

# The Influence of Ethnocentrism in Organizational Contexts: Perceptions of Interviewee and Managerial Attractiveness, Credibility, and Effectiveness

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*This paper presents the results of two studies that examine the influence of ethnocentrism on interpersonal perceptions of attractiveness, credibility, and managerial effectiveness. In Study I participants (N = 117) watched a video-taped interview of a Korean national student being interviewed for a job in the financial aid office of her United States (US) college. Participants then completed measures of ethnocentrism, interpersonal attraction, credibility, and were asked to give a hiring recommendation. Results reveal that ethnocentrism was negatively and significantly correlated with perceptions of social attraction, competence, character, and hiring recommendations. Study II focused on the influence of ethnocentrism on perceptions of managerial attraction, credibility, and effectiveness in a manager-subordinate conflict situation. Approximately half (N = 59) of the participants watched a video of an Asian student manager reprimanding a white student worker. The other half (N = 64) watched a nearly identical video of a white student manager reprimanding the same white student worker. Participants completed measures of ethnocentrism, interpersonal attraction, credibility, generalized attitudes about the manager, and managerial effectiveness. In the group of participants who watched the Asian student manager, results reveal that ethnocentrism was negatively and*

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ISSN 0146-3373 print/1746-4102 online/05/010041-16 © 2005 Eastern Communication Association  
DOI: 10.1080/01463370500055954

*significantly correlated with perceptions of physical, social, and task attraction, competence, and general attitudes about the manager, but not managerial effectiveness. In the group of participants who watched the white student manager there were no significant correlations between ethnocentrism and any of the dependent variables.*

*Keywords: Ethnocentrism; Attractiveness; Credibility*

In the past 50 years a considerable body of research has accumulated in the social science literature regarding the nature and prevalence of ethnocentrism. The term ethnocentrism was introduced to the social science literature nearly a century ago by Sumner (1906) who defined it as "the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" (p. 13).

Conceptually, ethnocentric persons hold attitudes and behaviors toward ingroups that are different from attitudes and behaviors toward outgroups. Specifically, the attitudes and behaviors of ethnocentric persons are biased in favor of the ingroup, often at the expense of the outgroup (Hewstone & Ward, 1985; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Weber, 1994). Attitudinally, ethnocentric persons see the ingroup as superior to outgroups. Behaviorally, ethnocentric persons foster cooperative relations with ingroup members while competing with, and perhaps even battling, with outgroup members. Although ethnocentrism is generally thought to be a negative trait, Sharma, Shimp, and Shin (1995) argue that ethnocentrism fosters ingroup survival, solidarity, conformity, cooperation, loyalty, and effectiveness.

The first systematic social scientific treatment of ethnocentrism was published by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950). Their work focused on nationalism, fascism, anti-Semitism, and the "antidemocratic" personality. Adorno et al. (1950) argued that nationalism is a species of ethnocentrism, that ethnocentrism is a manifestation of authoritarianism, and that authoritarianism is a personality defect (Forbes, 1985). In Adorno et al. (1950), Levinson argued that ethnocentrism is "based on a pervasive and rigid ingroup-outgroup distinction; it involves stereotyped, negative imagery and hostile attitudes regarding outgroups, stereotyped positive imagery and submissive attitudes regarding ingroups, and a hierarchical, authoritarian view of group interaction in which ingroups are rightly dominant, outgroups subordinate" (p. 150). The principal contention of Adorno et al. (1950) was that prejudices held by whites against minorities and ethnic groups constituted a generalized personality profile. In other words, an individual's prejudice toward any particular ethnic or minority group is symbolic of an entire cognitive system of negative attitudes about virtually any outgroup (i.e., particularly ethnic and/or minority groups). Adorno et al. referred to this generalized cognitive scheme as ethnocentrism.

In addition to their conceptual articulation of ethnocentrism, Adorno et al. (1950) also invested considerable time and energy into the construction and validation of an ethnocentrism scale, also known as the E scale. The E scale was a series of Likert-like

items pertaining to Jews, Negroes, and other minority groups and patriotism. Representative items included "To end prejudice against Jews, the first step is for Jews to try sincerely to get rid of their harmful and irritating faults," "Negroes have their rights, but it is best to keep them in their own districts and schools and to prevent too much contact with whites," and "Filipinos are all right in their place, but they carry it too far when they dress lavishly and go around with white girls" (p. 142). Ironically, the E scale is hopelessly outdated and certainly could not be used today to assess ethnocentrism in Black, Jewish, or Filipino groups among others. Moreover, very few studies ever employed it.

