

DIFFERENCES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS SATISFACTION BETWEEN GENERAL EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS. IMPLICATION FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

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Abstract

Within the frame of the Self Determination Theory (SDT, Deci & Ryan, 2000), the primary purpose of this study was to identify if resources such as the experience of teaching and the extent to which basic psychological needs are satisfied at the workplace are predictors for teachers' psychological distress, among both general and special educators. A secondary purpose was to determine if there are differences regarding psychological resources between these categories of professionals. We performed two separate regression analysis for both categories of teachers followed by a comparison regarding the psychological needs' satisfaction. The fulfillment of basic psychological needs predicts negatively teachers' psychological distress. On the other hand, teachers for special education programs were found to be more dissatisfied regarding the fulfillment of the need for competence by comparison with teachers for general education. Additional analyses revealed that the years of experience were found to be associated with an increased need for competence but only for special education teachers. The implications of these findings for intervention and prevention programs are discussed further.

Keywords: self-determination theory; psychological distress; teachers for special education programs; teachers for general education programs

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