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# Managing Racial Differences

## THE ROLE OF MAJORITY MANAGERS' ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT ON MINORITY EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT

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Potential sources of variance were examined to explain within-group differences in White managers' abilities to manage non-White employees. Majority manager and minority employee survey responses were matched to form 142 superior-subordinate cross-race dyads. Ethnic identity development, ethnic group self-identification, education, and participation in diversity training were measured. Additionally, the relationship between ethnic identity and minority employee perceptions of managerial support were examined. Results show that almost 20% of the majority respondents defined their ethnicity as something other than White. Findings suggest that majority members who perceive themselves as a minority (e.g., German American) may have developed a higher ethnic identity as a result of exploring their own ethnic background. Although education and participation in diversity training were not related to ethnic identity development, a significant relationship was found between the interaction of manager and employee ethnic identity and managerial support. Implications for corporate diversity initiatives are discussed.

**Keywords:** managing diversity; ethnic identity development

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Today, many American companies have embraced the concept of diversity and its importance in their continued success, as evidenced by the proliferation of initiatives that attempt to attract and retain minorities as well as improve professional opportunities for women and people of color (Chen, Hickman, & Garcia, 2000). However, the role of majority members in making diversity programs a success has generally been overlooked. Although majority member attitudes toward diversity programs have recently been studied in the context of backlash and affirmative action efforts (e.g., Kravitz

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& Klineberg, 2000; Lynch, 1991; Richard & Kirby, 1997), Whites are still often perceived as a single homogeneous group, lacking any real personal identification with race or ethnicity. Perhaps this is because a common belief still exists among Whites in this country that they do not perceive themselves as members of a racial group or as responsible for perpetuating racism (Thompson & Carter, 1997).

Much of the research on Whites and diversity programs has focused on perceptions of and behavior toward "others" rather than investigating the experience of privilege and self-reflection required of those in the dominant position (Ely, 1996). However, research on ethnic identity suggests that race and ethnicity may be complex social constructions for majority members as well as minority members. In fact, it is argued that Whites do have an important racial history and it is only through a deeper understanding of this history and subsequent power relations between identity groups that diversity issues in the workplace can be addressed (Jacques, 1997; Linnehan & Konrad, 1999).

Psychologists have recently begun to recognize and study the potential negative effects of defining race so narrowly and the implications of this for psychological research (Cox & Nkomo, 1990; Day, Cross, Ringseis, & Williams, 1997; Ely, 1996; Helms, 1994; Nkomo, 1992; Phinney, 1996a; K. M. Thomas, Phillips, & Brown, 1998). Phinney (1996a) suggests that ethnic categories are actually social constructions that vary over time, context, and individuals. She contends that researchers must explore three dimensions of difference that vary within and across ethnic groups: cultural norms and attitudes, the salience and meaning of ethnicity for an individual, and experiences as members of a minority group with lower status and power (Phinney, 1996a). K. M. Thomas et al. (1998) suggest that race traditionally has not been viewed as a complex and dynamic variable but rather as a simple nominal or categorical variable.

In a 1990 review by Cox and Nkomo, the authors characterize research designs involving race as dominated by comparative studies between Black and White workers. For example, several studies were reviewed in which Black and White levels of job satisfaction were compared, resulting in mixed findings. This type of research leads to tautological results and fails to provide insight into the complexity of variables that may account for such findings (Nkomo, 1992). A decade later, most race research in an organizational context continues to compare groups without the development of theory to explain such differences. As a result, researchers have failed to recognize and examine the diversity that lies within groups as well as between groups. For example, a recent article by Bell, Harrison, and McLaughlin (2000) makes a significant contribution to the affirmative action literature by examining the

psychological processes involved in forming, changing, and acting on affirmative action program (AAP) attitudes. However, race is treated as a categorical variable in this study and group differences are hypothesized. Perhaps a more complex conceptualization of race as a psychological rather than nominal variable could shed additional insight into differences in AAP attitudes.

Given an emerging appreciation for the need to broadly define race, as well as the lack of research on White ethnic identity, additional research is needed to better understand the antecedents and consequences of White ethnic identity development. The present study examines several potential sources of variance that may help to explain within-group differences in White managers' abilities to manage non-White employees. Ethnic identity development, ethnic group self-identification, education, and participation in diversity training are examined as potentially important individual difference variables. In addition, the present study applies theories of racial and ethnic identity development in a new context. The relationship between ethnic identity development and outcome variables is examined in cross-race superior-subordinate work relationships.

#### **RACE VERSUS ETHNIC IDENTITY**

Helms (1994, 1997) argued that although race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably in the literature, they should be treated as distinct constructs as the two terms have different conceptual meanings and operational definitions. She argued that race is socially and politically defined in this country and that racial classifications are imposed (Helms, 1996). Ethnicity, on the other hand, refers to dimensions of cultural socialization and expression (Helms, 1997) and involves affiliation toward a particular group based on shared cultural characteristics and history (Helms, 1996). According to Helms (1997), the most critical distinction between these two constructs is that ethnicity is largely voluntary and race is not. Racial and ethnic identity are probably best considered as distinct constructs and will be treated as such in this article. However, given that these terms have historically been treated interchangeably, it will be necessary to at times reference research on both constructs (as if identical) to support the hypotheses proposed.

Racial identity development has typically been conceptualized as a series of stages through which individuals progress to develop attitudes and beliefs toward their own racial group and other groups, ultimately achieving a "healthy" racial identity (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994). Although the construct of racial identity emerged from research and theory based on models of Black identity, models of White racial identity development have also

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been proposed (Block, Roberson, & Neuger, 1995; Helms, 1990; Rowe et al., 1994; Tokar & Swanson, 1991). Most White racial identity models are based on the work of Helms (1990), who proposed a six-stage model to explain the process by which Whites develop a healthy racial identity as they experience greater interaction with non-Whites and are therefore confronted with racial issues and conflicts.

