

## Contents

Evolution of Interpersonal Perception Measurement and Methodological Approaches .....	5
Included Works .....	5
Synthesis .....	5
Reconceptualizing Individual Differences in Self-Enhancement Bias: An Interpersonal Approach .....	6
Accuracy in Interpersonal Perception: A Social Relations Analysis .....	8
Review: The Dependability of Behavioral Measurements: Theory of Generalizability for Scores and Profiles by Lee J. Cronbach, Goldine C. Gleser, Harinder Nanda and Nageswari Rajaratnam .....	10
The Evolution of Social Support Theory: Mechanisms, Effectiveness, and Implementation .....	11
Included Works .....	11
Synthesis .....	12
Stress, Social Support, and the Buffering Hypothesis .....	13
Effects of Social Support Visibility on Adjustment to Stress: Experimental Evidence .....	15
Effective social support: Antecedents and consequences of partner support during pregnancy ..	16
Social Support as Coping Assistance .....	18
The Complex Nature of Enacted Social Support and its Psychological Effects.....	20
Included Works .....	20

Synthesis .....	20
Distinctions Between Social Support Concepts, Measures, and Models.....	21
Why Is Enacted Social Support Associated With Increased Distress? Using Simulation to Test Two Possible Sources of Spuriousness .....	23
Receiving Support as a Mixed Blessing: Evidence for Dual Effects of Support on Psychological Outcomes .....	25
Personality Traits, Social Influences, and Psychological Well-being: Examining Individual and Relational Factors .....	26
Included Works .....	26
Synthesis .....	26
Affect, Personality, and Social Activity .....	28
Trait and Social Influences in the Links Among Adolescent Attachment, Depressive Symptoms, and Coping.....	29
The Differential Effects of Positive and Negative Social Interactions on Psychological Well- being.....	31
Included Works .....	31
Synthesis .....	31
Social Undermining, Support Satisfaction, and Affect: A Domain-Specific Lagged Effects Model .....	32

A Comparison of the Influence of Conflictual and Supportive Social Interactions on Psychological Distress .....	34
Meta-Analytic Investigations of Risk Factors in Clinical Psychopathology .....	36
Included Works .....	36
Synthesis .....	36
Risk and Maintenance Factors for Eating Pathology: A Meta-Analytic Review.....	37
Meta-Analysis of Risk Factors for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Trauma-Exposed Adults ...	39
Attachment, Social Support, and Relationship Regulation: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives on Intimate Relationships .....	41
Included Works .....	41
Synthesis .....	41
Relational Regulation Theory: A New Approach to Explain the Link Between Perceived Social Support and Mental Health .....	43
A Safe Haven: An Attachment Theory Perspective on Support Seeking and Caregiving in Intimate Relationships .....	44
Perceptions of Conflict and Support in Romantic Relationships: The Role of Attachment Anxiety .....	46
Psychological Mechanisms of Adaptive Response: Examining Coping, Romantic Selection, and Cognitive Control.....	48
Included Works .....	48

Synthesis .....	48
Selective Versus Unselective Romantic Desire: Not All Reciprocity Is Created Equal .....	50
The Association of Coping To Physical and Psychological Health Outcomes: A Meta-Analytic Review .....	51
Cognitive reappraisal and secondary control coping: associations with working memory, positive and negative affect, and symptoms of anxiety/depression.....	53
Examining the Nature and Components of Perceived Social Support: Trait Influences, Social Processes, and Mental Health Outcomes .....	54
Included Works .....	54
Synthesis .....	55
The relationship between self-reported received and perceived social support: A meta-analytic review.....	56
Trait and Social Processes in the Link Between Social Support and Affect: An Experimental, Laboratory Investigation.....	57
The Relative Contribution of Trait and Social Influences to the Links Among Perceived Social Support, Affect, and Self-Esteem.....	59
Gaps In Research .....	61
References.....	63

# Evolution of Interpersonal Perception Measurement and Methodological Approaches

## Included Works

- Kwan2004.pdf
- Kenny1987.pdf
- Merrifield1974.pdf

## Synthesis

These three works represent key developments in the conceptualization and measurement of interpersonal perception and behavioral assessment, spanning from the 1970s to the 2000s. The works are connected through their focus on methodological rigor in measuring human perception and behavior, while building upon and refining previous approaches. Merrifield's (1974) review of Cronbach et al.'s seminal work on generalizability theory addresses the fundamental question of how to establish reliable measurements of behavioral phenomena. This methodological foundation proved crucial for subsequent research in interpersonal perception, as it established frameworks for distinguishing between generalizability studies and decision-oriented studies while addressing the challenges of measuring change. Kenny and Albright (1987) built upon these methodological foundations to address the specific research question: How can accuracy in person perception be effectively measured and decomposed into meaningful components? Their work directly responded to earlier critiques by Cronbach and colleagues about global accuracy scores, proposing the social relations model as a new paradigm

that could partition accuracy into distinct components. They identified two key types of accuracy: individual accuracy (how well people's judgments correspond to a target's general behavioral tendencies) and dyadic accuracy (how well people can predict others' behavior specifically toward themselves). Kwan et al. (2004) extended this methodological evolution to examine a specific theoretical question: How can self-enhancement bias be reconceptualized using an interpersonal approach? Their research integrated elements from both social comparison theory and self-insight theory, demonstrating how the social relations model could decompose self-perception into three distinct components: perceiver effect, target effect, and unique self-perception. This work represents a sophisticated application of the methodological principles established in the earlier works, while addressing theoretical debates about the nature and adaptiveness of self-enhancement. The progression across these works reveals an increasing sophistication in handling interpersonal perception measurements, moving from broad methodological foundations (Cronbach et al./Merrifield) to specific analytical frameworks (Kenny & Albright) to complex theoretical applications (Kwan et al.). Each successive work built upon the methodological insights of its predecessors while addressing increasingly nuanced research questions about human perception and behavior.

## Reconceptualizing Individual Differences in Self-Enhancement Bias: An Interpersonal Approach

This study by Kwan and colleagues addresses a fundamental question in psychology: how should self-enhancement bias be conceptualized and measured? The authors identify two distinct historical approaches to studying self-enhancement - Festinger's social comparison theory (comparing self-perceptions to perceptions of others) and Allport's self-insight theory

(comparing self-perceptions to how one is perceived by others). They propose an innovative interpersonal model that integrates these approaches using Kenny's social relations model (SRM). The research utilized a round-robin design with 128 undergraduate students (98 women) working in small groups. Participants rated themselves and other group members on 32 personality traits after interacting over 3 months. The authors developed three indices of self-enhancement: a social comparison index (self minus perception of others), a self-insight index (self minus perception by others), and a new SRM-based index that removes confounding effects. They also measured self-esteem, relationship harmony, and task performance as adjustment outcomes. The results revealed several key findings. First, the social comparison and self-insight indices were only moderately correlated ( $r = .58$ ), despite sharing the self-perception component. Second, as predicted, the social comparison index was confounded with the target effect ( $r = .31, p < .01$ ), while the self-insight index was confounded with the perceiver effect ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ). Third, the three indices showed distinct patterns of relationships with adjustment measures. The social comparison index had stronger positive correlations with self-esteem ( $r = .45$ ) compared to the SRM index ( $r = .25$ ). The self-insight index uniquely predicted relationship harmony ( $r = .26$ ), while the SRM index showed no relationship ( $r = .09$ ). For task performance, the social comparison index showed no relationship ( $r = -.02$ ), while both the self-insight ( $r = -.28$ ) and SRM indices ( $r = -.42$ ) showed negative correlations. The authors interpret these findings as demonstrating that self-enhancement has complex relationships with adjustment that vary by domain - potentially beneficial for intrapsychic adjustment (self-esteem) but detrimental for task performance and interpersonal adjustment. They argue that their interpersonal approach provides greater conceptual clarity by separating true self-enhancement from confounding effects of how individuals generally perceive others (perceiver effect) and how they are generally

perceived by others (target effect). The study's key limitations include its reliance on a single sample of college students and the need to examine these effects across different contexts and types of relationships. The authors suggest several promising future directions, including extending the model to incorporate temporal comparisons and examining interaction effects between components. Overall, this work makes an important theoretical and methodological contribution by demonstrating how componential analysis can help resolve conflicting findings regarding self-enhancement and adjustment.

## Accuracy in Interpersonal Perception: A Social Relations Analysis

This article by Kenny and Albright (1987) addresses the historically neglected topic of accuracy in interpersonal perception, proposing a new methodological framework called the social relations model. The primary research question examines how to properly measure when and how people are accurate in their perceptions of others, rather than focusing on who is accurate. The authors propose that modern accuracy research should follow three key principles: be nomothetic (focusing on general patterns rather than individual differences), interpersonal (recognizing the two-sided nature of social perception), and componential (breaking down accuracy into meaningful components). The methodology centers on the social relations model, which partitions both judgments and criteria into components including actor effects, partner effects, and relationship effects. The model can analyze different research designs: reciprocal (where everyone serves as both judge and target), classic (separate groups of judges and targets), and nested (unique judges for each target). To demonstrate their approach, the authors analyze data from Anderson (1984) involving fraternity and sorority members ( $n=121$  across 5 groups) who ranked each other on four traits (intelligence, humor, considerateness, and defensiveness) and predicted how others would rank them. The results showed high levels of individual



accuracy (correlations averaging in the high .50s) but lower levels of dyadic accuracy (averaging .17). Specific correlations for individual accuracy ranged from .471 to .758 across traits, while dyadic accuracy ranged from .112 to .225. When comparing self-perceptions to peer perceptions, correlations were highest for humor (.651) and intelligence (.401) and lower for defensive (.278) and considerate (.223) traits. The authors discuss several key implications and limitations. The high individual-level accuracy suggests people generally know "where they stand" in their social groups, but lower dyadic accuracy indicates limited knowledge of how specific others view them. The approach requires multiple partners, continuous variables, and specialized software. They note their framework deliberately moves away from individual differences research, given historically low reliabilities in that domain (often below .25). The authors suggest future accuracy research should use naturally occurring stimuli rather than preselected targets to enhance external validity. While acknowledging computational complexity, they argue this framework provides a more rigorous and interpretable approach to studying interpersonal accuracy compared to previous methods. The paper represents an important methodological advance in accuracy research, providing a structured way to separate different components of accuracy while accounting for the interpersonal nature of social perception. However, the requirements for implementation (multiple partners, continuous variables, specialized software) may limit its broad application in some research contexts.

