

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SELF-EFFICACY AS PREDICTORS OF BASIC NEEDS CRAFTING AMONG ADOLESCENTS

Marianna Berinšterová¹, Ivana Magáčová Žilková¹, Monika Kačmárová¹,
Jana Lukáčová¹, & Miroslava Bozogánová²

¹*Institute of psychology, University of Prešov (Slovakia)*

²*Institute of Social Sciences of the Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences,
Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovakia)*

Abstract

Need crafting represents the degree of self-awareness and proactive engagement in fulfilling the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This trait develops during adolescence and may be supported by relationships with significant others. At the same time, adolescents in middle and late adolescence have sufficient life experience to perceive and evaluate their own self-efficacy. The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between need crafting within the three basic psychological needs, social support from family, friends, and significant others, and general self-efficacy. The sample consisted of 293 adolescents (Mage = 17.69, SD = 1.33; 62,5% of women). Data were collected using the Need Crafting Scale, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and the General Self-Efficacy Scale. Data were processed in SPSS 21 using regression models. According to the results, need crafting for competence ($R^2 = 30.50$; $F = 25.22$, $p < .001$), autonomy ($R^2 = 22.50$; $F = 16.70$, $p < .001$), and relatedness ($R^2 = 31.12$; $F = 26.05$, $p < .001$) was associated with social support from significant others and friends. Social support from family did not show a significant relationship with the dependent variables. Self-efficacy was a significant predictor of need crafting in the areas of competence and autonomy, but not relatedness. The results support the examination of the role of significant others in the development of adolescents' personality and mental health. In the category of significant others, it is possible to include friends, romantic partners, as well as important non-parental adults present in the adolescents' natural environment. At the same time, results suggest that self-awareness and proactivity in the domain of relational needs may be associated with different personality traits than those related to autonomy and competence.

Keywords: *Social support, self-efficacy, basic needs, need crafting, adolescence.*

1. Introduction

Need crafting represents awareness and a proactive stance toward satisfying one's own psychological needs (LaPorte et al., 2022). During adolescence, it becomes especially important due to increasing self-awareness and identity development. The question arises as to what extent this mechanism results from external sources and to what extent from internal predispositions. At the same time, Self-Determination Theory posits that the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness function as distinct psychological nutrients for personal growth, and that different environmental conditions lead to the satisfaction of each of them (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Self-efficacy is the belief that an individual can successfully manage new or difficult tasks and cope with various challenges (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). Studies show that self-efficacy is associated with higher autonomy, mastery, reduced perceived risk, and decreased passivity (Napier et al., 2024; Putter et al., 2024). In order for individuals to approach their needs proactively, they must believe in their ability to meet them.

Social support has also been shown to play an important role in psychological needs. It provides a context in which adolescents can shape and practice the ability of need crafting, which requires safety for experimentation and opportunities to experience beneficial social situations (Laporte, 2022). LaPorte et al. (2022) found that autonomy-supportive parenting was associated with higher need satisfaction and lower need frustration. A remaining question concerns the role of different social contexts in which support is provided, and how these contexts contribute to the crafting of each basic need.

The aim of this contribution is to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and various sources of social support in relation to the need crafting of adolescents' individual psychological needs.

2. Methods

The sample consisted of 293 adolescents ($M_{age} = 17.69$, $SD = 1.33$; 62,5% of women). Adolescents were invited to participate in the study through university students, who were instructed to approach adolescents aged 15–20 years within their social networks, specifically secondary school students. In addition, the legal guardian of each adolescent completed an informed consent form containing information about the study prior to data collection. To prevent duplicate responses from the same participant, each respondent was asked to provide a unique personal code at the beginning of the questionnaire.

The Need Crafting Scale (Laporte et al., 2022) is a 30-item instrument assessing a proactive approach to fulfilling the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Each need is evaluated through 10 items, of which six capture the awareness component and four measure the action component. Example items include: "It is clear to me ..." and "As much as possible, I try to do things ...". All items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (completely true) (Cronbach $\alpha=0.866$).

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1990) measures social support from family, friends, and significant others. Each form of support is assessed through four items, rated on a 7-point Likert scale indicating the degree of agreement. (Cronbach's $\alpha \dots$)

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) (Košć et al., 1993) measures the extent of an individual's beliefs regarding their general self-efficacy, understood as the ability to respond to environmental demands and to exert control over them. Respondents rate the extent to which ten self-evaluative statements apply to them on a 4-point scale. (Cronbach's $\alpha \dots$).

The data were processed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and regression models in the JAPS software.

3. Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.

