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Cheryl Buehler

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Date April 26, 1994

The Direct and Moderating Effects of Social Support for Children Following Marital Separation

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Christine Marie Anthony

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to two very influential and important men in my life:

---My father, Kenneth Burwinkel, who passed away during the preparation of this thesis. His love for me and great pride in my accomplishments continue to inspire me to do my best.

---My husband, Brian Anthony, whose love, patience, encouragement and technical assistance provided me with the support necessary to make this thesis possible.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the direct and moderating effects of social support on the relationship between life change and child maladjustment following marital separation. The sample consisted of 138 residential parents with children between the ages of 3 and 18. Child maladjustment was conceptualized in terms of four dimensions: aggression, anxiety/depression, dependency, and low productivity. Life change was measured by assessing the occurrence and disruptiveness of changes in children's lives since the separation. Three dimensions of social support were measured: global support, sources of support and functions of support. The results provide more evidence for moderating effects of social support than direct effects. Support sources moderated more relationships than support functions. The dependent variables that were moderated by social support were measures of externalizing behavior problems.

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I. Introduction and Literature Review

During the course of development a child is likely to encounter numerous events, tasks, or challenges that require adaptive responses from both the child and the family (Wertlieb, Weigel, & Feldstein, 1987). Parental divorce is one such event for many children given that approximately 9.25 million children in the United States live with a divorced or separated parent (Zill, 1991). In general, children's reactions to stressful life events such as divorce vary tremendously (Compas, 1987; Emery, 1988). In spite of this variability, children of divorce are at greater risk for cognitive, affective, behavioral, and psychophysiological problems than are other children (Amato & Keith, 1991; Hetherington, 1979; Kurdek, 1981). In addition, greater variability in adjustment outcomes within samples of children of divorce and children residing in stepfamilies has been found when compared to nondivorced samples (Amato, 1993; Cooney, 1993).

Children who have experienced stressful life events and yet also evidence few behavior problems, and perhaps even enhanced social competence, seem to profit from various protective factors (Emery, 1982; Rutter, 1979; Stolberg, Complair, Currier, & Wells, 1987). Protective factors are "those attributes of persons, environments, situations and events that appear to temper predictions of psychopathology based upon an individual's risk status (Kimchi & Schaffner, 1990, 478)." According to Garmezy (1981),

protective factors fall into three broadly defined categories: (a) a positive personality disposition of the child, (b) a supportive family environment, and (c) an external support system that encourages and reinforces the child's effective coping efforts.

A review of the divorce literature suggests that three clusters of variables may play a role in children's post-divorce adjustment (Cowen, Pedro-Carroll, & Alpert-Gillis, 1990). These three clusters are: (a) fixed attributes of the child, such as age, sex, race and temperament (Hetherington, 1989), (b) a child's personal make-up including coping skills and problem-solving abilities (Emery, 1988), and (c) situational factors such as the quality of the parent-child relationship, the quality of the relationship between the former spouses, and the number of life changes associated with the divorce (Forehand, Wierson, McCombs, Brody & Fauber, 1989; Gately & Schwebel, 1991).

Increasingly, it has been recognized that children's adjustment to divorce is influenced strongly by situational variables, including environmental and social factors (Kurdek, 1981; Wertlieb et al., 1987). Two of these situational variables are additional life changes and the use of social support. The objective of the current study was to explore the relationships among life change, social support, and children's adjustment post-separation. Children's adjustment was defined conceptually as "the ability of a child to engage successfully and appropriately in interpersonal relationships and in work or

play activities with relative freedom from noxious social behaviors and burdensome emotions" (Trotter, 1989, p. 16).

Life Change

A long tradition of research dealing with the effects of stressful life changes on health and adjustment has focused on adults (Johnson, 1982). Recently, life change researchers have begun to focus on children, as evidenced by the development of life events checklists for children (Johnson, 1982). According to Holmes and Rahe (1967), life change is defined as the occurrence of a set of circumstances which results in the modification of a person's life pattern. For children of divorce, life change events often include a change in residence and school, the absence of a previously present parent, a change in the economic status of the family, and changes in the residential parent's employment status and/or hours.

Environmental change experienced by children post-separation seems to be related to the development of adjustment problems (Wolchik, Ruehlman, Braver & Sandler, 1989). Stolberg et al. (1987) found that a higher frequency of children's life change events was associated with greater child maladjustment as measured by the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1966). Other studies have shown a similar relationship between life change events and maladjustment in children post-separation (Kurdek, 1981; Kurdek & Blisk, 1983; Stolberg & Anker, 1984). The stressfulness of a representative sample of divorce-related change events was assessed in a study by Wolchik

et al. (1989) and revealed that negative or stressful events were related to maladjustment (r = .40, p < .001). In another study relating stressful life change to adjustment with this population of children, the accumulation of undesirable, disruptive life change was related more strongly to behavior symptoms than was the experience of accumulated daily hassles (Wertlieb et al., 1987).

Given that the frequency and perceived disruptiveness of life change each seem to be associated with children's post-separation adjustment, the current study addressed two dimensions of life change: the occurrence of life change and the perceived disruptiveness of life change events. The occurrence of life change is a measure of the number of life change events the child has experienced post-separation. The perceived disruptiveness of life change events is a subjective measure of change-related disruptiveness, as reported by the residential parent.

Studies using life events measures with children typically yield low to moderate statistically significant correlations between stress and adjustment. The research suggests correlations between life change and adjustment are .20 to .40, accounting for 10%-16% of the variance in children's adjustment (Johnson, 1982; Wolchik et al., 1989). One possible explanation for the relatively low correlations between life change and dependent variables may be that investigators are not considering other variables which may moderate the effects of life change on adjustment. Because individuals vary

considerably in how they are affected by life events, it is important to consider the nature of relevant social, psychological, and individual variables that may either increase vulnerability or play a protective role (Johnson, 1982). As such, it appears that life stress measures alone have only limited power in predicting adjustment problems and that the consideration of potential moderator variables, such as social support, is necessary to account for some of the individual differences in adjustment to life change events (Wertlieb et al., 1987).

Social Support

The study of children's social support is relatively new. For purposes of this study, the following conceptual definition of social support was used:

> Social support is the degree to which a person's basic social needs are gratified through interactions with others. Basic social needs include affection, esteem, belonging, identity, and security. These needs may be met by either the provision of socio-emotional aid (e. g., affection, sympathy, acceptance, and esteem from significant others) or the provision of instrumental aid (e. g., advice, information, and financial aid) (Thoits, 1982. p. 147).

Research suggests that support from family and nonfamily adults is related positively to adjustment in children of non-divorced families (e. g., Bryant, 1985; DuBois, Felner, Brand, Adan & Evans, 1992; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Varni, Setoguchi, Rappaport & Talbot, 1992). Only in the mid- to late 1980's did researchers begin to explore the relationship of social support to adjustment in children of maritally-disrupted families. However,

social support is an important variable to consider in this context because divorce is an event which affects the entire family system and has ramifications for the functioning of and interactions among family members (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978).

According to Wallerstein (1983), during the immediate aftermath of the separation and often into the first year, the residential parent tends to experience a diminished capacity to parent. That is, the parent tends to be less competent as a parent, less able to maintain the structure of the household, and less available to the children. Likewise, Hetherington et al. (1978) found that divorced parents made fewer maturity demands, communicated less effectively, were less affectionate, and displayed inconsistency in discipline during the first year following divorce.

In non-divorced families, parents typically are a child's primary source for affection, enhancement of worth, instrumental aid, and a reliable alliance (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985). For children of divorce, particularly in the first year post-separation when a parent may be unable, physically, psychologically, and/or emotionally to provide adequate support (for a particularly needy child), it would seem valuable for children to have alternate support sources (i.e., nonparental).

