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What is This?

I See Me the Way You See Me: The Influence of Race on Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Leadership Perceptions

Arpi Festekjian[1], Susanna Tram[2], Carolyn B. Murray[2], Thomas Sy[2]
and Ho P. Huynh[2]

Abstract

This research investigated two key questions central to research on leadership and race: (a) How are leadership perceptions influenced by target's race? (b) What are the consequences of race-based leadership perceptions on the target? These questions were specifically focused on Asian Americans (AAs), who are disproportionately underrepresented in leadership positions. Study 1 clarified previous research to demonstrate that Caucasian Americans (CAs) were perceived as more prototypic leaders compared with AAs. Study 2 supported the prediction that interpersonal leadership perceptions were affected by race via the activation of two leadership prototypes: competent and agentic leadership prototypes of AAs and CAs, respectively. Going beyond the contribution of clarifying previous research, Study 3 revealed that AAs had lower intrapersonal (self-directed) leadership perceptions and leadership aspirations than CAs and that the relationship between race and leadership aspiration was mediated by intrapersonal leadership perceptions. Implications of these findings are discussed with regard to leadership advancement opportunities for AAs and other racial minorities.

Keywords

Minorities remain largely underrepresented in U.S. management ranks (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Ospina & Foldy, 2009), despite calls for organizations to include diverse leadership perspectives and recognition of the potential competitive advantages of doing so (Greer & Virick, 2008; Roberson & Park, 2007). Although some progress has been made in this regard (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006), racial minorities remain underrepresented in leadership roles relative to their proportion in the U.S. population. For example, even though Asian Americans (AAs) comprise about 5% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), and 49.7% age 25 years and older have at least a bachelor's degree (compared with 28% of all Americans 25 years and older; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b), they comprise only 1.5% of *Fortune* 500 corporate officer positions (Catalyst, 2009). Even in fields where AAs are highly represented, such as science and engineering (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012c), AAs comprise a disproportionately small percentage of upper management positions (Committee of 100, 2007). Specifically, AAs comprise a small minority of leaders, relative to their population base rate and their professional experience. This underrepresentation is especially problematic in light of the trend of increasing diversity in the workplace. Surprisingly, only recently has research investigated

the role of race in leadership attainment (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008; Sy et al., 2010; Waring, 2003). Results from this limited number of studies demonstrate that leadership perceptions are influenced by race, and this may have consequences for leadership advancement opportunities for minorities. Accordingly, some researchers have advocated increasing the attention paid to race as a central focus in mainstream leadership research (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Ospina & Foldy, 2009).

The present research answers the call for a much-needed focus on the *nexus* of race and leadership. The focus here is on AAs, who are an underrepresented racial group, in terms of both leadership positions (Committee of 100, 2007) and leadership diversity research (Sy et al., 2010). AAs are the target group under study here because there are widely held perceptions, or stereotypes, suggesting that AAs are not effective leaders compared with members of other racial

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groups (Rosette et al., 2008; Sy et al., 2010). Specifically, this research addresses two key questions central to research on race and leadership (Ospina & Foldy, 2009):

1. How are leadership perceptions influenced by target's race?
2. What are the consequences of race-based leadership perceptions on the target?

In a series of three studies, the present research takes a comprehensive approach to understanding inter- and intrapersonal leadership perceptions as a function of race. *Interpersonal* leadership perceptions reflect an individual's impressions of others as leaders, whereas *intrapersonal* leadership perceptions reflect impressions of oneself as a leader. Because of historically inconsistent findings in the diversity literature, it is particularly important to examine further the relationship between leadership and race (Ospina & Foldy, 2009). As such, the first study addresses the methodological confounding problems of previous research (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Rosette et al., 2008; Sy et al., 2010) by clarifying the relationship between interpersonal leadership perceptions and race. In the second study, we clarify Sy et al.'s finding that racial categories activate different leadership prototypes, which in turn influence interpersonal leadership perceptions. Thus, Studies 1 and 2 address the first core question of how *interpersonal* leadership perceptions are influenced by race. Study 3 addresses the second core question regarding the consequences of self-leadership perceptions that are influenced by race. This study extends previous research and attempts to contribute new insights by examining whether *intrapersonal* leadership perceptions are influenced by race. Accordingly, we examine the degree to which AAs' leadership aspirations are a function of their own intrapersonal leadership perceptions. Just as previous research (e.g., Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Sy et al., 2010) has suggested that the perceptions of others can have consequences for leadership advancement opportunities, we propose that race-based intrapersonal (i.e., self) leadership perceptions can also have consequences, particularly in terms of leadership aspirations. The consequences of such intrapersonal leadership perceptions as a function of race have not been previously explored and may partially explain why minorities are underrepresented in U.S. leadership ranks.

Perceptions of leadership, whether made by others or by oneself, are largely context dependent and can vary on the basis of race (Carton & Rosette, 2011; Foti, Knee, & Backert, 2008; Hogue & Lord, 2007; Sy et al., 2010). We examine our research questions within the context of the "connectionist model" of leadership (COMOL) because of its core theoretical tenet that contextual sensitivity accounts for variability in leadership perceptions (Lord, Brown, & Harvey, 2001; Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). For

example, gender (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, & Reichard, 2008), identity (Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004), culture (Ayman, 1993; Ensari & Murphy, 2003), and race (Sy et al., 2010) have been found to be salient contextual features that influence leadership perceptions. Moreover, recent research shows that an emphasis on gender as a minority status (i.e., female) decreased self-perceptions and self-appraisals of leadership ability (Hoyt, Johnson, Murphy, & Skinnell, 2010). Although research on the COMOL has focused primarily on interpersonal leadership perceptions, the present research proposes that contextual factors, specifically race, can also influence intrapersonal leadership perceptions.

Leadership Categorization Theory and Leadership Perceptions

Leadership categorization theory (Lord, 1985; Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984) maintains that target individuals are evaluated against leadership prototypes. That is, knowledge of leaders is stored in cognitive structures called "schemas" (Lord et al., 1984; Rosch, 1978). When interacting with a target individual, key attributes and characteristics of the target become salient and are then compared against various cognitively stored prototypes (Lord et al., 1984). For example, if target individuals' attributes are congruent with leader prototypes, they are categorized as leaders. There are, however, many different types of leaders and leadership prototypes. The matching process of leadership categorization theory implies that individuals would need to store a large number of leader prototypes in order to account for various types of leaders. Leadership categorization theory assumes that prototypes are relatively stable and fixed across contexts (Lord et al., 1984). However, recent research indicates that individuals may hold opposing mental representations in different contexts (Dickson, Resick, & Hanges, 2006; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Moreover, recent advances in our understanding of the cognitive structure of leadership representation (e.g., Foti et al., 2008; Hanges, Lord, & Dickson, 2000; Hogue & Lord, 2007; Lord, Brown, & Harvey, 2001; Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001) suggest that it is a dynamic and context-sensitive process. Thus, although leadership categorization theory offers significant insight into the cognitive structure of leadership representation, some of its key assumptions and tenets are problematic in explaining the *dynamic, context-dependent* nature of these processes.

Connectionist Model of Leadership

Given recent advances in cognitive psychology and the theoretical limitations of leadership categorization theory, Lord and colleagues (Lord, Brown, & Harvey, 2001; Lord,

Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001) reformulated leadership categorization theory as the COMOL. Whereas leadership categorization theory posits that leadership prototypes are retrieved from stored memory or composed of symbolic-level constructs, the COMOL posits that leadership prototypes are generated "on the fly" at the moment of use. The COMOL is thus more advantageous because it allows for a dynamic and flexible construction of prototypes based on contextual cues.

