

Running head: THE THREAT OF RACIAL STEREOTYPING

Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

OVERCOMING THE THREAT OF RACIAL STEREOTYPING IN THE WORKPLACE

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

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July, 2014

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to first and foremost, my wife Nyree and my two sons, Jeremiah and Preston. This dissertation completes a journey which started eight years prior, and now it is complete. I did it my way, but I did it all for the three of you. This work is also dedicated to my father, Jesse Lee Gray and my mother, Jean Esther Gray, without the two of you there is no me. I also would like to dedicate this to my two older sisters, Tenita and Terri. Who's goofy now? Also, my mother-in-law Hazell, brother-in-law Vince, nephew Quinton, and my great niece Raelynn.

Finally, I dedicate this work to those who have passed before me but stay in my heart forever: my brother-in-law, Jessie Ray Brown and my nephew, Jamar Ray Brown, and the closest experience I will ever have to a daughter, my niece Brittany Dione Roy. I love you all....forever!

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Lastly, I thank the late Dr. Michael James Yarbrough, professor, mentor and friend. I heard you loud and clear, even when I wasn't listening.

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## ABSTRACT

There is a distinct possibility there may be many people of color who are in leadership positions or applying for leadership positions that believe racial stereotyping creates barriers for opportunity and can hinder one's chances for success. The purpose of this research is to explore strategies used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry, as it pertains to barriers, opportunities, and success. There are four research questions the researcher explored through leadership, strategies, assimilation and performance. The sample size consisted of twelve leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. Leaders of color were defined as African-American, males and females, and Hispanic-American, males and females. The researcher utilized qualitative interviews as the primary instrument and chose a semi-structured interview format. The researcher asked predetermined questions while still exercising the freedom to seek clarification with follow up and improvised questions. The twelve interviewees were asked seven questions relevant to the four research questions to provide an in-depth analysis. The results of this study concluded that leaders of color have cultivated strategies to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace. Although each leader of color in this study had never officially chronicled a professional strategy that is in direct correlation with the threat of racial stereotyping, all of the leaders have been living by a subliminal game plan that is either reactive, proactive or both. The leaders of color in this study were given, and took advantage of the opportunity to disclose what works for him or her in respect to their existence, relationships, and motivation to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in their respected workplaces.

## Chapter 1. Introduction

*I have a dream today, that one day my kids would be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

On November 17, 2008, one of the biggest historical moments in the history of the world happened. Illinois Senator Barack Obama was elected the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America (King, 2011). The child of a black Kenyan immigrant father and a Caucasian-American mother, Barack Obama became the first American President who is classified African-American and/or Black. King (2011) states the following:

Chris Matthews insisted after Obama's State of the Union address in January 2010: I forgot he was black tonight for an hour. When told that this patronized African-Americans, Matthews protested that he meant it as praise and that he thought Obama had done something wonderful. (p. 63)

Yes, he had, but if a white president gives a great speech could it be so great that people would forget he was white, and if it was possible for President Obama to not be seen as black for an hour, what would he be seen as? The smarter people do not rush to react to President Obama's election as some isolated occurrence that sums up where this country is in reference to race. In fact, most African-American people today have signed a theoretical disclaimer. Despite the tremendous significance of the election of this country's first black president, racial disparities still persist in America (King, 2011).

Racial diversity has been growing in the American workplace for the past forty-five years (Beale & Cox, 1997), and President Obama's victory can be perceived as a symbol of continuous progress. However, despite a person of color finally being elected to the most powerful leadership position in the free world, there are still concerns about racial diversity as it pertains to leadership opportunities in the workplace, as a result of racial insensitivity, and most

importantly, racial stereotyping (Parvis, 2003). Today's organizations have a need for good leaders now more than ever, and there are no reservations that the election of President Obama has changed the face of leadership in the United States of America (King, 2011). Still, there may be concerns among people of color that one's racial identity can possibly limit one's leadership opportunities in the workplace. Moreover, how can a person of color overcome these barriers to succeed in his or her organization?

### **Statement of the Problem**

On May 25, 2009, President Barack Obama nominated Judge Sonia Sotomayor as his candidate to replace retired Justice David Souter on the United States Supreme Court. President Obama confidently delivered a plethora of Judge Sotomayor's judicial qualifications and experience in front of the world. Despite President Obama's emphatic approbation of Judge Sotomayor, and instead of celebrating the possibility of having the first Hispanic-American person sit on the highest court of the United States of America, there were critics who started their speculation about her ability to be fair and follow the law in spite of her Hispanic heritage. Regardless of such reservations, Judge Sonia Sotomayor's nomination was confirmed by the United States Senate in August 2009 by a vote of 68-31 (Charles, Chen, & Gulati, 2012).

Justice Sonia Sotomayor and President Barack Obama represent the American Dream of opportunities for all, yet they both have come to either represent or embody all that is problematic in this country. There is an issue of class in this country. President Obama and Justice Sotomayor are products of not just the African and Hispanic heritage, the two are also the product of some of the finest educational institutions in the United States of America. President Obama is the product of Columbia University and the Harvard School of Law and Justice Sotomayor is a product of Princeton University and the Yale School of Law. It appears that even while reaching out to include the underrepresented members of our society, diversity seems to have a narrow interpretation (Fasenfest, 2010). That interpretation is if a person of color wants to succeed, they have to place themselves in the best situations to succeed, and at

the same time, unfortunately, not be categorized with any perception or stereotype attached to their racial identity. “Barack Obama prepared himself to become black and thus to appeal to African-Americans without frightening whites, while also equipping himself intellectually” (King, 2011, p. 64). Who would argue that a person of color, especially an African-American or Hispanic-American, who graduated from Harvard or Yale, is different from the usual African-American and Hispanic-American person most people meet on the street, or character they watch on television and film? Fasenfest (2010) states the following:

There is an often repeated truism that a poor black child growing up in the worst of our inner cities has a better chance of becoming a neurosurgeon than they do of becoming a highly paid professional athlete. Statistically that may be true, but it ignores the fact that at least the inner city poor child has a chance at developing skills on the playing field that may provide them with entry into professional sports. (p.6)

What happens to the rest? The rest and/or most people of color in America, who may not have an elite education, have to resort to other means or strategies to overcome any perceptions or stereotypes that are attached to their racial identity. Furthermore, coming from an elite education does not alleviate the pressures of becoming marginalized with a racial stereotype if you have lived short of your expectations. The comedienne Wanda Sykes jokingly points out *Obama was half-white if he succeeds, but half-black if he fails!* This is humorous but does not make it less true (Fasenfest, 2010).

There is a distinct possibility that there may be many people of color who are in leadership positions, or applying for leadership positions, who may believe racial stereotyping creates barriers for opportunity and can hinder one’s chances for success. Furthermore, there is research which contradicts racial equality in the workplace. Research articles such as *The White Standard: Racial Bias in Leader Categorization* cite results of white men perceived as the perfect business leader prototype (Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008). Obviously, research like this may discourage other cultural groups, despite the proliferation of diverse groups in the

workplace. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) states all individuals have an equal chance for employment, regardless of their race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, or national origin. One of the laws which regulate equal employment opportunity in the United States is Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which is intended to prevent an employer from discriminating against individuals because of their race, color, religion, gender, age, or national origin. No employer should hire, fire, or discriminate against an individual using the above seven categories; however, the categories of race and color are the primary concern for this study.

Despite laws implemented to protect equality in the workplace, there are no laws which can dismantle a person's perception of minorities or people of color, no matter how hateful or unintentional. There is no mandate that can obliterate racism and all the barriers and collateral damage that comes along with it; therefore, people of color may have to develop personal and professional strategies which can assist with overcoming this xenophobia which may follow them the rest of their lives in the workplace. The foremost challenge for people of color may, in fact, be basic job qualifications in the form of knowledge, skills, and abilities being obstructed by a cloud of negative perceptions or stereotypes, a challenge that even an Ivy League education may not be enough to overcome.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to explore strategies used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry, as it pertained to barriers, opportunities, and success. There are four research questions which explored this purpose through leadership, strategies, assimilation and performance.

**Research Questions**

1. How do leaders of color define effective leadership in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
2. How can the performance of leaders of color be hindered by the threat of racial stereotyping in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
3. What are the ways leaders of color utilize assimilation to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
4. What strategies have been used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?

**Significance of Study**

There is a possibility that one's race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, or national origin may negatively impact one's potential to succeed in one's workplace. Any study which explores that possibility is always significant. If we are all created and treated equally in the workplace, research should reflect as much, not contradict. This study is significant because it provides a much needed collection of life experiences which highlight successful strategies by leaders of color who have overcome racial barriers in their organizations, and most importantly are willing to share their collective wisdom. Hopefully, the findings of this research will be reviewed and utilized by younger people of color to overcome existing barriers to their success and create an original approach which can contribute to an already robust body of diversity research for people of every race, color, religion, gender, age, disability or national origin.

**Assumptions**

The researcher identified four assumptions going into this research. First, there were 12 to 15 leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry who were willing to participate in this research in the role of interviewees. Second, all interviewees answered all questions truthfully. Third, some of the leaders of color did not agree with the statement of the

problem of this research, the purpose of this research, the significance of this research, or with the strategies mentioned in this research. Finally, by the conclusion of this research there was sufficient data to provide realistic strategies that were consistent among the interviewees which will provoke further research.

### **Limitations**

The researcher identified two major limitations facing this research. First, with the semi-structural interview method, there was a risk of a participant slightly embellishing a story, or leaving out certain information as he or she answers questions from his or her perspective. Another limitation was the small sample size which was restricted to the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. These leaders of color work in an environment which is more diverse and may not share similar experiences as other leaders of color outside the city of Las Vegas or outside the hospitality and gaming industry. The clientele of the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry is dynamically diverse, ranging from age and color to socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, these leaders of color may be completely oblivious to their surroundings, and lack the emotional intelligence to assess his or her work environment, as it pertains to racial stereotyping or other racial issues in their workplace.

### **Delimitations**

This research was conducted November 2013 through January 2014 and was restricted to a sample population of African-American and Hispanic-American males and females who are leaders in the hospitality and gaming industry in the city of Las Vegas. Regarding education, all interviewees held a minimum of a regionally-accredited Bachelor's degree. All interviewees worked in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry for a minimum of three years and currently hold a Supervisor, Director, Manager, Vice President or Executive position in the hospitality and gaming industry for at least two years.

## Definition of Terms

The definitions of these terms will be used as a guide for the reader to understand and follow throughout this research.

- *African American* – Refers to Americans of African descent (Hackett-Barker, Mio, & Tumaming, 2006).
- *Civil Rights Act of 1964* – Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (DeNisi & Griffin, 2005).
- *EEOC* – Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which regulates that all individuals have an equal chance for employment, regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin (DeNisi & Griffin, 2005).
- *Hispanic American* – Refers to Americans of Hispanic descent (Hackett-Barker et al., 2006).
- *Hospitality and Gaming Industry* – Defined as any facility located in Las Vegas, Nevada, Clark County, Nevada, which currently holds a gaming license through the Nevada Gaming Control Board Gaming Commission. (Gray, personal communication, 2013)
- *Leaders of Color* – A group of American leaders, who are of African and Hispanic descent. (Gray, personal communication, 2013)
- *Leader-Member Exchange Theory* – The act of leaders categorizing followers into two groups: in-groups and out-groups (Northouse, 2010).
- *Race* – A group of people, who share a specific combination of physical, and, or genetically inherited characteristics which distinguish them from other groups (Hackett-Barker et al., 2006).
- *Racial Stereotyping* – A generalization about a group of its members on the basis of their racial categorization (Hackett-Barker et al., 2006).

- *Stereotype Threat* – A fear that one will confirm the negative stereotype of a group to which one belongs in an area in which the individual excels (Steel, 2010).
- *Title VII* – Prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (DeNisi & Griffin, 2005).

### **Background of the Las Vegas Hospitality and Gaming Industry**

In 1991, Warren Beatty starred in the Oscar winning film, *Bugsy*, which depicted the story of the famous and infamous New York gangster Benjamin Siegel and his rise to immorality as the visionary of what is known as the world-famous center of gambling and glamour: Las Vegas. However, the truth is, before the 1946 December opening of Siegel's Flamingo Hotel and Casino, the Las Vegas strip was already a thriving tourist attraction with two successful casinos on the outskirts of the young town as early as 1905 (Gragg, 2007).

By 1940, Radio KENO spread the news of Las Vegas throughout the state of Nevada as well as Arizona and California. Most tourists who visited the town admitted their curiosity was sparked by unintentionally stumbling across the broadcast from their car radios (Gragg, 2007). Then came Ben Siegel and friends. While criminal elements had already taken a huge part of Las Vegas, it was Siegel's management and vision that marked the beginning of four decades of organized crime management throughout Las Vegas. Moreover, it was Ben Siegel's love for Caribbean-inspired offerings and his notorious affinity for Hollywood that lead the way for many of the five-star megaresorts that exist today (Bernhard, Green, & Lucas, 2008). It was this high visibility of Siegel that was frowned upon by his mafia peers in the hospitality and gaming industry, believing his behavior was not serving the overall objective of respectability and profitability, which is still current in today's MBA Las Vegas where gaming leaders look to normalize the industry through Wall Street and government policy makers (Bernhard et al., 2008).

The late 1960s of Las Vegas introduced corporatization to the hospitality and gaming industry. In 1969, the state of Nevada enacted the Corporate Gaming Act, which made way for

millionaire Howard Hughes to purchase several hotel-casinos along the strip and end mob ownership in Las Vegas, but not mob operations. Hughes continued to employ staffers who skimmed money for underworld partners. There were other underworld figures that would come up with creative ways around the Corporate Gaming Act. The Argent Corporation, headed by Allen Glick, owned the Stardust, Fremont and the Hacienda, but the real owner was Frank *Lefty* Rosenthal, a sports gambler and bookmaker with mob ties, portrayed by Robert DeNiro in the film, *Casino*. Ultimately, it was government legislative and economic pressures that would lead to the demise of most mafia operations in Las Vegas (Bernhard et al., 2008).

The present leadership of the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry has featured multiple levels of well-educated members, referred to as the MBA Las Vegas: Harvard Business School graduate and former CEO of the Harrah, Gary Loveman; University of Pennsylvania graduate and former CEO of the MGM Mirage, Steve Wynn; and many more have come through Las Vegas with backgrounds in business and law and taken the city to the next level. The academe of hospitality and gaming has resulted in innovation for the industry, such as a database management system created by Loveman, while a professor at Harvard, that he brought to the daily operations at the Harrah. Yet the most well-known member of the MBA Las Vegas is Steve Wynn. When Wynn made his dream of the Mirage come to life in 1989, at the time, it made its mark as the most significant Las Vegas development in the past twenty years. Hospitality and gaming has become an enterprise which is known and accepted all over the world. No longer is a personal connection the key to a penthouse suite. The present MBA leaders of Las Vegas implemented more of a corporate frequent flier database approach (Bernhard et al., 2008).

There are three eras of the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry: The maverick era; the mafia era; and now the MBA era. The mavericks focused on selling a desert getaway; the mafia exploded the public hypocritical admiration for the gangster as an antihero; and the

MBA era uses both the maverick and mafia era to sell Las Vegas as just another American City, while giving a nod and wink tribute to its naughty past (Bernhard et al., 2008).

### **Chapter Summary**

There may be a concern among people of color that success in the workplace may be contingent on their ability to not be negatively stereotyped. There are laws on the books which officially forbid and penalize these actions but cannot stop the unofficial prejudices that live on in the minds of people of color when it comes to race. Therefore, there may be individual strategies which leaders of color have developed and implemented to rise above these challenges.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. These five chapters represent and explore the successful strategies of leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the workplace. The content of each chapter is as follows: Chapter 1 provided the statement of the problem, research questions, the significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and the background of the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. Chapter 2 provides a review of previous research, related literature, and theoretical framework. Chapter 3 provides research methodology, population and sample, data gathering instrument, validity and reliability of instrument, data gathering procedure and data analysis procedure. Chapter 4 provides the data collected and analysis of the data; finally, Chapter 5 represents a summary of the findings of the research with conclusions and recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

### Introduction

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the existing literature that pertains to this research. The primary theorist for this study is Dr. Claude M. Steel, the author of *Whistling Vivaldi, how stereotypes affect us and what we can do*. Dr. Steel also performed numerous researches on the topic of Stereotype Threat. This literature builds upon the purpose statement of this research which deals with overcoming the threat of stereotyping in the workplace with leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. The literature review will provide relevance to the research questions.

### Re-statement of Research Questions

1. How do leaders of color define effective leadership in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
2. How can the performance of leaders of color be hindered by the threat of racial stereotyping in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
3. What are the ways leaders of color utilize assimilation to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
4. What strategies have been used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?

### Previous Research

Unfortunately, there is limited research similar to this topic; however, there are two previous studies the researcher found very similar to this research. Study One: *Intergroup Anxiety Effects on Implicit Racial Evaluation and Stereotyping* (Amodio & Hamilton, 2012). Study Two: *Racial Stereotyping in the Media* (Stein, 1994).

**Study one.** *Intergroup Anxiety Effects on Implicit Racial Evaluation and Stereotyping* explored a body of research which has shown there can be intergroup anxiety that may activate

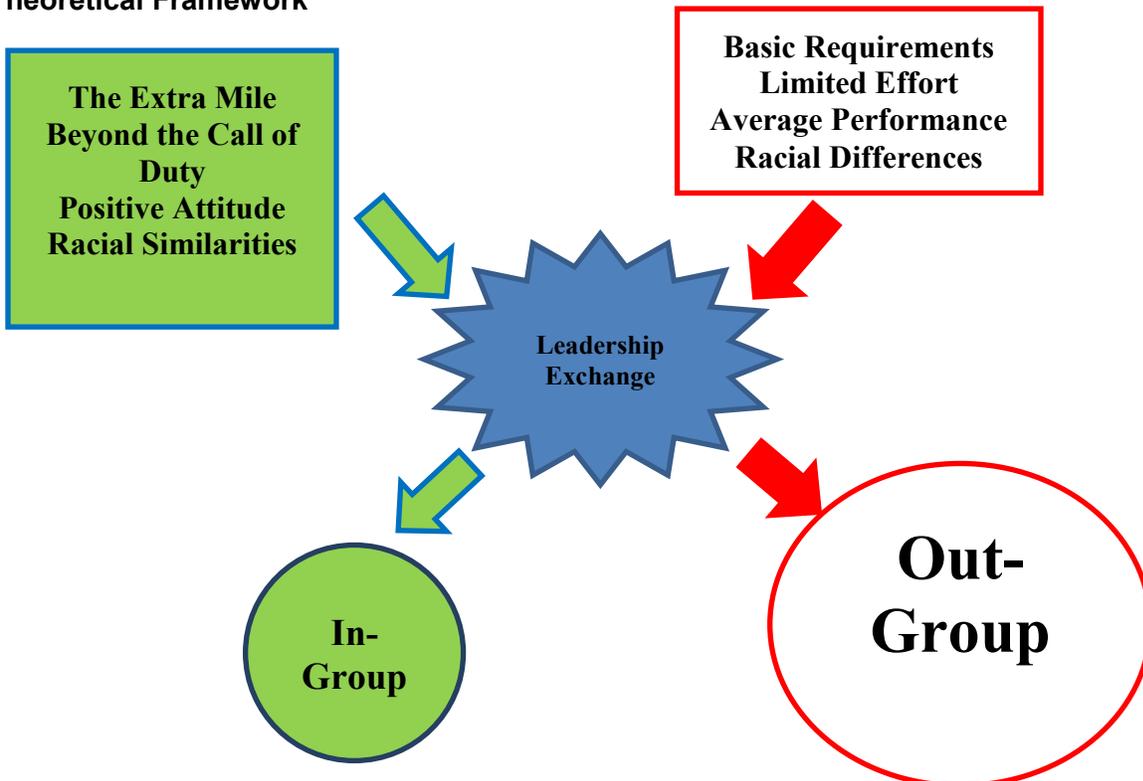
racial stereotyping during interracial interaction between African-American and Caucasian people; moreover, feeling anxious in interracial interactions has predicted more prejudiced, hostile, and avoidant tendencies toward out-group members. This study considered how the neurocognitive mechanisms involved in anxiety relate to those underlying implicit social cognition. Implicit racial bias reflects learned associations with a racial group category. This study also suggests that intergroup anxiety amplifies the evaluative associations with the relevant racial groups, specifically, between a White-American interacting with a Black-American. Intergroup anxiety would amplify both negative associations with blacks and positive associations with whites (Amodio & Hamilton, 2012).

