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Exploring Team Support: The Role of Team's Design, Values, and Leader's Support

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This study addressed the issue of team support and explored the role of structural factors, namely, job enrichment designs; the role of cultural factors, namely, individualism–collectivism and power distance; and the role of the leader's support, which served as support carrier in teams. With 56 nursing teams, the results demonstrated that whereas leader's support, collectivism, and low power distance facilitated team support, job enrichment designs placed constraints on the accessibility of support to team members. Additionally, leader's support and low power distance moderated the negative impact of job enrichment on team support. These findings suggest that support is not primarily a burst of altruism displayed by individuals, and they draw attention to the teams' contexts that most likely serve to encourage team members to engage in support.

As teams become the common work unit in today's organizations (Guzzo & Shea, 1992; Jackson, 1996; Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995), and empowerment and delegation are proliferating as organizational practices, the value of supportive discretionary behavior in those teams is proving crucial (Lepine & Van Dyne, 2001). Researchers now agree that support from one's colleagues is a major means of enhancing team performance (e.g., Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000; Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2002; West, 1994) and team and organizational learning (Nadler, Ellis, & Bar, 2003), of reducing job stress (e.g., Fenlason & Beehr, 1994), and of promoting members' satisfaction (Griffin, Patterson, & West, 2001).

Yet despite the importance of team support, some basic questions remain regarding this construct and its operation in today's organizations. First, research on support heretofore has mainly focused on individuals, be they the leader or team members who seek and provide support, and hence has examined mainly individual characteristics, such as attitudes (e.g., Bishop et al., 2000; Griffin et al., 2001), attributions (Higgins & Shaw, 1999; Lepine & Van Dyne, 2001), and dispositions (Daus & Joplin, 1999; Higgins & Shaw, 1999), that foster support. Because support behaviors are displayed by individuals, it is certainly appropriate to seek to understand them as individually manifested acts. However, such lines of research seem to fall short of fully capturing the way support grows within a context (Collins & Feeney, 2000), despite the repeated calls in the organizational behavior literature for more attention to this aspect (e.g., Cappelli & Sherer, 1991; Mowday & Sutton, 1993; O'Reilly, 1991; Wilpert, 1995). Individuals who seek and provide support do not do so in a vacuum, and the context most likely serves to encourage or discourage them. Moreover, the few studies that have addressed the subject at the team level of analysis (e.g., Bliese & Castro, 2000; Griffin et al., 2001; Janz, Colquitt, & Noe, 1997) have concentrated on the impact of team support on team outcomes, such as enhanced satisfaction and performance, while neglecting inquiry into its team-level antecedents.

Accordingly, the aim of the present study is twofold. Our first aim is to introduce the concept of team support, as a relative property of the team, and to differentiate it from other related team concepts. The second aim is to identify the antecedents of team support that might promote it in certain teams while inhibiting it in others.

Team Support

Team support is conceptualized here as a relative property of the team, which refers to the

The data presented in this study were part of a larger survey examining supportive and unsupportive climates of health care teams.

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availability of broad helping behaviors given to team members, possessing four distinct facets: emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal. *Emotional* team support refers to the notion of a shoulder to cry on, an encouraging word, and sympathetic understanding of another's emotional pain. It does not involve giving advice or direction; rather, it is simply providing the space within which team members can express their emotions (West, 1994). *Informational* team support refers to the extent to which team members exchange necessary information for their functioning—for example, members being engaged in mutual learning or exchanging relevant information concerning their work (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995; West, 1994). *Instrumental* team support focuses on the practical, "doing" support that team members offer each other. It has to do with tangible assistance such as helping an overloaded member with his or her duties or substituting for him or her during illness (Lepine & Van Dyne, 2001; West, 1994). Finally, *appraisal* team support refers to the help individual team members can provide each other in making sense of a particular problem situation. Ideally, this should involve offering not solutions but rather a range of alternative assessments of any given problem situation (Tjosvold & Tjosvold, 1995; West, 1994).

Hence, team support depicts *interaction processes* among team members and represents the vehicles that transform team inputs to both immediate and longer individual and team outcomes. The more team members provide and enact support of all kinds, the greater the improvement in team members' mental health (West, 1994), team learning capacity (Nadler et al., 2003), and team performance (Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2002).

This definition specifies and extends existing team-level variables such as cohesiveness, collaboration, and backup behaviors. First, whereas team support denotes interaction processes, by examining support in behavioral terms that specify what, actually, team members should do in order to be supportive, earlier constructs, such as team cohesion, tap qualities of a team's cognition or affective state (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001). The latter can be considered team inputs and immediate outcomes alike, although researchers have not typically classified them as inputs (Marks et al., 2001). For example, teams with high cohesion may be more willing to engage in team support. Second, this definition enlarges existing team-level variables such as team backup behaviors (Porter et al., 2003), team affect management (Marks et al., 2001), and helping behaviors (George, 1990) by adopting a multidimensional approach to understanding team support. The definition emphasizes that team support is not only about being warm, empathetic, and understanding, nor is it only about being instrumental in the attainment of team goals. It is a diversified concept encompassing task as well as emotional facets, directed not only at achieving team goals but primarily at helping the individual. Although the single-dimension approach allows broad generalizations about teams, it could depict an oversimplified picture, which might prevent an understanding of how support varies across different contents and contexts.

Hence, Hypothesis 1 focuses on the multidimensionality of team support and suggests that support behaviors of emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support are distinctive aspects of team support.