According to the COMOL, the overall *pattern* of interconnected units that are activated in a network generates perceptions of leadership (Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). Specifically, the network comprises units that store and continually process information (for reviews, see Foti et al., 2008; Hanges et al., 2000; Hogue & Lord, 2007; Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). These units communicate by transmitting signals in the form of activation or inhibition (McClelland, Rumelhart, & Hinton, 1986). Activation occurs between units that are more related (e.g., intelligence activating competence), whereas inhibition may occur between units that are less related (e.g., masculinity inhibiting sensitivity). The reciprocal influence between units is determined by the weights (degree of association) that are developed over time (Hogue & Lord, 2007). The weight between two units increases when the network observes a pattern in which both units are simultaneously active, and the weight decreases when the network observes a pattern in which one unit is active and the other unit is not (Hebb, 1949; McClelland et al., 1986). Activation and inhibition occur more readily between units with stronger associations.

Leadership perceptions depend on the overall *pattern* of activation among units in the network (Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). For example, a pattern of activated competence traits (e.g., Intelligence and Dedication) may be more prototypic of AA leaders, and a pattern of activated agentic traits (e.g., Masculinity and Dynamism) may be more prototypic of Caucasian American (CA) leaders (Sy et al., 2010). In the current research, we focus on the COMOL as the theoretical foundation for generating our hypotheses because the COMOL (a) is more consistent with recent developments in the literature positing the dynamic and context-dependent nature of leadership perceptions (Shondrick, Dinh, & Lord, 2010) and (b) can better integrate and account for the contextual information of race (the central variable of interest here) in shaping leadership perceptions (Hanges et al., 2000).

Leadership Perceptions and Race

Race is central to how people view themselves and others and, thus, is highly relevant in the context of leadership perceptions (Ospina & Foldy, 2009). In an increasingly global marketplace, inclusion of racial minority leaders may provide a competitive advantage (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). However, evidence suggests that racial minorities continue to be perceived as less suitable for managerial positions in the United States (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Ospina & Foldy, 2009; Rosette et al., 2008; Sy et al., 2010). It is particularly important to understand how leadership perceptions are influenced by race because (a) globalization and national trends show a continued growth and diversification of racial minorities in the workforce; (b) race continues to be a dominant characteristic in the workplace, where individuals are implicitly judged (Eagly & Chin, 2010); and (c) insights generated may help leaders and organizations capitalize on the competitive advantage of having racial diversity in their management ranks.

AAs are ideal for the present query about race and leadership perceptions, because they comprise one of the fastest growing racial groups (Bell, 2007; Pew Research Center, 2012) in the United States; are more educated and trained than any other racial group, including Caucasians (Pew Research Center, 2012; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009); have more experience and knowledge in their respective fields than others who hold similar positions and titles (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999); and tend to pursue more careers in occupational fields that are linked to the management pipeline (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Given these attributes, theories of human capital predict that AAs should be overrepresented in leadership positions (Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, & Ketchen, 2011). However, data continue to show that AAs are among the least represented in leadership ranks (Committee of 100, 2007; Korn Ferry International, 2006), suggesting that leadership opportunities are more difficult to secure for AAs than for other minorities (Bass, 2008; Sy et al., 2010). These patterns raise questions regarding whether AAs are perceived in a manner that is consistent with expectations for organizational leaders.

Our investigation is focused on Asians in the United States (i.e., AAs). They are distinct from their counterparts in their country of origin. Within their respective country of origin (e.g., China, Korea, etc.), Asians largely belong to and identify with the dominant culture. In contrast, AAs possess multiple identities owing to their multicultural heritage that includes both their culture of origin (now the minority, ethnic culture) and the dominant, mainstream American culture (Benet-Martinez, 2012; Berry, 2003; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013). AAs may possess an identity associated with their culture of origin (e.g., the six largest groups in the United States are Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a), which results in rich diversity within this group. Simultaneously, Asians living in the United States also possess a pan-ethnic "Asian American" identity as a result of their shared collective experience, which serves

the purpose of building coalitions, forming social support, and strengthening political support (Espiritu, 1996; Lopez & Espiritu, 1990). Indeed, empirical research indicates that the vast majority (e.g., 77%) of Asians living in the United States accept and identify themselves as AAs (Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2003; Park, 2008).

We focus our investigation on AAs as a collective group because AAs share commonalities in the workplace that are germane to the central theme of the current research. Evidence suggests the "glass ceiling" effect, or the lack of mobility into management positions, exists for AAs, regardless of their ethnic group (Cheng, 1997; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). Individuals in the United States (i.e., non-Asians) typically do not perceive ethnic distinctions among AAs (Landau, 1995; Sy et al., 2010), and thus tend to treat AAs collectively in similar ways and this results in similar outcomes regardless of ethnic heritage. For example, research shows that AA women (regardless of their ethnic heritage) had similar experiences with regard to career barriers and outcomes (Catalyst, 2003). This similarity in treatment by others, whether intentional or done unknowingly (Eagly & Chin, 2010), results in a shared experience common to most AAs, and ultimately shared work and leadership outcomes (Bass, 2008; Catalyst, 2009). Accordingly, we focus our investigation on AAs as a collective group.

There have been only a few studies that have examined the relationship between race and interpersonal leadership perceptions (e.g., Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Rosette et al., 2008; Sy et al., 2010). These studies generally have found that race may influence interpersonal leadership perceptions, such that AAs are perceived as less prototypic leaders than CAs. However, methodological issues with these studies preclude any definitive conclusions. For example, Chung-Herrera and Lankau's (2005) study utilized an outcome measure that may have confounded perceptions of technical competence with those of leadership. Similarly, Rosette et al. (2008) included AAs in their study, but they commingled AAs with other racial categories (i.e., "other" and "Hispanic") to form a composite measure of "racial minorities," thus confounding the results for AAs with other minorities. Likewise, Sy et al.'s (2010) design commingled race with occupation in their experimental manipulation, thus confounding the results of race with occupation. Because of these limitations in prior studies, the present research sought to clarify how interpersonal leadership perceptions are influenced solely by race.

The Caucasian race in the United States is perceived to possess the prototypic attribute of leadership because CA individuals frequently occupy leadership positions (Rosette et al., 2008; Sy et al., 2010). In other words, the dominant group, CA leaders, becomes the point of reference or standard for comparison with regard to leadership perceptions (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005). Furthermore, research on cross-cultural leadership perceptions shows that perceivers tend to use their own cultural norms when evaluating leaders (Harms, Han, & Chen, 2012). In line with the tenets of the COMOL, the strength of the association between the Caucasian race and other units in the underlying leadership prototype network may more easily activate leadership prototypes that lead to distinct patterns in the perception of leadership (Sy et al., 2010). Similarly, because the Asian race in the United States has historically been linked to traits that are counterindicative of leader-like attributes (e.g., being submissive, conforming, socially introverted, verbally inhibited, etc.; Bourne, 1975; Landau, 1995; Sue & Kirk, 1972, 1973; Sue & Sue, 1974; Woo, 2000), they are less likely to activate the leadership prototypes that lead to the perceptions of leadership suitability. In light of the above arguments, we hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 1*: Asian Americans are less likely to be perceived as prototypic leaders than are Caucasian Americans.