According to Cohen and Wills (1985), the role that social support plays in protecting and maintaining psychological well-being has been well established across a variety of studies. However, the mechanisms or processes linking

stressors, social support, and outcomes are not documented or understood (Quitner, Glueckauf, & Jackson, 1990). One reason cited for this lack of understanding is conceptual confusion resulting from the failure in the literature to distinguish between the functional and structural aspects of social support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Only the most recent literature on children and marital disruption has addressed the complexity and multidimensionality of social support (Cohen & Syme, 1985). Maintaining a distinction between the functions of social support and structural characteristics of support is necessary to provide a clearer understanding of the relationship between social support and children's adjustment post-separation (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

There is a paucity of research which has addressed the issue of social support with children of divorce. As a result, no conclusive evidence exists about the influence of supportive relationships on children's adaptations to divorce. What is known is that children of divorce with a high quality relationship with their parents fare better than those who have poor relationships (Hetherington et al., 1978). Much less is known about children's nonparental social relationships and the impact these relationships have on their adjustment to divorce (Wolchik et al., 1989).

Two important aspects of social support are the sources of support and the needs addressed by the support (i.e., function of support, Kurdek, 1988). For the current study, the following sources of support were examined: family

members, extended kin, peers and nonfamily adults. In addition, four support functions were examined: physical care/supervision, emotional needs/being loved, discussing separation/divorce, and social needs (Kurdek, 1988).

For children of divorce, the distinction between support from family members versus nonfamily members may be especially relevant. Wolchik et al. (1989) suggested that having different needs fulfilled by each source of support would be most beneficial to children. Specifically, they made the suggestion that support from family members may be important for restructuring family patterns, an important adaptive task of divorce (Wallerstein, 1983). Less personally involved nonfamily members, on the other hand, may be able to provide the child with a different perspective or a distraction from divorce-related stressors (Wolchik et al., 1989).

Using both mother- and child-reports, Kurdek (1988) found that divorced mothers and their children perceived different sources of support. Children cited friends and kin as their most frequently used source of support across all support functions. From the mother's perspective, the most frequent source of support depended on the function of support. Mothers saw themselves as the most frequent providers of physical care/supervision, emotional needs/being loved, and conversations about divorce-related concerns, and viewed themselves and their child's friends as the most frequent providers of social/recreational needs (Kurdek, 1988). Interestingly, Wolchik et al. (1989) found that support from other children, no matter what

the function of that support was or whose perspective was being considered, was not significantly related to children's post-divorce adjustment. So, even though children from separating and divorcing families cite friends as their most frequent source of support, some evidence suggests peer support is ineffective for ameliorating maladjustment.

Structural characteristics, such as the amount of support and the size of the network, also have been studied with divorcing families. Following a marital separation, interaction with one's in-laws typically decreases dramatically, possibly alienating a child from additional important sources of support. Daniels-Mohring and Berger (1984) reported that network size often decreased following separation, and that persons who experienced sharp declines in their social networks due to marital disruption were more likely to have adjustment problems. However, in the sparse literature examining children's network size post-separation, network size has not been found to be related to adjustment problems (Drapeau & Bouchard, 1993).

Relationships Among Child Adjustment, Life Change, and Social Support

Two models typically have been tested to describe the mechanisms by which social support affects outcomes of stressful life events: the direct or main effect model and the buffering or moderating model (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Quitner et al., 1990). The direct effect model suggests that social support has beneficial effects on the psychological well-being or adjustment regardless of levels of life change (Quitner et al., 1990). Generally, according

to this model, social support may serve to lessen the likelihood of symptom development (Norris & Murrell, 1984). Using social support as the moderator variable, the buffering model suggests that social support has positive effects on the adjustment of children who experience greater levels of stress and does not affect (or affects less) the adjustment of children who are experiencing lower levels of life change (Wolchik et al., 1989). Models that include both direct and moderating effects are labelled mixed models (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Wolchik and colleagues (1989) compared the direct and buffering effects of social support in a sample of children of divorce. Their results displayed a unique pattern. Direct effects occurred using parental reports of life change and adjustment and moderating effects of stress and social support occurred when analyzing children's reports. Cohen and Wills (1985) have suggested that direct and moderating effects both may occur, but that the type of support measured plays an important role. They argue that direct effects are more likely to occur when support is measured by assessing structural characteristics, and that buffering effects occur more often when specific types of support are measured and when there is a close match between an unmet need and a function of support.

In summary, most children experience dramatic life change following their parents' separation and their need for social support changes. However, children's social support post-separation has not been researched in any

detail. Theory and research on the role of social support in other contexts suggest social support may have both direct and moderating effects.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the direct and buffering effects of social support on the relationship between life change events experienced by children post-separation and their subsequent adjustment process. Three research questions were addressed: (a) Does social support directly affect residential parent's perceptions of children's maladjustment following marital separation?, (b) Does social support buffer or moderate the relationship between life change and residential parent's perceptions of children's maladjustment following marital separation, and (c) Is there more evidence for a direct or moderating effect of social support?

II. Methods

Data Set

The data used in this study were collected as part of the evaluation process for the Orientation for Divorcing Parents (ODP) project. This study was part of a larger, more comprehensive study designed to examine the well-being of parents and children following marital separation (Buehler, 1989; Buehler & Legg, 1993; Buehler & Trotter, 1990; Legg, 1990).

Sample characteristics. The subsample for this study consisted of 138 residential parents (RP), 108 mothers and 30 fathers with children between the ages of 3 and 18. The 1986 court records in a large southeastern city were used to identify the population. The mean age of the RP was 33 years. The educational attainment of the RP ranged from high school or less (36%) to the completion of a graduate degree (7%) with 12% attaining a college degree. Most (83%) reported being employed full-time with the modal occupational status being skilled laborer. Their median current net monthly income was $1,000. The median length of separation was five months. About 87% of the parents had either one or two children. The mean age of the target children was 8.04, and 55.8% (n=77) of them were male. (See Appendix C, Tables C-1 and C-2 for additional demographic information).

Measures

Children's adjustment. The Personal Adjustment and Role Skills (PARSII) scale and its shorter version, the Child and Adolescent Profile

(CAAP) scale (Ellsworth, 1978, 1979; Pett, 1979, 1982) were revised to measure residential parent's perceptions of children's adjustment (CA) in this study. These instruments were selected because they were designed for use by significant others (e. g., parents and teachers). Additionally, these scales were chosen because they: (a) had been validated for children between the ages of 3 and 18, (b) included both anti- and prosocial dimensions of CA, (c) had undergone a rigorous developmental process to establish validity, and (d) are relatively short.

The anxiety/depression items of the PARSII scale were included in the 30-item extended version of the CAAP that was used in this study. The anxiety/depression subscale (3 items) were retained because this is an important dimension to include in a study of children from divorcing families (Emery, 1982). Four other subscales were considered as well: (a) dependency (4 items), (b) aggression (4 items), (c) withdrawal (5 items), and (d) productivity (4 items).

To determine if Ellsworth's reported factor structure was upheld in the current sample, the subscale items were factor analyzed using a maximum likelihood (ML) extraction and an oblimin rotation. (A varimax rotation also was used and produced a similar solution). Two criteria were used to select items for each factor: (a) individual items had to have factor loadings greater than .40 on the primary factor, and (b) the primary and secondary loadings needed to differ by more than .20. Based on this analysis, four subscales

were identified: aggression (5 items), anxiety/depression (5 items), dependency (5 items), and low productivity (4 items). (See Appendix C, Table C-3 for the results of the factor analysis).