**Study two.** *Racial Stereotyping in the Media* explored how mainstream media's coverage of people of color is filled with old stereotypes, offensive terminology, biased reporting and a myopic interpretation of American society, especially in crime, sports, and the entertainment industry. The result was a 56-page report which validates a suspicion that the mainstream media coverage of people of color is perforated with racial stereotypes, racially offensive terminology, bias, and a myopic interpretation; moreover, day-to-day coverage revealed how people of color are often ignored except for stories that are more notably to crime, sports and entertainment. One particular portion of the research features an Assistant Style editor, Richard Leiby, a white man, of the *Washington Post*. Leiby was faulted for his first-person account of the *1993 National Association of Black Journalists* convention after writing how he found it necessary to speak with a black dialect when speaking to conventioners. He attempted to explain how you have to establish your cross-cultural bonafides by dropping the *g's* on your *ing-verbs* in a phony jive and even trying out *dis* and maybe even *yo*. The use of dialect and references to drinking and dancing echo the stereotype of blacks as stupid, reckless and carefree or Sambos, that date back to slavery, the *News Watch report* stated (Stein, 1994).

There is similar research that focuses on racial insensitive behavior, the origin of the behavior, and the result of the behavior, instead of research which brainstorms on what people

of color have done since 1864, in an attempt to separate themselves, not from their racial identity, but from the negative perceptions that are attached to their racial identity that may hinder progress and create barriers to success.

### Theoretical Framework



*Figure 1.* Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). Leadership exchange, (Blue), will exchange rewards for employee's performance, an employees' performance can fall on two sides, (Green), employees that go the extra mile or have racial similarities with the leader and in exchange become part of the in-group, or an employee can just provide status quo performance or is racially stereotyped, (White), and in exchange become part of the out-group. (Gray, personal communication, 2013)

The theoretical framework is Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). A direct result of racism, discrimination and racial stereotyping may be separation, even in the workplace where this research was conducted. LMX is unique because it focuses on the dyadic process between a leader and a follower in the workplace. Earlier research on leadership believed that leaders treated all their followers like a collective group; however, LMX challenged earlier research that leaders can and will create a special bond with certain followers in regards to personality, interpersonal skills, or job competencies. As a result, leaders may categorize followers into two

groups: in-groups and out-groups. A major criticism is LMX can support the development of discriminatory privileged groups of race, gender, and age in the workplace. LMX points out the need for more effective leadership and member communication that is based on mutual trust, respect, and commitment (Northouse, 2010).

Within most organizations: business, government, universities and other social organizations, there is a hierarchical structure that can make it difficult for leaders to develop an equal relationship with everyone in the organization. The most effective way for these organizations to accomplish goals is to develop key relationships with a special group of reliable subordinates to maintain order by being the leader's eyes and ears. Due to a leader's limited time and resources within an organization they must decide which subordinates can benefit them the most. Different subordinates provide different resources. So, to maximize benefits and lower risk, leaders may have to build an LMX relationship with subordinates that will benefit them, as well as the organization (Da & Liang, 2004).

There can be a major impact of communication traits on LMX relationships. The results found that subordinates who were less apprehensive to communicate with their superiors' experienced and higher quality of LMX; another factor that increased higher quality of LMX is being cognitively flexible, which may increase the dyadic communication between supervisors and subordinates. A subordinate will have the flexibility to adapt to a diverse list of topics and situations when communicating with their supervisor; therefore, dialogue between superiors and subordinates is enhanced, and LMX quality is improved (Madlock, Martin, Bogdan, & Ervin, 2007). Myers (2006) defines LMX Theory in the following:

Subordinates in in-group relationships have high-quality exchanges with their superiors, which result in greater amounts of support, communication and responsibility; subordinates in out-group relationships have low-quality exchanges with their superiors, which result in lower amounts of support, communication, and responsibility. (p. 294)

LMX is a relationship-based leadership theory that has a gigantic impact for leader-follower relationships based on a leader's behavior. This implies that a leader's behavior can vary among a group of followers as a result of dissimilar interpersonal interest. The quality of LMX can likely differ between followers of the same leader. The relationship quality between a leader and members can be illustrated through mutual liking, loyalty or faithfulness, contribution in terms of effort and support, and respect in the form of a personal reputation for excellence. Moreover, high levels of LMX consist of high-quality, high agreement, and high consensus (Schyns & Day, 2010). Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne (1997) states, "A high-quality LMX relationship is based on social exchange, meaning that the leader and follower must contribute resources valued by the other party and both parties must view the exchange as fair" (p. 50).

### **Leadership**

Before exploring strategies of leaders of color, it is necessary to define leadership. Leadership is a situation in which an individual leads another individual or a group of individuals with the purpose of accomplishing a shared vision or common goals. There are three collective approaches to leadership and how it leads followers to a shared vision and common goals. First, a leader can choose to accomplish shared vision and common goals through transactional events with their followers, in which both can affect and be affected by each other, making leadership more than just a one-way event. Second, a leader can accomplish shared vision and common goals through influence. Influencing followers is important in times of follower uncertainty about direction toward the shared vision or common goals, or even a conversation of what the vision or goals are; without influence, leadership cannot exist. Finally, leaders accomplish shared vision and common goals by stressing an ethical duty to attend to concerns and needs of their followers. Leaders are necessary to set an example and instill and/or restore values within their followers (Northouse, 2010). Despite relatively new research and leadership in its basic form does not have a required ethical component, ethical leadership is best described along two related dimensions: *moral person* and *moral manager*. The moral person is

an ethical leader and is an honest and trustworthy individual. The moral person is approachable and exhibits a genuine concern for other people. Followers can approach a moral person with problems and concerns. The moral manager dimension refers to how the position of leadership is utilized to promote ethical behavior in the workplace. The moral manager establishes the standard for ethics by modeling the way for their followers, but also decides how these standards will be reinforced (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Ultimately, it is the interest of the leader and the followers to believe that what they are doing is inherently right and results in something good happening, as opposed to something bad.

Why are leaders important? There are three recognizable reasons why leaders are important. First, leaders are responsible for the effectiveness of organizations and the people that work there, no matter how big or small, no matter for-profit or not-for-profit; an organization's success or failure depends on the perceived quality at the top, and that is the leader. Second, the change and upheaval of the past years have left many organizations and their people with no place to hide, and in some cases running for help wherever they can find it due to a lack of vision and purpose; there is a mutual pessimism between organizations and the people they employ. A leader should be someone to shine a guiding light of purpose and optimism. Finally, there is a pervasive national concern about the integrity, or lack thereof, with institutions in recent years. This United States of America once had enormous trust in government and the banking industry, but now that trust has significantly diminished over recent years, and only an effective leader can restore the integrity needed to move people forward. Everyone has a definition of what makes a leader, but some of the most consistent ingredients are, but not limited to a guiding vision, passion, integrity, curiosity and a sense of adventure; all can be essential ingredients to becoming an effective leader. With a clear guiding vision, a leader needs to know where he or she wants to take the individual, group, team or organization, and how to utilize its strengths and overcome any failures. A leader needs passion for what he or she is doing to inspire followers. Integrity has three essential parts--self-knowledge, candor,

and maturity; a leader must not only have these three to make up integrity, it should be something the leader constantly works to maintain. Finally, curiosity and a sense of adventure are essential for leadership because a leader should want to continue his or her learning; a leader should be willing to take risks (Bennis, 2003).

Along with the above ingredients, a leader should have a very diverse skill set, but more advanced skills are necessary for more exemplary leadership. According to leadership literature, there are five practices of exemplary leadership: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Exemplary leadership models the way by walking the walk and talking the talk; all followers should look for and expect this from exemplary leadership. A leader that does not model the way may have a limited skill set and limited self-discipline. When modeling the way, a leader has to be open with his or her heart and willing to let followers know what the leader thinks and believes by sharing and acting on the leader's values. Next, exemplary leadership will inspire a shared vision, as mentioned earlier. Leaders lead followers to a shared vision or common goals; however, vision must first be inspired before acted upon. When inspiring a shared vision, a leader must speak the language of their followers. The third practice of exemplary leadership is the ability to challenge the process. Exemplary leadership knows when, where, and if, there is a moment to take on the status quo; challenging the process is necessary when the process hinders leaders and followers from accomplishing shared visions and common goals. Moreover, challenging the process includes, but is not limited to, stepping out toward the unknown while searching opportunities to innovate and improve. Fourth, exemplary leadership enables others to act. Just because leaders and followers have a shared vision and common goals does not mean there is a natural inclination to act on what it will take to accomplish shared visions and common goals. Enabling others to act means helping followers feel strong and capable, as a result, they exceed their own expectations. An exemplary leader must know his or her followers, what they are capable of doing, even if the follower doesn't know, to enable followers to physically, mentally

and spiritually act. Finally, exemplary leadership must encourage the heart which means genuinely caring about followers and motivating them to move forward through good as well as difficult times (Posner & Kouzes, 2007).

There are many leadership techniques, theories and practices, but true leadership is not always clear and precise. There are individuals working hard to obtain leadership, and others have it placed upon them without asking, formal and informal leadership, known as *Assigned and Emergent Leadership*. The assigned form of leadership is based on formal titles and positions in a community or organization. The caveat is that individuals who hold these positions do not always become the real leader of the group, community, or organization. The second form of leadership, emergent leadership, is the result of an individual being perceived as the most influential by other members and becomes the leader of the group, community or organization. Emergent leaders are perceived as more dominant, intelligent, informed, and confident about their own abilities and these individuals sometimes fall into the position of leadership. Emergent leadership, informal leadership, or non-sanctioned leadership is just as important to an organization as the assigned formal leadership. True leaders have the potential to emerge as a result of influence within a group or organization and are just as important as leaders who are designated to lead through formal authority. Moreover, organizations today need leaders to create visions, challenge the process, and inspire organizational followers to want to achieve. This level of responsibility cannot just be left to chance that an assigned or emergent leader will be the only one to possess this skill set. Great leadership can and will break through formal barriers to accomplish what needs to be done if organizations are open to it (Judge & Robbins, 2008).

Today's organizational supporters and adversaries develop a perception of an organization by the perception of the leader. If the leader has a strong image and respect, it helps make for a stronger organization that will achieve its purpose. However, it is better to define a leader based on his or her real strengths, value, and achievements. It is the leader's

responsibility to live by the values he or she projects. It is the responsibility of followers to help leaders accomplish that task (Chaleff, 2003).

**Authentic leadership.** An established definition of leadership that pertains to this research: leading followers to accomplish a shared vision and common goals through various approaches. There are several dimensions of leadership that are relevant to leaders of color as it pertains to overcoming the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace. Authentic leadership is the first. Authentic leadership is the authenticity of leaders and their leadership style. There are many challenges to leaders of today; one can be the ability to present himself or herself as someone who is unique and genuine in their approach to a challenging situation and their approach to dealing with followers. Authentic Leadership is one of the newest approaches to leadership focusing on complete authenticity. Authentic leadership is not easily defined, but rather a complex process that is difficult to characterize. There are three unique viewpoints in an attempt to capture and clarify an acceptable meaning of true authentic leadership: intrapersonal, developmental, and interpersonal. Intrapersonal focuses on the feelings and thinking that takes place within a leader through his or her self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-concept; furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on a leader's life story and the meaning attached to those experiences. The developmental viewpoint highlights that leaders do not have to be born, but can be made through a process of life experiences that maybe triggered by major events in one's life (Northouse, 2010). West (1993) states, "Quality Leadership is neither the product of one great individual nor the result of odd historical accidents", he continues, "Rather, it comes from deeply bred traditions and communities that shape and mold talented and gifted persons" (p. 56). An authentic leader, over time, can develop four related components: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Finally, the interpersonal viewpoint, leadership is relational and is created by leaders and followers together. Leaders affect followers and followers affect leaders, and this is created when leaders and followers share similar values (Northouse, 2010).

There are two practical approaches to authentic leadership: The first practical approach focuses on an action plan for leaders dealing with challenging situations; the moral premise is to do what is right for the right problem. There are six components: meaning, mission, power, structure, resources and existence. The point is to locate the component that is most relevant to the challenge; moreover, choose the best component from the same six that can best address and solve the challenge (Terry, 1993). The second practical approach focuses on the need for hard work and self-evaluation to become an authentic leader. Using the same hard work that it could take to be a successful athlete, becoming a great leader is more than taking a few college courses or a job seminar, it is about recognizing and utilizing the unique strengths you were born with and continuing to develop. Also, acknowledging and learning from your shortcomings is necessary to increase long term leadership potential. Would-be leaders should have as many leadership experiences early in life as they can. After every experience, an individual should reflect on the experience and know where he or she may want to change, and know where he or she wants to have their next leadership experience (George, 2003). Furthermore, it is essential to discover your authentic leadership to be an effective leader. Being an authentic leader means you must be genuine and have passion for your purpose and this includes practicing your values, leading with your heart, and developing connected relationships, even when faced with adversity. An authentic leader can be seen as a visionary for the ability to communicate a desirable future for his or her followers. However, a solid vision which a leader believes in does not always live up to expectations or guarantees accuracy of prediction, but it does engage followers to head in the direction the authentic leader thinks is the best. If the leader is more inauthentic, the follower may feel manipulated about the shared vision and common goals and become disengaged, and long-term performance will suffer (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

**Leadership through emotional intelligence.** A leader finding his or her authentic self is only the start; leaders have to utilize strategic thinking and behave in the most effective way

when leading the best and worst followers. Great leaders have the ability to tap into the passion of followers and inspire them to being their best. The general consensus concerning leadership is great strategy, vision, and powerful ideas. Still, great leadership may also be the result of a more primal element: emotions. No matter what the goal or vision, success depends on how a leader does it, and if a leader cannot drive the emotions of his or her followers in the right direction, goals and visions, even if they are accomplished, will never be accomplished to their full potential. Furthermore, all cultures through history have looked to leaders for clarity when faced with confusion, and certainty when faced with uncertainty or threat. The leader's primal job is to act as the emotional guide of any human group (Boyatzis, Goldman, & Mckee, 2002). Goldman (1997) defines emotional intelligence as follows:

Emotional intelligence: abilities such as being able to motivate oneself, and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification: to regulate one's mood and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and hope. (p. 34)

There are many IQ tests used to measure intelligence through the most standardized testing, existing for years at most Ivy League universities. One group of Ivy League students in the 1940s that scored higher on standardized testing than their classmates were tracked well into their middle-ages. These students with higher scores than lower-scoring peers were not considered particularly successful by comparison. Success was defined as salary, status, friends, and romantic relationships. Emotional intelligence continues where IQ scores stop, especially in the midst of the vicissitudes of everyday life, when an individual needs it the most. The focal point of leadership is expeditiously becoming emotional competence. Through emotional competence, an effective leader should be able to develop effective followers. The inability of those in leadership to lead with emotional competence leads to lower performance of followers. A leader is either going to have high emotional competence, moderate emotional competence, or low emotional competence. How well the organization utilizes the talents of its employees will be a direct result of how high, moderate, or low the emotional competence is of

that leader. If a leader is to deliver a sincere message to followers, it must be from the heart. This is the only way it will be convincing to the followers. A true charismatic leader sincerely believes the message he or she is trying to convey to a team or group. The manipulative leader plays the role for a diminutive time just for the appearance of sincerity with the objective to manipulate the follower. A charismatic leader starts leading from the heart and acts from an authentic belief (Goldman, 1997). Goldman (1998) states the following:

In general, emotional charisma depends on three factors: feeling strong emotions, being able to express those emotions forcefully, and being an emotional sender rather than a receiver. Highly expressive people communicate through their facial expression, their voice, their gestures, and their whole body. This ability allows them to move, inspire, and captivate others. (p.186)

Leadership has a downward ripple effect, good or bad. Average leaders do not make their presence as obvious as effective leaders who go out of their way to open a line of communication with all subordinates. The effective leader takes an interest in his or her staff's personal lives as a way of keeping the communication conversational for both sides. As a result, all staff on all levels learn how to keep the lines of communication open. A leader must know when to be tough and assertive when dealing with subordinates. A common failure of a leader can be passivity out of fear of not being liked. An effective leader must find equanimity with his or her staff that will result in success for all (Goldman, 1998).

**Leadership through mentoring.** The most underrated, unsung, and unappreciated task of leaders is the skill of mentoring; even some of the most effective leaders can forsake what can be known as the lost art form of mentoring. Mentoring is about effective communication, empathic nurturing, active listening, and providing constructive feedback to a follower. The mentor is not a know-it-all tyrant who always has the last word, but a caring professional who provides guidance in the form of coaching. This does not mean the ideas and opinions of a mentor should not be challenged; on the contrary, a mentoring relationship should encourage

shifting of thoughts, roles, and ideas. This requires confrontation, but if the relationship is built on trust, respect and ethics, then the result of this confrontation will be personal and professional growth for both mentors and mentees (Kiltz, Danzig, & Szecsy, 2004). As mentioned in the definition of leadership, the mentor/mentee relationship is more than a one-way street. Mentoring is equally beneficial for the mentee as well as the mentor. When you mentor, you take the challenge of having a lasting effect on the professional life of a protégé. You will foster insight, knowledge, or expertise and expand areas of growth for him or her. For the mentor, mentoring gives you an outstanding opportunity to share and facilitate what you have learned and mastered through years of personal and professional practice (Russell & Nelson, 2009).

There is a need for strong leadership in organizations; leaders set the tone for a new, existing, or changing organizational culture (Schein, 2004).

### **Organizational Culture**

Leadership, effective or ineffective, can be contingent on the organizational culture. Organizational culture refers to a system of shared meaning and beliefs which is held by members of an organization that distinguishes their organization from other organizations. What distinguishes McDonalds from hamburger places around the world? The McDonald's Corporation has over 30,000 restaurants in 119 countries worldwide, earning over \$17 billion in yearly revenue. Aggression is a trait of its organizational culture that separates it from others by making brand loyalty its primary goal. The company registers hundreds of trademarks, vigorously files registration oppositions against possible infringing products and service trademarks, and aggressively attacks infringement of its own marks (Grant, 2010).

The research suggests there are seven primary characteristics that establish organizational culture: innovation and risk taking; attention to detail; outcome orientation; people orientation; team orientation; aggressiveness, as mentioned in the McDonald's brand; and stability. These key characteristics shape how members accomplish goals and behave among

each other as well as the external environment: customers, communities, and competition.

Organizational culture can also display what lies beneath the surface of an organization, the unseen and unconscious dynamics of an organization that grows strong roots over time (Judge & Robbins, 2008). Schein (2004) states the following:

Any social unit that has some kind of shared history will have evolved a culture, with the strength of that culture dependent on the length of its existence, the stability of the group's membership, and the emotional intensity of the actual historical experiences they have shared. (p. 11)

An organizational culture can also be revealed and communicated to its employees, customers and communities through the use of organizational symbols. Symbols can be as obvious as the golden arches of a fast food organization, or the *swoosh* that represents one of the world's leaders in sports apparel, or as cryptic as myths, vision, and values which lay the foundation for the organization's purpose and mission. Heroes and heroines, through past work and glories accomplishments, establish living and breathing logos. Fairy tales and stories serve as ways to resolve dilemmas with the organization. Rituals and ceremonies celebrate or re-establish purpose and mission. Metaphors, humor, and play maintain a human connection between the employees, customers, and communities the organization depends on for its existence. Organizational symbols are the building blocks of culture that develop over time to help sustain an organizational culture through the good times as well as the bad (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

**Strong organizational cultures verse weak organizational cultures.** The research emphasizes there are strong and weak organizational cultures. A strong organizational culture is where the leaders clearly define the work styles, beliefs and norms of all employees, but even a weak organizational culture can control just about everything that takes place. Weak organizational cultures allow for some flexibility among its employees when it comes to work styles, beliefs, and norms. Disorganization or contradiction to daily work is a grave consequence

a weak organization will have to deal with. The actions of all in the organization must be consistent and followed. If someone or something is out of place it will be magnified and must be immediately corrected (Judge & Robbins, 2008).

All organizational cultures exist, breathe, and live through its people; the people culture, and the organization are one in itself (Schein, 2004).

### **People Culture**

There can be no organizational culture without people culture, the ones who make up the group or team and provide the human dimension of organizational culture. There is an enormous amount of ways to define people culture, but for the purpose of this research, people culture is the perceptions, beliefs and behaviors a group of people share and value. In simpler terms: how a certain group of people see the world. People culture is not always about the biology of race. Two people can share the same race and can have a completely different cultural make-up. Just because you are born of a certain race does not mean one will be acculturated to the culture that is stereotypical of that race. People culture is not about ethnicity. If someone is from a certain geographical region, it does not mean he or she will act in accordance to the dominant culture of that region; people culture does not necessarily conform to ethnicity or citizenship (Matsumoto, 1994). Norma Carr-Ruffino (2006) defines culture as the following:

Culture is like the air we breathe: We take it for granted, rarely think about it, and assume our world viewpoint is merely the human viewpoint. We can work more powerfully with people from other cultures if we understand some key concepts of what culture is all about, how it affects our personal reality, and how we learn the beliefs, values, and rules of our culture. (p. 24)

It should be noted, just like within an organizational culture, the concept of the dominant culture also exists among people culture. A dominant people culture is more visible than less dominate cultures, and less dominate cultures do not receive equitable treatment; as a result,

less dominant cultures fail to attain equal levels of success (Lindsey & Terrell, 2009). Ultimately, the definition of people culture can be as diverse as a people culture. People culture can be a learned behavior. It can also be considered a list of standard operating procedures. People culture can be a combination of traditional ideas and related values, which are shared and transmitted from one generation to the next. Finally, people culture can be a set of customs a group has learned when responding to life issues: death, births, or weddings (Parvis, 2003). Furthermore, just like organizational culture, people cultures have very similar parts: beliefs, values, heroes, myths, rituals, networks and symbols. The beliefs are how people see themselves, the world, and their relationship in the context of their people culture. The values are the commitment to one way of doing things because it is preferable to the way other cultures may do it. The heroes and heroines are role models who personify the values of a people culture or group. Next, myths are stories or legends that feature the heroes of the people culture and support the values and strengths of the group or culture. There are rituals that include the customary day-to-day, month-to-month, year-to-year daily behaviors, operations, and procedures of the group or people culture that are unique from other groups or people cultures. Next, networks are the preferred means of communication within a group or organization. Finally, symbols can be icons, a song, or a flag that represent a group or organization's cosmetic appearance (Carr-Ruffino, 2006). Within people culture, there can be more than one truth.