Race and Leadership Perceptions: Mediating Role of Leadership Prototypes

In addition to examining interpersonal leadership perceptions between AAs and CAs, we also seek to clarify previous research by positing that race may influence leadership perceptions through the activation of differential leadership prototypes. The COMOL maintains that leadership perceptions are a function of contextual input variables. Input variables (e.g., race) trigger associated units (i.e., attributes), the patterns of which activate leader prototypes. Indeed, the Asian race may trigger patterns of units that activate a *competent* leadership prototype, whereas the Caucasian race may trigger patterns of units that activate an *agentic* leadership prototype (Sy et al., 2010). Consistent with the literature on implicit leadership theories (ILTs; Epitropaki & Martin, 2004; Lord & Maher, 1991), Intelligence and Dedication reflect competence attributes, whereas Masculinity, Tyranny, and Dynamism reflect agentic attributes (Sy et al., 2010). In sum, the pattern of leadership attributes dictates activation of different leadership prototypes and thus results in contrasting leadership perceptions for the two groups. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 2a*: The relationship between race and leadership perception is mediated by leadership prototypes, such that Asian Americans activate a competent leadership prototype consisting of the attributes of Intelligence and Dedication.
> *Hypothesis 2b*: The relationship between race and leadership perception is mediated by leadership prototypes, such that Caucasian Americans activate an agentic leadership prototype consisting of the attributes of Masculinity, Tyranny, and Dynamism.

Race and Leadership Aspirations: Mediating Role of Leadership Self-Perceptions

In addition to clarifying the relationship between race and interpersonal leadership perceptions, the second and principal contribution of this research is to address the intrapersonal consequences of race-based leadership perceptions. Specifically, we examine how race-based intrapersonal leadership perceptions influence motivational outcomes, such as leadership aspirations. Whereas research has long supported the idea that stereotypes serve as system justification of oppressed target group members (Allport, 1954; 1979), research also suggests that target members may themselves *internalize* these widely held beliefs, thereby contributing to the system justification (Jost & Banaji, 1994). If so, AAs may have internalized some of the widely held beliefs about their inferior leadership ability and may be less inclined to aspire to leadership positions. In a leadership context where race is salient, AAs, in comparison with CAs, may be less likely to see themselves as leaders. Lower leadership self-perceptions, in turn, could influence leadership aspirations.

Social psychological research suggests that context can make one aware of the negative perceptions associated with a particular social category (e.g., race) to which one belongs and thus detrimentally influence motivational outcomes, such as leadership aspirations (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005). Thinking about one's own social category membership (i.e., race) naturally activates stereotypes and attributes associated with the category, which in turn can create self-fulfilling prophecies that influence motivational outcomes, such as leadership aspirations (Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, & Steele, 1999; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003). Indeed, individuals from minority groups may also internalize and accept the negative beliefs associated with their groups (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). AAs are more likely to become cognizant of their race in leadership contexts because of the pervasive stereotype in the workplace that they are not effective leaders (Bass, 2008; Sy et al., 2010). Categories such as race become more salient for minorities in the presence of members from other category memberships (e.g., in contexts where CAs represent the majority of leaders in an organization; Cota & Dion, 1986; Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1991; Taylor, 1981). Consistent with the COMOL, the salience of race for AAs is likely to trigger stereotypes and attributes associated with the Asian race (e.g., submissive, conforming, socially introverted, verbally inhibited, etc.; Bourne, 1975; Landau, 1995; Sue & Kirk, 1972, 1973; Sue & Sue, 1974; Woo, 2000) that are counterindicative of prototypic leaders. This may, in turn negatively influence AAs' intrapersonal leadership perceptions.

Intrapersonal leadership perceptions are likely to trigger congruent motivational outcomes in terms of leadership aspirations (Davies et al., 2005) because perceptions and motivations are cognitive units that are inextricably intertwined (Chartrand, Maddux, & Lakin, 2005), such that the activation of one unit results in the activation of the other. On the basis of the COMOL and its explanation of how racial category influences interpersonal leadership perceptions, we argue that the contextual input of racial category activates different leadership prototypes for AAs (i.e., competent leadership prototype) and CAs (i.e., agentic leadership prototype), thereby influencing their intrapersonal leadership perceptions. Specifically, decades of research have demonstrated that agentic leadership prototypes are considered more befitting of the idealized leader in Western business contexts than are competent leadership prototypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Lord & Maher, 1991; Scott & Brown, 2006). Thus, to the extent that AAs also may have internalized this widely endorsed view of agentic leadership, this endorsement may undermine AAs' intrapersonal leadership perceptions. In contrast, the endorsement for agentic leadership prototypes would bolster CAs' intrapersonal leadership perceptions. Consistent with the tenets of the COMOL, intrapersonal leadership perceptions, in turn, would activate congruent motivational outcomes for AAs and CAs (Chartrand et al., 2005), namely, low and high leadership aspirations, respectively. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 3a*: Race is related to leadership aspiration, such that Asian Americans have lower leadership aspirations than Caucasian Americans.
> *Hypothesis 3b*: The relationship between race and leadership aspiration is mediated by intrapersonal leadership perceptions.

Overview of Studies

We conducted three studies to test our hypotheses. In Study 1, we test Hypothesis 1 regarding the main effect of race on interpersonal leadership perceptions. In Study 2, we examine the proposition that race affects interpersonal leadership perceptions via the activation of leadership prototypes (Hypotheses 2a and 2b). In Study 3, we investigate the intrapersonal consequences of race-based leadership perceptions by examining the relationship between race and leadership aspiration, and the mediating effect of intrapersonal leadership perceptions on the race-leadership aspiration relationship (Hypotheses 3a and 3b). These three studies examine the influence of a major contextual input variable (i.e., race) on interpersonal leadership perceptions, illuminate the cognitive mechanisms (i.e., differential prototype activation) underlying interpersonal leadership perceptions, and investigate motivational outcomes (i.e., leadership aspiration) of intrapersonal leadership perceptions, respectively.

This research makes several contributions to the leadership and diversity literature. First, as indicated earlier, we clarify previous results of the influence of race on leadership perceptions by addressing methodological confounds (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Rosette et al., 2008; Sy et al., 2010). The second and perhaps more important contribution of this study is that we answer the call for research on the consequences of race-based leadership perceptions. Whereas past research has focused on the impact of interpersonal leadership perceptions on leadership opportunities for minorities, we focus on the impact of intrapersonal leadership perceptions on self-motivational outcomes (i.e., leadership aspirations). Both inter- and intrapersonal leadership perceptions are likely to affect the representation of minorities in management ranks. Third, whereas past research has focused on the application of the COMOL to explain interpersonal leadership perceptions, we extend the COMOL theory by examining how its tenets operate to influence intrapersonal leadership perceptions.

Study 1

Method

Participants. Participants were 73 business undergraduates, 32 (44%) males and 41 (56%) females. The mean age was 23.77 years. More than 63% of the participants reported having had full-time work experience (averaging 3.11 years). Twenty-three (32%) were CA, 22 (30%) were AA, 19 (26%) were Hispanic, 1 (1%) was African American, 5 (7%) were "other," and 3 (4%) did not indicate their race. The participants were recruited from two business courses taught by the same instructor in a large business school on the west coast of the United States. Participation was voluntary, and all the students elected to participate.

Procedure. Participants were informed that the study concerned personnel decision making in work settings and that they would read about and evaluate an employee in a U.S.-based organization. Prior to the start of the study, participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions (Asian employee or Caucasian employee) and then completed an online survey during class time. Online surveys and paper-and-pencil formats have been shown to yield similar responses (Beuckelaer & Lievens, 2009; Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004). The survey consisted of three web pages. The first web page contained the voluntary consent form, and the second consisted of a vignette describing the target employee. Below the vignette were the evaluation items. The vignette and evaluation items were included on the same web page so that participants could refer back to the vignette as they evaluated the target employee. The third web page consisted of demographic items. Because of a concern that the demographic

page may have included items that would activate socially desirable responses (e.g., questions regarding participants' diversity experiences), these items were placed on the last web page to limit socially desirable responses; participants were unable to move back to the previous pages to change their responses. Participants were thanked and debriefed as a class.