## Review: The Dependability of Behavioral Measurements: Theory of Generalizability for Scores and Profiles by Lee J. Cronbach, Goldine C. Gleser, Harinder Nanda and Nageswari Rajaratnam

This review examines "The Dependability of Behavioral Measurements" by Cronbach, Gleser, Nanda, and Rajaratnam (1972), a landmark work synthesizing psychometric theory and experimental design. The primary research question addressed is how to assess and estimate the reliability of measurements across different sampling conditions and facets of measurement situations. The methodology involves developing a comprehensive theoretical framework for analyzing multiple facets of measurement, including samples of persons, items, item-groupings (subtests), and testing occasions. The authors present a components of variance model that allows researchers to estimate the contribution of each facet to both true and total score variance. They demonstrate their approach using data from 200 children from the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence Manual. The key findings center around three major areas: First, the authors distinguish between generalizability studies and decision-oriented studies, with generalizability being an attribute of the measurement instrument itself while decision-oriented applications focus on practical uses. Second, they present methods for estimating universe scores under different conditions, showing how reliability varies depending on which situational factors (day, subtests, items) are treated as fixed versus variable. Their analysis reveals that broader universes of generalization (with more variable facets) yield lower generalizability coefficients. Third, they address the challenges of measuring change, noting that both pre- and post-test scores are multivariate in nature and that interventions may alter the psychological content of responses. The authors interpret these findings to suggest several important implications: (1) most existing

instruments have limited generalizability since their reliabilities are rarely reported in ways that allow estimation across different situations, (2) decision-makers need to specify their intended universe of generalization when assessing measurement dependability, and (3) traditional approaches to measuring change have significant limitations that must be carefully considered. They acknowledge that practical challenges remain, particularly in educational settings where random assignment is often not possible. The work's major contribution is providing a sophisticated theoretical framework that combines psychometric theory with experimental design principles, though the authors note this may need to be simplified for incorporation into elementary texts. The reviewer (Merrifield) considers this synthesis as significant as Guilford's earlier integration of psychophysics with test theory. Methodological limitations are not extensively discussed in the review, though the complexity of the notational system is noted. The authors suggest future research should focus on developing more practical solutions for evaluating educational programs in real-world settings where experimental control is limited, noting that such solutions may require considering both statistical and interpersonal factors.

## The Evolution of Social Support Theory: Mechanisms, Effectiveness, and Implementation

### Included Works

- Cohen1985.pdf
- Bolger2007.pdf
- RINI2006.pdf

- Thoits1986.pdf

## Synthesis

These four influential works collectively advance our understanding of social support mechanisms, their effectiveness, and implementation across different contexts. Cohen and Wills (1985) established a foundational theoretical framework by investigating two competing hypotheses: whether social support functions primarily through a main-effect model (overall beneficial effect) or through a stress-buffering model (protective effect during stressful events). Their review demonstrated evidence for both mechanisms, with the buffering effect emerging when support matched specific stressor-induced needs, and main effects occurring through general social integration. Building on this theoretical base, Thoits (1986) proposed reconceptualizing social support as "coping assistance," integrating previously separate models of coping and support. This work addressed the research question of how social support functions as a stress-buffer, arguing that supporters essentially apply the same strategies used in individual coping when helping others. Thoits' framework emphasized the importance of sociocultural and situational similarity between helper and recipient for support effectiveness. More recent experimental work by Bolger and Amarel (2007) examined the counterintuitive hypothesis that visible support might be less effective than invisible support. Through three experiments with female participants facing a stressful task, they found that invisible support reduced emotional reactivity while visible support was either ineffective or detrimental. This research addressed the question of how support visibility influences its effectiveness, suggesting that support works best when it avoids threatening recipients' sense of efficacy. Rini et al. (2006) extended these theoretical insights into a specific relational context, investigating partner support during pregnancy. Their research questioned what factors contribute to "social support

effectiveness" (SSE) and how SSE affects psychological outcomes. Their longitudinal study demonstrated that support effectiveness was influenced by both individual characteristics (attachment, social skills) and relationship qualities, with effective support predicting reduced anxiety during pregnancy. These works show a clear progression from broad theoretical frameworks to increasingly nuanced understanding of specific support mechanisms and contexts. They share a common thread of examining how support characteristics and delivery methods influence its effectiveness, while each contributing unique insights about the complex relationship between social support and psychological well-being.

## Stress, Social Support, and the Buffering Hypothesis

This comprehensive literature review by Cohen and Wills (1985) examines the relationship between social support and well-being, specifically investigating whether this association is better explained by an overall beneficial effect of support (main-effect model) or by support protecting people from negative effects of stressful events (buffering model). The authors systematically reviewed studies published through 1983 that tested for interactions between stress and social support. The methodology involved organizing studies based on whether they measured support structure (existence of relationships) versus function (specific resources provided), and the specificity versus globality of the support measures. The authors established specific methodological criteria for evaluating studies, including adequate sample sizes, psychometrically sound measures, uncorrelated stress and support measures, and appropriate statistical analyses for testing interactions. The results provided evidence supporting both theoretical models under different circumstances. Support for the buffering model was found when studies measured the perceived availability of specific support functions that matched the needs elicited by stressful events, particularly esteem support and informational

support. The buffering effects were typically "pure" - showing differences between high and low support groups only under high stress conditions. Studies using measures of instrumental support and social companionship showed buffering effects only when these resources matched specific stressor demands. Evidence for the main effect model emerged primarily from studies measuring social network integration using global structural measures. These studies consistently showed beneficial effects of support regardless of stress levels. Importantly, the authors found that buffering effects were not artifacts of confounded stress and support measures, as studies with uncorrelated measures still demonstrated buffering. The review also revealed that perceived availability of support was more important than received support, and that support quality mattered more than mere quantity. Statistical analyses in the reviewed studies typically involved multiple regression or ANOVA testing for stress  $\times$  support interactions, with buffering indicated by significant interaction terms. The authors discuss several key implications and limitations. They emphasize that social integration and functional support represent distinct processes affecting well-being - integration provides general benefits while functional support buffers stress. They note the need for more research on physical health outcomes, as most studies focused on psychological symptoms. They also highlight the importance of developing better measures distinguishing different support functions and sources. Future research directions include examining how support perceptions are formed, investigating causal mechanisms through experimental intervention studies, and better understanding individual differences in support needs. The review's comprehensive analysis of methodological issues provides valuable guidance for future research design in this area.

## Effects of Social Support Visibility on Adjustment to Stress:

### Experimental Evidence

This experimental study by Bolger and Amarel (2007) investigated how the visibility of social support affects adjustment to stress. The researchers hypothesized that support attempts would be most effective when accomplished either outside of recipients' awareness or within their awareness but with sufficient subtlety that they do not interpret it as support. The study consisted of three experiments with female undergraduate participants (total  $N=257$ ) who were led to expect a stressful public speaking task while a confederate peer provided either visible or invisible support. The methodology involved a laboratory-based experimental paradigm where participants believed they would give an evaluated speech on a personally important topic. Support visibility was manipulated through carefully scripted interactions with a confederate peer who provided either practical support (advice on public speaking) or emotional support ("you'll do fine") in ways that were either visible to the participant or accomplished indirectly. The key outcome measure was participants' emotional reactivity to the stressor, assessed as changes in psychological distress from baseline to immediately before the anticipated speech. The results demonstrated that invisible support (both practical and emotional) reduced emotional reactivity compared to visible and no support conditions. In Study 1, participants receiving invisible practical support showed significantly less increase in distress (1.05 units) compared to those receiving visible support (3.13 units), representing a large effect size ( $d = 1.09$ ,  $CI = -1.81, -0.37$ ). Study 2 replicated this pattern with emotional support, showing the smallest distress increase in the invisible condition (0.87 units) compared to visible (2.22 units) and no support (1.65 units) conditions. Study 3 investigated underlying mechanisms, finding that reflected appraisals of inefficacy mediated both the costs of visible support and benefits of invisible

support. Statistical analyses showed that approximately 45% of the detrimental effect of visible support was explained by recipients' increased sense of inefficacy. In discussing these findings, the authors argue that support visibility matters because visible support can communicate recipient inefficacy and thereby offset any benefits of the supportive content. The research helps explain why enacted support often shows weak or negative effects in prior studies - the most effective support may occur "under the radar" in ways recipients don't interpret as support. Key limitations included the focus only on female participants and peer support rather than intimate relationships. The authors suggest future research should examine how support visibility interacts with support requests and investigate the relationship between subtle supportive acts and general perceptions of available support. Overall, this research provides compelling experimental evidence that support accomplished invisibly can be more effective than visible support in helping people cope with stressors, with important implications for understanding how social relationships promote well-being.

## Effective social support: Antecedents and consequences of partner support during pregnancy

This study investigated social support effectiveness (SSE) during pregnancy, examining both its antecedents and consequences. The researchers hypothesized that SSE would be predicted by individual and relationship characteristics, and that higher SSE would be associated with lower prenatal anxiety both concurrently and prospectively. The study followed 176 pregnant women across three time points during pregnancy (18-20 weeks, 24-26 weeks, and 30-32 weeks gestation). The methodology involved a comprehensive assessment of SSE through structured interviews measuring multiple dimensions of partner support, including emotional,



informational, and task support. The researchers developed a 21-item interview tool that evaluated the quantity and quality of support, ease of obtaining support, and potential negative effects. Individual-level predictors included measures of adult attachment, network orientation, kin individualism-collectivism, and social skills. Relationship-level variables included relationship quality, intimacy, and equity. Outcome measures included both state anxiety and pregnancy-specific anxiety. Statistical analyses using structural equation modeling revealed that SSE was most strongly predicted by relationship characteristics ( $\beta = .80$ ), while interpersonal orientation had an indirect effect through relationship characteristics ( $\beta = .43$ ). Factor analysis of the SSE measure identified four key components: emotional support effectiveness ( $\alpha = .85$ ), informational support effectiveness ( $\alpha = .62$ ), task support effectiveness ( $\alpha = .75$ ), and negative effects of support ( $\alpha = .80$ ). The final model explained approximately 63% of the variance in SSE. Regarding outcomes, greater SSE predicted lower prenatal anxiety at Time 2 and reduced anxiety from Time 2 to Time 3, even after controlling for relationship quality. The model explained 28% of the variance in Time 2 prenatal anxiety and 80% of the variance in Time 3 prenatal anxiety. Demographic factors including lower income, Latina ethnicity, and first-time pregnancy were associated with greater prenatal anxiety. The authors discuss several important implications of their findings. First, they suggest that the effectiveness of received support, rather than just its presence, may help explain inconsistent findings in previous social support research. Second, the results highlight the importance of relationship context in determining support effectiveness. The study's limitations included reliance on self-report data and a sample skewed toward women in stable relationships. The authors recommend future research using experimental designs and observational methods to further validate their findings. Their work provides a valuable framework for understanding social support processes within close

relationships and their impact on adjustment during major life transitions. This study makes a significant contribution by introducing a new conceptualization of social support effectiveness that accounts for both positive and negative aspects of support interactions. The findings have practical implications for interventions aimed at improving partner support during pregnancy and potentially other life transitions.