**Etics and emics.** *Etics* and *Emics* are truths; they are truths that can be universal or culturally specific. An etic refers to a universal truth or principle that can be consistent across different people cultures. An emic refers to a culturally specific truth or principle that is different across people culture. Etic is truth for all; emic is truth for some but not for all (Matsumoto, 1994). Etics and emics can be communicated through behaviors, values, beliefs, attitudes or rituals. The two most popular etics, a universal truth that is consistent across different people cultures, would be the celebration of birth and the mourning and burial of the dead. An example

of emics, a culturally specific truth, are Quinceaneras, a ritual in the Hispanic culture that celebrates a female's fifteenth birthday, and a Bar Mitzvah, a Jewish cultural ritual, in which a boy becomes a man at the age of thirteen. Historically, people cultures find ways to differentiate from other cultures mostly due to the basic need for survival; population density, availability of food, and other natural resources can alter what people cultures value and believe and how they behave. The various emics that develop over time are not a problem; it is how other people cultures attempt to conceptualize the driving forces that are behind the differences (Matsumoto, 1994).

**Ethnocentrism.** Due to the fact most individuals exist in their own culturally specific people culture, there is a tendency to only see the world through one's own emics. Filtering truth according to the cultural backgrounds we are acculturated within, this is referred to as ethnocentrism: the viewing and interpreting of behaviors, values, and beliefs of other cultures through one's own cultural glasses (Matsumoto, 1994). There are a variety of non-verbal behaviors and customs that are people culturally specific: formal and informal greetings, body movement, and eye-contact. Ethnocentrism is culturally conditioned in most of us as we are surrounded by our own culturally specific behaviors, beliefs and values. Ethnocentrism maintains its power through invisibility: what you do not see will not disrupt your world. The ethnocentric people are conditioned and rewarded for remaining unaware and oblivious of how their beliefs and actions may unfairly oppress people of color, women, and other people cultures or groups in society. When it comes to organizational culture, ethnocentric people fail to acknowledge how the status quo or standard operating procedure can deny equal access and opportunities for some while providing advantages and benefits for others (Sue, 2004). Sue & Sue (2003) states the following about ethnocentrism:

Other societies or groups may be perceived as less developed, uncivilized,

primitive, or even pathological. The group's lifestyles or ways of doing things are considered inferior. Physical characteristics such as dark complexion, black hair, and brown eyes; cultural characteristics such as belief in non-Christian religions (Islam, Confucianism, polytheism, etc.); collectivism, present time orientation, and the importance of shared wealth; and linguistic characteristics such as bilingualism, non-standard English, speaking with an accent, use of nonverbal and contextual communications; and reliance on the oral tradition are usually seen as less desirable by the society. (p. 70)

However, ethnocentrism does not have to only have an inferior component, it can travel both ways; ethnocentrism can have a superior component as well. If one was to put on their cultural glasses, they could choose another people culture and consider the people of that culture as superior to their own, based on nothing more than superficial and unsubstantiated myths. Every people culture can share similar characteristics, but look different at the same time. There are many variations of people concerning race and ethnicity.

### **Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT), alternately referred to as a theoretical and/or interpretive framework, draws together premises and strategies largely from critical theory, but related directly to race, racism, and power and is being increasingly used by educational scholars to analyze race education (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Furthermore, it analyzes race, racism, and power within a broader perspective, including economic, historical, contextual, group, self-interest, emotional, and unconscious (Alexander, 2012). Derrick Bell, considered the father of CRT, combined allegories with legal findings to illustrate to the American society how racial inequalities will never be resolved, yet only addressed to the extent that whites see themselves as threatened by the status quo (Closson, 2010). Taylor (1998) states, "As a form of oppositional scholarship, CRT challenges the experience of whites as the normative standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of

people of color", the author continues, " is crucial for understanding racial dynamics, particularly the way that current inequalities are connected to earlier, more overt, practices of racial exclusion" (p.122). CRT operates on four basic tenets:

1. Racism is normal and not an aberration; racism is an everyday experience for people of color;
2. White supremacy serves psychic and material purposes; as a result, it is an arduous task to completely eradicate;
3. Race is socially constructed and is the product of social thought and relations. Races are categories society has invented, manipulated, and altered when desired by society; and
4. Differential racialization is common, and it has consequences. For example, Africans were necessary to work the fields until slavery ended. Asians were necessary to build the railroads. Mexicans were necessary to work the agricultural fields (Alexander, 2012).

Even today, it seems that African-American men are necessary to win a National Football League championship and/or a National Basketball Association championship. There are six key aspects of CRT:

1. Racism is an endemic problem;
2. It questions and rejects the notions of a philosophy of objectivity, neutrality, colorblindness, and meritocracy;
3. It demands a context/historical analysis of institutional policies;
4. It recognizes people of color experiences and knowledge regarding individuals, groups and communities in analyzing society;
5. It embraces interdisciplinary collaboration; and
6. It strives to eliminate racially based oppression as part of a strategy to end all forms of oppression (Villalpando & Bernal, 2002).

Critical Race Theory relates to this study as an acknowledgement that racial issues have to continually be academically studied for feasible strategies for people of color through personal and professional experiences, historical and institutional policies, and interdisciplinary collaboration; furthermore, bringing to the surface the realities of current issues concerning race, racism, and power that may get lost among themes such as objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy.

### **Race and Ethnicity**

Within people culture, there lies the most identifiable element of culture: race and ethnicity. Charmaraman and Grossman (2010) state, "Racial identity has been historically understood as responses to racism and prejudice while ethnic identity has included a sense of belonging to a group of connected values, traditions, and often languages" (p. 144). However, too often, culture, race, and ethnicity are used interchangeably. According to Atkinson (2004), they are "Three of the most misunderstood and misused words in the English language" (p. 5). According to Spickard (1992), "The process of racial labeling starts with geography, culture, and family ties and runs through economics and politics to biology, and not the other way around" (p. 16). However, when it comes to race relations, if people have at least one good eye, chances are they will leap at the other way around and start with biology. Even the slowest witted police officer knows the first question to ask a witness in any crime investigation with the intent to track down a perpetrator: *What did the subject look like?* Ethnicity refers to the combination of race and culture, determined by both physical and cultural characteristics (Hackett-Barker et al., 2006). An African-American person will have the physical characteristic of dark-skin, which is a biological concept of race. Moreover, if you were to add the cultural characteristic of an American person being of African descent, this would equal ethnicity. It is contingent on one's geographical place of origin one can be of a completely different culture. Examples: African-American, African-Cuban, or African-Brazilian. It is important to keep in mind there are some critics who suggests race has no biological basis; race plays an important role in

the global community and the impact race can have on social experiences should not be taken for granted. Race has been, and still is, affiliated with significant economic, political, social, and psychological consequences. When it comes to the social world, race is used to divide people into groups and label them, and these groups are associated with differing levels of status, disparities in access to resources, and discrepancies in achievement, health, and well-being outcomes (Shih, Bonam, Sanchez, & Peck, 2007).

### **Racism**

Caver and Livers (2002) share a story about a young black female reporter who approached a CEO at a media convention and inquired about his view and hiring practices regarding African-Americans in leadership positions. The CEO honestly replied he was afraid to hire because if the candidate did not succeed and he had to fire him or her, the CEO is convinced his actions would have resulted in a lawsuit by the former employee. It is not known what this particular CEO has been through, but this individual is clearly working under the assumption that African-American people lead the way when it comes to filing employment lawsuits (Caver & Livers, 2002). Currently, for this research, there are no numbers to confirm or deny that assumption. This is one preconception that engenders a xenophobia that people of color find themselves battling daily in the job market. Previously, in the ethnocentrism section, there was an explanation that ethnocentrism does not have to only have an inferior component, it can travel both ways; ethnocentrism can have a superior component as well. This is the major difference between the two; racism only has in inferior component. Its objective is to clearly belittle and demean other people cultures or groups. The most interesting component of racism is that its discriminatory behavior is supported by institutional power, those on the upside of power who discriminate those on the downside of power. Social psychologists feel the mistreatment is part of institutional practices (Hackett-Barker et al., 2006). Take the example we begin this section with about the CEO. This man was afraid of a lawsuit that had not been filed, by an African-American person he had yet to meet, hire, or fire. Surely, this CEO was not

succumbing to the pressure of being personally sued; instead, he was succumbing to what would be perceived as threatening to the institution. Therefore, his practices are in the best interest of the institution, making it an institutional practice -- racism! Johnson (2006), define racism and race-related stress as the following:

Racial discrimination or racism involves actions of the majority group directed at members of a racial minority group that result in unequal treatment and/or resource distribution. Race-related stress, on the other hand, refers to the level of discomfort felt as a result of observing or personally experiencing racial discrimination. (p. 496)

Quintana (2007) combines racism with discrimination in the following:

Discrimination against a group is often labeled as racism because the sample was a racial group rather than because the discrimination was based specifically on racial bias. Historically, so called old fashioned racism was clearly racial in nature given that it involved categorical rejection of a group of people on the basis of racial status. However, so called modern racism (e.g., takes the form of *I don't dislike all Blacks, only those that act black* or *I don't dislike all Latinos, only those that refuse to learn English*) appears to take an ethnic or cultural focus, rather than racial focus, per se. (p. 261)

Jernigan, Green, Helms, Perez-Gualdrón, & Henze (2010) state the following:

People of color may be able to identify and find coping strategies to resist racism in its many forms (e.g., individual and systemic) and commit to an elimination of oppression through deliberate, ongoing self-examination and lived experiences. Helms's *People of Color model* described different ego statuses that reflect attitudes, beliefs, and information processing strategies an individual may utilize to make sense of racial stimuli. The model includes the conformity, dissonance, immersion/resistance, internalization, and integrative awareness statuses. (p. 63)

**Overt racism and covert racism.** *Overt Racism* is old school racism, in which the majority, individuals or institutions or both, demonstrated openly hostile and aggressive acts against people of color without fear of retaliation or persecution (Ridley, 1989). *Covert Racism* is a modern form of racism which may appear to be deniable or perceived as an overreaction by the target. Furthermore, to be fair, covert racism can be intentional or unintentional. *Covert Intentional Racism* is when a racist is well aware of their actions and the target of such action, but attempts to masquerade behind their true meaning by the use of cryptic messages or stories (Ridley, 1995). Affirmative action may be an issue that insights covert intentional racism. Also, the 2009 election and the 2012 re-election of President Barack Obama set the scene for covert intentional racists to express their hatred. *Covert Unintentional Racism* is the kind of racism by those who are unaware of the racist history of their country; however, unknowingly perpetuate it as a result of bad information or a majority perspective (Ridley, 1995). In 2002, Michelle Kwan was one of America's best figure skaters; she and both her parents were born in the United States of America; however, during the Winter Olympics that same year, Michelle was beaten out for the gold by a fellow American, but a news headline read, *American beats out Michelle Kwan*. Covert unintentional racism can be more damaging than covert, intentional racism, because covert unintentional racism is mostly practiced by individuals who do not see themselves as racist, and therefore, have no motivation to change (Ridley, 1995). Obviously, the headlines directed toward Michelle Kwan was not an intentional mean-spirited attack, but the biological aspect of race was no match for Michelle Kwan's United States citizenship, and the headline perpetuated ongoing racist acts and/or traditions (Hackett-Barker et al., 2006).

**Aversive racism.** In addition to covert and overt racism, there is aversive racism, a practice of racism by those who deny they are racist and take an offensive approach if accused of racism. When racist views surface from these individuals, they cite *logical* or *commonsense reasons* for their views to deny the perception of being racist (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). A study on the concept of aversive racism reports on hiring practices of black and white job

candidates; hiring managers ranking high on the aversive racism scale hired more white candidates over black candidates. When the hiring managers discussed their decision making process, it was revealed that instead of focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of both black and white candidates, the hiring managers focused more on the black candidates' weaknesses and the white candidates' strengths. Another group of aversive hiring managers also hired more white candidates over black candidates, but this time the authors of the study made the job qualifications opposite to the first set of candidates, but with a similar outcome where the reasoning focuses on the white candidates' strengths and the black candidates' weaknesses, which is perceived as a logical reason to back the decision (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). Once again, this can be a form of covert, unintentional racism.

With many variations of race and ethnicity, there are characteristics attached to these variations through the perceptions of others; this is how stereotypes and racial mystification can develop.

### **Stereotyping and Racial Mystification**

Ultimately, any form of racism leads to stereotyping: a generalization about a group of its members on the basis of their categorization (Hackett-Barker et al., 2006). According to Beale & Cox (1997), "Stereotyping is a mental process in which the individual is viewed as a member of a group and the information that we have stored in our minds about the group is ascribed to the individual" (p.78). A stereotype does not have to possess a malicious intent; a stereotype can be an overgeneralization based on a basic reflection of group norms or history. If one were to say that African-American people want to be treated equally and fairly, or Hispanic-American people's values are rooted within their love for family, these would be an overgeneralization reflective of the groups' norms or history of the groups' behavior. Overgeneralizations become problematic when you apply these norms to every member of the group and do not allow for any variation within the group. As a result, you treat all members of the group the same and expect a similar reaction, and maybe shocked when the group member does not act in accordance to

the way you think they should act. It would be tantamount to expecting every African-American person to have cast their vote for President Barack Obama, or assuming every Hispanic-American person is bilingual, and every Asian-American person a superior martial arts expert. Over generalizing eliminates the variation of behavior difference that groups have to offer. Beale & Cox (1997) state the following:

Compared to Euro-Anglo males, Chinese and Japanese males are typically more reserved and less aggressive in their behavior does not necessarily imply that they are either inferior or superior to Euro-Anglo males. It simply says that, as a group, they tend to be different on these behavioral dimensions. (p. 80)

There is also a belief that stereotyping is necessary for us as individuals to process all the people data our brains receive at once. Thus, it is normal and necessary to use stereotyping as a way of categorizing behavior data. However, the danger begins when we start labeling a group of people as more than or less than another group of people. Moreover, labeling an individual based on a group of people he or she is associated with by culture or race is unfair to that individual (Carr-Ruffino, 2006). Hollywood has historically portrayed Hispanic-Americans in lesser roles in society. Film scholars and cultural theorists have criticized this creation of the racial *others*. These stereotypes represent the fears and fantasies of the dominant group (Brayton, 2008). Stereotyping racial groups have, and can continue to cause, horrific damage. It is fair to report that in organizational cultures, most people of all people cultures have the ability to withhold their tongues in a professional setting; however, this does not mean the thought process does not exist. There is literature that brings to light the *automatic processes* that people have little control over stereotyping, in contrast, *controlled* processes in which stereotype influence is resisted or avoided. If you consider a person who knows the cultural stereotype about a group but whom personally disagrees and prefers not to indulge, this person can still demonstrate evidence of stereotyping when automatic processes dominate, when speeded responses are required, or cognitive resources are low, but relative lack of stereotyping when

controlled processes are more likely, when responses are not rushed, and cognitive resources are high (Wegener, Clark, & Petty, 2006). Basically when smart people are slow to react and use their brains, they can regulate their speech and behavior before it gets away from them. Bodenhausen, Sheppard, and Kramer (1994) state, "Stereotypes can be viewed as judgmental heuristics that are relied upon by social perceivers whenever they lack the ability or the inclination to think more extensively about the unique personal qualities of out-group members" (p. 49). Racial mystification is the shift from the overt racism to a more covert style of racism in the form of stereotypes and perceptions. According to Dyson (1996), "Understanding racial mystification helps us grasp the hidden premises, buried perceptions, and cloaked meaning of race as they show up throughout our culture" (p. 12). Racial mystifications were evident when Charles Stuart of Boston and Susan Smith of South Carolina committed murders of family members and claimed the crime was perpetrated by a black man. The facts in both cases were not as important as the perception of black crime. There is no denying the proliferation of black crime over recent years in this country; however, black crime is relegated to particular sections of the country, limited to particular crimes, and generally directed toward another black person. Unfortunately, no matter if the accused fits the profile of the crime or not, when racial mystification is at work, an African-American person, or any person of color, can become the focus of any crime (Dyson, 1996).

### **Discrimination**

Stereotyping and racial mystification breeds discrimination: a negative behavior toward an individual or group based on a stereotype (Hackett-Barker et al., 2006). Discriminating against a diverse group of people in the workplace not only excludes these groups from leadership opportunities, but can reduce a diverse group's motivation and productivity. As a result, the diverse group may not exemplify the work ethic or characteristics of those who are receiving leadership opportunities (Carr-Ruffino, 2006)

Moreover, African-American and Hispanic-American females experience a large occupational differentiation from white women, which places African-American and Hispanic-American females at the bottom of mostly female occupations, where white women are more likely to have higher status and higher pay in these positions. Furthermore, one-third of college educated African-American females are employed in clerical occupations (Dickerson, 2006). So, despite having more education than their white counterparts, women of color still find they may still have to continue climbing an uphill battle for success in the workplace. Triana, Garcia, & Colella (2010) state the following:

As people experience negative acts at work, such as racial discrimination, they are likely to associate work with negative feelings and become less affectively committed to their employer. Previous research has shown that perceived discrimination at work is negatively related to affective commitment. (p. 818)

**Law against discrimination in the workplace.** The purpose of this research is to explore the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace, which is a product of racism and discrimination. It is clear to acknowledge the official law on the books. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulates that all individuals have an equal chance for employment, regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin. The law which regulates equal employment opportunity in the United States is the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which is intended to prevent an employer from discriminating against individuals because of their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin: Title I outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin in hotels, motels, restaurants, theaters and all other public accommodations engaged in interstate commerce; exempted private clubs without defining the term private. Title III prohibited state and municipal governments from denying access to public facilities on grounds of race, color, religion, or national origin. Title IV encouraged the desegregation of public schools and authorized the U.S. Attorney General to file suits to enforce said act. Title V expanded the Civil Rights Commission established by the earlier Civil Rights

Act of 1957, with additional powers, rules and procedures. Title VI, prevents discrimination by government agencies that receive federal funds. If an agency is found in violation of Title VI, that agency may lose its federal funding. Title VII which deals directly with the topic of this research, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 codified as Subchapter VI of Chapter 21 of Title 42 of the United States Code, prohibits discrimination by covered employers on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Title VII applies to and covers an employer who has fifteen (15) or more employees for each working day in each of twenty or more calendar weeks in the current or preceding calendar year as written in the definitions section under 42. The Act does not apply to employers with 14 employees or less. Title VII also prohibits discrimination against an individual because of his or her association with another individual of a particular race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. An employer cannot discriminate against a person because of his interracial association with another, such as by an interracial marriage (DeNisi & Griffin, 2005). When there is a huge cultural gap in any organization there must be a heightened level of sensitivity to these laws. One form of illegal discrimination is *Disparate Treatment*: discrimination that exists when individuals in similar situations are treated differently based on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability or national origin. If two employees with similar qualifications are up for the same promotion, and the deciding factor is based on any of the protected classes, a clear case can be made for disparate treatment (DeNisi & Griffin, 2005). No matter the official laws, racism, stereotyping, and discrimination can still unofficially exist, without any penalties under the law.

### **White Privilege**

Racism, overt and covert racism, aversive racism, and discrimination are the result of protecting white privilege: the advantages that are affiliated with being white without examination, such as more positive representation in the media. People of color are not always represented in the media, and if they are, they are more likely to be portrayed stereotypically

(McIntosh, 1995). There are other instances that underscores the advantages of being white in society. McIntosh (1995):

- I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind.
- I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely and positively represented.
- I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
- I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
- If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones (p. 79-81).

Monaghan (2010) explores overcoming white privilege as the following:

Would I turn down a promotion, when a qualified black employee was not offered the position? Would I be resentful if a black employee was offered the job I wanted? These and other questions will enable us to understand better how we use our white privilege to benefit ourselves at the expense of others, thereby perpetuating the systems of racism, and how we can make changes that will move our organizations and ourselves to a place of true diversity. Racism is both overt and covert actions. An example is a lack of respect for the talents and abilities of persons of color. We assume that in a group project whites will contribute at a higher level than persons of color will. We assign more complicated and challenging tasks to white people. We need to check our assumptions. These assumptions demonstrate the power of white privilege. We need to acknowledge and honor the skills and talents of persons of color just as we do white people. (p. 58)

The Leadership Categorization Theory describes how individuals develop categories to help organize and process information. In the United States, a central characteristic of a leader

is *being white*. White leaders are more prototypical business leaders more so than leaders who are a member of a racial minority group. The results of a study on how race influences the U.S. business leader prototype found that leaders, more than employees, were assumed to be white, especially when whites comprised a smaller percentage of the employees in an organization (Rosette et al., 2008). After a stereotype is developed and implemented on a person or persons, there can be a reaction by the people being stereotyped that may cause unwarranted pressure on performance (Steel, 2010).