In the first two stages (Contact and Disintegration), the individual moves from a stage of limited understanding of racial issues to one of greater awareness and acknowledgement of the implications of being White in this country. In the Reintegration stage, the individual struggles with the moral dilemmas associated with race and may avoid cross-racial interactions. The fourth stage (Pseudo-Independent) is characterized by an active redefinition of Whiteness and acknowledgement of the responsibility of Whites for racism. During the Immersion/Emersion stage, the individual seeks to replace racial stereotypes with more accurate information. Finally, individuals in the sixth stage (Autonomy) actively take steps to eliminate racism and other forms of oppression.

Although several studies have found support for her stage model (Tokar & Swanson, 1991; Helms, 1990), Helms's (1990) measure has received considerable criticism (Behrens, 1997; Block & Carter, 1996; Rowe et al., 1994; Swanson, Tokar, & Davis, 1994). Critics argue that Helms's (1990) conceptualization of White racial identity is too focused on attitudes toward another group (Whites' attitudes about Blacks) and that data do not support distinct developmental stages. In response to criticisms of Helms's (1990) scale, Phinney (1991) proposed a measure of ethnic identity that conceptualizes development along a continuum and measures the aspects of ethnic identity that are common to all groups.

She argued that ethnic identity is a construct that varies across individuals and represents the process of identity formation within an individual. Phinney conceptualized ethnic identity as a continuum that begins with a complete lack of exploration and ends when the individual comes to terms with ethnic issues and accepts himself or herself as a member of an ethnic group (Phinney, Lochner, & Murphy, 1990). Phinney et al. (1990) proposed that individuals who have spent time reflecting on racial issues, coming to terms with their own ethnic group membership and how they interact with members of other groups, will achieve a higher ethnic identity. As a result of increased self-exploration, these individuals are more likely to compare options and make conscious decisions about how to deal with racial issues and conflicts when confronted with them (Phinney et al., 1990).

Although the Helms (1990) and Phinney (1991) models both describe a developmental process in which individuals explore the meaning and

significance of race, they differ considerably in the operationalization of the process (discrete stages versus continuum) and the focus of such exploration (attitudes toward another racial group versus attitudes toward self-identity).

#### **ROLE OF IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

Ethnic identity may be an important variable to consider in the context of an increasingly diverse work environment. Because upper management positions in American companies continue to be dominated by majority group members, ethnic identity theory suggests that White managers with higher ethnic identity development may be more effective in creating a work environment in which differences are valued. K. M. Thomas (1998) proposed that White managers of a diverse workforce require psychological preparation to effectively manage dissimilar employees. She recommended that this preparation take the form of self-assessment of three things: psychological privilege, the significance of one's ethnic identity, and inherent ethnocentrism. The process of White identity development involves all three through increased exploration of racial issues and the meaning of one's own racial identification.

The process of identity development for majority members may affect behavior in the workplace first through attitudinal change and then subsequently through behavioral change. As mentioned previously, high identity development is characterized by positive attitudes toward one's own ethnic group as well as other ethnic group members. Such attitudes associated with high identity development may translate into positive interracial interactions in the workplace as a result of increased comfort with interracial issues and situations and acknowledgement of the possible role one can play in either perpetuating or eliminating racism. For example, White racial identity development has been linked to perceived comfort with Blacks in a variety of social situations (Claney & Parker, 1989). A negative relationship between White racial identity development and modern racism has also been demonstrated (Carter, 1990; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994). Although the link between racist attitudes and racist behavior is tenuous, there is considerable evidence to suggest that racist attitudes are related to subtle, sometimes unconscious discriminatory behavior, particularly in ambiguous settings (Brief et al., 1997; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998).

Although the relationship between White identity development and behavior in a multicultural workplace may be important, very little empirical research has been conducted to test this. One of the few studies found in the literature is by Block et al. (1995) who found that Whites who had a more highly developed ethnic identity had more positive reactions to interracial

situations at work. Additionally, Chrobot (1997) found that White managers' ethnic identity was positively related to attitudes toward and interactions with ethnic groups other than one's own. However, additional research is clearly needed to evaluate the usefulness of White identity development theory in a work context. Few studies have attempted to do so and the majority of previous research on White identity development has focused entirely on self-report measures, resulting in common method bias.

This study will contribute to the organizational diversity literature by addressing both issues. Examining the role of ethnic identity development within the context of work relationships may aid our understanding of why some cross-race relationships are fraught with conflict and distrust and the role White managers may play in fostering more positive cross-race work interactions.

#### **UNDERSTANDING VARIABILITY IN WHITE ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT**

*Ethnic self-identification.* Phinney (1990) has suggested that ethnic identification should be based on one's self-categorization rather than the traditional use of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) codes to narrowly and sometimes inaccurately categorize individuals into racial subgroups. It may be that many Whites, although categorized as a majority member based on EEO classification (race), perceive themselves to be a minority member (ethnic identity). For example, when asked to identify one's ethnicity, many Whites would likely describe themselves as an Italian American, Polish American, or German American. Such individuals may be more likely to view racial issues and situations from a minority perspective and more likely to have been exposed to racial discrimination (either personally or through stories as told by their ancestors). Viewing racial issues from a minority perspective will result in increased sensitivity and awareness of racism and discrimination in this country (Steinhorn & Diggs-Brown, 1999). Such individuals may be more aware of the effects of stress caused by racism and perceived discrimination (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Sanchez & Brock, 1996). Additionally, the importance of group identity to one's self-concept has been well documented in the psychological literature and can be a significant source of pride and self-esteem (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Cox, 1994). Previous research has demonstrated that minority members are more likely to have stronger racial and ethnic identification than majority members (e.g., Chrobot, 1997; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990).

