



## **Do School Mentoring Programmes Promote Adolescents' Basic Psychological Needs? Results of a Qualitative Study**

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### **Abstract**

In general, studies about the nature and impact of school mentoring programmes report some effects over the instrumental and socio-emotional development of the mentees. However, no research has analysed systematically how school mentoring promotes their self-determination.

The main goal of this communication is to present the results of a qualitative study that aimed at better understanding if school mentoring programmes in Portugal duly addressed and nurtured adolescents' self-determination. The study analyzed the fulfillment of basic psychological needs of relatedness, competence and autonomy, which constitute the basis for self-determined behavior.

In order to achieve this main goal, a qualitative study was runned with 26 adolescents, ages 16 to 19, using the social network map and a semi-structured interview, followed by content analysis procedures. All of the participants were integrated in a two year mentoring programme developed in several Portuguese schools since 2005, called Metodologia TUTAL.

The results suggest that the basic psychological needs of the adolescents were addressed by school mentors, especially relatedness needs. However, school mentors tended to cope with autonomy needs inconsistently, often using restraining strategies like control or prescription of solutions. On the other hand, competence needs, according to the adolescents, seemed to be less important in their school mentoring experiences.

Limitations of the study, as well as theoretical and practical recommendations are made in order to deepen the study of the theme and to improve the design and implementation of school mentoring programmes in Portugal.