Antecedents of Team Support

Our definition of team support stresses that although support behaviors are performed by individuals, teams may vary in the extent to which support is shown by team members, and the incidence of these behaviors in teams may be meaningfully associated with team characteristics. It may ultimately be possible to characterize teams in terms of supportive orientation, encompassing behavioral antecedents and displays, and facilitating team conditions for the latter. Theoretical justification for searching for inputs for team support in the context of the team might be gained from the interactionism perspective (Mischel, 1977). This states that situations convey strong cues for the desired behaviors and at the same time constrain the expression of personality, and so behavior is more a function of the situation than of personality. Hence, embedded in the context of the team are cues, some structural and others more social in nature (Tannenbaum, Salas, & Cannon Bowers, 1996), that guide members to act supportively or nonsupportively, creating similarity in their behaviors. These cues or stimuli some-

times are an even more powerful motive to behave supportively than personal tendencies (George, 1996; Mischel, 1977; Smith-Crowe, Burke, & Landis, 2003). In the context of teams, Hackman (1992) similarly proposed that characteristics of work environment may be conceived as either ambient stimuli that pervade the group setting and are potentially available to all group members, creating relatively homogeneous behavioral responses, or discretionary stimuli, transmitted to individuals differently, resulting in differentiated behavioral responses.

Hence, in our study, as a first step toward understanding support in teams, we developed a model depicting team support as emerging from three types of cues, embedded at the team context. These are (a) characteristics of task design: job enrichment practices; (b) characteristics of leadership practices: leader's support; and (c) characteristics of team culture: team values. Given that this is but one empirical investigation of support behaviors in teams, naturally some decisions had to be made about what types of team input to focus on. This is not to suggest that there are no other team input variables that might be predictive of support in teams (e.g., team composition). Nevertheless, three criteria make them appropriate for consideration as important antecedents of team support: (a) Job enrichment, leader's support, and team values are all ambient stimuli (Hackman, 1992) and hence shape sharedeness in support behaviors within teams; (b) they tap into critical team characteristics or properties that affect team members' behavior (e.g., Guzzo & Shea, 1992; Hackman, 1990; McIntyre & Salas, 1995; Tannenbaum et al., 1996); and (c) they convey both structural and social cues for members on how to behave.

Input–process–outcome models of team effectiveness provide solid theoretical ground for considering job enrichment a crucial structural cue affecting team support. Most of these frameworks, typically depicting teamwork, include team structures like job enrichment as characteristics affecting team processes (cf. Guzzo & Shea, 1992; Hackman, 1990; McIntyre & Salas, 1995; Tannenbaum et al., 1996). Accordingly, the way the task is structured for teams sets the stage for certain team processes to be more salient than others by defining the opportunity, availability, and appropriateness of team members to engage in certain team processes, such as support behaviors, and to avoid others.

Further, social information processing (Salancik & Pfefer, 1978), social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), and the attraction–selection–attrition (ASA) model (Schneider, 1987) all support the proposition that social cues like leader's support and team values are crucial in shaping team support behaviors, although they imply slightly different mechanisms as driving the relationship. The social information processing approach (Salancik & Pfefer, 1978) suggests that individual employees use information about values, norms, expectations, and behavior outcome contingencies gathered from others in their social environment to guide behavior. For example, members may receive information about team values concerning the search for help: A request for emotional help might have been ignored or even ridiculed, whereas the quest for informational support may be grounds for comprehensive support provision. Under a social learning framework (Bandura, 1986) individual behavior is influenced by role models for behavior: A team member acquires a repertoire of supportive behaviors by observing others' behaviors (particularly the leader's) and their consequences. According to the ASA model, individuals with characteristics similar to those of other members of a work team are attached to, selected into, and retained by the team; individuals with supportive tendencies will more likely be attracted to, be selected by, and remain in teams with relatively homogeneous supportive tendencies. Hence, these team-level influences operate on individual support behaviors partly by exposure to the leader's supportive role modeling and by providing shared information about values, thereby shaping homogeneous supportive tendencies within a group. Together, these cues in the team context define the "shoulds" and the "oughts" of team life, thereby shaping the extent team members engage in support behaviors.

Job Enrichment

Job enrichment refers to "common practices carried out by organizations aiming to redesign the work place" (Griffin et al., 2001, p. 540) in order to maximize the individual's perceptions of autonomy, meaningfulness, and controllabil-

ity of the job, thereby fostering his or her performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). These practices include increasing the variety of tasks performed, developing task identity, enhancing flexibility to implement tasks, and providing opportunities to receive constant feedback regarding job performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

Despite the growing amount of empirical evidence to date highlighting the beneficial outcomes of job enrichment, such as increased perception of autonomy (Griffin et al., 2001), enhanced satisfaction (Griffin et al., 2001; Hackman & Oldham, 1980), and lower rates of turnover (Hackman, 1990), no study has examined the link between job enrichment and team support. Such an investigation is important because recent research has shown that job enrichment—hitherto deemed motivational—may be highly stressful for many individuals (Dwyer & Fox, 2000; Schaubroeck, Ganster, & Kemmerer, 1994; Xie & Johns, 1995). One theory behind this is that jobs high in skill utilization, decision-making autonomy, task significance, and so forth may actually create more pressure and felt stress on individuals than other jobs, precisely because of the added challenge, responsibility, and accountability (Dwyer & Fox, 2000). Moreover, enhanced job enrichment practices are not necessarily implemented through teamwork structures (Griffin et al., 2001), so they might reduce the opportunity to receive support at work. For example, job enrichment has recently been widely implemented in health care and service organizations as a way of restructuring workers' jobs to achieve better quality of service in a financially restricted environment and decreased costs (Bray, 1996; Dwyer & Fox, 2000; Thomas, McColl, Priest, & Bond, 1996). In those settings, job enrichment is typically implemented on an individual basis, through such mechanisms as making the worker solely accountable for a whole task and providing him or her with job discretion. In contrast, job enrichment practices in other settings, such as research and development teams, are implemented through team structures, where team members share all tasks (Griffin et al., 2001). Our concern here is with the former case, where the focus on the individual in fact deprives team members of engaging in support behaviors. Hence, Hypothesis 2 proposes that job enrichment practices will be negatively associated with team support.