## Social Support as Coping Assistance

This theoretical article by Thoits (1986) proposes a novel reconceptualization of social support as "coping assistance," aiming to integrate models of coping and social support within a more general theory of stress-buffering processes. The primary hypothesis is that the same coping strategies used by individuals in response to stress are those that are applied by others as assistance, and that support works through similar mechanisms as coping to reduce psychological distress. The paper develops its theoretical framework by first reviewing existing literature on stress, coping, and social support. The author identifies two major sources of perceived stress - threatening situations and emotional reactions to those situations - and proposes that both can be altered either behaviorally or cognitively. This creates a 2x2 matrix of stress-buffering responses from which specific coping and support techniques are derived. The methodology is theoretical analysis and integration of existing social psychological theories, particularly drawing from Lazarus's stress and coping framework and social comparison theory. The key theoretical proposition is that effective social support involves others suggesting or directly participating in an individual's coping efforts through various behavioral and cognitive techniques targeting either situations or emotions. For example, supporters may help reinterpret threatening situations, provide distracting activities, assist with physiological regulation through substances or relaxation, or help normalize emotional reactions. A crucial theoretical finding is

that empathic understanding, based on sociocultural and situational similarities between helper and recipient, is proposed as a necessary condition for support to be sought, accepted and found effective. The author hypothesizes that supportive efforts targeting problematic situations or feelings will be more efficacious than those targeting threatened self-concept alone. The paper also predicts that the most effective support comes from socially similar others who have faced similar stressors more successfully. In discussing implications and limitations, Thoits acknowledges the complexity of these processes poses challenges for empirical testing, particularly in survey research. She suggests experimental and intervention studies, supplemented by naturalistic observation, as more appropriate methods for testing the proposed theoretical framework. The author concludes that this reconceptualization offers several advantages: it enables more efficient use of both coping and support research findings, identifies additional support techniques not previously recognized, generates new hypotheses about efficacious support strategies, and helps specify probable sources of effective assistance. Future research directions are proposed to further refine understanding of these processes through controlled studies varying stressor types and supporter characteristics. The paper makes an important theoretical contribution by providing an integrative framework that generates testable predictions about when and how social support functions effectively. While largely theoretical rather than empirical, it systematically develops propositions that can guide future research and intervention efforts around social support processes.

# The Complex Nature of Enacted Social Support and its Psychological Effects

## Included Works

- Barrera1986.pdf
- Seidman2006.pdf
- Gleason2008.pdf

## Synthesis

This collection of scholarly works examines the complex and sometimes paradoxical relationship between social support receipt and psychological outcomes. The works build upon each other chronologically to deepen our understanding of the distinction between different types of support and their effects. Barrera (1986) laid important theoretical groundwork by addressing the fundamental research question: Should social support be treated as a unified construct or broken down into distinct concepts? Through a comprehensive literature review, the study argued for abandoning the global concept of social support in favor of more precise distinctions between social embeddedness, perceived support, and enacted support. This conceptual clarification proved crucial for subsequent empirical investigations. Building on Barrera's distinctions, Seidman et al. (2006) investigated a specific puzzle in social support research: Why does enacted (received) support often correlate with increased distress, contrary to theoretical expectations? Their research question focused on whether this counterintuitive association might be spurious. Using computer simulation studies, they tested two alternative explanations: (1) whether distress

leads to support provision rather than vice versa, and (2) whether adverse events simultaneously increase both support and distress. Their findings suggested that these potential sources of spuriousness were insufficient to explain the observed association. Gleason et al. (2008) further advanced this line of inquiry by examining the research question: Can social support simultaneously produce both positive and negative effects? Through a daily diary study of couples approaching a major stressor, they discovered that support receipt was associated with both increased closeness and negative mood, with substantial individual variation in these responses. This work integrated and extended the previous findings by demonstrating how enacted support could indeed have mixed effects, helping to resolve the apparent contradiction between theoretical expectations and empirical observations noted in earlier works. Together, these works represent an evolution in understanding social support, moving from broad conceptual distinctions to specific empirical investigations of the mechanisms and effects of enacted support. They share a common focus on the complexities of support receipt while building upon each other's findings to create a more nuanced understanding of how social support operates and affects psychological outcomes.

## Distinctions Between Social Support Concepts, Measures, and Models

This seminal article by Barrera (1986) examines the conceptual and methodological issues in social support research, with the primary thesis that the global concept of "social support" should be abandoned in favor of more precise concepts that fit specific models of stress-distress relationships. The author conducts a comprehensive review of the literature to evaluate how different social support concepts relate to stress and distress outcomes. The methodology involves a systematic review and analysis of existing research, categorizing social support measures into three distinct concepts: social embeddedness (connections to others), perceived

social support (cognitive appraisal of support), and enacted support (actual supportive behaviors received). The author examines correlational evidence between these different measures, finding they are only mildly related to each other, with correlations typically ranging from .24 to .32 between network size and enacted support, and often no significant relationship between satisfaction with support and other measures. The results reveal several key patterns in how different types of social support relate to stress and distress. Enacted support shows positive relationships with both stress and distress, consistent with a support mobilization model where stress triggers increased help-seeking and support provision. Perceived support consistently shows negative relationships with both stress and distress, fitting a support deterioration model where stress leads to decreased perceptions of available support, which then relates to increased distress. Social embeddedness measures tend to show independent effects on distress regardless of stress levels, supporting an additive model. The quantitative findings include specific correlations between measures, such as .46 between enacted support (ISSB) and perceived support (ISEL) across multiple studies. The author presents several theoretical models supported by the data, including the Effective Support Mobilization model, Stress Prevention model, Support Deterioration model, and Additive model, each linking different support concepts to stress and distress outcomes in distinct ways. In discussing implications, Barrera argues that treating social support as a unitary construct has impeded progress in understanding how different support processes relate to well-being. He notes several limitations, including the predominance of cross-sectional designs in existing research and potential confounds between support and outcome measures. The author recommends future research directions including: examining mechanisms linking stress to support deterioration, investigating reciprocal relationships between support concepts and outcomes, and studying how structural variables

influence support mobilization. The paper concludes that appreciating the diversity in social support concepts, while being precise about which aspects are being studied, is crucial for advancing the field. This review makes a significant contribution by providing a systematic framework for understanding different social support concepts and their unique relationships to stress and mental health outcomes. The detailed analysis of measurement issues and presentation of specific theoretical models helps resolve apparent contradictions in previous findings and provides clear direction for future research.

## Why Is Enacted Social Support Associated With Increased Distress?

### Using Simulation to Test Two Possible Sources of Spuriousness

This article investigates a paradoxical finding in social support research - why enacted social support is sometimes associated with increased psychological distress, even though perceived support availability generally has positive effects. The authors used computer simulation studies to examine two potential explanations for this counterintuitive relationship. The study employed sophisticated statistical simulation methodology to test two theoretical models. The first model (Reverse Causation Model) examined whether distress leads to support provision rather than support causing distress. The second model (Third-Variable Adversity Model) tested whether an adverse event independently increases both support and distress, creating a spurious association between them. For the methodology, the authors generated simulated daily diary data for 1,000 "participants" over 12 days, including binary support receipt measures and distress ratings (0-4 scale). They analyzed the data using multilevel modeling approaches, systematically varying parameter values to test different scenarios. The simulations incorporated both fixed effects (common across participants) and random effects (individual

differences). The results showed that for the Reverse Causation Model, no substantial spurious associations were produced between support and next-day distress, even with extreme parameter values. The Third-Variable Adversity Model could produce a spurious association, but only when the effects of adverse events on both support and distress were unrealistically large (effect size nearly 1.0 SD). For example, in the final simulation showing bias, the parameter values had to be set at 0.4 for same-day effects of adversity on distress, 0.3 for next-day effects, and 0.8 for effects on support probability. The authors discuss several key implications. First, the findings suggest that the documented association between enacted support and increased distress is unlikely to be spurious, as even extreme versions of these alternative explanations could not reliably reproduce the effect. They note that in actual empirical studies, the effects of daily stressors on distress tend to be much smaller (around 0.057) than what was required to generate spurious associations in their simulations. The study demonstrates the utility of simulation methods for critically evaluating competing theoretical explanations, particularly with complex longitudinal designs. The authors acknowledge some limitations, noting that other alternative explanations are possible and could be tested using similar simulation approaches. They conclude by emphasizing the practical implications for relationship researchers and counselors, suggesting the importance of considering dyadic dynamics and support matching when studying or implementing support interventions. This methodologically sophisticated paper makes an important contribution by using novel simulation approaches to evaluate competing explanations for a counter-intuitive finding in the social support literature. The detailed reporting of parameter values and careful consideration of realistic effect sizes strengthens confidence in the conclusions.