	NCM_C	NCM_A	NCM_R	SSFam	SSFri	SSSig	Self-efficacy
M	25.297	25.116	25.628	21.706	22.918	23.860	30.546
SD	3.845	3.820	4.022	5.779	5.016	5.260	5.344
Skewness	-0.730	-0.854	-0.975	-0.811	-1.188	-1.554	-0.423
SE	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142
Min	7.000	7.000	9.000	4.000	4.000	4.000	14.000
Max	35.000	35.000	35.000	28.000	28.000	28.000	40.000

*NCM_C – need crafting (competence), NCM_A – need crafting (autonomy), NCM_R (relatedness). SSFam – social support of family, SSFri – social support of friends, SSSig (social support of significant adult), Self-efficacy

Table 2. Correlation of variables.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Need crafting (competence)	—						
2. Need crafting (autonomy)	.737**	—					
3. Need crafting (relatedness)	.712**	.713**	—				
4. Social support (family)	.201**	.241**	.273**	—			
5. Social support (friends)	.418**	.308**	.467**	.403**	—		
6. Social support (significant other)	.468**	.446**	.522**	.613**	.713**	—	
7. Self-efficacy	.371**	.361**	.315**	.219**	.338**	.301**	—

Note ** $p < 0.001$

Regarding social support, all forms of need crafting were significantly correlated with all its types. Support from a significant other consistently showed the highest correlations with needs ($r = .468$ to $.522$), followed by support from friends ($r = .308$ to $.467$), and finally support from family ($r = .201$ to $.273$). This suggests that a close, significant person contributes the most to the satisfaction of psychological needs, whereas family support appears to have a weaker effect.

General self-efficacy was also significantly correlated with all three forms of need crafting. The correlations ranged from $r = .315$ (relatedness) to $r = .371$ (competence), indicating that individuals with stronger beliefs in their ability to cope with situations also tend to experience greater satisfaction of their psychological needs.

Table 3. Social support and general self-efficacy as a predictors of competence related need crafting.

	B	SE	β	t	p	Lower CI	Upper CI	Tolerance	VIF
Intercept	12.048	2.257	—	5.336	<.001	7.605	16.491	—	—
Social support: family	0.083	0.078	0.051	1.066	.287	-0.072	0.240	.740	1.352
Social support: priatelia	-0.005	0.022	-0.012	-0.226	.822	-0.048	0.038	.568	1.762
Social support: significant other	0.231	0.064	0.230	3.587	<.001	0.104	0.358	.596	1.676
General Self-Efficacy	0.180	0.044	0.223	4.089	<.001	0.093	0.266	.800	1.187

A linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between family social support, friend social support, and significant-other social support, as well as self-efficacy, in relation to competence-related need crafting.

The model was statistically significant, $F(4, 288) = 31.48$, $p < .001$, and explained approximately 30% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R = .553$, $R^2 = .306$, Adjusted $R^2 = .298$). Support from a significant other, as well as general self-efficacy, significantly predicted the level of competence-related need crafting

Table 4. Social support and general self-efficacy as a predictors of autonomy related need crafting.

	B	SE	β	t	p	Lower CI	Upper CI	Tolerance	VIF
Intercept	13.755	1.328	—	10.359	<.001	—	—	—	—
Social support: family	0.025	0.084	0.035	0.305	.754	-0.140	0.191	.740	1.352
Social support: friends	0.062	0.026	0.206	2.286	.023	0.008	0.116	.568	1.787
Social support: significant other	0.157	0.049	0.216	3.215	.001	0.060	0.253	.559	1.670
General Self-efficacy	0.129	0.033	0.236	3.903	<.001	0.064	0.195	.840	1.191

A linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationships among family social support, friend social support, significant-other social support, and general self-efficacy in relation to autonomy-related need crafting. The model was statistically significant, $F(4, 288) = 20.924$, $p < .001$, and explained 22.6% of the variability in autonomy-related need crafting ($R = .475$, $R^2 = .226$, Adjusted $R^2 = .214$). Significant predictors were friend social support, significant-other social support, and general self-efficacy.

Table 5. Social support and general self-efficacy as a predictors of relatedness related need crafting.

	B	SE	β	t	p	Lower CI	Upper CI	Tolerance	VIF
Intercept	13.806	1.321	—	10.526	<.001	—	—	—	—
Social support: family	0.016	0.046	0.021	0.266	.715	-0.074	0.106	.740	1.352
Social support: friends	0.175	0.056	0.223	3.148	.002	0.065	0.285	.566	1.767
Social support: significant other	0.208	0.038	0.270	5.449	<.001	0.133	0.284	.595	1.670
General Self-efficacy	0.078	0.034	0.204	3.083	.002	0.011	0.144	.840	1.191

A regression model was used to examine the relationships among family social support, friend social support, significant-other social support, and general self-efficacy in relation to relatedness-related need crafting. The model was statistically significant, $F(4, 288) = 32.113$, $p < .001$, and explained 36.0% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R = .600$, $R^2 = .360$, Adjusted $R^2 = .352$). Significant predictors were friend social support, significant-other social support, and general self-efficacy.