Therefore, it is predicted that self-identification as a minority member may cause Whites to develop a higher ethnic identity. Such individuals are

more likely to have explored the role of ethnicity in their life and consciously made decisions about how to deal with racial conflicts.

*Hypothesis 1:* White managers who identified their ethnicity as a subgroup of White (minority) will have a more highly developed ethnic identity than White managers who described themselves as White (majority).

*Education.* In addition to identifying with an ethnic subgroup, other variables are likely to affect White managers' ethnic identity development. Much of Phinney's research has focused on the study of minority ethnic identity development in various school-age groups. She reports finding higher ethnic identity for both minority and majority students who are further along in their educational career (Phinney, 1990; Phinney, Ferguson, & Tate, 1997). She concludes that "experience may play an important role as adolescents move into a larger world, encounter more people from backgrounds different from their own, and are increasingly exposed to discrimination" (Phinney, 1996b, p. 146). Other researchers have found a positive relationship between education and attitudes toward diversity and women's equality (Ponterotto et al., 1995). Ponterotto and Pedersen (1993) argue that the development of critical thinking skills or cognitive sophistication results in less prejudiced attitudes. In contrast, children and adults who think simply and unquestioningly are more likely to be prejudiced.

Likewise, educational experiences may play an important role in the development of critical thinking skills for White managers. Thinking critically about social and racial issues will cause one to question existing stereotypes and thus result in further development of ethnic identity. White managers who have a college or postcollege education are more likely to have interacted with a diverse group of people than White managers with a high school education. As education increases, I expect managers to become more aware of racial issues and be more likely to have been exposed to diverse ways of thinking.

*Hypothesis 2:* Educational attainment will be positively related to White managers' ethnic identity.

*Diversity training.* American companies are spending considerable resources on implementing diversity training intended to increase self-awareness and sensitize individuals, particularly majority members, to group differences, stereotypes, and assumptions (Ferdman & Brody, 1996; Kirkland & Regan, 1997). The goal of many diversity training programs is to increase awareness through education about the topic of differences and the

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ways they affect the workplace and the trainee (Ferdman & Brody, 1996). There is some empirical evidence to suggest that diversity training efforts are effective (Adler, 1986; Ellis & Sonnenfeld, 1994; Hanover & Cellar, 1998). For example, Adler (1986) reported that individuals exposed to cultural diversity training were significantly more likely to recognize the impact of cultural diversity on work behavior and to identify the potential advantages of cultural heterogeneity in organizations. More recently, Hanover and Cellar (1998) found that managers who participated in a diversity training workshop rated management practices related to diversity as significantly more important and perceived themselves as engaging in such practices significantly more often than a control group.

A number of studies report a link between multicultural training and White racial identity development (Brown, Parham, & Yonker, 1996; Neville et al., 1996; Parker, Moore, & Neimeyer, 1998). To my knowledge, no studies to date have linked diversity training to ethnic identity development. However, given previous empirical findings to support a relationship between diversity training and attitudinal change, I expected to find a positive relationship between participation in diversity training and ethnic identity development. Diversity training can increase Whites' awareness of biases and inaccurate stereotypes and lead to the questioning of White privilege, thereby causing ethnic identity development.

*Hypothesis 3:* Participation in a company-sponsored diversity training program will be positively related to White managers' ethnic identity.

### **ROLE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY IN CROSS-RACE WORK RELATIONSHIPS**

The counseling literature has contributed interesting findings with regard to the impact of racial identity development on cross-race counselor-client relationships that may prove applicable to manager-employee relationships. Early research on cross-race counseling relationships revealed that perhaps more than race itself, the dynamics of the relationship may be better explained by the counselor and client's manner of resolving their own cultural/racial issues (Helms, 1984). As a result, Helms proposed a theoretical model to explain the interaction between counselor-client pairings based on the cultural disposition that each brings to the relationship. She proposed that individuals at different stages of racial consciousness enter counseling relationships with different attitudinal and behavioral predispositions. The success of the counseling process is in part dependent on the ability of both participants to effectively deal with such differences in predispositions.

Helms (1984) described four types of relationships that may emerge based on differences in client-counselor stages of racial consciousness: parallel, crossed, progressive, and regressive. A parallel relationship is one in which both the counselor and client belong to the same stage of racial identity development. A crossed relationship occurs when counselor and client belong to opposite stages, such that each has opposing attitudes about both Blacks and Whites. A progressive relationship is described as one in which the counselor's racial consciousness is at least one stage more advanced than the client's, and a regressive relationship occurs when the client is at least one stage more advanced than the counselor.

In general, the model predicts that in a progressive relationship, the counselor will ideally be able to gradually move the client toward a healthier stage of development. Regressive relationships are likely to end in termination because the counselor is unable to enter the client's frame of reference because the counselor cannot move the client further than the counselor has come (Helms, 1984). A study by Ladany, Brittan-Powell, and Pannu (1997) explored Helms's (1984) racial interaction theory and found that supervisee-supervisor counseling relationships in which both members had high racial identity were found to have the strongest alliance (i.e., agreement on goals and tasks of the supervision) and emotional bonds.

Although the mentoring literature has not yet examined the role of ethnic identity in mentor-protégé relationships, research findings that reveal important differences between same-race and cross-race relationships are relevant for developing hypotheses in this particular study. David A. Thomas (1990) examined psychosocial support (e.g., developing and maintaining self-esteem and professional identity) in mentor-protégé relationships and found that same-race relationships were characterized by more psychosocial support than cross-race relationships. A qualitative study was conducted to address the reason behind such findings by examining different strategies for managing racial differences (D. A. Thomas, 1993). D. A. Thomas identified two types of strategies for managing racial differences. The first strategy he identified as denial and suppression of race-related issues and affect. The second strategy identified was direct-engagement in which racial differences were considered to be a positive feature and openly discussed. It should be noted that a direct engagement strategy is defined similarly to Phinney et al.'s (1990) definition of high ethnic identity development and Helms's (1984) discussion of cultural predispositions. Further analysis revealed that both African Americans and Whites exhibited behaviors and attitudes that suggested predispositions or a preference for one of the two types of strategies for managing differences (D. A. Thomas, 1993).

