

## The Effect of Hispanic Ethnicity on the Leadership Process

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Leadership categorization and relational demography theory suggest that ethnicity has a major impact on how people work together and perceive leaders. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between leader ethnicity (Hispanic) and perceptions of leader behaviors. The results indicated that Hispanic leaders were perceived as equivalent, in terms of leadership, to Euro-American leaders despite a significant difference in ethnic identity scores between Hispanic and Euro-American students. However, the mean perceived effectiveness ratings for leaders whose leadership style matches their followers' leadership prototype were significantly higher than those in the mismatch condition. Implications for both managers and researchers are discussed.

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**P**rior research indicates that race and ethnicity may have an effect on performance evaluations (Bass & Turner, 1973; Farr, O'Leary, & Bartlett, 1971; Feild, Bayley, & Bayley, 1977; Ford, Schechtman, & Kraiger, 1986; Fox & Lefkowitz, 1974; Kraiger & Ford, 1985; Schmitt & Lippin, 1980). For example, Kraiger and Ford (1985) found that Blacks and Whites tend to rate members of their own race higher. Studies by Hamner, Kim, Baird, and Bigoness (1974) and Schmitt and Lippin (1980) found similar results. Heneman (1986) indicated that a ratee's race may moderate the relationship between objective criteria and supervisor rating. Kraiger and Ford (1990) seemed to support Heneman's position. They found that for Blacks, supervisory ratings were more closely linked to work-performance measures than for Whites. Job-knowledge measures were also linked with supervisory ratings to a higher degree for Blacks than Whites. Hamner et al. (1974) and Schmitt and Lippin (1980) also found that there was an interaction effect between the race of the rater and the race of the ratee. Kraiger and Ford (1990) indicated that the moderating effect may be due to White raters' possible tendency to rate members of their group higher. When rating Blacks, they only use objective data, which would lead to a higher correlation between objective criteria and supervisor ratings for Blacks. This study was designed to determine if a similar phenomenon exists concerning the relationship between leader ethnicity (Hispanic) and follower perceptions of leader behaviors.

Two competing theories were tested to explain potential differences in leader behavior perceptions. After a brief definition of the term Hispanic, an overview of leadership

categorization theory and relational demography is provided to lay the foundation for the main hypotheses that were tested.

The term Hispanic defines a person who was born and raised in a Spanish speaking country or a U.S.-born individual of Hispanic heritage (Padilla, 1995). Hispanic means having a Spanish family name and having ancestors from a Spanish speaking country (Stephens, 1989). Euro-American followers often perceive both foreign-born and U.S.-born Hispanics as one category, Hispanic. Demographic data sections on application forms used by governmental and private organizations commonly use the term Hispanic in this fashion. Furthermore, the term Hispanic is commonly used by numerous researchers to mean foreign-born and U.S.-born individuals of Latin American heritage (Stephens, 1989; Triandis, Marin, Hui, Lisansky, & Ottati, 1984a; Triandis, Marin, Lisansky, & Betancourt 1984b). Finally, Hispanics use the term themselves in Spanish (*Hispano*) and in naming organizations (e.g., National Hispanic Scholarship Fund and National Society of Hispanic MBAs).

### *Leadership Style Match*

A significant trend in the leadership field is the interest in cross-cultural issues and the means by which culture affects leader behaviors and follower expectations of leader behaviors (Dorfman, 1996; House, Wright, & Aditya, 1997). Leadership practices that are acceptable in one culture may be counterproductive in another culture. Variables, such as level of modernization, form of government, religion, influence of the military, history of leadership, level of contact with foreign nationals, and general societal power structure contribute to leadership expectations and preferences.