### **Stereotype Threat**

As mentioned in a previous section, stereotyping is a generalization about a group of its members on the basis of their categorization (Hackett-Barker et al., 2006). Stereotype threat: When an individual belonging to a negatively stereotyped group is confronted with a task, he or she may experience performance anxiety from a fear of confirming a negative stereotype of his or her group (Steel, 1997). The genesis of stereotype threat is identity contingencies. Steel (2010) defines identify contingencies as the following:

The things you have to deal with in a situation because you have a given social identity, because you are old, young, gay, a white male, a woman, black, Latino, politically conservative or liberal, diagnosed with bipolar disorder, a cancer patient, and so on. Generally speaking, contingencies are circumstances you deal with in order to get what you want or need in a situation. (p. 3)

On April 5, 1968, the day after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, a third-grade teacher who lived in Riceville, Iowa, Jane Elliott, decided to introduce her students to a novice but complex concept to pay tribute to what Dr. King lived and died for: equality. Given the homogeneous identity culture of her community, most of the students in her school had never seen an African-American person. Jane created an experiment that divided her class into brown-eyed and blue eyed students and chose to discriminate against the brown-eyed students by first making them wear collars around their neck so they could be identified as such. Jane

continued to tell the entire class that blue-eyed students were labeled with being smarter, cleaner, and better behaved than brown-eyed students; moreover, she allowed all the blue-eyed students to sit in front of the class and handed blue-eyed students the best in equipment and learning materials and first choice for recess. The browned eyed students were not allowed to associate with the blue-eyed students. This created a stir in the classroom and on the playground because the brown-eyed students felt marginalized and humiliated. On the contrary, the blue-eyed students were relaxed, happy, and more at ease with themselves and happy learners. The very next day, Jane switched up and favored the brown-eyed students, and there was a complete opposite effect. The browned-eyed students demonstrated the same happy and at ease demeanor as the blue-eyed students did the day before, and the blue-eyed student's lost their energy they previously had.

Ms. Elliott's work was re-created through an ABC documentary with similar third-graders and on the Oprah Winfrey show with an adult audience. The ABC documentary revealed scenes that showcased the academic performance of the third-graders during the experiment through spelling and mathematic lessons. Each day, the marginalized group barely paid attention, didn't follow instructions, and they were slow to respond, which led to getting a lot of the lessons wrong, but when the group had their day of favor, there was an opposite effect in regards to their performance. Ms. Elliot's experiments are one of the foundations of stereotype threat (Peters, 1970).

When it comes to underperformance, there has been much consideration into biological differences as the root of it all. There was a 1980s study that focused on sex differences in mathematic performance. Much like similar studies, it was made up of eighth grade boys and girls who were good at math and have been exposed to similar coursework at the time of the study, scoring in the top 3 percent of standardized math exams. All of the participants were given the math section of the SAT, which was clearly above their current skill level. The result was the girls underperformed the boys, and since all the participants were carefully selected

based on equal math ability and equal exposure to mathematics, there was only one conclusion at that time: there was a lower biological capacity for math when it came to females (Benbow & Stanley, 1980a). Steel's (2010) study describes the following:

Scholastic underperformance happened in several groups—blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, women in math classes. Could there be something biological about all of these groups that caused them to underperform? Possibly, but I could also imagine that these groups shared an experience of stigmatization—different in form, of course, but nonetheless a group-based stigmatization in precisely those areas where they underperformed. (p.30)

The theory is, based on who you are or what group you belong to, there will be negative stereotypes labeled to that group, and the negative stereotypes, if believed by the group that is being stereotyped, hinders their performance. If there is any truth to stigmatization, there arise critical questions: What factors worsened this effect? What exactly does stigmatization do to people that impairs their intellectual functioning? Are some kinds of people more susceptible to this effect than others? Does it happen for all stigmatized groups or just some? Does it happen for other kinds of performance? What can be done about it? These were some of the questions that need to be addressed (Steel, 2010). One particular experience featured a group of African-American college students who were accomplished in English, based on their Scholastic Aptitude Test. These students were given the English portion of the Graduate Records Examination. The African-American students scored just as well as their white counterparts when the African-American students believed this was an exam for accomplished students. However, the next time the exam was given it was explained that it will be a measure of African-American and white intelligence, the result, the African-American students performance went down (Steel & Aronson, 1995). There is a self-fulfilling prophesy concerning performance when it comes to the identity of the group you are attached with. Stereotype threat is more than black

and white. To increase the validity, researchers have performed experiments with other negatively stereotyped groups.

As previously mentioned there was a study of eighth grade boys and girls to address the stereotype that men are usually superior to women in mathematics. This time, the experiment focused on college level men and women. Much like the African-American students in an earlier experiment, when women were primed to believe that a math exam was to measure and compare men and women's math abilities, these women scored lower than the women who were not primed (Spencer, Steel, & Quinn, 1999). It can be as simple as listening to the stereotype or the reputation that others in one's group have that can result in underperformance. According to Allport (1958), "One's reputation, whether false or true, cannot be hammered, hammered, hammered, into one's head without doing something to one's character" (p. 142). Repeated exposure to images of aggression and lack of intelligence can damage the psyche of individuals, especially young people of color, resulting in lowered expectations, motivation, self-esteem, and self-doubt, which lead to unemployment, low academic success and, in extreme cases, imprisonment (Allport, 1958). No one people culture is exempt from a negative stereotype or stereotype threat. Another experiment was conducted with white college students to add a stronger validity. High performing white male math students we put up against high performing Asian male students, who have been known to have a positive stereotype in the area of mathematics. The white students, like in previous studies, were primed that the math test was exploring Asian students strength in math and a test they generally do better than whites on, and like the other groups, they faced the threat of confirming their groups math inferiority when it comes to Asian students, not a self-defeating stereotype that has been hammered in their heads through society. The results were similar to all other experiments: white male students performed worse than the Asian students, and worse than white male students that were not primed with the Asian student math superiority complex (Aronson, et al., 1999).

When one finds him or herself closing in on confirming a negative stereotype they really care about, one's mind can take fears and insecurities and send them racing in various directions. When you are preparing for a task or actually in the middle of a task, you can find yourself arguing against the stereotype, denying it, wondering why people think that way of others and feeling sorry for yourself. When one is trying so hard to defeat a negative stereotype, it leaves the mind little room for mental capacity for the actual task at hand, referred to as the racing mind (Steel, 2010). There are four phases of the racing mind that is a direct result of the threat of confirmation of a negative stereotype. First, we become vigilant to all that is relevant and to the chances of avoidance. Second, there raises self-doubt, and we contemplate how valid those doubts are. Third, we begin to constantly monitor how we are doing. Finally, we use too much mental capacity to suppress threatening thoughts, leaving very little left over for anything else (Schmader & Johns, 2003). Ultimately, this type of mental activity, or lack thereof, leads to confirming the stereotype that individuals wanted to avoid at the beginning.

**Consequences of stereotype threat.** A long-term psychological consequence of stereotype threat is domain misidentification and abandonment, when members of negatively stereotyped groups begin to place less importance on performance and achievement. African-American and Hispanic-American students may stop caring about grades and continuous academic progression. These stigmatized individuals are the ones who feel disadvantaged and begin to misidentify and eventually leave the academic culture; as a result, the professional and educational institutions that draw from those pipelines are left with a less diverse talent pool (Steel, 1997). Steele, Spencer and Aronson (2002) define disengagement/disidentification as the following:

First, disengagement and disidentification can be thought of as end points on a continuum of self-protective, ego withdrawal from a domain and its standards.

At the disengagement end, their withdrawal is a more immediate reaction to

the experience of stereotype threat at the other end of the continuum, a complete disidentification is realized in which the person has no ego dependence on the domain and may resist any encouragement to develop one. (p. 412)

**Overcoming stereotype threat.** One way to overcome stereotyping and stereotype threat in the workplace is for all people in the organization to take on a leadership role and set the example for overcoming stereotyping in the workplace. It does not matter if you are entry-level or on the board of directors, if you can understand and identify stereotyping that negatively affects people's performance, you can help start a healing process (Carr-Ruffino, 2006). The diversity of the environment can moderate the experience of stereotype threat. A diverse environment may exacerbate its effects for minority group members, but a more homogenous environment in which minority group members are the numerical majority may offer protection (Woodcock, Hernandez, Estrada, & Schultz, 2012).

When in a stereotype threat situation, one can feel the pressure to perform well for the group he or she represents, in one's own eyes or in the eyes of others, the group's negative stereotype will be confirmed; the target of the stereotype threat can be the group. A Hispanic-American student fears that a poor performance on an exam would reinforce in his own mind that the negative stereotypes about his groups' intelligence are true. He may also fear that this performance could be confirmed in the minds of others: a white employer, coworker, teacher, or friend (Shapiro, Williams, & Hambarchyan, 2013). Literature recommends the best way for overcoming group-as-target stereotype threat may be the use of mentors from the in-group of the individual feeling the stereotype threat. If there is an intervention from a consistently positive member of the group being targeted, any stereotype threat may be alleviated (McIntyre, Paulson, & Lord, 2003). In contrast, the self can be the target of a stereotype threat. That is, when in a stereotype-relevant situation, one's performance could reflect on one's own personal abilities, revealing whether one is a stereotypic member of the group, in one's own eyes or in the eyes of others. The concern in this case may be that a poor performance on an exam will

confirm his hypothesis that he, by virtue of his race, may be less intelligent than his white classmates (Shapiro et al., 2013). The literature recommends self-affirmation to combat self-as-target stereotype threat where the individual feeling the threat focuses in on a valuable attribute they have that is different from the current task at hand. This is important to build confidence in one's skill set that can be transferable to alleviate the threat (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006).

If the challenges of being racially stereotyped are insurmountable one can only wonder what type of barriers will be the result in the workplace.

### **Racial Barriers in the Workplace**

Racial barriers are the result of the actions of the people in any organization. Problems arise from, but are not limited to, racial bias, racism, and discrimination. As a result, a hostile environment is created, and leadership opportunities are limited. If such challenges are not detected and resolved through innovative leadership, an organization will lose the area of opportunity to maximize its full talent potential. In some cases, an organization may fail all together (Parvis, 2003). Unlike the average workplace, in the world of sports, racial minorities are well represented, as athletes, but the same cannot be said for their representation when it comes to top management positions in a business organization. Despite great strides being made to diversify management positions on the professional level, the intercollegiate levels are still severely lagging behind with their efforts. There is a belief that African-Americans do not show as much interest in management positions or coaching as their white counterparts. This may be the result of workplace racial conditioning that goes back to the college student-athlete who observed glass ceilings in the areas of management and coaching. As a result, the African-American athletes do not feel motivated to apply for such positions. The result of less opportunity can be less interest (Cunningham, 2003)

**Overcoming racial barriers in the workplace.** Today's organizations and universities across the country are educating their employees and students about racial diversity. There are

other organizations establishing proactive approaches and encouraging employee participation in diversity classes. Current supervisors, managers, directors and leaders have to be role models and lead by example by participating in diversity education. Also, mentoring and coaching encourages positive and beneficial procedures on diversity issues. All leaders in all organizations need to improve their listening and understanding skills about the world of diversity which surrounds them not only in their personal lives, but in their organizational lives as well (Parvis, 2003). According to Parvis (2003), "Above all, given the uncertainties in today's world, we need to live our lives, manage our workplaces to promote the benefits of diversity, and never forget that humankind is one" (p.65).

Overcoming the racial barriers in the workplace can be more than one person's problem; it can be the problem of everyone but can affect everyone differently because of the diversity in the workplace (Parvis, 2003).

### **Diversity**

Most dictionaries share a similar definition for the word diversity. The most popular definition is one word: *difference*. The existence of differences demonstrates diversity. Diversity is within every culture but is not celebrated as a national theme. Race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, nation of origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, occupation, and class are all significant distinctions of diversity (Parvis, 2003). Moreover, there can be diversity within diversity: diversity of variation, diversity of type, and diversity of composition. Diversity of variation is differences in characteristics or attributes, such as skin complexion or education. There are African-American males who hold different educational accomplishments. Diversity of types refers to types of food one can buy in a grocery store, or order in a restaurant. Finally, there is diversity of composition, referring to the differences in how a type or variation is arranged, like the recipe of a cake. African-American females can vary in blood type or heredity traits. Variations, types and composition lives within all people. (Page, 2011)

**Managing diversity in the workplace.** There is a legal obligation organizations should have toward diversity, no matter if one presupposes that diversity is inherently good or bad. But do organizations have a moral obligation toward diversity? Most business organizations have a social obligation to increase profits, and if a proliferation of diversity will result in greater profits, an organization has a moral obligation to head in that direction (Hopkins, 1997). There are organizations that are fulfilling that moral obligation; they have begun the journey of educating personnel about cultural diversity. There are high performance organizations that have arrived to these realizations and are ahead of the game when it comes to supplying diversity courses for employees, especially supervisors, managers, and directors, all the way up to the executive level. The goal is to equip these leaders with the skills and tools to teach, mentor, and coach subordinates on positive diversity issues and procedures. The best way to accomplish this is to direct the leaders through to important elements: self-awareness and understanding. Self-awareness and understanding is defined as self-improvement and improving listening to understand the diverse workplace. Another element is communication, the ability to communicate effectively with team members is the best way to un-complicate the diverse workplace. Finally managers are encouraged to learn more about the cultural backgrounds of their employees. As a result, managers can recognize potential cross-cultural issues that may come up in the form of culturally- specific behaviors (Parvis, 2003).

A healthy diversity climate in the workplace can increase organizational commitment. An argument can be made that the strength of this relationship should be strongest with employees of color: African-Americans, Hispanics-Americans, and then Whites. Basically, those who are most likely to be discriminated against care the most about diversity than those who are less likely to be discriminated against. African-American employees have been known, in terms of racial identities, to have the strongest identification, followed by Hispanics-Americans, Asians-Americans, and then Whites (McKay, et al., 2007). Hopkins (1997) states, "Cultural diversity refers to a person's identification with a cultural group which may include, but is not limited to,

race, ethnicity, nationality, and color” (p. 5). Racial perception, misconception, and preconception may affect leadership opportunities as well as other opportunities in the workplace for people of color, but they do not have to. The negative effects on leadership opportunities also affect opportunities for subordinate positions as well.

**The value of racial diversity in the workplace.** There are many advantages to the implementation of people with diverse skills to any team, group, or organization; however, often these diverse skills may only exist within a diverse cultural or racial group of people. Beale & Cox (1997) state the following:

Valuing diversity is a philosophy about how diversity affects organizational outcomes that hold that the presence of diversity represents a distinct organizational resource that, properly leveraged, can bring a competitive advantage against organizations that either are culturally homogenous or fail to successfully utilize their diversity. (p.13)

Despite this, there are people who believe diversity in the workplace creates problems and challenges. Diversity is definitely worth having, even if it means learning how to overcome any challenges that may arise. The benefits include, but are not limited to, a variety in ideas, styles, vision, creativity, innovation, and lifestyles (Parvis, 2003). It is important to appreciate racial differences to build cross-cultural relationships that will strengthen not only society, but also organizations. Creativity and a diverse range of ideas will expand the way business is done around the world, resulting in more effective teams, organizations, and communities that will develop and continuously grow to their full potential (Carr-Ruffino, 2006).

Organizations should incorporate employees' diverse perspectives into organizational tasks and provide opportunities to learn from differences. Diversity provides a source of growth learning and intuition, but only when it is properly managed (Choi & Rainey, 2010). The role of a Diversity Champion generally went to someone who was usually a white male and worked in senior management and only executed the role part-time. Such duties included raising

awareness, modeling appropriate behavior in relation to diversity issues, supporting junior managers in aspects of equality and diversity, and supporting non-management employees experiencing equality and diversity-related problems. However, little organizational impact could be made from such a part-time position. Furthermore, white males in senior management experience limited risk for speaking up about diversity. Their positions usually protected them against potential costs that might affect and deter lower level managers (Kirton & Greene, 2009).

### **Assimilation**

Assimilation is widely known as a social, economic, and political integration of a race or minority group into a mainstream community, culture, organization, or structure. There are two known stages of assimilation: acculturation and structural assimilation. First, acculturation is the adaptation to a mainstream culture, which may include, but is not limited to, norms, values, and language. Next, structural assimilation is the equal and voluntary participation of a race or minority group into a mainstream group activity. As a result, racial barriers may precipitate at the expense of a racial or minority identity (Wildsmith, 2004). The risk of assimilation occurs when an organizational culture sets a standard of behavior for everyone, no matter if it is in direct conflict with one's racial culture. The objective of assimilation is to admonish any cultural differences in the organization that could prove hazardous to the organizational culture. It is the assumption of the organization that an individual will repress, or even reject his or her cultural values, beliefs, and practices while at work. Therefore, assimilation can lead to separation, when employees reject the organizational culture with the intent of preserving their individual culture; subcultures are developed within the organization which relegates organizational exchange between cultures to a minimum (Carr-Ruffino, 2006).

### **Chapter Summary**

Despite the plethora of literature, there remains a gap concerning the exploration of successful strategies people of color utilize to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping,

especially in the workplace. There needs to be an acknowledgement that people of color are aware of their racial differences and its potential drawback when it comes to opportunities and success. Furthermore, there needs to be transparency to provide insight on dealing with potential drawbacks.

The literature reviewed in this chapter by the researcher explored the topic of *Overcoming the Threat of Racial Stereotypes in the Workplace; Exploring Strategies of Leaders of Color in the Las Vegas Hospitality and Gaming Industry*. When the researcher broke down the title by words, the literature is enormous; however, the research with the title together is scarce. The literature does support the research questions and sets up a motive for why a person of color would fear the threat of being racially stereotyped and have a need to create a strategy that would combat against it.

Chapter 3 presents the kind of research that was utilized in this study, including but not limited to: research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and methods that were be used to analyze the data.

### **Chapter 3. Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter 3 provides the research methodology utilized to collect the necessary data to explore the actions and reactions of leaders of color as they deal with the threat of being racially stereotyped in the workplace. This chapter will include a restatement of the research questions, the research methodology, selection of data sources, data gathering instrument, validity and reliability of instrument, data gathering procedure, and the data analysis process. Every one of these factors was significant to further the research and education of the threat of being racially stereotyped in the workplace.

#### **Research Questions**

1. How do leaders of color define effective leadership in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
2. How can the performance of leaders of color be hindered by the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
3. What are the ways leaders of color utilize assimilation to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
4. What strategies have been used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?

#### **Qualitative Research Methodology**

The research conducted in this study utilized a qualitative research method which is a means of exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to regarding a social or human problem. According to Creswell (2009), "This process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretation of the meaning of the data" (p. 4). Myers (2009) adds, "Qualitative researchers contend that it is virtually impossible to understand why someone did something or why

something happened in an organization without talking to people about it” (p.5). When taking into consideration the sensitive issue of race in the context of being stereotyped and discriminated against, qualitative research is a fair method which will capture the interpersonal aspect of an interpersonal social challenge and human problem which leaders of color face in the workplace.

There are three endearing qualities of qualitative research. First, there is the use of a research participant’s natural setting. Qualitative research gathers data in the environment where the challenges or problems are taking place, for the purpose of this study, in the workplace. The observation of a participant in their natural setting allows qualitative researchers to get an up close and personal look at the participant’s non-verbal actions, as well as the many symbols of the organizational culture the participant is surrounded by on a day-to-day basis (Creswell, 2009).

The second endearing quality of qualitative research is the use of the theoretical lens, which allows the researcher to take an advocacy perspective which can shape the questions to be asked and how the data is collected and recommend changes based on the findings of the research. Ultimately, it gives the researcher power to focus on the issues he or she believes are important, much like this research is focusing on the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace (Creswell, 2009).

The third and final endearing quality of qualitative research is its interpretive inquiry, when researchers have free range to interpret what they see, hear, and understand. The caveat is the researcher’s interpretation can seldom be separated from the researcher’s background or experiences. However, readers of the final analyses of the research will also have the freedom to make their own interpretation, which will be based on their own history and experiences and adding various interpretations to the research (Creswell, 2009). This can result in a better understanding of the overall problem and assist in making recommendations for further research.

The essential element for any qualitative research is gathering data that is detailed and gives an in-depth account of the subject under study. If the researcher is to gather rich textual data for qualitative descriptions and interpretations, the data must meet two requirements. First, a researcher must immerse him or herself with the human experience or situation under study. Second, all data is expected to be detailed descriptions of the experience, as they were experienced by the participants (Kirkevold & Bergland, 2007).

