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Basic psychological needs and coping among tenants at risk of eviction

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Keywords

Eviction
Basic psychological needs
Coping

Abstract

This study examines the correlation between three basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness), measured with the *Basic Psychological Needs Scale*) and coping (measured with the *Coping Strategy Indicator*) among 495 tenants (54% male, *M* = 43 years) at risk of eviction in five Dutch municipalities. The effect of demographic variables on basic psychological needs, coping, and the relationship between both is determined. This study shows that tenants with strong feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness engage more in problem solving coping instead of avoiding their challenges. Tenants with strong feelings of relatedness seek social support more often. Older tenants tend to feel more autonomous compared to younger tenants and engage more in problem solving and less in seeking social support. Age does not affect the correlations between basic psychological needs and coping. On average, male tenants feel more competent than female tenants. Female tenants show a strong positive correlation between autonomy and problem solving. Native Dutch tenants generally feel more autonomous and related than tenants with an immigration background and engage in significantly less avoidance coping. Correlations between basic psychological needs and coping did not differ between both groups. The results of this study illustrate the need to develop targeted, individualized interventions that increase tenants' sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which in turn increases their problem-solving coping and reduces their avoidant behavior, which may avert evictions.

Necesidades psicológicas básicas y afrontamiento de inquilinos en riesgo de desalojo

Palabras clave

Desalojo
Necesidades psicológicas básicas
Afrontamiento

Resumen

En este estudio se examina la correlación entre tres necesidades psicológicas básicas (autonomía, competencia y relación, medidas con la *Escala Necesidades Psicológicas Básicas*) y el afrontamiento (medido con el *Indicador de Estrategia de Afrontamiento*) entre 495 inquilinos (54% hombres, *M* = 43 años) en riesgo de sufrir desalojo en cinco municipios holandeses. Se determina el efecto de las variables demográficas sobre las necesidades psicológicas básicas, el afrontamiento y su relación. Los arrendatarios con fuertes sentimientos de autonomía, competencia y relación se involucran más en la resolución de problemas. Aquellos con fuertes sentimientos de relación buscan apoyo social con más frecuencia. Los de mayor edad tienden a sentirse más autónomos y se involucran más en la resolución de problemas. La edad no afecta las correlaciones entre necesidades psicológicas básicas y afrontamiento. Los varones se sienten más competentes. Las inquilinas muestran una fuerte correlación positiva entre autonomía y resolución de problemas. Los arrendatarios nativos holandeses generalmente se sienten más autónomos y relacionados que los que tienen antecedentes de inmigración y se involucran en situaciones de evasión significativamente menores. Las correlaciones entre necesidades psicológicas básicas y afrontamiento no difirieron. Los resultados ilustran la necesidad de desarrollar intervenciones individualizadas y específicas que aumenten el sentido de autonomía, competencia y relación de los inquilinos, lo que a su vez aumenta su capacidad de resolución de problemas y reduce su comportamiento evasivo, lo que puede evitar los desalojos.

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In the Netherlands, social housing associations own 2.4 million rental homes, housing about four million people (Aedes, n.d.). In 2020, housing associations obtained approximately 6,750 eviction orders; 1,720 households were actually evicted, 609 households terminated their tenancy before an eviction took place, and 318 households left without notice. For the remaining 4,103 households an eviction was averted, mostly due to a common effort of the social housing associations and their local partners, such as the local government, police, welfare organizations, and volunteers. Together, these partners offered tenants help in multiple areas, for example by offering municipal debt counseling (Aedes, 2021). Although these tenants were not evicted, they still went through the stressful experience of an eminent eviction.

According to the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the level of a person's overall well-being is based on the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs (BPN): autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to being the perceived origin or source of one's own behavior, having a sense of choice and desire to self-organize experiences and behaviors. Competence relates to feeling effective in ongoing interactions with the social environment and experiencing opportunities to exercise and express one's capacities. Relatedness refers to a person's desire to feel connected to others and have a sense of belonging (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2002).