Vignette. Utilizing a between-subjects design, each vignette described an employee working in a U.S. company. The same vignette was used for both experimental conditions, with race as the manipulation variable. Race was manipulated by varying the name (Tung-Sheng Wong or John Davis) and the corresponding race category (AA or CA). Each vignette provided limited information about the target person. The design of the vignettes was consistent with past research indicating that interpersonal leadership perceptions can be elicited with limited information (e.g., Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Epitropaki & Martin, 2004, 2005). The vignette was stated in general and neutral terms so as not to provide any indication of performance (e.g., high vs. low performer) because interpersonal leadership perceptions may be inferred from performance information (Lord & Maher, 1993). The vignettes consisted of the following description:

> Tung-Sheng Wong (John Davis), a 31-year-old Asian American (Caucasian American) male, graduated in 1994 from University of Arizona. He has been employed as a supervisor in the same U.S.-based organization for 5 years. His responsibilities include managing customer complaints, providing consultation regarding the company's services, and troubleshooting customer problems. While he sometimes has problems with certain coworkers, he is generally good-tempered.

To control for gender effects (e.g., Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004), only males were included as target employees.

Dependent Measures

Interpersonal Leadership Perceptions. Consistent with previous research (Hains, Hogg, & Duck, 1997; Hogg et al., 1998; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; Sy et al., 2010), interpersonal leadership perceptions were assessed using the Global Leadership Impression Scale (Cronshaw & Lord, 1987; Lord, 1977). This scale consists of five items. Sample items include "How typical of a leader is Tung-Sheng Wong (John Davis)?" and "To what extent does Tung-Sheng Wong (John Davis) demonstrate leadership behaviors?" Participants responded to each item using a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all)* to 6 (*very much)*. Cronbach's alpha for the five items of .87 was deemed satisfactory.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Check. First, we tested the race manipulation by asking participants to identify the race of the target employee. All participants correctly identified the race of the target employee for both conditions. In addition, all participants correctly identified the gender of the target employee for both conditions. There were no statistical differences in participants' race, age, or gender in interpersonal leadership perceptions. Accordingly, we proceeded to examine Hypothesis 1.

Hypotheses. A hierarchical regression analysis provided support for our prediction that AAs are less likely to be perceived as prototypic leaders than CAs (Hypothesis 1). In Step 1, we entered participants' gender ($\beta = -.20$, *ns*), race ($\beta = -.02$, *ns*), and age ($\beta = -.14$, *ns*) as control variables ($R^2 = .07$). Step 2 showed that beyond participants' gender ($\beta = -.20$, *ns*), race ($\beta = -.05$, *ns*), and age ($\beta = -.14$, *ns*), target employee's race ($\beta = .32$, $p = .007$) explained significant variance in interpersonal leadership perception ($\Delta R^2 = .10$). As expected, CAs were perceived as more prototypical leaders ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.85$) than were AAs ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 0.54$), $F(1, 71) = 7.48$, $p = .008$, $\eta^2 = .10$.

Study 1 provides a pure examination of the effects of race on interpersonal leadership perception as we focused only on the influence of race. The results were comparable with Sy et al.'s (2010), where, as previously noted, the variables of race and occupation may have been confounded. The results provide support for Hypothesis 1.

Study 2

In Study 2, the primary goal was to examine the indirect effect of race on interpersonal leadership perceptions via the activation of different leadership prototypes. In addition, a secondary goal was to cross-validate the results of Study 1 with an industry sample consisting of employees from a variety of industries. We followed past recommendations to examine Studies 1 and 2 in combination in order to increase the generalizability of the findings (Heilman et al., 2004; Hosoda, Stone, & Stone-Romero, 2003; Rosette et al., 2008).

Method

Participants. Consistent with past research examining perceptions and evaluations at work, we recruited participants from a variety of industries (e.g., Martell & DeSmet, 2001; Schleicher, Watt, & Greguras, 2004; Sy et al., 2010). A team of trained research assistants contacted a sample of 132 employees from their existing networks in the western part of the United States, of who 101 participated in the study (76% response rate). The sample contained 55 (54%) females and 46 (46%) males: 37 (37%) CAs, 34 (34%) AAs, 19 (19%) Hispanic Americans, and 11 (11%) African Americans. On average, participants were 33.44 years old, worked 38.80 hours per week, and had 9.68 years of full-time work experience.

Procedure. Study 2 followed procedures similar to Study 1. Participants were informed that the current study examined personnel decision making in work settings. As such, they would be provided with information about an employee in a U.S.-based organization and subsequently evaluate that employee. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions (an AA employee or a CA employee). After consenting to participate in the study, participants received an e-mail with a link to an online survey. We followed the same online survey protocol as in Study 1.

Vignette. For methodological rigor, we slightly varied the content of Study 1's vignette. As with Study 1, race was manipulated by varying the name (Jo Woo or Joe Wood) and the corresponding race category (AA or CA). We also limited the target employee to males in order to control for gender influences on perceptions. Consistent with Study 1, the vignette was stated in general and neutral terms so as not to provide any indication of performance. The vignette consisted of the following description:

> Jo Woo (Joe Wood), a 31-year-old Asian American (Caucasian American) male, graduated from a well-regarded university. He has worked for the same U.S.-based organization for 5 years. His responsibilities include customer service and providing consultation about the company's products and services. While he sometimes has problems with certain coworkers, he is generally good-tempered.

Dependent Measures

Interpersonal Leadership Perceptions. We used the same five items as Study 1 from the Global Leadership Impression Scale (Cronshaw & Lord, 1987; Lord, 1977) to measure interpersonal leadership perceptions. Cronbach's alpha for all five items of .85 was deemed satisfactory.

Prototypic Leadership Attributes. We used a validated measure of prototypic leader attributes, the ILTs Scale (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004; Offermann, Kennedy, & Wirtz, 1994), which asked participants to rate how characteristic each of the traits presented was of the individual in the vignette using a 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all characteristic*) to 9 (*extremely characteristic*). The ILTs Scale consists of six attributes: Masculinity ($\alpha = .80$: masculine and male), Intelligence ($\alpha = .89$: intelligent, knowledgeable, educated, and clever), Sensitivity ($\alpha = .79$: understanding, sincere, and helpful), Tyranny ($\alpha = .86$:

Table 1. Study 2 Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. RaceCond												
2. P.Race			.05									
3. P.Gender			.01	−.05								
4. P.Age	32.62	8.96	.09	−.19	.12							
5. Masculinity	6.02	2.17	.29**	.09	.05	.05						
6. Intelligence	6.24	1.78	−.24*	.02	−.04	−.04	.22*					
7. Sensitivity	5.96	1.96	−.03	−.01	−.08	−.03	.04	.10				
8. Tyranny	5.18	1.91	.29**	.16	−.04	−.09	.29**	.17	−.15			
9. Dedication	6.27	2.24	−.23*	−.02	.02	.17	.01	.32**	.12	.08		
10. Dynamism	5.58	1.75	.27**	.03	.12	.16	.31**	.11	−.17	.07	−.14	
11. Interpersonal leadership perception	3.50	0.82	.21*	−.03	.02	.04	.38*	.30*	−.07	.36**	.30**	.38**

Note. RaceCond = target's race in condition (1 = Asian American, 2 = Caucasian American). P.Race = participants' race. P.Gender = participants' gender (0 = male, 1 = female).
*p < .05. **p < .01.