### **Research Design**

The research design utilized for this study is part ethnography and part grounded theory. Ethnography is designed to study an intact cultural group, such as the leaders of color, in a natural setting, the workplace, by collecting data through observation and interviews (Creswell, 2009). Ethnography is a process of learning about people by learning through people's behaviors and opinions from their natural setting. Ethnography explores people's stories in their own words and local context as researchers submerge themselves in the social world of the participants to better understand the meanings behind their social behavior in their culture (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013). Gans (2010) states the following:

Ethnographic research brings out several of what I consider sociology's distinctive virtues. The discipline can be distinguished from other social sciences because so much of its research is about the lives and problems of ordinary people, and because it obtains much of its data directly from such people. (p. 98)

Next, grounded theory, when the researcher arrives at a theory or action grounded in the opinions of the participants of the research, in this study, the participants are leaders of color. A primary function of grounded theory is the constant comparison of data among several groups (Creswell, 2009).

The intent of this research was to gather data from research interviewees through their stories which derive from their natural settings and build on theory grounded in their opinions through both ethnography and grounded theory.

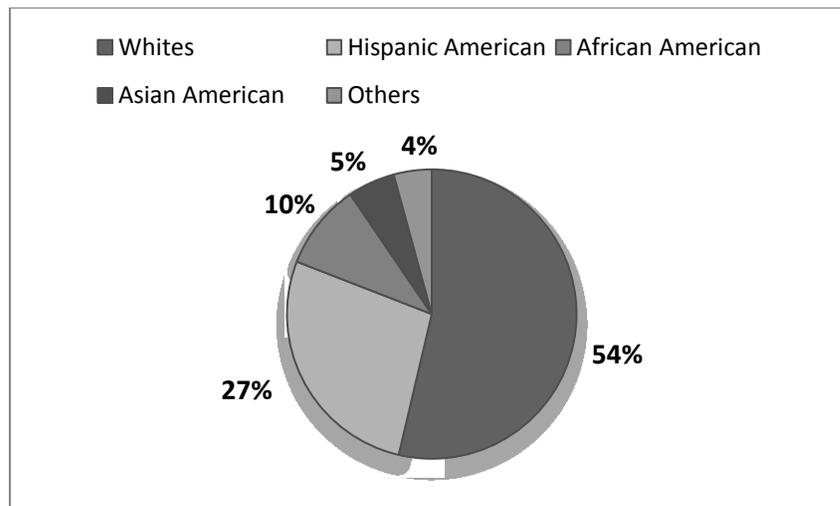
### **Population and Sample of Data Sources**

The population for this research is leaders in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. The Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry, for the purpose of this research, is defined as any facility located in Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, that currently holds a gaming license through the Nevada Gaming Control Board Gaming Commission as of January 1, 2013. The sample size consisted of 12 leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. Internet sites and the researcher's personal and professional network were utilized to identify a population of 30 to 40 leaders of color in total, but only 12 participated as interviewees. The 12 are a combination of men and women currently employed by the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. The leaders of color, in order to be a qualified interviewee for this research, had to meet the following criteria:

1. Have been employed by the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry for a minimum of three years in any position.
2. Currently holds a Supervision, Director, Manager, and, or Vice President position in the hospitality and gaming industry for a minimum of one year.
3. Have a Bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited educational institution in the United States.
4. Have to be at least 30 years of age.
5. Have to be one of the two racial identities: African-American and Hispanic-American.

The rationale for the first criteria was to connect with leaders of color that have an intimate knowledge of the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry for three years; three years qualify for enough experience to gain an intimate knowledge of the industry. The rationale for the second criteria was these positions are the leaders within any organization who generally work closely with a staff, and if they have worked for a minimum of one year in a leadership

capacity, he or she is familiar with the political landscape of the organization. The third criteria demonstrated a formal post-secondary education or higher from a reputable educational institution. This criterion is important because interviewees could more likely have an appreciation and patience for the academic research process. The fourth criteria added an element of professional maturity and years of life and work experience that contributed to the research. Finally, the rationale for the fifth criteria was that the two cultural groups, African-American and Hispanic-American, according to the Las Vegas Census Bureau pie chart (see Figure 2), make up 37 percent of the total population of 583,756 living in the city of Las Vegas, Nevada (United States Census Bureau, Las Vegas City, Nevada, 2010).



*Figure 2.* Racial Groups in the city of Las Vegas.

### **Data Gathering Instrument**

This research utilized qualitative interviews as the primary instrument. Myers (2009) states, "It has been said that qualitative interviews are like night goggles, permitting us to see that which is not ordinarily on view and examine that which is looked at but seldom seen" (p.121). The instrument of interviewing has a range of formats from which to choose: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews. A structured interview consists of the researcher

asking each interviewee the same questions using the same wording and preferably in the same order as all the other participants. Doody and Noonan (2013) state the following:

The strengths of a structured interview are that it is efficient with regards to time, it limits researcher subjectivity and bias, and the researcher controls the topics and format of the interview, making it easier to code, compare, and analyze data. (p. 29)

An unstructured interview, unlike a structured interview, can start very broad in the area of study, anywhere the researcher desires, and is fueled by interviewees' responses to each question, allowing for follow up questions. Doody and Noonan (2013) caution, "The term unstructured is misleading in the sense that no interview is entirely devoid of structure; if this were so, the data gathered may not be appropriate to the researcher's question," they continue, "so, while the interview is non-directive and flexible, the researcher does follow an interview guide, comprising themes rather than specific questions" (p. 29). The most popular interview method and most common in qualitative research are semi-structured interviews; the researcher used predetermined questions while still exercising his or her freedom to seek clarification with follow up and improvised questions (see Appendix C). Doody and Noonan (2013) continue with the following:

The researcher can explore new paths that emerge during the interview that may not have been considered initially. He or she is able to word questions instinctively and develop a conversational style during the interview that focuses on the topic. (p. 30)

Measuring the success of a qualitative interview is more than capturing the human experience of the participant and describing it in a detailed account, the researcher has to play a vital role when interviewing his or her subjects. Along with the rich and specific, a successful qualitative interview is determined by the interviewee and the degree to which the interviewer delivers appropriate follow up and thereby encourages the interviewees to clarify the meanings of their

descriptions when necessary. The researcher's interview questions should be shorter than the interviewee's answer. If this is repeated throughout the interview, the better the data will be, in addition, the researcher attempts to verify his or her interpretations of the interviewee's answer in the course of the interview. Finally, the interview is best when it communicates a story in itself that hardly requires much extra descriptions and explanations (Kirkevold & Bergland, 2007).

The sensitivity of race and stereotyping in the workplace requires a semi-structured interview style with some pre-determined questions leaving room for emerging questions during the actual interview for further clarification and understanding.

Table 1

*Interview Protocol Questions*

<b>Interview Protocol Questions</b>	<b>Reply supports RQ #</b>
What is your definition of leadership, and what are the ingredients to successful leadership?	1
Can you describe an experience where the threat of being racially stereotyped hindered your performance, or increased your anxiety level?	2&4
What degree do you feel assimilation has contributed to your leadership opportunities in the workplace?	2&3
What ways do you feel pressured to alter your attitude and/or behavior in the workplace to avoid the threat of being stereotyped?	2&3, 4
What qualities of your racial identity, if any, do you bring to your leadership style?	1&2

(Continued)

Interview Protocol Questions	Reply supports RQ #
What are some of the successful strategies you have used to overcome racial barriers in the workplace?	2&3
Dr. King suggested we should look at the perspective of our adversaries to determine some basic weaknesses of ourselves that we can improve. What is a basic weakness a racial adversary would say about you; that you can improve on?	2&3, 4

### Validity of Data Gathering Instrument

A qualitative interview is an instrument of collecting data in which quantitative or qualitative questions can be asked. However, the caveat to quantitative questions is that they are closed, leaving the intent and perception of the question up to the research interviewee. Qualitative questions are open-ended, which allows the interviewee the freedom to clarify and explore the question in his or her own words. Interviews are the most frequently used method of collecting data in qualitative research and their popularity is related to being perceived as a very natural and genuine approach to collecting data in a qualitative study. The qualitative interview instrument allows the researcher to fully understand people's lives as they are (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Other advantages that add validity to the instrument of interviewing:

- They are useful to gain insight and context.
- They help participants describe what is important to them.
- They are useful in generating quotes and stories.
- They enable the researcher to develop a rapport.
- They give the researcher the opportunity to observe as well as listen.
- They enable more complex questions to be asked.

- The researcher can explain the purpose of the research and answer any questions the participant may have about the study.
- They help the participant to give detailed responses.
- They can explore the participants' reasons for acting in a certain way or their interpretations of events.
- They are more appropriate for certain groups, such as those with reading or writing difficulties.
- Interviews can be a rewarding experience for interviewees as they stimulate self-exploration and discovery.
- Personal benefit: the telling of one's story (Doody & Noonan, 2013, p. 29).

### **Reliability of Data Gathering Instrument**

The method of triangulation was used to provide reliability to the qualitative research method of interviewing. Triangulation is a method that allows the researcher to utilize more than one type of resource for information and theories to provide corroborative evidence for conclusions (Creswell, 1998). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) found, "many sources of data were better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena you were studying" (p.107).

There are four notable forms of triangulation: data triangulation, investigation triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and methodological triangulation. For the purpose of this research, the researcher utilized data triangulation which entails gathering data through several sampling resources that can be gathered at different times and social situations, as well as from a variety of people (Denzin, 1970).

### **IRB**

In accordance to the Pepperdine University Intuitional Review Board (IRB), the researcher completed and submitted an application for initial IRB Review of Research Protocol

and Informed Consent Form for approval by the IRB committee. The research is considered exempt because all interviewees are allowed to voluntarily withdraw their participation at any time by emailing the researcher. When the IRB application is approved, it became the permanent record of compliance of the researcher with laws and regulations protecting the rights and welfare of human participants in this research.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher received the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Exemption Approval notice on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013 (see Appendix E). The data collection began with the search for 30 to 40 leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry who were willing to be interviewed and met the required criteria under the population and sample section. Through the researcher's prior experience in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry, a strong professional network of leaders of color had been established. The researcher secured a commitment from 12 interviewees who replied to an email invitation sent to the potential interviewees' personal email addresses (see Appendix A). Interview times were scheduled based on availability. The interviews were conducted from November 2013 thru January 2014. Each of the 12 interviewees received a cover letter explaining the study and an Informed Consent Form that was signed prior to their interview. The Informed Consent Form gave the researcher permission to conduct and record a face-to-face or telephone semi-structured interview with a digital recording device (see Appendices B & C). All recorded interviews, signed releases, notes, email correspondents, and most importantly, the identity of all interviewees of this research are confidential and will not be used for any other purpose outside of this research. All digital recordings and written notes of the interviews are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home and on a password protected computer and will be destroyed three years following the successful completion of the final oral defense.

### **Data Analysis Process**

The intent of this research was to explore, gather, and analyze data to illustrate the personal philosophies and strategies leaders of color conjure up to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the workplace, as it pertains to barriers, opportunities and success. Hopefully, the results of this research will spread awareness; the awareness that people of color, even if they have achieved impressive career goals still make provisions for how they may be perceived in the eyes of others based on their race. Creswell (2009) states the following:

The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data (some qualitative researchers like to think of this as peeling back the layers of an onion), representing the data, and making interpretation of the larger meaning of the data. (p.183)

The researcher organized and prepared the data, which included transcribing digital recordings and typing up written notes taken during the interviews and pulling together any final after thoughts of the data received. Next, there was an aggressive coding process. According to Rossman & Ralkis (1998), "Coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks of segments of text before bringing meaning to information" (p.171). Once all the digital recordings were transcribed and thoroughly read, through the process of coding and descriptive wording, sentences and paragraphs of data were segmented into categories. Each category was labeled by the researcher to create possible themes and/or descriptions which may be interrelated. Finally, the researcher was able to interpret the meaning of interrelated themes and descriptions, as a result, an overall better understanding of the data, enabling the researcher to create themes, generate conclusions, and make recommended suggestions for further research of the area of study.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 3 presented the type of research used in this study. The areas covered were a discussion of the use of qualitative research, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, validity and reliability of instrument, IRB plan, data collection procedures, methods which were used to analyze the data, and possible limitations of the study.

The research design is ethnographic/grounded theory. The population and sample were leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. The data was collected through semi-structural interviews. The interviews were coded through content analysis to analyze the data that illuminated through intimate professional and person experiences. Chapter 4 will provide the data collected and analysis of the data. Chapter 5 will represent a summary of the findings of the study with conclusions and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 4. Findings**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this research is to explore strategies used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace, as it pertains to barriers, opportunities, and success. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data collection component of the research. Strategies used to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping were obtained through interviews conducted with leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. The 12 interviewees were asked seven questions relevant to the four research questions, to provide in-depth analysis on how the interviewees' observe their existence, relationships, and motivation in their respected workplaces (see Appendix C).

### **Research Questions**

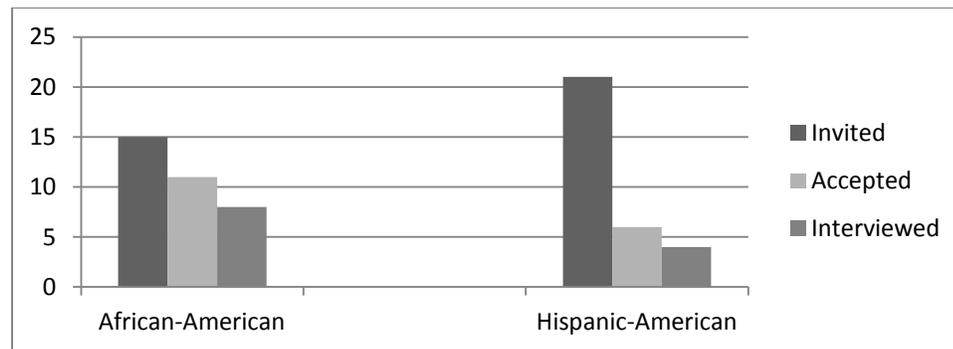
1. How do leaders of color define effective leadership in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
2. How can the performance of leaders of color be hindered by the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
3. What are the ways leaders of color utilize assimilation to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
4. What strategies have been used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?

### **Review of Data Gathering Instrument**

This study utilized qualitative interviews as the primary instrument. The instrument of interviewing has a range of formats from which to choose: structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. The researcher chose to utilize a semi-structured interview format. The researcher asked predetermined questions while still exercising his freedom to seek clarification with follow up and improvised questions (see Appendix C).

### Review of Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection began after the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter to proceed with research was received on November 25, 2013 (see Appendix E). The researcher utilized a personal and professional network of leaders of color established through prior experience in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry to identify potential interviewees. Figure 3 illustrates 36 leaders of color were contacted through an email invitation: 15 African-American and 21 Hispanic-American leaders were contacted for a qualitative interview; 11 African-Americans initially accepted, but only eight were interviewed; six Hispanic-Americans initially accepted, but only four were interviewed (see Appendix A).



*Figure 3.* Invited, Accepted, and Interviewed Demographic

Table 2 illustrates the first interview was conducted Wednesday, November 27, 2013 and the last interview was conducted Friday, January 31, 2014. The duration of the interviews ranged from 13 minutes and 43 seconds to 38 minutes and 34 seconds. Due to scheduling conflicts and geographic limitations, Interview #1 was the only interview conducted in-person; the remaining interviews were conducted by telephone and recorded by a digital tape recorder for transcribing purposes only.

Table 2

*Data Collection Timeline*

<b>Data Collection Timeline IRB Approval Letter 11/25/2013</b>			
<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>In-person/Phone</b>
Interview #1	11/27/13	0:25:22	In-person
Interview #2	12/13/13	0:20:22	Phone
Interview #3	12/17/13	0:13:43	Phone
Interview #4	12/12/13	0:38:34	Phone
Interview #5	12/15/13	0:33:58	Phone
Interview #6	12/15/13	0:18:57	Phone
Interview #7	12/18/13	0:23:20	Phone
Interview #8	12/19/13	0:24:59	Phone
Interview #9	01/27/14	0:26:51	Phone
Interview #10	01/30/14	0:22:45	Phone
Interview #11	01/31/14	0:26:01	Phone
Interview #12	01/31/14	0:16:30	Phone

**Demographics of Sample Population**

The sample population for this research was 12 interviewees. Figure 4 illustrates an interviewee demographic population of leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. Out of the 12 interviewees, there were six males and six females, eight African-Americans, four Hispanic-Americans, seven hold Graduate degrees, five hold Bachelor degrees, nine are between the ages of 30 - 40, one is between the ages of 40 - 50, and two are 50 years and older. Each interviewee was assigned a number for the purpose of the confidentiality clause in the *Informed Consent to Participant in Research* (see Appendix B).

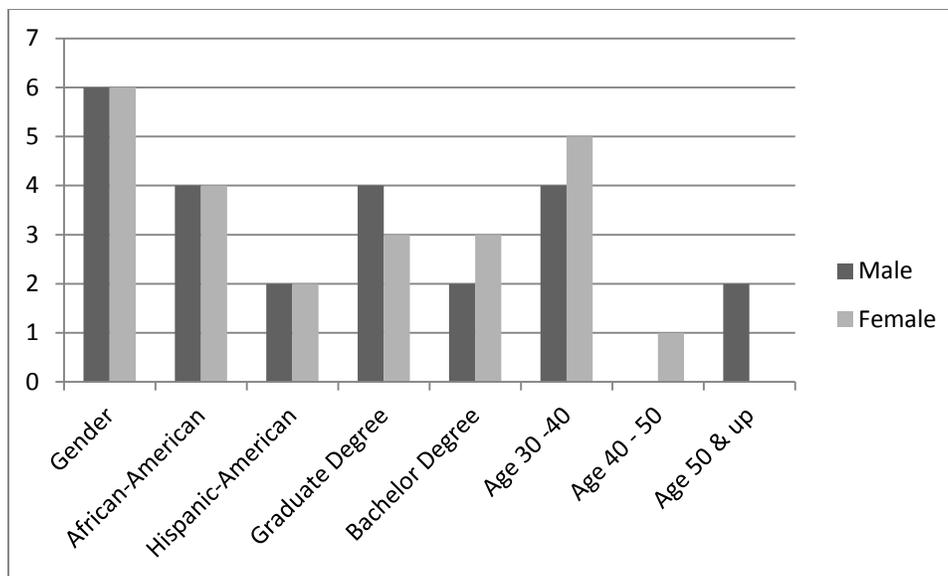


Figure 4. Profiles of Interviewed Demographic

### Interviewees' Profiles

- Interviewee #1 - African-American/Caucasian female, between the ages of 30-40 years old, Human Resources Professional; she holds a Bachelor's degree.
- Interviewee #2 - African-American female, between the ages of 30-40 years old, Human Resources Professional; she holds a Master of Business Administration degree.
- Interviewee #3 - Hispanic-American female, between the ages of 30-40 years old, Customer Services Professional; she holds a Bachelor's degree.
- Interviewee #4 - African-American male, between the ages of 30-40 years old, Accounting and Business Management Professional, he holds a Master's degree.
- Interviewee #5 - African-American female, between the ages of 40-50 years old, Human Resources Professional, she holds a Master's degree.
- Interviewee #6 - Hispanic-American male, between the ages of 30-40 years old, Recruitment Professional, he holds a Bachelor's degree.
- Interviewee #7 - African-American/Asian female, between ages of 30-40 years old, Human Resources Professional; she holds a Bachelor's degree.

- Interviewee #8 - African-American male, between the ages of 50 years old and up, Diversity Professional; he holds a Master's degree.
- Interviewee #9 - African-American male, between the ages of 30-40 years old, Recruitment Professional, he holds a Master's degree.
- Interviewee #10 - African-American male, between the ages of 30-40 years old, General Management Professional; he holds a Bachelor's degree.
- Interviewee #11 - Hispanic-American male, between the ages of 50 years old and up, Human Resources Professional; he holds a Master's degree.
- Interviewee #12 - Hispanic-American female, between the ages of 30-40 years old, Human Resources Professional; she holds a Juris Doctorate.

#### **Researcher's Profile**

- Researcher - African-American male, between the ages of 40 - 50 years old, Organizational Behavior Professional, he holds a Master's Degree and a Doctoral Candidate.

#### **Interpreting the Data Gathered**

After transcribing all interviews, the researcher began the coding process: "Coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks of segments of text before bringing meaning to information" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 171). Through the process of coding and descriptive wording, sentences and paragraphs of data were segmented into categories. Each category was labeled by the researcher to create *leading themes, supporting themes, and relevant factors* that were interrelated.

Table 3 illustrates *leading themes, supporting themes, and relevant factors* identified by each research question. The researcher defines a leading theme as four or more valuable responses by interviewees, a supporting theme is defined as at least three valuable responses by interviewees, and the possibility of a relevant factor is defined by the researcher as an

important response by at least one interviewee considered to be thought provoking and worth mentioning in the results of this study.

