. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of basic psychological needs and self-confidence, because the significance level obtained is less than the standard significance level ($p < 0.05$). According to the obtained correlation coefficient, it can be claimed that the highest correlation in the relationship between the dimensions (basic psychological needs) of the need for relatedness and affiliation and the need for competence is (0.655) and the lowest correlation coefficient is related to the relationship between the variables of the need for competence and the need for autonomy with (0.486).

In research that involves multiple independent variables, especially when these variables are interrelated, the relative importance or weight method is employed. This approach highlights both the direct impacts of each independent variable on the dependent variable, as well as the effects when these variables interact with one another. The relative importance or weight indicates how much each independent variable (predictor) contributes to the overall R^2 of the model.

Table (3) presents the correlations between the independent variables and the self-confidence variable. By applying the relative importance technique, we analyze the combined weight effects and the individual weights of each independent variable. Table (4) provides a summary of the basic psychological need constructs that influence self-confidence.

Table 4 - Relative importance of dimensions of basic psychological needs in the impact on increasing self-confidence

<i>The matrix has 4 rows and 4 columns.</i>	
The matrix read from the record(s) of row type CORR.	
RSQUARE	
0.566	
Raw Relative Weights	
Autonomy	0.178
Competence	0.153
Relatedness	0.234
Relative Weights Percentage of R-square	
Autonomy	32.48%
Competence	28.25%
Relatedness	39.27%

The findings presented in Table (4) indicate that the components of basic psychological needs account for 56.6% of self-confidence, with relatedness and affiliation demonstrating the highest relative weight, while competence shows the lowest. Specifically, the need for autonomy contributes 32.48%, the need for competence contributes 28.25%, and the need for relatedness and affiliation contributes 39.27% to the overall impact on enhancing self-confidence. Consequently, the research hypothesis suggesting that the relative weights of the dimensions of basic psychological needs differ in their effects on self-confidence has been substantiated. This suggests that these dimensions significantly influence the self-confidence of first secondary school teachers in Pars Abad.

5- Conclusion and Suggestions

The findings indicate a notable relationship between the dimensions of basic psychological needs, as evidenced by the significance levels obtained. The correlation coefficients among the research variables reveal a connection between the independent variables, with some coefficients being particularly high. Additionally, there is a significant association between the dimensions of basic psychological needs and self-confidence, as the significance level observed is below the established threshold. The correlation data suggest that the strongest relationship exists between the need for relatedness and affiliation and the need for competence, while the weakest correlation is found between the need for competence and the need for autonomy. The study further indicates that the dimensions of basic psychological needs account for 56.6% of self-confidence, with the need for relatedness and affiliation contributing the most, followed by the need for autonomy at 32.48%, the need for competence at 28.25%, and the need for relatedness and affiliation at 39.27%. Consequently, the research hypothesis—that the relative weight of the dimensions of basic psychological needs differs in their impact on boosting self-confidence—was confirmed. Thus, it can be asserted that these dimensions significantly influence the enhancement of self-confidence among junior high school teachers in Pars Abad.

Therefore, it is suggested:

Individuals in their youth need to feel like agents, have the right to choose, and be decision-makers. People who have this need satisfied consider themselves agents and spontaneously participate in activities, and therefore experience higher levels of performance. Therefore, managers should be aware that by satisfying the need for autonomy, that is, engaging in meaningful activities, they can create positive emotions towards the activity and, as a result, increase satisfaction in employees.

Managers should know that, according to the self-determination theory, the source of healthy growth and functioning is the satisfaction of psychological needs. If employees' needs are continuously satisfied, individuals will grow and function effectively, but if these needs are prevented from being satisfied, individuals are more likely to face abnormalities and non-optimal performance.

Managers' valuing of employees' ideas and satisfying the need for competence motivates employees to increase their innovation and provide new ideas, which increases the level of employee performance. Therefore, managers are advised to create incentive systems based on providing new ideas in the organization so that employees have a positive attitude towards the organization.

It is suggested that managers create environments with the following characteristics to satisfy employees' autonomy needs: 1) emphasizing individual opinion, 2) encouraging decision-making and initiative, 3) providing a rational reason for social control, 4) using a non-controlling communication method and providing positive feedback on individual performance.

It is suggested that managers, by strengthening the feeling of autonomy when performing an activity, lead to a special psychological state called experienced responsibility for work outcomes. This state makes the individual feel that work outcomes are influenced by his or her own performance and are not controlled by the external environment. This psychological state also leads to increased individual performance.

Satisfying the need for connection and connectedness through the concept of task interdependence affects individual performance. This concept indicates the degree of dependence of an activity on

others to perform it. Based on this concept, managers should know that the more people depend on each other to perform a task, the more connected they feel and the higher their performance will be. Managers should remember that recognizing and paying serious attention to teachers' basic psychological needs is of great importance as the first effective step in motivating and raising their morale towards their job, and that failure to pay attention to teachers' psychological needs in the workplace leads to their dissatisfaction and lack of motivation, which can lead to a decrease in performance and efficiency.

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