domineering, pushy, manipulative, loud, conceited, and selfish), Dedication (α = .87: motivated, dedicated, and hardworking), and Dynamism (α = .80: energetic, strong, and dynamic). For the AA condition, the means and standard deviations for each attribute were as follows: Masculinity, *M* = 6.02, *SD* = 2.17; Intelligence, *M* = 6.24, *SD* = 1.78; Sensitivity, *M* = 5.96, *SD* = 1.96; Tyranny, *M* = 5.18, *SD* = 1.91; Dedication, *M* = 6.27, *SD* = 2.24; and Dynamism, *M* = 5.58, *SD* = 1.75. For the CA condition, the means and standard deviations for each attribute were as follows: Masculinity, *M* = 6.67, *SD* = 2.02; Intelligence, *M* = 5.81, *SD* = 1.64; Sensitivity, *M* = 5.89, *SD* = 1.97; Tyranny, *M* = 5.74, *SD* = 2.09; Dedication, *M* = 5.73, *SD* = 1.98; and Dynamism, *M* = 6.06, *SD* = 2.02.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Check. Participants in both conditions correctly identified the race and gender of the target employee. As such, our manipulation was successful. There were no statistical differences in participants' race, age, or gender in interpersonal leadership perceptions for Study 2. Thus, we proceeded to examine Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Hypotheses. In addition to cross-validating the results of Study 1, the main goal of Study 2 was to examine our proposition that the target's race affects interpersonal leadership perceptions via the activation of prototypic leadership attributes. We investigated Hypotheses 2a and 2b with both simple and multiple mediation models. For the simple mediation analyses, we separately examined our hypotheses by separately testing each leadership attribute as a mediator of the target's race and interpersonal leadership perception relationship. For the multiple mediation analyses, we examined the competent and agentic leadership

prototypes as mediators (by simultaneously testing multiple leadership attributes as mediators) of the target's race and interpersonal leadership perception relationship. Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study variables.

Simple Mediations. To test our mediation hypotheses, we conducted bootstrap analyses (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007) with the target's race as the independent variable, the six dimensions of ILTs as the mediating variables, and interpersonal leadership perceptions as the dependent variable. In comparison with the commonly used Sobel test (Sobel, 1982), the bootstrap procedure is preferable because it does not assume that the indirect effect is normally distributed, which avoids problems introduced by asymmetric and nonnormal sampling distributions (Mackinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). This procedure bootstraps the sampling distribution of the indirect effect and empirically derives the confidence intervals (CIs) of that effect for the true population. We utilized the SPSS macro created by Preacher and Hayes (2008) to estimate bias-corrected CIs around the product coefficient of the indirect (mediated) effect. Mediation is supported if the 95% CI does not include zero.

For the simple mediation analyses, we performed six separate bootstrap analyses with each of the six prototypic leadership attributes as the mediator of the target's race and leadership perception relationship. Table 2 displays the results of the indirect effect of the target's race (independent variable) on interpersonal leadership perceptions (dependent variable) through each of the six prototypic leadership attributes (mediators). Specifically, Masculinity, Intelligence, Tyranny, Dedication, and Dynamism significantly mediated the effect of the target's race on interpersonal leadership perception, with point estimates of .10, −.09, .09, −.09, and .09 and 95% CIs [.04, .23], [−.20, −.02],

Table 2. Study 2 Separate Simple Mediation: Leadership Attributes Mediating the Target's Race and Interpersonal Leadership Perceptions Relationship.

	Product of coefficients				Bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% confidence interval	
	Point estimate	SE	Z	p	Lower limit	Upper limit
Masculinity	**.10**	.04	2.33	.02	.04	.23
Intelligence	**−.09**	.04	−2.06	.04	−.20	−.02
Sensitivity	.01	.01	0.29	.77	−.02	.05
Tyranny	**.09**	.04	2.23	.03	.01	.22
Dedication	**−.09**	.04	−2.05	.04	−.20	−.02
Dynamism	**.09**	.04	2.21	.03	.01	.24

Note. Bootstrap sample size = 1,000. Coefficients in boldface indicate mediation. Race is coded as 0 = Asian and 1 = Caucasian; positive and negative point estimates indicate activation by the Caucasian and Asian race, respectively.
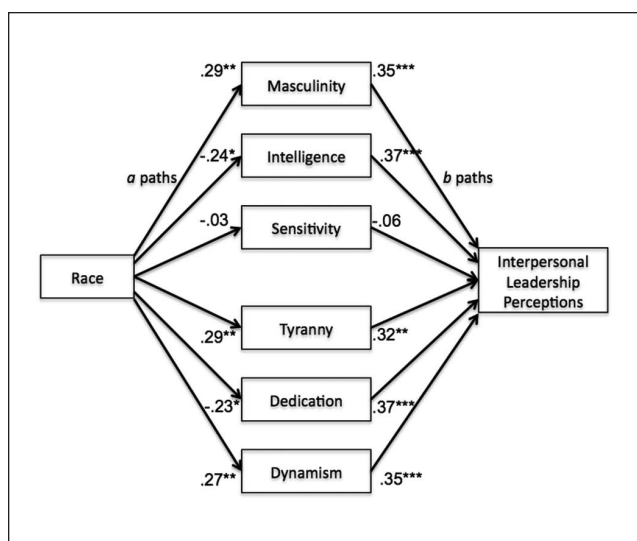

Figure 1. Prototypic leadership attributes as mediators of the target's race and interpersonal leadership perceptions relationship.
Note. The numbers represent standardized regression coefficients derived from bootstrap procedures. Race is coded as 0 = Asian and 1 = Caucasian; positive and negative estimates indicate activation by the Caucasian and Asian race, respectively.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

[.01, .22], [−.20, −.02], and [.01, .24], respectively. Sensitivity did not mediate the effect of the target's race on interpersonal leadership perception, with a point estimate of .01 and 95% CI [−.02, .05]. Moreover, Figure 1 demonstrates that the coefficients among the variables are consistent with our hypotheses that AAs and CAs activate different prototypic attributes that subsequently influence interpersonal leadership perceptions. For AAs, interpersonal leadership perceptions were influenced by the activation of the prototypic leadership attributes of Intelligence and Dedication. For CAs, interpersonal leadership perceptions were influenced by the activation of the prototypic

leadership attributes of Masculinity, Tyranny, and Dynamism. The simple mediation results provided support for Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Multiple Mediation Models. In addition to simple mediation analyses, we investigated Hypotheses 2a and 2b by conducting multiple mediation analyses to examine the mediating role of competent and agentic leadership prototypes on the target's race and interpersonal leadership perception relationship. Multiple mediation models test "simultaneous mediation by multiple variables" (Preacher & Hayes, 2008, p. 880). Accordingly, for Hypothesis 2a (that proposed AAs activate a competent leadership prototype consisting of the attributes of Intelligence and Dedication), we examined (a) the target's race as the independent variable, (b) Intelligence and Dedication simultaneously as mediating variables, and (c) interpersonal leadership perceptions as the dependent variable. Likewise, for Hypothesis 2b (that proposed CAs activate an agentic leadership prototype consisting of the attributes of Masculinity, Tyranny, and Dynamism), we examined (a) the target's race as the independent variable; (b) Masculinity, Tyranny, and Dynamism simultaneously as mediating variables; and (c) interpersonal leadership perceptions as the dependent variable. The mediation results for the competent and agentic leadership prototypes are shown in Table 3 and Figure 2 and Table 4 and Figure 3, respectively. The multiple mediation results were similar to the simple mediation results and provided full support for Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

The second goal of Study 2 was to cross-validate the results of Study 1 with a cross-industry sample. A hierarchical regression analysis provided support for our prediction that AAs are less likely to be perceived as prototypic leaders than CAs (Hypothesis 1). In Step 1, we entered participants' gender (β = .01, *ns*), race (β = −.02, *ns*), and age (β = .03, *ns*) as control variables (R^2 = .00). Step 2 showed that beyond participants' gender (β = .01, *ns*), race (β = −.04, *ns*), and age (β = .01, *ns*), target's race (β = .21,

Table 3. Study 2 Multiple Mediation Model: Competent Leadership Prototype Mediating the Target's Race and Interpersonal Leadership Perceptions Relationship.

