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Catherine J. Lutz

AN IDIOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO THE PERSON x ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION IN SUPPORT JUDGMENTS

by

CATHERINE J. LUTZ

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The link between high perceived social support and positive mental health has been well established empirically (Barrera, 1986; S. Cohen & Wills, 1985; Kessler & Mcleod, 1985). In order to design effective prevention programs for low perceived support persons, a sound understanding of the perceived social support construct is essential. The most common model of perceived social support states that support perceptions are based on the actual support persons receive from their social network members, or *enacted support* (S. Cohen & Wills, 1985). However, research in the mid-eighties began to uncover serious limitations this model. These limitations led some support theorists to speculate that perceived social support acts, in part, as a cognitive personality variable (Lakey & Cassady, 1990; Sarason, Pierce, & Sarason, 1990). That is, support appraisals represent stable individual differences in chronically accessible beliefs about the social world.

Although many studies support the claim that cognitive representations of the social world influence both the memory and interpretation of support-related behaviors, a recent series of generalizability studies conducted by Lakey, McCabe, Fisicaro, and Drew (1996) suggests that characteristics of the perceiver account for a relatively small amount of variance in social support judgments. Rather, these findings reveal that the largest portion of variance can be accounted for by the Person by Environment interaction. The findings represent a break from both of the earliest espoused models which emphasize the characteristics of the social world and more recently proposed models which emphasize one's perceptions of the social world as a function of early cognitive social learning.

Rather, these findings highlight the relevance of understanding the idiosyncratic matching between the person and their environment. I will begin this paper by critique both environment-based and individual-based models of perceived support. Drawing from current social cognition research, I will then attempt to clarify the nature of the Person by Environment matching process found in Lakey, McCabe, et al. (1996). Finally, I will discuss new findings from a series of three studies designed to examine these hypotheses.

The Link Between Perceived Social Support and Symptomatology

A number of cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have demonstrated that persons with high perceived support are less likely to experience emotional distress than their low support counterparts (e.g., Aneshensel & Stone, 1982; Billings & Moos, 1981; L.H. Cohen et al., 1984; S. Cohen & Hoberman, 1983; Lin & Ensel, 1984). These findings are typically interpreted as evidence that low perceived social support is a risk factor for the development of subsequent mental health problems. However, others have pointed out that low perceived social support may be a consequence of depression (Turner, 1981; Monroe, et al., 1986). That is, depression could potentially influence perceived social support through a wearing down of one's existing support network. Similarly, depression could influence reporting of perceived social support through mood consistent judgments (Cohen, Flocco & Towbes, 1988).

Because of the possibility of reverse causation or of a reciprocal relationship between these two variables it is important to examine this relationship through the use of prospective designs. A prospective study is a design strategy in which the variable thought to have causal importance is used to predict a criterion at a later point in time

while controlling for the initial influence of this criterion variable. A significant relationship between the predictor and criterion is interpreted as evidence that the predictor variable is related to change in the criterion over the time between the measurement occasions. In the case of perceived social support, both perceived social support and psychological distress are measured at time 1. The support measure is then used to predict distress at time 2, while controlling for the effect of time 1 distress on subsequent distress. To the degree that the perception of support availability is a reflection of distress, this conceptual overlap is statistically controlled. Additionally, this design allows useful speculation regarding the causal sequence of these two variables.

A large number of studies have used prospective designs to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and distress (Compas et al., 1986; Dean & Ensel, 1982; Gore, 1978; Henderson et al., 1981; Holahan & Moos, 1981; Lin & Ensel, 1984; Monroe, et al., 1986; Phifer & Murrell, 1986; Turner, 1981; Turner & Noh, 1983; Warheit, 1979; Williams, Ware, & Donald, 1982). Some prospective studies have examined the relationship between changes in both perceived social support and symptomatology over time (Holahan & Moos, 1981; Williams, Ware, & Donald, 1982). For instance, Holahan and Moos (1981) found that, over a one year period, changes in perceived support of family and work relations were related to changes in depression after controlling for initial levels of both social support and symptoms. Although this type of analysis suggests that the relationship is not merely a function of chronic negative affect, it does not yield information regarding the temporal ordering of the variables, and therefore does not take full advantage of the prospective design.

More rigorous studies of low perceived social support as a risk factor for depression

are those that have used initial levels of perceived social support to predict subsequent levels of symptomatology. For example, using a representative sample of adults, Lin and Ensel (1984) found that changes in perceived support were significantly related to changes in depression over a 12 month period. Subjects demonstrating increases in perceived social support during this time showed decreases in depression. Likewise, subjects experiencing decreases in perceived social support showed increases in depression. Another study by Phifer and Murrell (1986) found that, controlling for initial symptoms, perceived social support was predictive of symptomatology for older adults after a 6-month time frame. This study also found moderate evidence for a stress buffering effect of social support.

Other prospective studies have examined this relationship using a college sample. For instance, using students in transition from high school to college, Compas et al. (1986) found global perceived social support to be a significant predictor of symptomatology three months later. Similarly, Power (1988) found that perceived emotional and practical support were significant predictors of symptomatology six months later.

In addition to the view that perceived social support may simply reflect negative affectivity, some researchers have speculated that perceptions of support may result from social competence or social anxiety (Heller, 1979; Heller & Swindle, 1983). Highly socially competent persons might be better able to cope with the negative life events that precipitate stress related disorders. Likewise, they might be more likely to have stable, enduring social relations than persons with poor social skills. Using a sample of college freshmen just entering college, Cohen et al. (1986) examined whether social skills influenced changes in perceived social support in new settings. They found that, although

a number of social skills measures were significant predictors of subjects' support judgments of their college peers, the amount of variance accounted for was relatively small, ranging from 2.5% to 7.2%. Cohen et al. also found evidence for a small but statically significant stress buffering effect of social support. This Stress by Support interaction remained significant after controlling for the effects of social skills, suggesting that perceived social support may act as a stress buffer for a person irrespective of their level of social skills.

In sum, a number of studies have found perceived social support to be a significant predictor of subsequent symptomatology. These studies have varied in terms of type of perceived support measures used, time frame between measurement occasions, and the nature of the populations sampled, thus speaking to the generalizability of this finding. The body of studies reviewed lend evidence to the claim that low perceived social support is an important risk factor for the development of subsequent psychological distress. Furthermore, perceived social support does not appear to be merely a reflection of social skills. Consequently, social support researchers have attempted to understand the genesis of perceived social support and the process by which it influences distress in an effort to design effective prevention programs for low perceived support persons (Lakey & Lutz, 1996). In the following sections, I will review the two dominant models of perceived support, environment-based and individual-based models, as a prelude to a perspective that emphasizes the interaction between the perceiver and the support provider.

Enacted Support Models

Traditional models of perceived social support primarily emphasized characteristics of the social environment. According to this view, the perception of support availability is a

direct function of the help one actually receives from social network members (*i.e. enacted support*). This help can take many forms including the provision of financial aid, advice, or emotional support. Thus, if a person receives support in a form commensurate with their needs, then this person is more likely to judge his or her social network as supportive than someone who does not receive such aid.

The buffering hypothesis, a popular enacted support model, assumes that enacted support moderates the negative effects of stress on mental health (Cohen & McKay, 1984; Cohen & Wills, 1985). This model translates into an interaction effect, whereby only persons experiencing high levels of stress reap the mental health benefits of high levels of support. In this view enacted support is thought to increase one's ability to effectively cope with stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Cutrona & Russel, 1990; Thoits, 1986). Perceived support can also reduce the potential for stress-related disorders by influencing the appraisal of an event as stressful (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Although this perspective has substantial intuitive appeal and has been highly influential in the design of support interventions, there are considerable empirical limitations to this approach. Criticisms of this model come primarily from two observations: (1) that perceived and enacted support are only marginally related, and (2) that perceived and enacted support exhibit different patterns of relationships with distress, with perceived social support exhibiting the strongest relationship with subsequent distress.

Several studies have measured the relationship between perceived and enacted support using a variety of self-report instruments (see Barrera, 1986). The correlations range from -.13 to .46, averaging around .30 (Barrera, 1986; Dunkel-Schetter & Bennet, 1990; Newcomb, 1990; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). If one assumes multiple

determinants of a given psychological phenomenon, correlations of this magnitude are often acceptable (Ahadi & Diener, 1989). However, given that an enacted support model assumes that perceptions of support availability are based almost exclusively on the aid one actually receives, correlations of this magnitude are notably low. The magnitude of this relationship is even less impressive if one considers that measures of enacted and perceived support share common method variance (Wethington & Kessler, 1986). Both types of support are typically evaluated by self-report measures. Inherent in this methodology is the bias of one's subjective perceptions. Thus, the relationship between enacted support and perceived social support may be artificially inflated. Furthermore, some studies suggest that persons with high perceived social support have superior memory for support related behaviors (Drew, Lakey & Sirl, 1995; Lakey & Cassady, 1990; Lakey, Moineau & Drew, 1992). Thus, persons with high perceived support may report receiving more enacted support than low perceived support persons because of superior memory for support relevant information, rather than because of actual differences in support provided by the networks members of these two groups. This information processing effect might further inflate the observed relationship between perceived and enacted support.

A second type of study that examines the relationship between perceived and enacted support are those designed to identify the type of enacted support that differentiates between high and low perceived social support persons (Belsher & Costello, 1991; Gurung, Sarason & Sarason, 1994; Heller & Lakey, 1985; Lakey & Heller, 1988). In these studies, high and low perceived social support persons are instructed to interact with a network member within the context of a laboratory setting. Blind raters then code the

actual supportiveness of the interactions. This design represents an improvement over those studies in which perceived and enacted support are both assessed via self report measures in that the problem of shared methods variance is avoided. Consistent with the results using self report measures of the two constructs, observational studies have consistently failed to find a significant relationship between the levels of perceived social support of the subject and the support provided by companions (Belsher & Costello, 1991; Heller & Lakey, 1985; Lakey & Heller, 1988). One possible explanation for these findings is that the behavior of network members in a laboratory session is not representative of their behavior in other settings. However, in two of these studies, enacted support was related to other variables in a predictable manner, suggesting that the observational ratings of the companions' behavior had some validity (Heller & Lakey, 1985; Lakey & Heller, 1988). For example, Lakey and Heller (1988) found that enacted support predicted coping on a behavior problem solving task.

Another study investigated the relationship between the subjects' ratings of their mothers' supportiveness and the mothers' actual support behavior during a laboratory stressor (Gurung, Sarason, & Sarason, 1994). Although subjects' perception of mothers' support predicted the aid they actually received in a laboratory setting, the supportiveness ratings accounted for only 5% of the variance in actual support. The authors speculated that this relationship might have been higher than those reported in previous studies because perceived social support was assessed with respect to a specific relationship.

Not only have researchers found only negligible relationships between perceived and enacted support, but they have also found different patterns of relationships with stress and psychological distress. Specifically, perceived support has been found to be

negatively related to stress and distress, whereas the direction of the observed relationship between enacted support and these variables is less consistent across a number of studies (Barrera, 1986; Collins, Dunkel-Schetter & Bennet, 1990; Sandler & Barrera, 1984; Sarason, Sarason & Pierce, 1990). For instance, research demonstrating that high levels of enacted support are associated with higher levels of stress and psychological symptoms is opposite to the pattern predicted by the buffering hypothesis. In addition, a study by Wethington and Kessler (1986) found support for the buffering hypothesis, but only with respect to perceived social support. In this study, both measures of enacted support and perceived social support were used to predict psychological adjustment to stressful life events. While evidence for the buffering hypothesis was found using perceived social support, these results could not be explained by enacted support. Although the role of individual cognitive appraisal in social support is commonly recognized (Cohen & McKay, 1984; Gottlieb, 1984), the results of this study suggest this appraisal may be even more important than actual support in moderating the deleterious effects of stress.

Perceived Social Support as a Person Variable

The failure to empirically establish a strong relationship between enacted support and one's subjective appraisal of support availability has lead some researchers to emphasize characteristics of the individual rather than characteristics of one's social environment (Lakey & Cassady, 1990; Sarason, Pierce, & Sarason, 1990). Specifically, they suggest that perceived social support, in part, reflects a cognitive personality variable. In this view, perceived social support represents individual differences in chronically accessible beliefs or *schemas* about the social world. These schemas are thought to influence the processing of support-related behaviors (Lakey & Cassady, 1990; Sarason, Pierce &

Sarason, 1990).

Research in the area of social cognition suggests that schematic representations of the self and social world influence such processes as attention (Matthews & McCloud, 1986), judgment (Gotlib, 1983), and memory (Blaney, 1986; Stangor & McMillian, 1992). Consequently, if schematic processes are involved in global assessments of perceived support, one would expect high and low perceived support persons to differ in their attention, memory, and judgment of support-related material. Studies investigating the relationship between perceived social support and memory have yielded inconsistent findings (Lakey & Cassady, 1990; Lakey, et al., 1992; Rudolph, Hammen & Burge, 1995). However, studies examining the relation of perceived social support to the interpretation of support-related behaviors have consistently found that high perceived support subjects interpret these behaviors more favorably that do low perceived support persons (Lakey & Cassady, 1990; Drew, et al., 1995; Lakey & Dickinson, 1994; Lakey, Monineau & Drew, 1992; Mallinckrodt, 1991; Rudolph et al., 1995; Pierce, et al., 1992; Sarason, et al., 1991)

One of the earliest studies to document this effect was conducted by Lakey and Cassady (1990). In this study, subjects read short vignettes asking them to imagine that they were describing a problem to a relative or friend. They were also presented with the relative's or friend's hypothetical response. These responses were designed to be ambiguous in order to leave room for individual interpretations. Subjects were then asked to rate how supportive the response was. The results indicated that subjects low in perceived social support rated novel, supportive behaviors less positively than subjects high in perceived social support.

One potential limitation of the study by Lakey and Cassady (1990) is that differences

in subjects' interpretations of support-related behaviors might have been a function of actual differences in the support providers they imagined, resulting in accurate judgments of the behavior in question. That is, the same support-related behavior could be interpreted as helpful or unhelpful depending upon the nature of the relationship between the recipient and the support provider they imagined. In order to address this issue, Lakey, Monineau, & Drew (1992) asked subjects to judge a series of videotaped support behaviors, thereby standardizing the stimuli to be judged. Additionally, Lakey et al. measured social desirability in order to rule out the possibility of response bias. Consistent with the findings of Lakey and Cassady (1990), Lakey et al. found that low perceived support subjects interpreted ambiguous support behaviors more negatively than did high perceived support subjects. Furthermore, these results could not be accounted for by social desirability or dysphoria.

In an effort to create a unified theory of social support, Sarason, Pierce, and Sarason (1990) have attempted to link perceived social support to early attachment relationships. According to their model, the nature of one's early primary relationships influences the development of a mental model of the availability and supportiveness of others (i.e., the "sense of acceptance"). One's sense of acceptance is thought to influence how the individual interprets and interacts with their social environment, which consequently leads to a strengthening of this mental model. Partial support for this hypothesis comes from a study illustrating a strong correlation between subjects' responses on the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ; I. G. Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983) and retrospective reports of parental care and overprotectiveness (Sarason, Sarason & Shearin, 1986). The results of this study, however, must be regarded as tentative due to the potential memory

biases inherent in the method used to assess early attachment relationships. That is, it is likely that subjects' current relationships with parents influenced their recall of early attachment relationships.

To examine this model further, Lakey & Dickinson (1994) investigated whether perceived family environment predicts the development of perceived support in new relationships. Using college students who had recently moved away to attend college for the first time, they measured perceived family environment at first few weeks of school and perceived support at the end of the first semester. Aside from a positive family environment being directly related to the development of high levels perceived support in new settings, positive family relations could exhibit an indirect relationship with perceived support via its impact on socially-desirable qualities. That is, a warm, supportive family environment may be conducive to the development of social skills. A person with a higher level of social competence may be able to establish more satisfying social relations. In order examine this possibility, interpersonal variables including agreeableness, extraversion, and social competence were also measured at time 1 to determine whether these factors mediated the relationship between perceived family environment and subsequent perceived support. As predicted, controlling for dysphoria and social desirability, perceived family environment at the beginning of subjects' first semester was a significant positive predictor of perceived social support developed specifically at college. Moreover, this relationship was not mediated by the interpersonal variables in this study.

Another study investigated the influence of perceived support on support judgments within the context of a specific relationship (Pierce, Sarason, and Sarason; 1992). In this study, subjects evaluated the supportiveness of their mothers prior to engaging in a

stressful activity (i.e., giving a speech) All subjects read identically-worded notes offering support for their speech. These notes were completed in their mother's handwriting. As predicted, subjects whose initial expectations for maternal support were low rated the letter from their mother as less supportive than subjects with high initial expectations for maternal support, even though the notes said the same thing. Studies have also found similar support-related interpretive biases in children (Rudolph et al., 1995), in the client therapist relationship (Mallinckrodt, 1991), and among divorced community residents (Lakey, Drew, Anan, Sirl, & Butler, 1995).

In sum, the above mentioned studies provide strong evidence that low perceived support persons interpret ambiguous supportive behaviors more negatively than do high perceived support persons. These observed interpretive biases are consistent with a cognitive individual difference model of perceived social support. However, a recent series of studies by Lakey, McCabe et al. (1996) suggests that although cognitive processes play an important role in support appraisals, the personality-like features of perceived support have been somewhat overstated. In the following section, I will discuss a new perspective that emphasizes the interaction between both the individual and the environment. Drawing from modern work in person perception, I will present a series of three studies designed to clarify the nature of this interaction.

Person by Environment Matching

In previous sections I have outlined the two dominant models of perceived social support. Both models attempt to address the question of what information people use to make supportiveness judgments. Enacted support models assume supportiveness judgments are based primarily on the specific helpful behaviors of the target (i.e. the

support provider). Specifically, person A judges person B as supportive because person B provides a good deal of useful aid to person A. Conversely, personality models assume that supportiveness judgments are based primarily on the chronically accessible constructs used by the observer. That is, person A judges person B as supportive because person A has an extensive belief system of people as supportive. A third possibility is that judgments of targets' supportiveness are a function of an interaction between characteristics of the target and observer. In this case, observer A reliably judges target A as more supportive than target B, whereas observer B judges target B as more supportive than target A. In essence, this amounts to a unique matching between the qualities that the observer prefers and those that she believes the target exhibits.

Lakey, McCabe et al. (1996) conducted a series of three generalizability studies to investigate which aspect of the social dyad--the target, observer, or the Target by Observer interaction--plays the largest role in the support appraisal process. When a group of people all rate the same targets on support, generalizability theory (Cronbach et al., 1972) provides methods for determining the amount of variance that can be accounted for by each of these three sources. In the first study, a group of graduate students rated professors with whom they all had contact. The same method was used in two other studies, one in which sorority sisters rated other sisters, and one in which undergraduates rated a series of videotaped supportive interactions. Across the three studies, the largest amount of variance in support ratings was explained by the Perceiver by Supporter interaction, accounting for an average of 41 percent. The variance due to supporters was the second highest (20%), followed by the variance due to perceivers (8%). Consistent with the expected stability of a personality variable, the variance due to perceivers

remained relatively stable across the three samples. Conversely, the variance due the situational context demonstrated the largest variability across the three samples.

The results of Lakey, McCabe et al. have important implications for social support theory and interventions. Specifically, the sizeable effect for the Perceiver by Supporter interaction suggests a matching between members of this dyad. That is, the characteristics that one person prefers in a support provider is fairly distinct from the characteristics preferred by another person. Consequently, interventions designed to provide support to at-risk persons must be tailored to the individuals' unique preferences. Hence, rather than randomly assigning at-risk persons a supportive friend, the results of Lakey, McCabe et al. suggests that a more effective strategy might be to take into account these unique preferences. In such an intervention subjects would be matched with others who exhibit the qualities seen by subjects as supportive. This type of intervention is similar to programs designed to match people with their ideal romantic partner. In order to develop such intervention programs, it is first essential to understand the basis of this matching process. Just as people may differ in the dimensions they weight as important in evaluating a prospective mate, people may differ in the dimensions they weight as important in evaluating a prospective support provider.

One likely possibility is that perceiver by supporter matching, in part, reflects perceived similarity. That is, a given perceiver may be more likely to rate similar others as more supportive than non-similar others. Similar others could be viewed as more supportive because they are seen as more capable of empathizing with ones' problems. Alternatively, similarity could influence support appraisals through a matching of support styles. For instance, if a person experiences comfort from being told how to solve a given

problem, this person is more likely to prefer a support provider who offers advice over one who merely listens attentively. Finally, given research demonstrating a strong relationship between perceived similarity and interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1971), more favorable support judgments could simply reflect greater liking for similar others.

Support for the role of similarity in supportiveness judgments comes from a series of three studies by Lakey, Ross et al. (1996). Across the three studies, subjects rated similar others as more supportive. In the first study, subjects rated people from their own social network in terms of supportiveness, the Big 5 dimensions of personality, and similarity on a variety of dimensions including personality, values, and interests. Conscientiousness and similarity of the target were related to perceived supportiveness. The second study was a conceptual replication of the first using an experimental design. In this study, subjects were given a completed attitude and conscientiousness measure and were asked to form an impression of the respondent who had completed the measure. Similarity of targets to subjects was manipulated by creating responses to the attitude questionnaires that represented either a high or low correspondence to subjects' own responses to the same questionnaire completed a week prior to the experiment. Subjects then rated the hypothetical other in terms of supportiveness. Consistent with the results of Study 1, subjects rated the hypothetical other as more supportive when the target was portrayed as conscientious and similar to the subject than if the target was portrayed as unconscientious and dissimilar to the subject. In the third study, subjects engaged in actual social interactions with a target. The results of this study were consistent with those of the first two, thus speaking to the robustness of this finding across three different methodologies. Perceived similarity accounted for an average of 20 percent of the variance in support

judgments across the three samples.