4. Discussion

The aim of the study was to examine the relationships between three forms of social support (family, friends, and significant other) and general self-efficacy in relation to need crafting for the three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The target group consisted of adolescents aged 15 to 20.

The results showed that general self-efficacy was a predictor of need crafting for all three needs. Social support from a significant other was likewise a predictor across all three needs. Friend social support predicted autonomy-related need crafting and relatedness-related need crafting, but competence-related need crafting was not associated with friend social support. Family social support was not associated with need crafting for any of the needs.

The predictors of competence-related need crafting were general self-efficacy and social support from a significant other. In this case, it is possible to consider a link between the satisfaction of the needs for competence and relatedness. When the need for relatedness is met, space is created for the fulfilment of the need for competence (Niemic & Ryan, 2009; Furrer & Skinner, 2003). During adolescence, social life gradually shifts from prioritizing belonging to a peer group toward dyadic relationships (Brown & Larson, 2009). Competence-related need crafting may therefore reflect adolescents' perceived ability to build close relationships. At the same time, the question arises of who can qualify as a significant other. A romantic partner, a close friend, or even a natural mentor may serve as a person fulfilling the role of a significant relational figure (Van Dam et al., 2018). Future research could develop and validate instruments that distinguish the role of a significant adult's social support more precisely.

Autonomy-related need crafting and relatedness-related need crafting were predicted by friend social support, significant-other social support, and general self-efficacy. Family social support was not a significant predictor. This finding does not necessarily indicate a lack of family support among adolescents, but rather reflects the increasing importance of relationships outside the family during middle and late adolescence. Separating from the family of origin is an essential condition for the development of autonomy (Beyers et al., 2024). Autonomy-supportive parenting provides a secure foundation for forming other adaptive relationships in which autonomy can be expressed (Joussemet, Landry, & Koestner, 2008). It is possible that family social support did not emerge as a significant predictor for any form of need crafting because its influence overlaps with the effects of friend and significant-other support.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Scientific Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Academy of Sciences under Grant VEGA 1/0656/25, Fulfilment of Psychological Needs in the Mentoring Relationship and Adolescent Identity.

References

- Beyers, W., Soenens, B., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2024). Autonomy in adolescence: A conceptual, developmental and cross-cultural perspective. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 22(2), 121–141.
- Brown, B. B., & Larson, J. (2009). Peer relationships in adolescence. In R. M. Lerner & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology: Contextual influences on adolescent development* (3rd ed., pp. 74–103). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Furrer, C., & Skinner, E. (2003). Sense of relatedness as a factor in children's academic engagement and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(1), 148–162. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.95.1.148>
- Joussemet, M., Landry, R., & Koestner, R. (2008). A self-determination theory perspective on parenting. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 49(3), 194.

- Košč, M., Heftyová, E., Schwarzer, R., Jerusalem, M. (1993). *Slovakial Adaptation of the General Self-Efficacy Scale*. Retrieved from <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/slovak.htm>
- Laporte, N., Soenens, B., Flamant, N., Vansteenkiste, M., Mabbe, E., & Brenning, K. (2022). The role of daily need crafting in daily fluctuations in adolescents' need-based and affective experiences. *Motivation and Emotion, 46*(2), 137-149. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-021-09921-2>
- Napier, A. D., Slep, G. R., & Vella-Brodick, D. A. (2024). Crafting One's Life and its Relationship with Psychological Needs: A Scoping Review. *Applied Research Quality Life, 19*, 2063–2101. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-024-10322-z>
- Niemiec, C. P., & Ryan, R. M. (2009). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom: Applying self-determination theory to educational practice. *Theory and Research in Education, 7*(2), 133–144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878509104318>
- Putter, I., van der Vaart, L., & Bosman, J. (2024). Evaluating need crafting: scale validation and workplace implications. *Behavioral Sciences, 14*(4), 301.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale. In J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston (Eds.), *Measures in Health Psychology: A User's Portfolio* (pp. 35–37). Windsor, UK: NFER-Nelson.
- Van Dam, L., Smit, D., Wildschut, B., Branje, S. J. T., Rhodes, J. E., Assink, M., & Stams, G. J. J. (2018). Does natural mentoring matter? A multilevel meta-analysis on the association between natural mentoring and youth outcomes. *American journal of community psychology, 62*(1-2), 203-220.
- Zimet, G. D., Powell, S. S., Farley, G. K., Werkman, S., & Berkoff, K. A. (1990). Psychometric characteristics of the multidimensional scale of perceived social support. *Journal of personality assessment, 55*(3-4), 610-617.