Leader's Support

Leader's support is defined here as the availability of broad helping behaviors from the direct supervisor (S. E. Anderson & Willams, 1996). Few would argue with the idea that such leadership practice can play a key role in modeling support behaviors in teams directly, by demonstrating support behaviors, or indirectly, by setting the ground rules, the norms, and the opportunities for team members to engage in support (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003; Griffin et al., 2001; McIntyre & Salas, 1995). This notion is reinforced by team leadership research, which emphasizes the leader's role in building team trust, caring for team members, and coaching them (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003). Leaders have also been shown to influence team members through hands-off consultations by means of encouraging behaviors that signal them the right way of doing things in the team (Manz & Sims, 1987).

The literature on organizational culture and climate similarly depicts leaders as powerful suppliers of norms to their team members. For example, leaders may transfer formal and informal verbal information on the appropriateness of support in the team, monitor team members' support behaviors via hands-on practices, and model support and self-reliance behaviors. Norms are thereby conveyed and assimilated concerning the appropriate amount of support behaviors in the team in the process of socialization (Schein, 1990). That is, leaders determine, in part, the level of supportive behavior characteristic of a team. Similarly, members who want to cohere with team norms and create a fit with their environment often carefully observe their leader's behaviors, to learn which are and are not warranted in the team (Zohar, 2000). Finally, exerting reward and punitive power (French & Raven, 1959), leaders can foster ASA processes by promoting members who adhere to team norms and apply the appropriate dosage of support behaviors, and by dismissing those who do not. Hence, Hypothesis 3 proposes that leader's support will be positively associated with team support.

Cultural Values

According to the proposed model, team values represent an additional source of social cues, which shape the level of support behaviors characterizing the team. It is proposed here that the two value dimensions of individualism–collectivism and power distance may further predict the level of support in teams. Although differences in these cultural values have been examined primarily at the societal (national) level (e.g., Chen, Brockner, & Katz, 1998; Hofstede, 1980; Robert, Probst, Martocchio, Drasgow, & Lawler, 2000), recent theory and research have noted the usefulness of individualism–collectivism and power distance for predicting job-related attitudes and behaviors at the team level of inquiry also (e.g., Bantz, 1993; Eby & Dobbins, 1997; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001; Workman, 2001). The idea that teams can have a distinct culture is based on the assumption that particular sets of values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions become internalized, shared, and enacted by a team's members (N. R. Anderson & West, 1998; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Klimoski & Mohammed, 1994).

Individualism–Collectivism

The concept of individualism–collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995) refers to the degree to which team members expect individuals to orient their actions to their own benefit (individualism) rather than to the group's (collectivism). In individualistic teams, members are expected to serve their own interests, and individual success is considered a source of well-being. In collectivistic teams, in contrast, the individual is expected to serve above all the team's needs and interests; in exchange, teams offer protection and support. Accordingly, it is posited here that teams higher on individualism will be characterized by less team support, because individuals are expected to foster their own goals even at the expense of abandoning team goals and neglecting other members' well-being (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995). By contrast, teams higher on collectivism will exhibit more team support because they attach greater weight to protecting members and maintaining their well-being. Hypothesis 4 proposes that teams higher on individualism will be characterized by less team support, whereas teams higher on collectivism will be characterized by more team support.

Power Distance

Power distance refers to the extent to which inequality among persons in different positions of formal power is viewed as a natural (and even desirable) aspect of social order (Hofstede, 1980). In teams characterized by high power distance, hierarchical relations between individuals drastically influence social cognitions and behaviors. Therefore, members might refer to the leader as a critical source of support, precisely because he is perceived as more powerful and competent than a rank-and-file team member. But in teams characterized by low power distance, members value equality and egalitarian relations; they expect their counterparts to be equally powered and competent and, therefore, adequate sources of support. Hence, Hypothesis 5 proposes that teams higher in power distance will be characterized by less team support than teams lower in that dimension.

Interaction Effects of Leader's Support, Job Enrichment, and Cultural Values

In addition, this study focuses on the interaction effects of job enrichment, leader's support, and team values. Consider, for example, the case of a manager supervising a team working according to high job-enrichment practices. Should the manager decrease his or her support behaviors to meet his or her workers' expectations of job discretion? Or should the manager actually increase his or her support behaviors as a means to increase team support? An alternative intervention option for the leader might be to assimilate values that cohere better with team support as a means of buffering the negative impact of enrichment practices on it (Klein & Sorra, 1996). The answer to such questions necessitates examining how job enrichment, leader's support, and cultural values interact in relation to team support.

The theoretical foundation for the hypotheses concerning these interaction effects is the notion of *fit*. Recent research has shown that variations in culture may enhance or diminish the impact of management practices such as job enrichment and leader's support on team members'

behaviors (Erez, 1994; Klein & Sorra, 1996; Lee, Pillutla, & Law, 2000; Newman & Nollen, 1996; Robert et al., 2000). We draw on this research to postulate that when leader's support, job enrichment, and team values convey similar information to members concerning the appropriateness of team support, they will act as enhancers of each other's impact on team support. Alternatively, contradictory information will cause team support to suffer.

Interaction of Leader's Support and Cultural Values

Collectivism and leader's support alike convey social cues to team members that cooperation and mutual support are highly valued in the team. Hence, it is proposed that values of collectivism and leader's support will enhance each other's effects on team support and create highest levels of team support. In contrast, values of individualism signal self-reliance, autonomy, and self-coping (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1993), which may run counter to team support, thereby buffering the positive effects of leader's support on team support. Hypothesis 6 is that leader's support and individualism–collectivism will interact in their effect on team support, such that the relationship between leader's support and team support will be less positive in individualistic teams than in collectivistic teams.