Coping can be defined as "an individual's efforts to master demands (conditions of harm, threat, or challenge) that are appraised (or perceived) as exceeding or taxing his or her resources" (Monat & Lazarus, 1991, p. 5). Amirkhan (1990) distinguishes three common coping strategies: 1) Problem solving, an approach in which people take steps to resolve the problem; 2) Seeking social support, an approach in which persons seek interpersonal contact because of the comfort this contact provides; and 3) Avoidance, a strategy that reflects tendencies that avoid dealing with the stressor, both by means of physical and psychological withdrawal. Which coping strategy or strategies a person uses, depends on the perceived sense of control and available social support, and influences the resolution of the specific demand as well as the person's well-being. People who feel effective at mastering obstacles are more likely to use problem-solving coping strategies, whereas people who feel incompetent are more likely to run away from the problem and use avoidant coping strategies (Skinner & Edge, 2002).

In addition to the abovementioned psychological processes, Skinner and Edge (2002) argue that BPN play an important role in the coping process. They state that the experiences people have within their social contexts, and how they appraise stressful situations, shape the person's sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which in turn influences the way people act within the situations they face, including their coping behavior.

Tenants at risk of eviction often experience severe psychological distress. Studies have shown that tenants at risk of eviction experience feelings of fear, stress, shame, despair, panic, helplessness, or horror (Robles-Ortega et al., 2017; Wewerinke et al., 2014), and may even increase the risk of suicide (Fowler et al., 2015; Rojas & Stenberg, 2015). It is expected that this psychological distress affects tenants' sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Increased susceptibility to external pressures and perceptions of lower control over choice may be associated with a frustration of basic psychological needs (Mills et al., 2021). This psychological distress and associated frustration of BPN may also affect tenants' coping styles. Additionally, it is expected that BPN, coping styles, and the relationship between both differ as a result of demographic characteristics. It is expected that gender, age, and having an immigration background influence to what extent tenants' BPN are satisfied and which coping styles they engage in. Additionally, the correlations between BPN and coping may vary when comparing different demographic groups.

This study examines the relation between BPN and coping among tenants at risk of eviction, and the role of several basic demographic variables in this relation. This study determines (1) how the fulfillment of BPN correlates with coping strategies of tenants at risk of eviction in five Dutch municipalities; (2) how age, gender, and having an immigration background affect these tenants' BPN and coping strategies; and (3) how the correlation between BPN and coping is affected by age, gender, and an immigration background.

Method

Participants

Of the 495 tenants included in this study, 53.9% were male. Their age ranged from 19 to 80 years old ($M = 43.1$; $SD = 12.2$). About half of the tenants (49.8%) lived alone, 6.1% lived with a partner, 18.9% lived with a partner and children, 21.5% were single parent households, and 3.6% lived with others. Almost half of the tenants (46.1%) were native Dutch (both parents were born in the Netherlands; Keij, 2000), 42.2% were first generation immigrants (the respondent and at least one of the parents were not born in the Netherlands), and 11.7% were second generation immigrants (the respondent was born in the Netherlands and at least one parent was not born in the Netherlands).

Procedure

This study was part of a larger project on tenant evictions which was conducted from July 2010 to June 2014. According to the Medical Research Ethics Committee of Arnhem-Nijmegen, formal ethical approval was not required for this study (registration number 2011/110) because participants were not subjected to any intervention or treatment.

For this study, tenants were contacted when they had received a second notification from a bailiff regarding rent arrears. They were at least 18 years old and lived in independent housing from social housing associations. Tenants were contacted through 16 housing associations in Amsterdam, Leiden, Nijmegen, Rotterdam, and Utrecht, through seven projects working with people at risk of eviction and through six debt counselling agencies.

Tenants meeting the inclusion criteria received a written invitation to participate in an interview. Two types of letters

were sent: opt-out and opt-in letters. In the opt-out method, tenants who did not send the opt-out card to the researchers were called to ask if they were willing to participate. For housing associations that did not want to use the opt-out method for organizational or privacy reasons, and for the local projects and debt counselling agencies, the opt-in method was used. This meant that tenants were asked to contact the researchers if they wanted to participate. This strategy resulted in a sample of 495 tenants. A detailed description of the sampling process and the response rate can be found in Holl et al. (2019).

All 495 participants signed an informed consent form and were interviewed face-to-face by trained interviewers using a structured questionnaire. This allowed respondents to ask clarifying questions about the questionnaire and ensured accuracy of the data collection. Four respondents were interviewed by telephone. Six respondents were interviewed in a different language, using an English translation of the questionnaire for three respondents, on the spot translation to French by a bilingual interviewer for two respondents, and translation to Turkish by a bilingual interview for one respondent. Participants received 20€ for their participation. The data was collected between November 2011 and February 2013.

