Manipulating the type and source of social support: An experimental investigation

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ABSTRACT

The present research investigates whether various types of support are distinguishable from each other, and assesses whether the stress/outcome relationship depends on the type and/or source of support. In two separate vignette studies, both the type of support (emotional, instrumental, informational, appraisal) and its source (family, friends, boyfriend, or professor) were manipulated. In both studies respondents distinguished between instrumental, informational, and appraisal support, and they also perceived these types of support as emotional in content. The type of support, but not its source, was perceived by respondents as being important for predicting outcome. Comparing subjects' ratings of perceived outcome across types of support, it was found that subjects in the informational condition predicted the most positive outcome. However, since subjects perceived that informational support was also emotional, it is concluded that it is the perceived combination of informational and emotional support that is most effective in buffering any negative outcome of stress. Implications for the construct validity of social support, and for future research using the social support construct, are discussed.

One frequently debated issue concerning the conceptualization of social support is whether or not there are distinguishable types of support. Determining whether social support is a global construct or comprised of distinguishable types has implications for understanding the influence of social support on stress/outcome relationships. A second area of disagreement is whether the source of social support affects its influence on stress/outcome relationships. There continues to be disagreement concerning the conceptualization of social support, primarily because most research employs a non-experimental methodology which confounds various types and sources of support.

When social support is conceptualized in terms of specific types, the number and nature of such categorizations are inconsistent. For example, Gottlieb (1978) delineates five different types of social support: emotional, sustaining behaviour, indirect personal influence, problem-solving behaviour, and environmental action on the individual's behalf. Abdel-Halim (1982) suggests that there are two types of social support: emotional and instrumental. Barrera and Ainley (1983) identify six types of social support: material aid, behavioural assistance, intimate interaction, guidance, feedback, and positive social interaction.

It has also been suggested that the different types of social support are so highly intercorrelated that they form a single construct (Beehr, 1985; Caplan, 1974; Cobb, 1976; Leavy, 1983). Some researchers suggest that when individuals receive one type of support they *perceive* that they are receiving other types as well (Beehr, 1985; Gottlieb, 1978; Schradle & Dougher, 1985). For example, if an individual receives instrumental support he/she may also feel emotionally supported (cared for, accepted).

The issue of whether support is a global construct or composed of several types has implications for understanding how support exerts an impact on the negative effects of stress. It has been suggested that a main effect for support emerges when it is treated as a global construct, but that a buffering effect is obtained when social support is defined according to specific types (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Thoits, 1982). Furthermore, some types of support may even exacerbate the negative effects of stress (MacEwen & Barling, in press).

Recent research suggests that social support should be defined according to its source as well as its type. Findings regarding the effectiveness of diverse sources of support are inconsistent (Ganster, Fusilier, & Mayes, 1986), and two contradictory hypotheses have recently emerged in the literature. First, Beehr (1985) hypothesizes that support exacerbates the negative effects of a stressor when the source of the support corresponds to the source of the stressor. Supporting Beehr's (1985) hypothesis, Kaufmann and Beehr (1982) found that nurses receiving high supervisor support experienced more psychosomatic symptomatology when exposed to role overload and ambiguity than nurses receiving low supervisor support. The second hypothesis, which also has some empirical support, proposes that social support reduces the negative impact of a stressor only when the source of the support is the same as the source of the stressor (Henderson & Argyle, 1985; LaRocco, House, & French, 1980). For example, Kobasa and Puccetti (1983) found that social support from one's family was an ineffective buffer of work stress. The existence of data which support both contradictory hypotheses is partly due to the failure to assess either specific types of support, and/or its source (Schradle & Dougher, 1985).

The lack of clarity in the literature is also partly attributable to the exclusive use of a correlational methodology. In existing studies, no control is exerted over the dimensions of support, and so the source and type of support are often confounded (Dooley, 1985). As a result, when one type or source of support is provided, other types may also be provided (Beehr, 1985). Such confounding of types and sources of support makes it difficult to establish whether the types of support are perceived to be distinct, and to determine which aspect of support is responsible for effects on stress/outcome relationships (Schradle & Dougher, 1985).

In view of the above observations, an experimental methodology was used to investigate two issues. The first was to evaluate whether frequently identified types of support are perceived to be distinct. A second aim was to determine whether

the effect of social support on stress/outcome relationships is perceived to be dependent upon the type or source of support provided, or whether the same effect is achieved regardless of the type or source of support.