Similarly, values concerning the distribution of power may determine the leader's success in acting as a role model of support and in affecting team support. In teams characterized by low power distance, members expect their counterparts to be competent sources of support. When similar cues are obtained from the leader exhibiting high support behaviors and team support is important in that team, leader's support and low power distance might each enhance the other's effect on team support and create its highest levels. By contrast, at other times team members receive contradictory information cues on the appropriateness of team support. This might be either when leader's support is slight (support is not important in that team) and power distance is low (support is expected from team members) or when leader's support is high (support is important in that team) and power distance is high (support is expected primarily from the leader). Under these conditions, the level of team support is expected to decrease. Finally, values of high power distance and low leader's support alike signal members that team support is an unimportant behavior in the team, with team support suffering. Hypothesis 7 maintains that power distance and leader's support interact in their effect on team support, such that the relationship between leader's support and team support will be more positive in low power distance teams than in high power distance teams.

Interaction of Job Enrichment and Cultural Values

High individualism and high job enrichment alike emphasize self-reliance, autonomy, and self-coping (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1993), which may stand in contrast to team support. We envisage that these variables will act as enhancers of each other, so that their combination will yield the lowest levels of team support. By contrast, high collectivism may reduce the negative impact of job enrichment practices on team support, because highly collective teams value concern for comembers' interests and well-being (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1993). Hypothesis 8 posits that job enrichment and individualism–collectivism will interact in their effect on team support, such that the relationship between job enrichment and team support will be more negative in individualistic teams than in collectivistic teams.

Similarly, values concerning the distribution of power may also determine the impact of job enrichment practices in acting to block team support. High power distance emphasizes that support is expected mainly from the supervisor and not from team members. Hence, high power distance and high job enrichment might enhance each other's impeding effect on team support, and their combination will yield the lowest levels of team support. By contrast, in teams characterized by low power distance, members expect their counterparts to be competent sources of support. In such teams, therefore, low power distance may be expected to reduce the negative impact of job enrichment practices on team support (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1993). Hypothesis 9 proposes that job enrichment and power distance will interact in their effect on team support, such that the relationship between job enrichment and team sup-

port will be more negative in high power distance teams than in low power distance teams.

Interaction of Leader's Support and Job Enrichment

Finally, as mentioned, job enrichment designs might curtail team members' opportunities to engage in support behaviors. Nevertheless, leader's supportive or nonsupportive practices serve as important social cues, which might enhance or buffer the negative impact of job enrichment on team support. Stated otherwise, in teams performing highly enriched jobs, leader's support might act as a neutralizer of job enrichment such that team support will be considerably higher with high than with low leader's support. Hence, Hypothesis 10 postulates that job enrichment and leader's support will interact in their effects on team support, such that the relationship between job enrichment and team support will be less negative when leader's support is high than when it is low.

Method

Sample and Procedure

Participants in this study were nursing teams in 10 randomly approached nursing units in each of six hospitals in Israel. Four out of the 60 units had a policy of not participating in research, and so 56 nursing units, representing medical, surgical, internal, and critical care, participated in the study. In each unit, all registered nurses (520) as well as their direct superiors were surveyed. In sum, 368 surveys of staff nurses and 56 surveys of supervisors were returned, a return rate of 71% and 100% for staff nurses and supervisors, respectively.

Two salient aspects of nursing teams have been identified in previous research, which make them appropriate for the purposes of the present study. First, nursing teams can be identified as intact work teams by four definitive characteristics (Alderfer, 1977; Hackman, 1990): (a) They have responsibilities and resources for achieving shared goals regarding the quality of care of their patients, (b) they necessarily interact to achieve those shared goals, (c) their members depend on one another for knowledge and effort, and (d) they have clear and well-defined roles but at the same time share an organizational identity as a work team (West & Poulton, 1997). Second, the nursing workplace has recently been undergoing major reforms in the way that care is delivered toward more enriched job designs for nurses (e.g., primary nursing, disease management, and case management). These reforms are founded on the idea that nurses are made solely accountable for particular patients from hospitalization to discharge. They are given the resources as well as the opportunities to exert direct responsibility for their jobs, ensuring that patients get what they need when they need it, and at the same time ensuring the quality of care (Cook, 1998). However, as the realities of clinical practice might be quite different from what is stated owing to exigency—characterizing nurses' workplace—as well as nurse scheduling issues, nursing teams might vary in the extent job enrichment practices are put into practice.

Hence, although nurses in our teams had clear and defined roles, they necessarily interacted regularly during the shift to achieve shared goals regarding the quality of care given to their patients. They also depended on one another for knowledge, equipment, and effort via several permanent structures such as daily nurses' rounds, shift transfer practices, "brown bag" lunch meetings, and scheduled staff meetings held at least once a month.

Unit size ranged from 5 to 20 nursing staff, with an average of 15 nurses ($SD = 8.23$). The sample was 75% women, with an average age of 36.6 years ($SD = 7.97$). The average unit tenure was 6.06 years ($SD = 5.32$), and the average job tenure was 9.5 years ($SD = 7.38$). In education level, the majority (53%) of the nurses in the sample had a college degree, 42% had a bachelor's degree, and 5% had a master's degree. Programs for advanced training in nursing had been taken by 68% of the nurses.

Data were obtained through a survey of all nursing staff, including the head nurse. The questionnaire surveys were distributed to employees on site by a research assistant as follows. Staff nurses' surveys consisted of measures of perceived team support, leader's support, and cultural values. These measures were aggregated to the team level of analysis. Head nurses' data included measures of job enrichment and leader's support.