Parents were asked to rate specific child behaviors during the past month using a 1 (never) to 4 (often) response scale. The productivity items were reverse-coded so that a high score represented low productivity. The instruments' author reported test-retest correlations ranging from .78 to .89 providing evidence of acceptable test-retest reliability (Ellsworth, 1979). In previous research an estimate of the measure's internal consistency indicated that the scale items were measuring the same dimension of adjustment with an acceptable degree of reliability (Cronbach's alphas between .80 and .90) (Ellsworth, 1979). Alpha coefficients for the current sample were as follows: .84 for aggression, .72 for anxiety/depression, .85 for dependency, and .78 for low productivity.

Life change. A multidimensional conceptualization of life change was used for this study. Buehler and Langenbrunner (1987) identified occurrence, disruptiveness, area of life change, social desirability, and subjective desirability as dimensions of life change. Specifically, the dimensions of occurrence and perceived disruptiveness were assessed in this study because existing literature suggested these dimensions are particularly salient.

Occurrence was measured by summing the responses of nine child-

relevant events, situations, or strains that divorcing parents reported their families have experienced since separation. Examples are: "The children have changed schools" and "Household routines and daily patterns have changed." Responses were "no" (0) and "yes" (1). Thus, the summed scores on occurrence could range from 0 to 9.

Perceived disruptiveness is a subjective rating where the respondents assessed the degree of change, or disruption, associated with their personal experience of the event (Buehler & Langenbrunner, 1987). This type of assessment allows for an "insiders" perspective (Olson, 1977). Other life events scales (e. g., Holmes & Rahe, 1967) use a panel of judges to determine the degree of change associated with each event and apply these assessments to all situations and contexts.

For this study, respondents assessed the degree of disruption with a Likert-type response scale that ranged from "experienced this but it was not disruptive" (1) to "experienced this and it was very disruptive" (5). The disruptiveness score was calculated by averaging the disruption responses to the nine items. The question: Of the events experienced, how disruptive were they on the average? was answered with this scale (Buehler & Legg, 1993). Past research has shown that disruptiveness and occurrence are separate dimensions of life change, and the disruption score is correlated more strongly with a measure of global stress than is the occurrence score (Buehler & Langenbrunner, 1987). Thus, it is important to study separately

these dimensions.

Social support. Three social support variables were measured in this study: global support, sources of support, and functions of support. A derivation of the social support instrument developed by Bloom and Hodges (1981) and used by Kurdek (1988) in previous research examining children's correlates of social support post-divorce was selected to measure social support.

The total number of supports used were summed to measure global support. Parents indicated whether or not each of 10 sources provided support for each of four areas of need (functions). The possible scale ranged from 0 to 40.

Because current knowledge regarding children's social support in divorcing families is limited (Wolchik, Fogas, & Sandler, 1984), little empirical work has been done to identify specific, salient groupings of sources of support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In this study, parents rated the contributions of 10 potential sources of support. Potentially useful groupings for this study were identified by the author as **family members** (mother, father and siblings), **extended kin** (grandparents and other relatives), **peers** (child's friends and other children with divorced parents), and **nonfamily adults** (parents' friends, neighbors, and child's coaches and clubleaders). The number of support functions provided were summed for each source category. For family members and nonfamily adults possible scores ranged

from 0 to 12. For extended kin and peers, the possible range was 0 to 8.

Four functions or areas of support were addressed in this study: physical care/supervision, emotional need/being loved, discussing separation, and social needs. For each function category, the number of persons providing support were summed to determine if support for specific needs was being utilized. For each category, possible scores ranged from 0 to 10.

Control variables. The current study utilized parental reports of children's maladjustment. Accordingly, it was important to include the psychosocial well-being of the parent as a control variable because parents' ratings of child adjustment are correlated moderately with their own psychosocial well-being (Belsky, 1990; Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985). Specifically, Brody and Forehand (1986) found that maternal depression was related to maternal perceptions of child maladjustment; depressed mothers rated their children as more deviant than mothers who were not depressed. Likewise, Webster-Stratton and Hammond (1988) found that depressed mothers perceived their children as being significantly more disturbed behaviorally than did their husbands or non-depressed mothers. Thus, evidence suggests depressed mothers may be hypersensitive to their children's behavior.

Additionally, separated mothers have indicated that they have higher rates of anxiety and depression than other women (Gove & Shin, 1989), and have exhibited low self-esteem, feelings of anger, and perceived social and

personal incompetence (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982). Thus, parental emotional well-being should be controlled for when using their reports of child maladjustment.

Three dimensions of mothers' psychological well-being were measured in this study: emotional affect, self-esteem, and psychosomatic symptomatology. The Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969; Bradburn & Caplovitz, 1965) was used to assess emotional affect. This measure assesses the frequency of positive and negative feelings. It has been standardized and findings have been replicated with varying community samples (Cherlin & Reeder, 1975). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure self-esteem. The positiveness and negativeness of one's attitude toward oneself is assessed with this instrument. The scale has been used to measure self-concept in a sample of separated individuals (Spanier & Hanson, 1982), as well as other populations (Ostrow, 1982). Psychosomatic symptomatology was measured by assessing whether or not individuals reported experiencing nine symptoms such as sleeplessness, headaches, and indigestion. The responses to the items were summed. Each of the three measures of parental psychosocial well-being were standardized (converted to Z-scores) and summed. Children's age and sex also were used as control variables in the regression analyses.

Data Analysis

The measurement characteristics of the different measures were

assessed using factor analysis, zero-order correlation tables, and alpha coefficients. The research questions under consideration were examined using hierarchial multiple regression with interaction terms (Jaccard, Turrisi, & Wan, 1990).

III. Results

The primary purpose of this study was to determine what role social support plays for children's adjustment following marital separation. Because little is known about how social support is used by this group of children, some descriptive analyses are reported before examining the direct and moderating role of social support.

Descriptive Analysis of Social Support

According to the residential parent, children used an average of 14.8 (SD=5.1) support sources/functions. As can be seen in Table 1, residential parents reported themselves as being the primary providers across all areas of need. Reporting parents cited their former spouses as providing support across all areas less frequently than themselves with the greatest contributions of former spouses being made in the areas of emotional needs and discussing the separation with the child.

In general, parents reported that family members provided support that attempted to meet physical care, supervision and emotional needs more frequently than non-family adults or peers. Nonfamily adults and peers were cited as frequent providers of support to meet social needs.

Regression Analyses: Effects of Social Support

To test for possible direct and/or moderating effects of social support a series of hierarchial multiple regression equations were calculated. For each

Table 1
Residential Parent's Perceptions of the Percentages of Children Who Received Social Support

	Areas of Need			
Support Source	Physical Care	Emotional Needs	Discussing Separation	Social Needs
Residential Parent	98	99	89	91
Former Spouse	41	68	44	33
Child's Siblings	7	40	15	32
Grandparents	53	89	23	42
Relatives	30	70	15	40
Child's Friends	5	51	17	60
Other Children with Divorced Parents	2	16	22	20
Child's Coaches and Clubleaders	12	12	3	23
Parents' Friends	24	53	17	44
Neighbors	12	30	6	35

Note. N=138.

regression model, the control variables were entered as the first block of variables to control for the child's age, child's sex and parental negative well-being. In the second block the life change measures and a social support measure were entered to test for the direct effects of both life change and social support (Research Question 1). The interaction terms between the measures of life change and social support were entered as the third block of variables (Research Question 2). Each life change measure (occurrence, disruption) was entered with each social support measure (four functions of support, four sources of support, and global support) for all the dependent variables, resulting in a total of 36 equations. A significant change in F from block 2 to block 3 indicated a significant interaction effect (i.e., moderating). To reduce the possible effects of multicollinearity, the interaction terms were created using centered variables as recommended by Jaccard, Turrisi, and Wan (1990).