## Receiving Support as a Mixed Blessing: Evidence for Dual Effects of Support on Psychological Outcomes

This study investigated an apparent paradox in social support research: why support receipt can simultaneously increase distress while being perceived as beneficial for relationships. The researchers hypothesized two possible models: 1) an individual differences model where support increases either distress or closeness in different individuals, or 2) a differential effects model where support simultaneously increases both distress and closeness within individuals. The methodology involved analyzing daily diary data from 293 couples over 31 days leading up to the bar exam, where one partner was preparing for this major stressor. Participants completed evening diaries reporting their negative mood, relationship closeness, and whether they received/provided emotional support that day. The researchers used multilevel modeling to examine both within-person and between-person effects, while controlling for prior day's closeness, morning mood, daily stressors, and weekend effects. The results supported aspects of both proposed models. For the average effects (fixed effects), receiving support was associated with increased negative mood (partners:  $b=0.075$ ,  $p<.001$ ; examinees:  $b=0.037$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and increased relationship closeness (partners:  $b=0.248$ ,  $p<.001$ ; examinees:  $b=0.411$ ,  $p<.001$ ). However, these effects were moderated by whether individuals also provided support that day - on days with reciprocal support exchanges, the negative mood effects were mitigated. The random effects analysis revealed significant individual variation in responses to support. The correlation between random effects for negative mood and closeness was negative (partners:  $r=-.36$ ,  $p<.05$ ; examinees:  $r=-.31$ ,  $p<.05$ ), indicating that individuals who experienced greater increases in closeness tended to show smaller increases in negative mood, and vice versa. Scatter plots revealed that while most participants showed the average pattern of increased closeness and

negative mood, some showed only benefits (increased closeness, decreased negative mood) or only costs (decreased closeness, increased negative mood). The researchers attempted to explain this heterogeneity by examining self-esteem and relationship satisfaction as moderators, but found limited evidence - only partners' self-esteem moderated the effect of support on negative mood. The discussion highlights several important implications: 1) support processes show substantial between-person heterogeneity that needs to be better understood, 2) the benefits of support may primarily operate through relationship enhancement rather than mood improvement, and 3) support provision generally showed positive effects, suggesting the importance of reciprocity. Key limitations included the educated sample, potential third-variable explanations, and the focus only on emotional support. The authors suggest future research should examine additional moderators related to recipient characteristics, provider characteristics, and relationship dynamics.

## Personality Traits, Social Influences, and Psychological Well-being: Examining Individual and Relational Factors

### Included Works

- [Watson1992.pdf](#)
- [Merlo2007.pdf](#)

### Synthesis

These two studies explore different but complementary aspects of how individual traits and social factors influence psychological functioning, though they approach this broad question

through distinct theoretical and methodological lenses. Watson et al. (1992) investigated the fundamental research question of how social activity relates to both state/trait measures of affect and personality dimensions, particularly focusing on the connection between extraversion and positive affect. Through two studies utilizing different time-sampling approaches (weekly surveys over 13 weeks and daily surveys over 6-7 weeks), they found consistent correlations between socializing and positive affect/extraversion, while finding no reliable associations between social activity and negative affect or other personality dimensions. Merlo and Lakey (2007) examined a more specific research question: whether the established links between attachment insecurity, depression, and maladaptive coping in adolescents primarily reflect trait influences (stable individual differences) or social influences (variations based on specific relationship partners). Their methodology involved having adolescents complete measures three times, each time referring to different attachment figures (maternal, paternal, and peer), allowing them to decompose these constructs into trait and social components through generalizability analyses. While these studies differ in their specific focus and participant populations, they share important conceptual threads in their examination of how individual differences (traits) interact with social/relational factors to influence psychological outcomes. Watson et al.'s finding that social activity correlates with positive affect primarily through trait-like personality dimensions (extraversion) complements Merlo and Lakey's more nuanced exploration of how both trait and social influences shape attachment-related outcomes. Together, these works contribute to our understanding of the complex interplay between stable individual characteristics and social-relational factors in determining psychological well-being, though they differ in their relative emphasis on trait versus social influences. A key methodological contrast lies in their approaches to parsing trait and social influences: Watson et al. examined trait-state relationships

through temporal sampling, while Merlo and Lakey used multiple relationship targets to decompose variance into trait and social components. This difference in approach provides complementary perspectives on how stable individual differences manifest across different temporal and relational contexts.

## Affect, Personality, and Social Activity

This study investigated the relationship between social activity, affect (both positive and negative), and personality traits across two related studies. The primary research questions centered on examining how social activity relates to positive and negative affect, both at state and trait levels, and how these relationships connect to broader personality dimensions. Study 1 utilized a sample of 85 undergraduate students who completed personality measures and weekly mood/social activity questionnaires over 13 weeks. Study 2 expanded on this with 127 students completing daily assessments over 6-7 weeks, along with personality measures. The research design incorporated both within-subject and between-subject analyses to examine how social activity related to affect both momentarily and at trait levels. The methodology included multiple validated measures: the PANAS for affect assessment, multi-item social activity surveys (15 items in Study 1, expanded to 21 in Study 2), and various personality measures including the EPQ, GTS, and NEO-PI. Social activities were categorized into subscales: Social Entertainment, Active Participation, and Social Responsibilities. Key quantitative findings demonstrated that social activity consistently correlated more strongly with Positive Affect than Negative Affect. In Study 1, Overall Social Activity had a mean correlation of .30 with Positive Affect compared to -.18 with Negative Affect ( $t(12) = 3.18, p < .01$ ). Study 2 showed similar results with correlations of .26 and -.05 respectively. At the trait level, only Extraversion/Positive Emotionality showed consistent relationships with social activity ( $r = .35$  and  $.28$  in Studies 1 and 2), while

Neuroticism/Negative Emotionality and other personality dimensions showed no consistent associations. The authors interpreted these results as supporting a temperamental view of Extraversion, suggesting that positive emotionality is an intrinsic component of the trait rather than merely a consequence of increased social activity. This was supported by partial correlations showing that controlling for social activity did not eliminate the relationship between Extraversion and Positive Affect (partial  $r = .43$  in Study 1,  $.39$  in Study 2). The researchers acknowledged limitations, including reliance on self-reported social activity and focus on quantity rather than quality of social interactions. They suggested future research should examine the quality of social interactions and their differential effects on mood states. The findings contribute to understanding the nature of Extraversion and its relationship with positive emotionality, suggesting a bidirectional relationship where social activity both influences and is influenced by positive affect. The research makes a significant contribution by demonstrating the robust connection between social activity and positive affect across different time scales and measurement approaches, while also clarifying how these relationships fit within broader personality frameworks. The detailed analysis of specific types of social activities and different forms of positive affect provides a nuanced understanding of these associations.

## Trait and Social Influences in the Links Among Adolescent Attachment, Depressive Symptoms, and Coping

This study aimed to examine how attachment security, depressive symptoms, and coping strategies in adolescents reflect both stable individual differences (trait influences) and relationship-specific experiences (social influences). The researchers hypothesized that: 1) attachment avoidance would show a larger social influence than trait component, 2) attachment

anxiety would have roughly equal trait and social components, and 3) depression would display equal trait and social components. The methodology involved 150 high school students (ages 14-18) completing questionnaires about their attachment security (using the Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire), depressive symptoms (using the CES-D), and coping strategies (using the Coping Strategy Indicator) in relation to three different attachment figures - mother, father, and closest peer. Using generalizability theory analyses, the researchers separated variance attributable to trait influences from variance due to social influences for each construct, then examined correlations among the constructs at both levels. The results revealed significant trait and social influence components for all variables. For attachment avoidance, the social influence component (70%) was significantly larger than the trait component (12%), supporting the first hypothesis. Counter to the second hypothesis, attachment anxiety showed a stronger social influence component (48%) compared to trait component (23%). The third hypothesis was supported, as depression showed relatively equal trait (26%) and social (46%) components. When examining correlations, attachment anxiety and depression were strongly related at both trait ( $\rho = .74$ ) and social influence ( $\rho = .60$ ) levels. However, attachment avoidance and depression were only significantly correlated at the social influence level ( $\rho = .54$ ). The study also found that coping strategies partially mediated the relationships between attachment and depression, but only for social influence components, not trait components. The authors discuss several important implications of these findings. First, the strong social influence components suggest that attachment security varies considerably across relationships, challenging views of attachment as primarily reflecting stable individual differences. Second, the different correlation patterns for trait versus social components help explain inconsistent findings in previous research regarding links between attachment avoidance and depression. Finally, the mediation findings

suggest that relationship-specific coping patterns may help explain how attachment insecurity leads to depression. Study limitations included the cross-sectional design, use of only self-report measures, and a relatively homogeneous sample from one parochial school. The authors recommend future research use longitudinal designs and more diverse samples. The findings have clinical implications, suggesting therapists should consider relationship-specific factors when treating adolescent depression rather than focusing solely on individual traits.

## The Differential Effects of Positive and Negative Social Interactions on Psychological Well-being

### Included Works

- Finch1998.pdf
- Finch1999.pdf

### Synthesis

These two studies by Finch and colleagues examine the complex relationships between supportive and negative social interactions and psychological outcomes, though they approach this topic from complementary angles. The 1998 study specifically investigated the research question of whether there are domain-specific temporal relationships between social undermining and negative affect on one hand, and support satisfaction and positive affect on the other. Using structural equation modeling with a sample of 330 college students, this study revealed distinct lagged reciprocal relationships over a one-week period, supporting a domain-specific model where social undermining predicted negative affect but not positive affect, while

support satisfaction predicted positive affect but not negative affect. Building on these findings, the 1999 study addressed the broader research question of the relative influence of conflictual versus supportive social interactions on psychological distress, specifically depression. This more comprehensive investigation, utilizing a larger sample of 906 college students, incorporated additional variables including personality dimensions and coping strategies. The study tested and validated a second-order factor model of negative social exchange and examined how measurement approaches influence the apparent impact of social support versus social negativity. A key hypothesis explored whether negative social interactions would have stronger effects on psychological distress than positive support, as suggested by previous literature. The works are theoretically linked through their examination of the dual nature of social relationships - both supportive and undermining - but differ in their scope and complexity. While the 1998 study focused on specific affect outcomes within a relatively simple model, the 1999 study expanded the theoretical framework to include personality factors and coping mechanisms, providing a more nuanced understanding of how social interactions influence psychological well-being. Together, these studies contribute to our understanding of the distinct pathways through which positive and negative social interactions influence psychological outcomes, while highlighting the importance of measurement approaches in determining their relative impact.