Measures

Team support. Team support reflected the degree that team members engaged in emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support. The items were adapted from West (1994) and were developed and standardized in previous research (Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2002). In the present study, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted that evinced support for the four expected categories of support (a detailed description of the findings is given in the Results section). Emotional support had four items (e.g., "People feel understood and accepted by each other"); Cronbach's alpha reliability score was .83. Informational support also had four items (e.g., "We generally share information in the team, rather than keeping it to ourselves"); $\alpha = .70$. There were four items on instrumental support (e.g., "Team members provide practical help to enable you to do the job to the best of your ability"); $\alpha = .82$. Appraisal support had two items (e.g., "Team members provide each other with fresh perspectives and ideas"); $\alpha = .74$. Finally, all 14 items from the four subscales were averaged to obtain the general support measure of the team; $\alpha = .88$.

Leader's support. Parallel measures of leader's own ratings and team members' ratings of the leader's support behaviors were run, by means of a Likert-type 16-item scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) adapted from S. E. Anderson and Williams (1996). As the correlation between the support scores obtained by the team and by the leader was considerably high, $r(55) = .68$, $p < .01$, and to avoid same-source bias (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), we used the leader's own appraisal measure of support for further analysis. The items represented several different types of support, including tangible assistance, listening and encouragement, sharing/giving information and ideas, and creating an atmosphere of support. To assess leader's support, we averaged the responses to the 16 items. An example item was "Talk the nurse through problems at work, helping him/her come up with solutions" ($\alpha = .91$ for head nurses and .87 for staff nurses).

Job enrichment. Job enrichment was measured by a Likert-type four-item scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Items were developed to assess Hackman and Oldham's (1980) concept of an "enriched job" as consisting of a higher amount of task identity ("In this unit nurses are held accountable for the patients' quality of care from admission to discharge"), opportunity to exert a variety of complex skills ("In this unit, nurses have the opportunity to use various and complex skills"), enhanced flexibility to implement tasks ("How things are done in this unit is left pretty much up to the nurse in charge of the patient"), and feedback from the job ("Because of the way the job is designed in this unit, nurses can't tell when they have done a good job"; reverse scored). Cronbach's alpha for job enrichment was .83.

Team values. Team values were measured by the individualism–collectivism and power distance scales adopted from the GLOBE project, worded with the team, not the organization, as the referent (Hanges et al., 1998; for detailed description of the development and validation of the scales, see also Hanges & Dickson, 2004). Eight items on team *individualism* assessed the extent to which team members expected individuals to orient their action to their own rather than the group's benefit. An example item is "In this unit, the head nurse encourages devotion to the team, even at the expense of harming members' personal goals" (reverse scored). Cronbach's alpha reliability score was .68. Five items on *power distance* assessed the extent to which members of the unit accepted and expected an unequal distribution of power. An example item is "In this unit, a member's influence is based mainly on his/her formal authority." Cronbach's alpha reliability score was .67.

Level of Analysis

The unit of theory in the present study was the team. All of the hypotheses were posited at the team level, and the focal criterion—team support—was defined as a team-level construct (West, 1994). Therefore, team support, members' rating of leader's support, and cultural values were aggregates of individual responses to the team level of analysis (all items were worded with the team, not the individual, as the referent). Leader's own rating of support and job enrichment were measured at the team level by surveying the team leader.

Justification for aggregation is provided by theoretical as well as empirical arguments (Chan, 1998; Rousseau, 1985). Theoretically, Rousseau (1985) advocated the use of composition theories, which specify the functional similarities of constructs at different levels. Chan (1998) identified referent-shift consensus models, in which the researcher first begins with a conceptual definition and operationalization of the focal construct at the lower level (support behaviors by individuals). Next, while maintaining the basic content of the construct, he or she derives a new form of the construct at the same level by changing the referent of the basic content (to team support). There are many reasons to expect team members to share perceptions concerning work environment, such as team support, team design, team leader, and team culture. Members' frequent interaction, shared tasks, the clear delineation of team boundaries, and the long tenure of most of the teams should allow team members to adopt the views of the collective, thereby creating shared norms (George, 1990; Janz et al., 1997). It was critical to demonstrate high within-team agreement to justify using the team average as an indicator of team-level variables (r_{wg}). A value of .70 or above is suggested as a "good" amount of within-group interrater agreement (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1993). All scales met this criterion. Values are given in Table 1.

In addition, in team-level analyses the aggregation of individual responses into a team score treats team members as judges rating their environment. Therefore, it is also important to demonstrate that team members "agree" before claiming that a construct is a team-level variable (Bliese & Halverson, 1996). In this study, within-team agreement was estimated by two measures: the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) (1), which estimates the reliability of an individual respondent's rating, and the ICC (2), which estimates the reliability of mean differences across teams (Bliese & Halverson, 1996). Values are given in Table 1. As indicated by James (1982), ICC (1) generally ranges from 0 to .50, with a median of .12. There are, however, no definite guidelines for determining acceptable values for ICC (2). From Table 1 it is apparent that all scales met or exceeded the median score and ranged from .12 (instrumental support) to .22 (job enrichment). These values of ICC (1) are moderate to large compared with

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities, and Intercorrelation Matrix for the Study Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*	r_{wg}[a]	ICC (1)	ICC (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Emotional support	3.61	0.72	.75	.14	.72	—								
2. Informational support	3.94	1.00	.83	.17	.77	.72**	—							
3. Instrumental support	3.73	0.87	.78	.12	.69	.50**	.62**	—						
4. Appraisal support	3.54	0.81	.81	.18	.78	.43**	.59**	.64*	—					
5. Team support	3.70	0.34	.77	.17	.77	.68**	.81**	.72*	.71*	—				
6. Leader's support	3.58	0.48		.17	.77	.27*	.22	.59**	.31*	.33**	—			
7. Job enrichment	4.92	1.94		.22	.82	.08	−.29*	−.11	−.07	−.26**	.13	—		
8. Individualism	3.76	0.37	.87	.20	.80	−.46**	−.30*	.05	−.26*	−.37**	.16	−.10	—	
9. Power distance	3.77	0.39	.84	.19	.79	−.30*	−.05	.00	−.29*	−.12	−.18	.22	−.07	—

Note. $N = 56$. ICC = intraclass correlation coefficient.
[a] The statistic r_{wg} represents the reliability within groups averaged across all teams (James et al., 1993). The ranges of the reliability scores were .70–.92 for emotional support, .65–.96 for team informational support, .76–.92 for team instrumental support, .40–.95 for appraisal team support, .42–.99 for team support, .48–.99 for team individualism, and .65–1.00 for team power distance.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

values typically found in organizational research using multilevel modeling (Bliese, 2000).