The Role of Trait and Evaluative Person Concepts

In summary, the results of Lakey, Ross et al. (1996) indicate that subjects relied upon information about targets' conscientiousness and similarity to the subject to make judgments of the targets' supportiveness. The reliance upon information regarding targets' conscientiousness suggests that subjects partially infer supportiveness on the basis of other personality traits. This observation is consistent with a large body of research in the area of social cognition which emphasizes the role of person concepts on social judgments (Beike & Sherman, 1994; Kihlstrom & Klein, 1994; Wyer & Carlston, 1994). Moreover, social cognition theory and research provides a useful conceptual framework in which to better understand the process whereby people make support judgments on basis of the social behavior of others (Lakey & Drew, 1997). In this section, I will discuss a model of social judgment that emphasizes the role of person concepts in making support judgments. In the following section, I will elaborate this model with respect to its applicability to Person by Environment matching. Finally, I will discuss a series of studies designed to investigate these processes.

Research in the area of person memory and judgment suggests a strong tendency for people to construe the behavior of others in trait terms. Trait inferences appear to occur spontaneously, and on the basis of relatively few behaviors (Beike & Sherman, 1994; Hastie & Park, 1986; Srull & Wyer, 1989; Winter, Uleman & Cunniff, 1985; Wyer & Carlston, 1994). Once the perceiver has formed trait concepts of a given target, specific behaviors that formed the basis of these trait concepts are seldom reviewed when making subsequent judgments of the target (Hastie & Park, 1986; Kihlstrom & Klein, 1994; Wyer

& Carlston, 1994). Rather, these judgments are based on the memory of prior trait inferences of the target (i.e. on-line inferences). According to Hastie and Park (1986), people only rely on memory of specific behaviors when no trait inference was made at the time of encoding of the target. Given that trait inferences are made early in the judgment process, these *memory-based judgments* are rare. Further, a number of studies by Klein, Loftus and colleagues (e.g., Klein, Loftus & Burton, 1989; Klein & Loftus, 1990) using a priming paradigm, suggest that trait level information and information about specific behaviors occupy separate memory stores.

Research in person memory and judgment might account for the failure of social support researchers to find a strong relationship between perceived and enacted support. If support appraisals, like other social judgments, are represented in memory as global trait concepts, we would expect that judgments of support are likely to be based on these prior trait inferences of supportiveness. That is, if I have a representation of my partner as supportive, I will tend to base subsequent support judgments on this representation of him or her rather than reviewing specific examples of supportive behaviors.

Thus, person perception research suggests that people may rely heavily on trait concepts of supportiveness to make subsequent support judgments. But what of situations in which a person does not form a concept of supportiveness prior to judgment? In the case of social support, people presumably judge others as either supportive or unsupportive before that actually have an opportunity to observe others emit support-relevant behaviors. People seldom elicit support from others early in their acquaintanceships, and therefore have a small sample of supportive behaviors from which to derive a concept of supportiveness. And yet it seems likely that they have reached

some preliminary judgment of target's supportiveness or they probably would not approach this person in question in a time of need.

Wyer and Srull's (1989) model of person memory and judgment suggests that representations of a given person are derived from initial samples of behavior. These representations take the form of trait concepts and general evaluations of likability (i.e., *evaluative person concepts*). If a given trait concept is not formed initially, one is likely to infer the trait from other traits (Asch, 1946; Beike & Sherman, 1994; Schneider, 1973) or from an evaluative person concept (Wyer & Srull, 1989; Wyer & Carlston, 1994).

The studies by Lakey, Ross et al. (1996) are consistent with Wyer and Srull's model in that they suggest that in addition to possibly having a distinct trait concept for supportiveness, people also infer supportiveness from the trait concept of conscientiousness. Furthermore, these studies also suggest that people make support judgments on the basis perceived similarity between themselves and the target. In view of the strong association between perceived similarity and interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1971), it is likely that perceived similarity, in part, contributes to a general evaluative person concept for a given target. Hence, the results of Lakey, Ross et al. provide evidence that people might also infer supportiveness on the basis of global evaluative person concepts. Although the role of similarity in support judgments is consistent with a Perceiver by Environment matching model of perceived support, it is insufficient in itself to account for this matching process. In the next section, I will elaborate this point further, as well as present a view of matching that emphasizes the idiographic use of trait concepts to infer supportiveness.

An Idiographic Approach to the Understanding of the

Person x Environment Interaction

The results of Lakey, Ross et al. (1996) are somewhat surprising in that conscientiousness was the only trait concept found to be related to judgments of support. Given that supportiveness is typically associated with interpersonal warmth and friendliness, one might expect support judgments to be related to agreeableness and extraversion as well. Another potential limitation of the conclusions reached in these studies is that similarity accounted for an average of 20% of the variance across the three samples. Although this is a sizeable effect, it can explain only half of the variance in the Perceiver by Environment interaction. This suggests that other mechanisms must be involved in this interaction.

One such mechanism is that persons vary in terms of the different combinations of personality characteristics that they rely upon to infer target supportiveness. Stated another way, persons differ in the traits or configuration of traits that they associate with support. For example, some people may associate agreeableness with support, whereas others may associate conscientiousness with support. In this view, the Perceiver by Supporter interaction reflects a matching of the traits the perceiver associates with support and the observed presence or absence of these characteristics in the target. This view necessitates taking an idiographic approach to the study of support judgments because it assumes that the trait concepts used to infer supportiveness differ from person to person. As stated above, the results of Lakey, Ross, et al. (1996) suggests that people do, in fact, rely upon certain trait concepts (e.g., conscientiousness) to judge the supportiveness of a given target. However, such a matching of trait concepts used by the perceiver with characteristics of the provider may not be detected by a group design used by Lakey, Ross

et al. For instance, if a fourth of the subjects in this study infer support from extraversion information, a fourth from agreeableness, and a fourth from openness, one would expect that these effects would be obscured when analyzing the group as a whole.

In sum, I propose that social support judgments are, in part, based on a matching between person concepts the perceiver associates with support and the observed characteristics of targets in one's social environment. This perspective emphasizes the idiographic nature of the relation between the person and their social environment in that the people differ in their trait-support associations. Theories of human behavior which emphasize the idiographic nature of this relationship between the individual and environmental characteristics have a long history in psychology (Allport, 1966; Kelly, 1958; Lewin, 1935; Murray, 1938; Rotter, 1954).

The importance of idiographic matching within theories of social perception can be seen in "synapse" models of construct accessibility (Higgins et al, 1985; Higgins & King, 1981). According to this view, characteristics of the environment activate social concepts. Once a given concept has been activated, it is more likely to be activated in the future, thus accounting for the stability of a chronically accessible construct over time. The extent to which these constructs effect social judgment is partly a function of whether perceiver views these constructs as *applicable* to the judgment at hand. In the case of support judgments, I propose that people differ in the trait concepts (or combination of trait concepts) that people view as applicable to judgments of support. Thus, targets are judged as more or less supportive to the extent that their personality matches the concepts used by the perceiver to infer support.

Another influential personality theory that takes an idiographic stance on the

relationship between person and environment is that of George Kelly's Personal Construct Theory (1955). Like his modern counterparts in the field of social cognition research, Kelly assumed that people use various constructs to understand and interpret their environment. Similarly, as is the case with schema theories of personality (Markus, 1977), he assumed that people differ in their use of certain constructs. Thus, whereas some people might, for example, use concepts of warmth and sincerity to judge others, another person might rely upon concepts of intelligence and creativity.

Although an interactionist view of behavior has become increasingly popular in recent years (as evidenced by its prominence as a topic in the Annual Review of Psychology), the methodological advances to study such idiographic and potentially non-linear relationships between the person and environment have developed more slowly (Magnusson & Torestad, 1993). One notable attempt has been within a program of research has investigating the effects of inconsistent self concepts and psychological distress (Higgins, et al., 1985; Strauman, 1989; Strauman, 1992). In this paradigm, measures are obtained on subjects' actual self concept and concepts of who they want to be (i.e., ideal self) or who they feel they should be (i.e., ought self). Subjects are then exposed to primes of their own actual/ideal or actual/ought consistencies or inconsistencies. Results across a number of studies suggests that the priming of subjects' own actual/ideal inconsistencies leads to situational increases in dysphoria, whereas actual/ought inconsistencies leads to situational increases in anxiety.

Another example of research using idiographic procedures is an experiment by Niedenthal et al. (1985) investigating the role of concepts of self and others on housing choices among college students. Subjects made ratings of their own personality as well as

of who they believed to be the average person or prototype who lives in various housing options (e.g. apartments, dorms, fraternities, etc.). They found that the degree of overlap between subjects' self concept and their concepts of the prototype who lives in various housing options was related to their own housing choices with a greater overlap being associated with a greater preference for a particular housing choice. This study represents another example of research incorporating idiographic methods to study individuals' self concepts.

Both the program of research by Stauman and Higgins (1985,1992) and the study by Neidenthal et al. (1985) are particularly notable because idiographic methods are used to study general processes. This is important in that a common criticism of idiographic approaches is they often lack utility in deriving general principles of human behavior.

In order to investigate the hypothesized idiographic matching between the trait concepts perceivers associate with support and personality characteristics of a given target, it is first necessary to develop an index of the degree to which a person weights different traits as important to social support judgments. Consequently, I developed such a measure, the Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task, and conducted Study 1 to determine whether people differed in their use of different trait concepts to infer supportiveness. This measure consisted of a series of personality profiles tapping different levels and combinations of the Big-5 personality traits. Subjects were asked to rate each profile in terms of how supportive they thought a person with this profile would be. Each subjects' set of responses was analyzed separately using multiple regression, thus allowing me to determine the degree to which each subject weights each of the Big-5 in making support judgments. This method also allows for the investigation of subjects' possible use

of non-linear combinations of traits in support judgments.

Researchers have successfully used this idiographic method to investigate linear and non-linear uses of information in clinical judgments of psychopathology (Martin, 1957; Wiggins & Hoffman, 1968) and intelligence (Hoffman, 1960). For instance, in a study by Hoffman (1960), two judges were presented profiles of 100 students and asked to predict each students' intelligence on the basis of this information. These profiles consisted of the students' percentile rank on nine indices including such measures as high school GPA, mothers's education, study habits, credit hours attempted, and emotional anxiety. In an attempt to determine the extent to which each judge used a linear combination of the information provided to predict intelligence of the students, separate regression equations were calculated for each judge. Multiple-R^2 used as an index of the degree to which the linear combination of nine variables predicted intelligence. The multiple-R^2 when corrected for attenuation due to unreliability of judgment was 1.00 and .91 for the two judges respectively, suggesting that the linear model was almost a perfect model for the judgments of the first judge and accounted for the majority of the variance in the judgments of the second judge.

In Study 1, I was also interested in determining whether subjects' own personality was related to their idiographic trait-support associations. Consequently, subjects' ratings of their own personality and global level of perceived social support were also included. This aspect of the study is especially important in that it allows us to relate our findings to general principles in personality psychology. That is, if I were to find that subjects differ in the traits that they associate with supportiveness, this finding is only useful clinically insofar as I am able to identify relatively discrete clusters of people who rely on a given

trait or combination. For example, the findings of this study might reveal that the concepts people use to describe themselves may be the same concepts that they associate with supportiveness of others. In such a case, someone who views themselves as practical and conscientious would be likely to associate these qualities with supportiveness.

Study 1

The purpose of this study was to determine whether subjects differ in the traits that they associate with support, and to examine the personality correlates of these idiographic trait-support associations. In this study, idiographic trait-support associations were derived from subjects' responses to the Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task. Subjects rated the supportiveness of hypothetical personality profiles. Separate regression equations for each subject were then constructed to predict support from the personality traits. Thus, I was able to determine the extent to which an individual subject weighted each of the personality traits in judging support. I then examined the relationship between these idiographic trait-support associations and subjects' standing on the Big-5 personality dimensions.

Method

Subjects. 98 undergraduate students at Wayne State University were recruited to participate in the first study. Subjects received either course or extra credit in exchange for their participation. Of them, 33% were men, 64% were women, and 3% did not specify. Ages of subjects ranged from, 18 to 46. 62% of subjects were Caucasian, 30% were African American, and 8% were of Asian or Arabic descent.

Procedure. Subjects were given a packet containing the following measures: the Social Provisions Scale, and the Interpersonal Adjective Scale-Revised, and the Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task which was developed for the purposes of this research. Questionnaires were administered in undergraduate Psychology courses and completed on the subjects' own time. The packets were then collected the following class period, and subjects were thanked and debriefed.

Measures

Trait concepts associated with support. A semantic associations task, the Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task (for the purpose of brevity I will refer to this task as the Semantic Associations Task), was developed for this study in order to identify the traits and configurations of traits that persons associate with supportiveness. Each item contains a series of trait descriptors. Subjects are asked to read each personality profile and rate "how supportive would a person be if he/she had the following combinations of traits?" Response options range from "very supportive" to "very unsupportive." An example of an item is "not self-conscious, not self-assured, somewhat reliable, very literary, not tender-hearted." Appendix A includes a complete copy of the measure.

This questionnaire consists of 103 items, twenty of which are duplicates. Duplicate items were added as a validity check to assess the degree to which subjects are consistent in their responses. Each item consists of five trait adjectives with each tapping one of the Big-5 personality traits. Levels of the adjective are varied by the modifiers "not" "somewhat" and "very." These adjectives were taken from the Interpersonal Adjective Scale--Revised (Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990), a measure of the Big-5 with demonstrated psychometric properties. Only adjectives tapping positive poles of each dimension were used. Positive adjectives were selected to avoid double negatives such as "not unbold." The ranges of the factor loadings reported by Trapnell and Wiggins (1990) of the adjectives with their respective dimensions were as follows: .43 to .74 for extroversion, .41 to .76 for agreeableness, .36 to .84 for conscientiousness, .42 to .79 for neuroticism, and .40 to .66 for openness to experience.

In the development of this task, I first derived every possible combination of the five traits by the three levels (i.e., not, somewhat, and very). This resulted in a total of 243 combinations of traits by levels. The order of the traits within each item were then randomized such that each of the five traits had an equal likelihood of appearing in each of the five possible positions. Given the length of the original task, I decreased the number of items by roughly a third. However, in order to ensure that each combination of traits and levels of each trait were equally represented, it was first necessary to randomly select a third of the items and conduct Chi-square tests of independence on all possible 3 x 3 tables in which each table represented the co-occurrence of three levels of two traits. Non-significant Chi-squares would indicate that no systematic bias in which certain combinations of traits and levels were more likely to occur than others. Random selection of the items was accomplished through the use of the "random seed" procedure in SPSS. The final set of items consisted 83 items. The p values for all 3 x 3 tables ranged from .67 to .97 indicating that the combinations of traits and levels were relatively equally represented.

Perceived social support. The Social Provisions Scale (SPS; Cutrona & Russel, 1987) was employed to measure perceived social support. The SPS is a widely used measure of social support and is significantly correlated with measures of a number of related constructs such as morale, frequency of contact with friends, relationship closeness, and relationship conflict (Mancini & Bieszner, 1992). The internal consistency for our sample was .95.

Personality traits. The Interpersonal Adjective Scale-Revised (IAS-R; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990) was used to assess the Big-5 personality dimensions of neuroticism,

extroversion, openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness. The domain scales of IAS-R showed good internal consistency in a sample of 941 undergraduate students (Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990). Trapnell and Wiggins (1990) report alpha values in this study ranging from .87 to .94 (Openness and Extroversion domain scales, respectively). Additionally, the convergence of this measure with the Revised Neuroticism Extroversion Openness Personality Inventory (NEO-PIR; Costa & McCrae, 1992) was good, with values ranging from .65 to .76 (Conscientiousness and Agreeableness domain scales, respectively). Cronbach's Alpha for the current study ranged from .80 to .92 (Openness and Conscientiousness domain scales, respectively).

Results

In order to address the question of whether people differ in the extent to which they associate different person concepts with supportiveness in others, I constructed separate regression equations for each subject's responses to the Semantic Associations Task. Thus, the five trait concepts (i.e. neuroticism, extroversion, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness) were the predictors and subjects' ratings of the supportiveness of these profiles was the criterion. I was not only interested in subjects' linear use of single traits to infer supportiveness, but also in testing for non-linear effects, as well as for the use of configural combinations of traits. Therefore, for each subject, the main effects for the five traits were entered in the first step, their quadratic effects on the second, and all two-way interactions between the traits on the third. The beta weights in each subject's regression equation can be interpreted as the extent to which this subject associates the trait concept with the concept of supportiveness. The following is an example of an individual subject's regression equation. The variables listed represent significant predictors of supportiveness

for this given subject.

Subject #12: Supportiveness = a + (.37) agree + (.38) cons + (.26) extr + (.09) neur + (.36) open + (-1.3) $agree^2$ + (-1.0) $cons^2$ + (-1.3) $extr^2$ + (-1.5) $open^2$ + (-.33) extr x neur.

As one can see from this example, an individual subject's associations between a given trait and support is statistically represented by the beta weights in the regression equation. One can also see from this example that the configuration of traits subjects associate with support can be quite complex. Table 1 summarizes the results for each subject's regression equations. In looking at the idiographic trait-support associations across the sample, the majority of subjects associated agreeableness with support. That is, for 87 percent of the sample, the beta weights for the linear use of agreeableness were significant at the .05 level. This suggests that the majority of subjects in this sample associated the trait dimension of agreeableness with supportiveness. In all cases, the direction of the effect was positive such that high levels of agreeableness were related to high levels of supportiveness. However, subjects varied widely in the extent to which they associated this dimension with supportiveness. As indicated in Table 1, for subjects who associated agreeableness with supportiveness, the amount of variance in subjects' support concepts accounted for by agreeableness ranged from .03 to .69 (R^2 change). The beta weights ranged from .18 to .87.

Subjects associated other personality traits with supportiveness, but they did so to a lesser extent. Specifically, 47 percent of the sample demonstrated significant linear associations for openness, 24 percent for conscientiousness, 21 percent for extroversion, and 19 percent for neuroticism. In all significant cases, low levels of neuroticism and high

Table 1

Study 1--Idiographic associations between Trait Concepts and the Concept of Supportiveness.

subject	agree[1] R^2	agree[2,3] β	cons β	extr β	neur β	open β	interaction
001	.20*	.46	.21		-.22	.26 Q	
002	.19*	.46			32		ExN
003	.24*	.50 Q				.18	
004	.60*	.81 Q			-.14	.27	
005	.15*	.41	.29 Q	.22		.22	CxE
006	.26*	.53	.28 Q			.32	CxN
007	.26*	.54		-.24			ExO
008	.03	.20					
009	.45*	.70 Q				.18	
010	.47*	.72					ExN
011	.13*	.38				.28	AxE;ExN
012	.13*	.37 Q	.38 Q	.26 Q		.36 Q	AxE
013	.27*	.54 Q				.18	AxO
014	.57*	.79	Q		-.36	.18	AxE
015	.25*	.53	-.17	Q			
016	.40*	.66	Q	-.18		.20	
017	.03*	.18	.32	.36		.24	
018	.60*	.81					
019	.17*	.43 Q					
020	.03	-.19		.25			
021	.42*	.68	Q	Q	-.24		
022	.31*	.59				.18	
023	.56*	.78	Q			.16	
024	.01	.12					
025	.16*	.41 Q	Q		-.22	.20	AxC
026	.39*	.65 Q			-.19	.28	
027	.09*	.32			-.35	.19	AxO;ExN
028	.13*	.37			-.22		
029	.69*	.87 Q				.17	CxN
030	.55*	.77	.22				AxC;CxE
031	.23*	.50	Q	.30		.30	AxE
032	.57*		Q				AxC;ExO
033	.16*	.42 Q	.22	Q		.36	
034	.40*	.66 Q				.28	AxO
035	.13*	.38					
036	.62*	.82				.13	
037	.33*	.60	.32		-.18	.25	
038	.58*	.79		-.19			NxO
039	.42*	.68				.21	AxE
040	.40*	.66					AxE;ExO
041	.42*	.68	Q				
042	.58*	.79 Q					
043	.38*	.64			-.28	.17	
044	.31*	.58			-.20	.29	
045	.24*	.51	.17			.25	AxC;ExO
046	.41*	.67 Q				.18	ExN

subject	agree R^2	agree β	cons β	extr β	neur β	open β	interaction
047	.37*	.63			-.22	.48	
048	.00	-.07					AxC;CxN
049	.01	.11				.01	ExO
050	.01	.11		.26	Q	.31	AxO;ExO
051	.04*	.21 Q					
052	.52*	.75			-.25		
053	.36*	.63 Q	Q	.28		.16 Q	
054	.47*	.71					AxO
055	.61*	.82 Q				.13	AxC; ExN
056	.63*	.83					AxN;ExN; ExO
057	.18	.45	.19 Q			Q	CxN
058	.21*	.48 Q		-.21			
059	.27*	.55 Q		.17			
060	.00	-.10	.24	.25		Q	CxN
061	.21*	.46	Q	.22			ExN
062	.00	.00					ExN;ExO
063	.41*	.66 Q	Q				
064	.29*	.56 Q					
065	.46*	.70			Q		ExN;ExO
066	.06*	.24 Q	.20	.23 Q		.33 Q	CxE
067	.61*	.81 Q				.22	
068	.39*	.42 Q	.18 Q	.18		Q	AxO;NxO
069	.23*	.51 Q	.22 Q	.24	-.23	.28	ExN
070	.55*	.77 Q		-.15	-.14		CxN;CxO
071	.44*	.69					ExN
072	.49*	.73 Q					
073	.47*	.71			Q	.26	
074	.56*	.78 Q				.19 Q	OxN
075	.01	.07		-.22			CxE
076	.25*	.51 Q		Q	-.27	.32 Q	
077	.56*	.78 Q	.18		-.13		NxO
078	.43*	.69					NxO
079	.02	.14 Q				.27	CxO
080	.37*	.63	.21			.26	
081	.16*	.41 Q		.29 Q			
082	.07*	.28					NxO
083	.45*	.70 Q		Q		.16	AxC
084	.17*	.43	.24 Q	Q		.26	AxC
085	.05*	.23	Q				CxE
086	.10*	.33					NxO
087	.49*	.73				.23 Q	AxE;CxN;
088	.01	.12		Q			CxN
089	.53*	.76	.16		-.21		CxN;CxO
090	.29*	.56				.18	ExN
091	.39*	.65	Q		-.16		CxO
092	.09*	.31	.30			.21	AxN
093	.24*	.51				.34	CxO
094	.37*	.64	.17				
095	.34*	.61	.22	Q			

subject	agree R^2	agree β	cons β	extr β	neur β	open β	interaction
096	.60*	.81 Q					
097	.36*	.63 Q	.18		-.28	Q	NxO;AxO
098	.10*	.33	.20	.32		.19	AxN
099	.27*	.54 Q		-.19			CxE
100	.31*	.58 Q					

[1] This column represents the R square change values for agreeableness for all subjects. Values significant at the .05 level are denoted by an asterisk.