STUDY 1

METHOD
Subjects
Two hundred and thirty-two students (M age $= 22.47$ years, $SD = 6.21$, range $= 17$–55; 74% females) enrolled in Introductory Psychology or Introductory Organizational Psychology courses at Queen's University participated in this study voluntarily and anonymously. Subjects had not received any lectures during their psychology courses on either stress or social support.

Materials
All subjects read a description of a person experiencing considerable psychological stress. In the description, both the type of support and its source were independently manipulated. Thus, 12 vignettes (in a 3×4 design; type $\times$ source of support) were used in this study.

Stress manipulation
To ensure that the hypothetical situation presented to the respondents would be relevant to them, the vignettes described a first-year student experiencing qualitative and quantitative course overload. The first part of the vignette read as follows:

> Jennifer moved away from home in September, 1985 to enter first-year university in another province. It was the first time that she had ever left home for more than a few days. Jennifer found it extremely difficult to leave her parents. During her first semester, Jennifer found her workload to be overwhelming. Jennifer is completely unsure about how she should go about improving her study skills or grades. She feels that no matter how hard she tries she cannot do better than she is doing now. She has just completed her mid-terms and is dreading the results. In general, Jennifer is certainly not finding school life to be as positive as she expected it would be.

To enhance the perceived stress that Jennifer was experiencing, three elements common to the experience of stress were incorporated into the above description: perceived undesirability, unpredictability, and uncontrollability (Thoits, 1982). In addition, Jennifer had recently experienced a change (moving away from home) that required some readjustment on her part, and her potential for failure was great.

Social support manipulation
Two central aspects of social support were independently manipulated. Emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support were described in separate vignettes, and each of these types of support were provided by either family, friends, or boyfriend. To ensure the construct validity of the four types of social support manipulated, House's (1981, pp. 22–26) definitions and/or descriptions of the four types of support were followed closely to generate the supportive behaviours portrayed in each vignette. House's (1981) categorization of social support into four types (emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal) was chosen not only because it is frequently used, but because his four types of support also overlap with many of the definitions appearing in the literature.

Instrumentally supportive behaviours included helpfulness in taking care of the numerous time-consuming activites that detracted from Jennifer's studies. Emotionally supportive behaviours consisted of sympathy, listening and caring. The informational support consisted of general advice on ways to approach her problems, and specific advice on effective study skills. The appraisal support given to Jennifer consisted of an objective evaluation of her situation, appropriate social comparisons,

and an acknowledgement of the difficulties she faced. The description of the types of support sometimes differed according to the source of the support. For example, in the instrumental manipulation, Jennifer's parents provided her with money for extra tutorial assistance, but this was obviously not appropriate from her friends.

The appropriateness of the support manipulation was assessed by having nine "expert" judges categorize all 12 vignettes. The nine "expert" judges, all senior undergraduate or graduate psychology students who had received numerous lectures on both stress and social support, were given House's (1981) definitions and/or descriptions of the four types of support manipulated. Their task was to classify the type of support presented in each of the vignettes. One hundred and six of the possible 108 classifications (9 judges × 12 vignettes) were correct.

Dependent variables

To assess whether respondents could appropriately identify the four types of support, 12 items assessed how the respondent perceived the supportive behaviour. Each item was measured on a 10-point scale, ranging from "extremely descriptive" (10) to "not at all descriptive" (1). (See Appendix I for items composing dependent variables.)

House's (1981) descriptions of the four types of social support were again used to choose descriptors. The adjectives used in generating items for the dependent variables were different from those presented in the vignettes, however, to ensure that the independent and dependent measures were not confounded. The ratings given to each item were summed and averaged to yield a stable overall index for each of the four types of social support. Emotional support was assessed by asking how sensitive and accepting the source of support was, and whether Jennifer could confide in the source. Instrumental support assessed whether the source was perceived as helping Jennifer confront her feelings and solve her problems. Appraisal support evaluated the extent to which Jennifer received feedback about her situation, help in evaluating her situation, and a realistic description of her situation. Informational support assessed whether the source was perceived as providing Jennifer with useful information, appropriate direction, and/or valuable ideas on how to confront her problems.