Leadership categorization theory and leadership prototypes (Lord, Foti, & Phillips, 1982; Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984) may explain the possible differences between follower perceptions of Hispanic and Euro-American leaders. Categories, such as "leader," simplify the processing of numerous stimuli into manageable and understandable sets by reducing the number of characteristics to look for in people (Cantor & Mischel, 1979). Once an individual is categorized, behavioral predictions can be made from the confined set of likely behaviors characteristic of the category (Lord et al., 1982). A leadership prototype is a type of category which summarizes the major and most common aspects of the follower's concept of a leader (Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Nye & Forsyth, 1991). People compare potential leaders to their leadership prototype when making a leadership assessment. When a person has attributes that are consistent with attributes of a follower's leader prototype, the individual will be perceived as a leader (Lord et al., 1982). The more attributes the person has that are consistent with the follower's leader prototype, the stronger the perception that the individual is a leader (Cantor & Mischel, 1979). Additionally, when leaders are categorized as leaders, they are further categorized as an effective leader, political leader, business leader, etc. (Foti, Fraser, & Lord, 1982; Lord et al., 1982).

A number of studies support leadership categorization theory and the concept of leadership prototypes. Nye and Forsyth (1991) discovered that followers preferred leaders who matched their leadership prototype. Fraser and Lord (1988) indicated that the level of the leader's prototypicality affects leadership perceptions. Leaders who were highly prototypical were rated higher than those who were neutral or low in prototypicality. Hains, Hogg, and Duck (1997) discovered that followers perceived leaders as more effective when the leader matched the follower's prototype than when the leader did not match the follower's prototype. Chong and

Thomas (1997) indicated that followers were more satisfied when there was a match between their leadership prototype and the leader's behavior. Ayman and Chemers (1991) found similar results, indicating that followers were more satisfied when there was a leadership style match. Based on these studies, if leaders are not perceived as such by their followers, it will likely have a negative effect on perceived satisfaction with supervision and perceived effectiveness.

Leadership prototypes that followers use to judge leaders are culturally contingent (O'Connell, Lord, & O'Connell, 1990) and consistent within cultures (Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, 1986). Shaw (1990) proposed that leadership perceptions are different across cultures because of differences in leadership prototypes. There is support for these complementary positions. Gerstner and Day (1994) found that followers from eight countries had significantly different leadership prototypes. Morrison (1993) indicated that minority leaders may be judged by White followers using different prototypes than those used to judge White leaders, indicating that ethnicity may moderate leader perceptions. Chong and Thomas (1997) found that both follower and leader ethnicity had an effect on leader perceptions. Followers who had leaders from their ethnic group were more satisfied than followers who did not have a leader from their ethnic group. Chong and Thomas (1997) concluded that followers have culturally specific leadership prototypes, and they proposed that "the greater the difference between cultures, the greater is the potential for differing leader prototypes and hence possible ineffective interaction between members of these cultures" (p. 290). This seems true in the case of leadership in Mexico. Dorfman et al. (1997b) found that in Mexico, leaders were expected to be directive and avoid conflict. In the United States, on the other hand, leaders were found to be participative and supportive (Dorfman et al., 1997b). Similar differences may exist between Hispanic and Euro-American leaders in the United States.

In addition to the effect that culture has on leadership prototypes, it also has a significant effect on leadership style development in leaders. House et al. (1997) indicated that culture places significant limits and constraints on leader behaviors. Cultural factors, such as the level of economic development, influence of the military, and contact with other cultures, all influence leaders in forming their leadership style. Hui (1990) proposed that culture has an effect on a manager's beliefs and values and therefore, a leader's style. For example, an American manager would likely be direct in communicating about a problem with a worker because of the cultural value placed on being direct and not wasting time. In Japan, a manager would likely be indirect because of the cultural value placed on harmony and avoiding conflict.

Based on the literature reviewed, Hispanic culture likely has a significant impact on the leadership style of Hispanic leaders and the leadership prototype of Hispanic followers. The following hypotheses were developed to determine if leadership style match has an effect on the two major leadership perceptions mentioned earlier: perceived satisfaction with supervision and perceived effectiveness.

*Hypothesis 1a:* Leaders whose leadership style matches their follower's leadership prototype have higher perceived satisfaction ratings from followers than leaders whose leadership style does not match their follower's prototype.