## Social Undermining, Support Satisfaction, and Affect: A Domain-Specific Lagged Effects Model

This study investigated the relationships between social undermining, support satisfaction, and affect using a longitudinal design. The primary research question examined whether there are domain-specific links between positive social interactions (support



satisfaction) and positive affect (PA), as well as between negative social interactions (undermining) and negative affect (NA). The study also explored whether these relationships were reciprocal over time. The methodology involved 330 undergraduate students who completed assessments at four time points separated by 1-week intervals. Participants completed measures including the Test of Negative Social Exchange (TENSE) for social undermining, the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) short form for support satisfaction, the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS), and personality measures of neuroticism and extraversion from the Big Five Inventory. The researchers employed latent variable structural equation modeling to analyze the longitudinal relationships between these constructs. The results strongly supported the domain-specificity hypothesis. Cross-lagged analyses revealed significant reciprocal relationships between social undermining and NA ( $\beta = .05, p < .01$ ) and between support satisfaction and PA ( $\beta = .06, p < .01$ ). These effects remained significant even after controlling for substantial autoregressive effects ranging from  $\beta = .75$  to  $\beta = .91$  ( $p < .001$ ). Importantly, cross-domain associations were not significant - social undermining was unrelated to PA, and support satisfaction was uncorrelated with NA. The personality traits showed domain-specific effects as well, with extraversion relating to PA ( $\beta = .54, p < .001$ ) and neuroticism strongly predicting NA ( $\beta = .91, p < .001$ ). The model demonstrated good fit with CFI = .93, NNFI = .93, and IFI = .93. In discussing the findings, the authors proposed both temperamental and instrumental explanations for the observed relationships. The reciprocal effects suggest that social support/conflict and mood may reinforce each other over time - positive social interactions promote positive mood which facilitates more satisfying social interactions, while negative interactions increase NA which may lead to more conflictual relationships. The authors acknowledged limitations including the use of different types of measures for support versus

conflict (perceptual vs. behavioral). They suggested future research should employ parallel measures and explore other personality dimensions beyond extraversion and neuroticism. The study makes an important contribution by empirically demonstrating reciprocal relationships between social interactions and mood, while supporting the domain-specificity of these effects. The findings have implications for understanding how personality traits may influence mood both directly and indirectly through social relationship patterns.

## A Comparison of the Influence of Conflictual and Supportive Social Interactions on Psychological Distress

This paper presents two complementary studies examining the relative influence of positive and negative social interactions on psychological distress. Study 1 was a meta-analysis investigating how different types of social support and social negativity measures relate to emotional functioning. The research questions focused on: 1) How different types of social support measures moderate the support-emotional functioning relationship, 2) How different types of social negativity measures moderate the negativity-emotional functioning relationship, and 3) The relative impact of social support versus social negativity measures. For Study 1's methodology, the researchers analyzed 48 studies containing 108 effect sizes (56 for social negativity-emotional functioning and 52 for social support-emotional functioning). They coded social support measures into 5 categories (counts of providers, frequency ratings of enacted support, satisfaction ratings of enacted support, perceived availability, and satisfaction with perceived availability) and social negativity measures into 2 categories (counts and frequency ratings). Effect sizes were calculated using Pearson's  $r$  and weighted by sample size. The meta-analysis results showed that perceived support measures had significantly stronger relationships

with emotional functioning (weighted mean  $r = -.29$  to  $-.35$ ) compared to enacted support ( $r = -.11$  to  $-.17$ ) or count measures ( $r = -.11$ ). For social negativity, frequency ratings showed slightly stronger but non-significant differences compared to count measures ( $r = .27$  vs  $.22$ ).

Importantly, when comparing the relative effects, perceived support measures showed comparable relationships to psychological distress as social negativity measures, contradicting previous assumptions about negativity's stronger influence. Study 2 extended these findings by developing and testing a measurement model of negative social exchange and examining the unique effects of social negativity and support satisfaction on depression while controlling for personality and coping. The study included 906 college students who completed measures of personality (Big Five), coping style, social support satisfaction, negative social exchange, and depression. Using confirmatory factor analysis, Study 2 established a hierarchical three-factor structure of negative social exchange comprising Anger, Insensitivity, and Interference/Hindrance dimensions loading onto a second-order factor. Structural equation modeling revealed that both negative social exchange ( $\beta = .09$ ) and support satisfaction ( $\beta = -.12$ ) uniquely predicted depression beyond personality and coping effects. The Big Five traits showed both direct effects (e.g., neuroticism  $\beta = .47$ ) and indirect effects through social negativity and support. The authors discuss several key implications: 1) The conclusion that negative interactions outweigh positive support effects appears overgeneralized and depends on measurement approach, 2) Negative social exchange shows a hierarchical structure with distinct but related dimensions, and 3) Personality traits influence psychological distress both directly and indirectly through social interaction patterns. Study limitations include the cross-sectional design limiting causal inference and the specific nature of the coping measure. The authors suggest future research should examine moderators of support/negativity effects and further

explore personality-social interaction links. This comprehensive investigation makes important theoretical and methodological contributions to understanding how social relationships impact psychological well-being, while highlighting the critical role of measurement approaches in drawing conclusions about the relative influence of positive and negative social exchanges.

## Meta-Analytic Investigations of Risk Factors in Clinical Psychopathology

### Included Works

- Stice2002.pdf
- Brewin2000.pdf

### Synthesis

These two influential meta-analytic studies from the early 2000s examine risk factors for different forms of psychopathology, with both works seeking to systematically evaluate and synthesize empirical evidence regarding predictive factors for their respective clinical conditions. The primary research questions driving these analyses centered on identifying which proposed risk factors had strong empirical support versus those with limited or contradictory evidence. Stice (2002) focused on eating pathology, addressing the research question of which theorized risk and maintenance factors for eating disorders had received consistent empirical support through prospective and experimental studies. The analysis revealed that some widely accepted risk factors (e.g., sexual abuse) lacked strong empirical backing, while other less-recognized factors (e.g., thin-ideal internalization) demonstrated more robust support. Similarly, Brewin et

al. (2000) investigated risk factors for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in trauma-exposed adults, examining how different types of risk factors varied in their predictive power and consistency across populations. Both meta-analyses share methodological similarities in their systematic evaluation of multiple risk factors and their attention to moderating variables. However, they differ notably in their findings regarding the relative importance of pre-existing versus post-event factors. Brewin et al. found that factors operating during or after trauma (e.g., lack of social support) had stronger effects than pre-trauma variables, while Stice's analysis identified limitations in the predictive power of both types of factors for eating pathology. The studies also converge in highlighting the importance of comprehensive multivariate models, as both found that individual risk factors alone had modest predictive power. This limitation points to the complexity of psychological disorders and the need for more sophisticated etiological frameworks. These works collectively demonstrate the value of meta-analytic approaches in challenging assumptions about risk factors while also revealing the limitations of univariate predictors in understanding complex psychological conditions. Their findings have important implications for both theoretical models of psychopathology and clinical intervention strategies.

## Risk and Maintenance Factors for Eating Pathology: A Meta-Analytic Review

This meta-analytic review by Stice (2002) aimed to systematically evaluate risk and maintenance factors for eating pathology by analyzing prospective and experimental studies. The primary research questions were: 1) Which accepted risk factors for eating disorders have empirical support? 2) What are the effects of variables that potentiate or mitigate risk factors? 3) What factors predict maintenance of eating pathology? The methodology involved a

comprehensive literature search of studies from 1980-2001 using multiple databases (PsycINFO, MedLine) and manual searches of relevant journals. Studies were included if they used prospective or experimental designs and tested whether putative risk/maintenance factors predicted subsequent onset, remission, or changes in eating disorder symptoms. The review focused primarily on bulimic symptoms and binge eating, as no studies examined anorexic symptoms alone. Effect sizes were calculated using correlation coefficients ( $r$ ), with Cohen's criteria used to categorize effects as small ( $r=.10$ ), medium ( $r=.30$ ) or large ( $r=.50$ ). The results revealed several key findings: Body mass emerged as a risk factor for perceived pressure to be thin ( $r=.33$ ), body dissatisfaction ( $r=.16$ ), and dieting ( $r=.11$ ) but not for eating pathology directly ( $r=.04$ ). Perceived pressure to be thin and thin-ideal internalization were identified as causal risk factors for body dissatisfaction, dieting, negative affect, and eating pathology based on experimental evidence. Body dissatisfaction showed consistent effects as a risk factor for dieting ( $r=.26$ ), negative affect ( $r=.14$ ), and eating pathology ( $r=.13$ ). Contrary to previous assumptions, dieting showed conflicting results - while self-reported dieting predicted increased eating pathology, experimental caloric deprivation led to decreased binge eating, suggesting dieting may actually attenuate overeating. Negative affect emerged as both a risk factor ( $r=.09$ ) and maintenance factor for eating pathology. Perfectionism showed small but significant effects as both a risk ( $r=.06$ ) and maintenance factor ( $r=.22$ ). In discussing the findings, the author noted several important limitations: 1) The generally small effect sizes suggest no single factor accounts for large variance in eating pathology; 2) Methodological issues like unreliable measures and inappropriate developmental timing of studies may have attenuated effects; 3) Focus on overall eating disorder symptoms rather than specific disorders may have obscured disorder-specific risk factors. The author recommended future research focus on: developing

more comprehensive multivariate models, identifying additional risk factors including biological processes, examining disorder-specific pathways, and using more rigorous methodology including experimental designs. The findings have important implications for prevention and treatment, suggesting interventions should target empirically-supported malleable risk factors like thin-ideal internalization and body dissatisfaction rather than factors lacking support like sexual abuse or stress.