Perceived outcome was measured by summing responses to four items, viz. "How likely is Jennifer to cope with her difficulties?", "How likely is it that Jennifer's feelings about school will change?", "How likely are Jennifer's grades to improve or decline?", and "How likely is it that Jennifer's perception of herself will change?" These four items were also measured on 10-point scales extending from "extremely likely to change positively" to "extremely likely to change negatively" and were summed and averaged to form a single outcome index. A single outcome measure was derived rather than considering each of the four outcome measures separately because the internal consistency of the outcome measures was high (alpha = 0.89).[1]

Procedure

Each respondent received one of the 12 vignettes. Therefore, all respondents read the identical description of a stressed student, but only one support manipulation. The vignettes were distributed to the respondents in a systematic order so that no two individuals sitting next to each other would receive the same vignette and so that all experimental conditions would contain the same number of respondents.

RESULTS

Manipulation checks

To ensure that Jennifer was perceived to be experiencing stress, the first item asked "To what extent is Jennifer stressed?" The mean rating across all respondents for

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1. Copies of all the stimulus materials are available from the first author.

this item was 8.02 (*SD* = 1.22, range: 3–10). The second item asked "How stressful is Jennifer's situation?"; it received a mean rating of 7.02 (*SD* = 1.66, range: 1–10). In both cases, a score of 10 indicated Jennifer was perceived as "extremely stressed," and a score of 1 that she was "not at all stressed."

Irrespective of the source or type of support depicted, respondents should all see Jennifer as receiving some support. This was indeed found to be the case, as a mean rating of 7.48 (*SD* = 2.01, range: 1–10) was obtained in response to the question "How supportive are Jennifer's friends, boyfriend, or family?"

Descriptive statistics, reliability data, and intercorrelations between the five dependent variables are presented in Table 1.

Neither Pearson correlations nor *t*-tests revealed any age or sex differences in either the extent to which Jennifer was perceived as stressed, her situation perceived as stressful, or the amount of support she was seen as receiving. Also, subjects' ability to identify the type and source of support was not dependent upon their age or sex.

Isolating the type of support

The first aim of this study is to determine whether subjects can distinguish between the four types of support manipulated. The issue of specific interest is whether subjects who read the emotional manipulation can distinguish it from the other three types of support by rating the type of support received as more emotional in nature than instrumental, informational, or appraisal support, whether those who receive the instrumental manipulation can differentiate it from the remaining three types of support, and so forth. This involves 12 planned contrasts. Accordingly, 12 matched pairs *t*-tests were computed, using one-tailed probability tests. To correct for any Type I errors, the multi-stage Bonferroni procedure was used (Larzelere & Mulaik, 1977). With 12 planned comparisons, the first stage of this procedure stipulates that a probability level ≤ 0.004 (i.e., alpha level/number of tests compared) must be reached for a one-tailed test to yield a reliably significant result. When significance is no longer achieved at the initial stage or level, the probability level is adjusted according to the number of comparisons remaining. The procedure is terminated when the null hypothesis can no longer be rejected.

As can be seen from the mean scores and tests for planned contrasts presented in Table 2, irrespective of the source of support, subjects correctly identified all types of support, but they also perceived that emotional support was received regardless of the type of support actually provided. In the informational manipulation, the support was perceived appropriately as more informational in nature than either appraisal or instrumental, but was perceived as equally emotional. Under the emotional support manipulation, the support received was perceived as more emotional in nature than either instrumental, informational, or appraisal support. Within the appraisal condition, the support manipulated was viewed appro-

TABLE 1
Descriptive statistics and reliability data for the five dependent variables

	M	SD	Alpha	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	Alpha
1. Emotional support	6.44	1.69	.76		62	47	43	22	6.19	2.04	86
2. Instrumental support	4.60	1.93	.57	61		77	80	50	4.68	2.17	62
3. Appraisal support	4.28	2.05	.77	36	71		72	47	4.52	2.17	77
4. Informational support	4.17	2.34	.93	36	75	81		39	4.54	2.56	89
5. Perceived outcome	5.09	1.62	.87	25	48	53	43		5.49	1.89	89

All p's < 0.01.
Data below diagonal for first study ($n = 217$); data above diagonal for second study ($n = 85$).