*Hypothesis 1b:* Leaders whose leadership style matches their follower's leadership prototype have higher perceived effectiveness ratings from followers than leaders whose leadership style does not match their follower's prototype.

### *Ethnicity Match*

Relational demography theory offers an alternative mechanism to explain the effect that leader ethnicity may have on follower perceptions of leader behaviors. The authors of the theory postulate that people compare their demographic features to other people in their social groups to judge whether the group's demographic features are similar to their own (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). Similarity affects attitudes and behaviors regarding their coworkers, such as commitment to the group, group cohesiveness, and high group evaluations (Riordan & Shore 1997), friendship ties and more frequent communication (Lincoln & Miller, 1979; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). O'Reilly, Caldwell, and Barnett (1989) determined that higher levels of demographic similarity are related to more social integration within work groups. When leaders and followers are from different cultural groups, ethnicity may become an important factor in social perception and integration.

Tsui et al. (1992) found that the individual's attachment to the organization is lower when there is a significant difference in race between an individual and other members in a work group. Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) concluded that "increasing dissimilarity in superior-subordinate demographic characteristics...is associated with lower effectiveness as perceived by supervisors, less personal attraction on the part of superiors for subordinates and increased role ambiguity experienced by subordinates" (p. 402). Wesolowski and Mossholder (1997) determined that subordinates in racially diverse dyads had lower job satisfaction when compared to homogeneous dyads. These studies imply that ethnicity may be a psychologically relevant dimension when encountering a Hispanic leader.

Research suggests that Hispanic culture has an impact on leadership. Romero (2004) proposed that Hispanic culture has a general and predictable effect on leader behaviors such that leaders will tend to be directive and autocratic. Preliminary data from seven Latin American countries supported this proposition. Offerman and Hellman (1997) discovered that uncertainty avoidance had a significant positive correlation with increased leader control, and power distance had a significant negative correlation with leader delegation, approachability, communication, and team building. Given that Hispanic countries scored high in power distance and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980), one might expect to see Hispanic leaders exhibit these behaviors which are consistent with directive leadership. This is evident in Mexican leaders, which previous researchers have characterized as autocratic and paternalistic (Stephens & Greer, 1995; Dorfman & Howell, 1997a). The results from these studies suggest that Hispanic leaders will have a tendency to be more directive than most leaders in the United States. Directive and participative leader behaviors were selected for this study to reflect the preferred leadership style of Hispanic and American followers, respectively.

Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were developed and tested to determine if ethnicity match has an effect on perceived satisfaction with supervision and perceived effectiveness.

*Hypothesis 2a:* When the ethnicity of the leader is the same as the follower's, the follower has higher levels of perceived satisfaction with supervision compared to when there is no ethnicity match.

*Hypothesis 2b:* When the ethnicity of the leader is the same as the follower's, the follower perceives the leader as more effective compared to when there is no ethnicity match.

### *Ethnic Identity*

The explanatory power of leadership categorization theory and relational demography theory, in terms of ethnicity based differences, relies on the degree of ethnic identity of at least one group being compared. If both groups have little sense of identity with their ethnicity, they are likely to perceive each other as equivalent if all other factors are the same. Therefore, it is imperative to establish the degree to which Hispanics identify with their ethnicity.

Although Hispanics come from many different countries representing numerous cultures, a common Hispanic culture does exist (Lozano, 1997). In a study of 43 countries, Smith, Dugan, and Trompenaars (1996) found similar cultural scores for Mexico and Argentina. Spain, although not part of Latin America, shared similarities with Mexico and Argentina, indicating a cultural link between the three countries. Triandis et al. (1984a) indicated that "U.S. Hispanics should exemplify cultural attributes commonly found in collectivist cultures given that their background and cultural roots have emerged from Latin America" (p. 298).