Direct effects of social support. Zero-order correlations were calculated among the life change, social support and maladjustment measures (see Table 2). Five of the 36 correlations between the social support and maladjustment measures were statistically significant. The strongest relationships were between physical support and parent's ratings of child aggression ($r = .25$, $p < .01$) and support to meet social needs and aggression ($r = .22$, $p < .05$).

The results of the regression analyses showed little evidence for a

Table 2
Zero-Order Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Life Change, Social Support, and Residential Parent's Perceptions of Child Maladjustment

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
LIFE CHANGE																
1. Occurence		.32**	.27**	.25**	.12	.09	.13	.15	-.02	-.01	.15	.20*	.03	.13	.06	.22**
2. Disruption			.05	.14	.10	.05	-.17	-.07	-.16	-.05	-.14	-.06	-.08	-.13	-.17	.13
MALADJUSTMENT																
3. Aggression				.40**	.45**	.36**	.21**	.14	.13	.14	.14	.25**	.12	.05	.22*	.08
4. Anxiety/Depression					.37**	.01	.18*	.09	.05	.15	.18*	.15	.12	.16	.13	.18*
5. Dependency						.29**	.09	-.04	.12	.01	.12	.17	.07	-.05	.03	.15
6. Unproductivity							-.04	-.03	.09	-.04	-.11	.06	.04	-.07	-.09	.21*
SOCIAL SUPPORT																
7. Global Support								.60**	.51**	.68**	.78**	.60**	.72**	.63**	.80**	-.04
8. Family									-.04	.37**	.19*	.20*	.63**	.45**	.45**	-.06
9. Kin										.06	.26*	.49**	.20*	.26**	.45**	.14
10. Peer											.42**	.24**	.57**	.50**	.54**	.04
11. Non-family adults												.54**	.45**	.42**	.59**	.07
12. Physical													.24**	.26**	.25**	.09
13. Emotional														.23**	.48**	.11
14. Discuss Separation															.38**	.07
15. Social Needs																-.04
CONTROL																
16. Parental Negative Well Being																
MEAN	3.7	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.5	2.0	14.8	6.6	3.5	1.9	2.7	2.8	5.0	2.5	4.2	0
S.D.	1.6	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	5.1	2.1	2.0	1.6	2.2	1.4	1.9	1.5	2.2	1

Note: N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

direct effect relationship between social support and parent's ratings of child maladjustment (see Table 3.) Global support was related to only one of the four maladjustment measures--aggression ($\underline{B}$ = .20). It was not related directly to the other child maladjustment measures.

Moderating effects of social support. Although there were few significant direct associations between specific support variables and parent's perceptions of child maladjustment, there was evidence that specific support variables moderated the effects of life change on child maladjustment. Seven of the 36 models had a statistically significant change in F between blocks 2 and 3, indicating a significant interaction effect (i.e., moderating). At the .05 significance level, 126 equations would need to be calculated for seven to be statistically significant by chance.

In terms of support sources, family support moderated the relationship between occurrence of life change and low productivity (see Table 4). There was a stronger relationship between occurrence of life change and low productivity for children who received more family support ($\underline{r}$ = .17) than for children who received less family support ($\underline{r}$ = .06). For this relationship, the use of family support exacerbated, rather than buffered, the relationship between life change and low productivity.

Support from kin did not moderate the relationship between life change and any of the child maladjustment measures (see Table 4). It was the only support source that did not evidence any moderating effects.

Table 3
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Model for the Control Variables, Life Change, and Global Support

Independent Variables	Aggression	Anxiety/Depression	Dependency	Low Productivity
Child age	-.03	.24**	-.28**	-.10
Child sex	.05	.09	.01	-.20*
Parental well being	.01	.17	.10	.19*
Occurrence of life change	.25**	.15	.09	.10
Disruption of life change	-.01	.11	.07	-.02
Global support	.20*	.15	.15	-.04

Note. N=138.

*$p \leq .05$ **$p \leq .01$

Table 4
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Results Using Interaction Terms for Support Sources

	Aggression		Anxiety/Depression		Dependency		Low Productivity	
Independent Variables	F Change	Total R^2	F Change	Total R^2	F Change	Total R^2	F Change	Total R^2
Block 1 Age, sex, parental well being	.68	.01	5.82***	.12	4.63**	.09	4.04**	.08
Block 2 Family Occurrence Disruption	3.70**	.09	2.16	.17	.66	.11	.31	.09
Block 3 Occurrence x family Disruption x family	1.48	.11	.90	.17	1.21	.12	**3.00***	.13
Block 1 Age, sex, parental well being	.68	.01	5.82***	.12	4.63**	.09	4.04**	.08
Block 2 Kin Occurrence Disruption	3.74**	.09	2.41	.16	.87	.11	.43	.09
Block 3 Occurrence x kin Disruption x kin	.63	.10	.72	.17	1.65	.13	1.04	.11
Block 1 Age, sex, parent well being	.68	.01	5.82***	.12	4.63**	.09	4.04**	.08
Block 2 Peer Occurrence Disruption	4.15**	.10	2.35	.16	1.04	.12	.30	.09
Block 3 Occurrence x peer Disruption x peer	**3.38***	.15	1.42	.18	1.61	.14	**3.08***	.13
Block 1 Age, sex, parental well being	.68	.01	5.82***	.12	4.63**	.09	4.04**	.08
Block 2 Nonfamily adult	3.54*	.09	3.39*	.18	1.26	.12	1.33	.11
Block 3 Occurrence x adult Disruption x adult	2.50	.12	1.76	.20	**4.59****	.18	.26	.11

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

The use of peer support moderated the relationship between disruption of life change and two maladjustment measures, aggression and low productivity (see Table 4). For children whose residential parents reported that they used fewer peers as support sources, there was a positive relationship between disruptive life change and aggression (r = .14) and disruptive life change and low productivity (r = .12). There was a negative relationship between disruptive life change and aggression (r = -.23) and disruptive life change and low productivity (r = -.19) for children who used more peer support. For these relationships, the use of peer support buffered the relationships between life change and both low productivity and aggression.

The use of nonfamily adult support moderated the relationship between occurrence of life change and dependency (see Table 4). There was a stronger relationship between the occurrence of life change and dependency for children who had fewer nonfamily adult support sources (r = .34, p < .01) than for children who had more nonfamily adult supports (r = -.08). Nonfamily adult support buffered, rather than exacerbated, the relationship between life change and dependency.

Of the 16 equations calculated for support sources, 4 had statistically significant moderator effects, 3 greater than should have occurred by chance. Two of the support sources (peer and nonfamily adults) buffered a relationship between specific measures of life change and maladjustment.

Family support exacerbated the relationship between life change and low productivity. All of the maladjustment measures except anxiety/depression, an internalizing behavior problem, were buffered by a support source.

In terms of support functions, only one of the four functions moderated a relationship between life change and maladjustment. Being able to discuss the separation buffered the relationship between disruptive life change and low productivity and the relationship between the occurrence of life change and dependency (see Table 5). Children whose residential parents reported that they had fewer opportunities to discuss the separation showed a positive relationship between disruptive life change and low productivity (r = .22), whereas children who had more opportunities for discussion showed a negative relationship between disruptive life change and low productivity (r = -.23). There was a stronger relationship between occurrence of life change and dependency for children who had fewer opportunities to discuss the separation (r = .37, p < .01) than for children who had more opportunities (r = -.18).