In related research, Taylor and Jaggi (1974) introduced a phenomenon called ethnocentric attributional bias. According to Taylor and Jaggi (1974), ethnocentrists construct internal attributions for the positive behavior of ingroup members while making external attributions for their negative behavior. For example, if ingroup members perform well on some task, the attribution is that they possess the essential ingredients to accomplish such a task (e.g., "they're smart," "they're hard workers," etc.). Yet, if ingroup members perform marginally on some task, the fault lies elsewhere (e.g., "trick questions," "bad calls by the umpire," etc.). On the contrary, external attributions are made for the positive behavior of outgroup members (e.g., "they got lucky") while internal attributions are made for their negative behavior (e.g., "they're born liars").

In his work on ethnocentrism and threat to social identity Grant (1992, 1993) and Grant & Brown (1995) argue that threats to one's social identity fosters ethnocentrism. The results of this line of research indicate that when persons perceive a threat to their social identity, they respond ethnocentrically by differentiating the outgroup from their ingroup along stereotyped and attitude dimensions.

#### *A Contemporary Conceptualization of Ethnocentrism*

Neuliep and his associates (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997, 2001; Neuliep, Chaudoir, & McCroskey, 2001) have offered a contemporary conceptualization of ethnocentrism. They argue that rather than conceptualizing ethnocentrism as a personality defect, ethnocentrism should be viewed along a continuum; that everyone is, to some extent, ethnocentric. In fact, Hofstede (1991) has argued that ethnocentrism is to a people what egocentrism is to an individual. As newborns, humans are entirely, and naturally, egocentric. Eventually, we develop an awareness of others around us. By age two or three we engage in social perspective taking of those most central to us. These people, our biological or adopted families, are the center of our universe. As we become socialized, we observe that our families coexist with other families, and that this culmination of people constitutes some form of neighborhood, clan, tribe, community, city, society, and finally culture. By the time we realize that we are a part of some much larger whole, we are officially enculturated and ethnocentric.

Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) have argued that ethnocentrism is essentially descriptive; not necessarily pejorative. On one end of the ethnocentrism continuum, ethnocentrism may serve a very valuable function when one's central group is under actual or the threat of attack. Ethnocentrism forms the basis for patriotism and the willingness to sacrifice for one's central group. On the other end of the continuum, the tendency for people to see their own way as the only right way can be dangerous and lead to pathological forms of ethnocentrism that result in prejudice, discrimination, and even *ethnic cleansing*.

To the extent that humans are ethnocentric, we tend to view other cultures (and microcultures) from our own cultural vantage point. That is, our culture is the standard by which we evaluate other cultures—and the people from those cultures. Most deviations from that standard are viewed negatively and will be used as evidence of the inferiority of people from the other culture.

#### *Ethnocentrism, Intercultural Communication, and Interpersonal Perception*

Neuliep, Chaudoir, and McCroskey (2001) have argued that ethnocentrism negatively influences intercultural communication. Similarly, Gudykunst (1997) points out that one's cultural orientation acts as a filter for processing incoming and outgoing verbal and nonverbal messages. Neuliep and McCroskey (2001) have argued that, to this extent, all intercultural exchanges are necessarily, to a greater or lesser degree, charged with ethnocentrism. Indeed, most cross-cultural researchers recognize that human communication is replete with cultural noise that interferes with the transmission of information. Guan (1995) points out that ethnocentrism leads to "self-centered dialogue" where interactants use their own cultural standards to evaluate and communicate with others.

Neuliep and McCroskey (2001) contend that ethnocentrism acts as a perceptual filter that affects not only the perceptions of verbal and nonverbal messages, but also perceptions of their source. As McCroskey and Richmond (1996) have argued, no message is interpreted apart from its source. In fact, McCroskey and Dunham (1966) observed that even when the real source of a message is unknown, interactants will create a source in their minds. Decades of research in communication have revealed that perceptions of source attractiveness and source credibility are two key dimensions of the interpersonal communication process (c.f., Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; McCroskey, 1966; McCroskey & McCain, 1974; McCroskey & Young, 1981; O'Keefe, 1990; Sillars & Scott, 1983; Sunnafrank, 1991, 1992). The purpose of the present research is to examine the influence of ethnocentrism on perceptions of attractiveness and credibility.

Extant research suggests that in intercultural contexts perceived source attractiveness may be affected by ethnocentrism. For the most part, people initiate and maintain communication with those to whom they are attracted (McCroskey & McCain, 1974). Many studies indicate that perceived similarity is related to attraction (Capella & Palmer, 1990, 1992; Sillars & Scott, 1983; Sunnafrank, 1991, 1992). In his



seminal work, Byrne (1971) noted that attraction is a function of the proportion of similar opinions held by two people and that culture mediates perceptions of attraction. By definition, ethnocentrics perceive themselves as dissimilar to outgroups. Specifically, ethnocentrics perceive themselves as superior to outgroups (e.g., ethnic/racial groups). Hence, when interacting with people from a different culture or ethnicity, high ethnocentrics are likely to perceive outgroup members as less attractive than ingroup members.