The social psychology literature sheds light on Hispanic social expectations. Hispanics place significant value on harmony in social relationships and close family ties (Triandis et al., 1984a). Triandis et al. (1984b) found that Hispanics expect more positive social behavior and less negative social behavior than non-Hispanics. Kagan (1977) found a similar result, indicating that Hispanics prefer cooperation over competition. Triandis et al. (1984b) indicated that the difference between Hispanic and non-Hispanic social behavior expectations may lead to misunderstandings, stress, and discomfort when non-Hispanics and Hispanics work and interact together. Perhaps this difference in social behavior is due to a difference in coping style. Diaz-Guerrero (1979) discovered that coping styles are culturally contingent, which explains the substantial differences in coping styles between Americans and Mexicans. He described coping style as the general way in which people deal with stress and problems. According to Diaz-Guerrero (1979), the American coping style is primarily focused on modifying the interpersonal, physical, and social environments, whereas the Mexican coping style is primarily concerned with self-modification, such as passively tolerating stress or problems. Other Hispanics should have a similar coping style due to cultural similarities.

Hofstede's (1980) research supports the notion of a common Hispanic culture and differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanics. Hofstede (1980) found significant commonalities among Hispanic cultures, particularly that they are generally high in power distance, collectivism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance compared to U.S. culture. Power distance is a particularly important dimension of Hispanic culture, given the hierarchal nature of most Hispanic societies. Hofstede (1980) defined power distance as "the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (p. 45). Another way to think of power distance is as an acceptance of power and control by people above one's level in a given power structure. Hofstede (1980) described uncertainty avoidance as the extent to which people feel at ease with uncertainty, risk, and ambiguity. A culture that scores high on the uncertainty avoidance dimension indicates that people feel uncomfortable with ambiguity, risk, and uncertainty. Collectivist cultures value cooperative effort and expect people in their groups (friends and family) to take care of them. In individualist cultures, such as

American culture, the expectation is that people should primarily take care of themselves. Hofstede (1980) found some variability in Hispanic cultures concerning the masculinity dimension, with some cultures being more masculine than others. The masculinity dimension measures a culture's dominant values regarding assertive and aggressive social behaviors. Feminine cultures are the opposite of masculine cultures, which Hofstede (1980) defined as stressing equality among the sexes, being nurturing, sympathetic, and cooperative.

Overall, it is proposed that Hispanics tend to have a connection with their native or ancestral cultures and they identify more with them than Euro-Americans who are more disconnected from their ancestral cultures. Given this observation and the material discussed in the previous section, the following hypothesis is proposed.

*Hypothesis 3: Hispanics have a stronger ethnic identity than Euro-Americans.*

### *Method*

#### *Sample*

Undergraduate students were recruited from management courses offered at New Mexico State University. The student population at New Mexico State University has a sizeable proportion of Hispanics (approximately 45%). The high representation of Hispanics facilitated an effective comparison between Hispanic and Euro-American follower perceptions of Hispanic leaders. Students are suitable subjects because they have ample experience being followers and they are the future leaders, managers, and professionals of tomorrow. The fact that firms eagerly recruit undergraduate students implies that these subjects are relevant to organizations.

The sample included 409 students, 341 met the Hispanic or Euro-American ethnicity requirement necessary for inclusion in the study. Students from other ethnicities (68) were not used in the study. Out of the 341 students who met the ethnicity requirement, 6 records were unusable due to missing data, leaving 335 records for analysis. A complete description of the sample is presented in Table 1.

#### *Measures*

The satisfaction with supervision sub-scale of the Job Description Index (JDI) (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) was used to measure perceived satisfaction with supervision. The scale was slightly adapted to suit the use of the scenario used in the study. The JDI has been used in numerous studies and has internal reliabilities ranging from .80 to .88 (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981). For this study, Cronbach's alpha for the satisfaction with supervision subscale was .86. Perceived effectiveness was measured with 4 items developed by Nye and Forsyth (1991). For this study, Cronbach's alpha for the perceived effectiveness scale was .91. Both dependent variables were measured with a 9-point scale.

The ethnic identity subscale of the Scale of Ethnic Experience (Malcarne, Chavira, & Liu, 1996) was used to detect the difference in cultural affiliation between Hispanics and Euro-Americans. A higher score indicated a firmer attachment to one's ethnic group. Malcarne et al. (1996) calculated Cronbach's alpha of .87. For this study, Cronbach's alpha for the sub-scale was .87. The variable was measured with a 5-point scale.