Global support buffered the relationship between disruptive life change and dependency (see Table 6). There was a stronger relationship between disruptive life change and dependency for children who received less total support (r = .24, p < .05) than for children who received more support (r = -.05).

In summary, the results showed more evidence for moderating effects

Table 5
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Results Using Interaction Terms for Support Functions

	Aggression		Anxiety/Depression		Dependency		Low Productivity	
Independent Variables	F Change	Total R^2	F Change	Total R^2	F Change	Total R^2	F Change	Total R^2
Block 1 Age, sex, parental well being	.68	.01	5.82***	.12	4.63**	.09	4.04**	.08
Block 2 Physical Occurrence Disruption	5.23**	.12	2.86*	.17	1.61	.13	.33	.09
Block 3 Occurrence x physical Disruption x physical	.85	.13	.62	.18	.67	.14	.37	.10
Block 1 Age, sex, parental well being	.68	.01	5.82***	.12	4.63**	.09	4.04**	.08
Block 2 Emotional Occurrence Disruption	3.79**	.09	2.47	.16	1.06	.12	.32	.09
Block 3 Occurrence x emotional Disruption x emotional	1.45	.11	.13	.16	2.63	.15	1.30	.11
Block 1 Age, sex, parent well being	.68	.01	5.82***	.12	4.63**	.09	4.04**	.08
Block 2 Discuss separation Occurrence Disruption	3.10*	.08	2.32	.16	.66	.10	.47	.09
Block 3 Occurrence x discuss Disruption x discuss	.79	.09	1.01	.17	**2.88***	.15	**3.74****	.16
Block 1 Age, sex, parental well being	.68	.01	5.82***	.12	4.63**	.09	4.04**	.08
Block 2 Social needs Occurrence Disruption	5.13**	.12	3.03*	.17	.78	.11	.62	.10
Block 3 Occurrence x needs Disruption x needs	.57	.13	1.43	.19	1.96	.14	.28	.10

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

Table 6
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Results Using Interaction Terms for Global Support

	Aggression		Anxiety/Depression		Dependency		Low Productivity	
Independent Variables	F Change	Total R^2	F Change	Total R^2	F Change	Total R^2	F Change	Total R^2
Block 1 Age, sex, parental well being	.68	.01	5.82***	.12	4.63**	.09	4.04**	.08
Block 2 Global Occurrence Disruption	4.70**	.11	3.06*	.17	1.20	.12	.42	.09
Block 3 Occurrence x global Disruption x global	1.15	.13	.48	.18	**3.69***	.17	1.57	.11

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

of social support rather than direct effects. It is unlikely that the statistically significant interaction terms occurred by chance. Of the seven significant moderator effects, six buffered the relationship between life change and maladjustment and one exacerbated the relationship. Support sources were more important than support functions. The dependent variables that were moderated by social support were parent's perceptions of externalizing behavior problems (i. e., aggression, dependency, and low productivity). The relationship between life change and anxiety/depression, the internalizing behavior problem under consideration, was not moderated by any social support variable. (See Appendix C, Tables C-4 to C-11 for additional regression results).

IV. Discussion and Implications

Before discussing the results, it is important to consider the limitations of this study. The generalizability of these findings is limited by the use of a cross-sectional research design. Longitudinal research is needed to examine variations in the use of social support throughout the post-separation adjustment period and to determine whether the use of social support buffers the effects of life change on residential parent's perceptions of child maladjustment post-separation or is merely a response to increased child behavior problems.

A further limitation was the sole use of the residential parent's report of their child's life change and adjustment. Children's perspectives of life change and non-residential parents' and/or teacher reports of child adjustment should be considered in future research. The use of multiple informants is important to reduce the possibility of shared method variance. Using a single informant, in this case the residential parent, may lead to results that, in part, reflect reporter bias. Residential parents may have biases that affect their reports of child maladjustment and social support. Previous research has found that separated mothers have higher rates of anxiety and depression than other women (Gove & Shin, 1989) and have exhibited low self-esteem, feelings of anger, and perceived social and

personal incompetence (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982). These feelings might effect residential parent's reports of their children. To help control for potential bias, the reporting parent's psychosocial well-being was controlled for statistically in the regression analyses. Therefore, some of the contaminating bias produced by a parent's psychosocial distress was controlled.

Another potential source of reporter bias might arise from the former spouse relationship. If this relationship is conflictual, the residential parent might perceive the nonresidential parent as being unsupportive in meeting their child's needs or perceive the child has problems because the parents are fighting. Another limitation was that the child's need for support was not controlled for in the analyses. Given the potential variability in need for support following marital separation, this seems an important variable to consider in future research.

Given the variability in age and cognitive ability of the children in this study (3-18 years old), it seems unlikely that a single instrument would measure adequately any of the variables under consideration from the child's perspective. Also, in previous research examining children's use of social support and adjustment utilizing children's reports, there is evidence that children overwhelmingly report friends and/or peers as their primary source of support across many functions (Kurdek, 1988; Wolchik et al., 1989) but that support from other children has been found to be unrelated to adjustment

(Bryant, 1985; Wolchik et al., 1989). Children, especially younger children, may not organize the social support construct by the type of behavior provided by support sources (e. g., physical care, discussion of separation), but according to source only (e. g., family, peers) (Dubow & Tisak, 1989). So, the use of children's reports of social support may be of limited use.

A strength of the current study was the multidimensional conceptualization of social support and maladjustment. The use of a multidimensional conceptualization of social support has been called for in previous work (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Kurdek, 1988), particularly the caution to maintain a distinction between function and source variables. A further strength, based on the conceptualization of social support, was that the present study attempted to examine the conditions under which social support would be particularly helpful for children following marital separation by examining both direct and moderating effects of social support.

The proposition that life change, social support, and parent's reports of child maladjustment are connected was supported based on the results of this study. In the extant literature, there is evidence of both direct and moderating effects of social support on the relationship between stress and adjustment in children's lives. The findings of the current study provide some new insight into how these three concepts operate in children's lives following marital separation.

Direct Effects of Social Support

The major purpose of this study was to examine the direct and moderating effects of social support on the relationship between life change and maladjustment. In terms of direct effects, global support was associated positively with aggressive behavior in children (using parents' ratings). In other words, children who displayed aggressive behavior following their parents' martial separation were using support from others to meet their needs. Because residential parents often experience a diminished capacity to parent in the immediate aftermath of marital disruption (Wallerstein, 1983), they may seek assistance from others to ensure that their child's needs are being met. Competent parents may see their child acting out and request help from others. Also, a child's aggressive behavior may serve as a device to get attention or assistance from others, especially if the residential parent is unavailable, physically or emotionally.

Moderating Effects of Social Support

Based on their review of the social support literature, Cohen and Wills (1985) explained that buffering effects would most likely be observed when a functional measure of support is well matched to the stressful event under consideration. Contrary to their hypothesis, three support sources (family, peer, and nonfamily adult) moderated the relationship between life change and maladjustment. Particularly interesting was that the use of family support exacerbated the relationship between occurrence of life change and parent's

ratings of low productivity. Because family members are experiencing similar life change events, their support may not be as effective as support from other sources. They may be unable to provide children with the assistance needed to keep them involved in tasks, possibly leading to the perception of low productivity.

Also, perhaps in families where the residential parent reported the use of family support for children there is a tendency for much of the support to come from within the immediate family. These families may not want or know how to get assistance from nonfamily members, including extended kin. The children in these families may be acting as support sources for siblings or their parents, possibly resulting in an inability to concentrate on important tasks such as homework.