Based on these findings, D. A. Thomas (1993) developed a model of racial dynamics. The model proposes that each member of a mentoring dyad comes to that relationship with established perspectives about race relations that influence that individual's attitudes toward other racial groups, orientation toward one's own racial group and racial identity, and assumptions about the appropriate and preferred way to address race-related matters in the workplace. Based on his results, D. A. Thomas (1993) concluded that race becomes an obstacle to the development of close personal bonds in relationships with dissimilar strategy preferences. The type of strategy used to manage racial differences is not critical; however, the racial perspective of both parties is critical. It is important to point out the fact that results also indicated that the type of strategy used to manage racial differences was unanimously the strategy preferred by the superior and was selected very early in the relationship.

In summary, researchers from multiple disciplines theorize that the interaction effect of individual racial perspectives or predispositions has significant consequences for the quality of cross-race dyadic relationships. High racial identity development in both members (or perhaps more importantly high racial identity of the member with greater authority or power—often the White member) is likely to facilitate racial discussions and the development of stronger, more supportive relationships. This is consistent with ethnic identity theory, which suggests that Whites who have higher ethnic identity development are more likely to have explored and questioned the implications and privileges associated with being White and have consciously thought about racial issues and how to effectively deal with conflicts.

Therefore, I predicted that White managers with higher levels of ethnic identity would handle cross-race relationships and conflicts more effectively. However, I also predicted that the relationship between a White manager's ethnic identity and employee perceptions of the supervisor-subordinate relationship depends on the minority employee's ethnic identity. For example, a White manager's attempts to discuss racial concerns with a minority employee may be met with skepticism, interest, or indifference depending on the ethnic identity development of the minority employee (Helms, 1990). The manager and employee's ethnic identity will interact to affect the employee's perception of managerial behaviors that foster a climate for diversity and perceptions of psychosocial support provided by the manager.

*Hypothesis 4/Hypothesis 5:* The interaction of minority employees' ethnic identity and majority managers' ethnic identity will be significantly related to

minority employee perceptions of managerial diversity behaviors and managerial support.

## METHOD

### PARTICIPANTS

Participants were employees from a Fortune 50 company headquartered in the northeastern United States. A total of 2,990 surveys were mailed to managers and employees within the United States. Surveys were distributed to all majority managers (as defined by EEO classification) in the organization who had minority employees ( $N = 990$  managers). Of the approximately 3,500 minority employees who had majority managers, 2,000 were randomly selected by a computer program and received surveys in the mail. A total of 359 surveys were returned from majority managers (response rate = 36%) and 533 surveys were returned from minority employees (response rate = 27%). Managers and employees were matched resulting in 142 dyads. All subsequent analyses reported were performed on matched employee-manager dyads.

The manager-employee dyads are represented by 96 majority male managers (69%), 44 majority female managers (31%), 68 minority male employees (49%), and 72 minority female employees (51%). It should be noted that two managers and two employees failed to indicate their gender. Of the minority employee respondents, 56% were Black, 12% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% Native American/Alaskan Native, and 30% Hispanic.

### MEASURES

Education was measured by seven categories. For majority managers, responses were as follows: grade school (1%), high school diploma or GED equivalent (2%), some college education (19%), 2-year technical or specialized degree (10%), college or secondary education degree (45%), master's degree (22%), doctorate degree (1%). The average education level for majority managers was 4.69 (college or secondary education) with a standard deviation of 1.15.

Ethnic identity was assessed using Phinney's Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (1992). Phinney's (1992) measure defines ethnic identity as a continuous variable, ranging from lack of exploration and commitment to evidence of both, reflected in efforts to learn more about one's background and to understand the role of ethnicity for oneself. This measure was selected in part because employees of the participating organization represented five

different racial groups, making it cumbersome to administer five different measures. Phinney's (1992) scale was designed to assess the aspects of ethnic identity that are common to all groups, thus allowing for comparisons to be made.

The first subscale, Affirmation and Belonging, contains five items that measure ethnic pride, feeling good about one's background, and being happy with one's group membership, as well as feelings of belonging and attachment to the group (e.g., "I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to"). The second subscale, Ethnic Identity Achievement, contains seven items, which measure exploration and commitment (e.g., "I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs"). The third subscale, Ethnic Behaviors, contains two items, which measure involvement in social activities with members of one's groups and participation in cultural traditions (e.g., "I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs"). The scale responses range from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (5).

Phinney (1992) has previously reported a single-factor structure for the 14-item scale containing all three subscale items. Additional research on the factor structure of the MEIM has found a single-factor structure for both a minority and majority sample (Chrobot-Mason, 1999). For purposes of this study, a principal-axis factor analysis was conducted separately for majority managers and minority employees. The number of factors was determined by several criteria: scree plots, absolute size of eigenvalues, and interpretability of the factor solutions (Ford, MacCallum, & Tait, 1986). Results for majority managers suggested a single-factor solution. The eigenvalue for the first factor was 5.88 accounting for 42% of the variance. The second factor had an eigenvalue less than one (.96), accounting for only 7% additional common variance. Factor loadings were all acceptable (e.g., .32 and above as suggested by Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996), ranging from .347 to .766. A second principal-axis factor analysis conducted with minority employees also suggested a single-factor solution. The eigenvalue for the first factor was 7.28, accounting for 52% of the variance with all factor loadings acceptable, ranging from .434 to .871. The second factor eigenvalue was .67, contributing only 5% additional common variance. This large discrepancy between the first and second eigenvalues is often viewed as strong evidence for unidimensionality (Hambleton, Swaminathan, & Rogers, 1991).