Table 1  
*Demographic Characteristics (N = 335)*

Demographics	Number	Percent
Ethnicity		
Euro-American	211	63
Hispanic	124	37
Gender		
Male	156	50
Female	156	50
Age		
17-19	22	7
20-22	192	60
23-26	70	21
26 >	42	12
Years of full-time work experience		
< 1 year	120	36
1 -2 years	80	24
3-4 years	49	15
4 > years	83	25

### *Design*

The study was designed as a between students, quasi-experiment (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Students were randomly assigned to a Hispanic or Euro-American leader condition and a directive or participative leader condition. The follower's leadership prototype was an independent variable that students self-reported indirectly on the questionnaire by responding to a mini-leadership scenario. Ethnicity match was tested with the leader and follower ethnicity match/mismatch conditions. Leadership match was tested with the leadership prototype and leadership style match/mismatch conditions.

### *Procedures*

After receiving verbal instructions, students read the leadership prototype preference paragraphs that were designed to allow students to indicate their preferred leadership prototype. The leadership prototype preference paragraphs contained two brief scenarios with a directive and participative leader, respectively. The students answered two questions in which they were

asked which leader was more likely to be effective and have satisfied followers. The students chose either the directive or participative leader. The answer to the two questions indicated which leadership prototype the subject preferred (directive or participative). The participants were next given a leadership scenario.

The leadership scenario described a work situation involving new college graduates and a leader working at a major American company in the United States. The students responded to the leader in the scenario as if they were followers and part of the work group. The subject received one of the four versions of the leadership scenario at random. One difference in the scenarios was the leader's ethnicity (Hispanic or Euro-American), which was used to test for the effect of a match or mismatch in ethnicity between the leader and follower. The second difference in the scenarios was the leader's leadership style (directive or participative), which was used to test for the effect of a match or mismatch between the student's leadership prototype and the leader's leadership style. After reading the scenarios, the students completed the questionnaire containing the measures described earlier, as well as demographic items.

### *Results*

Planned contrasts were used to test Hypotheses 1 and 2. The four factors were follower ethnicity, leader ethnicity, leadership prototype, and leadership style. A *t* test was used to test Hypothesis 3. Perceived effectiveness and satisfaction were significantly correlated ( $r = .133, p = .01$ ). The mean perceived effectiveness and perceived satisfaction with supervision scores were 6.68 ( $SD = 1.74$ ) and 5.26 ( $SD = .58$ ), respectively. The leadership prototype preference questions indicated that most Hispanics (69%) and Euro-Americans (72%) selected the participative leader as being more effective. Most Hispanics (90%) and Euro-Americans (90%) also selected the participative leader as having more satisfied followers. Table 2 indicates the followers' ethnicity and the number of students. The students were distributed adequately across the possible conditions.

The results provided no support for Hypothesis 1a which predicted that leaders whose style matches their follower's leadership prototype have higher perceived satisfaction with supervision scores. There was no statistically significant difference in mean perceived satisfaction with supervision between the two groups. However, there was support for Hypothesis 1b which predicted that leaders whose style matches their follower's leadership prototype have higher perceived effectiveness. There was a statistically significant difference ( $p = .002$ ) in mean perceived effectiveness between the two groups. The results provided no support for Hypotheses 2a or 2b which predicted that ethnicity match impacts the dependent variables. There was no significant difference between the ethnicity match and mismatch conditions in terms of the dependent variables. There was support for Hypothesis 3 ( $p = .000$ ) which predicted that there was a difference between Hispanic and Euro-American ethnic identity. The mean score for Hispanic students was 43.57 ( $SD = 9.16$ ) while for Euro-Americans it was 35.71 ( $SD = 8.73$ ). The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 2  
*Quasi-Experimental Conditions Distribution*

Follower Ethnicity	Leader Ethnicity			
	Hispanic		Euro-American	
Hispanic	H, H, D 39	H, H, P 34	H, E, D 30	H, E, P 21
Euro-American	E, H, D 49	E, H, P 54	E, E, D 51	E, E, P 57
	Directive	Participative	Directive	Participative

Leadership Style

Note. H = Hispanic, E = Euro-American, D = Directive Leader Behavior, and P = Participative Leader Behavior.