Results

To test the multidimensional taxonomy for support behaviors and help establish the convergent and discriminant validity of the scales, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Specifically, we tested our measurement model by comparing the four-factor (oblique) model (emotional support, informational support, instrumental support, and appraisal support) with the rival one-factor model (oblique). As Kelloway (1998) noted, the quality of fit of a theoretical model is based on both whether it provides a good absolute fit to the data and whether it fits better than a competing model. As is typical in confirmatory factor analysis (Kelloway, 1998), the chi-square associated with our four-factor model was significant, $\chi^2(59, N = 368) = 246.57$, $p < .01$. However, the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .07 was below the .08 cutoff value recommended by experts, and this together with the normed fit index (NFI) of .98 and the comparative fit index (CFI) of .99 can be interpreted as indicating adequate fit to the data (e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1999). Even more important, our four-factor model provided a better fit to the data than did the one-factor rival model. All of the fit indices were worse than those of our four-factor model, $\chi^2(65, N = 368) = 551.82$, $p < .01$; RMSEA = .14, NFI = .95, and CFI = .95.

For further support, we examined the correlations between the dimensions, which, contrary to our expectations, were moderate to high, ranging from .43 between emotional team support and appraisal team support to .72 between informational team support and emotional team support (Table 1). This finding suggested that although the different support behaviors had common variance, each contained a unique aspect of team support. However, the moderate to high correlations between the dimensions did not constitute sufficient evidence for discriminant validity, and overall, Hypothesis 1 received only mixed support.

To test Hypotheses 2–10 a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. To control for the possible effects of different team sizes, we entered this variable in the regression equation in Step 1, followed by all main effects of the proposed antecedents, namely, leader's support, job enrichment, and team values, which were entered in Step 2. Finally, the proposed second-order interactions were entered in Step 3. To facilitate interpretation and minimize problems of multicollinearity, the analysis was conducted with centered variables (Aiken & West, 1991). To clarify the significant interactive effects, the predicted values for team support were calculated using the unstandardized regression coefficients (*b*s) from the regression equation (Aiken & West, 1991). The results of the hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, team size was not a significant predictor of team support (Equation 1). Further, the joint main effects of team support predictors accounted for 47% of the variance in team support (Equation 2), $F(5, 55) = 10.99$, $p < .01$. Job enrichment was negatively and significantly associated with team support (Hypothesis 2). Leader's support was significantly and positively associated with team support (Hypothesis 3). Finally, among the culture values, in line with our predictions individualism and power distance were significantly and negatively related with team support (Hypotheses 4 and 5). However, inspection of the zero-order correlation between power distance and team support (Table 1) indicated that power distance was negatively and significantly correlated only with the emotional and appraisal support scales and not with the mean team support scale. Hence, Hypothesis 5 received only mixed support.

The second-order interaction effects among leader's support, job enrichment, and cultural values on team support accounted for an additional 13% of the variance in team support. The complete model accounted for 60% of team support (Equation 3), $F(1, 55) = 9.40$, $p < .01$. First, contrary to our predictions, the interaction effects between cultural values (individualism and power distance) and leader's support on team support were nonsignificant ($p > .05$) (Hypotheses 6 and 7). As regards the interaction effects of cultural values and job enrichment, the interaction between individualism and job enrichment was not significant, and so Hypothesis 8 was not supported.

However, the interaction effect of power distance and job enrichment was significant. Re-

Table 2
Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Team Support

	Team support					
	Equation 1		Equation 2		Equation 3	
Independent variable	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*
Team size	−.01	.02	−.03	.01	−.03	.01
Leader's support			.36***	.07	.39***	.06
Job enrichment			−.08***	.02	−.08***	.02
Individualism			−.50**	.09	−.67***	.09
Power distance			−.24**	.09	−.34***	.08
Leader's Support × Job Enrichment					.94**	.34
Leader's Support × Individualism					−.02	.05
Leader's Support × Power Distance					−.50	.33
Job Enrichment × Individualism					−.03	.04
Job Enrichment × Power Distance					.20**	.05

Note. For Equation 1, adjusted $R^2 = .00$; $F(1, 55) = 0.29$, *ns*; $\Delta F = 0.29$, *ns*. For Equation 2, adjusted $R^2 = .47$; $F(5, 55) = 10.99$, $p < .001$; $\Delta F = 13.59$, $p < .001$. For Equation 3, adjusted $R^2 = .60$; $F(10, 55) = 9.40$, $p < .001$; $\Delta F = 4.26$, $p < .01$.
** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

sults from simple effects tests revealed that as expected, when power distance was high, team support was significantly higher under the condition of low as compared with high job enrichment, $t = 1.96$, $p < .05$. However, when power distance was low, no significant differences between high and low job enrichment in team support were found, $t = 1.54$, $p > .05$. Note that the combination of high job enrichment and high power distance yielded the lowest level of team support, whereas the combination of low job enrichment and low power distance yielded the highest levels of team support in our sample. The interaction effect is illustrated in Figure 1. Finally, as predicted, the interaction effect between leader's support and job enrichment was significant (Hypothesis 10). Results from simple effects tests revealed that as expected, when