	Product of coefficients				Bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% confidence interval	
	Point estimate	SE	Z	p	Lower limit	Upper limit
Intelligence	**−.07**	.04	−1.90	.06	−.16	−.04
Dedication	**−.07**	.04	−1.90	.06	−.15	−.01
Total indirect effect	**−.13**	.05	−2.60	.01	−.26	−.04

Note. Bootstrap sample size = 1,000. Coefficients in boldface indicate mediation. Race is coded as 0 = Asian and 1 = Caucasian; positive and negative point estimates indicate activation by the Caucasian and Asian race, respectively.
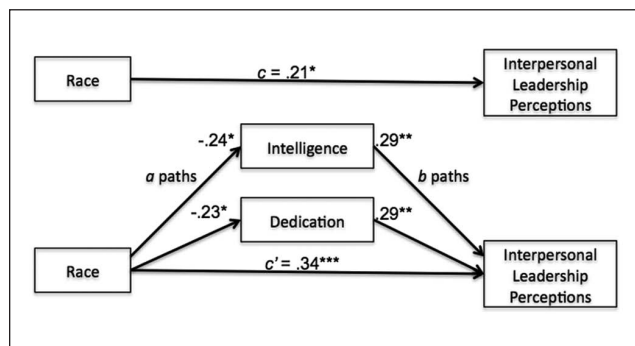
Figure 2. Competent leadership prototype as mediator of the target's race and interpersonal leadership perceptions relationship.
Note. The numbers represent standardized regression coefficients derived from bootstrap procedures. Race is coded as 0 = Asian and 1 = Caucasian; positive and negative estimates indicate activation by the Caucasian and Asian race, respectively.
$*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.$

$p < .01$) explained significant variance in interpersonal leadership perception ($\Delta R^2 = .04$). As expected, CAs were perceived as more prototypic leaders ($M = 3.68, SD = 0.82$) than were AAs ($M = 3.34, SD = 0.65$), $F(1, 99) = 4.44$, $p < .05, \eta^2 = .04$.

Study 2 cross-validated the results of Study 1 to demonstrate that AAs are less likely to be perceived as prototypic leaders in comparison with CAs. Furthermore, simple and multiple mediation analyses revealed that these perceptions are influenced by leadership prototypes. Specifically, interpersonal leadership perceptions of AAs and CAs were influenced by competent and agentic leadership prototypes, respectively. These results are consistent with past research (Sy et al., 2010) and provide support for a key tenet of the COMOL: namely, interpersonal leadership perceptions are dynamic and context sensitive (Foti et al., 2008; Hogue & Lord, 2007).

In Studies 1 and 2, we have demonstrated how and why race-based interpersonal leadership perceptions may exist. In Study 3, our primary goal was to examine intrapersonal consequences of race-based leadership perceptions. Race may also influence intrapersonal leadership perceptions that affect leadership aspirations. Consistent with our earlier rationale that minorities may internalize the widely held stereotypes of the majority (Jost & Banaji, 1994), AAs may have internalized some of the widely held beliefs about their inferior leadership ability and may be less inclined to aspire to leadership positions.

Study 3

This study simulated a work situation in which a manager is needed to lead a business task. It required that there be at least two people in any data collection session. Depending on how many participants signed up in a given session and the racial group composition of the group, participants were run in homogeneous-race (i.e., all CA or all AA) or heterogeneous-race (e.g., one or two CAs and one or two AAs) groups of two ($n = 76$) or three ($n = 58$). However, there were 15 sessions in which only one participant had signed up, in which case a CA or AA confederate (research assistant) took part in the study but only the participant's data were included in analyses. There were no differences in outcomes between sessions with and without confederates. Likewise, there were no differences between homogeneous-race and heterogeneous-race groups.

There were five experimenters, all of whom were CA females. Gender and ethnicity were kept constant to avoid introducing potential confounds. Participants came into the laboratory in groups of two or three and were seated separately in cubicles. All participants were asked whether they knew each other. If not, the study proceeded as planned. If so, one of the two people who knew each other was randomly (with the flip of a coin) rescheduled for an alternative data collection session.

The experimenter read the instructions, which led the participant(s) to believe they were going to participate in a group task involving the other participant(s) in the room. They were told they would be developing a business plan together, led by a manager and one (or two, if there were three participants) employee. They were also told that their role assignment would be based on their response to the

Table 4. Study 2 Multiple Mediation Model: Agentic Leadership Prototype Mediating the Target's Race and Interpersonal Leadership Perceptions Relationship.

	Product of coefficients				Bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% confidence interval	
	Point estimate	SE	Z	p	Lower limit	Upper limit
Masculinity	**.06**	.03	1.78	.07	.01	.17
Tyranny	**.08**	.04	2.15	.03	.01	.23
Dynamism	**.08**	.04	2.13	.03	.01	.20
Total indirect effect	**.22**	.06	3.55	.00	.10	.38

Note. Bootstrap sample size = 1,000. Coefficients in boldface indicate mediation. Race is coded as 0 = Asian and 1 = Caucasian; positive and negative point estimates indicate activation by the Caucasian and Asian race, respectively.
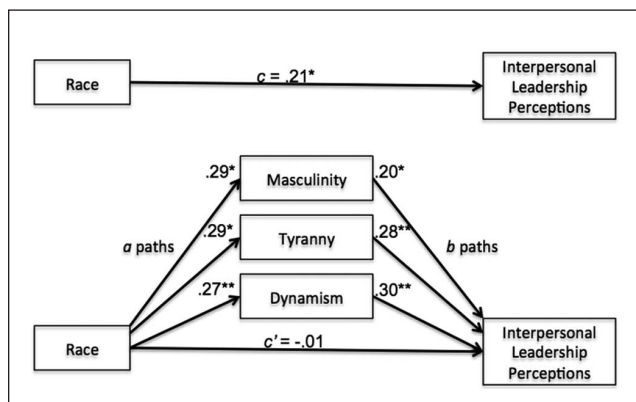

Figure 3. Agentic leadership prototype as mediator of the target's race and interpersonal leadership perceptions relationship.
Note. The numbers represent standardized regression coefficients derived from bootstrap procedures. Race is coded as 0 = Asian and 1 = Caucasian; positive and negative estimates indicate activation by the Caucasian and Asian race, respectively.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

study survey. Next, the experimenter instructed participants to complete the intrapersonal leadership perceptions and leadership aspiration measures. Finally, after the experimenter collected all the measures from the participants, it was revealed that the experiment was over and that there would not be a group business task. Participants then completed a series of follow-up manipulation checks and were fully debriefed.

Method

Participants. Participants were 134 undergraduates from the psychology subject pool of a Southern California university. The sample contained 73 (54%) males and 61 (46%) females and 32 (24%) CAs and 102 (76%) AAs. The ratio of CA to AA participants reflected the ratio found in the university's diverse student body and in the psychology subject pool. The average age was 19.20 years (SD = 1.61).

Participants received partial course credit in their introductory psychology class.

Measures

Intrapersonal Leadership Perceptions. Because there are no existing measures for intrapersonal leadership perceptions, we developed items specifically for this study. Six items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). They included "I feel confident about my ability to be a good manager" and "I would be better qualified to be a good manager than my colleagues." The seventh item was a rank-ordered item: "Using the letters you have each been assigned (i.e., A, B, C), please rank order yourself and your colleagues on the ability to be a competent manager (1 being most competent)." All seven items were standardized, and a mean composite variable was created to represent the degree to which participants perceived themselves as leaders. Internal reliability for the seven-item intrapersonal leadership perceptions composite was .82.

Leadership Aspiration. We developed two questions that assessed leadership aspirations. The first item, rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), read, "I would like to be the manager." The second item was a forced-choice item that read, "Which of these two roles would you prefer?" This dichotomous item (i.e., 1 = *employee*, 2 = *manager*) and the Likert-type item were standardized and a mean composite variable was created to represent the degree to which participants displayed leadership aspirations. The correlation between these two items was .63 (internal reliability of .78).