## Meta-Analysis of Risk Factors for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Trauma-Exposed Adults

This meta-analysis by Brewin, Andrews, and Valentine (2000) examined risk factors for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in trauma-exposed adults. The primary research question was to determine which risk factors predict PTSD development and to what extent these effects are moderated by sample and study characteristics. The study analyzed 14 separate risk factors across 77 articles, involving combined sample sizes ranging from 1,149 to over 11,000 participants. The methodology involved conducting separate meta-analyses for each risk factor, converting all statistics to correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) as a common measure of effect size. These were combined using Fisher's  $z$  transformation and weighted by degrees of freedom. The researchers examined six key moderator variables: military vs. civilian trauma, gender, retrospective vs. prospective design, diagnostic vs. continuous measures, interview vs. questionnaire assessment, and whether trauma occurred in childhood or adulthood only. The results revealed three categories of risk factors. The first category included demographic variables like gender, age at trauma, and race, which predicted PTSD in some populations but not others. For example, female gender was a significant risk factor in civilian samples ( $r = 0.13$ )

but not in military samples ( $r = 0.00$ ). The second category comprised factors like education, previous trauma, and childhood adversity, which predicted PTSD more consistently but with varying effect sizes across populations. The third category included psychiatric history, childhood abuse, and family psychiatric history, which showed more uniform predictive effects across studies. The strongest risk factors were those occurring during or after the trauma: trauma severity ( $r = 0.23$ ), lack of social support ( $r = 0.40$ ), and life stress ( $r = 0.32$ ). Most risk factors showed significant heterogeneity across studies, except for psychiatric history, childhood abuse, and family psychiatric history, which had homogeneous effects. The authors discussed several important implications and limitations. They noted that the modest effect sizes of pre-trauma factors suggest vulnerability to PTSD may be better understood by examining more proximal factors or interactions between pre-trauma factors and trauma response. The substantial variation in effect sizes across different populations (particularly military vs. civilian) warns against attempting to build a general vulnerability model for all cases of PTSD. Important methodological limitations included the predominance of retrospective designs, potential confounding between moderator variables, and varying measurement approaches across studies. The authors suggested future research should focus on investigating more immediate links in the causal chain, such as the association between pre-trauma risk factors and immediate trauma responses. The study's comprehensive analysis of multiple risk factors and moderators provides valuable insights into PTSD vulnerability while highlighting the complexity and heterogeneity of risk across different populations and contexts.



# Attachment, Social Support, and Relationship Regulation: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives on Intimate Relationships

## Included Works

- Lakey2011.pdf
- Collins2000.pdf
- Campbell2005.pdf

## Synthesis

These three works form an interconnected exploration of how attachment patterns, social support processes, and relationship dynamics influence psychological wellbeing and relationship outcomes. The papers progressively build upon each other to examine different aspects of support and regulation in intimate relationships. Collins and Feeney (2000) established a foundational empirical investigation into the specific mechanisms of support-seeking and caregiving behaviors through an attachment theory lens. Their key research questions examined: (1) how support-seekers' stress levels influence their support-seeking behaviors, (2) how these behaviors affect partner caregiving responses, and (3) how attachment styles moderate these processes. Using observational methods with 93 dating couples, they found that higher stress led to more direct support-seeking, which elicited more helpful caregiving responses, while attachment avoidance and anxiety predicted less effective support dynamics. Building on this

work, Campbell et al. (2005) specifically focused on how attachment anxiety shapes perceptions of relationship conflict and support. Their research questions investigated: (1) how attachment anxiety influences daily perceptions of relationship conflict and support, and (2) how these perceptions affect relationship satisfaction and anticipated relationship longevity. Through a two-part study combining diary methods and laboratory observation, they demonstrated that anxiously attached individuals perceived more conflict, reported greater conflict escalation, and showed more distress during conflicts, with these perceptions significantly impacting their relationship satisfaction. Lakey and Orehek (2011) proposed Relational Regulation Theory (RRT) as a new theoretical framework to explain the consistent link between perceived social support and mental health. Their work addressed the research question of why perceived support shows main effects on mental health beyond stress-buffering effects. RRT suggests that people regulate their affect, thoughts, and actions through ordinary social interactions rather than explicit stress-coping conversations. This theoretical paper provides a complementary perspective to the empirical works of Collins and Feeney (2000) and Campbell et al. (2005) by offering a broader framework for understanding how relationships serve regulatory functions. Together, these works demonstrate the complex interplay between attachment patterns, support processes, and relationship regulation. While Collins and Feeney (2000) and Campbell et al. (2005) provide empirical evidence for how attachment shapes support dynamics and relationship perceptions, Lakey and Orehek (2011) offer a theoretical framework that helps explain why these everyday interactions are crucial for psychological wellbeing. The progression from specific behavioral observations to broader theoretical integration reflects the evolution of understanding in this field.

## Relational Regulation Theory: A New Approach to Explain the Link Between Perceived Social Support and Mental Health

This article presents Relational Regulation Theory (RRT) as a new theoretical framework to explain the well-established link between perceived social support and mental health. The authors propose that main effects between perceived support and mental health occur primarily through ordinary yet affectively consequential social interactions, rather than through conversations specifically about coping with stress. The primary research question addressed is: How does perceived social support influence mental health outcomes through relational regulation processes? Methodologically, the theory was developed inductively over a 30-year research program, synthesizing findings from multiple studies using various research designs. A key methodological innovation is the use of Kenny's Social Relations Model and Generalizability Theory to cleanly separate relational influences from both recipient personality traits and provider characteristics. This allows researchers to isolate truly relational effects from other confounding variables. The results provide strong evidence for relational influences on perceived support and mental health. Meta-analytic findings from five studies including over 5,000 dyads showed that relational influences accounted for 62% of systematic variance in perceived support, while recipient trait influences accounted for 27% and provider influences only 7%. Multiple studies demonstrated that perceived support and affect were strongly linked when examining relational influences specifically. For example, studies by Neely et al. (2006) and Veenstra et al. (in press) found significant correlations between provider supportiveness and recipient positive affect for relational components. The authors discuss eight key theoretical principles of RRT: 1) Recipients regulate affect primarily through social interaction; 2) Social interaction regulates affect relationally; 3) Regulation occurs through ordinary conversations

rather than stress-coping discussions; 4) Regulation happens through conversations that elaborate on cognitive representations; 5) Perceived support is based on relational regulation of affect; 6) Regulation is dynamic as people shift between conversation partners; 7) Support interventions should harness relational processes; and 8) Having diverse potential relationships available enhances regulation. Important limitations and future directions are discussed. The authors acknowledge that recipient, provider and relational influences may be naturally confounded, though they argue the utility of separating these components analytically. They also note the need for more research on how relational regulation is rooted in social interaction. The theory generates novel predictions about social support interventions, suggesting they may be more effective if designed to leverage relational influences rather than assuming providers are objectively supportive. The paper makes a significant theoretical contribution by providing a new framework for understanding main effects between perceived support and mental health, while maintaining methodological rigor through careful operational definitions and empirical support from multiple studies. The theory has important implications for both research and clinical practice in social support interventions.

## A Safe Haven: An Attachment Theory Perspective on Support Seeking and Caregiving in Intimate Relationships

This study, led by Collins and Feeney, investigated support-seeking and caregiving processes in intimate relationships using an attachment theory framework. The primary research question examined how support-seeking and caregiving behaviors are coordinated in dyadic interactions, and how these behaviors relate to relationship functioning and individual attachment styles. The methodology involved 93 dating couples participating in a laboratory study where

one partner (the support seeker) discussed a personal problem with their partner (the caregiver) while being videotaped. Prior to the interaction, participants completed measures of attachment style using the Adult Attachment Scale and Bartholomew's attachment prototypes. Support seekers rated their problem's stressfulness and completed mood assessments before and after the interaction. The interactions were coded by trained observers for specific support-seeking behaviors (emotional disclosure, instrumental disclosure, indirect strategies) and caregiving behaviors (emotional support, instrumental support, responsiveness, negative support). The quantitative results revealed several key findings. Path analysis demonstrated excellent model fit ( $CFI = 1.0$ ,  $\chi^2(6) = 3.73$ ,  $p = .71$ ) for the hypothesized sequence: greater perceived stress predicted more direct support-seeking ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $p < .05$ ), which led to more effective caregiving ( $\beta = .46$ ,  $p < .001$ ), resulting in greater perceived support ( $\beta = .43$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and improved mood ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Attachment style differences emerged, with avoidant individuals using more indirect support-seeking strategies ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and anxiously attached individuals providing less effective caregiving (showing less responsiveness and more negative support behaviors). Relationship quality was strongly associated with effective caregiving at the couple level ( $r = .58$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The authors discussed several important implications. First, the results demonstrated that support interactions are highly coordinated between partners, with support-seeking and caregiving behaviors meshing in complementary ways. Second, the findings highlighted how attachment styles shape these processes, with avoidance hampering effective support-seeking and anxiety interfering with responsive caregiving. Finally, the study showed that couples in better functioning relationships engaged in more supportive interactions, suggesting that caregiving processes play a key role in relationship satisfaction. The authors acknowledged limitations including the laboratory setting potentially constraining natural

behavior, the relatively homogeneous sample of college dating couples limiting generalizability, and the cross-sectional design preventing causal conclusions. They suggested future research should examine these processes in more diverse samples and relationship contexts, distinguish between different forms of avoidant attachment, and investigate additional individual difference variables that may influence support dynamics. Despite these limitations, the study makes an important contribution by integrating attachment theory with social support research and demonstrating how support processes unfold at both normative and individual difference levels.