TABLE 2
Results of the 12 matched pair t-tests assessing the planned contrasts in the first study

Manipulation	Planned comparison	M	SD	t	p	T
Informational support ($n = 60$)	Informational vs.	6.63	1.17			
	(a) appraisal	5.68	1.69	4.95	<.001	.004
	(b) instrumental	5.81	1.84	5.11	<.001	.004
	(c) emotional	6.71	1.53	0.07	>.05	.004
Emotional support ($n = 59$)	Emotional vs.	6.98	1.76			
	(a) instrumental	3.82	1.73	16.36	<.001	.005
	(b) appraisal	3.02	1.56	15.05	<.001	.005
	(c) informational	2.59	1.57	16.77	<.001	.005
Appraisal support ($n = 56$)	Appraisal vs.	5.15	1.80			
	(a) instrumental	4.19	1.66	5.79	<.001	.005
	(b) informational	3.94	1.95	7.75	<.001	.005
	(c) emotional	5.57	1.60	2.89	<.002	.005
Instrumental support ($n = 57$)	Instrumental vs.	4.56	1.88			
	(a) informational	3.51	1.93	5.42	<.001	.005
	(b) appraisal	3.30	1.80	6.62	<.001	.005
	(c) emotional	6.41	1.61	9.00	<.001	.005

priately as less informational and instrumental in nature than appraisal, but subjects perceived the appraisal support as equally emotional in nature. Finally, when instrumental support was manipulated, the support received was perceived as more instrumental in nature than informational or appraisal support, and it was also perceived as more emotional than instrumental in nature.

Perceived outcome

To assess whether the type and/or the source of the support influenced perceived outcome, a 3×4 (source $\times$ type of social support) MANOVA was computed, with the four perceived outcome items as the dependent variables because they were highly intercorrelated. Neither the interaction effect (Pillais-Bartlett $F(24,860) = 1.01$) nor the source of support (Pillais-Bartlett $F(8,426) = 0.23$) main effect were significant. However, there was a significant multivariate type of support main effect (Pillais-Bartlett $F(12,642) = 3.23, p < 0.0001$), and all four univariate effects contributed to the significant multivariate effect as they were all significant (all p's < 0.05). Scheffe tests revealed that individuals in the informational support condition perceived Jennifer as more likely to change positively in the future than individuals receiving instrumental ($M's$: 5.68 vs. 4.81) or emotional support ($M's$: 5.68 vs. 4.48). Respondents receiving the appraisal support manipulation also perceived Jennifer as more likely to change positively than those in the emotional support condition (M: 5.4 vs. 4.48) (all $p's < 0.05$).

STUDY 2

One of the major findings of the first study is that respondents could identify the type of support appropriately but also perceived all forms of social support as emotional in content. One explanation for this finding is that it would be appropriate for each of the three sources presented in the vignettes (viz. friends, boyfriends, family) in the first study to provide emotional support. To assess whether this explanation is tenable, it is necessary to investigate whether similar results would be obtained with a source who might normally be expected to provide informational, instrumental, and appraisal support, but not necessarily emotional support. This second study also addresses the issue of whether the type and source of support that is effective in buffering stress is dependent upon the nature of the stressor under consideration.[2]

METHOD

To investigate this issue, the identical format and procedure used in the first study were followed. Eighty-five Introductory Psychology and Introductory Organizational Psychology students (M age = 20.53 years, SD = 3.79; range = 17–40; 78% female) participated voluntarily and anonymously, and

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2. The authors are indebted to Michele Laliberte for bringing this issue to their attention.

each responded to one vignette depicting one of the four types of social support. The source of support in all these vignettes was chosen to be a professor because professors are not usually expected to provide emotional support, but are likely to provide informational, instrumental, or appraisal support.

RESULTS

An experimental manipulation check was again conducted, and Jennifer was perceived as experiencing considerable stress (M score on item "To what extent is Jennifer stressed?" $= 8.32$, $SD = 1.1$; M score on item "How stressful is Jennifer's situation?" $= 7.48$, $SD = 1.42$); and high social support (M score on item "How supportive is Jennifer's professor?" $= 7.33$, $SD = 2.28$). The reliability of the individual scales was again satisfactory, and descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of the dependent variables are presented in Table 1.

The data were analyzed in the same manner as in the first study, and planned comparisons were again conducted. The results of the matched-pairs t-tests suggest that even when support was provided by the college professor, the type of support was perceived appropriately, but it was also seen as emotional in nature. Specifically, when informational support was depicted in the vignette, it was perceived as equally emotional. When appraisal support was received, appraisal and emotional support were rated as equally available, and as in the first study, instrumental support was perceived as more emotional in nature than instrumental. Finally, when emotional support was provided, it was differentiated appropriately from instrumental, appraisal, and informational support (see Table 3).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The first question addressed in the present studies was whether subjects would perceive a distinction between instrumental, emotional, appraisal, and informational support. The results suggest that people do see these types of support as different. However, all forms of support were also perceived to be emotional, thus replicating the results of previous research (Beehr, 1985; Gottlieb, 1978). Moreover, this finding was not affected by the person who provided the support, even when that person was a professor, who is not normally expected to provide emotional support as a role-prescribed behaviour.