Table 3  
*Results for Hypotheses*

Variable	Contrast Estimate (same – different)	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>SE</i>
Leadership Style Match					
<i>Hypothesis 1a. Satisfaction</i>	.02	.95	0.01	0.07	.23
<i>Hypothesis 1b. Effectiveness</i>	.67	.00**	10.07	3.17	.21
Ethnicity Match					
<i>Hypothesis 2a. Satisfaction</i>	.04	.85	0.03	0.19	.23
<i>Hypothesis 2b. Effectiveness</i>	.05	.80	0.06	0.25	.21
Ethnic Identity					
<i>Hypothesis 3. Ethnic Identity</i>	n/a	.00**	0.92	-7.809	1.00

\*\**p* < .01.

### *Discussion*

The results for leadership style match (Hypotheses 1a and 1b) were mixed. There was no support for Hypothesis 1a which predicted that leadership style match leads to higher perceived satisfaction with supervision ratings. There was, however, support for Hypothesis 1b which predicted that leaders whose style matches their follower's leadership prototype have higher perceived effectiveness ratings than leaders whose style does not match their follower's prototype. This result indicates that leadership style match is important in perceived effectiveness by followers, and it also provides partial support for leadership categorization theory.

Although there is a significant difference in ethnic identity between Hispanics and Euro-Americans, there was no support for the notion that Hispanic ethnicity affects leader behavior perceptions. The non-significant effect of ethnicity is surprising, given the literature which suggests that ethnicity is a significant factor in leadership and in ethnically integrated workgroups. There are two possible explanations for this finding.

One possible explanation is that the students have not experienced much discrimination from leaders who are of another ethnicity. New Mexico has a large and integrated Hispanic population, and students are likely to experience less discrimination because they are viewed as equivalent to Euro-Americans in terms of work behaviors. Such a perception is a function of the long-term interaction between Euro-Americans and Hispanics. This dynamic is unlikely to be evident in other parts of the United States where Hispanics are a minority and not well integrated. In such areas, respondents would be more likely to report differences in perceptions between leaders of their own ethnicity compared to leaders from another ethnicity.

Another possible explanation for the ethnicity match results is also related to the sample. The population sampled in this study is unique when compared to other populations in the United States. Many of the Hispanics sampled were not immigrants, rather they were second or third generation Mexican Americans. Berry (1990) indicated that the length of time interacting with the dominant culture, the education system used, the dominant language, daily practices, and social relations all contribute to acculturation. Regarding the Hispanics sampled, these factors are such that they have led to a high level of acculturation in terms of leadership, but not in terms of ethnic identity. The Hispanics sampled seem to have been fully socialized concerning American leadership expectations, yet they have retained their ethnic identity.

A recent field study of leadership in Mexican *maquiladoras*, published after this study was conducted, yielded results similar to those found in this study. Howell, Romero, Dorfman, Paul, and Bautista (2003) found no main effects for leader ethnicity on follower satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervision, job performance, role ambiguity, and organizational commitment. There was no statistically significant mean difference between Mexican and American leaders working in Mexico, based on the dependent variables examined in the study. The study by Howell et al. (2003) illustrated that the lack of significant ethnicity effect concerning leadership is not an isolated incident.

Although not statistically significant, the ethnicity results are significant in a practical sense and may be of value to future researchers interested in Hispanic leaders and followers. It suggests that not all Hispanic groups in the United States are the same in terms of their leadership perceptions, which is contrary to what is commonly assumed.