## Perceptions of Conflict and Support in Romantic Relationships: The Role of Attachment Anxiety

This study examined how attachment anxiety influences perceptions of conflict and support in romantic relationships and their impact on relationship satisfaction and stability. The research was guided by attachment theory and consisted of two parts: a 14-day diary study followed by a laboratory conflict discussion. The primary research questions centered on whether more anxiously attached individuals would: 1) perceive greater daily relationship conflict, 2) be more reactive to conflict when evaluating relationship quality, and 3) feel more distressed during actual conflict discussions. The researchers hypothesized that anxiously attached individuals would perceive more conflicts, report greater conflict escalation, and show stronger negative reactions to conflict in terms of relationship evaluations. The methodology involved 103 dating couples who completed background questionnaires assessing attachment style, relationship quality, self-esteem, and neuroticism. In Part 1, participants completed daily diaries for 14 days reporting on relationship conflicts, support, satisfaction/closeness, and views of relationship future. In Part 2, 98 couples returned to discuss their most serious unresolved

conflict while being videotaped, with trained observers later rating their behaviors. Key results showed that more anxiously attached individuals perceived greater daily relationship conflict ( $b = .11, p < .05$ ) and reported more conflict escalation ( $b = .18, p < .01$ ). On high-conflict days, anxious individuals reported lower relationship satisfaction/closeness and more pessimistic views about their relationship's future. Statistical interactions revealed that anxious individuals felt more distressed following conflicts regardless of their partner's positive behaviors (rated by observers), while less anxious individuals were comforted by partner positivity. The behavioral observation data confirmed that anxious individuals appeared more distressed during conflict discussions (actor effect  $b = .19, p < .01$ ) and their partners also showed greater distress (partner effect  $b = .18, p < .01$ ). The authors interpreted these findings as evidence that anxious individuals' working models bias their perceptions of daily relationship events in problematic ways. By basing relationship evaluations heavily on amplified perceptions of conflict, anxious individuals may inadvertently destabilize their relationships over time. The study's key limitations included its correlational nature, which prevented causal conclusions, and the relatively short 2-week timeframe that couldn't capture long-term relationship trajectories. The authors suggest future research examine how anxious individuals' heightened reactivity to daily conflicts might accumulate to affect relationship stability over extended periods. The findings expand our understanding of attachment anxiety by demonstrating how it shapes both perceptions of and reactions to daily relationship events, particularly conflicts. The study makes a unique contribution by combining daily diary methodology with behavioral observation to show convergence between self-reported and observer-rated responses to conflict. The results remained significant even when controlling for self-esteem and neuroticism, suggesting the

effects are specific to attachment-related concerns rather than general negative affectivity or low self-worth.

## Psychological Mechanisms of Adaptive Response: Examining Coping, Romantic Selection, and Cognitive Control

### Included Works

- Eastwick2007.pdf
- Penley2002.pdf
- Andreotti2013.pdf

### Synthesis

These three studies, while examining different domains of human behavior, collectively investigate psychological mechanisms that humans employ to adaptively respond to various life circumstances and social situations. Each study approaches this broader theme through distinct research questions and methodological frameworks. Eastwick et al. (2007) investigated the nuanced nature of romantic reciprocity through the research question: "How does selectivity in romantic interest affect one's own desirability?" Using a speed-dating paradigm, they hypothesized that universal reciprocity would not hold in romantic contexts. Their findings confirmed that while unique romantic desire toward specific individuals was positively reciprocated, expressing indiscriminating romantic interest actually decreased one's desirability,



mediated by perceived unselectivity. Penley et al. (2002) addressed the broader question: "What are the relationships between different coping strategies and health outcomes?" Through a comprehensive meta-analysis, they examined how various coping mechanisms correlate with physical and psychological health outcomes in nonclinical adult populations. Their findings revealed that problem-focused coping showed positive correlations with health outcomes, while several other strategies (including avoidance and wishful thinking) demonstrated negative correlations, with these relationships moderated by stressor characteristics and outcome type. Andreotti et al. (2013) explored the research question: "How do cognitive reappraisal and secondary control coping relate to working memory and psychological well-being?" Their study examined the interconnections between cognitive coping mechanisms, working memory abilities, affect, and symptoms of anxiety/depression. They found that while cognitive reappraisal and secondary control coping are related constructs, they differ in their relationships with positive affect versus negative affect and psychological symptoms. These works intersect in their examination of adaptive psychological responses, though through different lenses. While Eastwick et al. focus on social adaptation in romantic contexts, both Penley et al. and Andreotti et al. examine coping mechanisms, with Penley et al. taking a broad meta-analytic approach and Andreotti et al. focusing specifically on cognitive aspects of coping. Together, these studies highlight how various psychological mechanisms - whether in romantic selection, stress management, or cognitive control - contribute to adaptive functioning across different life domains.

## Selective Versus Unselective Romantic Desire: Not All Reciprocity Is Created Equal

This study investigated the dynamics of romantic reciprocity in initial encounters, specifically examining whether reciprocal romantic desire functions differently from reciprocal platonic liking. The researchers hypothesized that while dyadic reciprocity (unique liking between two individuals) would be positive, generalized reciprocity (tendency for people who generally like others to be liked in return) would be negative in romantic contexts, contrary to findings in non-romantic settings. The methodology employed a speed-dating paradigm with 156 undergraduate students (75 female, mean age = 19.6 years) who participated in seven speed-dating sessions. Participants engaged in 4-minute speed-dates with 9-13 opposite-sex individuals, completing a 2-minute Interaction Record after each date. The dependent variables included a three-item measure of romantic desire ( $\alpha = .88$ ), a three-item measure of felt chemistry ( $\alpha = .91$ ), and a single item assessing perceived unselectivity. Participants also made yes/no decisions about their interest in future contact with each speed-dating partner. The results revealed a complex pattern of reciprocity effects. Dyadic reciprocity showed a positive correlation ( $r = .14$ ,  $p = .001$ , Prep = .985), indicating that unique romantic desire toward a specific partner tended to be reciprocated. Additionally, unique romantic desire positively predicted partners' experiences of chemistry ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .001$ , Prep > .985). However, generalized reciprocity demonstrated a significant negative correlation ( $r = -.41$ ,  $p = .006$ , Prep = .950), meaning that participants who generally desired others tended to be less desired themselves. This negative effect persisted even after controlling for physical attractiveness. The negative generalized reciprocity was partially mediated by perceived unselectivity (Sobel  $z = 1.85$ ,  $p = .065$ , Prep = .858), suggesting that participants who expressed more general desire were perceived as less selective and

consequently less desirable. The authors discuss several important implications of these findings. First, they highlight that romantic desire operates differently depending on whether it is expressed selectively toward specific individuals or generally toward many potential partners. The negative generalized reciprocity effect contrasts sharply with previous findings in non-romantic contexts and suggests that humans possess a sophisticated ability to detect and respond to subtle cues of romantic attraction, even in brief encounters. The authors acknowledge limitations, including the inability to directly compare romantic and non-romantic liking within the study, and suggest that the mediational results represent just one of several possible mechanisms underlying the negative effect of generalized liking. They conclude by suggesting that the need to feel special may be a fundamental motivation in social relationships, extending beyond established relationships to the very first moments of romantic encounters.

## The Association of Coping To Physical and Psychological Health

### Outcomes: A Meta-Analytic Review

This meta-analysis examined the associations between different coping strategies and health outcomes in nonclinical adult populations. The primary research question was whether specific coping strategies from the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WOC-R) and Ways of Coping Checklist (WCCL) were differentially associated with physical and psychological health outcomes, and whether these associations were moderated by situational characteristics. The methodology involved comprehensive literature searches across multiple databases (ABI, ERIC, CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsycINFO) for studies using the WOC-R or WCCL measures. Studies had to include nonclinical adult samples and report physical or psychological health outcomes. From an initial pool of 107 studies, 34 met all inclusion criteria. Two authors independently

coded study characteristics including type of health outcome (physical vs. psychological), stressor type (health-related, job-related, relationship-related, or self-selected), stressor controllability, and stressor duration. Effect sizes were calculated using Pearson's correlation coefficients. The results revealed significant associations between coping strategies and health outcomes, with effect sizes ranging from small to moderate. Problem-focused coping showed small positive associations with health ( $r = .08$ ), while most emotion-focused strategies demonstrated negative associations, ranging from  $r = -.05$  for positive reappraisal to  $r = -.42$  for wishful thinking. The analyses revealed important moderating effects - type of health outcome moderated many associations, with strategies like self-control showing differential relationships with physical versus psychological outcomes. Stressor characteristics also emerged as significant moderators. For example, seeking social support was positively associated with health for job-related stressors ( $r = .21$ ) but negatively associated for relationship-related stressors ( $r = -.14$ ). In discussing their findings, the authors note several key implications and limitations. The results suggest that the adaptiveness of coping strategies depends heavily on contextual factors rather than being universally beneficial or harmful. Major limitations included the predominance of cross-sectional studies, potential reporting biases in self-report measures, and the inability to establish causality. The authors recommend future longitudinal research examining specific health outcomes and potential bidirectional relationships between coping and health. They also note the need for additional research on physical health outcomes, as most existing studies focused on psychological outcomes. The meta-analysis makes an important contribution by synthesizing a complex literature and highlighting the context-dependent nature of coping-health relationships, while also identifying important gaps for future research.

## Cognitive reappraisal and secondary control coping: associations with working memory, positive and negative affect, and symptoms of anxiety/depression

This study investigated the relationships between working memory, secondary control coping, and cognitive reappraisal in young adults, as well as how these factors relate to positive/negative affect and symptoms of anxiety/depression. The researchers hypothesized that individuals with greater working memory abilities would be better able to use cognitive reframing strategies (measured via secondary control coping and cognitive reappraisal) to regulate emotions and have lower levels of affective symptoms. They also hypothesized that secondary control coping and cognitive reappraisal measures would be related but potentially differ in their associations with positive/negative affect. The methodology involved 124 undergraduate students (77.4% female, mean age 19.25 years) completing several assessments: working memory was measured using WAIS-IV subtests and the BRIEF self-report; cognitive reappraisal was assessed via the ERQ; secondary control coping was measured using the RSQ; and outcome measures included the PANAS for affect and ASR for anxiety/depression symptoms. The researchers used correlational analyses and hierarchical linear regression to examine relationships between variables. Key results showed significant correlations between working memory and secondary control coping ( $r = .20$  to  $.40$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and between secondary control coping and cognitive reappraisal ( $r = .33$ ,  $p < .001$ ), though these constructs shared only 10% common variance. Working memory composite scores significantly predicted all outcome measures in regression analyses. Secondary control coping accounted for substantially more variance than cognitive reappraisal in predicting negative affect ( $sr^2$  approximately 1.5x larger),

depression symptoms ( $sr^2$  3x larger), and anxiety symptoms ( $sr^2$  14x larger). Conversely, cognitive reappraisal was about 4 times stronger in predicting positive affect compared to secondary control coping. In discussing these findings, the authors note that while secondary control coping and cognitive reappraisal are related constructs, they appear to serve different functions - cognitive reappraisal may be more central to regulating positive emotions while secondary control coping may be more important for managing negative affect and mood symptoms. Key limitations included the cross-sectional design, homogeneous college student sample, and reliance primarily on self-report measures. The authors suggest future research should examine these relationships in clinical populations where working memory impairments may have stronger effects. Overall, this study provides important initial evidence for how working memory abilities may influence emotion regulation strategies and how different regulation approaches may distinctly impact positive versus negative emotional experiences.

