

# Quid pro quo at work?

## How daily received social support and basic need satisfaction influence our daily work life



### Introduction

With increasing flexibility and emphasis on digitalization, it is necessary for workers to cope with novel challenges and demands by acquiring and maintaining resources to manage stressors and thus maintain their well-being and health (Hobfoll, 2002). Basic Need Satisfaction (relatedness, competence and autonomy) at the workplace has shown to have a tremendous influence on a person's well-being (Baard et al., 2004). Social support is one of the most important and most researched resources in occupational contexts as well as one of the influencing factors when it comes to work-related outcomes (Mathieu, Eschleman, & Cheng, 2019). One can distinguish between emotional and instrumental support, which

are conceptually independent and provide distinct resources (Mathieu et al., 2019). Recent literature has focused on the question whether receiving social support from others also increases the willingness to provide support, as well as the effects of support provision on work-related attitudes (Kim et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2015). In applying ideas of self-determination theory and social exchange theory, we focus on the mediating role of basic psychological needs on social support provision as well as job satisfaction (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Gouldner, 1960). Furthermore, we differentiate between face to face and computer-mediated communication (Rains & Wright, 2016).

### Instruments

Scale	Source	Items	$\alpha$	Example (as used in survey)
<b>Social Support</b> (received)	Lawrence et al. (2007)	4	.86	"Wie sehr haben Ihre KollegInnen Ihnen geholfen, sich bei arbeitsbezogenen Problemen besser zu fühlen?"
* Emotional				
* Instrumental		4	.87	"Wie sehr haben ihre KollegInnen Ihnen geholfen, wenn es bei der Arbeit schwierig wurde?"
<b>Basic Psychological Needs</b>	Deci et al. (2001)	3	.55	"Heute konnte ich selbst entscheiden, wie ich meine Arbeit erledige."
* Autonomy				
* Competence				
* Relatedness				
<b>Support Provision</b>	Shakespeare-Finch & Obst (2011)	3	.71	„Heute in der Arbeit war ich da, um mir die Probleme meiner KollegInnen anzuhören.“
* Emotional				
* Instrumental		3	.70	„Heute in der Arbeit unterstützte ich meine KollegInnen mit praktischen Hilfestellungen.“
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	Van Dick, Wagner & Lemmer (2004)	1	-	„Heute war ich mit meinem Arbeitsleben zufrieden.“

