The Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)

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.

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- Overview
- Assessment validation analysis
- Scoring Instructions
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Assessing Social Support. The Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)

Overview:
A measure of social support, the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ}is described. The SSQ yields scores for (a) perceived number of social supports and (b) satisfaction with social support that is available. This study deals with the SSQ's psychometric properties, its correlations with measures of personality, adjustment and the relation of the SSQ to positive and negative life changes and details of an experimental investigation of the relation between social support and persistence in working on a complex, frustrating task. The research reported suggests that the SSQ is a reliable instrument and that social support is (a) more strongly related to positive than negative life changes, (b) More related in a negative direction to psychological discomfort among women than men, and (c) an asset in enabling a person to persist at a task under frustrating conditions.

(This overview is a except from Assessing social support: The Social Support Questionnaire.
Sarason, Irwin G.; Levine, Henry M.; Basham, Robert B.; Sarason, Barbara R. journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol 44(1), Jan 1983, 127-139)

Observations in a variety of settings have highlighted the positive roles played by social attachments in psychological adjustment and health. Psychotherapists try to provide their clients with the acceptance needed to pursue self-examination. Soldiers develop strong mutually reinforcing ties with each other that contribute to their success and survival. Physicians daily note the salutary effects of their attention and expressed concern on their patients' well-being and recovery from illness. These types of observations have added to the idea that social support (a) contributes to positive adjustment and personal development and (b) provides a buffer against the effects of stress.

 Social support is usually defined as the existence or availability of people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about. value, and love us. Bowlby's theory of attachment (1969, 1973, 1980) relies heavily on this interpretation of social sup-port. When social support, in the form of an attachment figure, is available early in life, Bowlby believes children become self-reliant. learn to function as supports for others, and have a decreased likelihood of psychopathology in later life. Bowlby has also concluded that the availability of social support bolsters the capacity to withstand and overcome frustrations and problem-solving challenges. . A variety of types of evidence seems to support this concept of social support. for example, Miller and Lefcourt have recently obtained results consistent with this inter-pretation (Miller & Lefcourt, Note 1, Note 2), as did Hirsch (1980). Bronfenbrenner (1961) found that the rated leadership 'and responsibility of 16-year-old boys and girls was related to family interaction patterns. Those adolescents showing the greatest leadership and responsibility described their parents as being more affectionate and supportive than did adolescents low on these characteristics.
Murphy and Moriarty (1976) found that the availability of family supports increased children's resilience in the face of stress. Sandler (1980) found significant relations between stress and social support, on the one hand, and children's maladjustments, on the other. In a 30 year longitudinal study of Harvard University male undergraduates, Vaillant (197 4, 1977) found that a supportive early family environment was correlated with positive adult adjustment and lack of psychiatric disorder. In addition to evidence that the availability of childhood social support is related to personality development and adult behaviour pat-terns. There is also evidence of the detrimental effects of lack of support in adults. De Araujo

In this article. we describe a new instrument intended to quantify the dimensions of perceived availability of and satisfaction with social support and Recent reliability and other psychometric data. We also report the results of a series of studies that provide in-formation about the relations and correlates of dimensions of social support with other measures, including desirable and undesirable recent life events. perceived adequacy of childhood relationships. personality characteristics (such as depression, anxiety, hostility, . extroversion, and self-esteem), and outlook about the future. s ~ x differences in these variables are also investigated. In addition, results of an experimental study are presented. The study dealt with the relations between social support and locus of control, on the one hand, and persistence and cognitive interference under frustrating conditions, on the other.

Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ)

Instructions:

The following questions ask about people in your life who provide you with help or support. Each question has two parts. For the first part, list all the people you know, excluding yourself, whom you can count on for help or support in the manner described. Give the person's initials and their relationship to you (see example). Do not list more than one person next to each of the numbers beneath the question.

For the second part, circle how satisfied you are with the overall support you have.

If you have no support for a question, check the words "No one," but still rate your level of satisfaction. Do not list more than nine persons per question.

Please answer all questions as best you can. All your answers will be kept confidential.

Example:

Who do you know whom you can trust with information that could get you in trouble?

No one
1) T.N. (brother)   4) T.N. (father)   7)
2) L.M. (friend)   5) L.M. (employer)   8)
3) R.S. (friend)   6)   9)

How Satisfied?

6- very satisfied	5 – fairly satisfied	4 – a little satisfied	3 – a little dissatisfied	2 – fairly dissatisfied	1 – very dissatisfied

To score SSQ:

1. Add total number of people for all 27 items. (Max. is 243).
    Divide by 27 for per item score. This gives you SSQ Number Score, or SSQN.
2. Total satisfaction scores for all 27 items. (Max is 162).
    Divide by 27 for per item score. This gives you SSQ Satisfaction score or SSQS
3. You can also add up total number of people that are family members and that can   .
    give the SSQ family score.