Instruments

Basic psychological needs were measured using the *Basic Psychological Needs Scale* (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This scale includes seven items related to autonomy, six items measuring competence, and eight items measuring relatedness. Respondents indicated their agreement with the statements using a scale ranging from 1 = *Not at all true* to 7 = *Very true*), and scores for each subscale were calculated by averaging the scores for each item on the relevant subscale. Cronbach's α for the three subscales were .66 for autonomy, .66 for competence, and .74 for relatedness.

Coping was measured using the *Coping Strategy Indicator* (Amirkhan, 1990). This 33-item instrument measures situation-specific coping behavior with three subscales of 11 items each: problem solving coping, seeking social support coping, and avoidance coping. In order to measure situation-specific coping, respondents are asked to keep a specific stressful situation in mind when completing the *Coping Strategy Indicator*. In this case, respondents were asked to keep the specific situation of their rent arrears and risk of eviction in mind when determining to what extent they use each of the 33 coping behaviors 1 = *Not at all*, 2 = *A little*, or 3 = *A lot*. The scores for each subscale were calculated by adding the scores for the relevant items, resulting in subscale scores ranging from 11 to 33. Cronbach's α for the three subscales in the sample were .84 for problem solving coping, .88 for seeking social support coping, and .70 for avoidance coping.

Demographic variables included in the analysis are age, gender, and having an immigration background. The classification by Statistics Netherlands (Keij, 2000) was adapted to identify two groups: native Dutch (both parents were born in the Netherlands) and immigration background (at least one of the respondent's parents was not born in the Netherlands).

Analysis of the data

Missing data was imputed for the BPN and coping scales. For respondents who missed data on no more than 30% of the items of these scales, the missing values were substituted with the respondent's average score on the other items of the scales. Data was not imputed when respondents missed more than 30% of these items, meaning that they were not scored on these scales. There were 7 (1.4%) missing values on the BPN scales and 5 (1.0%) missing values on the coping scales; because the number of missing values was well below 5% for both instruments, missing data was not considered to be problematic.

The highest variance inflation factor (VIF) was 1.13 and the lowest tolerance statistic was 0.88. Because the VIF was well below 10 and the tolerance statistic was above 0.2, it was concluded that there was no multicollinearity (Bowerman & O'Connell, 1990; Menard, 1995; Myers, 1990). Normality was examined by charting the distribution of each variable and by searching for skewness and kurtosis values of less than -1 or more than 1. The assumption of normality was violated by problem solving coping (Skewness = -1.26, SE = .11; Kurtosis = 1.48, SE = .22); however, because of the large enough sample size and considering the central limit theorem, it was decided not to transform this variable and to consider this variable to be normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 28. Relationships between BPN and coping were examined using Pearson's correlations. Additionally, partial correlations were examined controlling for age. To determine the roles of gender and immigration background, means and correlations within each group (male and female; native Dutch and people with an immigration background) were compared.

Results

Descriptive statistics of all variables are shown in Table 1.

To examine the relation between BPN and coping, Pearson correlations are presented in Table 2.

Bias corrected bootstrap 95% confidence intervals are reported in square brackets. Fulfillment of all three BPN is positively associated with problem solving coping (autonomy, r = .13 [.04, .22], p = .004; competence, r = .22 [.13, .30], p < .001; relatedness, r = .11 [.02, .19], p = .020). A negative association was found between fulfillment of all three BPN and avoidance coping (autonomy, r = -.32 [-.40, -.24], p < .001; competence, r = -.34 [-.42, -.26], p < .001; relatedness, r = -.25 [-.33, -.16], p < .001). A positive correlation was found between relatedness and seeking social support coping (r = .23 [.14, .31], p < .001); autonomy and competence were not significantly correlated with seeking social support coping.

In order to examine the role of age, Pearson's correlations between age and BPN and coping are presented in Table 3.