To further assess the importance of defining social support as a multidimensional rather than a global construct, two outcome issues were addressed: (a) the perceived differential effectiveness of the four types of support; and (b) the relevance of congruence between the source of support and the source of the stressor. The four types of support were perceived to lead to differential outcomes. Subjects in the informational condition believed that a person (in this case, Jennifer) would fare better if he/she received informational support rather than emotional, instrumental, or appraisal support. However, because subjects perceived that when Jennifer received informational support she also received emotional support, it would

TABLE 3
Results of the 12 matched pairs *t*-tests assessing the planned contrasts in the second study

Manipulation	Planned comparison	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*T*
Informational support (*n* = 20)	Informational vs.	6.92	1.84			
	(a) appraisal	5.95	2.49	2.71	<.05	.004
	(b) instrumental	6.26	1.72	2.31	<.05	.004
	(c) emotional	6.74	1.92	1.19	>.05	.004
Emotional support (*n* = 22)	Emotional vs.	7.52	1.35			
	(a) instrumental	4.27	2.25	8.36	<.001	.005
	(b) appraisal	3.79	2.12	9.44	<.001	.005
	(c) informational	2.91	2.20	11.89	<.001	.005
Appraisal support (*n* = 20)	Appraisal vs.	4.17	1.67			
	(a) instrumental	3.13	1.47	4.30	<.001	.005
	(b) informational	2.77	1.46	5.01	<.001	.005
	(c) emotional	4.49	1.67	0.68	>.05	.012
Instrumental support (*n* = 21)	Instrumental vs.	5.00	1.98			
	(a) informational	5.41	1.98	1.27	>.05	.017
	(b) appraisal	4.17	1.77	3.08	<.01	.01
	(c) emotional	5.74	1.87	2.50	<.05	.05

be most accurate to say that the combination of informational and emotional support is perceived to reduce any negative effects of stress to a greater extent than the combination of emotional and any other type of support, or emotional support alone. If the subjects' perceptions of how different types of support lead to differentially beneficial outcomes are correct, then the pervasive belief in the social support literature that emotional support is the most effective buffer of stress may not be appropriate (Beehr, 1985). Past studies may have been biased in favour of emotional support because most operationalizations of support focus exclusively on emotional support, leaving other types of support unmeasured (Beehr, 1985; Tardy, 1985). Indeed, the few studies that do consider other types of support do not consistently find that emotional support is the most effective type of support. For example, Cotterell (1986) found that only informational support improved the quality of mothers' child-rearing expectations and behaviour, and Schaefer, Coyne, and Lazarus (1981) found that informational support was related to positive morale in a group of senior citizens. In addition, it has been suggested that the lack of informational support following the disaster at Three Mile Island was a major predictor of subsequent psychological distress (Chisholm, Kasl, & Mueller, 1986). In the present study, an effort was made to describe stress that would be familiar to the undergraduate sample participating in the study, but the type of support perceived to best buffer the stress may depend on the type of stress described. It is possible that informational support is the best suited of the four types of support to help Jennifer with her problems at school. That is, emotional support alone cannot help Jennifer employ better study habits, appraisal support is somewhat redundant because Jennifer is already aware that she is performing poorly, and instrumental support is of little help when assignments and exams must be completed without the help of others. Further research should address the issue of whether the type of support best able to reduce ill effects as a result of stress is dependent upon the type of stress involved.

No evidence was found for either of the two contradictory hypotheses concerning source of support (Beehr, 1985; Cohen & Syme, 1985; Kobasa & Puccetti, 1983). That is, congruence between the source of support and the stressor was unimportant for subjects' perceptions of outcome. Rather than supporting either of the two contradictory hypotheses, the present results are consistent with House's (1981) suggestions that as long as support is provided by one source it will be sufficient to alleviate the negative effects of a stressor, and that the most crucial element is whether some support is present, irrespective of its sources if subjects' perceptions are accurate.