Support from extended kin, including grandparents and other relatives, did not act as a moderator between life change and parent's perceptions of child maladjustment. For some families, a divorce is viewed as a failure, or may be prohibited for religious or moral reasons. Requesting assistance from extended family members who hold these views may be perceived as very difficult, or even impossible, for some separated parents. Also, the number of extended kin a family has contact with may decline following a marital separation (Daniels-Mohring & Berger, 1984), resulting in fewer extended kin being asked for assistance.

Support from peers buffered the relationship between disruption of life

change and aggression. The relationship between disruption of life change and low productivity was buffered by peer support and discussing the separation. The finding that support from peers acted as a buffer is contrary to past research with children following marital separation (e. g., Wolchik et al., 1989). Support from nonfamily adults buffered the relationship between occurrence of life change and dependency. This same relationship was buffered by discussing the separation. In the context of the recency of the marital separation and the associated accumulation of life change events, an explanation can be posited as to why peers, nonfamily adults, and being able to discuss the separation act as buffers.

In the case of children soon after a parental separation, the coping requirement may be a need for distraction from and/or a reinterpretation of separation-related events, and the best available support to meet these needs may be people outside of the family system. Wolchik et al. (1989) suggested that support from family members may be important for restructuring family patterns and that other areas of need, such as providing children with distractions from divorce-related stressors, might be most effective if provided by nonfamily members. Following this logic, then, the function of the support per se may not be what is most important. It could be having someone outside of the family to provide relief from the cumulative stressors that may benefit children. By helping children to reinterpret aspects of the separation process, such as who is responsible for it, nonfamily adults and peers may

lessen the threat of stressors and facilitate the coping process.

Global support buffered the relationship between disruptive life change and parent's ratings of child dependency. Cohen and Wills (1985) suggested that global measures of support are an indicator of general social integration and typically are related directly to measures of adjustment or well-being. Because the needs of children in the immediate aftermath of a parental separation are so pervasive, a global indicator may provide the necessary match between specific needs and areas of support. It is interesting that the dependent variable moderated by global support was dependency. Dependency manifests itself in behaviors that exhibit neediness, such as asking for assistance when it is not needed or not wanting to complete tasks independently. Children who have support in many areas provided by different sources (i. e., high global support) may be less likely to react in this way than children who don't have this kind of support.

An interesting finding was that the support variables moderated relationships between life change and parent's reports of externalizing behavior problems rather than internalizing behavior problems. As mentioned previously, because of the recency of the separation, many parents likely are experiencing some adjustment difficulties themselves and the resulting diminished capacity to parent. In light of this, it is not surprising that they are noticing more externalizing behavior, such as aggression, dependency, and low productivity, than internalizing behavior, such as anxiety/depression.

Parents may not be completely aware of their children's reactions to the separation because of their own affective state, and externalizing behavior problems likely are more readily noticeable than internalizing behavior problems.

Future Research

Future research needs to continue to explore the conditions under which social support helps to ameliorate difficulties in children following marital separation. Diverse samples including children from varying ethnic and socioeconomic statuses need to be considered. It is important that future research maintain a multidimensional conceptualization of the social support concept. Also, it is important for future researchers to use multiple informants to reduce possible systematic method variance.

In addition, research in the future needs to take a longitudinal perspective. As the transition period following a marital separation leads into a readjustment phase, it would be interesting to see if the role of social support changes. For example, after the period of pervasive need diminishes, would global support continue to be related positively to aggressive outcomes in some children?

Finally, in terms of sampling, restricting the age range of the respondents or target children could provide insightful information, and perhaps, a developmental perspective. For example, would social support operate differently in a sample of young children compared with a sample of

preadolescents?

Practical Implications

People involved in the daily lives of children whose parents have recently separated should be aware of the stressors facing these children, paying particular attention to the number of life change events involved. Children who have experienced many changes or a few changes that were particularly disruptive may benefit from opportunities to discuss the separation. Nonfamily adults, such as the child's teachers, coaches, or clubleaders, and peers may be helpful in this capacity because they can separate themselves emotionally from the situation and provide the child with clear, accurate information regarding the separation.

School guidance counselors could provide assistance to teachers and coaches and can organize peer support groups as well. Children who have experienced particularly disruptive stressors as a result of a parental separation may benefit from the opportunity to discuss their situation with peers who have experienced a similar event.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Children and Social Support

Children are faced with a need for instrumental and emotional resources from others in the course of their daily lives (Belle, 1989). This need for support changes as children develop and as they deal with different developmental tasks and stressors. This study examined support sources and functions, and their relationship to children's adjustment following marital separation. The purpose of this discussion is to broaden the focus used in the study, and consider the use of social support in other populations of children using a developmental framework in an illustrative, rather than comprehensive, manner.

Because children have a need for support from others, it is interesting that the impact of social support on adjustment has been studied more frequently among adults than among children (Belle, 1989). Research that has examined the use of social support in children has been conducted only in the last 8-10 years (Peterson, 1990). Early in the study of children's social support, the large majority of studies looked at only one relationship, for example, the mother-child relationship (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985). Also, early work examined the social networks of mothers and how these might affect children indirectly (Belle, 1989). Once researchers started to examine other potential supportive relationships that would affect children directly they focused primarily on support sources, although some addressed children's

different needs for support and developmental changes in support sources and functions (Peterson, 1990).

Support Sources

Very few studies have looked at the structural characteristics of children's support networks. Instead, most have focused on the relationship between support from a certain group of people (i. e., peers, teachers, kin) and child adjustment. One of the few researchers who examined children's social support networks was Bryant (1985). In terms of support sources, she asked children to list the ten most important people in their lives. A developmental difference emerged in their responses. Seven year old children reported more peers in their network than did 10 year-old children. Ten year olds reported more parent and grandparent generation people as important in their lives. Bryant (1985) concluded that 10 year olds have more elaborate sources of support, and a support network with greater range.

The literature that addresses the relationship between support sources and adjustment has used primarily early and middle adolescent samples of youth, making the examination of developmental differences difficult. In addition, many studies looking at this age group consider only peer or friend support, along with other independent variables, to predict an outcome variable. For example, Hirsch and DuBois (1991) examined the contribution of peer support and level of school adjustment in predicting adolescent self-esteem over time, and found that peer support made the largest contribution.

In another study of the relationship of negative life events, perceived personal efficacy, peer support, and family cohesion to adolescent psychophysiological symptom development, peer support had a direct effect on symptom development and buffered the relationship between negative life events and symptom development (Walker & Greene, 1987). This pattern of results was not found for the other independent variables. Thus, peer support seems to be important to children's adjustment when it is considered with variables that are not support-related.

Other research on children's support sources has examined the contributions made by more than one support source to the dependent variable. Most of these studies report differential associations between perceived support sources (i.e., peer, teacher, family and parent) and adjustment factors. In a rare study using younger children (8-10 years), Dubow and Tisak (1989) found that family support buffered the relationship between life events and behavior problems. However, peer support had a stronger stress-buffering effect on behavior problems than family or teacher support. In a follow-up study two years later (Dubow, Tisak, Causey, Hryshko, & Reid, 1991), they found that family support was related to an increase in teacher-rated competencies. Changes in peer support, however, had the most consistent relationship to positive changes in adjustment.

Additional studies have found differential associations as well. Varni, Setoguchi, Rappaport, and Talbot (1992) found that perceived teacher

support was a significant predictor for depressive symptomatology in a sample of early adolescent children with limb deficiencies. These authors also found that perceived classmate support was the only significant predictor across all the adjustment factors (i. e., depression, trait anxiety, self-esteem). In the current study, peer support buffered the relationship between life change and both low productivity and aggression, whereas nonfamily adult support buffered the relationship between life change and dependency.