Positive correlations were found between age and autonomy (r = .10 [.01, .19], p = .033) and between age and problem solving coping (r = .14 [.05, .22], p = .003), indicating that older tenants tend to feel more autonomous and engage more in prob-

Table 1

Descriptive statistic

Variable name	*N*	Missing	*M*	Range	*SE*
Autonomy	488	7 (1.4%)	4.9	1.7 - 7	1
Competence	488	7 (1.4%)	4.8	1.7 - 7	1
Relatedness	488	7 (1.4%)	5.4	1.6 - 7	0.9
Problem Solving Coping	490	5 (1%)	28.4	12 - 33	4.3
Seeking Social Support Coping	490	5 (1%)	21.1	11 - 33	6
Avoidance Coping	490	5 (1%)	19.7	11 - 30	4.2

Table 2

Bivariate correlations between BPN and coping

	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
Problem solving coping	.13**	.22***	.11*
Seeking social support coping	-.02	.03	.23***
Avoidance coping	-.32***	-.34***	-.25***

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Table 3

Bivariate correlations of age with BPN and coping

	r	*p*	CI
Age – Autonomy	.10	.033	.01, .19
Age – Competence	-.002	.96	-.09, .09
Age – Relatedness	-.09	.062	-.17, .00
Age – Problem solving coping	.14	.003	.05, .22
Age – Seeking social support coping	-.15	< .001	-.24, -.06
Age – Avoidance coping	.00	.924	-.09, .09

Table 4

Bivariate correlations between BPN and coping controlling for age

	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
Problem solving coping	.12*	.22***	.12*
Seeking social support coping	-.02	.03	.22***
Avoidance coping	-.33***	-.35***	-.25***

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

lem solving coping compared to younger tenants. A negative correlation was found between age and seeking social support coping (r = -.15 [-.24, -.06], $p < .001$); older tenants tend to rely less on their social network to cope with the threat of eviction than younger tenants do.

To determine if age affects the correlations between BPN and coping, the correlations between BPN and coping while controlling for age are presented in Table 4.

The correlations between BPN and coping controlled for age are very similar to the uncontrolled correlations presented in Table 2; differences in the correlation coefficients range from .00 to 0.02. This indicates that, while age does have some effect on tenants' feeling of autonomy, problem solving coping, and seeking social support coping, age does not significantly affect the correlations between BPN and coping.

To determine if gender and immigration background affect BPN and coping, the means for BPN and coping were compared between groups (Tables 5 and 6).

Male and female tenants scored similar on most aspects of BPN and coping, but a significant difference was found for competence. On average, male tenants felt more competent (M = 4.9, SE = 1) than female tenants (M = 4.7, SE = 1.1). This difference (0.22, BCa 95% CI [.04, .40], $t(484) = 2.33$, $p = .02$) has a small effect size (d = .21).

Several significant differences were found between native Dutch tenants and tenants with an immigration background.

Table 5

Comparing means of BPN and coping for male and female tenants

Variables	Male		Female		*t*(484)	*p*	Cohen's *d*
	M	*SE*	*M*	*SE*			
Autonomy	5	0.9	4.9	1.1	0.85	.397	.08
Competence	4.9	1	4.7	1.1	2.33	.02	.21
Relatedness	5.3	0.8	5.4	0.9	-1.9	.058	-.17
Problem solving coping	28.3	4.5	28.6	4	-0.91	.365	-.08
Seeking social support coping	21	6	21.4	5.9	-0.72	.471	-.07
Avoidance coping	19.6	4.3	19.8	4.1	-0.59	.558	-.05

Table 6

Comparing means of BPN and coping for native Dutch and tenants with an immigration background

Variables	Native Dutch		Immigration background		*t*(484)	*p*	Cohen's *d*
	M	*SE*	*M*	*SE*			
Autonomy	5	0.9	4.9	1	2.15	.032	.2
Competence	4.6	1.1	4.8	1	1.01	.315	.09
Relatedness	5.5	0.8	5.3	0.9	2.50	.013	.23
Problem solving coping	28.2	4.4	28.7	4.1	-1.30	.194	-.12
Seeking social support coping	20.9	6.4	21.4	5.6	-0.90	.368	-.26
Avoidance coping	18.8	4.1	20.5	4.2	-4.58	< .001	-.42

Table 7

Differences in bivariate correlations of BPN and coping between male and female tenants

Pairs of variables	Male (N = 267)		Female (N = 228)		Difference		
	r	*p*	*r*	*p*	$r_{difference}$	$z_{difference}$	*p*
Autonomy – Problem solving coping	-.03	.611	.3	< .001	.33	3.75	< .001
Autonomy – Seeking social support coping	-.01	.847	-.02	.816	-.002	-0.04	.97
Autonomy – Avoidance coping	-.3	< .001	-.34	< .001	-.04	-0.48	.629
Competence – Problem solving coping	.15*	.015	.31	< .001	.16	1.85	.065
Competence – Seeking social support coping	.01	.834	.05	.455	.04	0.4	.688
Competence – Avoidance coping	-.34	< .001	-.35	< .001	-.002	-0.03	.979
Relatedness – Problem solving coping	.11	.071	.09	.169	-.02	-0.23	.817
Relatedness – Seeking social support coping	.26	< .001	.2	.003	-.06	-0.71	.48
Relatedness – Avoidance coping	-.24	< .001	-.27	< .001	-.03	-0.3	.762