Results and Discussion

Hypotheses and Simple Mediations. We investigated Hypotheses 3a and 3b with simple mediation models. We followed the same procedures as in Study 2 and conducted bootstrap analyses (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). Table 5

Table 5. Study 3 Simple Mediation: Intrapersonal Leadership Perceptions Mediating the Effect of Race on Leadership Aspirations.

	Product of coefficients				Bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% confidence interval	
	Point estimate	SE	Z	p	Lower limit	Upper limit
Intrapersonal leadership perceptions	**.38**	.13	2.84	.00	.12	.67

Note. Bootstrap sample size = 1,000. Coefficients in boldface indicate mediation. Race is coded as 0 = Asian and 1 = Caucasian; positive and negative point estimates indicate activation by the Caucasian and Asian race, respectively.
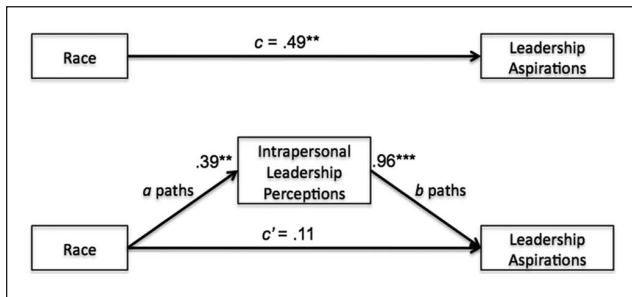
Figure 4. Intrapersonal leadership perceptions as mediator of the race and leadership aspirations relationship.
Note. The numbers represent standardized regression coefficients derived from bootstrap procedures. Race is coded as 0 = Asian and 1 = Caucasian.
$*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.$

displays the results of the indirect effect of race (predictor) on leadership aspiration (outcome) through intrapersonal leadership perception (mediator). Intrapersonal leadership perception significantly mediated the effect of race on leadership aspiration, with a point estimate of .38 and 95% CI [.12, .67]. Moreover, Figure 4 illustrates the simple mediation and the coefficients among the variables provided support for Hypotheses 3a and 3b. Specifically, AAs had lower leadership aspirations than CAs (Hypothesis 3a) and intrapersonal leadership perceptions fully mediated the relationship between race and leadership aspiration (Hypothesis 3b). In sum, AAs' lower intrapersonal leadership perceptions were predictive of their lower leadership aspirations.

Whereas Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated that AAs are perceived by others to be less prototypical leaders (interpersonal perception), Study 3 demonstrated that AAs also perceive themselves as less prototypical leaders (intrapersonal perception). Results supported the COMOL by underscoring the powerful influence of race as a contextual input variable influencing intrapersonal leadership perceptions. Moreover, the racial difference in leadership aspiration disappeared when intrapersonal leadership perceptions were accounted for, indicating that AAs' lower intrapersonal leadership perceptions explained *why* they display lower leadership aspirations. It is not race per se that makes AAs less likely to aspire to be leaders but rather their lower

intrapersonal perceptions of leadership. Race, therefore, is a salient contextual variable that predicts intrapersonal leadership perceptions, which affect leadership aspirations. This may partly explain (among other structural-level barriers) why AAs are disproportionately less represented in management ranks than CAs.

It is plausible that if the same research question (the effect of race on intrapersonal leadership perceptions) were tested in a country where there are more Asians than there are Caucasians (e.g., Japan), the results would be different. Using the same theoretical framework (i.e., COMOL), it can be hypothesized that Caucasians would have lower intrapersonal leadership perceptions than Asians because they are underrepresented in leadership ranks in that host country. Therefore, it is not the racial category per se that predicts differences in leadership perceptions but rather the contextual input from the broader cultural context (i.e., United States).

General Discussion

Our research addresses two key questions central to race and leadership: (a) How are leadership perceptions influenced by target's race? (b) What are the consequences of race-based leadership perceptions on the target? We investigated these questions in terms of the COMOL model that emphasizes the importance of contextual inputs in understanding leadership perceptions. Whereas the COMOL has focused on interpersonal leadership perceptions, we extend the COMOL to the realm of intrapersonal leadership perceptions. Thus, the COMOL is theoretically and empirically relevant to both inter- and intracognitive processes. Interestingly, only a handful of studies have examined the COMOL in understanding leadership perceptions despite its advantages. In comparison with earlier models of leadership categorization, the COMOL reflects a more advanced and accurate account of social cognition as context-sensitive, dynamic states and is better able to integrate and account for contextual information (e.g., race, occupation, etc.; Lord & Shondrick, 2011; Sy et al., 2010). Thus, the COMOL is more robust in explaining leadership perceptions in multicultural and diversity settings where leadership prototypes are dynamic and driven by contextual cues (e.g., race, gender, etc.). Much can be gained

with more research on the COMOL, especially in light of globalization and national trends toward continued growth and diversification of racial minorities in the American workforce.

In addressing the first question, we demonstrated that race is a contextual input that can lead to different interpersonal leadership perceptions. Corroborating Sy et al.'s (2010) results, AAs were less likely to be perceived as prototypic leaders compared with CAs. Whereas Sy et al. considered the interaction between race and occupation on interpersonal leadership perception, our study focused solely on race. Thus, the present study further clarified the relationship between race and interpersonal leadership perceptions without the conflation of race with occupation. In addition, results show how race may affect interpersonal leadership perceptions via the activation of different leadership prototypes. The findings suggest that AAs activate the competent leadership prototype, consisting of the attributes of Intelligence and Dedication, whereas CAs activate the agentic leadership prototype, which consists of the attributes of Masculinity, Tyranny, and Dynamism. Thus, regardless of whether or not actual differences exist between AA and CA leaders, our results suggest individuals perceive AA leaders to be different from CA leaders.

Beyond clarifying the relationship between race and interpersonal leadership perceptions, the primary contribution of this research is in addressing the consequences of race-based leadership perceptions in the United States. Previous research has shown that demographic contextual inputs such as gender (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Johnson et al., 2008), identity (Hogg et al., 1998; van Knippenberg et al., 2004), culture (Ayman, 1993; Ensari & Murphy, 2003), and race (Sy et al., 2010) can influence interpersonal leadership perceptions. However, the effect of race as a contextual input on intrapersonal leadership perceptions had not been previously examined. Research has found evidence for lower interpersonal leadership perceptions of AAs (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Sy et al., 2010), with the underlying implication that lower interpersonal leadership perceptions may have an effect on leadership opportunities for racial minorities, possibly in the form of blatant or subtle discrimination (e.g., minorities being passed over for leadership promotions because they lack "executive presence"). In a similar vein, intrapersonal leadership perceptions may also negatively influence leadership advancement opportunities for racial minorities to the extent that leadership aspirations are critical to securing such opportunities. Indeed, the dominant perspective of the protean career (Hall, 2004) emphasizes the criticality of self-driven leadership aspirations in determining the success of minority leaders. Taken together, interpersonal and intrapersonal leadership perceptions provide a more complete picture of the effect leadership perceptions may have on the presence of minorities in management ranks.

Study Limitations and Future Research

One of the limitations of this study is that the mechanisms underlying intrapersonal leadership perceptions were not explicitly examined, which renders interpretation of that aspect of the model (i.e., path *a* in Figure 4) open to speculation. Consistent with the results for interpersonal leadership perceptions in Studies 1 and 2, we propose that race activated leadership prototypes, which in turn influenced intrapersonal leadership perceptions. Because the activated agentic leadership prototype for CAs, as opposed to the activated competent leadership prototype for AAs, is widely endorsed as the ideal leader prototype in the United States, this bias negatively affects AAs' intrapersonal leadership perceptions to the extent that AAs have also internalized this endorsement. Although speculative, this explanation is consistent with the theoretical tenets of the COMOL and the results of Studies 1 and 2.