[2] Values in this and subsequent columns represent the Beta weight for the specified trait concepts and subject. Note that for agreeableness, all values including non-significant ones are listed. For the remaining columns only values significant at the .05 level are listed.

[3] The symbol "Q" is used to indicate the presence of a quadratic effect significant at the .05 level.

levels of openness were associated with high levels of support. The linear relation between conscientiousness and support was negative in 1 out of the 24 significant cases such that one subject associated low conscientiousness with high supportiveness. The linear relation between extroversion and supportiveness was negative in 1/3 of the significant cases such that 1/3 of the subjects associated introversion with high supportiveness.

In addition to linear effects, I also found evidence for quadratic relations between trait concepts and supportiveness. There were three general patterns to these non-linear effects. Figures 1 to 3 illustrated examples of these three patterns taken from the results of selected subjects.

The first figure illustrates a pattern whereby moderate levels of the trait are associated with high support ratings while low and high levels are associated with lower levels of support. The second figure shows a similar pattern with the exception that both moderate and high levels of a given trait are associated with high supportiveness ratings. Finally, the third figure illustrates a pattern opposite of Figure 1. That is, both high and low levels of a trait are associated with high supportiveness ratings while moderate levels are associated with lower levels.

As shown in Table 1, thirty seven percent of subjects relied on a non-linear function for agreeableness to infer supportiveness, twenty one percent for conscientiousness, eleven percent for openness, ten percent for extroversion, and three percent for neuroticism. All of the non-linear relations for the traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness where of the type illustrated in figures 1 and 2. That is, moderate levels or moderate and high levels of a trait were associated with high levels of

Figure 1

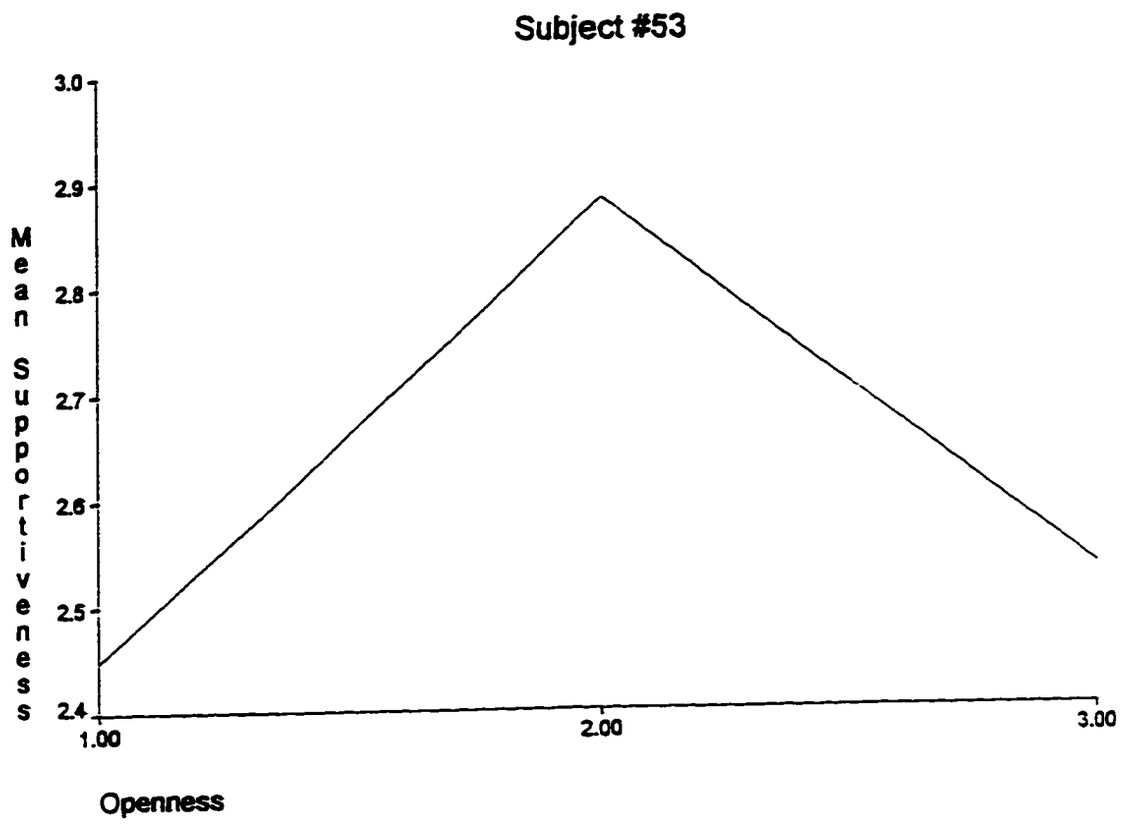

Subject #53
Mean Supportiveness
3.0
2.9
2.8
2.7
2.6
2.5
2.4
1.00
2.00
3.00
Openness

Figure 2

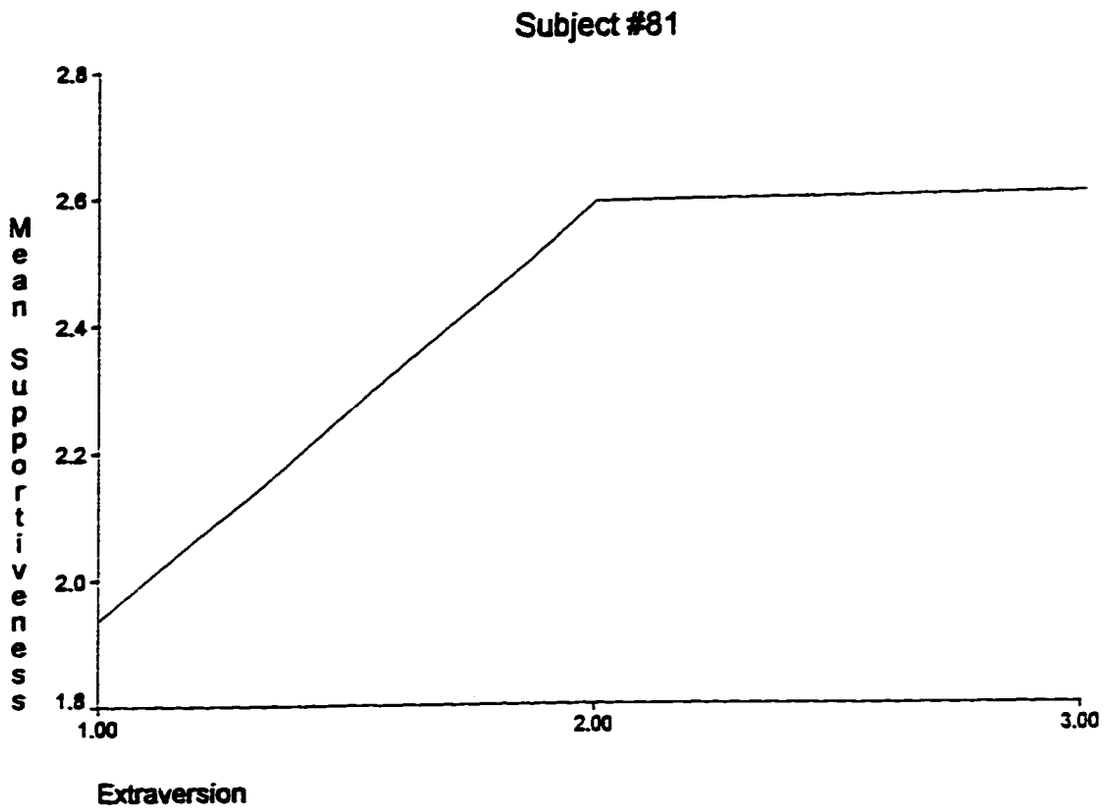
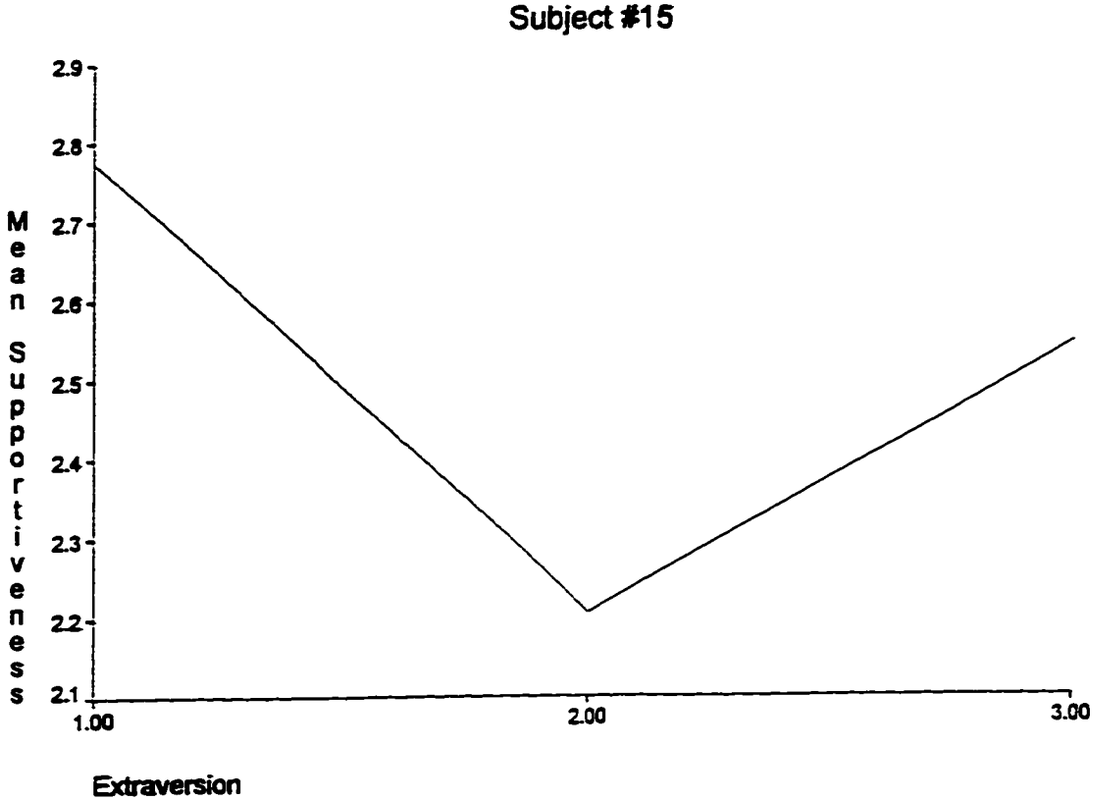

Subject #81
Mean Supportiveness
2.8
2.6
2.4
2.2
2.0
1.8
1.00
2.00
3.00
Extraversion

Figure 3


Subject #15
Mean Supportiveness
2.9
2.8
2.7
2.6
2.5
2.4
2.3
2.2
2.1
1.00
2.00
3.00
Extraversion

supportiveness whereas low levels of the trait were associated with lower ratings of supportiveness. Additionally, one of the three quadratic effects for neuroticism and nine of the ten quadratic effects for extroversion match patterns shown in either Figures 1 or 2. The remainder of the effects for neuroticism and for extroversion match the pattern shown in figure three. That is, these subjects rate both high and low levels of the trait in question as more indicative of supportiveness than moderate levels of the trait.

To determine whether some subjects used a combination of two different trait concepts to infer supportiveness, I tested for all possible two way interactions of the five trait concepts. The results revealed 57 percent of the sample demonstrated a pattern whereby supportiveness was associated with a combination of two different traits. Of subjects displaying 2-way interactions, 68 percent demonstrated one two-way interaction, 29 percent used two different combinations, and one percent used three combinations. The most common interactions were Extroversion by Neuroticism (17%). The second most common were Conscientiousness by Neuroticism and Extroversion by Openness interactions (12%). Figures 4 - 6 represent examples of the three types of Extroversion by Neuroticism interactions.

As shown in all three figures, all three subjects chosen to represent the three types of interactions rated personality profiles with high levels of neuroticism as supportive when high levels of extroversion are also present. Conversely, these three subjects rated profiles with high levels of neuroticism as unsupportive when low levels of extroversion are present. However, three different patterns emerge when these subjects rated personality profiles in which the hypothetical person had low levels of neuroticism. Figure 4 illustrated a pattern whereby the subject saw the profiles with high levels of emotional

Figure 4

Subject #11

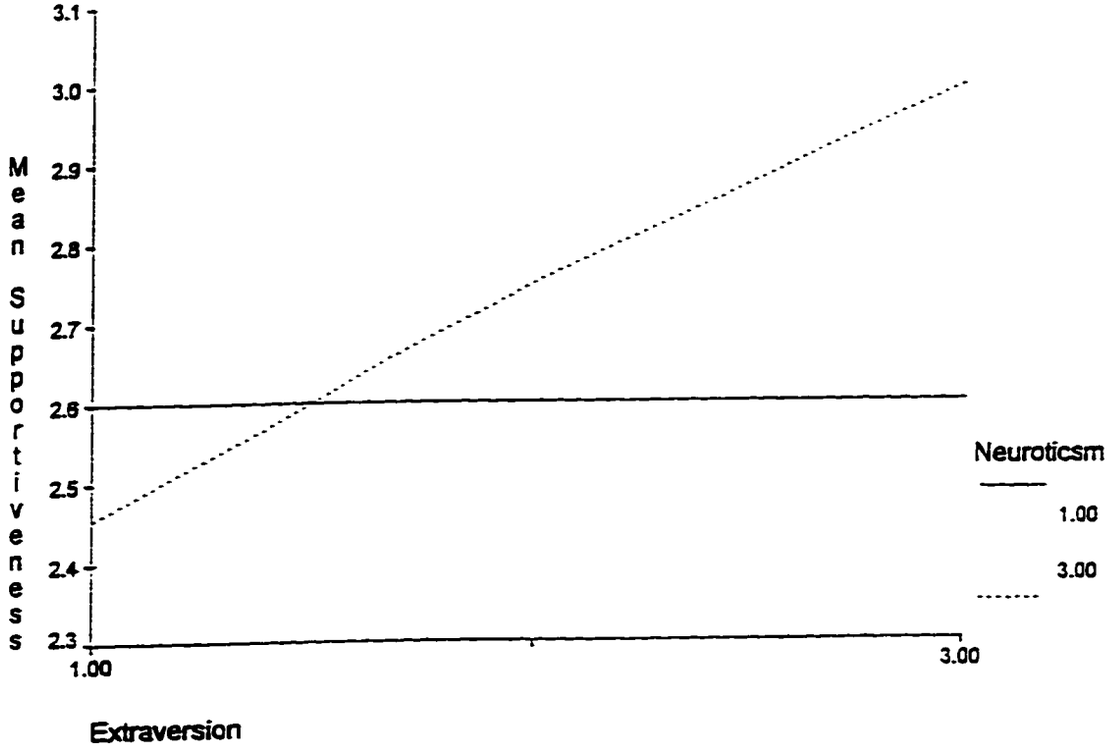


Figure 5

Subject #46

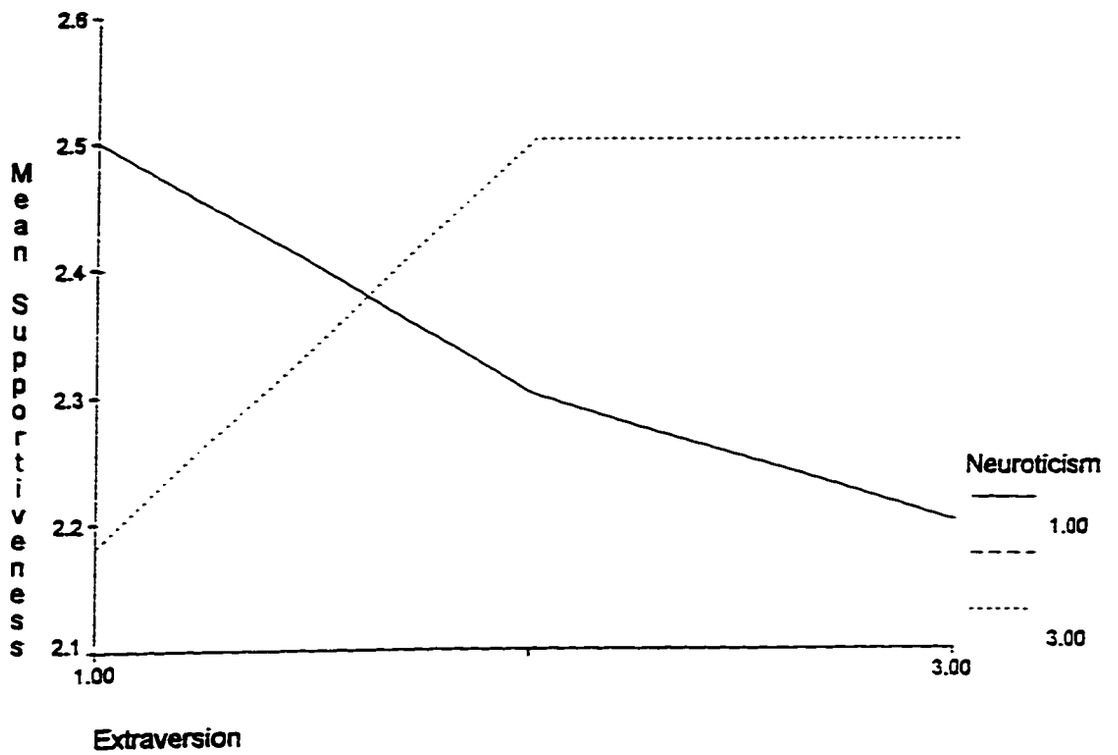
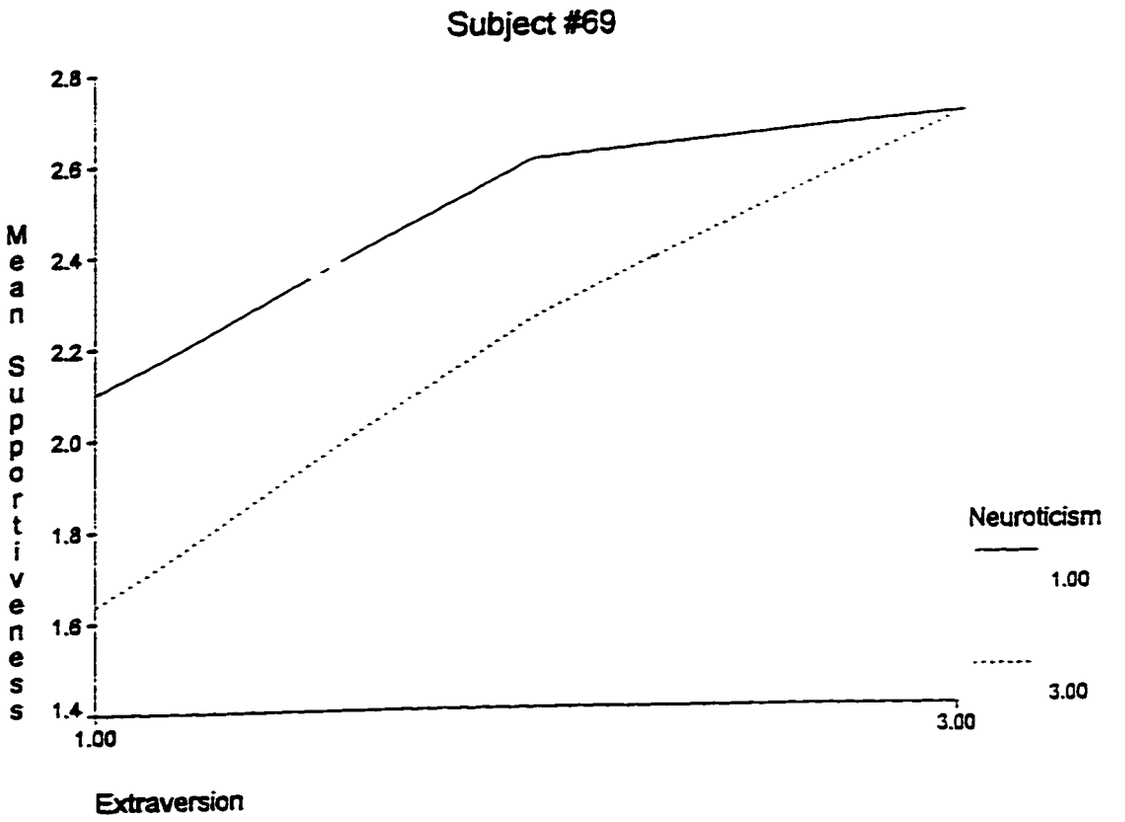


Figure 6


Subject #69
Mean Supportiveness
2.8
2.6
2.4
2.2
2.0
1.8
1.6
1.4
1.00
3.00
Extraversion
Neuroticism
1.00
3.00

stability as moderately supportive regardless of whether the profile was low or high in extroversion. In Figure 5 the subject rated emotionally stable hypothetical persons as unsupportive when the hypothetical persons were extroverted, and supportive when the persons were introverted. The opposite was true for the subject portrayed in Figure 6.