To the contrary, other studies found that peer or friend support were not related to adjustment. In a prospective study using a sample of early adolescents, a significant direct effect between school personnel support and psychological distress was found, but a relationship between family or friend support and distress was not (DuBois, Felner, Brand, Adan, & Evans, 1992). Similarly, in a sample of children of divorce, support from peers was not related to adjustment (Wolchik, Ruehlman, Braver, & Sandler, 1989). Based on the studies reviewed above, it could be that peer support is related more often to externalizing behavior problems (i. e., aggression, low productivity, behavior problems) than internalizing behavior problems (i. e., depressive symptomatology, psychological distress). Future research needs to continue to explore the relationship between peer support and child adjustment.

Functions of Support

Understanding children's social support can be enhanced by analyzing the various functions provided by different types of relationships within

children's social networks, but the literature addressing support functions is sparse. Because children's social roles and sense of self change rapidly in middle childhood, it seems likely that the functions served by social support may change during this time as well (Peterson, 1990). The literature addresses changing intimacy and companionship needs, and the change in the use of social-emotional, instrumental, and informational support as children develop. When examining intimacy changes, it would be expected that as children grow older, ratings of intimacy with friends will increase markedly whereas ratings for parents will remain stable or decrease moderately (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985). In support of this, Lustig, Wolchik, and Braver (1992) found that preadolescent children reported more intimacy with chums (same-sex friends) than any other support source. Likewise, Berdnt & Perry (1986) found that intimacy of friendships increased with grade level (second, fourth, and sixth graders were studied). Thus, intimacy appears to remain a need for children across ages, and there is beginning evidence that the primary source of intimacy changes as children approach adolescence.

In the literature there is evidence that children increasingly use social support to enhance social-emotional functioning as they get older. Bryant (1985) concluded that 10-year old children were more capable of using support figures to enhance social emotional functioning than were 7 year olds. In their study, Berdnt & Perry (1986) found an increased use of emotional

support from second to fourth grade. Going against this pattern, in a sample of 11 to 13 year olds, Furman & Buhrmester (1985) found that parents were the primary providers of support to enhance self-worth, followed by grandparents. All of these studies used children's reports of social support.

Two studies used data from anonymous community help lines for children to ascertain children's support needs (Kliewer, Lepore, & Broquet, 1990; Peterson, 1990). Kliewer et al. (1990) reported a distinctive shift between the ages of 10 and 11 from the use of instrumental support (e. g., help with homework, assistance with a chore) to the increased use of informational support (e. g., advice-seeking, help with problems with peers or parents). Similarly, Peterson (1990) reported that children 7 years old and younger sought far less contact for emotional and social needs than older children. Younger children (5-7 years old) made twice as many calls seeking instrumental support than informational support. By 8 years of age, children made only 10% more calls seeking instrumental support than informational support. Thus, based on the limited empirical work to date, there appear to be changes in the support needs of children as they get older.

Methodology

In terms of methodology, Cohen and Wills (1985) suggested testing both direct and moderating models of the effects of social support on adjustment. In the child and adolescent support literature, there is evidence for both models. For example, in the Dubow and Tisak (1989) study, both

moderating and direct effects were found among the life events, support source, and adjustment variables. However, Dubow et al. (1991) reported only direct effect for the relationship between support sources and adjustment. Wertlieb, Weigel, and Feldstein (1987) also found evidence for both direct and moderating effects of social support. Because there was no appreciable difference in the predictive power between the two models, the authors suggested that the simpler, more parsimonious direct effects models often are as useful as moderating models. In the current study, however, more evidence was found for moderating effects, and the moderating models had more predictive power than the direct effects models.

Future research needs to continue to address this issue in order to increase understanding of the link between social support and adjustment in children. In addition, future research should incorporate a multidimensional conceptualization of social support rather than relying on a single global index of support. Not much is known about the structural characteristics of children's support networks, especially for children who are faced with stressors such as marital separation or a handicapping condition. Finally, social support researchers need to consider seriously the use of social support in children of all ages and ethnic backgrounds.

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APPENDIX B

Instruments

Occurrence/Disruptiveness of Life Change

The following is a list of events or situations you may have experienced since your separation. Please read each item carefully. If you have NOT experienced the item, circle the "0" and go on to the next item. If you have experienced the item, circle the number that represents how disruptive it has been in your life (how much it has changed your life).

0 = did NOT experience
1 = experienced this - it was not disruptive
2 = experienced this - it was somewhat disruptive
3 = experienced this - it was moderately disruptive
4 = experienced this - it was quite disruptive
5 = experienced this - it was extremely disruptive

Meeting household expenses has been more difficult.	0	1	2	3	4	5
The children have changed schools.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I started working outside of the home.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have had less time to spend with my children.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have moved.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Household routines and daily patterns have changed.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Relationships with my children have gotten worse.	0	1	2	3	4	5
My use of drugs or alcohol has increased.	0	1	2	3	4	5
A child has been to juvenile court.	0	1	2	3	4	5

REVISED VERSION OF THE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT PROFILE

Please describe your child's behavior as you have observed in during the past month by circling the number that corresponds with the best response.

DURING LAST MONTH, Has s/he.....		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1.	Wanted help in things s/he could have done on own?	1	2	3	4
2.	Worked hard at school?	1	2	3	4
3.	Completed work without being checked on?	1	2	3	4
4.	Complained about problems?	1	2	3	4
5.	Daydreamed?	1	2	3	4
6.	Shown little interest in things, had to be pushed into activity?	1	2	3	4
7.	Asked for help when didn't need it?	1	2	3	4
8.	Asked unnecessary questions instead of working on own?	1	2	3	4
9.	Stirred up others into arguments or hitting?	1	2	3	4
10.	Stayed with task or assignment until finished?	1	2	3	4
11.	Done work carefully?	1	2	3	4
12.	Talked about worries?	1	2	3	4
13.	Said people didn't care about him/her?	1	2	3	4
14.	Appeared listless and apathetic?	1	2	3	4
15.	Done things very slowly?	1	2	3	4
16.	Became upset if others did not agree with him/her?	1	2	3	4
17.	Made cruel or critical remarks to others?	1	2	3	4
18.	Picked quarrels with others?	1	2	3	4
19.	Sat and stared without doing anything?	1	2	3	4
20.	Asked for help when could have figured things out?	1	2	3	4

Social Support

For each of the following people, please place a check in each column they meet your child's needs.

	physical care/ supervision	emotional needs/ being loved	discussing separation	social needs
Yourself				
My husband/wife				
Grandparents				
Relatives				
Child's siblings				
Child's friends				
Child's coaches and clubleaders				
Other children with divorced parents				
My friends				
Neighbors				

Bradburn Affect Scale

How often in the past week did you feel each of the following?

	Never	Once	Several Times	Often
Particularly excited or interested in something.	1	2	3	4
So restless you couldn't sit long in a chair.	1	2	3	4
Very angry at somebody or something.	1	2	3	4
That things were going your way.	1	2	3	4
Upset because someone criticized you.	1	2	3	4
On top of the world.	1	2	3	4
Very lonely, not close to other people.	1	2	3	4
Pleased about having accomplished something.	1	2	3	4
Bored.	1	2	3	4
Down and discouraged because nothing seemed to be going right for you.	1	2	3	4
Proud because someone complimented you on something you had done.	1	2	3	4

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

For each statement, please circle the choice that best describes how you feel.

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
I feel I'm a person of worth, at least on equal basis with others.	1	2	3	4
I feel I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4
All in all, I am inclined to feel I am a failure.	1	2	3	4
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4
I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	1	2	3	4
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1	2	3	4
I certainly feel useless at times.	1	2	3	4
At times I think I am no good at all.	1	2	3	4

Psychosomatic Symptomatology

Here is a list of common conditions that people experience. Please indicate whether you have experience this condition within the past month by circling the corresponding number.