Future research should investigate the degree to which AAs' intrapersonal leadership perceptions are context dependent and the conditions under which they are likely to vary. For example, it is conceivable that if stereotypes about AAs' leadership ability were explicitly activated, AAs' intrapersonal leadership perceptions may be more positive and inconsistent with the stereotype, a phenomenon known as *reactance effect* (e.g., Hoyt & Blascovich, 2007; Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001). Recent research has found support for the reactance effect, such that when stereotypes about women in leadership positions were made explicit and salient, women used a more masculine communication style in an effort to defy or avoid confirming the stereotype (von Hippel, Wiryakusuma, Bowden, & Sochet, 2011).

Another limitation of this research is that we focused on only one racial minority group in the U.S. context. It is not known whether the results are generalizable to other racial minorities and across different cultural settings. Different racial minorities face different challenges (Fernandez, 1999; Knight, Hebl, Foster, & Mannix, 2003; Rosette et al., 2008; Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). For example, whereas AAs are perceived to be "quiet" and "submissive" (Bourne, 1975; Landau, 1995; Sue & Kirk, 1972, 1973; Sue & Sue, 1974; Woo, 2000), Latin Americans are perceived to be "ambitionless" (Niemann, Jennings, Rozelle, Baxter, & Sullivan, 1994). Given these different perceptions and challenges, it would be fruitful to examine the relationship between race and interpersonal leadership perceptions for other racial minorities, and the corresponding intrapersonal consequences of race-based leadership perceptions.

Relatedly, individuals from different cultural backgrounds (e.g., collectivistic and individualistic) may respond differently to survey scaling, such as level or degree scales (e.g., *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* on a 10-point scale) and mutually exclusive category scales (e.g., *Australian* to *Chinese* on a 10-point scale; Harzing, Brown,

Köster, & Zhao, 2012). To address concerns with cultural response bias, we used both level-type scale anchors (i.e., Likert-type scales) and mutually exclusive categories (i.e., rank-order and forced-choice). Moreover, our results did not suggest that cultural response biases were strongly operating (reliability coefficients ranged from .78 to .87). Nonetheless, future research should be aware of different cultural response styles.

Another limitation to our research could be the study samples. Each study sample on its own may possess one limitation or another (e.g., small sample size in Study 1, limited work experience in Study 3). However, the strength of our multisample study is that the limitations of one sample are counterbalanced by the strengths of other samples (e.g., the combined sample for this study is 308, comprising a breadth of work experience from entry-level employees to senior-level managers and representing a variety of businesses in various industries). More important, the findings across the three studies are consistent, which suggests that our findings are robust, although we encourage future research to confirm these results with larger and more geographically diverse industry samples.

Future research could also examine other mediators between race and leadership aspirations. For example, self-regulatory focus mechanisms can serve as a possible mediator (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). Specifically, promotion-based self-regulatory focus (driven by hopes, wishes, and aspirations) may have a more positive effect on leadership aspirations than prevention-based self-regulatory focus (driven by duties, obligations, and responsibilities; Higgins, 1997). The present results provide indirect evidence for this proposition. That is, AAs, who typically subscribe to the prevention-focused regulatory system (Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000), had lower leadership aspirations. Future research could investigate the possibility that self-regulatory focus mechanisms may mediate the relationship between race and leadership aspiration.

Future research should also investigate other contextual inputs that influence interpersonal and intrapersonal leadership perceptions. For example, recent research (Sy et al., 2010) has shown that occupation can have important implications for leadership perceptions. Future research could investigate the interaction of race with gender (Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012; Waring, 2003), age, experience, education, and leadership style (Jung & Yammarino, 2001) on leadership perceptions. In addition, leadership prototypes could be affected by organizational characteristics such as management levels and structure (e.g., hierarchical, vertical, centralized, etc.). For example, management levels can range from entry-level supervisor to chief executive officer. It is likely that an entry-level supervisor may activate a different leadership prototype from a chief executive officer. Moreover, it would be fruitful for future research to investigate how the interaction of race and management level may produce differential leadership prototypes and perceptions.

Finally, researchers could also utilize case studies or in-depth interviews to gain insights into how individuals may overcome the effect of race on leadership perceptions because such insights may escape traditional survey methodology. Moreover, researchers could also examine case studies in which CAs or Westerners led AA or Eastern organizations. Take, for example, Carlos Ghosn, who has a Brazilian, Lebanese, and French background and was tasked with leading Nissan, a Japanese auto maker. Ghosn successfully turned a nearly bankrupt company into a profitable, efficient company and in the process established his image as a great leader. Similarly, much can be gained by examining case studies in which an Asian leader leads an organization composed of majority Caucasians or Westerners. One example is Foxconn's CEO, Terry Guo, who is leading the Taiwanese company's expansion in the United States (Riley, 2012).

Practical Implications

Our findings point to several important practices that can improve the selection and promotion of racial minorities within organizations. The results suggest that AAs activate a leadership prototype that is less than ideal. It is likely that these perceptual processes occur at a preconscious level, thus making them difficult to avoid (Chartrand et al., 2005; Chen & Bargh, 1997). In particular, research has shown that when faced with little information about another person, individuals are likely to utilize prototypic and stereotypic information (Bodenhausen & Lichtenstein, 1987). Managers in medium to large organizations with large spans of control may therefore rely more heavily on these prototypes because they may have little interaction with the individuals being evaluated. To the extent that racial minorities have even fewer interactions with these key decision makers (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Ospina & Foldy, 2009), this may result in racial minorities being perceived as less than ideal leaders. Therefore, developing practices that bring these implicit processes into conscious awareness may mitigate such biased perceptual processes. Organizations could implement protocols that require discussions about the existence and impact of such prototypes at the onset of evaluative functions that involve the consideration of racial minorities for leadership opportunities.

Furthermore, organizations may need to be more inclusive in their approach to identify and develop minority leaders. Specifically, in the case of AAs, who are believed to be the "model minority," some organizations may mistakenly presume there is no need to invest in the development of their AA employees given that they are doing seemingly well on the basis of other metrics such as income and education (Catalyst, 2003; Sy et al., 2010; U.S. Bureau

of Labor Statistics, 2009). Our research suggests that initiatives should specifically take aim at AAs' leadership aspirations, which could include (a) modeling techniques in which AAs "shadow" successful leaders (Bandura, 1977), (b) implementation of cognitive restructuring training to increase AAs' confidence in their own leadership abilities, and (c) development of cross-race mentoring relationships (Thomas, 2001) as ways to build positive intrapersonal leadership perceptions.

Organizations should also spotlight existing racial minority leaders within their organizations or industry to raise the visibility and association of racial minorities as leaders. The lack of visible minority leaders makes it difficult for other minorities to imagine or see themselves holding similar leadership roles. This *failure of imagination* may have a detrimental effect on leadership aspirations. In other words, racial minorities may not aspire for a career path in management because they are not able to imagine or see themselves as leaders. Thus, by pointing to tangible, concrete role models, minority employees may be able to envision themselves attaining those high-level leadership positions. Similarly, visible minority leaders may combat existing perceptions that racial minorities are not prototypical leaders (Rosette et al., 2008). Consistent with the COMOL, coactivation of racial minorities with leadership over time will change this pattern of association, such that minorities may be equally perceived as prototypical leaders.

In sum, mitigating the potentially deleterious effects of race on leadership perceptions may increase leadership advancement opportunities for minorities. In turn, leveraging the strengths of a diverse leadership cadre provides organizations with competitive advantages (Richard, 2000; Roberson & Park, 2007) such as positive stakeholders' perceptions, organizational reputation, and financial performance.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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