In summary, the idiographic analyses indicated that subjects differ in the extent to which they associated trait concepts and configuration of trait concepts with supportiveness. The next group of analyses focused on whether these idiographic trait-support associations were related to individual differences in personality and global ratings of perceived social support at the nomothetical level. Specifically, I computed correlations between the trait-support associations derived from the idiographic analyses and both personality and perceived social support measures. R^2 change values from the within-subjects analyses were used as an index of participants' linear use of a trait concept to infer support. In order to preserve the direction of the effects, negative signs were added to those that had negative beta weights. This allows for interpretations not only of whether the use of a trait concept to infer support is related to personality, but about the direction of use, as well. Because the distributions of the non-linear effects and the interactions were relatively bimodal, they were treated as dichotomous variables. That is, they were scored as 1 or 0 depending on whether or not the beta weight for a given variable was significant for a given subject.

The results of these analyses indicated that subjects' associations between agreeableness and support was related to personality ratings of agreeableness ($r = .25$, $p = .01$) such that subjects who associated agreeableness with support were more likely to rate themselves as agreeable. Subjects high on perceived support were also more likely to

associate agreeableness with supportiveness (r =.21, p < .05). Furthermore, subjects' linear association between openness and support was related to personality ratings of openness (r = .23, p < .02). Evidence was also found for discriminant validity of these two effects in that subjects' association between either of these two traits and support were not related to personality variables other that agreeableness and openness respectively. In terms of interactions between trait concepts, the use of the combination of agreeableness and neuroticism was related to personality ratings of neuroticism (r = .21, p < .05) and extroversion (r = -.20, p < .05) such that subjects who used the combination of these two trait concepts to infer supportiveness were also more likely to rate themselves as high in neuroticism and low in extroversion. The combined use of agreeableness and neuroticism was also related to perceived social support (r = -.25, p = .01). Low support individuals were more likely to use the configuration of agreeableness and neuroticism to infer support than high support individuals.

The analyses presented in the previous paragraph provide one way of relating the large number of idiographic effects to group measures of personality. Another way to classify the idiographic effects is to identify clusters of subjects who are similar to each other in the traits that they associate with support, and to then determine whether these groups of subjects differ from each other in personality. In order to accomplish this, I conducted a cluster analysis using an agglomerative hierarchical method and specified that subjects were to be classified on the basis of their R^2 change values for the five trait-support associations. This type of cluster analysis was chosen over inverse factor analysis because of the tendency for inverse factor analysis to yield split factor loadings (Borgen & Weiss, 1971). Additionally K-means cluster analysis was counterindicated because of the

absence of apriori hypotheses regarding the number of clusters (Anderberg, 1973). The optimal number of clusters was determined by examining a plot of the agglomeration coefficient against the number of clusters and looking at where the function leveled off (Blashfield & Aldenderfer, 1978). Using this method, a five cluster solution appeared optimal. To better understand these clusters, I conducted a MANOVA with the clusters as the grouping variables and the R^2 change values as the dependent variables. The omnibus effect showed that the subjects assigned to different clusters differed in the degree to which they associated traits with support (Wilks Lambda = .082, $F_{(20, 289.5)} = 16.33$, $p<.001$). Specifically, the results indicated significant differences between the clusters in subjects' use of agreeableness ($F_{(4,91)} = 3.6$, $p < .01$). Post hoc tests revealed that all clusters differed from each other on the extent to which subjects associated agreeableness with supportiveness (for the means of each idiographic trait-support association in each cluster, see Table 2).

Table 2
Study 1--Mean trait-support associations (R^2 change values) in a five-cluster solution.

	Agreeableness	Openness	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Conscientiousness
Cluster 1 (N=16)	.15[1]	.04	.02	.01	.03
Cluster 2 (N=17)	.27[1]	.05	.01	.00	.02
Cluster 3 (N=19)	.58[1]	.02	.01	.00	.00
Cluster 4 (N=18)	.06[1]	.02	.00	.02	.01
Cluster 5 (N=26)	.41[1]	.03	.02	.00	.01

(Within a column, clusters with the same supercript are significantly different at the .05 level.)

Next I examined whether subjects assigned to different clusters differed in personality. Consequently, I conducted a second MANOVA using the five clusters as the grouping variable and the personality variables as the factors. The omnibus effect showed that the subjects assigned to different clusters differed in their standing on the personality variables (Wilks Lambda = .67, $F_{(20, 289.5)} = 1.88$, $p = .01$). Specifically, the results indicated significant difference in agreeableness ($F_{(4,91)} = 182.77$, $p < .001$). Post hoc test revealed that one cluster differed significantly from the other five. An examination of the means indicated that the cluster of subjects who showed the lowest semantic associations between agreeableness ($\bar{X} = .06$) also had the lowest scores in personality agreeableness ($\bar{X} = 78.39$). Thus, the results of the cluster analysis are consistent with the results of the previous analyses using simple Pearson correlations between personality and the R^2 change value for a specific trait-support association.

One remaining question in this study is to what extent were subjects consistent in their responses to the Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task? This question is especially pertinent because the nature of the task requires the subject to weigh a number of pieces of information simultaneously to derive a supportiveness judgment. Thus, the potentially mentally-challenging nature of the task may lead subjects to become frustrated and to respond randomly. In order to discern how consistent subjects were in their completion of items on this task, I calculated correlations between the twenty duplicate items separately for each subject. The results revealed significant correlations between the duplicate items for 66% of subjects (see Table 3). In order to determine the effect that inconsistent responding had upon the analyses, I first examined the extent to which consistent and inconsistent responders differed in the number of trait concepts used to

Table 3

Study 1--Pearson correlations between twenty duplicate items of the Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task (SPSAT)

Subjec	Correlation	P Value	Subjec	Correlation	P Value
001	.05	.84	038	.71	.00
002	-.29	.22	039	.59	.00
003	.40	.09	040	.83	.00
004	.57	.01	041	.56	.01
005	.12	.60	042	.72	.00
006	-.05	.82	043	.71	.00
007	.76	.00	044	.32	.16
008	-.30	.19	045	.57	.00
009	.80	.00	046	.55	.01
010	.42	.06	047	.62	.00
011	.49	.03	048	.02	.94
012	.57	.00	049	.29	.21
013	.36	.12	050	.18	.46
014	.58	.00	051	-.17	.48
015	.12	.62	052	.58	.00
016	.51	.02	053	.84	.00
017	.61	.00	054	.50	.02
018	.69	.00	055	.58	.00
019	.10	.65	056	.82	.00
020	.44	.05	057	.64	.00
021	.55	.01	058	.51	.02
022	.31	.19	059	.36	.12
023	.58	.01	060	.81	.00
024	.02	.92	061	.54	.02
025	.47	.04	062	-.10	.66
026	.22	.35	063	.69	.00
027	.54	.01	064	.52	.02
028	.24	.32	065	.55	.01
029	.96	.00	066	.47	.04
030	.57	.00	067	.72	.00
031	.33	.16	068	.68	.00
032	.90	.00	069	.50	.02
033	-.31	.18	070	.81	.00
034	.80	.00	071	.30	.20
035	.61	.00	072	.79	.00
036	.77	.00	073	.55	.01
037	.46	.04	074	.70	.00

Subjec	Correlation	P Value	Subjec	Correlation	P Value
075	.07	.76	089	.06	.80
076	.73	.00	090	.55	.01
077	.68	.00	091	.61	.00
078	-.16	.51	092	.05	.84
079	-.15	.52	093	.39	.09
080	.69	.00	094	.50	.02
081	.71	.00	095	.57	.01
082	-.42	.06	096	.84	.00
083	.70	.00	097	.53	.02
084	.25	.29	098	.24	.32
085	.21	.38	099	.12	.60
086	.25	.29	100	.57	.01
087	.63	.00			

infer support. If a subject is responding in a random fashion, then we should observe a smaller number of significant trait-support associations. In order to address this question, I calculated an independent samples t-test using consistency as the grouping variable and number of linear and non-linear effects as the dependent variable. The results indicate that consistent responders demonstrated a larger number of linear and non-linear effects ($t(96) = 2.44$, $p=.02$, $\underline{X} = 3.8$) than did inconsistent responders ($\underline{X} = 3.0$). I then recomputed the correlations between the linear use of a trait concept and subjects' standing on that trait using only consistent responders. However, this modification did not result in findings different from those using the entire sample.

Discussion

Study 1 was designed to investigate one possible mechanism involved in Perceiver x Supporter matching in support judgments. Specifically, this study explored the question of whether people differ in the extent to which they associate different trait concepts with supportiveness. Because I was interested in examining individual differences in the traits persons associate with support, idiographic methods were used to address this question. The results did, in fact, reveal a wide variety of different linear, non-linear, and configural relationships between trait concepts and the concept of supportiveness. That is, subjects differed in the personality traits they associated with supportiveness, as well as in the level or levels of a trait they viewed as indicative of high supportiveness. Furthermore, a number of subjects showed interactions between of traits such that whether they viewed high levels of one trait concept as a marker of high supportiveness depended upon levels of another trait concept. The most robust finding of this study was that, across subjects, the majority of the sample saw the concept of agreeableness as being related to the

concept of supportiveness. However, another important finding is that the magnitude of this effect varied substantially across subjects. For some subjects, agreeableness and supportiveness appeared to represent the some construct. Conversely, for some subjects this association was nominal.

A second goal of this study was to determine whether it was possible to link the idiographic use of a given trait concept with individual differences in personality and perceived social support at the nomothetical level. The results revealed significant effects for agreeableness and openness. That is, subjects high in agreeableness were more likely than those low in agreeableness to use the concept of agreeableness to infer supportiveness. Similarly, subjects high in openness were more likely than those low in openness to use the concept of openness to infer supportiveness. The results also indicated that subjects high in perceived social support were more likely than low support subjects to associate aggreeableness with support. Deleting subjects with unreliable protocols did not increase the magnitude of relationships between the use of a given trait concept and the personality variables.

One limitation of this study is the nature of the Personality Semantic Associations Task. For each item subjects were asked to rate the supportiveness of a hypothetical person with specified levels of the Big-5 personality traits. This task does not address how subjects' use personality information to rate the supportiveness of real-world targets, nor whether the Big-5 personality traits are even the crucial dimensions upon which subjects infer supportiveness in real-world targets. Thus, the results of this study speak primarily to the question of which trait concepts an individual person associates with the concept of supportiveness in hypothetical persons. An important question is whether the findings

based on the Semantic Associations Task apply to more realistic targets. Study 2 uses two different methods to address this issue.

Study 2

The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, it was designed to replicate the findings from Study 1. Consequently, subjects completed the Semantic Associations Task (SPSAT), as well as the same nomothetic measures of personality and perceived social support used in Study 1.

The second purpose of Study 2 was to link idiographic trait-support associations to personality and support judgments of actual targets. The findings from Study 1 indicate that subjects differ in the traits that they weigh in judging the supportiveness of hypothetical profiles. Further, subjects weigh a specific trait as being important to support insofar as they see themselves as high on that particular trait. This suggests a similarity effect in support judgments. That is, subjects rated hypothetical targets as supportive insofar as targets were similar to themselves in personality. What remains to be seen is whether the same processes can be observed using more realistic stimuli, i.e. actual targets. This comes down to an issue of the external validity of these idiographic trait-support associations. Two different methods were used to address this issue. Subjects rated both the personality and supportiveness of a target in their own social network. In the first method, I attempted to replicate the similarity effects found in Study 1 using support judgments of actual network members. To do this, an index of the correspondence between subjects' personality ratings of themselves and the targets was derived. This index of similarity in personality was then used to predict subjects' ratings of targets' support. The second method attempted to establish a direct link between the idiographic trait-support associations, as measured by the Semantic Associations Task, and support judgments of actual network members. It was hypothesized that if a subject

weights a trait as important in support, then they will judge actual targets who are high on this trait as more supportive than subjects who are low on this trait. This hypothesis translates into a statistical interaction between the idiographic trait-support associations and ratings of targets' traits in predicting targets' support.

Method

Subjects. 202 undergraduate students at Wayne State University were recruited to participate in this study. Subjects received extra credit in exchange for their participation. Of them, 78% were women, 21% were men, and 1% did not specify. Ages of subjects ranged from 19 to 50. 63% of subjects were Caucasian, 22% were African American, 10% were of Asian or Arabic descent, and 5% did not specify.

Procedure. Subjects completed a packet of questionnaires containing the same measures used in Study 1. Subjects were also asked to list the names of five people with whom they interacted most frequently, and then to rate the personality and supportiveness of the person on a predetermined line of the list. The line that a given subject to select was randomly determined. This method was used to help ensure that there was a sufficient range of supportiveness ratings for the sample. If every subject rated their best friend it might result in the support ratings of targets being uniformly high.

Measures.

Trait concepts associated with support. The same Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task used in Study 1 was used to measure the traits or configuration of traits persons rely on to infer supportiveness.

Perceived social support. As in Study 1, the Social Provisions Scale (SPS; Cutrona & Russel, 1987) was employed to measure subjects' global level of perceived social support.

Cronbach's alpha for the measure in this sample was .91.

Target Supportiveness. To assess perceived support from targets a combination of items from different measures was used. Subjects completed the five randomly-selected items from the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (Cohen & Hoberman, 1983), and one item from the Social Support Questionnaire (Sarason, Sarason, Shearin, & Pierce, 1987), two widely-used measures of perceived social support. Items were modified to refer to the target being rated and to include a 5-point response option. This measure was chosen because it was used in Lakey, Ross, et al. (1996), and therefore, allows for replication of their findings. However, because these items reflect the theme of the provision of specific aid rather than interpersonal warmth and responsiveness, six items from the Social Provisions Scale (SPS; Cutrona & Russel, 1987) were also included as a measure of the latter type of perceived support. For this sample, Cronbach's Alpha was .90 for the composite scale, .68 for the tangible support items, and .91 for the emotional support items.

Personality traits. The Interpersonal Adjective Scale-Revised (IAS-R; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990) was used to assess the Big-5 personality dimensions of neuroticism, extroversion, openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness. Subjects completed two separate forms of this measure, one with instructions to rate their own personality and one under instructions to rate the personality of the person with whom they indicated interacting with on a regular basis. The Cronbach's alphas for subjects' ratings of targets' personality for this sample ranged from .85 (extroversion) to .95 (conscientiousness). In terms of subjects' ratings of their own personality, the Cronbach's alphas for this sample ranged from .83 (openness) to .94 (conscientiousness).

Results

Prior to conducting the idiographic analyses, I examined the consistency of subjects' responses to the Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task. To do this, I calculated the correlation between the twenty duplicate items for each subject separately. Table 4 summarizes the correlations for each subject. As demonstrated in Table 4, 65% of the sample demonstrated a significant correlation between the duplicate items on this measure (compared to 66% of the sample in Study 1). In light of the finding from Study 1 that consistent responders used a greater number of traits and combinations of traits than inconsistent responders, only the consistent responders were used in the subsequent analyses, resulting in a modified sample size of 132.[1]

The findings from the idiographic analyses of Study 1 indicated that subjects varied widely in their trait-support associations. The next set of analyses were designed to replicate these findings. Consequently, I constructed separate regression equations for each subject's responses to the Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task of the same form as those used in Study 1. Table 5 summarizes the results of each subject's regression equation. In order to make comparisons between Study 1 and Study 2, Table 6 summarizes the percent of subjects showing each specific effect in each study. As one can see, agreeableness was a significant predictor of supportiveness for the majority of the

[1]The idiographic analyses in Study 2 differ from those of Study 1 in that they are based only on consistent responders. In Study 1, when inconsistent responders were deleted it did not effect the magnitude of the correlations between the idiographic trait-support associations and the personality variables. However, because a third of the sample was lost, it is unclear whether the failure to find stronger personality correlates was due to loss of power. In Study 2 we had the luxury of a much larger original sample, therefore, we could afford to drop inconsistent responders without concerns that this would diminish our power to detect effects.

Table 4
Study 2--Pearson correlations between twenty duplicate items of the Support and Personality Semantic Associations Task (SPSAT).

Subject	Correlation	P value	Subject	Correlation	P value
001	.54	.02	038	.41	.07
002	.44	.05	039	-.12	.62
003	.74	.00	040	.81	.00
004	.87	.00	041	.78	.00
005	-.03	.89	042	.22	.34
006	-.12	.61	043	.32	.16
007	.83	.00	044	.69	.00
008	.53	.02	045	.95	.00
009	.11	.65	046	.76	.00
010	.58	.01	047	.40	.08
011	.70	.00	048	.70	.00
012	.90	.00	049	.31	.19
013	.78	.00	050	.54	.01
014	.77	.00	051	.26	.28
015	.45	.05	052	.80	.00
016	.24	.30	053	.42	.07
017	.48	.03	054	.88	.00
018	.10	.68	055	-.13	.60
019	.92	.00	056	-.20	.39
020	.16	.52	057	.66	.00
021	.63	.00	058	.86	.00
022	.51	.02	059	.37	.11
023	.18	.45	060	.18	.45
024	.60	.00	061	.85	.00
025	.00	1.0	062	.78	.00
026	.65	.00	063	.62	.00
027	-.17	.48	064	.51	.02
028	.72	.00	065	.81	.00
029	.29	.22	066	.40	.08
030	.28	.22	067	.88	.00
031	.57	.01	068	.26	.26
032	.09	.69	069	.85	.00
033	.64	.00	070	.30	.24
034	.54	.01	071	.01	.95
035	.86	.00	072	-.06	.80
036	.40	.08	073	.89	.00
037	.72	.00	074	.74	.00

Subject	Correlation	P value	Subject	Correlation	P value
075	.52	.02	116	.13	.58
076	.71	.00	117	.45	.05
077	.58	.00	118	.77	.00
078	.56	.01	119	.45	.04
079	.68	.00	120	.64	.00
080	.31	.19	121	.58	.00
081	.70	.00	122	.55	.01
082	.47	.04	123	.49	.03
083	.54	.01	124	.05	.84
084	.93	.00	125	.61	.00
085	.22	.36	126	.55	.01
086	.37	.11	127	.46	.04
087	.49	.03	128	.58	.00
088	.72	.00	129	.79	.00
089	.45	.05	130	.73	.00
090	.18	.46	131	.80	.00
091	.63	.00	132	.51	.02
092	.38	.10	133	.51	.02
093	.35	.13	134	.65	.00
094	.65	.00	135	.76	.00
095	.39	.09	136	.81	.00
096	.54	.01	137	.42	.07
097	.81	.00	138	.45	.05
098	.50	.02	139	.34	.15
099	.36	.12	140	.84	.00
100	.78	.00	141	.00	1.0
101	.14	.55	142	.80	.00
102	.62	.00	143	.70	.00
103	.60	.00	144	.15	.53
104	.47	.03	145	.24	.31
105	.00	1.00	146	.50	.02
106	.92	.00	147	.42	.08
107	-.23	.34	148	.33	.16
108	.52	.02	149	.78	.00
109	.80	.00	150	.80	.00
110	.51	.02	151	.52	.02
111	.66	.00	152	.79	.00
112	.20	.40	153	.11	.65
113	.74	.00	154	.27	.24

Subject	Correlation	P value	Subject	Correlation	P value
114	.23	.34	155	.71	.00
115	.19	.42	156	.62	.00
157	-.09	.71	180	.75	.00
158	.38	.10	181	.47	.04
159	.35	.13	182	.58	.00
160	.68	.00	183	.80	.00
161	.53	.02	184	.77	.00
162	-.20	.39	185	.66	.00
163	.58	.00	186	.74	.00
164	.52	.02	187	.74	.00
165	.51	.02	188	.84	.00
166	.70	.00	189	.68	.00
167	.55	.01	190	.42	.06
168	.72	.00	191	.41	.07
169	.35	.13	192	.20	.40
170	.65	.00	193	.38	.10
171	-.25	.29	194	.37	.11
172	.50	.03	195	.73	.00
173	.57	.01	196	.74	.00
174	.83	.00	197	.55	.01
175	.17	.48	198	.64	.00
176	.55	.01	199	.52	.02
177	.86	.00	200	.28	.23
178	.31	.18	201	.77	.00
179	.32	.17	202	.80	.00