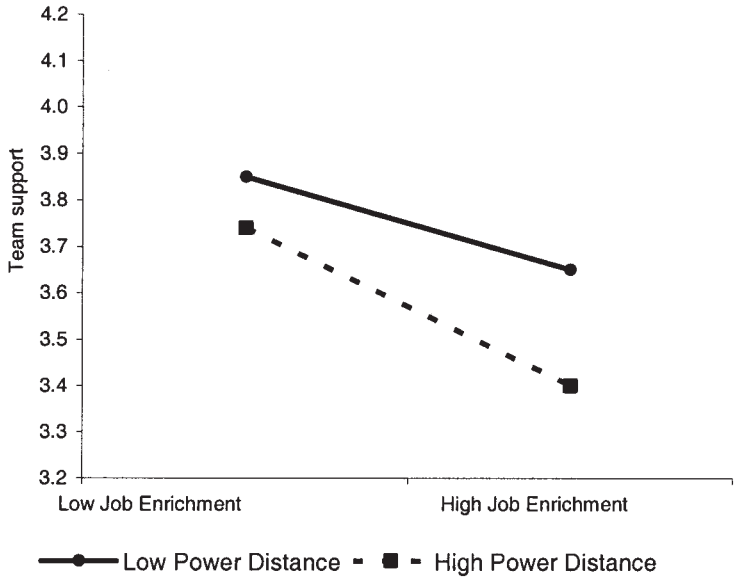

Figure 1. Team support: Means by power distance and job enrichment.

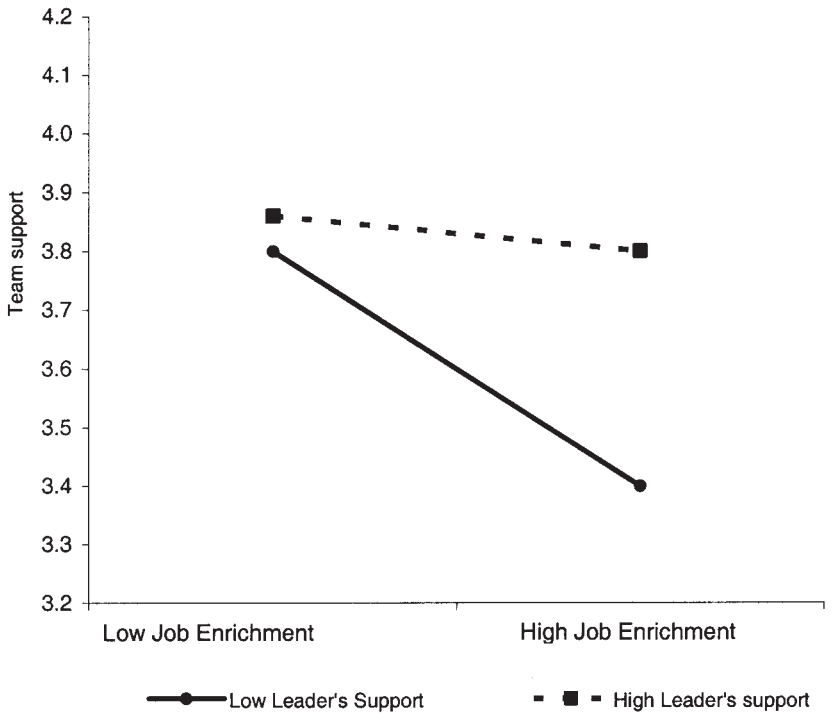

Figure 2. Team support: Means by leader's support and job enrichment.

leader's support was low, team support was significantly lower under high as compared with low job enrichment practices, $t = 3.28$, $p < .01$. By contrast, when leader's support was high, team support remained high regardless of job enrichment practices, and no significant differences in team support were found in units operating high as compared with low job enrichment practices, $t = -1.90$, $p > .05$. Thus, high leader's support moderated the negative impact of job enrichment practices on team support, evincing support for Hypothesis 10 (see Figure 2).

Discussion

The present study addressed the issue of team support by modeling it as a team-level output variable shared by team members, thereby making it possible to explore the process, design, and leadership factors that enhance the occurrence of team support in some teams but inhibit it in others. Our results highlighted the importance of work designs, values, and practices within the team, which serve as support carriers, thereby contributing to team literature in several respects.

First, our findings highlighted that the support of the supervisor was a potent determinant of team support. This finding suggests that despite the arguments of several authors that teamwork and restructuring might limit the potential benefits of traditional support provided by supervisors (Griffin et al., 2001; Podsakoff, Niehoff, MacKenzie, & Williams, 1993), leaders still play a key role in teams through their impact on team support. A possible explanation for this finding is that leaders might satisfy followers' needs for support through modeling support behaviors in teams, setting the ground rules for team members to engage in support, and clarifying roles and expectations concerning support from employees (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Griffin et al., 2001; McIntyre & Salas, 1995). Similar findings were obtained by Griffin and his colleagues (2001). In 48 manu-

facturing companies, these authors showed that even though supervisory support was less important in companies where there was greater use of teams, this support was still positively related to satisfaction. They disagreed with the conclusion that supervisory support was unimportant when there was greater use of teamwork. The association found in this study between leader's support and team support, therefore, provides evidence for the implicit assumption that with the implementation of teamwork, leaders might assume a more facilitative role (Parker & Wall, 1998), creating the atmosphere for the development of other sources of support such as team support.