Table 3

*Theme Coding Table*

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Leading Themes</b>	<b>Supporting Themes</b>	<b>Relevant Factor</b>
1) How do leaders of color define effective leadership in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?	Leading by Example Self-Awareness The Ability to Inspire		Values
2) How can the performance of leaders of color be hindered by the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?	Ambiguity	Frustration with Management	
3) What are the ways leaders of color utilize assimilation to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?	Social Skills		Professional Appearance
4) What strategies have been used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?			Transparent Awareness, Racial Indifference, Cultural Education, Result Oriented, Innovative Oriented, Connecting with People, Maintaining Professionalism, Flexibility and Hard work.

## Results

Below Table 4 illustrates how the 12 interviewees provided valuable responses to the four research questions.

Table 4

### *Valuable Responses to Research Questions*

Research Questions	Valuable Responses to Research Questions
1) How do leaders of color define effective leadership in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?	Interviewees 1,2,4,5,7,8,9,10,11
2) How can the performance of leaders of color be hindered by the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?	Interviewees 1,2,3,5,7,8,9
3) What are the ways leaders of color utilize assimilation to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?	Interviewees 1,2,4,5,7,8,9,10,11
4) What strategies have been used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?	Interviewees 1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,12

**Research question 1.** How do leaders of color define effective leadership in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry? *Leading by Example, Self-Awareness, and Ability to Inspire* were the three leading themes; There were no supporting themes identified; *Values* were a relevant factor. Interviewees #1,2,4,5,7,8,9,10,11 provided valuable responses for this research question.

**Leading by example.** Five leaders of color eloquently expressed how important this can be for a leader. Interviewee #1, African-American/Caucasian female (2013) found, “Being a role model, I think that sometimes it’s confused with title, but I think you can be a leader regardless of your position, and it’s just about who you are and how you act” (Confidential communication, transcript, p.1). Interviewee #2, African-American female (2013)

stated, "Successful leadership is when a leader is an example to other employees", she continued, "the leadership I would like to have is someone who is approachable, someone that can help me grow in my career and show me the things I need to work on effectively" (Confidential Communication, transcript, p.1). Interviewee #5, African-American female (2013) believed, "I as a black woman want to do better for people that look like me, and my kids", she continued, "I want them to have positive notions about us as a people opposed to a negative notion. I feel a sense of responsibility for that" (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 5). According to Interviewee #9, African-American male (2014), "My definition of leadership is someone who can lead a team and lead by example and not just by dictating the task" (Confidential communication, transcript p.1). Interviewee #10, African-American male (2014) stated the following:

My definition of leadership is always be willing to do whatever you're asking your employees to do. What I mean by that is, there's a boss and a leader, a boss will tell you to do this, and a leader will say, *let us go do this*. I think any good leader should be able to at least do the job or have the working knowledge of anyone that they are in charge of; my ingredient to successful leadership has always been leading by example. You could talk to hundreds of people that have worked for me in my seventeen years; I will never ask them to do anything that I have not done or am not willing to do. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.1)

**Self-awareness.** This is another leading theme acknowledged by five leaders of color in this study as an important part of how they defined leadership. Interviewee #1, African-American/Caucasian female (2013) stated, "My leadership style is very accountability driven (Laughs). I'm also military driven, (laughs), so that makes it times two", she continues, "I am very compassionate to others; I think my racial identity has absolutely made me completely open-minded and an advocate for civil rights for anyone" (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 4). Interviewee #2, African-American female (2013) believed the following:

I think I'm strong, and at the same time, a little bit laid back, so I bring that to my style of leadership. So people who are under me know they can come talk to me if they wanted to. I'm approachable that way, but they know they can only do so much and get away with it,(Laughs), because I'm strong and I know the deal, (Laugh). (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

Interviewee #5, African-American female (2013) stated, "I think as a leader I have compassion for people. I think that has to do a lot with my race and how I was brought up, and I really want to put a stake in the ground for black people" (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 4).

Interviewee #8, African-American male (2014) stated the following:

Tenacity, passion, the willingness to not give up; not taking every day lightly. The intangibles that may not be looked at in corporate as valuable have served me well. Because I have been treated so differently, I work hard not to treat other people differently. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 4)

Interviewee #9, African-American male (2014) stated the following:

Me, being an African-American male, I believe we are colorful, expressive people, so I believe I bring that to my leadership style because I can relate to individuals in ways that others cannot. I know how to talk to people and get people going. I just use my colorful expressive nature to build relationships and I think that comes from my racial identity as an African-American male. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

***The ability to inspire.*** This is the third leading theme, with four responses from the leaders of color in this study. According to Interviewee #4, African-American male (2013), "The ability to be able to motivate, and empower; achieve and accomplish a common goal; someone who can effectively communicate, someone who can instill a passion to achieve a goal or vision, I think that's a big thing" (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 1). Interviewee #7, African-American/Asian female (2013) believed, "Leadership is not necessarily about the position you're in. It's a lot more about the ability to drive a group of people to the same goal in a positive

manner”, she continued, “It’s about how you accomplish goals and how you inspire others to give their best to accomplish something” (Confidential communication, transcript, p.1).

Interviewee #8, African-American male (2013) insisted, “The capacity to use others through inspiration; motivated by a passion, generated by a vision, utilized by a conviction, ignited by a purpose” (Confidential communication, transcript, p.1). Interviewee #11, Hispanic-American male, (2014) believed the following:

The ability to influence people to achieve strong shared vision and goals, and as far as the skills, one most important skill is the ability to communicate a vision and the ability to influence people to act and achieve that vision on a more specific level. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.1)

**Values.** This was identified by the researcher as a relevant factor, a highly thought-provoking element through a response by Interviewee #1, African-American/Caucasian female (2013) who stated, “It’s about your values and how you portray yourself to others. I think personal values”, she continues, “I think it’s ideal when your personal values match with your organizational values, but sometimes that doesn’t happen. I’d say leadership is going to be driven by the personal values” (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 1).

**Research question 2.** How can the performance of leaders of color be hindered by the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry? *Ambiguity* was a leading theme, *Frustration with Management* was a supporting theme and the researcher did not identify a relevant factor. Interviewees #1,2,3,5,7,8,9 provided valuable responses for this research question.

**Ambiguity.** For the purpose of this study, ambiguity is the stress of not knowing if racial identity is creating barriers in various career advancement and opportunities in the workplace. Four leaders of color provided valuable responses for this leading theme. Interviewee #1, African-American/Caucasian female (2013) believed, “When I do get nervous about it I’d say would be in interviews, in advancement opportunities when considering that I sometimes

question if someone is going to perceive something of me because they don't know me", she continues, "initially when I'm just a person on paper and meeting for the first time, I'd say that is where the nervousness is; a fear that I am going to be perceived as something I'm not" (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2). Interviewee #2, African-American female, (2013) shared the following:

I was recently going to apply for a job, and I spoke to a recruiter regarding the position, and I was told the executive who was hiring for that position was looking for a particular type. I was told that person had to graduate from an Ivy League school and be male, and he (the recruiter) basically told me that they were looking for white males, so don't even apply. It kind of hindered me to not want to apply for anything because you never know what the hiring manager is looking for. Regardless of what you can do. It doesn't matter. It made me sad because I was excited about applying for that position, and it made me feel like what's the point. How do I know? Made me question every job I wanted to apply for and should I waste my time? And, I was qualified for this position, educationally and experience wise. (Confidential communication, Transcript, p. 2)

Interviewee #3, Hispanic-American female, (2013) shared the following:

Last year, I did a training presentation for people who worked outside customer services, and the people there were not people of color; it made me feel anxious because of the way they may view me as a Hispanic woman and may not give me as much respect as a trainer. (Confidential communication, Transcript, p.2)

Interviewee #5, African-American female (2013) shared the following:

In my previous role with my current company, I was hired as an executive, and I was the only female on the executive team with all white males over fifty, and I was the only female there under forty and black. I found myself being excluded

from a lot of team meetings and decisions. They would have meetings, and I wouldn't know anything about it. I would walk down the hall and see a group of them walk out of the board room and I would find out they had meetings and I wasn't included. I really had to sit back and really wonder why they hired me, why am I here if I'm not going to be included. When I asked the question to my boss, after I been there for about six months, he basically told me it was a corporate directive to hire my position, and it looked good for the company but they basically had no plans to include me in anything, and he was very direct about it. I guess the stress for me if I had to call it that was more of uneasiness with my place there with the company. It caused a little bit of stress because I had never dealt with this in my life, that kind of overt discrimination if you will. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2)

***Frustration with management.*** Three leaders of color in this study spoke on how managerial behavior and/or decisions hindered their performances.

Interviewee #7, African-American/Asian female (2013) shared the following:

So, there were times when being an African-American female in HR there were things that were discounted, even though I had opened properties with them before, and they knew I knew what I was talking about; they proceeded to argue with me and discount everything I said. So that made no sense, a lot of that was ego, but part of it was that I was an African-American female in HR. More frustrating, I have to do things to prove myself, I spent a lot of time proving to them about why things weren't going to work, even though I was the only person that knew how it was going to work, and they wanted to change the process and from that point on there was a lot of tension, anxiety, and feeling very depressed and trapped. So this was a very emotional time in my life. It was like waking up every day and putting on the gloves. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2)

Interviewee #8, African-American male, (2014) shared the following:

I was told by a colleague that my supervisor at the time said that African Americans were inferior when it came to intellect. That infused an emotional response out of me to the standpoint I had to do a presentation later on and was not fully prepared because I was so caught up that a direct supervisor, who was higher up in the organization, had categorized or labeled a stereotype, and felt strongly about a stereotype that I knew no matter how I performed later on I was not equipped to compare my work to my colleagues. So that led to me probably not doing my best work in the presentation, and probably feeding into the theory of being inferior and to someone who has a direct impact on your evaluations, your raises, your salary. Obviously, for two weeks, I did not make some of my best decisions and allowed this to have an impact on my work as far as my decision making and my problem solving. My grandmother use to say, *Everybody ain't saved*. Everybody is not a good person. There are going to be people in your life that because of their low self-esteem, because of their incompetence, because of their lack of confidence, because of the threat of you, they are always going to say or do things to hinder or become barriers to moving forward, or just be plain, flat out mean. You have to make your haters your motivators. That should drive you to be better.

(Confidential communication, transcript, p.2)

Interviewee #9, African-American male (2014) shared the following:

I notice that new ideas are something that just isn't presented. I wanted to implement change in the workplace, but the process wouldn't allow it. I am the only black male in my department, and I was told that I should run ideas by other people in the department before I officially present them. It takes away from my creative edge, which is part of who I am. It seems like everyone else gets to present ideas but mine had to go through a censorship process. I don't know

if it was about race, well I should say I don't know how much of it was about race, as a result, I present nothing as far as new ideas anymore. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2)

**Research question 3.** What are the ways leaders of color utilize assimilation to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry? *Social Skills* was the leading theme, there was no supporting theme identified and the researcher identified *Professional Appearance* as a relevant factor. Interviewees #1,2,4,5,7,8,9,10,11 provided valuable responses for this research question.

**Social skills.** Eight leaders of color so eloquently shared their experiences concerning their style of assimilation. Interviewee #1, African-American/Caucasian female (2013) admitted to the following:

I'll put it this way, sometimes I think it's angry black woman syndrome that people just perceive that because you're black and a woman in, (Laughs) a leadership position that means you're angry and mean. I'm very direct, very direct and that can be perceived as coming from a bad place, but it never does for me. I'm very open minded, with anything I say is probably more so because I respect directness, I love feedback, I'm constantly evolving and live to get it, but I've learned in my career, and more recently at this level in my career, that not too many people like feedback or welcome it; they're not able to take it, so I've found I had to change myself in that respect a lot lately where I'm not as direct as I normally would be. I'm not as open, and I don't know if that is racial or not, it could be. I have stepped back and really been cautious of my approach and the way I give feedback, and quite honestly, I have found it not to be as effective (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3-4)

Interviewee #2, African-American female, (2013) honestly shared the following:

I feel a lot of times if there is something wrong with a certain job responsibility I feel it's okay for me to speak up, but because of who I am and what they think they know about me because of my race, I have to hold my tongue. So, instead of me voicing my opinion, sometimes I will tell another leader of a different race to say it so things will happen because if I say it, and I'm not sure if it's me or my race, it may not be taken seriously or get done. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

Interviewee #4, African-American male (2013) shared the following:

This industry is dominated by white America. I have had to assimilate 75 to 85 percent of the time just to get by. When it comes to entertainment talk in the workplace, I have to be careful what I share because upper managers can't always relate. So I am careful to exclude any talk of urban entertainment just to be included in some conversations. I just can't bring up the *BET awards*, (Laughs) or the *Real Housewives of Atlanta* and expect to be taken seriously in corporate America. But it's acceptable to discuss the *Grammys* or the *Country Music Awards*. It's a cultural boundary that white Americans can set in the workplace and most of them would not be entertained by the *BET awards*. (Confidential Communication, transcript, p.3)

Interviewee #5, African-American female (2013) shared the following:

One of our white employees referenced a friend and he happened to be black, and so we interviewed him, and I thought this kid did a really good job, loved his story, loved his attitude, really felt he was the best person for the job. But I had a (white) person come to me and say, *We knew once you got here, you'd probably start hiring your relatives!* I had to hold back, and I don't want to ignore this little black thing, I wanted to say, *Are you fucking kidding me? Don't talk to me like that!* I did tell him I'm a professional and he was referred by a white employee. I didn't know this guy; he walked in by himself as a referral. We get many other referrals; we just hired a white guy before that,

and I didn't get any comments. I had to hold back a little bit because I realized I moved to this different environment and emotions can get in the way, but I have to really check those things because I can't go around cursing people out every time they say something offensive to me. Of course, naturally I know that, but when people say something like that, it touches a cord when its outright inappropriate. In the street world, an inappropriate comment like that could get very confrontational, but in the professional world you can't do that; I don't get to be all on their level. I don't want to be the angry black woman, and I am conscious of that. Why can't I just be angry about things that make everybody else angry? (Confidential communication, transcript, p.4)

Interviewee #9, African-American male, (2014) stated the following:

I'm a black man! I'm on probation from the time I get there until the time I leave. I don't have the pleasure of laying back without worrying if someone is coming for my head. I had a co-worker who has tried to poison my manager about me. I had to learn to be one with this culture because if I'm not, I'm the bad apple. I just come to work and put in my eight hours and go home, because it is just not worth it to have any conflict with anyone. As a black male, you lose no matter if you are right or wrong. It doesn't matter. So I have adjusted my behavior to not be a rebel and just play ball as long as my name is on my check. It does take away from the challenge. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

Interviewee #10, African-American male, (2014) believed the following:

I would say this, as far as my work ethic and as far as I hold things true to my value and my character, I would say that I have not assimilated at all. Now, if I have a leader or a mentor that has found a better way of doing something that can assist me in moving up, as long as that does not interfere with my core values and character, I'm okay with assimilating. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2)

Interviewee#11, Hispanic-American male (2014) shared the following:

Growing up I didn't play golf. I didn't play tennis. My athletic activities as a kid were not country club athletic activities, and particular when I got into the fortune five-hundred club environment as I have. I've realized and understood it wasn't about me assimilating it was about me understanding there was nothing wrong with that background. If that was one's background, the country club background, and it wasn't anything for me to be resentful of or to have an attitude about and to make a decision not to engage in those activities, because somehow that was selling out, or some other loss of my own identity. So, I can understand that business still gets done, and they are actually kind of fun, (Laughs), so I have a better perspective on things. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

Interviewee #8, African-American male (2013) believed the following:

You have to have exceptional social skills to interact and work alongside of key members that may be different from yourself. Those skills are what helps launch you to where you aspire to be and there will be times when you need to assimilate, but that is not a bad thing by the way; we live in a diverse world, and if you want to call yourself a leader, you've got to have the ability to understand and go along and assimilate with those who are different than you. No one group is ever 100 percent right about anything. It doesn't mean you have to get away from your values or who you are, but the world in which we live today, was not the world we were born in, and will not be the world we leave. So if you don't have that skill set, the skill to assimilate effectively, you will suffer as a leader unless you move to a monolithic society and in this country, I have not seen that. (Confidential Communication, transcript, p.3)

**Professional appearance.** The researcher identified professional appearance as a relevant factor, resulting from an experience of one leader of color. Interviewee #7, African-American/Asian female (2013) shared the following:

There are days when my hair gets a little out of control, which I grow naturally now, and there are days when I have an important meeting, it gets straightened and pulled back just like a white girl style. Changing a little of my personal style, as far as dress and hair; It's about being professional in HR. It's about presentation, the curly hair versus the straight hair; the clothing, a little less Cindy Lauper and, (Laughs) more Martha Stewart. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

**Research question 4.** What strategies have been used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry? The researcher could not identify any leading or supporting themes for this research question. Most responses by the leaders of color were very diverse and independent to his or her experiences. The researcher did identify nine relevant factors: *Transparent Awareness, Racial Indifference, Cultural Education, Result Oriented, Innovation Oriented, Connecting with People, Maintaining Professionalism, Flexibility and Hard work*. Interviewees #1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,12 provided valuable responses for this research question.

**Transparent awareness.** This is the strategy used by two leaders of color in this study to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping. Interviewee #1, African-American/Caucasian female (2013) shared the following:

I joined the diversity counsels. I am very compassionate about creating the bridges there. So knowing the barriers are there, I'm compassionate about getting rid of them and helping others who have a harder time with the struggle. I think being biracial has helped me; I don't by any means struggle as much as someone who is 100 percent African-American. I think that's a strong point to say to someone. It's a reality, just like an African-American woman does not struggle as near as much as an African-American man. I don't know why that is and why that is accepted differently, but I feel it's definitely a reality in a workplace and in a society. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.4)

Interviewee #2, African-American female (2013) shared the following:

I had a boss who was comparing me to someone else that was the same race as me, so if I was upset or mad, I was going to react the same way as that person. I literally told the boss I'm not that way and everybody is not the same. We're all different. Even though that person was of the same race, and that person got mad; I'm not going to react the same way. I had to explain myself...constantly. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

**Racial indifference.** This was used by one leader of color. Interviewee #3, Hispanic-American female (2013) shared the following:

The one (strategy) that I use the most is to not identify myself as a Hispanic person, or a female, or anything regarding my appearance. I just consider myself just a human with talent who can do amazing things. I don't want anyone to take into account my race and outward appearance. I just look at a people as a soul rather than a culture. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2)

**Cultural education.** This has proven to be a successful strategy for one leader of color. Interviewee #4, African-American male (2013) believed the following:

The ability to communicate with a very diverse group of people of all races and nationalities; I guess that stems from being the chameleon and really engaged in these specific groups, so I can know exactly the things that are appealing or perceived as popular among that group of individuals. So, I think that is really helping me. So going into any group and knowing I can communicate with this person or that person: black, white, Asian, Hispanic, it doesn't matter. This stems from being an African-American male having to learn how to get along and communicate with other people more than the average leader. I had to learn to play the game. I learned all I can about white males, white females. I had no choice because they may say he (me) can't interact with others. If you don't learn how to communicate and get along with others, especially your white counterpart, your career isn't going anywhere; educating myself on the different cultures,

just really diving into the different literature on effectively communicating among diverse groups of people, I think that has really helped me a lot. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.4)

**Result oriented.** This is a strategy that one leader of color is confident made a difference in her life in the workplace. Interviewee #5, African-American female (2013) believed the following:

I think being competent and effective and creating results, because when you work for a business, businesses are around to make money and when you do a good job and you create results and make the company money, you further the growth of the company; that helps overcome whatever, rather its racial issues, physical handicap, whatever. When you are producing, people tend to love you. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

**Innovation oriented.** This helped one leader of color become competitive in his workplace. Interviewee #6, Hispanic-American male (2013) shared the following:

I try to surprise people with working hard on something different and do the things they don't expect me to do. So focusing in on your different skill set and tackling things others don't. Innovation is a successful strategy and thinking outside the box has worked for me. I have also been known to take a lower salary just to prove I can do a better job. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2)

**Connecting with people.** This was utilized by two leaders of color to raise the level of thinking in others in the workplace. Interviewee #8, African-American male (2014) shared the following:

Education; I read books like wolves eat meat. The ability to bring in information and teach people but that education is not enough. You have to use common sense and get to know people, connect with people and spend time with people to understand people, and I have built enough credibility to where people see

those attributes as more sustainable in terms of getting beyond racial barriers.

Lastly, being a good teacher. I think a leader's job is to teach. You have to touch a person's heart because if you just touch their intellect, it just doesn't work.