The results of the present study suggest that it is the type, rather than the source, of support that is important for understanding the perceived effect of support on stress/outcome relationships. The social support literature is inconsistent regarding which type of support best buffers stress, however. Possibly, the appropriateness of a given type of support is dependent upon a match between type of support

offered and type of stressor encountered (Cohen & Syme, 1985; Cohen & Wills, 1985). That is, buffering may occur only when types of available support match the needs elicited by the stress a person is experiencing. In a study conducted with college students, Cohen and Syme (1985) found that informational and emotional support were effective buffers, but instrumental support was not. In the present study, the combination of emotional and informational support in the form of advice about time management and study skills may have been perceived as most suited to the stress experienced by students.

Some further questions remain regarding the conceptualization of social support with respect to its relevant dimensions and its effect on stress/outcome relationships. For example, level of support may be an important factor in understanding the stress buffering role of support (MacEwen & Barling, in press). Furthermore, the process by which support affects stress/outcome relationships over time has yet to be delineated (Depner, Wethington, & Ingersoll-Dayton, 1984). Although caution must be exercised when generalizing across vignettes and from vignette to in vivo situations, an advantage of the present study is its experimental control which allows specific hypotheses concerning dimensions of support to be tested.

Before concluding, some limitations regarding the generalizability of the present findings should be outlined. First, the present studies were analogue studies and so it is not known whether the results would be replicated if actual situations involving stress and support were investigated. The present studies are limited to conclusions regarding subjects' perceptions of which types and sources of support are most effective in buffering stress. A further limitation on the generalizability of the present findings is the undergraduate, largely female composition of the sample. Future research might also examine the degree to which subject characteristics such as stress level, academic performance, and/or state/trait anxiety affect perceptions of desirable types and sources of support.

In conclusion, two findings in the present study suggest that social support should not be defined globally, but according to specific types. First, subjects distinguished between the four types of support, and second, their perception of outcome depended upon the type of support provided. Contrary to current suggestions in the social support literature, the source of support had no influence on perceived outcome. Finally, the experimental approach adopted in the present study avoids the problem of confounded dimensions of support that plagues non-experimental research (Dooley, 1985), and vignette studies may be a viable methodology for further clarification of the social support construct.

RÉSUMÉ

La présente recherche étudie si différents types de soutien social se distinguent entre eux et évalue si la relation ''stress/conséquences'' dépend du type et/ou de la source du soutien. Dans deux études distinctes, utilisant des scénarios hypothétiques, le type de soutien (émotionnel, instrumental, informationnel et évaluatif) et ses sources (famille, amis, ami de coeur et professeur) furent manipulés.

Dans les deux études les répondants distinguèrent entre le soutien instrumental, informationnel et évaluatif, en plus de percevoir ces types de soutien comme étant de nature émotionnelle. Le type de soutien, mais non ses sources, fut perçu par les répondants comme étant important pour prédire les conséquences. En comparant les évaluations des sujets concernant les conséquences perçues selon les types de soutien, il fut trouvé que les sujets dans la condition informationnelle prédisaient les conséquences les plus positives. Par contre, étant donné que les sujets perçurent le soutien social informationnel comme étant également de nature émotionnelle, on conclut que c'est la perception de la combinaison soutien informationnel/émotionnel qui est plus efficace pour prévenir les effets négatifs du stress. Les implications pour la validité de construit du soutien social et pour les recherches futures utilisant ce dernier construit sont discutés.

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APPENDIX I
Dependent Variables

Informational Support
1. To what extent does Jennifer's family provide her with useful information?
2. To what extent does Jennifer's family provide her with appropriate direction?
3. To what extent does Jennifer get good ideas from her family about how to confront her problems?

Emotional Support
1. How concerned is Jennifer's family?
2. To what extent does Jennifer feel that she can confide in her family?
3. How sensitive is Jennifer's family?
4. How accepting is Jennifer's family of her feelings?

Appraisal Support
1. To what extent does Jennifer receive feedback about her situation from her family?
2. To what extent does Jennifer's family help her evaluate her situation?
3. To what extent does Jennifer's family realistically describe the situation other students are in?

Instrumental Support
1. How well does Jennifer's family help her solve her problems?
2. How cooperative is Jennifer's family in helping her confront her feelings?

Items Assessing Perceived Outcome
1. How likely is it that Jennifer's feelings about school will change?
2. How likely is Jennifer to cope well with her difficulties?
3. How likely are Jennifer's grades to improve or decline?
4. How likely is it that Jennifer's perception of herself will change?