Table 8

Differences in bivariate correlations of BPN and coping between native Dutch tenants and tenants with an immigration background

Pairs of variables	Native Dutch (N = 228)		Immigration background (N = 260)		Difference		
	r	p	r	p	$r_{difference}$	$z_{difference}$	p
Autonomy – Problem solving coping	.09	.182	.18**	.004	-.09	-1	.317
Autonomy – Seeking social support coping	.03	.692	-.05	.458	.07	0.80	.426
Autonomy – Avoidance coping	-.29***	< .001	-.32***	< .001	.03	0.35	.729
Competence – Problem solving coping	.23***	< .001	.21***	< .001	.02	0.27	.789
Competence – Seeking social support coping	.05	.446	.01	.896	.04	0.47	.640
Competence – Avoidance coping	-.37***	< .001	-.32***	< .001	-.04	-0.55	.583
Relatedness – Problem solving coping	.10	.134	.12*	.045	-.02	-0.28	.783
Relatedness – Seeking social support coping	.28***	< .001	.20**	.001	.07	0.85	.395
Relatedness – Avoidance coping	-.24***	< .001	-.23***	< .001	-.01	-0.15	.879

On average, native Dutch tenants felt more autonomous (M = 5, SE = 0.9) than tenants with an immigration background (M = 4.9, SE = 1), a significant difference (0.18, BCa 95% CI [-.01, .37], $t(484) = 2.15$, p = .032) with a small effect size (d = .20). Additionally, native Dutch tenants felt more related (M = 5.5, SE = 0.8) than tenants with an immigration background (M = 5.3, SE = 0.9); this significant difference (0.20, BCa 95% CI [.06, .34], $t(484) = 2.50$, p = .013) has a small effect size (d = .23). The strongest difference was found for avoidance coping; native Dutch tenants used less avoidance coping (M = 18.8, SE = 4.1) than tenants with an immigration background (M = 20.5, SE = 4.2); this significant difference (1.72, BCa 95% CI [-2.5, -0.9], $t(484) = -4.58$, p < .001) has a medium effect size (d = -.42).

To identify differences between female and male tenants in correlations between BPN and coping, Pearson's correlations were calculated for each group and compared. For each difference in correlation, z-values were calculated to determine if the difference was significant (Table 7).

While male and female tenants show similar patterns of correlations between most aspects of BPN and coping, an interesting, significant difference was found regarding the correlation between autonomy and problem solving coping. Female tenants show a strong positive correlation between autonomy and problem solving coping (r = .30 [.18, .42], p < .001), which is a stronger correlation than was found in the complete sample (Table 2), while no significant correlation was found between autonomy and problem solving coping among male tenants.

Differences between native Dutch tenants and tenants with an immigration background in correlations between BPN and coping are presented in Table 8.

Native Dutch tenants and tenants with an immigration background show similar patterns of correlations between BPN and coping; no significant differences in correlations were found between these groups.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine (1) how the fulfillment of BPN correlates with coping strategies of tenants at risk of eviction in five Dutch municipalities, (2) how demographic variables affect these tenants' BPN and coping strategies, and (3) how the correlation between BPN and coping is affected by demographic variables.

All three BPN (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) showed positive correlations with problem solving coping and negative correlations with avoidance coping, and relatedness showed a positive correlation with seeking social support coping. In general, these results indicate that people with strong feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness tend to engage more in problem solving coping instead of avoiding their challenges. In contrast, when people do not feel competent and effective or when their need for autonomy is frustrated and they feel pushed in an unwanted direction, their feelings may cause them to avoid the problem and engage in activities that distract from the problem (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). While avoidance coping strategies are often associated with positive short-term outcomes, the long term outcomes of these strategies are often more negative than nonavoidant coping strategies (Suls & Fletcher, 1985). Tenants with a stronger sense of relatedness tend to engage more in seeking social support coping.