(Confidential communication, transcript, p.4)

Interviewee #10, African-American male (2014) stated:

People who have any type of racial stereotypes about me, I get them to know me, don't just know the color of my skin, get to know me and my work ethic, and usually, once they get to know me well, I can't say I changed their viewpoint about my race, but I can tell you I changed their viewpoint about me, and hopefully, that experience will give them the opportunity to do the same for another person of color. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

**Maintaining professionalism.** This worked for one leader of color to stay focused on professional objectives and values. Interviewee #9, African-American male (2014) shared the following:

Honestly, I haven't been in the workplace that long but I have learned not to bow down to other people's level. I have co-workers who curse all the time, but I try not to involve myself in any of that. Bad language coming out of my mouth can be perceived differently than bad language coming out of a white person's mouth. Some may agree, some may not, but I just don't take that chance. I try to maintain a certain level of professionalism, even if I'm joking or having fun in the moment; I try not to go too far; I just can't afford to do it. (Confidential communication, transcript p.3)

**Flexibility.** This has proven to be a valuable asset to one leader of color to cope with the challenges of corporate America. Interviewee #11, Hispanic-American male (2014) shared the following:

I bring to the workplace a lifetime of experience; I grew up in a bi-lingual household and traveled across the United States. Those experiences gave me flexibility, a great survival

skill to cope with corporate America, and the ability to adapt to different situations, and the ability to relate to different people, people of different cultural or economic backgrounds from my own. I think those experiences to an extent can be described as specific to my racial or ethnic identity, and have proven as valuable to me, so I've been able to nurture them into specific skills and abilities that I apply to my job and workplace. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

**Hard work.** This final, old-fashioned strategy was relied on by one leader of color to overcome adversity. Interviewee #12, Hispanic-American female (2014) shared the following:

I guess one would be definitely working really hard, and I do high quality work, but I don't know if it's based on a racial stereotype. I just try to do the best job possible and put more hours in than I ever should have. So working hard, I can't think of anything other than working hard, practicing, for example if it's a presentation, making sure that you're well prepared. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.4)

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 4 presented the findings of this study; the research used a data collecting instrument of interviewing. The findings of this study was a result of interviews conducted with 12 leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry, leaders being defined as African-American and Hispanic-American. The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview format and asked predetermined questions while still exercising his freedom to seek clarification with follow up and improvised questions. The 12 interviewees were asked seven questions relevant to the four research questions to provide an in-depth analysis on how the interviewees observe their existence, relationships, and motivation in their respected workplaces (see Appendix C). Each response provided an in-depth look and an emotional tone that assisted in coding, categorizing, and answering the appropriate research question. The coding process analyzed the data and acknowledged leading themes, supporting themes, and relevant factors.

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the study, a discussion of demographics and findings in Chapter 4, and recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER 5. Discussion of Findings**

### **Introduction**

The literature and research concerning race, racism, and discrimination in society and organizational institutions is plentiful; however, the literature and research on how to deal with, and/or overcome the challenge of race, racism, and discrimination is scarce. The current literature and research acknowledges racism and discrimination are alive and well, overtly and covertly, but are limited on strategic maneuvers implemented by people of color who are succeeding and willing to share their experiences. This study contributes to the already scarce research by providing valuable and insightful transparency of how leaders of color overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the workplace. This chapter presents an overview of the study, a discussion of demographics and findings in Chapter 4, and recommendations for further research.

### **Overview of Study**

The purpose of this research is to explore successful strategies used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace, as it pertains to barriers, opportunities, and success. This study is significant because it provides a much needed collection of life experiences which highlight successful strategies by leaders of color who have overcome racial barriers in their organizations, and most importantly, are willing to share their collective wisdom.

The research conducted in this study utilized a qualitative research method which is a means of exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to regarding a social or human problem. This study utilized qualitative interviews as the primary instrument. The sample population for this study was 12 leaders in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry; leaders of color were identified as African-American and Hispanic-American. The Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry, for the purpose this study, was defined as any facility

located in Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, that currently holds a gaming license through the Nevada Gaming Control Board Gaming Commission as of January 1, 2013.

The following four research questions explored leadership, performance, assimilation, and strategies.

### Research Questions

1. How do leaders of color define effective leadership in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
2. How can the performance of leaders of color be hindered by the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
3. What are the ways leaders of color utilize assimilation to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
4. What strategies have been used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?

### Discussion of Demographics

Figure 5 illustrates 36 leaders of color who were contacted through an email invitation: 15 African-American and 21 Hispanic-American leaders for a qualitative interview. Out of the 36 leaders of color contacted, 11 African-Americans initially accepted, but only eight were interviewed, and six Hispanic-Americans initially accepted, but only four were interviewed (see Appendix A).

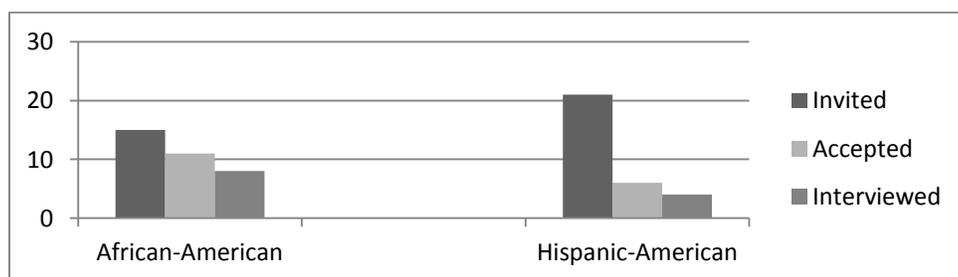


Figure 5. Invited, Accepted, and Interviewed Demographic

**Demographic discrepancy.** The researcher hypothesizes there may be a difference of opinion between what African-Americans define as a person of color and what Hispanic-Americans define as a person of color. As a result, there may be a correlation with the higher numbers of non-replies by the Hispanic-American leaders of color to participate in this research.

The initial goal of interviewing 12 leaders of color was accomplished; the goal of having a minimum of six African-Americans and six Hispanic-Americans was not obtained. A total of 21 Hispanic-American leaders in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry were identified by the researcher and invited to participate through the researcher's professional and personal network, only six originally replied back, but only four agreed to be interviewed. There were 15 African-American leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry identified by the researcher and invited to participate through the researcher's professional and personal network. Only 11 originally replied and agreed to be interviewed; however, when it was time to schedule the actual interviews, only eight followed through with the interview. Three times as many Hispanic-American leaders were invited to participate as an interviewee and did not reply than African-American leaders that did not reply. The two Hispanic-American leaders who did reply, but did not agree to an interview respectfully claim to not consider themselves a person of color and felt they would not provide anything meaningful to the research.

### **Discussion of Theoretical Framework**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework is Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). LMX is unique because it focuses on the dyadic process between a leader and a follower in the workplace. Earlier research on leadership believed that leaders treated all their followers like a collective group; however, LMX challenged earlier research that leaders can and will create a special bond with certain followers in regards to personality, interpersonal skills, or job competencies. The leaders of color in this study all have the objective of creating a special bond with other leaders, followers, and the entire organizational culture as a whole through strategies explored in Chapter 4. LMX theory categorizes leaders into two groups: in-groups and

out-groups. One's in-group affiliation can be the result of hard work, having a positive attitude or having racial similarities with the leader. One's out-group affiliation can be the result of limited effort, average performance or having racial differences from the leader. (Northouse, 2010). The research in this dissertation support the LMX theory and two examples are given below

Consider one leader of color who spoke about the challenges and pressures he experiences on a regular bases trying to maintain his in-group status. Interviewee #4, African-American male (2013) stated the following:

I feel the pressure to put my passion on display to prevent from being overlooked. It can be very challenging for an African American person to move up the ladder. I feel pressured to have to do two, three, four times as much than my white counterparts.

(Confidential Communication, transcript, p. 2)

Another leader of color spoke of the negative feelings the affect on the work experienced through her out-group status. Interviewee #7, African-American/Asian female (2013) stated the following:

The executives above me, the higher level executives were a bunch of white guys and they were the boys club. So there were times when being an African-American female in HR there were things that were discounted, even though I had opened properties with them before and they knew I knew what I was talking about; they preceded to argue with me and discount everything I said. So that made no sense, a lot of that was ego, but part of it was that I was an African -American female in HR. (Confidential Communication, transcript, p. 2)

The leader responses support a major criticism of LMX: the development of discriminatory privileged groups of race, gender and age in the workplace. (Northouse, 2010). Previous LMX research explains those who are less apprehensive to communicate with their superiors' experienced and higher quality of LMX; another factor that increased higher quality of LMX is being cognitively flexible, which may increase the dyadic communication between

supervisors and subordinates (Madlock, et al., 2007). It has been noted in Chapter 4 the leaders of color in this study are not apprehensive to communicate with other leaders and followers through strategy to build a higher quality of LMX and through structural assimilation are exercising cognitive flexibility to increase dyadic communication. LMX points out the need for more effective leadership and member communication that is based on mutual trust, respect, and commitment (Northouse, 2010). All of which can be strategies to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace.

### **Discussion of Results**

The results of this study conclude that leaders of color have cultivated strategies to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace, as it pertains to barriers, opportunities, and success. Although each leader of color in this study has never officially chronicled a professional strategy which is in direct correlation with the threat of racial stereotyping, most of them have been living by a subliminal game plan that is either reactive or proactive. The leaders of color in this study were given the opportunity to disclose what works for them in respect to their existence, relationships, and motivation in their respected workplaces.

**Research question 1 discussion.** How do leaders of color define effective leadership in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry? The responses to this question were very general across the board. Overall, leaders of color define effective leadership as being a role model who exemplifies the ability to empower, motivate, teach, and develop followers, as well as other leaders. Effective leaders understand their own strengths and weaknesses and drive others by generating a vision and utilizing a conviction, while being ignited by a purpose. The leading themes were: *Leading by Example, Self-Awareness and The Ability to Inspire* with the relevant factor identified as *Values*. Chapter 2 literature supports all leading themes and the relevant factor: exemplary leadership models the way by walking the walk and talking the talk; all followers should look for and expect this from exemplary leadership. A leader that does not

model that way may have a limited skill set and limited self-discipline. When modeling this way you have to be open with your heart and willing to let followers know what you think and believe by sharing and acting on your values (Posner & Kouzes, 2007). Based on leading themes and a relevant factor, leaders who participated in this research are clear on what is expected from their roles as leaders, and the ingredients of leadership, but they have the added responsibility to take into consideration what their implementation of leadership will have on followers based on his or her racial identity. In Chapter 2, Beale and Cox (1997) was quoted as saying, “Stereotyping is a mental process in which the individual is viewed as a member of a group and the information that we have stored in our minds about the group is ascribed to the individual” (p.78). In Chapter 4, two leaders acknowledged the possibility of being stereotyped as the angry black woman. Interviewee #1, African-American/Caucasian female (2013) shared the following:

I think its angry black woman syndrome that people just perceive that because you're black and a woman in, (Laughs) a leadership position that means you're angry and mean. I'm very direct, very direct, and that can be perceived as coming from a bad place. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

Interviewee #5, African-American female (2013) stated, “I can't go around cursing people out every time they say something offensive to me”, she continues, “I don't get to be all on their level; I don't want to be the angry black woman, and I am conscience of that. Why can't I just be angry about things that make everybody else angry? (Confidential communication, transcript, p.4)

The responses to the first research question allowed the researcher to illustrate how leaders, no matter what racial affiliation, strive for a similar excellence as all leaders do. However, the remaining research questions allowed the researcher to also illustrate how different leaders of color have to strategize throughout their day within their positions to lead effectively amidst an environment of racial insensitivity, barriers, and the threat of being stereotyped.

**Research question 2 discussion.** How can the performance of leaders of color be hindered by the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry? When performance is hindered, strengths are minimized and weaknesses are magnified. In Chapter 2, the stereotype threat was identified: When an individual belonging to a negatively stereotyped group is confronted with a task, he or she may experience performance anxiety from a fear of confirming a negative stereotype of his or her group (Steel, 1997).

*Ambiguity* was a leading theme and *Frustration with Management* was a supporting theme. In Chapter 4, there were two leaders from the seven that provided valuable responses to this question that stood out to the researcher, with the first one discussed the result of *ambiguity*.

Interviewee #3, Hispanic-American female, (2013) shared the following:

Last year I did a training presentation for people who worked outside customer services and the people there were not people of color; it made me feel anxious because of the way they may view me as a Hispanic woman, and may not give me as much respect as a trainer. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2)

The second was a result of *frustration with management*. Interviewee #8, African-American male (2014) shared the following:

I was told by a colleague that my supervisor at the time said that African Americans were inferior when it came to intellect. That infused an emotional response out of me to the standpoint I had to do a presentation later on and was not fully prepared because I was so caught up that a direct supervisor, who was higher up in the organization, had categorized or labeled a stereotype, and felt strongly about a stereotype that I knew no matter how I performed later on, I was not equipped to compare my work to my colleagues. So that led to me probably not doing my best work in the presentation, and probably feeding into the theory of being inferior and to someone who has a direct impact on your evaluations, your raises, your salary. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

These two leaders of color experienced performance anxiety irrelevant to their job description and more relevant to their racial existence. There are factors that can hinder a leader's performance: family challenges, health challenges, organizational challenges, and unfortunately for leaders of color, on top of family, health and organizational challenges, the sociological challenge of a stereotype threat. In Chapter 2, the genesis of a stereotype threat was described as identity contingencies. Steel (2010) defined identity contingencies as the following:

The things you have to deal with in a situation because you have a given social identity, because you are old, young, gay, a white male, a woman, black, Latino, politically conservative or liberal, diagnosed with bipolar disorder, a cancer patient, and so.

Generally speaking, contingencies are circumstances you deal with in order to get what you want or need in a situation. (p. 3)

The threat of being racially stereotyped is an internal anxiety built up within leaders of color, paranoia that exists in one's mind, but is the result of institutional racism and discrimination.

**Research question 3 discussion.** What are the ways leaders of color utilize assimilation to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry? In Chapter 2, there were two known stages of assimilation: acculturation and structural assimilation. First, acculturation is the adaptation to a mainstream culture, which may include, but not be limited to, norms and values. Next, structural assimilation is the equal and voluntary participation of a race or minority group into a mainstream group activity. As a result, racial barriers may precipitate at the expense of a racial or minority identity (Wildsmith, 2004). The leading theme for this research question was *Social Skills*, with no supporting theme, and the relevant factor was *Professional Appearance*. The leaders of color in this study had various ways of maneuvering with their social skills. In Chapter 4, two leaders felt holding their tongues to avoid conflict and being stereotyped was to their personal advantage, but not to their professional advantage. Interview #1, African-American/ Caucasian female (2013) shared the following:

I love feedback, I'm constantly evolving and live to get it, but I've learned in my career, and more recently at this level in my career, that not too many people like feedback or welcome it; they're not able to take it, so I've found I had to change myself in that respect a lot lately where I'm not as direct as I normally would be. I'm not as open, and I don't know if that is racial or not. It could be. I have stepped back and really been cautious of my approach and the way I give feedback, and quite honestly, I have found it not to be as effective. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3-4)

Interviewee #9, African-American male (2014) stated the following:

I had to learn to be one with this culture because if I'm not, I'm the bad apple. I just come to work and put in my eight hours and go home, because it is just not worth it to have any conflict with anyone. As a black male, you lose no matter if you are right or wrong, it doesn't matter. So, I have adjusted my behavior to not be a rebel and just play ball as long as my name is on my check. It does take away from the challenge. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

In Chapter 4, another leader of color realized utilizing her social skills to put the words in another leader's mouth was not to her personal advantage, but to her professional advantage.

Interviewee #2, African-American female, (2013) believed the following:

I feel a lot of times if there is something wrong with a certain job responsibility I feel it's okay for me to speak up, but because of who I am and what they think they know about me because of my race, I have to hold my tongue, so instead of me voicing my opinion, sometimes I will tell another leader of a different race to say it so things will happen, because if I say it, and I'm not sure if it's me or my race, it may not be taken seriously or get done. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

As stated in Chapter 4, the two leaders of color in this study, whom are in the 50 years and up age category, provided responses for assimilation in the form of social skills, derived from years

of life and work experiences. Interviewee #11, Hispanic-American male (2014) shared the following:

Growing up I didn't play golf, I didn't play tennis. My athletic activities as a kid were not country club athletic activities, and particular when I got into the fortune 500 club environment as I have, I've realized and understood it wasn't about me assimilating. It was about me understanding there was nothing wrong with that background. If that was one's background, the country club background, it wasn't anything for me to be resentful of or to have an attitude about and to make a decision not to engage in those activities, because somehow that was selling out, or some other loss of my own identity. So I can understand that business still gets done, and they are actually kind of fun, (Laughs), so I have a better perspective on things. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

Interviewee #8, African-American male, (2013) stated the following:

You have to have exceptional social skills to interact and work alongside of key members that may be different from yourself. Those skills are what help launch you to where you aspire to be, and there will be times when you need to assimilate, but that is not a bad thing by the way. We live in a diverse world, and if you want to call yourself a leader you've got to have the ability to understand and go along and assimilate with those who are different than you. No one group is ever 100 percent right about anything. It doesn't mean you have to get away from your values or who you are, but the world in which we live today, was not the world we were born in, and will not be the world we leave. So, if you don't have that skill set, the skill to assimilate effectively, you will suffer as a leader unless you move to a monolithic society and in this country, I have not seen that. (Confidential Communication, transcript, p.3)

Regarding professional appearance, the researcher identified this as a relevant factor resulting from an experience of one leader of color who believed that part of assimilating is not just being conscience of what you say and don't say, and what you do or do not do, it is also being

conscious of your external presentation as well. Interviewee #7 African-American/Asian female (2013) shared the following:

There are days when my hair gets a little out of control, which I grow naturally now, and there are days when I have an important meeting, it gets straightened and pulled back just like a white girl style. Changing a little of my personal style, as far as dress and hair; It's about being professional in HR. It's about presentation, the curly hair versus the straight hair; the clothing, a little less Cindy Lauper and, (Laughs) more Martha Stewart. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

In Chapter 2, Figure 1 was identified as the diagram explaining the theoretical framework using the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). The LMX Theory illustrated how an employee's performance can fall on two sides: employees can go the extra mile or have racial similarities with the leader and in exchange become part of the in-group, or, an employee can just provide status quo performance or is racially stereotyped and in exchange becomes part of the out-group (Northouse, 2010). The leaders of color in this study verbalized an obligation to assimilate to the in-groups of their organizations as a basic survival skill, especially being in a leadership position. None of the leaders of color in this study felt there was a permanent or temporary loss of self that damaged his or her values or character. Still, assimilation may be a necessary evil for some leaders, but for the leaders of color in this study, assimilation was a necessary strategy for success.

**Research question 4 discussion.** What strategies have been used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of being racially stereotyped in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry? The previous two research questions prompted the leaders of color in this study to respond from a reactionary position. The final research question encouraged the leaders of color in this study to share their more proactive strategies to deal with and overcome racism, discrimination, and the threat of racial stereotyping in their workplaces. There were no leading themes or supporting themes identified with research question 4; however, the researcher

identified nine relevant factors among all twelve leaders that are thought-provoking and important to this research: *Transparent Awareness, Racial Indifference, Cultural Education, Result Oriented, Innovation Oriented, Connecting with People, Maintaining Professionalism, Flexibility and Hard Work.*

As mentioned earlier in the *Discussion of Results* section of this chapter, the leaders of color in this study have never officially chronicled a professional strategy that is in direct correlation with the threat of racial stereotyping; therefore, the strategies expressed to the researcher were considered to be habit or just common sense. These leaders, whether they know it or not, are strategically operating based on their parental guidance, workplace experiences, and academic and/or professional mentoring. In Chapter 2, the mentor is not a know-it-all tyrant who always has the last word, but a caring professional who provides guidance in the form of coaching. This does not mean that ideas and opinions of a mentor should not be challenged; on the contrary, a mentoring relationship should encourage shifting of thoughts, roles, and ideas. This requires confrontation, but if the relationship is built on trust, respect, and ethics, then the result of this confrontation will be personal and professional growth for both mentors and mentees (Kiltz, et al., 2004).

In describing transparent awareness, two leaders of color strategized that being honest about the threat of racial stereotyping and educating others can build and repair relationships. From Chapter 4, Interviewee #1, African-American/Caucasian female (2013) shared, "I joined the diversity counsels; I am very compassionate about creating the bridges there; so knowing the barriers are there, I'm compassionate about getting rid of them and helping others who have a harder time with the struggle" (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 4). Interviewee #2, African-American female (2013) shared the following:

I had a boss who was comparing me to someone else that was the same race as me, so if I was upset or mad, I was going to react the same way as that person. I literally told the boss I'm not that way and everybody is not the same. We're all different. Even

though that person was of the same race, and that person got mad; I'm not going to react the same way. I had to explain myself...constantly. (Confidential communication, transcript, p. 3)

Regarding racial indifference, one leader of color refused to be simplified by her outward appearance, and relegated to a racial stereotype, so her strategy was more self-affirmation. From Chapter 4, Interviewee #3, Hispanic-American female (2013) shared, "The one (strategy) that I use the most is to not identify myself as a Hispanic person, or a female, or anything regarding my appearance; I just consider myself just a human with talent who can do amazing things" (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2).

When describing cultural education, another leader of color understood how diverse the workplace could be, and he decided to embrace and value it. In Chapter 2, despite the fact that there were people who believed diversity in the workplace created problems and challenges; diversity was definitely worth having, even if it meant learning how to overcome any challenges that may arise. The benefits included, but were not limited to a variety of ideas, styles, vision, creativity, innovation, and lifestyles (Parvis, 2003). From Chapter 4, Interviewee #4, African-American male (2013) stated, "If you don't learn how to communicate and get along with others, especially your white counterpart, your career isn't going anywhere", he continues, "educating myself on the different cultures, just really diving into the different literature on effectively communicating among diverse groups of people. I think that has really helped me a lot" (Confidential communication, transcript, p.4).