Table 5

Study 2--Idiographic Associations between Trait Concepts and the Concept of Supportiveness.[4]

subject	agree[1] R2	agree[2,3] β	cons β	extr β	neur β	open β	interaction
001	.23*	.50 Q			-.28	.41 Q	AxC; ExN
002	.39*	.65 Q			-.19		AxC; CxN
003	.48*	.73 Q	Q				ExN: NxO
004	.41*	.67				.26	CxN; ExO
007	.53*	.76 Q					ExO
008	.11*	.35 Q			-.38		AxN; CxE
010	.21*	.48					
011	.57*	.79 Q				.13	
012	.67*	.86 Q					
013	.53*	.76		-.18	-.14 Q		NxO
014	.41*	.67			-.18	.24	
015	.03	.18		Q			AxC
017	.12*	.37 Q			-.20		
019	.47*	. 72 Q	-.18				
021	.29*	.56 Q					ExO
022	.42*	.68	.22	-.19			AxE; CxO
024	.32*	.59 Q					
026	.52*	.75 Q	Q			.22	
028	.56*	.78	Q				AxE
031	.43*	.69	Q		-.20		
033	.30*	.57					
034	.36*	.63 Q			Q	.23	CxN; CxO
035	.36*	.64 Q					CxN
037	.23*	.50 Q		.25 Q		.35	
040	.00	.02 Q		.25 Q	-.44	.23	ExO
041	.35*	.62		-.40			AxE
044	.00	.04 Q					AxN
045	.68*	.86	Q		-.14		ExN
046	.66*	.85 Q					AxE;ExN; ExO; NxO
048	.49*	.73		.18	-.17	.33 Q	AxC
050	.41*	.66 Q				.36 Q	CxN
052	.58*	.80 Q		Q		.29	
054	.50*	.74 Q					AxE
057	.19*	.45				.31	
058	.39*	.65 Q			-.23	.21	

subject	agree R2	agree β	cons β	extr β	neur β	open β	interaction
061	.29*	.56				.26	AxO
062	.25*	.53	.23 Q			.16	CxE
063	.50*	.74 Q			-.22	.25	
064	.41*	.66 Q	Q			.25	
065	.46*	.71 Q				.14	
067	.60*	.82	Q			.23	
069	.65*	.84 Q				.21	CxE; ExN; NxO
073	.75*	.91 Q		-.15			
074	.20*	.46 Q			-.26		AxC; CxN
075	.43*	.69					
076	.24*	.51 Q		.19	-.24	.27	
077	.01	.08	.27	.41			
078	.08*	.29 Q	.24	.41		.41 Q	
079	.46*	.71			-.17		
081	.35*	.62					
082	.27*	.54 Q	.17	.18	-.21	.20 Q	
083	.39*	.65 Q				.23	
084	.46*	.71	Q	.16	.14	.16	NxO
087	.43*	.69 Q				.20	CxE; ExN; NxO
088	.27*	.55 Q	.19	.19		.21	AxN;CxE; CxN;CxO; ExN;ExO; NxO
089	.47*	.72 Q			-.16		
091	.28*	.55 Q	.19 Q	.23	-.44	.30	
094	.09*	.31	.28	.48 Q	-.31	.30	
096	.07*	.28	.19 Q	.23		.39	
097	.61*	.82 Q				.14	
098	.33*	.60	.19	.23	-.22		
100	.02	.14	Q	.37	-.16	.52	
102	.42*	.68 Q	.24 Q	.16	-.24		
103	.47*	.72 Q			Q	.25	
104	.26*	.53 Q	Q	.32		.28 Q	
106	.69*	.87 Q					ExO
108	.37*	.63	Q	-.25	-.19	.39	
109	.51*	.75		.25			CxN
110	.42*	.68		.14	-.23	.20	
111	.52*	.76		-.15	-.24		

subject	agree R2	agree β	cons β	extr β	neur β	openβ	interaction
113	.40*	.66 Q					ExN
117	.26*	.53		.27 Q	-.22		
118	.48*	.73	Q	-.14	-.20	.26	
119	.31*	.59	.22				CxN
120	.42*	.68			-.27		
121	.19*	.46 Q	Q		-.18		
122	.16*	.42		.18			AxN
123	.27*	.54 Q					
124	.24*	.52	.23				
126	.06*	.25	.22 Q	.34	-.28	.22	AxC;ExN
127	.43*	.68	Q				
128	.30*	.57 Q				.19	
129	.38*	.65 Q	-.18		-.26	.19	
130	.07*	.28	.24 Q	Q	-.23	.18 Q	
131	.45*	.70			-.37 Q		
132	.50*	.74 Q					ExO
133	.36*	.62 Q	Q		-.21	.28	
134	.43*	.68 Q			-.15		
135	.08*	.30	.35 Q		-.17	.29	
136	.58	.79					AxN
138	.45*	.70					CxE;ExO; NxO
140	.39*	.66	.16 Q			.22	AxE
142	.11*	.35	.24	.30	-.28	.33 Q	
143	.06*	.25 Q	.20		-.24		
146	.24*	.52	.25		-.38 Q	.32	
149	.26*	.53 Q			Q		
150	.59*	.81 Q					
151	.02	.16	.29	.25		.22	
152	.50*	.74					ExN
155	.48*	.73				.26	
156	.28*	.55 Q	Q	.26 Q		.30 Q	
160	.40*	.66		Q	-.20	.19	
161	.23*	.50				.29	
163	.01	.11	.23				AxO;CxO
164	.12*	.36 Q			-.28	.49 Q	
165	.26*	.53			-.18		NxO
166	.48*	.72			-.15	.23	
167	.04	.20		Q			
168	.42*	.68	.16			.22	AxE;ExN; ExO

170	.38*	.65	Q				
172	.02	.17	.25 Q	.28		.25	AxN
173	.27*	.54 Q			Q	.20	
174	.35*	.62 Q	.22		Q		CxE
176	.44*	.70	.25	.20			CxE
177	.52*	.76		-.16	-.17 Q	.19	
180	.38*	.64 Q				.28 Q	
181	.45*	.70					AxC
182	.17*	.43	.20		-.26	.27	AxC
183	.28*	.55	.23	Q		.17	
184	.43*	.69	Q			.19	
185	.23*	.51 Q	Q			.18	AxE
186	.45*	.71					
187	.40*	.66 Q					
188	.65*	.84				.15	NxO
189	.41*	.67	.25 Q	.25		.30	
195	.26*	.54 Q	Q	Q	-.24	.31 Q	AxO
196	.28*	.56 Q		Q	-.31	.31	
197	.43*	.68	Q			.27	
198	.52*	.75 Q				.27	CxO
199	.43*	.68 Q		.17			CxE
201	.42*	68 Q	Q	Q	-.31	.18	CxE
202	.09*	.32	.26	.39		.25	

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[1] This column represents the R square change values for all subjects. Values significant at the .05 level are denoted by an asterisk.

[2] Values in this and subsequent columns represent the Beta weight for the specified trait concepts and subject. Note that for agreeableness, all values including non-significant ones are listed. For the remaining columns only values significant at the .05 level are listed.

[3] The symbol "Q" is used to indicate the presence of a quadratic effect significant at the .05 level.

[4] This table only includes the effects for consistent responders.

Table 6
Percent of within-subjects effects for Studies 1 and 2.

	Study 1	Study 2
Linear effects		
Aggreeableness	87%	92%
Conscientiousness	24%	24%
Extraversion	21%	28%
Neuroticism	19%	36%
Openness	47%	53%
Quadradics		
Agreeableness	37%	48%
Conscientiousness	21%	24%
Extraversion	10%	11%
Neuroticism	3%	7%
Openness	11%	9%
Interactions		
One	40%	28%
Two	16%	8%
Three or more	1%	9%
Consistency of duplicate items	66%	65%

sample in Study 2. That is, for 92 percent of the sample (compared to 87% in Study 1), the beta weights for the linear use of agreeableness were significant at the .05 level. In all cases, the direction of the effect was positive such that high levels of agreeableness were related to high levels of supportiveness. As in Study 1, subjects varied widely in the extent to which they associated this dimension with supportiveness, with R^2 Change values ranging from .00 to .75. The beta weights ranged from .02 to .91.

Subjects associated other personality traits with supportiveness, but they did so to a lesser extent than they did with agreeableness. Specifically, 53 percent of the sample demonstrated significant linear associations for openness (compared to 47% in Study 1), 36 percent for neuroticism (compared to 19% in Study 1), 28 percent for extroversion (compared to 21% in Study 1), and 24 percent for conscientiousness (compared to 24% in Study 1). In all significant cases, high levels of openness were associated with high levels of support. The linear relation between conscientiousness and support was negative in 2 out of the 32 significant cases such that two subjects associated low conscientiousness with high supportiveness. Seven subjects associated introversion with high supportiveness. The linear relation between extroversion and supportiveness was negative in 7 out of the 21 significant cases such that 7 subjects associated introversion with high supportiveness. The linear relation between neuroticism and supportiveness was positive in 2 out of 48 significant cases such that two subjects associated high neuroticism with high supportiveness.

In addition to linear effects, I also found evidence for quadratic relations between trait concepts and supportiveness. Forty-eight percent of subjects relied on a non-linear function for agreeableness to infer supportiveness (37 percent in Study 1), 24 percent for

conscientiousness (21% in Study 1), 11 percent for extroversion (10% in Study 1), 9 percent for openness (11% in Study 1), and 7 percent for neuroticism (3% in Study 1). All of the three patterns of non-linear relationships found in Study 1 were observed in Study 2.

I was also interested in determining whether some subjects used a combination of two different trait concepts to infer supportiveness. Consequently, I tested for all possible two way interactions of the five trait concepts. The results revealed 40 percent of the sample of 132 demonstrated a pattern whereby supportiveness was associated with a combination of two different traits (57% in Study 1). Of subjects who used a combination of traits, 70 percent demonstrated one two-way interaction (68% in Study 1), 19 percent used two different combinations (29% in Study 1), eight percent used three combinations (1% in Study 1), and three percent used four or more combinations (0% in Study 1).

In summary, the idiographic analyses replicated the results of Study 1 in that they demonstrated substantial variability of traits and combinations of traits used to infer support, but also in their common use of the trait concept of agreeableness. The next question I attempted to address was whether the use of a given trait concept was associated with subjects' personality and global ratings of perceived social support. To do this, I computed correlations between the idiographic trait-support associations and both nomothetic measures of personality and perceived social support measures. R^2 change values were used as a measure of the degree to which a subject associated a given trait concept with supportiveness. In order to preserve the direction of the effects, the signs were added to those that had negative beta weights.

The results of these analyses indicated that subjects' linear associations between a

given trait and support was related to their own standing on that trait. The more subjects used information about agreeableness ($r = .17$, $p = .06$), conscientiousness ($r = .26$, $p < .01$), extroversion ($r = .19$, $p < .05$), neuroticism ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), or openness ($r = .24$, $p < .01$) to infer support, the more likely the were to rate themselves as agreeable, conscientious, extroverted, neurotic, or open respectively. Recall, in Study 1 this effect was found for agreeableness and openness, but not for the other three traits. Evidence was found for the discrimnant validity of these effects. That is, subjects' associations between a given trait and support were related to their standing on that trait, but not to their standing on other traits. The one exception to this result was found with respect to neuroticism. Subjects who rated themselves as being high in neuroticism were also more likely to associate high levels of agreeableness ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), but low levels of conscientiousness ($r = -.22$, $p < .01$) and extroversion ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$) with supportiveness. Neither the non-linear associations between a trait and support nor the use of a combination of two traits were related to subjects' standing on any of the five personality variables. Finally, subjects who associated agreeableness with support were more likely to rate themselves as having high levels of perceived social support ($r = .17$, $p = .05$), an effect that was also found in Study 1.

As in Study 1, I was also interested in determining if groups of subjects could be identified that were similar in the traits they associated with support. Consequently, I conducted a hierarchical cluster analysis using the same method and variables as in Study 1. Again, an examination of the agglomerative coefficients against the number of clusters suggested that a five-cluster solution may be optimal. In order to determine the cluster characteristics, I conducted a MANOVA using the clusters as the grouping variable and

subjects' linear associations between each of the five traits and support as the factors. The omnibus effect showed that the subjects assigned to different clusters differed in the degree to which they associated a trait with support (Wilks Lambda = .04, $F_{(20, 405.58)}$ = 34.34, $p<.001$). Specifically, the results indicated significant differences between the clusters for all five trait-support associations (agreeableness $F_{(4,126)} = 613.70$, $p< .001$; extroversion $F_{(4,126)} = 13.53$, $p< .001$; openness $F_{(4,126)} = 4.1$, $p< .01$; neuroticism $F_{(4,126)} = 3.0$, $p< .05$; and conscientiousness $F_{(4,126)} = 13.82$, $p< .001$). Interestingly, the post hoc tests revealed that there were two clusters (Clusters 3 and 5) that differed significantly from each other across all five of the semantic associations (for the means of each idiographic trait-support association in each cluster, see Table 7). Specifically, one cluster (Cluster 5) contained subjects with the highest use of extroversion ($\underline{X} = .06$), openness ($\underline{X} = .06$), neuroticism ($\underline{X} = .04$) and conscientiousness ($\underline{X} = .05$), and the lowest use of agreeableness ($\underline{X} = .06$). Conversely the other cluster (Cluster 3) contained subjects with the lowest use of extroversion ($\underline{X} = .00$), openness ($\underline{X} = .02$), neuroticism ($\underline{X} = .01$) and

Table 7

Study 2--Mean trait-support associations (R^2 change values) in a five-cluster solution.

	Agreeableness	Openness	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Conscientiousness
Cluster 1 (N=36)	$.47^{1}$	$.02^{2}$	.02	$.00^{2}$	$.00^{2}$
Cluster 2 (N=30)	$.38^{1}$	.04	.01	$.00^{3}$	$.00^{3}$
Cluster 3 (N=14)	$.63^{1}$	$.02^{1}$	$.00^{1}$	$.00^{1}$	$.00^{1}$
Cluster 4 (N=31)	$.25^{1}$	.05	.03	$.02^{4}$	$.01^{4}$
Cluster 5 (N=20)	$.06^{1}$	$.06^{1,2}$	$.04^{1}$	$.06^{1,2,3,4}$	$.05^{1,2,3,4}$

(Within a column, clusters with the same supercript are significantly different at the .05 level.)

conscientiousness ($\underline{X}$ = .00), and the highest use of agreeableness ($\underline{X}$ = .63). It is important to note that even the cluster in which the use of agreeableness is the lowest, subjects on average still significantly associate agreeableness with support, just not to the extent of subjects in the other four clusters. I then attempted to determine whether subjects in different clusters differed from each other in personality. Therefore, I conducted a MANOVA using cluster membership as the grouping variable and subjects' standing on the personality variables as the factors. The omnibus effect showed that the subjects assigned to different clusters differed in their standing on the personality variables (Wilks Lambda = .74, $\underline{F}_{(20, 398.94)} = 1.90$, $\underline{p}<.01$). Specifically, the results indicated that clusters differed in their standing on neuroticism ($\underline{F}_{(4,126)} = 4.29$, $\underline{p} < .01$). Post hoc tests indicated that subjects who rated themselves as the least neurotic ($\underline{X}$ = 78.9) were among the cluster (Cluster 5) of people that used extroversion, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism the most to infer support. The subjects who rated themselves as the most neurotic ($\underline{X}$ = 96.29) were among the cluster (Cluster 3) that used agreeableness the most and the other variables the least to infer support. This suggests that calmer subjects were more likely to have complex mental models of supportiveness, where as anxious subjects were more likely to rely heavily on agreeableness to infer support (It is as though neurotic subjects were saying "I don't care what other characteristics a person has as long as they are very, very nice!")

One major question that remains unanswered is whether the findings based on the Semantic Associations Task are relevant to judgments of more realistic targets. One way to address this question is to conceptually replicate these findings with respect to

judgments of actual network members. The correlations between the idiographic trait-support associations and nomothetic measures of personality from both Studies 1 and 2 indicate that subjects tend to associate a given trait with the support of hypothetical profiles *insofar as they see themselves as being high on that trait*. These findings can be viewed as similarity effects in that subjects rated hypothetical targets as supportive insofar as targets were similar to themselves in personality. It remains unclear is whether subjects also associate the traits that they see in themselves with supportiveness in actual network members. If this is the case, one would expect that subjects would rate targets as supportive insofar as subjects see the target as being similar in personality to themselves. In order to address this question, I first calculated the inter-class correlation between an individual subject's ratings of self and a real target on each on the five personality traits. This resulted in five values for each subject that represent the degree of similarity between their own and the target's standing on each of the five traits. I then conducted hierarchical multiple regression using ratings of targets' support as the criterion. To control for the effects of target and respondent personality, subjects' trait ratings of self and targets were entered on the first step. The similarity indices were then entered on the second step. This analysis indicates the extent to which similarity in personality predicts judgments of targets' support beyond either subjects' or targets' personalities alone. The results indicated that the similarity indices as a block added unique variance in judgments of targets' support above subjects' or targets' personality ratings alone ($\underline{R^2\ Cha} = .08$, $\underline{p} < .02$). Subjects who saw the target as similar to themselves were more likely to rate the target as supportive. An examination of the effects for each of the five personality dimensions suggested that similarity on neuroticism ($\underline{\beta} = .18$, $\underline{p} < .03$) and extroversion ($\underline{\beta}$

=.16, $p = .05$) predicted judgments of targets' support. Both of these effects were found in the idiographic analyses of the current study. These findings support the hypothesis, at least with respect to neuroticism and extroversion, that subjects use the traits that they see in themselves to infer supportiveness in of real targets. Thus, these findings provide evidence for the external validity of findings based on the Semantic Associations Task in they demonstrate a similar mechanism, but with actual targets rather than hypothetical personality profiles.

A second way to link the idiographic-trait support associations to judgments of actual targets would be to examine the extent to which these idiographic associations interact with trait ratings of actual targets in predicting targets' supportiveness. If all subjects used the same trait algorithms to infer supportive ("if high on trait X, then supportive") then one would expect to observe a main effect of targets' traits in predicting judgments of targets' support. Stated another way, all subjects would see all targets high on a given trait as supportive and low on that trait as unsupportive. However, the idiographic analyses indicate that subjects differ in the traits that they use to infer support. Consequently, one would expect to find an interaction between the traits a subject uses to infer support, as measured by the Semantic Associations Task, and the traits they see the target as possessing in predicting target supportiveness. If a subject associates a given trait with high levels of support on one task, one would expect that this subject would be more likely to see an actual target who is high on this trait as more supportive. Conversely, if a subject associate a given trait with low levels of support, then one would expect that this subject would see targets with low levels of this trait as unsupportive.

I first attempted to determine whether subjects as a whole saw targets who were high

on a given trait or set of traits as more supportive than targets who were low on these traits. To do this, I calculated a regression equation using targets' standing on the Big-5 as the predictor variables and targets' supportiveness as the criterion variable. Consistent with the within-subjects findings the results of the current analyses indicated that targets' who were seen as more agreeable ($\beta = .51$, $t = 5.7$, $p < .01$) and open ($\beta = .21$, $t = 2.6$, $p < .01$) were rated as more supportive.

I then attempted to explore the interaction between targets' standing on a given trait and subjects' idiographic trait-support associations in predicting targets' supportiveness. Subjects who weigh agreeableness, for example, heavily in making support judgments on the Semantic Associations Task should show a strong relation between target agreeableness and target support when rating a network member. However, subjects who do not use agreeableness on the Semantic Associations Task should not show a relation between agreeableness and supportiveness when rating network members. Thus, the relation between agreeableness and supportiveness of network members should vary as a function of subjects' weighting of agreeableness on the Semantic Associations Task. Such an effect could be detected using moderated multiple regression in which the interaction between subjects' weightings of agreeableness on the Semantic Associations Task and their ratings of the agreeableness of network members' is used to predict ratings of network members' support. Consequently, I calculated five separate hierarchical regression equations with network members' standing on one of the Big-5 personality traits and subjects' semantic association of that trait with support on the first step, and the interaction between these two variables on the second step. In all five equations, subjects' ratings of targets' supportiveness was the criterion. The results indicated that none of the

five interactions were significant predictors of targets' supportiveness. Thus, this method failed to establish a direct link between the idiographic trait-support associations derived from the Semantic Associations Task and judgments of actual network members.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was two-fold in that it was designed to replicate the findings of Study 1, as well as the link subjects' semantic associations to judgments of real-world targets. In terms of the former goal, the idiographic analyses of Study 2 are strongly consistent with those of Study 1. Specifically, the results of Study 2 converge with those of Study 1 in that they demonstrate strong individual differences in the linear and non-linear use of traits and combinations of traits associated with support. The relative use of the traits in each of the two samples also appears to be similar in that subjects in both samples relied heaviest on agreeableness and second heaviest on openness. The relative use of conscientiousness, extroversion, and neuroticism varied somewhat between the two studies. Further, a similar proportion of subjects in both studies used traits in a non-linear fashion or used a combination of two or more traits. Similarly, both studies reveal that, for the majority of subjects, the association between agreeableness and support is very strong, the average effects size being .31 for Study 1 and .35 for Study 2.