Second, our results demonstrated that job enrichment practices, such as increasing the variety of tasks performed, developing task identity, enhancing flexibility in implementing tasks, and providing an opportunity to receive fluent feedback regarding job performance, were associated with decreased team support. This result is especially important in light of recent research findings illuminating the costs of job enrichment practices in terms of elevated levels of stress, strain, and burnout in nursing settings (Melchior et al., 1996), as well as in other organizational settings (Dwyer & Fox, 2000; Schaubroeck et al., 1994; Xie & Johns, 1995). Because of the efficiency of team support in moderating job stress (e.g., Fenlason & Beehr, 1994), the present results imply that job enrichment practices should be implemented with caution, ensuring that support is maintained. For example, job enrichment practices could be implemented through a teamwork structure (in which, for example, team members share all tasks) or on an individual basis (Griffin et al., 2001). It might be logical to assume that in the former case, job enrichment will not have a detrimental effect on team support, as teamwork structure makes team support possible (Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2002), but in the latter case, job enrichment practices might deprive employees of team support. In such instances responsibility for support reverts to the leader, highlighting his or her major role in maintaining the level of support needed. In this vein, Manley, Hamill, and Hanlon (1997) showed that job enrichment practiced in small teams was perceived as providing added benefits in terms of support and development of junior staff, as compared with job enrichment practiced individually.

Third, the current research corroborates the general conclusion that team culture has an important influence on team processes and practices (Erez, 1994; Van Oudenhoven, Mexhelse, & De Dreu, 1998). Our results imply that variations in support as a function of teams may be well understood in terms of cultural dimensions on which these teams vary. Results were generally consistent with the individualism–collectivism hypothesis, namely, teams higher on collectivism will be characterized by more team support than teams higher on individualism (Hofstede, 1980; Robert et al., 2000; Triandis, 1993). Partial support was also obtained for the power distance hypothesis, namely, teams lower in power distance tend to express more team support than teams higher in power distance. These results are consistent with previous theory and research indicating that in low power distance units, members value equality and egalitarian relations, and greater harmony prevails between the more and the less powerful members (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1993; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). These findings imply that the tendency of teams to engage in support behaviors depends on the extent to which they consider support to be legitimate, that is, approved rather than disapproved by cultural norms (S. E. Anderson & Williams, 1996; Brockner et al., 2001). It is not the support per se that members avoid. It is when support violates cultural norms that members withdraw from acting supportively.

Finally, perhaps the most important results of the present study were that leader's support and cultural values moderated the negative impact of job enrichment on team support. Concerning leader's support, when job enrichment practices were accompanied by high leader's support, team support remained intact. These results support those of a previous study by Griffin et al. (2001) that examined the changing role of supervisory support during restructuring. These authors found that reduction in levels of supervisory support may have partially offset the positive benefits of job enrichment practices. In addition, Bliese and Castro (2000) found that leader's support moderated the relationship between role clarity and perceived strain. Our findings likewise indicated that the negative im-

pact of job enrichment designs on team support could be somewhat offset by low levels of power distance.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

As with any study, this research is not without limitations. First, our findings could not fully support the multidimensionality of the team support construct, as the four support subscales were moderately interdependent. This might have stemmed from the fact that our data were largely self-reported and hence subject to biases. Although recent research has shown that people often accurately perceive their social environment (Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 1998), our participants might have been hard pressed to distinguish the four facets of support. In some cases, it might be difficult to isolate some of the distinct support behaviors as devoted to a particular category of support. For example, one could argue that a colleague who provides information also serves as a source of emotional support. Hence, the behaviors seemed to blend such that it might have become complicated to isolate any element from the others. However, we surveyed supervisors as well as team members in order to avoid the same-source bias that would have arisen had we used team members' data only (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Further studies that use objective criteria, such as observational methods, are clearly required to explore further the multidimensional nature of providing support. Additionally, more studies that also measure the link between team support and team outcomes such as innovation and effectiveness are clearly needed.

The generalizability of the present findings should be examined in other types of teams in addition to nursing. It is critical to assess any such differences so that insights can be tailored to specific circumstances. In particular, further research should try to compare job enrichment configurations implemented on an individual basis (such as is widely used in nursing teams in primary care and case management practices of care) with job enrichment configurations implemented through teams. These studies should also evaluate the relative potency of team support versus autonomy as means for enhancing effectiveness. Furthermore, for especially talented members, autonomy may very well serve as a better means of increasing performance, whereas for the less efficacious members support appears crucial (Van Yperen, 1998). Finally, our data were cross-sectional, which prevented us from testing the causal nature of our relationships.

Contributions

The present study focused on team support as a relative property of the team and explored the leadership, cultural values, and structural arrangements embodied in teams that serve as support carriers. The results of this study are interesting and important for theoretical and substantive reasons. Theoretically, modeling team support as a team-level phenomenon emphasizes that support is not mainly a burst of altruism manifested by individuals, thereby setting a rich agenda for researchers for further identifying managerial practices, as well as structural and contextual factors that enhance team support. Moreover, the findings emphasize the importance of developing more complex models for teams that address more adequately the moderating effects between the predictors. As Janz et al. (1997) noted, prior studies on teams have taken the "more is better" approach for their investigation, neglecting the examination of the interaction of design, culture, and leadership variables. With respect to management implications, our findings emphasize the importance of integrating team-level considerations into the devices for enhancing support in teams. Our results go beyond individual characteristics that predict support. They imply that managers should develop institutionalized structures and processes that foster support (such as supporting members directly, and indirectly via developing team meetings, team consulting, and team teaching) and should generate collectivistic and egalitarian values to encourage team members to display support behaviors. Furthermore, the present findings that job enrichment places constraints on the accessibility of support for team members might represent a catch-22 situation in teams (Janz et al., 1997). That is, these practices might reduce the positive effects associated with each other (at least when job enrichment design is implemented on an individual basis). Managers should therefore

put into practice job enrichment practices with caution, ensuring that support is maintained.

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