Alternatively, coping behavior may also affect people's sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Tenants who engage successfully in problem solving coping may feel more autonomous and competent, and tenants who seek social support to cope with their problems may increase their sense of relatedness by doing so. Avoidance coping may cause tenants to feel less autonomous, competent, and related as they are disengaging from solving their problems. Further research is needed to determine what the causal relations between BPN and coping look like. Additionally, similar research among groups facing other stressful situations may shed further light on this interrelationship between BPN and coping strategies.

Age affected tenants' feeling of autonomy; older tenants tended to feel more autonomous compared to younger tenants. This is in line with other research that showed that feelings of autonomy increase with age (Lataster et al., 2022). Older tenants also engaged more in problem solving coping, which aligns with previous research indicating that age is positively correlated with problem-focused coping (Trouillet et al., 2011). Older tenants engage less in seeking social support coping than younger tenants. This may be explained by the fact that older adults associate social support seeking behavior with higher social costs. The more prosocial and empathetic nature of older adults causes them to not want to disrupt their social networks to seek support (Jiang et al., 2018). Age does not significantly affect the correlations between BPN and coping.

Two interesting differences were found between male and female tenants: on average, male tenants felt more competent than female tenants, and female tenants showed a strong positive correlation between autonomy and problem solving coping, while no significant correlation was found between autonomy and problem solving coping among male tenants. While there is some evidence that in general, men tend to feel more competent than women (Costa et al., 2018), no research has been published on the role of gender in the correlation between autonomy and problem solving coping.

Native Dutch tenants generally felt more autonomous and more related than tenants with an immigration background. This may be explained by acculturation stress that is experienced by immigrants which negatively affects their basic psychological needs satisfaction (Ren & Jiang, 2021). Additionally, native Dutch tenants engaged in significantly less avoidance coping than tenants with an immigration background. Further research into coping strategies among immigrants is needed to determine how cultural factors play a role in coping strategies used by immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds. Correlations between BPN and coping were not significantly different between native Dutch tenants and tenants with an immigration background.

Besides these general observations about the relation between BPN and coping, this study also illustrates the need for personalized approaches when supporting tenants at risk of eviction. For example, while autonomy is positively correlated with problem solving coping among female tenants, it is not a significant factor among male tenants. This means that interventions focusing on strengthening tenants' feelings of autonomy may have a better effect on female tenants than male tenants. Additionally, tenants with an immigration background felt less autonomous and less related than native Dutch tenants and tended to avoid the problem of the threat of eviction more than native Dutch tenants. Language barriers, a lack of understanding of eviction processes and options to avoid eviction may cause a lower sense of autonomy among tenants with an immigration background, while not (yet) feeling rooted in the neighborhood or country may cause a lower sense of relatedness. As both autonomy and relatedness are negatively correlated with avoidance coping, it is no surprise that more tenants with an immigration background engage in avoidance coping than native Dutch tenants.

A strength of this study is its large scale. Furthermore, in order to make the sample more representative of the total Dutch population of tenants at risk of eviction, tenants from three large and two small cities were included. This study also has some limitations. First, because tenants in various stages of the eviction process were interviewed, ranging from just having received a second summons from a bailiff to having received an eviction order, it is likely that the tenants in this study did not all experience the same levels of stress. Second, the non-response was rather large, as the researchers were not able to reach the tenants who did not open their mail or answer their phone. Additionally, since this is not a longitudinal study, causal associations could not be explored.

Future research is needed to test whether similar relationships between BPN and coping are also present in other groups of people experiencing stressful situations, and whether demographic variables have similar effects. In addition, establishing whether people's appraisal of a stressful situation affects their BPN as stated by Skinner and Edge (2002), or if BPN affect how a person appraises the stressful situation (Ntoumanis et al., 2009), would provide valuable insights. Furthermore, as this study was not designed to determine causal relationships between BPN and coping, future research examining causality would be useful. For example, it seems logical that feelings of autonomy and competence cause people to engage more in problem solving coping, while successfully engaging in problem solving coping may also increase people sense of autonomy and competence. This question of causality is beyond the scope of this study and would be a valuable contribution.

Conclusions

This study has provided important insights into the relationships between BPN and coping and the role of demographic variables among tenants at risk of eviction. These insights are helpful in developing targeted, personalized interventions that increase tenants' sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which in turn increases their problem solving coping and reduces their avoidant behavior as they work to find solutions that will avoid an eviction.

Author contributions

Conceptualization: J.W., L.D., M.E.
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Writing – original draft: M.E.
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Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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