Not only did Studies 1 and 2 converge with respect to the results of the idiographic analyses, but they also showed consistent relationships between these idiographic trait-associations and personality. As in Study 1, the current study revealed that subjects who see themselves as high on a given trait, are more likely to associate high levels of that trait with support. This effect was found for all of the Big-5 personality dimensions in the idiographic analyses of the current study, whereas in Study 1 the effect was found for

openness and agreeableness. The finding that subjects' high on a given personality dimension are more likely to associate this quality with supportiveness suggests a similarity effect. That is, the data from Study 1 and 2 both suggest that subjects' mental models of supportive others are made up of same personality traits as subjects see in themselves. One major limitation of these findings is that of these idiographic trait-support associations were derived from ratings of hypothetical personality profiles. Although using this task afforded greater experimental control, it is unclear the extent which these findings can be generalized to the support judgments of actual targets.

One method of linking the idiographic trait-support associations to judgments of actual targets is by replicating the similarity effect found using the Semantic Associations Task. As stated in the previous paragraph, the correlations between the idiographic trait-support associations and nomothetic measures of personality indicate that subjects tend to associate a given trait with support in hypothetical profiles insofar as they see themselves as being high on that trait. The question then becomes, do subjects also associate their own traits with support when judging actual network members? If so, subjects should rate targets as supportive insofar as subjects see targets as being similar to themselves on given traits. In fact for extroversion and neuroticism, the more overlap there was between subjects' ratings of their own and targets' standing on these traits, the more likely subjects were to see the target as supportive. Thus, taken together the two sets of analyses suggest that subjects tend to view the qualities they see in themselves as being indicative of supportiveness in others. This effect appears to hold true regardless of whether the subject is rating hypothetical or actual persons.

A second way to link the idiographic-trait support associations to judgments of actual

targets would be to examine the extent to which these idiographic associations interact with trait ratings of actual targets in predicting targets' supportiveness. If all subjects used the same trait algorithms to infer supportiveness (i.e., "if high on trait X, then supportive") the one would expect to observe a main effect of targets' traits in predicting judgments of targets' support. Stated another way, all subjects would see targets high on a given trait as supportive and targets low on that trait as unsupportive. However, the idiographic analyses indicate that subjects differ in the traits that they associate with support. If a group of subjects associate a given trait with high levels of support, these subjects should be more likely to see actual targets who are high on this trait as more supportive. These same subjects should see an actual targets who are low on this trait as unsupportive. However, if a group of subjects do not associate this trait dimension with support, then one would expect no relation between targets' traits and targets' supportiveness. This would be reflected in a an interaction between the traits a subject associates with support and traits of the target. A test of this hypothesis failed to find an interaction between the idiographic trait-support associations and ratings of targets' personality in predicting judgments of targets' support. Rather, main effects for openness and agreeableness were found such that targets who were high on these traits were seen by subjects as a whole as more supportive than targets who were low on these traits. It is possible that the failure to detect this significant interaction is due to the lack of sensitivity of the statistical method.

To summarize, the first method used to link idiographic trait-support associations to judgments of actual targets was successful. Although the traits showing the effect varied somewhat, the same similarity effect was found in both support judgments of hypothetical and actual persons. Subjects viewed both hypothetical and actual others as supportive

insofar as targets possessed the same personality traits as subjects. The second method sought to directly link the idiographic trait-support associations derived from the Semantic Associations Task to judgments of actual targets. Due to the failure of this method to link the idiographic trait-support associations to judgments of more realistic stimuli, a third study using yet another methodology was conducted.

Study 3

In Study 2, a direct test of the link between idiographic trait-support associations and judgments of actual targets was a two step process. First, I attempted to identify the trait concepts individual subjects associate with support, using the Semantic Associations Task. Then, I attempted to link these idiographic associations to ratings of personality and support of actual targets. In Study 3 this two-step process collapsed into one. That is, the idiographic trait-support associations will be inferred from an individual subject's pattern of trait and support judgments across four different targets. Characters from a widely-know television show were used rather than targets from subjects' social networks in order to enforce standardization of the stimuli being rated. The degree to which a given subject's configuration of trait ratings across to four characters was the same as the subject's configuration of support ratings was used as an index of the association between the trait and support. This method has been used successfully by Lakey, Drew, and Sirl (1997) in examining the trait-support associations of depressed and non-depressed subjects. Figures 7 and 8 taken from their manuscript show that whereas non-depressed subjects demonstrate a close association between trait agreeableness and support, they demonstrate less of an association between trait conscientiousness and support.

Once the trait-support associations have been derived for each subject, I attempted to replicate the similarity effects found in Studies 1 and 2. Studies 1 and 2 indicated that subjects associated the traits they see in themselves with support in both hypothetical personality profiles and actual social network members. Therefore, subjects should also associate the traits they see in themselves with the supportiveness of television characters rated in the current study. A test of this assumption will involve examining the

Figure 7

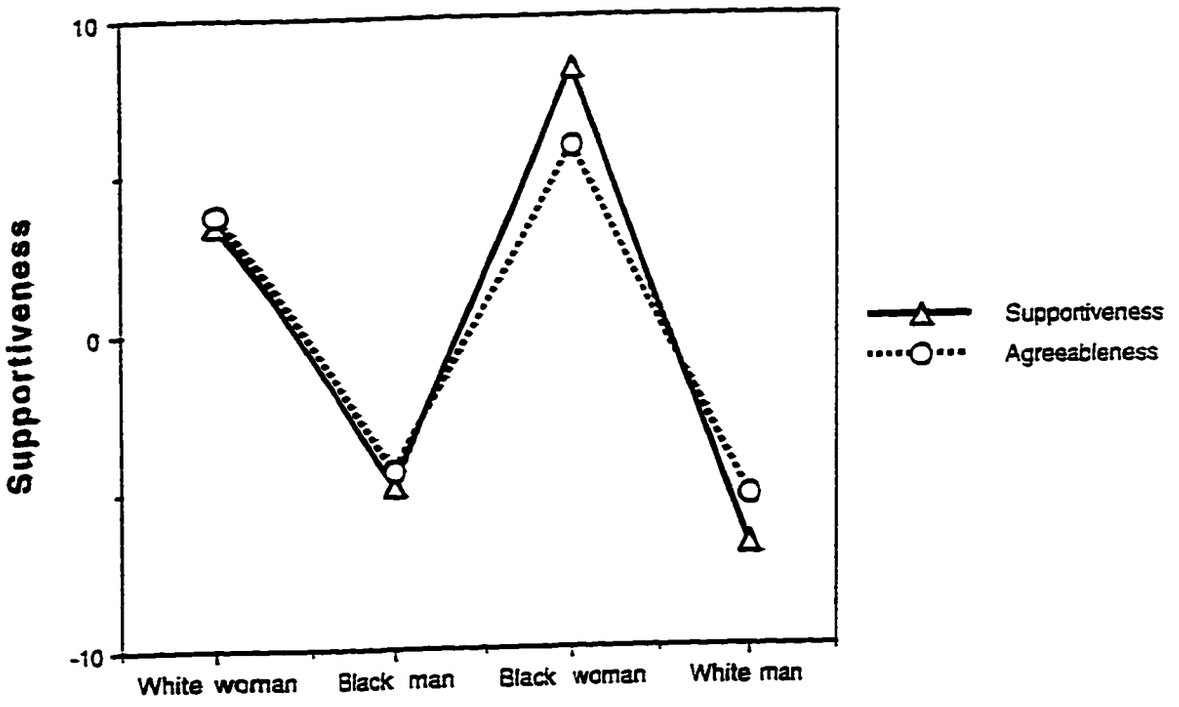
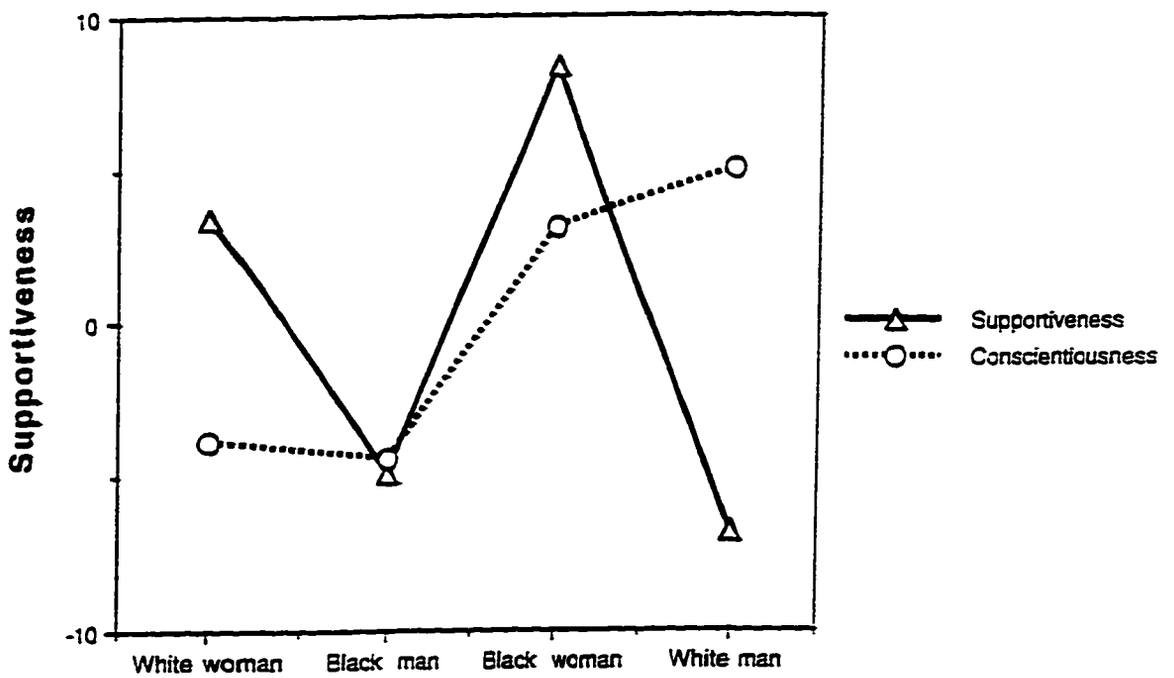

10
0
-10
Supportiveness
White woman
Black man
Black woman
White man
Supportiveness
Agreeableness

Figure 8


10
0
-10
Supportiveness
White woman
Black man
Black woman
White man
Supportiveness
Conscientiousness

relationship between subjects' personality and the traits subjects' associate with support.

Method

Subjects. 80 undergraduate students at Wayne State University were recruited to participate in this study. Subjects received extra credit in exchange for their participation in this study. Of them, 74% were women, 25% were men, and 1% did not specify. Ages of subjects ranged from 18 to 47. 61% of subjects were Caucasian, 18% were African American, 14% were of Asian or Arabic descent, and 7% did not specify.

Procedure. Subjects received a packet of questionnaires to complete. The first page contained pictures of four characters from the popular sitcom, Friends, and a series of questions assessing the frequency in which they view the show. In order to ensure that subjects had enough information to rate the characters, a subject's protocol was excluded if the person had not viewed the show at least five times. Subjects then made ratings of the personality and supportiveness of the four characters, as well subjects'own personality and global perceived social support.

Measures.

Perceived social support. As in Studies 1 and 2, the Social Provisions Scale (SPS; Cutrona & Russel, 1987) was employed to measure subjects' global level of perceived social support. Cronbach's alpha for the measure in this sample was .75.

Target Supportiveness. The same compilation of twelve items used in Study 2 were used in this study to assess the supportiveness of each of the four television characters rated in this study. The instructions were modified to account for the fact that subjects do not have actual relationships with these characters by asking subjects to speculate about what these characters would be like. Cronbach's alpha for this measure ranged from .66

(Monica's supportiveness) to .94 (Ross' supportiveness).

Personality traits. The Interpersonal Adjective Scale-Revised (IAS-R; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990) was used to assess the Big-5 personality dimensions. Subjects completed five separate forms of this measure, one with instructions to rate their own personality and four under instructions to rate the personality of the four television characters. The five forms of the questionnaire were shortened to twelve items per dimension of personality. This was done because the statistical method for analyzing the data required that the number of items for trait and support ratings be equal. Items were excluded on the basis of comparatively low factor loadings on the dimension in question as reported by Trapnell and Wiggins (1990). The Cronbach's alphas for subjects' ratings of their own personality for this sample ranged from .25 (openness) to .87 (neuroticism). Cronbach's alphas for subjects' ratings of the television characters ranged from .62 (Monica's openness) to .91 (Ross' conscientiousness).

Results

Analyses. The first set of analyses attempted to identify the personality traits of targets that individual subjects associated with the supportiveness of targets. This was accomplished by comparing targets' relative standing on a given trait with targets' relative standing on supportiveness for each subject separately. If a subject showed the same configuration of ratings for both a given trait and support across the four targets, we could infer that the subject associated that trait with support. However, if a subject's configuration of ratings on a trait conflicted with his/her configuration of ratings on support, we might infer that this subject does not associate the trait with support. Thus, for each of the five trait dimensions, I compared the configuration of support ratings with

the configuration of ratings for that trait dimension. Because I was interested in individual differences in trait-support associations, separate analyses were conducted for each subject.

A series of five repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted for each subject. The within-subjects factors were ratings (supportiveness and one of the Big-5 personality traits), targets (Phoebe, Joey, Ross, and Monica from the show "Friends"), and items, resulting in a 2 x 4 x 12 design. This design has one observation per cell. The appropriate error term under these conditions is the Rating x Target x Items interaction. Of specific interest in these analyses were the Target x Rating interaction. This tells us the extent to which the configuration of ratings for a given trait are different from the configuration of ratings for support. For example, if relative standing of targets on support is different from the relative standing of targets on openness, this would be reflected by a significant Target x Rating interaction. Therefore, a significant Target x Ratings interaction would suggest that this subject does not associate openness with support. Conversely, if for a given subject the relative standing of targets on support is the same as the relative standing of targets on openness, this would be reflected by a non-significant Target x Ratings interaction. This non-significant Target x Ratings would suggest that the subject associates openness with support. Thus, the effect size of the Target x Ratings interaction (Shavelson & Webb, 1991) for each trait for each subject was used as an index of the extent to which individual subjects associated a given trait with support. If support and trait ratings were perfectly parallel, then the effects size for the Target x Ratings interaction would equal zero. If support and trait ratings diverged sharply, effect sizes could reach a maximum of one. Unlike the prior studies in this paper, the effect sizes

approaching zero indicate strong links between support and a trait. Effect sizes approaching one indicate weak links between support and a trait.

The purpose of this study was to provide a second externally-valid replication of the similarity effect found in Studies 1 and 2. The idiographic analyses from these studies indicated that the traits subjects associated with support were the same traits they see in themselves. Study 2 also indicated that the correspondence between subjects' and targets' standing on a trait predicted support perceptions of actual network members, thus providing one externally valid replication of this similarity effect. Study 3 will also replicate the similarity effect if subjects' associations between a given trait and support are related to subjects' standing on the trait. To test for this effect I computed correlations between subjects' effect size estimates of the Target x Rating interaction for each of the five traits with subjects' ratings of their own standing on these traits. It is important to keep in mind that small effect sizes indicate the extent to which the subject associates the trait with support. Consequently, negative correlations indicate a similarity effect between subjects' standing on a trait and the effect size estimates of the Target x Rating interaction for that trait.

Results of tests for the similarity effect. The results indicated, that subjects' standing on extroversion ($r = -.27$, $p = .01$), conscientiousness ($r = .28$, $p = .01$), and openness ($r = -.18$, $p = .09$) were related to subjects' associations between the trait and support. Subjects high on extroversion were more likely to associate support and extroversion and those high on openness were more likely to associate support and openness. Likewise, subjects low in conscientiousness were more likely to associate support and conscientiousness. Given the low internal consistency of the openness subscale of the

personality measure for this sample, items with poor item-total correlations were deleted resulting in an eight item scale with an alpha of .69. Recomputing these analyses with this revised scale, however, did not result in an increase in the magnitude of the relation between personality openness and the appropriate Target x Rating interaction.

Meta-Analysis of the Similarity Effect

The results of Studies 1 and 2a indicated that the subjects' idiographic trait-support associations were positively correlated with subjects' standing on the personality traits. Studies 2b and 3 provide conceptual, more externally-valid replications of this effect. Thus, we have four sets of analyses that demonstrate that the traits a subject weights in support judgments are the same traits that subject see in themselves. However, the traits that show effects vary somewhat across the four sets of analyses, and in the case of conscientiousness in Study 3 the effect is in the opposite direction. Table 8 summarizes the effect sizes for each of the five traits across the four studies. As one can see, the similarity effect for extroversion and openness are present or approaching significance ($p<.10$) in three of the four data sets. For agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness the similarity effect is present in two of the four analyses, but in the case of conscientiousness the effect is in the opposite direction in Study 3.

Although it is common to tally the number of times an effect is replicated across data sets, this dichotomous view of replication can be misleading (Rosenthal, 1991). Specifically, Rosenthal (1991) points out that variations in sample size and the distribution of effect sizes can result in a failure to detect a true effect within a given data set. Consequently, he recommends examining the estimated effect size combined across samples. Therefore, Table 8 also provides a meta-analysis of the effect sizes for each of

the five traits, thus enabling one to examine the combined effect size for each trait across the four sets of analyses. The effect size estimation for each trait represents the average of the standardized correlation weighted by the sample size of each study (Rosenthal, 1991). Probability values were calculated according to formulas provided by Rosenthal (1991). As one can see from last two columns of Table 8, the similarity effect is significant for all of the five traits when combined across the four data sets. However, the magnitude of the effect sizes varies depending on the trait in question. The relationship between subjects' standing on a trait and their association of that trait with support is fairly strong in the case of neuroticism, extroversion, and openness, but is less strong for agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Table 8

Magnitude of the similarity effect across the three studies

Trait	Study 1		Study 2a[1]		Study 2b[2]		Study 3[3]		Meta-Analysis	
	r	p	r	p	β	p	r	p	r	p
Neuroticism	.15	.15	.35	.00	.18	.03	-.01	1.0	.19	.00
Extroversion	.16	.12	.19	.03	.16	.05	.27	.02	.19	.00
Openness	.23	.03	.24	.01	.07	.47	.19	.10	.18	.00
Agreeableness	.26	.01	.17	.06	.09	.25	-.06	1.0	.13	.01
Conscientiousness	.14	.17	.26	.00	.02	.80	-.28	1.0	.06	.02

[1] "Study 2a" refers to the correlations between idiographic trait-support associations and subjects' standing on the five traits.

[2] "Study 2b" refers to the analyses in which the similarity between targets' and subjects' standing on a trait was measured and then used to predict ratings of targets' support.

[3] As stated in the text, for Study 3 a negative correlation rather than a positive correlation is indicative of the similarity effect. Consequently, in the meta-analyses the signs for the five correlations were reversed. Additionally the p values of effects in the opposite direction from prediction were set equal to 1.

Discussion

The results from both Studies 1 and 2a indicated that the trait concepts subjects associate with supportiveness are related to subjects' own standing on that trait, such that the higher a subject was on a given trait her/himself, the more likely he/she was to see that trait as being related to supportiveness. One limitation of the Semantic Associations Task used in Studies 1 and 2 was that the support judgments pertained to hypothetical personality profiles rather than judgments of more realistic targets. The analyses from Study 2 in which the similarity between targets' and subjects' standing on a trait was used to predict support ratings of targets provided a conceptual, externally-valid replication of this similarity effect. Study 3 provides a second externally-valid replication. In the current study, the traits individual subjects associated with support were derived from their pattern of trait and support judgments for four television characters. The extent to which an individual subject associated a given trait with support was assessed by the degree to which the subject's configuration of trait ratings across the four characters was the same as the subject's configuration of support ratings. This coorespondence was indicated by a non-significant Target x Ratings interaction. As in the previous two studies, Study 3 examined the correlation between trait-support associations and subjects' standing on the five personality traits. Consistent with the findings from the previous two studies, the results of Study 3 indicated that the traits subjects associated with support were the same traits subjects saw in themselves This effect was found for both extroversion (also found in the two sets of analyses in Study 2) , and openness (also found in the idiographic analyses of both Studies 1 and 2). Therefore, the current study reinforce the findings from Studies 1 and 2 that the traits subjects associate with the support of hypothetical or actual

others are the same traits that they see in themselves. A significant relationship between subjects' standing on conscientiousness and their associations of this trait with support was also observed. However, the effect was in the opposite direction of similarity (and of the effect for conscientiousness observed in Study 2a). That is, in this study subjects who associated conscientiousness with support were less likely to be conscientious themselves.

Although the current study expands the findings of the previous two studies, there are some limitations to the method used to assess individual differences in trait concepts that subject associate with support. One set of limitations has to do with the types of effects that can be detected by the Semantic Associations Task, but not with the current method. First, unlike the Semantic Associations Task used in Studies 1 and 2, the method used in the current study does not lend itself to the examination of multivariate relationships. The Semantic Associations Task can assess the relative contribution of the five trait concepts to subjects' mental models of support judgments simultaneously. On the other hand, in Study 3 subjects' associations between a single trait and support needed to be examined in isolation. The inability to detect multivariate relationships with the current method is problematic because some subjects may associate two traits with each other. Because separate multiple regression equations were conducted for each subject in Studies 1 and 2, the shared variance between two traits could be statistically controlled. However, in the current study, possible shared variance between two traits could over or under estimate the unique variance in the relationship between a single trait and support. Additionally, unlike the Semantic Associations Task, the current methodology did not allow for the examination of non-linear associations between a trait and support or for associations between configurations of traits and support. However, the non-linear associations

between a trait and support or associations between configurations of traits and support were not consistently related to subjects' personality in Studies 1 or 2. Consequently, the inability of the current methodology to detect these effects is probably not a serious flaw.