Phinney (1992) reports a reliability coefficient (alpha) for the 14-item scale containing all three subscale items as .81 for a high school sample and .90 for a college sample. In this study, a coefficient alpha of .92 for the ethnic identity 14-item composite is reported for minority employees and .90 for majority managers.

Self-identification was measured by asking respondents to complete the following open-ended statement: "In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be . . ."

Diversity training was assessed by asking respondents to indicate whether they had participated in the organization-sponsored "Valuing Diversity" training program. The training consisted of a 2- to 3-hour manager-led training workshop in which employees were shown a video. The video consisted of four scenarios in which actors portrayed characters in a short scene depicting a situation in which an employee felt that his or her differences were not valued. The manager leading the workshop would stop the video after each scenario and lead the group in a discussion of how the situation could have been handled better by each person involved.

The diversity training program was developed by a corporate human resources team in conjunction with a professional diversity consultant. Managers from across the country received a packet of training materials that included the video, instructions, overhead slides complete with discussion questions, and a list of "role model behaviors" (please see below for more details). Although managers were encouraged to conduct the diversity training as soon as they received the packet of materials, they were required only to conduct the training sometime during that fiscal year. Because the survey instrument used in this study was mailed approximately 6 months after diversity training packets were delivered to managers, not all managers had completed the diversity training initiative at the time of survey administration.

The Managerial Diversity Behaviors scale was developed based on role model behaviors identified for training purposes within the organization of interest. The training was designed to promote awareness and understanding of diversity in the workplace and provided a list of behaviors expected of all employees to develop a work environment that values diversity. Although there were no previous reliability estimates available for this 23-item measure, several steps were taken during the development of the instrument to increase its reliability and validity. For example, the behaviors identified were developed based on an extensive review of the literature on diversity and diversity training (Edwards, Thomas, Rosenfeld, & Booth-Kewley, 1997). Survey items were created using guidelines identified by Church and Waclawski (1998) who recommend screening for parsimony, measurement of one idea at a time (double-barreling), jargon, and leading or biased items. In addition, various minority caucus groups consisting of employees from all levels and functional units within the organization (including the Black and Hispanic caucus groups) were asked to validate the list of behaviors. The scale responses range from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (5). Items are presented in Table 1. To evaluate the factor structure of the measure, a

**TABLE 1**  
**Managerial Role Model Behaviors Scale Items**

- 
1. My manager resists making assumptions about the behavior and beliefs of others.
  2. My manager makes an effort to personally get to know each of his or her employees.
  3. My manager monitors his or her behavior to try and make everyone feel comfortable.
  4. My manager rewards innovation and creativity.
  5. My manager refrains from using language that excludes some people from the conversation.
  6. My manager encourages me to be myself (i.e., show my true personality).
  7. My manager takes steps to create a work environment in which different ideas and opinions are valued.
  8. My manager allows employees who make suggestions to take ownership of their ideas and see that they get carried out.
  9. My manager becomes defensive when I disagree with him or her.
  10. My manager attempts to remove barriers for *all* employees.
  11. My manager sponsors team-building activities to allow employees the opportunity to get to know each other.
  12. My manager facilitates the development of common work group goals by focusing on the similarities among work group members.
  13. My manager acknowledges the contribution of *all* team members.
  14. My manager actively promotes cooperation among his or her employees.
  15. My manager tries to build self-confidence in his or her employees.
  16. My manager supports changes in the work environment that promote valuing diversity.
  17. My manager is effective in recruiting, hiring, and promoting a diverse workforce.
  18. My manager supports a work environment that is flexible to meet the needs/preferences of *all* employees.
  19. My manager provides feedback focusing on my ability to meet performance objectives, not on my personal style/preference for meeting my objectives.
  20. My manager effectively communicates why valuing diversity is good for business.
  21. My manager acknowledges that each employee has individual interests, strengths, and preferences.
  22. My manager treats *all* employees with respect.
  23. My manager encourages career growth and development for *all* his or her employees.
- 

principal-axis factor analysis was conducted. The number of factors was again determined through the use of scree plots, absolute size of eigenvalues, and interpretability of the factor solutions (Ford et al., 1986). These criteria suggested a single-factor solution. The eigenvalue for the first factor was 14.06, accounting for 61% of the variance. The second factor eigenvalue was .77, accounting for only 3% additional common variance, again presenting strong evidence for unidimensionality (Hambleton et al., 1991). Factor loadings were all acceptable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996), ranging from .445 to .894. A coefficient alpha of .97 was found in the current study for minority employees.

Managerial support was assessed using a measure of psychosocial support, adopted from a measure developed by Kram (1985) and used in previous research (D. A. Thomas, 1990) to assess the type of developmental relationship existing between manager and employee. The scale contains four items with a previously reported reliability estimate of .80 (D. A. Thomas, 1990). In the present study, a coefficient alpha of .85 was found for minority employees. The responses range from 5 = *to a very great extent* to 1 = *not at all*. Scale items are as follows: "To what extent does your manager . . ." (a) "direct and guide you," (b) "listen to your ideas and encourage your thinking," (c) "act as a professional role model for you," and (d) "have a relationship with you characterized by trust and mutual sharing." Again, the scale's factor structure was examined by conducting a principal-axis factor analysis using the criteria outlined by Ford et al. (1986) to interpret the output. Results suggest a single-factor solution with an eigenvalue of 2.52, accounting for 63% of the variance (the second factor eigenvalue was .74, accounting for 18% additional common variance). Factor loadings ranged from .455 to .887.

## RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, coefficients alpha, and intercorrelations are presented in Table 2. Two groups of majority managers were generated based on each individual's response to the open-ended item "In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be . . ." Majority managers who described their ethnic identification as White or Caucasian, consistent with their EEO classification, were coded zero and labeled as self-identified White ( $n = 98$ ). Majority managers who considered themselves to be a subgroup of White or Caucasian (e.g., Italian American, Irish American, Polish American) were coded as one and labeled as self-identified ethnic-White ( $n = 23$ ). A *t* test revealed a significant difference in ethnic identity between those who described their ethnicity as White and those who described their ethnicity as ethnic-White (see Table 3). The first hypothesis was supported as the self-identified ethnic-White group reported significantly higher ethnic identity development than the self-described White group.

Regression analyses were conducted to test Hypotheses 2-5. Results of the first regression analysis show that neither education nor diversity training were significantly related to ethnic identity (see Table 4). Additionally, when manager's gender was entered into the equation first as a control variable, the results changed very little ( $R^2 = .009, ns$ ) and beta weights for all three predictors were nonsignificant. A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test Hypotheses 4 and 5. Because the interaction term is likely to correlate

TABLE 2  
Means, Standard Deviations, Coefficients Alpha,  
and Intercorrelations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Demographics</b>								
Employee education	4.31	1.20	—					
Manager education	4.69	1.15	.27**	—				
<b>Ethnic identity composite</b>								
Employee ethnic identity	4.09	.80	.18*	.27**	(.92)			
Manager ethnic identity	3.36	.71	.10	.01	.04	(.90)		
<b>Outcomes</b>								
Managerial behaviors	4.01	.81	-.04	-.01	.01	.03	(.97)	
Managerial support	3.60	.87	-.03	.03	.13	.06	.80**	(.85)

NOTE: All variables were measured on a 5-point continuum except education. Subsample (employee, manager) *n* sizes ranged from 135 to 141. Coefficient alphas are reported on the main diagonal.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

TABLE 3  
Means, Standard Deviations, and *t* Values  
for Self-Identified Ethnicity Groups

	<i>Self-Identification</i>					
	<i>White (n = 98)</i>		<i>Ethnic-White (n = 23)</i>		df	t
	M	SD	M	SD		
Manager ethnic identity	3.33	.67	3.79	.66	119	-2.99**

\*\* $p < .01$ .

with the variables from which it is created, the approach recommended by Aiken and West (1991) was adopted to reduce multicollinearity. Aiken and West suggest centering the independent variables around zero by subtracting the mean (a constant) from each variable. In doing this, the mean for both predictors then becomes zero. They argue that such rescaling has no effect on the correlational properties of the rescaled variables and allows for a better estimate of the interaction term. They do not however, recommend centering the criterion variable.

In Step 1, manager ethnic identity and employee ethnic identity were entered. In Step 2, the interaction term (calculated by multiplying the two centered independent variables) was entered. In both regression analyses,

TABLE 4  
**Regression Results of Majority Managers' Ethnic Identity  
 on Education and Diversity Training**

<i>Independent Variables Entered</i>	<i>Dependent Variable: Ethnic Identity</i>		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Education	.000	.054	-.004
Diversity training	.132	.155	.073

NOTE:  $R^2 = .005$ .

manager and employee ethnic identity were not found to be significant predictors of work outcome variables. However, results suggest a significant relationship between the interaction variable and employee perceptions of managerial diversity behaviors ( $\beta = .24, p \leq .05$ ). Additionally, the interaction between manager and employee ethnic identity was found to be a significant predictor of managerial support ( $\beta = .22, p \leq .05$ ). A summary of the hierarchical regression analysis is presented in Table 5.

To evaluate the possible effects of gender in this analysis, hierarchical regression analyses were rerun with manager gender entered into the equation first as a control variable. The overall results did not change with the addition of this control variable. Consistent with the previous analysis, only the final step in the regression analysis was significant, with the addition of the interaction term. Manager gender, manager ethnic identity, and employee ethnic identity were not found to be significant predictors of the work outcome variables. A final analysis was conducted to evaluate the effects of adding employee gender as a control variable. Again, results remained consistent, with the interaction term being significant in the final step but no other predictors (manager gender, employee gender, manager ethnic identity, and employee ethnic identity) found to be significant. The only difference was a slight increase in the  $p$  value of the final step in the hierarchical regression analysis for managerial role model behaviors ( $F = 2.16, p = .06$ ) and for managerial support ( $F = 2.14, p = .07$ ). However, because adding manager gender and employee gender did not alter the significant change in  $R$  square found when adding the interaction term and neither predictor was found to be significant, gender does not appear to have an effect on the hypothesized relationship between ethnic identity and work outcome variables in this study.

To interpret the interaction effects, Aiken and West (1991) recommend calculating simple slopes and testing the significance of  $t$  tests for each.

**TABLE 5**  
**Regression Analysis Results of Outcome Variables**  
**on Ethnic Identity Terms**

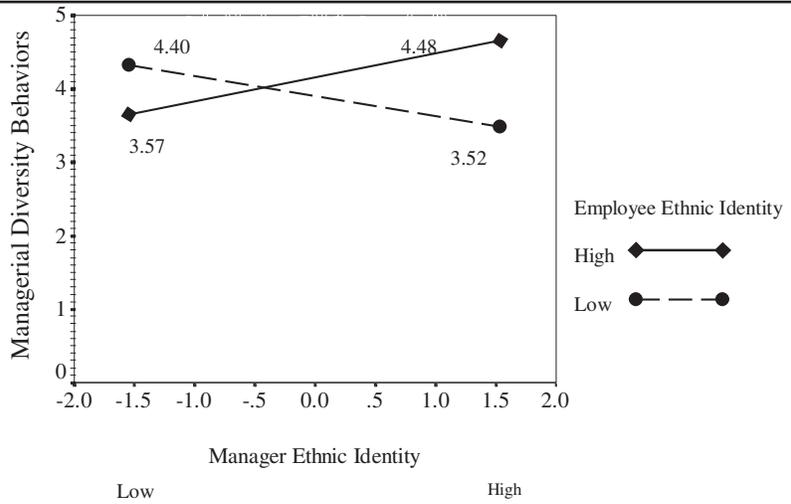
<i>Independent Variables Entered</i>	B	SE B	$\beta$
<b>Dependent variable: Managerial diversity behaviors</b>			
Step 1			
Manager ethnic identity	.000	.099	.014
Employee ethnic identity	.000	.088	.007
Step 2			
Manager ethnic identity	.000	.096	.004
Employee ethnic identity	.000	.086	.038
Interaction term	.376	.130	.244*
<b>Dependent variable: Managerial support</b>			
Step 1			
Manager ethnic identity	.000	.104	.032
Employee ethnic identity	.133	.093	.124
Step 2			
Manager ethnic identity	.000	.102	.025
Employee ethnic identity	.159	.091	.148
Interaction term	.360	.138	.222*