### Research Questions

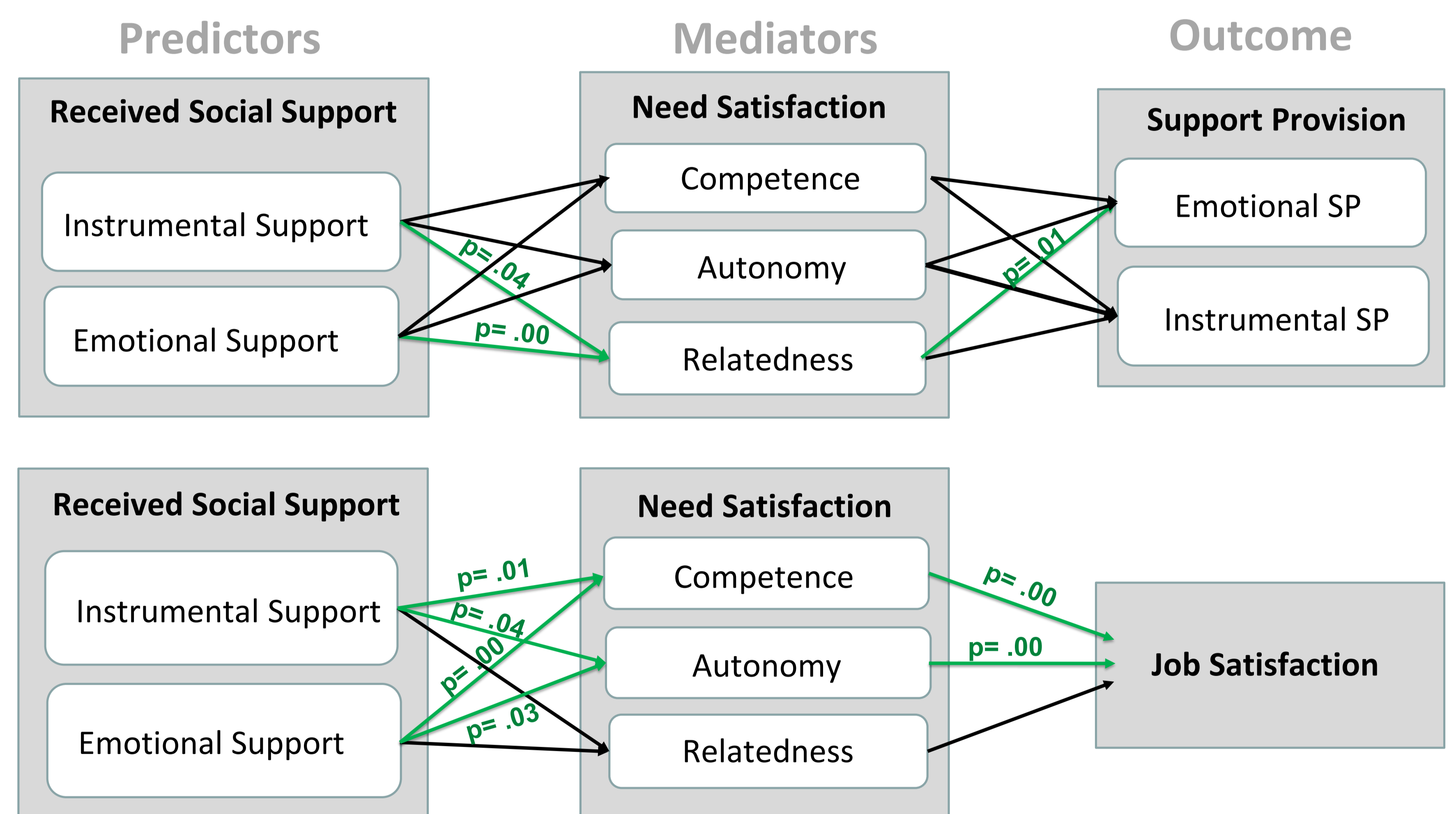
- Are there daily effects of received social support (instrumental vs. emotional) on support provision and job satisfaction?
- Does the satisfaction of the three basic needs at work mediate the relationship between received social support and a) support provision and b) job satisfaction?
- Does the medium (face to face vs. computer-mediated) via which social support is communicated affect the relationship between received social support and support provision?

### Sample

- N**= 92 (♂= 46.6% | ♀= 52.4%)
- Age**: 22-60 (M=34.7, SD= 11.7)
- Inclusion criteria**: Person works at least 20 hours/week, regular virtual communication with colleagues
- Survey**: daily online questionnaire in German over 10 working days, with two measuring times (5pm and 9pm)
- Method**: Mediation and Moderation analyses via PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2013)
- Data collection**: 14<sup>th</sup> October until 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019

### Hypotheses and Results

- ✓ H1a/b: Received emotional support has a positive effect on emotional/instrumental support provision.
- ✓ H2a/b: Received instrumental support has a positive effect on emotional/instrumental support provision.
- ✓ H3a/b: Received emotional/instrumental support has a positive effect on job satisfaction.
- ✓ H4: Basic need satisfaction mediates the positive relationship between received support and support provision. (partially supported)
- ✓ H5: Basic need satisfaction mediates the positive relationship between received support and job satisfaction. (partially supported)



### Discussion

- In line with results of research in the last decades, this study has proven the importance of social support in working contexts. Our results revealed the need to consider both emotional and instrumental social support because they influence need satisfaction differently.
- Against our assumption, the results show that it makes no difference whether support is received face to face or via computer-mediated communication.
- Further research should focus on possible links not just between perceived social support and support provision, but on possible other interfering factors we did not include. Additionally, it seems to be promising to investigate the impact communications technologies might have on job satisfaction and social support.

### Practical Implications

- Practitioners should consider that all kinds of support lead to support provision and that all three basic needs (Competence, Autonomy and Relatedness) are important and should be supported in the workplace.
- Independent of the type of social support relatedness contributes to social interaction in the form of emotional support provision and help in the workplace.
- Consequently, it is important that supervisors and HR departments pay attention to providing a supportive environment.
- Vice versa, the needs competence and autonomy are crucial to increase job satisfaction.