



## Diversity in Leadership

 Randolph-Seng, B., Cogliser, C. C., Randolph, A. F., Scandura, T. A., Miller, C. D., & Smith-Genthôs, R. (2016). Diversity in leadership: Race in leader-member exchanges. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 37(6), 750–773.

### WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

Leader–member exchange (LMX) research focuses on explaining how supervisors and subordinates relate to and interact with each other. In this paper, two studies examined the influence of racial similarity/dissimilarity on supervisor and subordinate relationships and the influence of a supervisor’s race on employee performance.

### WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

The results of the first study, using a survey measure (conscious measure), were mixed and racial similarity and dissimilarity did not interact with affiliation motivations in determining LMX.

Dyads	LMX Findings
Both members racial majority	Subordinates perceive their relationship with their supervisor more positively.
Majority subordinate/minority supervisor	Higher affect and mutual obligation emerge between diverse dyad members.
Minority subordinate/majority supervisor	Subordinates perceive their relationship with their supervisor significantly lower.
Both members in racial minority	Minority members may not see increased loyalty as important in the relationship with their supervisor.

Furthermore, a second study found a significant relationship between race similarity vs dissimilarity and total time to complete tasks.

A behavioral measure (unconscious measure) captured differences and provided the following insight into how race is related to leader-follower relational dynamics:

-  Participants whose race mismatched that of their supervisor exerted less effort than those whose race matched that of their supervisor.
-  All participants with the black supervisor showed less effort than those with the white supervisor.
-  When an employee did not have motivation to affiliate with their supervisor, regardless of race, it negatively influenced their perceptions of the supervisor or their perceptions of their relationship.
-  Lack of motivation to affiliate may not be a conscious decision based on a supervisor’s race or whether they share the same race, but rather influenced by unconscious stereotypes and bias.
-  Motivation to avoid prejudice can influence the way people respond in work settings, as well as the way people answer surveys.

### WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Most significantly, high-quality relationships with one’s supervisor lead to increases in performance, satisfaction, and commitment. Yet the interplay of organizational, individual, and relationship processes result in either advancement barriers for minorities or an alternative path to job satisfaction and career advancement. These findings inform management practice in an increasingly diverse workplace and demonstrate the importance of being aware of personal biases and implementing steps to limit those biases in work contexts.