NOTE: In the first regression analysis,  $R^2 = .00$  for Step 1; ( $R^2 = .059$  when adding the interaction term in Step 2 ( $p < .05$ )). In the second regression analysis,  $R^2 = .02$  for Step 1; ( $R^2 = .049$  when adding the interaction term in Step 2 ( $p < .05$ )).

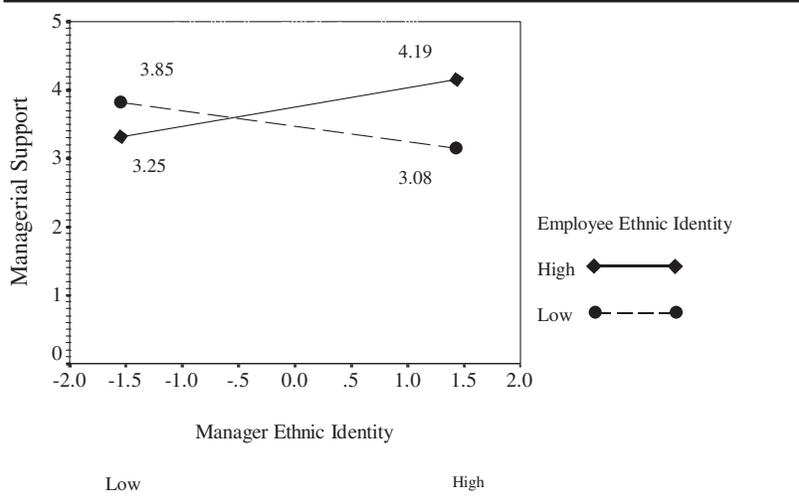
\* $p \leq .05$ .

Calculation of a simple slope involves evaluating the slope of the regression of Y on  $X_1$  at a single value of  $X_2$ . As suggested by Cohen and Cohen (1983) and Aiken and West, I calculated simple slopes for one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean of  $X_2$  (representing high and low employee ethnic identity). The resulting test of simple slopes and criterion mean values for high/low manager and employee ethnic identity are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

As Figure 1 illustrates, there is a positive relationship between high ethnic identity minority employees' perceptions of managerial diversity behaviors and majority managers' ethnic identity. However, for minority employees found to have low ethnic identity, there appears to be a negative relationship between majority managers' ethnic identity and employee perceptions of managerial diversity behaviors. Similar results were obtained for managerial support, as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 1:** Nature of Interaction Effects for the Relationship Between Majority Manager Ethnic Identity and Managerial Diversity Behaviors for High and Low Minority Employee Ethnic Identity



**Figure 2:** Nature of Interaction Effects for the Relationship Between Majority Manager Ethnic Identity and Managerial Support for High and Low Minority Employee Ethnic Identity

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest that within the traditionally categorized majority subgroup, individual differences exist with regard to ethnicity. Almost 20% of the majority respondents defined their ethnicity as a subgroup of White/Caucasian. This self-identified ethnic-White group was found to have higher levels of ethnic identity development than majority members who described themselves as White/Caucasian (i.e., consistent with their EEO classification). This finding suggests that majority members who perceive themselves as a minority may have developed a higher ethnic identity as a result of exploring their own ethnic background or experiencing the feelings and prejudices associated with being viewed as a minority member by others due to differences in dialect or cultural practices. These results provide further support to the emerging notion that race and ethnicity are much more than a nominal or categorical variable. Even within the majority group, differences in ethnicity exist that should not be ignored and should be examined further in the context of cross-race work relationships.

Neither educational level nor participation in a company-sponsored diversity training program were related to majority manager's ethnic identity. Perhaps the link between manager's education and ethnic identity development was not found in this study due to a restriction of range for this variable (68% of the managers reported a college education or higher). Alternatively, this finding may indicate that although higher education is often associated with greater exposure to a variety of people, ideas, and lifestyles, educational attainment alone may not play a significant role in developing ethnic identity. Higher educational achievement does not in and of itself ensure greater contact with dissimilar others, and this may be particularly true for majority members. Exposure to diversity may be more strongly influenced by variables such as geographic upbringing (rural versus urban hometown), parents' ethnic identity development, and personality variables (e.g., openness to experience). Future research should examine additional antecedents of ethnic identity development.

Likewise, participation in the company-sponsored diversity training session does not appear to have an impact on ethnic identity development. Such findings may be the result of ineffective training practices that fall short in developing diversity "skills" (Ferdman & Brody, 1996). Additionally, few organizational diversity training initiatives attempt to increase self-exploration and ethnic identity development. The diversity training program described in this study may have failed to effect change due to its short duration (4 hours) and limited participation on the part of trainees (Chrobot-

Mason & Quiñones, 2001). Future research in organizational diversity training should attempt to replicate research findings in the counseling literature (Brown et al., 1996; Neville et al., 1996; Parker et al., 1998) that suggest that training developed to enhance multicultural competencies increases racial identity development. Additionally, future studies should explore the relationship between training that includes self-assessment of psychological privilege and ethnic identity, ethnocentrism, and development (Ferdman, 1995; Kirkland & Regan, 1997; K. M. Thomas, 1998). Finally, the time interval between diversity training and survey administration for this study is unknown. Because training in this particular organization was implemented somewhat sporadically over the course of a year, measurement of lasting change in both attitudes and behavior proved difficult. Ideally, a more standardized implementation process is needed to measure both the long- and short-term effects of diversity training.