From the result oriented factor, one leader of color preferred a strategy of continuously creating a professional brand of competency and results that would lead to organizational profitability. Interviewee #5, African-American female (2013) stated the following:

I think about being competent and effective and creating results, because when you work for a business, businesses are around to make money and when you do a good job and you create results and make the company money, you further the growth of the

company; that helps overcome whatever, rather its racial issues, physical handicap, whatever. When you are producing, people tend to love you. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

While being innovation oriented, one leader's strategy was to be innovative and stand out among the rest by using a diverse skill set he brought to his workplace, working smarter and not necessarily harder gave this leader of color a competitive edge. Interviewee #6, Hispanic-American male (2013) shared the following:

I try to surprise people with working hard on something different and do the things they don't expect me to do. So focusing in on your different skill set and tackling things others don't. Innovation is a successful strategy, and thinking outside the box has worked for me. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.2)

Connecting with people was a strategy utilized by two leaders of color to raise the level of thinking in others through the heart and with empathy. In Chapter 2, if a leader is to deliver a sincere message to followers, it must be from the heart, and this is the only way it will be convincing to the followers. A true charismatic leader sincerely believes the message he or she is trying to convey to a team or group (Goldman, 1997). Interviewee #8, African-American male (2014) shared the following:

Education; I read books like wolves eat meat. The ability to bring in information and teach people, but that education is not enough. You have to use common sense and get to know people, connect with people, and spend time with people to understand people, and I have built enough credibility to where people see those attributes as more sustainable in terms of getting beyond racial barriers. Lastly, being a good teacher. I think a leader's job is to teach. You have to touch a person's heart because if you just touch their intellect, it just doesn't work. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.4)

Interviewee #10, African-American male (2014) stated the following:

People who have any type of racial stereotypes about me, I get them to know me, don't just know the color of my skin, get to know me and my work ethic, and usually, once they get to know me well, I can't say I changed their viewpoint about my race, but I can tell you I changed their viewpoint about me, and hopefully, that experience will give them the opportunity to do the same for another person of color. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

While maintaining professionalism, one leader of color felt this strategy was a top priority when it came to overcoming the threat of racial stereotyping. There were certain privileges other leaders were enabled to take advantage of that were not provided to other leaders. In Chapter 2, white privilege was described as the advantages that are affiliated with being white without examination such as avoiding spending time with people you mistrust, turning on the television and seeing people of your own race widely and positively represented, and talking with mouth full and not have people put this down to the color of your skin (McIntosh, 1995). Interviewee #9, African-American male (2014) shared the following:

Honestly, I haven't been in the workplace that long, but I have learned not to bow down to other people's level. I have co-workers who curse all the time, but I try not to involve myself in any of that. Bad language coming out of my mouth can be perceived differently than bad language coming out of a white person's mouth. Some may agree, some may not, but I just don't take that chance. I try to maintain a certain level of professionalism, even if I'm joking or having fun in the moment; I try not to go too far; I just can't afford to do it. (Confidential communication, transcript p.3)

Flexibility was a strategy one leader of color chose by taking advantage of his personal experiences as a way of dealing with diverse challenges in his role as a leader in the workplace. Interviewee #11, Hispanic-American male (2014) stated the following:

I bring to the workplace a lifetime of experience; I grew up in a bi-lingual household and traveled across the United States. Those experiences gave me flexibility, a great survival

skill to cope with corporate America, and the ability to adapt to different situations, and the ability to relate to different people, people of different cultural or economic backgrounds from my own. I think those experiences, to an extent, can be described as specific to my racial or ethnic identity, and have proven as valuable to me, so I've been able to nurture them into specific skills and abilities that I apply to my job and workplace. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.3)

The last factor, hard work, was still used by one leader of color because she believed this strategy, at the end of the day, week, month, or year, was the most simple of all the others, and she had no time to involve herself with the everyday politics and social burdens of the workplace. Interviewee #12, Hispanic-American female (2014) shared the following:

I guess one would be definitely working really hard, and I do high quality work, but I don't know if it's based on a racial stereotype. I just try to do the best job possible and put more hours in than I ever should have. So working hard, I can't think of anything other than working hard, practicing, for example if it's a presentation, making sure that you're well prepared. (Confidential communication, transcript, p.4)

The results of this study are transparent and align with the purpose of this research: exploring successful strategies used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace, as it pertains to barriers, opportunities, and success. Moreover, the results of this study align with the significance of the research: providing a much needed collection of life experiences that highlight successful strategies by people of color who have overcome racial stereotyping in the workplace.

### **Comparison to Previous Studies**

Chapter 3 explored two previous studies that the researcher found very similar to this study: Study One - *Intergroup Anxiety Effects on Implicit Racial Evaluation and Stereotyping* (Amodio & Hamilton, 2012), and Study Two - *Racial Stereotyping in the Media* (Stein, 1994).

**Study one.** This study explored a body of research that showed there could be intergroup anxiety which may activate racial stereotyping during interracial interaction between African-American and Caucasian people; moreover, feeling anxious in interracial interactions predicted more prejudiced, hostile, and avoidant tendencies toward out-group members. This study considered how the neurocognitive mechanisms involved in anxiety related to underlying implicit social cognition. Implicit racial bias reflects learned associations with a racial group category. This study also suggested that intergroup anxiety amplified the evaluative associations with the relevant racial groups, specifically, between a White American interacting with a Black American. Intergroup anxiety would amplify both negative associations with Blacks and positive associations with Whites (Amodio & Hamilton, 2012). *Intergroup Anxiety Effects on Implicit Racial Evaluation and Stereotyping* is similar to what leaders of color have strategized in overcoming the threat of racial stereotyping, which can be the result of intergroup anxiety, and anxiety, in return, can lead to a stereotype threat by leaders of color. In Chapter 2 when an individual belonging to a negatively stereotyped group was confronted with a task, he or she may have experienced performance anxiety from a fear of confirming a negative stereotype of his or her group (Steel, 1997). Study one focused on the performance of interracial interactions, which is what the leaders of color in this study had to overcome on a daily basis.

**Study two.** This study explored how mainstream media's coverage of people of color is filled with old stereotypes, offensive terminology, biased reporting and a myopic interpretation of American society, especially in crime, sports, and the entertainment industry (Stein, 1994). The leaders of color in this study, *Overcoming the Threat of Racial Stereotyping in the Workplace*, were not asked to define or address any old stereotypes, offensive terminology or any racial bias and myopic interpretations in their workplaces. The leaders of color were only asked questions pertaining to strategies to overcoming the threat of being racially stereotyped, as they perceived a threat of stereotype to be in their roles as leaders and in their workplaces.

**Comparison.** The two previous studies contributed to the literature that dealt with racial issues of today; however, like much of the previous and current literature, these two previous studies acknowledged the problem of race, racism, and stereotypes, and the affect it had on people through interracial interaction and mass media, but differs from this study in the following manner: It does not open up a dialogue or reveal strategies people of color can implement to deal with and overcome the challenges of race, racism, and stereotyping.

### **Researcher's Observation**

There were three observations the researcher identified as surprising in this study. The first observation revealed to the researcher was that there were potential participants the researcher identified as leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry who did not consent to participate in this study due to disagreeing with at least one of the following: the statement of the problem of this research, the purpose of this research, the significance of this research, or define themselves as a leader of color. These potential participants are entitled to their opinions and the researcher respected their decision not to participate.

The second observation the researcher found was that the leaders of color in this study were very humble, extremely competent, and tremendously gracious with their time and thoughts of the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace. The researcher was very impressed with their attitudes, transparency, and their support. First, the attitudes were impressive. Each leader of color interviewed for the study was very positive and had a great sense of humor about such a serious topic. No leader was observed as negative, hostile, militant, or racist. All the leaders joked and laughed periodically through the interview while still taking the topic very seriously but not taking themselves too seriously. Next, all leaders interviewed for the study were completely transparent and answered all questions while carefully pondering each question before supplying a thought-provoking response. Finally, all leaders interviewed for this research were supportive. They understood and appreciated the topic of this study and sincerely wanted to contribute to the research. All leaders were very

thankful for the opportunity to be included, offered well wishes, and requested a copy of the completed study for their personal libraries.

The third observation was that the researcher was overwhelmed by the diverse backgrounds and results of the study. Every leader of color interviewed for this study grew up in a different part of the United States of America, and had a different educational background. As a result, no responses to any questions were similar but still enabled the researcher to identify leading and supporting themes, in the context of the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace.

In closing, in Chapter 2, the researcher explored the literature on Critical Race Theory (CRT), alternately referred to as a theoretical and/or interpretive framework which draws together premises and strategies largely from critical theory, but related directly to race, racism, and power, and is being increasingly used by educational scholars to analyze race education (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). There are six key aspects of CRT:

1. Racism is an endemic problem;
2. It questions and rejects the notions of a philosophy of objectivity, neutrality, colorblindness and meritocracy;
3. It demands a context/historical analysis of institutional policies;
4. It recognizes people of colors' experiences and knowledge regarding individuals, groups, and communities in analyzing society;
5. It embraces interdisciplinary collaboration; and
6. It strives to eliminate racially based oppression as part of a strategy to end all forms of oppression (Villalpando & Bernal, 2002).

This research on overcoming the threat of racial stereotyping contributes to three out of six aspects. Compared to #1, CRT identifies racism as an endemic problem, and the researcher believes there may be leaders of color in other industries who are experiencing similar threats of racial stereotyping. Compared to #2, CRT questions and rejects the notions of a philosophy of

objectivity, neutrality, colorblindness, and meritocracy in which the leaders of color in this study acknowledged and embraced their racial identity and recognized the challenges and perceptions that may be attached to their racial identity. Finally compared to #4, CRT recognizes experiences and knowledge regarding individuals, groups, and communities in analyzing society through the eyes of people of color. The leaders of color in this research have provided valuable responses in the form of their experiences and knowledge of overcoming the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace. The researcher is confident this study needs to be expanded and researched further to build on the current literature on issues of racism, discrimination, and the threat of racial stereotyping.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study discussed in-depth the lack of current literature that builds a collection of transparent experiences of leaders of color overcoming the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace. The researcher is identifying three recommendations to broaden this topic for further research to add to the current literature: expanding the population, studying gender disparities, and a correlation with age and strategies.

The first recommendation: the population for this study was African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. The researcher recommends the expansion of the population of leaders of color to include Asian-Americans, American-Indian, Polynesian-Americans and any other group of people whose racial identity, as Chapter 2 defines, “has been historically understood as responses to racism and prejudice while ethnic identity has included a sense of belonging to a group connected with values, traditions, and often languages” (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010, p. 144). Any such group would add to the diversity of experiences, which could present a stronger case of racism, discrimination, and the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace for a multitude of cultures; moreover, it could add and present more of a collection of strategies to overcome.

The second recommendation: a study of gender disparities among leaders of color. Are female leaders of color perceived and approached differently in the workplace? The researcher hypothesizes there may be a higher degree of comfort with female leaders of color in regards to personal and professional interactions. If so, how does such a comfort level affect interviewing and hiring practices in the workplace?

Finally, there may be a correlation between age and strategy in respects to leaders of color overcoming the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace. *Chapter 4, Figure 3: Interviewed Demographics* reveals two leaders of color, one African-American male and one Hispanic-American male, as the only leaders of color in this study 50 years and older. The researcher hypothesizes that there may be a level of maturity developed through years of personal, as well as professional experiences that may differentiate the strategies from younger leaders of color.

The recommendations for further research are needed to strengthen the continuous contribution to the research of exploring how leaders of color overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace. Additionally, the continuous collection of similar strategies will provide future leaders of colors the knowledge that the challenges and concerns of their group is not being ignored or dismissed and will equip them with consciousness and interpersonal skills that can propel their careers.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented an overview of the study and discussions of the findings drawn from Chapter 5. It provided a discussion of the demographics and results, as well as a comparison of previous studies, the researcher's observations, and recommendations for future studies in regards to overcoming the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace. The statement of the problem in Chapter 1 explained there is a distinct possibility that many people of color who are in leadership positions or applying for leadership positions may believe racial stereotyping creates barriers for opportunity, and can hinder one's chances for success.

Therefore, people of color may have to develop personal and professional strategies that can assist with overcoming this xenophobia that may follow them for the rest of their lives in the workplace. The results in Chapter 5 confirm this way of thinking based on leaders of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry who participated in this study.

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## APPENDIX A

## Email Invitation to Participate

Dear:

My name is Jeremy Gray; I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am gathering data for a study that is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership.

The purpose of this study is to explore successful strategies used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace. I am very excited about exploring this topic. I have identified you as someone that meets the criteria to participant in this study as an interviewee. If you accept, any information obtained in this study will remain confidential. If you volunteer to be an interviewee, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

If you are interested, please contact me at your earliest convenience. I have a minimum window of time to gather and organize my data, and your expeditious reply is appreciated.

I have attached a copy of the informed consent form to this email.

Thank you,

Jeremy Gray

## APPENDIX B

## Informed Consent to Participant in Research

**Study Title**

*Overcoming the Threat of Racial Stereotyping in the Workplace; Exploring Strategies of Leaders of Color in the Las Vegas Hospitality and Gaming Industry*

**Participants**

Your permission is required to voluntarily participant in a study conducted by Jeremy Gray, doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. This study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership. Your identification as a possible participant was based upon meeting the criterion of the research study. Participation in this study is voluntary.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore successful strategies used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace, as it pertains to barriers, opportunities, and success.

**Procedures**

As a participant in this research, you can expect the following to occur related to the study:

- 1) The interview will consist of seven questions that will be delivered within a face-to-face, semi-structural process that will be digitally recorded at the time of the interview.
- 2) You will be asked questions regarding your experiences in the role as a leader of color in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry confronting the challenges of the threat of racial stereotyping.
- 3) You will be asked questions in order to confirm that you meet the criteria to participant in this study.
- 4) The responses to the questions will be kept in a secure file cabinet for a period of three years before being destroyed.

- 5) There will be an opportunity to review the transcript of your responses.
- 6) A summary of the findings will be available upon request.
- 7) Interviewees will be designated a code name and data will be analyzed in an aggregate process to provide the confidentiality.

**Potential Risks and Discomforts**

The risks associated with participation in the study are considered minimal and by definition are no greater than those experienced in daily life. It also should be noted that you, as an interviewee, may decline to answer any questions or complete the interview at any time without risk to you.

**Potential Benefits to Subjects and/or to Society**

Your participation in this study may afford you the opportunity to: (a) contribute to the acknowledgement that people of color are aware of their racial differences and its potential drawbacks when it comes to opportunities and success; (b) provide the transparency needed to develop a consensus of successful strategies for the next generation of leaders of color to shadow; (c) gain additional understanding of your lived experiences by means of personal reflection during the interview process; (d) the results of this research may include the opportunity to contribute to the field of organizational change and make recommended suggestions for further research.

**Payment for Participation**

There is no payment for participation in this study.

**Confidentiality**

Your name will remain confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained through coding and by placing all documents in a locked file cabinet to which only the researcher will have access. The researcher will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of the interviewee's records and your identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project.

The confidentiality of records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

**Participation and Withdrawal**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point with no consequences.

**Identification of Researchers**

If you have questions regarding the study, please contact Jeremy Gray, researcher, by phone at [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED] or Dr. Leo Mallette, Faculty Advisor, by email at [REDACTED].

**Rights of Research Subjects**

Participation is voluntary and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you have questions regarding the rights of research subjects, please contact Dr. Leo Mallette, Faculty Advisor, by email at [REDACTED] or the Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional School Institutional Review Board office at [REDACTED].

**Signature of Research Subject**

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to voluntarily participate and permit the use of identifying information obtained in this study. I have received a copy of this informed consent form which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research as described above.

---

Name of Subject

---

Signature of Subject Date

**Signature of Researcher or Designee**

The subject is voluntarily giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participant in this research study.

---

Name of Researcher or Designee

---

Signature of Researcher or Designee

Date

## APPENDIX C

## Interview Protocol

Respondent \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Code \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Univeristy \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Introduction

- a. Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Thank Interviewee for attending the interview
- c. Describe purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore successful strategies used by leaders of color to overcome the threat of racial stereotyping in the workplace, as it pertains to barriers, opportunities, and success.
- d. Review with the participant the consent form, their right to vacate the study at any time, and remind them their participation is voluntary.
- e. Instruct the interviewee on how to complete the consent form and where to send it.
- f. Ask if the interviewee has any questions or comments.
- g. May I start recording this conversation?
- h. Start recording.

## 2. Complete criterion questionnaire

- i. How many years have you worked in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry?
- j. What is the title of your position?

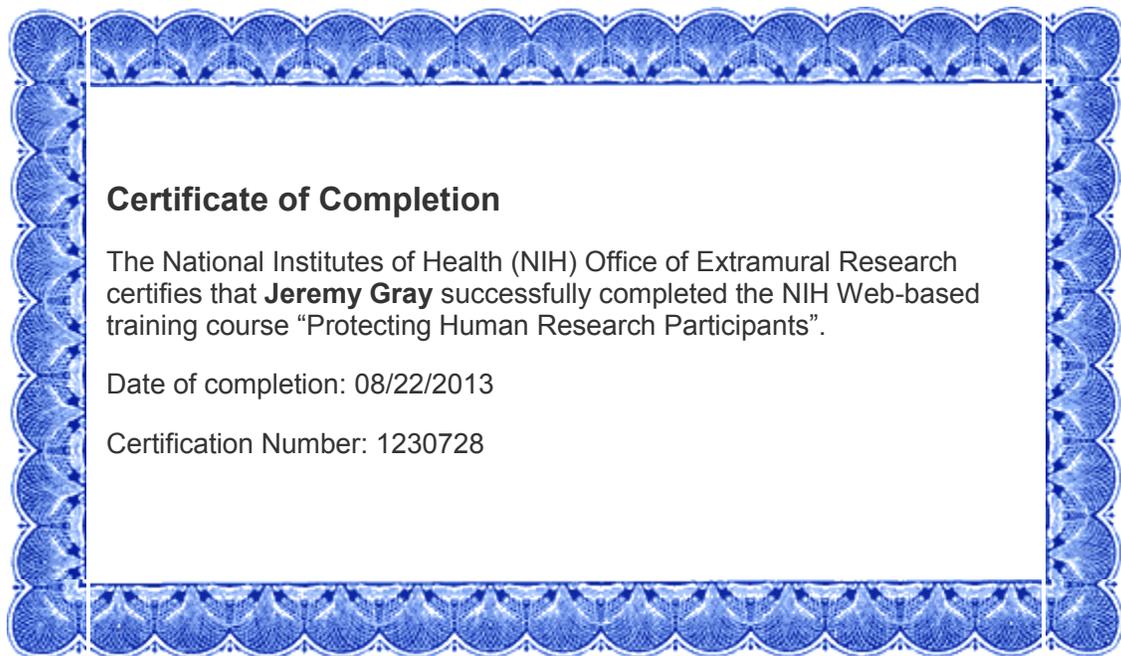
- k. How many years have you been working in your current leadership position?
- l. Are you at least 30 years of age?
- m. What is the highest level of education obtained?
- n. What is your racial identity?

### 3. Summary

- o. Discuss instructions for semi-structural interview process.
- p. Explain the research instrument.
  - i. What is your definition of leadership, and what are the ingredients to successful leadership?
  - ii. Can you describe an experience where the threat of being racially stereotyped hindered your performance, or increased your anxiety level?
  - iii. What degree do you feel assimilation has contributed to your leadership opportunities in the workplace?
  - iv. What ways do you feel pressured to alter your attitude and/or behavior in the workplace to avoid the threat of being stereotyped?
  - v. What qualities of your racial identity, if any, do you bring to your leadership style?
  - vi. What are some of the successful strategies you have used to overcome racial barriers in the workplace?
  - vii. Dr. King Suggested we should look at the perspective of our adversaries to determine some basic weaknesses of ourselves that we can improve. What is a basic weakness a racial adversary would say about you; that you can improve on?
- q. Express gratitude for willingness to participate in the study.

APPENDIX D

Protecting Human Research Participants Completion Certificate



## APPENDIX E

## IRB Exemption Approval Notice

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

November 25, 2013

Jeremy Gray

Protocol #: E0913D04

Project Title: Overcoming the Treat of Racial Stereotyping in the Workplace; Exploring Strategies of Leaders of Color

Dear Mr. Gray:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Overcoming the Treat of Racial Stereotyping in the Workplace: Exploring Strategies of Leaders of Color*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Leo Mallette, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - <http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html>) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

**Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS

IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Michelle Blas, Director of Student Success at [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu). On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thema Bryant-Davis".

Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.  
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives  
Ms. Alexandra Roosa, Director Research and Sponsored Programs  
Dr. Leo Mallette, Faculty Chair