Another limitation of the current study pertains to the nature of the targets judged in this study. The purpose of the study was to provide a more externally valid replication of the similarity effect found in Studies 1 and 2, and yet the targets in the current study were television characters rather than actual persons. The rationale for using television characters in the current study was to enable all subjects rate the same set of targets. Having subjects rate the same set of targets allows for some degree of standardization in the targets' objective characteristics. When subjects rate targets in their own social network, as was the case in the second set of similarity analyses of Study 2, there is less control over the objective characteristics of the targets that individual subjects rate. Thus, the four sets of similarity analyses can be ordered on a continuum with internal validity but less generalizability on one end, and external validity but less experimental control on the other. The similarity findings in Studies 1 and 2 using the Semantic Associations Task possess the most standardization in the information about the targets available to the subjects, but the targets are the most artificial (i.e., simply a list of personality adjectives). The method used in Study 3 to detect the similarity effect, possesses somewhat less standardization in the information available about the targets to the subjects (in that some subjects watch the show "Friends" more than other subjects), but the targets are somewhat less artificial. Finally, the similarity effects from Study 2 using personality similarity between subjects and social network members to predict support possesses the least standardization in the information available about the targets to the subjects (we have

no idea who these people are that subjects are rating), but the targets are the most realistic.

A final limitation of Study 3 is that it does not account for subjects' use of a given trait in a negative direction. For example, if a subject viewed unconscientiousness rather than conscientiousness as indicative of supportiveness, the Target x Rating interaction would be significant even though judgments of the two constructs are covarying in a consistent fashion across targets for a given subject. A number of techniques designed to account for the negative use of a trait to infer support proved to be unsuccessful.[2]

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[2]A number of techniques were used to attempt to account for negative use of a trait to infer support. For example, I plotted all significant interactions. Interactions between a trait and support in which the pattern of ratings across the four targets were exactly opposite were identified. I then calculated correlations between the trait-support associations and personality with these interactions removed. The results indicated that the magnitude of these correlations did not increase once the "negative use" interactions were deleted.

General Discussion

In summarizing the current set of three studies, I will divide the discussion into two major content areas: (1) what the results tell us about matching processes in support judgments, as well as what questions remain unanswered by the current research, and (2) how the results of these studies fit into the larger fields of Personality, Social, and Clinical Psychology.

Matching Processes in Support Judgments

In discussing Perceiver x Supporter matching in social support judgments, I will begin by briefly reviewing this perspective and outlining the mechanism for matching investigated in this paper. I will then discuss the support for this mechanism found in the current series of three studies. Finally, I will discuss limitations of the current studies and directions for future research.

In recent years there has been an increased interest among social support researchers in determining the basis of support judgments (Lakey, Ross, et. al., 1996; Lakey & Drew, 1997; Kaul & Lakey, under review). This is a crucial research question in that it informs us about how to modify perceived social support among low perceived support persons (Heller, 1979; Lakey & Lutz, 1996). The application of generalizability theory has greatly aided in elucidating this question. Generalizability theory (Cronbach et al., 1972; Shavelson et. al., 1989) allows for the partitioning the variance in a given judgment that is contributed by different sources. Of interest in support research is the variance attributed to the person, the environment, and the Person by Environment interaction. A series of three studies conducted by Lakey, McCabe, et. al. (1996) suggest that the single most important determinant of support judgments is the Person by Environment interaction.

These studies suggest that support judgments are largely a function of the match between the perceiver and the support provider.

One question that stems from a matching perspective of support judgments, is "what is the basis of this matching process?" One possibility is that persons differ in the extent to which they see different trait concepts as associated with supportiveness. For instance, Person A associates warmth and kindness with support in others, whereas Person B associates pragmatism and conscientiousness with support in others. For example, in the case of Person A, warm people will be seen as supportive, whereas cold people will be seen as unsupportive. Because Person B does not associate interpersonal warmth with support, these qualities in others are likely to be irrelevant to Person B's support judgments of them. Instead, Person B will see conscientious people as supportive and unconscientious people as unsupportive. This view is closely related to the notion of implicit personality theories (Bruner and Tagiuri, 1954, Cronbach, 1955, Kelly 1955). Simply put, proponents of implicit personality theory proposed that people associate certain traits with each other such that a perceiver is likely to predict that if a target is high on one trait they are likely to be high on the other. In the case of social support, I hypothesized that people differ from one another in their implicit personality theories of supportiveness.

To explore this hypothesized mechanism for matching in support judgments, three general steps were involved. First, I attempted to determine whether there were individual differences in the traits people associated with support, as opposed to all of the subjects using same support algorithm. If there were no individual differences in these trait-support associations, then a view based on matching between the perceivers' trait-support

associations and the actual personality characteristics of targets becomes unfeasible. Second, I attempted to relate idiographic trait-support associations to nomothetic measures of personality. The importance of this second step is two-fold. First, relating idiographic trait-support associations to nomothetic measures has the advantage of clinical utility. That is being able to group persons who have a certain set of trait-support associations would enable us to design intervention programs that match these persons with others who possess these traits. Second, certain links between the idiographic trait-support associations and personality could also further specify the mechanism for matching espoused in this paper. If the traits subjects associate with support are related to their own standing on that trait, then this would suggest that subjects' support algorithms are tied to their own self representations. The final step was to replicate these findings using more realistic stimuli. Recall that in Study 1 and Study 2a subjects' idiographic trait-support associations were identified by subjects' ratings hypothetical profiles. These profiles are far removed from actual people in one's social network. Thus, it is important to establish the external validity of findings based on this task. I will first review the findings from each of these three steps. Next, I will discuss what these findings as a whole suggest about matching processes in support judgments. Finally, I will briefly discuss some inconsistencies and limitations of the current data which may form the basis of future research.

In order to examine the first question of whether there were individual differences in mental models of support, an idiographic methodology was used. In the first two studies, subjects made support ratings from a series of personality profiles tapping each of the Big-5 personality dimensions. This method allowed for the examination of individuals' linear

and non-linear associations between the personality traits and support, as well as the use of combinations of different traits. The results from both studies indicated that there were substantial individual differences in persons' mental models of support. Interestingly, there was also evidence for substantial consistency in that the vast majority of subjects viewed agreeableness as related to support. This suggests that most people view characteristics such as kindness, warmth, and trustworthiness as important aspects of support. In fact, the magnitude of the effect was so large for some subjects that support and agreeableness may even be the same concept to them. This makes a good deal of intuitive sense in that support is often defined in terms of behaviors that indicate the support provider cares about the support recipient. Consequently, it is not surprising subjects assume that hypothetical targets who have warm, caring personalities would be most likely to engage in caring behaviors.

After identifying individual differences in support models, I attempted to identify group differences in these support models. This was done by examining the relationship between subjects' personality and subjects' trait-support associations. Both Studies 1 and 2 indicated that there was a relationship between ones' standing on a personality trait and one's association between that trait and support. Persons high on a trait were more likely to associate that trait with support. This effects was found for trait agreeableness and openness in Study 1 and for all of the traits in Study 2. Additionally, the cluster analysis conducted in Study 1 revealed that the group of subjects who were the least likely to associate agreeableness with support were also the lowest in their self-ratings of agreeableness. These data suggest that subjects' support algorithms are tied to their own self representations, thus pointing to a similarity effect. To put it simply, when asking

people what they think a good support provider is like, these data suggest that they will say a good support provider is someone like themselves.

The final step in the current research was to link idiographic trait-support associations to personality and support judgments of actual targets. The findings from Study 1 indicate that subjects differ in the traits that they weigh in judging the supportiveness of hypothetical profiles. Further, subjects weight a specific trait as being important to support insofar as they see themselves as high on that particular trait. What remains to be seen is whether this same process can be observed using more realistic stimuli, i.e. actual targets. This comes down to an issue of the external validity of these idiographic trait-support associations. Two attempts were made at replicating this finding using more realistic stimuli. In the first replication was conducted in Study 2b. It was reasoned that if a subject associates the same traits they see in themselves with support in others, then insofar as a subject and target are similar on a given trait the subject should see the target as supportive. Consequently, I examined the degree to which similarity in trait ratings between subjects and targets predicted ratings of the targets' support. The results indicated that targets who were more similar to the subject on a given trait were rated as more supportive than targets who less similar to the subject.

Study 3 attempted to provide a second replication of the similarity effect. In this study, the traits individual subjects associated with support were inferred from their judgments of personality and support across four television characters. The extent to which subjects' pattern of trait ratings across the four targets matched their pattern of support ratings was used as an index of association between a given trait and support. Subjects' trait-support associations were then correlated with subjects' standing on these

traits. The results indicated that the traits subjects saw in themselves were the same traits they associated with support in others.

Taken together, the findings from the three studies help clarify one source of matching in judgments of support. Specifically, the idiographic analyses provide evidence that subjects differ in the traits they associate with support. Further, the traits a subject associates with support in others are the same ones that subjects see in themselves. Thus, the current studies suggest that it is possible (to some extent) to identify individual differences in trait-support associations from subjects' personality. The personality correlates of idiographic trait-support associations can be viewed as similarity effects. Subjects see targets as supportive insofar as these targets are similar to themselves in personality. This similarity effect was found both with support judgments of hypothetical and realistic targets, thereby lending external validity to the findings based on the Semantic Associations Task. A meta-analysis indicated that this similarity effect was significant for all of the five traits when the results of the four sets of analyses were combined. Therefore, this effect appears to be quite robust. However, it should be noted that the magnitude of the effect sizes varied depending on the trait in question. The relationship between subjects' standing on a trait and their association of that trait with support is fairly strong in the case of neuroticism, extroversion, and openness, but less impressive for agreeableness and conscientiousness. Nonetheless, all three studies indicate a relationship between some personality traits and mental models of support, and with the exception of conscientiousness in Study 3 these relationships were all in the direction of similarity. Further, the fact that personality correlates of mental models of support were found at all is impressive given the difficulty among researchers in an analogous field of investigation,

implicit personality theories, to find such personality correlates. Schneider (1973, p.305-306) in his review of this area concluded that, "it is relatively easy to show that individuals differ in their implicit personality theory, but there has been limited success relating such differences to traditional personality variables." Not only does the current data suggest that traditional personality variables are related to implicit personality theories of support across three studies, but this relationships are theoretically meaningful in that they suggest a similarity between self representations and representations of supportive others.

The data from the current series of studies are consistent with the similarity effects in support judgments found in Lakey, Ross, et. al. (1996). Their results indicated that subjects who saw themselves as similar to the target were more likely to rate the target as supportive than subjects who saw themselves as dissimilar to the target. The current studies add to these findings in two ways. First, the primary dimensions of similarity measured in Lakey, Ross, et. al. (1996) were attitudes and values. The current series of studies demonstrate that personality in also an important dimension of similarity in support judgments. A second way in which the current analyses add to the findings of Lakey, Ross, et. al. (1996) is that in Study 2 similarity was assessed in a more subtle fashion. Studies 1 and 3 of Lakey, Ross, et. al. (1996) measured similarity directly by asking subjects how similar they believed the targets were to themselves, whereas similarity in the current paper the techniques used to assess similarity were substantially more subtle.

Not only do the current studies help advance our conceptual understanding of matching processes in support judgments, but they point to certain treatment implications as well. A matching based model of support judgments would suggest that not all perceivers will view the same support provider as equally supportive. Consequently, it is

necessary to link low support persons with support providers that match their unique perceptions and needs. The findings from the current studies suggest that one aspect of matching in support judgments is individual differences in the personality traits that persons associate with support. However, knowing that persons differ in their trait-support associations is not terribly helpful if we don't know how to easily identify which persons have which trait-support associations. Fortunately, the current studies also suggest that these idiographic trait-support associations are, in part, based on their similarity to the perceiver's own personality. The results of Lakey, Ross, et al. (1996) found that similarity in attitudes and values also predicted judgments of targets' support. Therefore, one way to match low support persons with supportive others would be on the basis of similarity in a wide range of dimensions.

Although the current studies help expand what is currently known about the person perception processes involved in social support judgments, there are some inconsistencies and limitations of the current data that should be reiterated. One inconsistency is between the findings of Studies 1 and 2 of the current paper and the findings of Lakey, Ross, et. al. (1996). In their research, they found ratings of targets' conscientiousness, but not the other Big-5 personality traits, was related to support. The idiographic analyses of Studies 1 and 2 in the current paper suggest that subjects rely heavily on agreeableness to infer support. Further, the between-subjects analyses from Study 2b indicated that ratings of targets' agreeableness and openness, but not conscientiousness, were significant predictors of targets' support. One possibility could be that the measure used to assess targets' supportiveness primarily tapped practical support in Lakey, Ross et al., (1996). Consequently, one might expect conscientiousness to be related to practical support,

whereas agreeableness might be related to emotional support. Because the measure used in the current research assessed both types of support I was able to statistically examine this hypothesis. However, the results failed to detect different effects as a function of the different items. Rather, targets' agreeableness predicted both judgments of practical and emotional support, thus making this explanation of the difference in findings somewhat untenable.

Finally, there are a number of questions pertaining to matching in support judgments that remain unanswered. The current studies only address mental associations between personality and support. Consequently, it remains unclear the extent to which personality traits are the central dimensions in which persons base judgments of support. There are numerous other qualities of people that could be viewed by perceivers as important components of support. For example, world views, life experiences, attitudes, race, gender and need for intimacy are just a few potentially important dimensions that one could rely on to evaluate the supportiveness of other people. Future studies could explore whether the similarity processes found in this study apply to these dimension as well. For instance, do people who view themselves as having low intimacy needs associate this tendency with support in others? One could also examine whether there are individual differences in the general classes of dimensions people mentally associate with support. Some people may rely more heavily on a matching in personality, whereas others may rely on matching in religious views, for example. Additionally, it remains unclear why similarity is important in judgments of support. This effect may represent a general liking effect. That is, previous research indicates that support may simply be inferred from evaluative person concepts (e.g. Byrne, 1971). Similarity could also be related to support

through people's needs to feel like their beliefs and values are validated. Or more similar others may be in a better position to offer the support that one would find helpful. Yet another possibility is that similar dyads are less likely to have relational discord stemming from misunderstandings, and thus the members of the dyad are more likely to see the other as supportive.

A final issue that needs to be clarified in this area of research is whether and how matching processes in support judgments translate into low perceived social support. In view of the large body of literature suggesting that perceived social support is related to negative mental and physical health outcomes, it would behoove us to further clarify the question of what is the basis of individual differences in global perceived social support. If judgments of global perceived social support are derived from judgments of the supportiveness of individual network members, one might expect perceived social support judgments to be based on matching. This being the case, are persons with low perceived social support isolated from similar others? Or are these people less likely than their high perceived social support counterparts to perceive similarity with others when it is actually there? All of these issues are fruitful areas for future social support research.

Applications To Other Research Areas

In a recent book on social support research and theory Pierce, et. al. make the claim that social support research historically has developed in isolation to other areas of Psychology. Therefore, they recommend that future work in this area be more directly linked to the larger field. The current set of studies do, in fact, fit nicely with a number of different areas of Personality, Social, and Clinical Psychology. Additionally, the current studies represent two important and yet under-emphasized approaches in the history of

Psychology, the use of idiographic approaches to understanding of human perception and behavior and the focus on the dyadic relationship as the unit of analysis. Thus, in this final section I will demonstrate how the findings from the current paper tie into the larger field. I will begin by discussing how the current findings relate to other areas of person perception research. I will then go on to discuss how these studies add to research on trait theories of personality. Finally, I will briefly discuss the current studies as representing an example of both idiographic and interactional approaches.

The results of the current series of studies stem logically from person perception theory and research. For example, research in schema theory suggests that people differ in the trait concepts that are chronically accessible to them (Markus, 1977; Higgins, King, & Mavin, 1982). These chronically accessible traits have been found to color one's perceptions of the social world (Higgins, King, & Mavin, 1982). For example, one person may apply the trait of manipulativeness to the understanding of many different social situations, whereas another person may habitually apply the trait of dominance in order to understand social behavior. Further, there is evidence to suggest that the constructs one uses to view the self are the same as those used to view others (Lewicki, 1983, Markus, Smith, & Moreland). The findings from the current studies are in line with research in chronically accessible constructs in two ways. First, the findings from the idiographic analyses of Studies 1 and 2 indicate that persons vary in the traits that they associate with support. These finding may reflect a more general tendency for different persons to apply different traits to the understanding of social behavior in general. Second, the findings across four sets of analyses in the three studies indicate that subjects' standing on a given personality trait is related to the extent to which they associate this trait with support.

This suggests that one's mental representations of themselves overlap with their mental representations of supportive others. The contructs that one uses to understand the self are likely to be more accessible. Accessible traits, in turn, are more likely to be used in judging others. These data are consistent the findings of Lewicki (1983) that suggest the constructs that one uses to view oneself are the same as the constructs used to view others. The current findings add to existing literature in that they demonstrate overlap between self and a specific category of other people, supportive people. However, rather than having a specific category for support in other people, support might be inferred from other traits. The traits that a person uses to infer support might be those which overlap with their own view of self. That is simply to say that most people may view themselves as supportive. Consequently, when asked to determine the what qualities constitute supportive persons they may partially reply upon their perceptions of the qualities they themselves possess.

The current findings also have historical roots in another major subarea of person perception literature, implicit personality theory. In the fifties and sixties there was a major interest among person perception researchers in studying peoples' lay theories of personality (e.g., Bruner and Tagiuri, 1954, Cronbach, 1955, Kelly 1955). That is, what traits did the average person see as being related to each other. A forerunner of this trend was Asch in his work on "central traits" (1946), the idea that people organized trait information of others around a few primary traits such as "warm" and "cold." As discussed in the previous section, although individual differences in implicit personality theories have been identified, attempt to link these differences to personality has been mixed (See Schneider, 1973 for review). The current research builds on this historical

tradition by examining individual differences in implicit personality theories of support. Further, the current research represents a successful attempt to link these differences to personality correlates. An interesting side note is that some studies in implicit personality theories (Steiner, 1954; Warr & Sims, 1965) have found evidence to suggest that persons differ in the extent to which they rely on one evaluative dimension versus many evaluative dimensions. This is consistent with the results of the cluster analysis in Study 2 that indicated differences in two clusters of subjects, those who relied heavily on agreeableness to infer support at the expense of the other four traits, and those who rely on all five trait dimensions to infer support. The results also indicated that subjects high in personality neuroticism were more likely to be among the cluster of subjects who rely almost exclusively on agreeableness. One might interpret this as an indication that neurotic personality tendencies are related to a cognitively simplistic style of person perception.

The overlap between representations of self and supportive others is also in line with a large body of research that relates similarity to attraction (Berscheid & Walster, 1979; Byrne, 1971), a point that has been thoroughly addressed in the previous section. Thus, it may come as little surprise that similar others are also viewed as more supportive. From a practical stand point, we could ask ourselves why would similarity be specifically important in judgments of support. One answer may come from research on self verification theory (Swan, 1992). Self verification theory suggests that persons are strongly motivated to maintain their own world view even when that view is maladaptive to one's own self-esteem. In terms of how self verification theory applies to the current findings, one may turn to like others for support in order to gain validation of their own world view. Take for example a situation in which an employer and an employee have an

intense dispute because the employee violated a company policy. The employer who tends to be strict and bit on the rigid side seeks support from wife who possesses similar qualities. She tells him that he is right because without a rigid enforcement of the rules there would be social anarchy. On the other hand, the employee who is laid back and open goes to her friend who possesses similar qualities. Her friend tells her that she is right because most rules are arbitrary and a microcosm of socially imposed morality.

Not only do the current findings fit nicely with other aspects of person perception literature, but they also draw a link between support research and taxonomic approaches to personality as well. One major trend in personality psychology has been to attempt to factor-analytically derive the most basic set of personality traits that can be used to describe others. The Big-5 personality traits in particular have gained increasing popularity in recent years to classify the basic building blocks of personality. Both the idiographic and nomothetic analyses from Studies 1 and 2 suggest a strong link between support and agreeableness concepts. In fact, the idiographic analyses call into question the extent to which, for some persons, support and agreeableness are even distinct traits. Factor analytic studies in the future may help clarify how support fits into this Big-5 taxonomy of personality. If such research indicated that judgments of support and agreeableness are the same construct, it could potentially create a bridge between social support and Big-5 research. As a result, knowledge gained from social support research could help inform Big-5 research on the agreeableness construct, and vice versa.

The current studies represent two important and yet under-emphasized approaches in the history of psychology, the use of interactional and idiographic approaches to understanding of human perception and behavior. These approaches are in contrast with

the tendency among many modern behavioral science researchers to focus exclusively on either individual or environmental origins of behavior and to utilize nomothetic approaches. Interactionalist approaches to the study of both normal personality and clinical problems gained popularity in the seventies (Endler & Magnusson, 1976, Magnusson & Endler, 1976). The use of this approach can be seen in such areas as diathesis-stress models of mental illness (Gottesman & Shields, 1976; Zubin & Spring, 1977), interactionalist models of anxiety (Muller, et al., 1990), and person perception theories and research (Markus, 1977, Higgins et al, 1985; Higgins & King, 1981; Neidenthal, et al., 1985). A specific variant of this approach is the examination of the relationship component of social judgments. Research on social relationships suggests that Perceiver x Target interactions are important components of many social judgments such as judgments of a targets personality or liking judgments (see Kenny, 1994 for review). However, very little research has been done applying this approach to the study of social support judgments. Likewise, although idiographic models of behavior have a long history in Psychology (e.g. Kelley, 1955; Allport, 1966), the current series of studies represents, to our knowledge, the first application of this approach to social support.