### *Implications for Managers*

The Hispanic population is growing rapidly (Fullerton, 1999) and is one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. population (Galper, 1998; Larmer, 1999). The 2000 census data indicated that the Hispanic population grew 57.9% from 1990 to 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). The growth of the Hispanic population creates a need for a full understanding of how Hispanics are perceived as leaders. Organizations may use this study as a basis to eliminate Hispanic ethnicity as a possible factor contributing to low perceived effectiveness or low perceived satisfaction with supervision of a particular Hispanic leader.

Managers who use Hispanic leaders in an expatriate role might be interested in the findings of the current study. Hispanic ethnicity does not seem to have a negative effect on

perceived satisfaction with supervision or perceived effectiveness. Based on the results, managers may feel comfortable using either Hispanic expatriate leaders or Euro-American leaders since there was no statistically significant difference between leader perceptions for Hispanic and Euro-American leaders. Managers may rule out Hispanic ethnicity as a factor contributing to low perceived effectiveness and low perceived satisfaction with supervision if these are important factors contributing to expatriate failure in a particular organization. Firms operating with similar populations as those sampled in this study may use the findings as a basis for human resource policies concerning expatriate Hispanic leaders. Even if similar populations are not used by a firm, these results in combination with the results from a study by Chemers, Fiedler, Lekhyananda, and Stolurow (1966), can be useful for managers employing Hispanic workers. Chemers et al. (1966) found that leadership training had a significantly positive effect on leader attitudes and group atmosphere and performance. Given these findings, training may be used with Hispanic leaders or Euro-American leaders to assist their adaptation to a given situation.

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

The results of the current study must be interpreted with care. Since the study was conducted using a quasi-experimental design, the results are of limited use in terms of generalizability. The sample came from one university in New Mexico; thus, some bias in the sample may be evident which was discussed earlier. Care must be exercised when interpreting the results due to this possible bias as it may affect internal and external validity.

Future research might be conducted to replicate the study using populations from different parts of the United States. The results would likely be different due to the various experiences of other Hispanic populations, which might consist of more recent immigrants or less integrated Hispanics. Furthermore, Euro-American populations in other parts of the United States are likely to have different perceptions of Hispanic leaders due to lower levels of interaction with Hispanics. A replication with such samples could possibly produce mean differences between match and mismatch groups regarding perceptions of Hispanic leaders.

Other future research might be conducted to investigate whether there is a similar preference for participative leadership, such as the strong preference found in this study and in other contexts such as the military, fast food chains, and other organizations that typically use a directive leadership style. It would be interesting and useful to examine the relationship between industry sector, training, and leadership style preference.

This significant finding for Hypothesis 1b indicates that leadership style match is an important factor regarding perceived leader effectiveness. Future research might be conducted to discover whether leadership style match may be influenced by education, organizational culture, or other variables. From a human resource perspective, it would be useful to discover whether training could modify leadership preferences in contexts where a particular leadership style is most common (e.g., directive leadership in the military).

The results from this study and Howell et al. (2003) illustrate that the results regarding ethnicity match warrant further study to better understand the process underlying these surprising findings. In particular, if Hispanic ethnicity does not impact leader prototypes, what other variables are not affected? Is the relationship between ethnicity and leadership prototype similar in other ethnic groups? Is the relationship between ethnicity and leadership style preferences similar in other ethnic groups?

### *Conclusion*

This study examined the effect of a leader's Hispanic ethnicity on leader behavior perceptions. The results were surprising because ethnicity did not have a significant effect on leader behavior perceptions. Therefore, relational demography theory was not supported. However, leadership categorization theory was partially supported. The results are useful because they demonstrate a relationship that is contrary to that found in the literature. Both researchers and practitioners may find value in the results of the study.

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Dr. Eric J. Romero earned his Ph.D. in business administration from New Mexico State University and holds a B.S. in management/finance and an M.S. in accounting from Binghamton University, USA. He currently serves as a consultant and professor of management. Dr. Romero's research interests include international management, organizational humor, and Latin American leadership. He has published articles in the *Journal of International Management*, *Academy of Management Executive*, *Cross Cultural Management*, and *Latin American Business Review*, and he has presented papers at numerous conferences in both the United States and abroad.

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