(1) sleeplessness
(2) nervousness
(3) being tired
(4) headaches
(5) indigestion
(6) allergies
(7) colds, flu, or fever
(8) irregularity
(9) moody spells

APPENDIX C

Additional Tables

Table C-1
Demographic Characteristics--Continuous Data

Characteristic	M	SD	Range
Age of child	8	4.3	3-18
Age of residential parent	33	5.8	21-47
Hours worked per week (RP)	23	17.4	0-68
Monthly income (1986)	$1120	$881.40	$0-5,000
Number of children	1.8	.69	1-4
Length of marriage	10.5 years	5.3	1-23

Note. N = 138.

Table C-2
Demographic Characteristics--Categorical Data

Characteristic		Frequency	Percent
Sex of residential parent:	Female	108	78.3
	Male	30	21.7
Sex of child:	Female	61	44.2
	Male	77	55.8
Race:	White	134	97.1
	Black	4	2.9
Education level of residential parent:			
1. Grade school or less		2	1.4
2. Some high school		8	5.8
3. High school diploma		39	28.3
4. Non-college training		18	13.0
5. Some college		36	26.1
6. College degree		16	11.6
7. Some graduate work		9	6.5
8. Graduate degree		10	7.2
Employment status:	Employed	114	82.6
	Unemployed	24	17.4

Note. N = 138.

Table C-3
Factor Coefficients for Child Maladjustment Measure

Items	Factor I[a]	II[b]	III[c]	IV[d]
I. Aggression				
Stirred up others into arguments	**.86**	-.28	.27	.23
Picked quarrels with others	**.86**	-.27	.34	.39
Made cruel/critical remarks	**.68**	-.24	.35	.48
Upset if others didn't agree with him/her	**.63**	-.41	.42	.38
II. Low Productivity				
Stayed with task/assignment until completed	.33	**-.84**	.23	.08
Completed work carefully	.18	**-.82**	.20	.02
Completed work without being checked on	.22	**-.61**	.22	-.05
Worked hard at school	.20	**-.49**	.26	-.04
III. Dependency				
Asked for help when didn't need it	.28	-.24	**.87**	.15
Asked unnecessary questions	.34	-.26	**.76**	.40
Became discouraged when attempting on own	.46	-.25	**.70**	.37
Wanted help in things s/he could have done	.23	-.20	**.69**	.22
Asked for help when could have figured out	.25	-.21	**.62**	.34
IV. Anxiety/Depression				
Seemed sad	.38	-.01	.29	**.76**
Daydreamed	.30	-.09	.33	**.73**
Sat and stared without doing anything	.25	-.07	.16	**.60**
Done things very slowly	.21	-.01	.30	**.50**
Talked about worries	.16	.19	.10	**.46**

Note. N = 138.

[a]Eigenvalue = 6.84. [b]Eigenvalue = 2.67. [c]Eigenvalue = 1.85. [d]Eigenvalue = 1.48.

Table C-4
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Model for the Control Variables, Life Change, and Family Support

Independent Variables	Aggression	Anxiety/ Depression	Dependency	Low Productivity
Child age	-.04	.25**	-.27**	-.11
Child sex	.05	.08	-.01	-.20*
Parental well-being	.03	.15	.10	.19*
Occurrence of life change	.27**	.18*	.11	.11
Disruption of life change	-.04	.07	.03	-.02
Family support	.09	.02	-.01	-.03
F	2.04	3.27	2.28	2.40
R^2	.11	.17	.12	.13

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

Table C-5
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Model for the Control Variables, Life Change, and Kin Support

Independent Variables	Aggression	Anxiety/ Depression	Dependency	Low Productivity
Child age	.04	.28**	-.27**	-.11
Child sex	.04	.07	-.01	-.18*
Parental well-being	-.01	.12	.10	.19*
Occurrence of life change	.28**	.19*	.11	.08
Disruption of life change	-.04	.09	.07	.03
Kin support	.13	.08	.06	.04
F	1.81	3.32	2.49	1.92
R^2	.10	.17	.13	.11

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

Table C-6
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Model for the Control Variables, Life Change, and Peer Support

Independent Variables	Aggression	Anxiety/ Depression	Dependency	Low Productivity
Child age	-.06	.24**	-.30**	-.10
Child sex	.06	.08	-.01	-.17*
Parental well-being	-.01	.14	.09	.16
Occurrence of life change	.27**	.16	.10	.09
Disruption of life change	-.05	.07	.04	.01
Peer support	.12	.06	.07	-.03
F	2.74	4.17	2.54	2.42
R^2	.15	.16	.14	.13

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

Table C-7
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Model for the Control Variables, Life Change, and Nonfamily Adult Support

Independent Variables	Aggression	Anxiety/ Depression	Dependency	Low Productivity
Child age	-.02	.25**	-.27**	-.11
Child sex	.07	.11	.02	-.20*
Parental well-being	.03	.14	.12	.20*
Occurrence of life change	.27**	.15	.10	.11
Disruption of life change	-.04	.11	.04	-.04
Nonfamily adult support	.11	.18*	.14	-.16
F	2.26	4.05	3.49	2.06
R^2	.12	.20	.18	.11

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

Table C-8
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Model for the Control Variables, Life Change, and Physical Support

Independent Variables	Aggression	Anxiety/ Depression	Dependency	Low Productivity
Child age	.01	.25**	-.27**	-.10
Child sex	.06	.09	.01	-.18*
Parental well-being	.01	.13	.10	.19*
Occurrence of life change	.23*	.14	.06	.08
Disruption of life change	-.02	.09	.06	.01
Physical support	.20*	.13*	.15	.02
F	2.45	3.48	2.52	1.69
R^2	.13	.18	.14	.09

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

Table C-9
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Model for the Control Variables, Life Change, and Emotional Support

Independent Variables	Aggression	Anxiety/ Depression	Dependency	Low Productivity
Child age	-.03	.25**	.28**	-.10
Child sex	.04	.09	-.03	-.20*
Parental well-being	-.01	.13	.09	.18*
Occurrence of life change	.28**	.18*	.10	.10
Disruption of life change	-.01	.08	.03	.01
Emotional support	.13	.08	.11	.01
F	2.06	3.17	2.85	1.94
R^2	.11	.16	.15	.11

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

Table C-10
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Model for the Control Variables, Life Change, and Discussing Separation

Independent Variables	Aggression	Anxiety/ Depression	Dependency	Low Productivity
Child age	-.02	.24**	-.26**	-.08
Child sex	.06	.09	.02	-.19*
Parental well-being	.01	.14	.10	.19*
Occurrence of life change	.27**	.16	.09	.07
Disruption of life change	-.05	.08	.04	-.01
Discussing separation	.03	.10	.07	-.04
F	1.62	3.37	2.75	2.95
R^2	.09	.17	.15	.15

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

Table C-11
Hierarchial Multiple Regression Model for the Control Variables, Life Change, and Social Needs Support

Independent Variables	Aggression	Anxiety/ Depression	Dependency	Low Productivity
Child age	-.03	.24**	-.29**	-.11
Child sex	.06	.09	.01	-.18*
Parental well-being	.03	.14	.11	.18*
Occurrence of life change	.26**	.18*	.12	.10
Disruption of life change	.01	.11	.06	-.02
Social needs support	.21*	.14	.06	-.08
F	2.32	3.74	2.54	1.78
R^2	.13	.19	.14	.10

Note. N = 138.

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

VITA

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