

**PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AND SUBJECTIVE VITALITY IN EXERCISE:
A CROSS-GENDER SITUATIONAL TEST OF THE NEEDS UNIVERSALITY
HYPOTHESIS**

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Abstract: The present study examined (a) the mediating role of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the relationship between perceived autonomy support and levels of subjective vitality among Greek-speaking exercise participants at the situational level of generality; and (b) the validity of the needs universality hypothesis across gender in exercise. Exercise participants ($N = 388$) aged between 18 and 61 years completed scales assessing situational exercise-instructor perceived autonomy support, psychological need satisfaction, and levels of subjective vitality at the end of a single exercise class. Multi-sample latent variable structural equation modeling supported both partial mediation of the psychological needs in the relationship between perceived autonomy support and subjective vitality and the equivalence of the effects of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness on subjective vitality across gender providing support for the needs universality hypothesis. The findings open new research avenues to test the relative effectiveness of various exercise instructing styles on improving indexes of psychological health and well-being and the equivalence of the psychological processes involved across gender.

Key words: Multi-group analysis; Physical activity; Psychological well-being, Self-determination theory.

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