## Examining the Nature and Components of Perceived Social Support: Trait Influences, Social Processes, and Mental Health Outcomes

### Included Works

- Haber2007.pdf
- Neely2006.pdf
- Lakey2005.pdf

## Synthesis

These three interconnected studies examine the complex nature of perceived social support and its relationship to psychological outcomes, progressively building understanding of how different components contribute to support perceptions and their effects. Haber et al. (2007) addressed the fundamental research question of how strongly received support correlates with perceived support, conducting a meta-analysis of 23 studies using the Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors. Their findings revealed a moderate correlation ( $r = .35$ ) between received and perceived support, suggesting these constructs, while related, are distinct phenomena requiring separate theoretical treatment. Building on this distinction, Lakey and Scoboria (2005) investigated a more specific research question: To what extent do trait-based versus social influence components contribute to the relationship between perceived support and mental health outcomes? Using multivariate generalizability analyses across three samples, they found both trait and social influence components of perceived support were similarly correlated with positive affect and self-esteem, suggesting both mechanisms play important roles in how social support relates to mental health. Neely et al. (2006) further decomposed these relationships by examining the research question: How do trait perceived support and different types of social processes (objective provider supportiveness, stable relationship characteristics, and occasion-specific interactions) influence the link between perceived support and affect? Through an experimental design involving 200 structured interactions, they found that perceived support's relationship with positive affect operated through multiple pathways: trait perceived support, stable relationship characteristics, and occasion-specific interactions. Notably, they identified perceived similarity as a consistent predictor of support perceptions. These works form a progressive investigation of social support, moving from establishing the basic received-

perceived support relationship (Haber et al.) to decomposing the trait and social components of support's effects (Lakey & Scoboria) to experimentally examining specific social processes involved (Neely et al.). Together, they demonstrate that perceived social support operates through multiple mechanisms, involving both stable personality traits and dynamic social processes, with implications for both theoretical development and intervention design in social support research.

## The relationship between self-reported received and perceived social support: A meta-analytic review

This meta-analytic study examined the relationship between received and perceived social support, addressing ongoing debates in the field about the strength of this association. The primary research question was: What is the overall correlation between measures of received support and perceived support? The authors specifically analyzed studies using the Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors (ISSB) as the received support measure, comparing it to any measure of perceived support. The methodology involved a comprehensive literature search across multiple databases (PsycInfo, Medline, Social Science Citation Index) for studies published between 1981-2005 that used both the ISSB and a perceived support measure. The final sample included 23 studies yielding 24 effect sizes. The authors coded multiple variables from each study, including: correlation between ISSB and perceived support measure, publication date, journal impact factor, sample size, gender composition, sample type (student vs. non-student), specific perceived support scale used, whether ratings were network-anchored, and use of full vs. partial ISSB versions. Meta-analytic procedures followed Hunter and Schmidt's (1990) approach, with analyses conducted both with and without corrections for measurement reliability. The results revealed an overall correlation between received and perceived support of



$r = .32$  (uncorrected) and  $r = .35$  (corrected for reliability), with 95% confidence intervals of .30 to .34 and .32 to .39 respectively. Effect sizes showed significant heterogeneity both before and after reliability correction. Among potential moderators, only the type of perceived support scale used consistently showed significant effects across both corrected and uncorrected analyses. The Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) produced the strongest correlations (corrected  $r = .45$ ), followed by "other" scales ( $r = .35$ ), with the Social Support Questionnaire satisfaction subscale showing the weakest relationship ( $r = .28$ ). Some moderators like gender composition and network anchoring showed inconsistent effects before versus after reliability correction. In discussing these findings, the authors note that while the correlations are interpretable and important, they explain only 10-15% of the shared variance, suggesting that received and perceived support are distinct constructs influenced by different factors. This supports social-cognitive perspectives arguing that perceived support involves subjective evaluation processes beyond just received supportive behaviors. The authors acknowledge limitations including the restricted focus on ISSB studies, which while ensuring measurement quality, limited sample size and generalizability. They recommend future meta-analyses incorporating additional received support measures and examining other relationships between social support constructs. The findings have implications for social support interventions, suggesting that manipulating received support behaviors alone may have limited impact on perceived support.

## Trait and Social Processes in the Link Between Social Support and Affect: An Experimental, Laboratory Investigation

This study investigated how the relationship between perceived social support and affect reflects both trait-based and social process components. The researchers examined three key

questions: 1) To what extent is perceived support related to positive and negative affect across recipient traits, provider characteristics, and relationship components? 2) How stable are relationship components across multiple interactions? 3) What information do recipients use to judge provider supportiveness? The methodology involved 10 recipients interacting with 4 providers across 5 separate occasions, generating 200 total interactions. Recipients and independent observers rated recipient affect and provider support after each 20-minute conversation. The study employed Cronbach's multivariate generalizability theory to isolate different components of perceived support and affect. Recipients also rated perceived similarity between themselves and providers. Key findings revealed that greater perceived support was associated with greater positive affect through multiple pathways: recipient traits ( $\rho = .78$ ), relationships stable across occasions ( $\rho = .78$ ), and relationships varying across occasions ( $\rho = .25$ ). No significant correlations emerged between perceived support and negative affect. For recipient ratings, relationship components of perceived support showed moderate stability across occasions ( $\omega^2 = .17$ ) while also demonstrating considerable variation ( $\omega^2 = .12$ ). Recipients consistently based support judgments on perceived similarity across recipient traits ( $\rho = .98$ ), stable relationship components ( $\rho = .59$ ), and varying relationship components ( $\rho = .37$ ). Agreement between recipients' and observers' ratings of provider supportiveness was modest and only significant for relationships varying across occasions ( $\rho = .21$ ). The discussion highlighted several important implications. First, the findings suggest social support reflects both trait-like differences among recipients and multiple distinct social processes, rather than being exclusively trait-based or socially-determined. Second, the stability of relationship components across occasions suggests interventions targeting these components may produce durable effects. Third, the strong link between perceived similarity and support judgments, especially for relationship

components, indicates recipients rely heavily on similarity when evaluating provider supportiveness. The authors note important limitations, including the use of stranger dyads rather than established relationships, the small sample size (though generating 200 interactions), and the controlled laboratory setting potentially limiting external validity. They recommend future research focus on developing interventions specifically targeting relationship components that demonstrate both strong links to mental health and stability over time.

## The Relative Contribution of Trait and Social Influences to the Links Among Perceived Social Support, Affect, and Self-Esteem

This study investigated the extent to which the relationship between perceived social support and mental health reflects trait influences versus social influences. The authors hypothesized that these links could operate at both levels - through recipients' personality traits and through social interactions with specific support providers. The research used multivariate generalizability analyses across three independent samples of undergraduate students ( $n=43$ ,  $n=132$ , and  $n=67$ ) to examine these relationships. The methodology involved having participants rate their most important relationships (3-4 providers) on measures of perceived supportiveness, social conflict, self-esteem, and positive/negative affect. The design was a partially nested ANOVA with random factors, where items and providers were within-subjects factors and participants served as the between-subjects factor. Multivariate generalizability analyses were used to calculate correlations between perceived support and mental health at both trait and social influence levels. The results revealed that both trait and social influence components significantly contributed to the relationship between perceived support and mental health outcomes. For perceived support itself, social influences accounted for approximately three times

more variance (62%) than trait influences (18%). The correlations between perceived support and favorable mental health outcomes (positive affect, self-esteem) were strong and similar in magnitude at both trait and social influence levels. For social conflict, the social influence component was significantly stronger than the trait component, accounting for over 4 times more variance. The relationship between conflict and mental health varied by level of analysis - conflict showed stronger correlations with performance and social self-esteem at the trait level compared to the social influence level. The authors discuss several important implications. First, competing social support theories emphasizing either personality or social processes may not be mutually exclusive but rather describe different phenomena at different levels of analysis. This suggests comprehensive models should incorporate both trait and social mechanisms. Second, the findings have implications for intervention design - optimal social support interventions may need to target both trait and social influence components. The authors note some limitations, including the potential mispartitioning of social influences as trait influences since each participant rated different providers. They validated their findings by comparing their trait influence estimates to previous studies using fully crossed designs. The study makes an important methodological contribution by demonstrating how multivariate generalizability analyses can simultaneously examine relationships at both trait and interactional levels. The authors suggest future research should test specific hypotheses about mechanisms linking perceived support and mental health at these different levels of analysis. They also note the need to further distinguish between objective supportiveness of providers versus unique relationship effects within the social influence component.

## Gaps In Research

A significant gap exists in understanding the paradoxical role of conspicuousness in social support effectiveness. While prior research, particularly Bolger and Amarel's (2007) experimental work, has demonstrated that invisible support can be more effective than visible support by avoiding threats to recipients' self-efficacy, several important questions remain unexplored: First, the mechanism linking support visibility to emotional outcomes requires further investigation. While Bolger and colleagues established that visible support can increase recipients' sense of inefficacy, research has not fully examined how different levels of support conspicuousness might differentially affect recipients' mood through other potential mediating pathways such as perceived stigma, relationship dynamics, or self-esteem maintenance. Additionally, the temporal dynamics of support visibility effects remain understudied. The existing research focuses primarily on immediate emotional reactions rather than examining how varying levels of support conspicuousness might influence mood and relationship outcomes over time. This gap is particularly notable given findings from Lakey and Orehek's (2011) Relational Regulation Theory suggesting that support processes operate through ongoing daily interactions rather than just discrete supportive events. A third key gap concerns the potential moderating role of individual differences in responses to support visibility. While Campbell et al.'s (2005) work demonstrated that attachment anxiety shapes perceptions of support and conflict, research has not systematically investigated how personality traits, attachment styles, or other individual difference variables might moderate the relationship between support conspicuousness and emotional outcomes. These gaps collectively suggest that your proposed research examining how the conspicuousness of received aid shapes its influence on mood could make a valuable

contribution, particularly if designed to illuminate the mechanisms, temporal dynamics, and individual difference factors that determine when and for whom support visibility matters most.

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