Although considerable effort and financial resources are invested by companies to develop and deliver diversity training, research to evaluate its effectiveness is virtually nonexistent. An alternative explanation for the nonsignificant relationship between diversity training and ethnic identity development is that company-sponsored diversity training initiatives are simply not an effective means to change individual identification with and understanding of one's own ethnicity. Perhaps the ability to understand the consequences of holding a minority status in this society, and experiencing the implications of this status, may be a more critical factor in developing a higher ethnic identity than education or diversity training.

Finally, a significant relationship between the interaction of manager and employee's ethnic identity and workplace outcome variables was found. Collecting data from two sources, manager's ethnic identity and employee perceptions of the manager's behavior, is a strength of the present study and enhances the internal validity for such findings. Additionally, this study is one of the first to empirically test Helms's (1984) relational interaction model and D. A. Thomas's (1993) model of racial dynamics. Findings suggest that in cross-race work relationships, the majority manager and minority employee's ethnic identity interact to influence the quality of the work relationship. Both the manager and employee approach the relationship with a particular ethnic perspective and manner for resolving cultural/racial issues (Helms, 1984; D. A. Thomas, 1993). Managers who have a higher ethnic identity and therefore by definition have thought more about the role of ethnicity in their own life and in dealing with others are viewed more positively by high ethnic identity employees with respect to managerial diversity behaviors and managerial support. However, managers with higher ethnic

identity development are viewed less positively by their subordinates when employee ethnic identity is low. Minority employees who have not thought much about the role of ethnicity in their lives and lack an understanding of racial issues and how to cope with them may be more likely to adopt an assimilation strategy (Ward & Kennedy, 1994) and attempt to avoid or minimize differences rather than deal directly with conflict.

This finding may help explain the results of an earlier study conducted by Watts and Carter (1991) who found that for African Americans, Pre-Encounter (Stage 1) attitudes were associated with more favorable views of the organization's racial climate and Immersion/Emersion (Stage 3) and Internalization (Stage 4) attitudes were associated with negative views of the racial climate. Because most organizations continue to be majority dominated, and racial issues and conflict tend to be minimized or ignored, minority employees may be most comfortable in such organizations when their racial identity is low. Based on this earlier work by Watts and Carter (1991) as well as the present study, we may find that in organizational contexts where the racial climate is negative or the ethnic identity of coworkers is low, minority employees with a lower racial/ethnic identity are better able to cope with the situation and hold more positive attitudes than minority employees with a higher racial/ethnic identity. Helms and Piper (1994) go so far as to say that for Black Americans, it may be occupationally rewarding and comfortable for White colleagues to remain in a relatively immature stage of racial identity development. Such individuals may be better able to deny the reality of their experiences and adjust to a majority-dominated organizational climate. However, the author also points out that the psychological costs of such denial for the individual and the organization are still unclear, although research would suggest that denial may lead to feelings of anger, low self-esteem, and low organizational commitment.

In the article by Helms and Piper (1994), the authors reiterate the need for researchers to explore the role of racial identity in forming relationships in the workplace. "The manner in which people express their racial identity resolutions influences the quality of their interactions with one another, especially in situations in which race is salient" (p. 131). They suggest that similarity in racial identity attitudes can perpetuate a particular organizational climate that will undoubtedly be comfortable for those who share similar attitudes but uncomfortable for those who do not share those same attitudes. The findings in the present study are also consistent with much of the research on leader-member exchange (Gerstner & Day, 1997), which suggests that each superior-subordinate relationship is unique, and therefore effective mana-

gers must learn to use a variety of leadership styles and adapt their style depending on the needs, strengths, and backgrounds of each individual employee.

Although this study provides some of the first empirical research findings on ethnic identity development within the work context, future research should explore additional antecedents, the impact of various types of diversity training initiatives on ethnic identity development, and the influence of various types of cross-race relationships (parallel, crossed, etc.) on work outcome variables. Future research should also include a measure of corporate culture (Cox, 1994; D. A. Thomas & Ely, 1996) and its impact on employee perceptions of the work environment and explore the concept of "feeling like a minority" or the ability to take the perspective of the minority member. Furthermore, the inherent limitations present in this cross-sectional study should be addressed by measuring ethnic identity development in a longitudinal design. The single-item measure of self-identification used in this study also presents a limitation that should be considered in future studies. Researchers should continue to explore new methods for studying the richness and within-group variability found in the construct of ethnicity and recognize its increasing importance as the workplace continues to diversify.

Finally, the results of this study have implications for companies struggling to remain competitive in an increasingly diverse and multicultural workplace. Organizations that view diversity as programs concerning only women and people of color will fail to recognize the importance of including majority members in diversity initiatives and the intragroup differences that exist within the majority population. Majority members should be considered when designing and developing diversity training programs. The results of this study suggest that a more effective approach to diversity training for majority members may be the development of perspective-taking skills or the ability to view racial issues and conflicts from a minority perspective. Companies striving to progress from a work environment in which racial differences merely exist and are tolerated to one in which individual differences are valued and seen as a competitive advantage must better understand, recognize, and leverage intragroup differences that were previously ignored or minimized. Additionally, it is important that managers understand the interactional nature of cross-race work relationships and that both members bring different racial perspectives to the relationship. Effective managers in a diverse workplace are likely to be those who are adaptable not only to changes in technology and the global marketplace but also to the changing needs, values, and perspectives of each employee.

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