List of Research Measures

Study 1

Study 2

Study 3

Appendix A

Kahn and Quinn (1977) define social support as an interpersonal transaction consisting of : 1) the expression of positive affect, including linking, admiration, respect, and other kinds of positive evaluation, 2) the expression of affirmation, including endorsements of an individual's perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes or actions, or 3) the provision of aid, including materials, information, time and entitlements.

The following is a series of personality descriptors. Please read each personality profile, and rate how supportive you believe a person with such combinations of traits would be.

How supportive would a person be if he/she had the following combination of traits?

1. Not self-conscious, not self-assured, somewhat reliable, very literary, not tender-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

2. Somewhat firm, not organized, very worrying, somewhat philosophical, very sympathetic.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

3. Not guilt-prone, very self-disciplined, not gentle-hearted, not firm, very literary.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

4. Somewhat kind, not self-disciplined, not questioning, somewhat guilt-prone, somewhat self-assured.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

5. Very philosophical, somewhat gentle-hearted, somewhat forceful, not tidy, somewhat worrying.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

6. Somewhat individualistic, not tender-hearted, very assertive, very thorough, not hypersensitive.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

7. Somewhat individualistic, somewhat tense, somewhat self-assured, not tender, very neat.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

8. Very imaginative, very anxious, very self-assured, somewhat kind, not efficient.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

9. Not individualistic, very persistent, somewhat self-conscious, very accommodating, not thorough.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

10. Somewhat fretful, very dominant, very systematic, somewhat philosophical, not accommodating.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

11. Not gentle-hearted, very systematic, not philosophical, somewhat fretful, somewhat domineering.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

12. Somewhat tense, not orderly, very gentle-hearted, not assertive, not abstract thinking.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

13. Very domineering, somewhat tidy, very anxious, somewhat imaginative, very soft-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

14. Not dominant, somewhat efficient, somewhat fretful, very reflective, very tender-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

15. Somewhat overexcitable, somewhat soft-hearted, somewhat orderly, somewhat self-confident, very broad minded.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

16. Very high-strung, somewhat forceful, somewhat organized, very unconventional, somewhat gentle-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

17. Very domineering, very broad minded, very worrying, not charitable, very efficient.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

18. Very individualistic, somewhat forceful, somewhat self-conscious, very kind, somewhat thorough.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

19. Somewhat thorough, somewhat hypersensitive, not tender-hearted, somewhat assertive, not abstract thinking.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

20. Not self confident, not unconventional, very anxious, not kind, not efficient.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

21. Very domineering, very systematic, not guilt-prone, not questioning, very soft-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

22. Not forceful, not reflective, not fretful, somewhat gentle-hearted, not systematic.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

23. Somewhat philosophical, not fretful, somewhat self-confident, not kind, not systematic.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

24. Somewhat sympathetic, very thorough, very individualistic, somewhat tense, very dominant.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

25. Not charitable, not self-disciplined, somewhat imaginative, somewhat guilt-prone, very firm.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

26. Not thorough, somewhat self confident, somewhat soft-hearted, very hypersensitive, not literary.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

27. Somewhat persistent, not tense, not neat, very unconventional, not sympathetic.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

28. Not persistent, somewhat planful, not nervous, not broad minded, not sympathetic.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

29. Somewhat gentle-hearted, very tidy, not philosophical, very worrying, not forceful.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

30. Somewhat hypersensitive, very assertive, very planful, not literary, very gentle-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

31. not inquisitive, somewhat tender, somewhat firm, very planful, very nervous

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

32. somewhat kind, very high-strung, somewhat unconventional, somewhat organized, not self-assured.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

33. not reflective, somewhat fretful, somewhat persistent, somewhat charitable, very systematic.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

34. Somewhat gentle-hearted, very forceful, somewhat reflective, somewhat systematic, very fretful.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

35. Very tender, very tidy, somewhat imaginative, somewhat anxious, very self confident.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

36. Somewhat assertive, somewhat orderly, not tense, somewhat abstract thinking, very gentle-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

37. Very hypersensitive, somewhat forceful, very planfull, very literary, very kind.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

38. Somewhat sympathetic, somewhat planfull, very inquisitive, not nervous, very dominant.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

39. Somewhat orderly, somewhat overexcitable, somewhat tender, not firm, somewhat broad minded.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

40. Not thorough, very domineering, somewhat tender-hearted, very hypersensitive, somewhat literary.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

41. Not self-conscious, not self-assured, somewhat reliable, very literary, not tender-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

42. Somewhat firm, not organized, very worrying, somewhat philosophical, very sympathetic.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

43. Not guilt-prone, very self-disciplined, not gentle-hearted, not firm, very literary.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

44. Somewhat kind, not self-disciplined, not questioning, somewhat guilt-prone, somewhat self-assured.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

45. Very philosophical, somewhat gentle-hearted, somewhat forceful, not tidy, somewhat worrying.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

46. Somewhat individualistic, not tender-hearted, very assertive, very thorough, not hypersensitive.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

47. Somewhat individualistic, somewhat tense, somewhat self-assured, not tender, very neat.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

48. Very imaginative, very anxious, very self-assured, somewhat kind, not efficient.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

49. Not individualistic, very persistent, somewhat self-conscious, very accommodating, not thorough.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

50. Somewhat fretful, very dominant, very systematic, somewhat philosophical, not accommodating.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

51. Somewhat anxious, somewhat accommodating, somewhat efficient, somewhat assertive, somewhat imaginative.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

52. Not self-assured, very planful, very hypersensitive, somewhat literary, very charitable

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

53. Very firm, very abstract thinking, very tense, somewhat tender, somewhat neat.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

54. Not nervous, somewhat domineering, somewhat planful, somewhat inquisitive, somewhat tender-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

55. Somewhat thorough, somewhat hypersensitive, somewhat tender, somewhat firm, not literary.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

56. Somewhat hypersensitive, not self-assured, very thorough, very reflective, not tender-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

57. Somewhat persistent, very reliable, very self-conscious, very questioning, not soft-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

58. Not guilt-prone, very self-assured, somewhat self-disciplined, somewhat questioning, somewhat kind.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

59. Not hypersensitive, not assertive, somewhat planfull, very literary, very gentle-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

60. Somewhat charitable, very organized, somewhat unconventional, somewhat high-strung, not persistent.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

61. Very broad minded, not tender, very assertive, somewhat neat, very tense.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

62. Not forceful, very orderly, not overexcitable, somewhat literary, not soft-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

63. Not overexcitable, very domineering, somewhat orderly, not broad minded, somewhat tender-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

64. Somewhat guilt-prone, somewhat systematic, very tender-hearted, very dominant, not questioning..

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

65. Very thorough, not hypersensitive, somewhat tender, very firm, somewhat literary.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

66. Very firm, not tidy, not anxious, very imaginative, very sympathetic.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

67. Not soft-hearted, somewhat forceful, somewhat individualistic, somewhat neat, very tense.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

68. Not tense, not forceful, somewhat orderly, not abstract thinking, very kind.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

69. Very fretful, very tender-hearted, very efficient, very dominant, not reflective.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

70. Very worrying, very tidy, not kind, somewhat self confident, somewhat questioning.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

71. Not tender, somewhat planful, somewhat broad minded, not nervous, somewhat self-assured.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

72. Somewhat assertive, very neat, not overexcitable, very conventional, not tender.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

73. Somewhat dominant, not tidy, not anxious, somewhat imaginative, very tender-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

74. Very tender, not self confident, somewhat questioning, somewhat systematic, very guilt-prone.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

75. Somewhat guilt-prone, somewhat dominant, not self-disciplined, not imaginative, not accommodating.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

76. Very overexcitable, not self confident, not orderly, somewhat broad-minded, somewhat soft-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

77. Not self-assured, somewhat philosophical, somewhat worrying, somewhat king, not tidy.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

78. Very sympathetic, somewhat firm, not imaginative, very tidy, somewhat anxious.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

79. Not orderly, somewhat overexcitable, not soft-hearted, very forceful, not literary.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

80. Somewhat dominant, not philosophical, very fretful, not accommodating, somewhat systematic..

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

81. Not inquisitive, not reliable, somewhat assertive, not tender-hearted, not self-conscious.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

82. Somewhat charitable, not self-disciplined, very questioning, very guilt-prone, not persistent.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

83. Very organized, not high-strung, not charitable, very firm, not reflective.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

84. Somewhat literary, not persistent, very overexcitable, not sympathetic, not orderly.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

85. Not individualistic, very tense, not self-assured, not tender, somewhat neat.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

86. Somewhat imaginative, somewhat gentle-hearted, somewhat forceful, very efficient, not anxious.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

87. Somewhat kind, somewhat fretful, somewhat reflective, very systematic, very self-assured.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

88. Not tender-hearted, somewhat literary, not assertive, somewhat orderly, somewhat overexcitable.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

89. Somewhat thorough, somewhat hypersensitive, not sympathetic, very persistent, somewhat abstract thinking.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

90. Very systematic, very unconventional, not accommodating, very fretful, not self confident

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

91. Very tender-hearted, somewhat dominant, somewhat unconventional, very self-disciplined, very high-strung.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

92. Very philosophical, very forceful, somewhat tense, not sympathetic, very planful.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

93. Not forceful, very reflective, somewhat self-conscious, not soft-hearted, not reliable.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

94. Somewhat anxious, somewhat accommodating, somewhat efficient, somewhat assertive, somewhat imaginative.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

95. Not self-assured, very planfull, very hypersensitive, somewhat literary, very charitable.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

96. Very firm, very abstract thinking, very tense, somewhat tender, somewhat neat.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

97. Not nervous, somewhat domineering, somewhat planful, somewhat inquisitive, somewhat tender-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

98. Somewhat thorough, somewhat hypersensitive, somewhat tender, somewhat firm, not literary.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

99. Somewhat hypersensitive, not self-assured, very thorough, very reflective, not tender-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

100. Somewhat persistent, very reliable, very self-conscious, very questioning, not soft-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

101. Not guilt-prone, very self-assured, somewhat self-disciplined, somewhat questioning, somewhat kind.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

102. Not hypersensitive, not assertive, somewhat planful, very literary, very gentle-hearted.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

103. Somewhat charitable, very organized, somewhat unconventional, somewhat high-strung, not persistent.

☐ very unsupportive ☐ somewhat unsupportive ☐ somewhat supportive ☐ very supportive

[1] The versions of this measure differ in Study 1 and Study 2. In Study 1, the duplicate items are 1-10 matched with 41-50, and 51-60 matched with 94-103. In Study 2, the duplicate items are 21-40 matched with 84-103.

Appendix G

RATINGS OF JOEY

The following is a list of adjectives that can be used to describe people. Please rate each adjective in terms of how well it describes Joey. Make these ratings on a 1 to 7 scale with 1 being very unlike him and 7 being very like him. Note: if you are uncertain, it is okay to speculate based on what you know about this television character.

very unlike him _____ very like him

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

____dominant
____organized
____tense
____inefficient
____tender-hearted
____planful
____thorough
____unsympathetic
____kind
____at ease
____assertive
____inquisitive
____bashful
____neat
____forceful
____charitable
____efficient
____self-confident
____systematic
____gentle-hearted
____tidy
____soft-hearted
____reflective
____broad-minded

____conventional
____artistic
____questioning
____cruel
____philosophical
____disorganized
____calm
____iron-hearted
____shy
____worrying
____orderly
____domineering
____imaginative
____tender
____nervous
____timid
____cold-hearted
____hypersensitive
____abstract-thinking
____self-assured
____meek
____anxious
____literary
____individualistic

____self-conscious
____relaxed
____guilt-prone
____high-strung
____persistent
____self-conscious
____fretful
____firm
____accommodating
____impractical
____ruthless
____self-disciplined

---

[1]Five versions of this measure were used. The directions were modified each time such that the subject rated Joey, Ross, Monica, Phoebe and themselves.

Appendix B

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following items, using the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

	SD	D	A	SA
1. There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it.	1	2	3	4
2. There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress.	1	2	3	4
3. There are people who depend on me for help.	1	2	3	4
4. There are people who enjoy the same social activities I do.	1	2	3	4
5. Other people do not view me as competent.	1	2	3	4
6. I feel personally responsible for the well being of another person.	1	2	3	4
7. I feel part of a group of people who share my attitudes and beliefs.	1	2	3	4
8. I do not think other people respect my skills and abilities.	1	2	3	4
9. If something went wrong, no one would come to my assistance.	1	2	3	4
10. There is someone I could talk to about important decisions in my life.	1	2	3	4
11. I have relationships where my competence and skill are recognized.	1	2	3	4
12. There is no one who shares my interests and concerns.	1	2	3	4
13. There is no one who really relies on me for their well being.	1	2	3	4
14. There is a trustworthy person I could turn to for advice if I were having problems.	1	2	3	4
15. There is no one I can depend on for aid if I really need it.	1	2	3	4
16. There is no one I feel comfortable talking about problems with.	1	2	3	4
17. There are people who admire my talents and abilities.	1	2	3	4
18. I lack a feeling of intimacy with another person.	1	2	3	4
19. There is no one who likes to do the things I do.	1	2	3	4
20. There are people I can count on in an emergency.	1	2	3	4
21. I feel that I do not have any close personal relationships with other people.	1	2	3	4
22. I have close relationships that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being.	1	2	3	4

SSP-2

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

	SD	D	A	SA
23. I feel a strong emotional bond with at least one other person.	1	2	3	4
24. I lack a feeling of intimacy with another person.	1	2	3	4

Appendix C

The following is a list of adjectives that can be used to describe people. Please rate each adjective in terms of how well it describes **your own personality**. Make these ratings on a 1 to 7 scale with 1 being very **unlike me** and 7 being very **like me**.

very unlike me _____ very like me

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

____dominant
____conventional
____unphilosophical
____tense
____inefficient
____cruel
____tender-hearted
____planful
____meek
____thorough
____calm
____uncomplex
____high-strung
____kind
____persistent
____shy
____at ease
____unorderly
____worrying
____unself-conscious
____overexcitable

____unaggressive
____undisciplined
____organized
____questioning
____unauthoritative
____unanxious
____philosophical
____unreflective
____disorganized
____untidy
____unagitated
____unsympathetic
____iron-hearted
____reliable
____forgetful
____unimaginative
____uncharitable
____unplanful
____unartistic
____assertive
____orderly

very_____very
unlike me like me

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

____unbold
____firm
____inquisitive
____unreliable
____imaginative
____neat
____tender
____nervous
____charitable
____stable
____timid
____cold-hearted
____ruthless
____hypersensitive
____unmoody
____unsearching
____tidy
____uninquisitive
____anxious
____abstract-thinking
____broad-minded
____unnervous
____self-conscious
____unworring
____guilt-prone

____warmthless
____unsystematic
____domineering
____bashful
____sympathetic
____unliterary
____forceful
____accomodating
____unconventional
____unabstract
____efficient
____impractical
____self-confident
____systematic
____gentle-hearted
____self-assured
____forceless
____soft-hearted
____reflective
____literary
____unanxious
____individualistic
____fretful
____relaxed
____self-disciplined

---

[1]In Study 2, two versions of this measure were used. The directions were modified each time such that the subject rated themselves and a designated person from their social network.

Appendix D

Please take a moment to list the initials of the five people who have the most important impact in your life. Their impact upon you can be **either positive or negative**. Please limit this list to people **with whom you interact with at least once a month**. In addition, write in parentheses your relationship with the person. For example,

"A. B.L.(boss)"

A._____

B._____

C._____

D._____

E._____

Appendix E

Think about **the person you listed in blank "C" of the previous page**. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements **as they pertain to this person**.
Write the initials of this person on the following line.

_____.

1. This person makes my problems clearer and easier to understand.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

2. I would feel perfectly comfortable talking to this person about difficulties with my social life.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

3. This person would help me study for an exam by spending several hours reading me questions.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

4. This person would loan me their car for a couple of hours.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

5. I hang out with this person quite a lot.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

6. This person accepts me totally, including both my best and worst points.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

7. This person really cares about me, regardless of what is happening to me.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

8. I feel close with this person.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

9. This person provides me with a sense of emotional security and well-being.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

10. I have a strong emotional bond with this person.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

11. This person respects my talents and abilities.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

12. This person understands me.

☐strongly disagree ☐disagree ☐agree ☐strongly agree

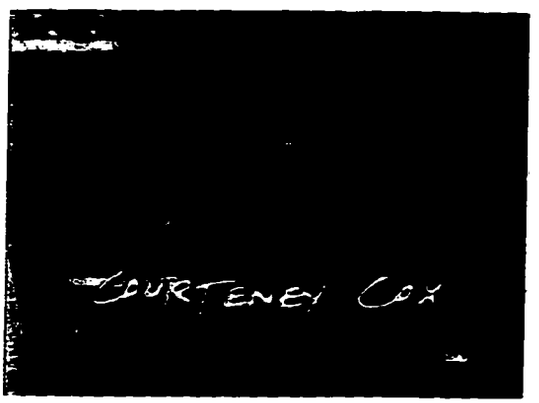
---

[1]In Study 2, the instructions varied such that different subjects rated targets on different specified lines. In Study 3, five versions of this measure were used. The directions were modified each time such that the subject rated Joey, Ross, Monica, Phoebe and themselves.

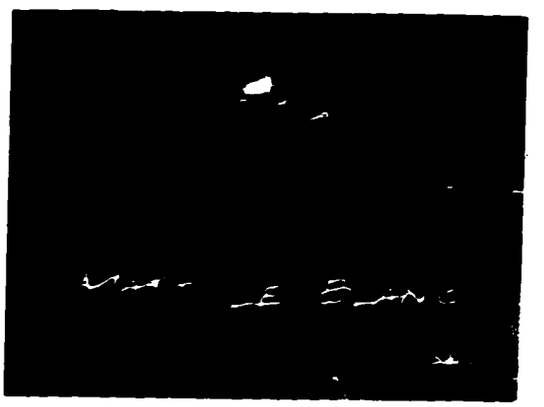
This study investigates mental representations of oneself and of other people. Consequently, you will be asked to make a series of judgments about yourself, as well as about some of the characters from a popular television show, <u>Friends</u>. The pictures below will help you in remembering the names of these characters. Before beginning this packet, please answer the following question about the frequency with which you watch this show. Note: If you have never watched the show, answer the questions in the booklet on the basis of what you think these people are like from their pictures.

Within the last 6 months, how often have you watched the show friends.

☐ *Almost every week.*
☐ *Approximately two times a month.*
☐ *Approximately once a month.*
☐ *Approximately every other month.*
☐ *Other. Please specify _____.*
☐ *I have not watched Friends in the past 6 months, but I have watched it approximately ____ times before this time.*
☐ *I have never watched this show before.*



Monica



Joey

Phoebe

Ross

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ABSTRACT

AN IDIOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO THE PERSON x ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION IN SUPPORT JUDGMENTS

by

CATHERINE J. LUTZ

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Advisor: Dr. Brian Lakey

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Earliest models of perceived social support emphasized aspects of the individual's social environment, proposing that perceived support is a direct function of the help one actually received. Other researchers speculated that perceived social support is a reflection of the personality of the perceiver. However, a recent series of generalizability studies suggest that the single most important determinant of support judgments is the Perceiver by Environment interaction. Thus, it appears that social support judgments are largely driven by the unique matching between the perceiver and the support provider. One potential mechanism of this matching process is that different people base their judgments of other's supportiveness on different characteristics of targets. In order to investigate this possibility, a series of three studies were conducted. In the first, subjects completed measures of perceived support and personality, as well as rated the extent to which different patterns of personality profiles imply supportiveness. The results of Study 1 indicated that 1) subjects differed in the traits that they associated with support, and 2) the traits subjects associated with support were the same traits they see in themselves. This suggests a similarity between subjects' mental representation of self and

representations of supportive others. Because subjects made ratings of hypothetical personality profiles, Study 1 did not address whether this similarity effect applies to support judgments of actual persons. In Study 2, subjects made personality and support ratings of both themselves and a target in their own social networks. The results of Study 2 indicated that the more similar subjects and targets were in personality, the more likely subjects were to see the target as supportive. One limitation of Study 2 was that subjects each rated a different target. In Study 3 subjects all rated the support and personality of the same four characters from a popular television program. The results of Study 3 indicated that the traits subjects associated with support of the four characters were the same traits they saw in themselves. Taken together the three studies provide good evidence that when asking people what they think a good support provider is like, they will say a good support provider is someone who is like themselves.

Autobiographical Statement

I, Catherine Jean Lutz, was born and raised in Springfield, Illinois. I completed my Bachelor's Degree in Psychology at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. For my undergraduate Honors Thesis, I conducted a series of studies examining the effects of anxiety upon judgements of risk. Since entering this program, I have co-authored two book chapters; one on special issues faced by severely mentally ill women, and one interventions to increase perceived social support. I have also written two articles on cognitive processes involved in perceived social support. After I graduate, I intend to apply for academic positions at four-year schools (or pursue a career as a Country-Western singer).