



Antecedents and consequences of parental psychological control and autonomy support

The role of psychological basic needs

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Article Information

Article first published online: February 13, 2018

Abstract

Research suggests that psychologically controlling and autonomy-supportive parenting can be described within the Self-Determination Theory's (SDT) framework. Two studies were conducted to examine (a) the role of parental need frustration as a predictor of parental psychological control, (b) the role of parental need satisfaction as a predictor of parental autonomy support, and (c) the role of parents' psychological control and autonomy support in the intergenerational transmission of satisfaction and frustration of the psychological basic needs. Study 1 provided evidence, in a sample of 203 Italian coupled parents, that needs frustration and needs satisfaction represent distinct antecedents of psychological control and autonomy support. Study 2, showed that in 135 families, the intergenerational association between parents' and adolescents' need frustration was partially mediated by psychological control and autonomy support. Results clearly showed that parents who experienced high level of psychological needs frustration are more likely to use psychological control and in turn to promote a feeling of need frustration in their adolescents; differently, parents who experienced high levels of psychological needs satisfaction tend to exert more autonomy support in their relationship with their children and in turn adolescents tend to perceive higher level of needs satisfaction. These findings are discussed in light of SDT and underline the importance of needs in the parenting context and have implications for interventions.

Keywords [Need frustration](#), [need satisfaction](#), [parental autonomy support](#), [parental psychological control](#), [self-determination theory](#)

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