Perceived credibility may also be affected by ethnocentrism. O'Keefe (1990) and others maintain that credibility is a receiver-based construct; that is, perceptions of a message source held by a receiver. Seminal research (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; McCroskey, 1966; McCroskey & Young, 1981; O'Keefe, 1990) indicates that credibility is a multi-dimensional construct. The first dimension of credibility is expertise or competence. Persons are perceived to be competent to the degree that they are perceived to be experienced, informed, qualified, trained, intelligent, etc. (McCroskey & Young, 1981). Ethnocentrics tend to see the ingroup as superior to outgroups. Because they see themselves as superior, ethnocentrics see outgroups as less competent. The second dimension of credibility is trustworthiness or character. Here, persons are believed to be competent to the degree that they are perceived to be honest, trustworthy, just, fair, ethical, etc. (McCroskey & Young, 1981). Following the work of Grant (1992, 1993) and Grant and Brown (1995), ethnocentrics perceive outgroups as threatening the goals of the ingroup thus, tend to distrust them. If ethnocentrism negatively affects perceptions of outgroup competence and trustworthiness, then outgroups will be seen as not credible.

#### *Ethnocentrism and Communication in the Workplace*

The effects of ethnocentrism are manifest in any social context, including interpersonal, group, and organizational environments where persons of different cultural backgrounds interact. Largely because of immigration trends, cultural and ethnic diversity in the USA is a fact of life. To be sure, the results of the 2000 census profile the remarkable racial and ethnic diversity that has been a hallmark of US society. Neuliep (2003) reports that if the current immigration trend continues, by 2025 whites will make up 62% of the population, and by 2050, nearly half of the US population will be non-white. By then, Americans of European descent, who were 90% of the population in 1960, will be a minority of less than 50%.

Mirroring the general population, US organizations are becoming increasingly diverse. According to the US Census Bureau, over three million US businesses are owned by minorities, employing nearly five million workers and generating nearly US \$600 billion in revenues. Although Hispanics and African-Americans own the largest percentage of minority-owned businesses, Asian owned businesses accounted for the largest share of all revenues collected by minority-owned businesses. Given the dramatic cultural transformation in today's marketplace, managing and

communicating with people from different cultures within an organizational context represents a great challenge for the corporate world (Neuliep, 2003).

According to Disanza and Legge (2003) the employment interview is one of the most common forms of interpersonal communication in the modern organization. Moreover, Baker and Spier (1990) argue that the employment interview is the primary tool for recruiting, hiring, and placing new employees in business, military, and government organizations. Although legal statutes prohibit the discrimination of persons based on race or ethnicity certain persons may be at a disadvantage in the job interview context. For example, House (2001) reports that cultural and/or ethnic similarity between interviewee and interviewer may play a role in hiring decisions. House (2001) maintains that interviewers are more likely to hire people with whom they feel they have the most in common (e.g., culture and/or ethnicity). This effect may be enhanced by ethnocentrism. Because ethnocentrism affects perceived attractiveness and credibility, ethnocentric interviewers may be more likely than less ethnocentric interviewers to hire persons with similar cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Hence, the initial hypotheses guiding this study are:

*H1: There will be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and perceptions of outgroup members' interviewee attraction.*

*H2: There will be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and perceptions of outgroup members' interviewee credibility.*

*H3: There will be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and hiring recommendations for outgroup members.*

In addition to influencing the job interview context, ethnocentrism may affect managerial-subordinate communication. The manager-subordinate transaction is perhaps the most common communicative situation in organizations (Goldhaber, 1993). The position of an effective manager is one that fosters a certain level of obedience and compliance by those subordinate to that position. Ideally, managers function as leaders to their subordinates. One common denominator of good leadership is social influence (Brehm, Kassin, & Fein, 1999). A substantial amount of research in communication indicates that people tend to be influenced by and believe those whom they view as credible (Benoit, 1987; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Kouzes & Posner, 1993; McCroskey & Young, 1981; O'Keefe, 1987). To the extent that managers are perceived as credible, subordinates are more likely to comply with them. In manager-subordinate transactions, ethnocentrism may interfere with perceptions; that is, ethnocentric managers may perceive outgroup subordinates as less attractive and/or credible. Similarly, ethnocentric subordinates may perceive outgroup managers as less credible and/or attractive.

According to Li and Karakowsky (2001) and Arvey and Murphy (1998), the consequences of racial and/or ethnic differences between managers and subordinates

are most clearly evident in performance appraisals. For example, Landy and Farr (1980) and Kraiger and Ford (1985) found that African-American and white managers consistently gave more positive appraisals to members of their own race. Manager or subordinate ethnocentrism may amplify this effect. Hence, the second set of hypotheses guiding this study are:

*H4: There will be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and perceptions of outgroup members' managerial attraction.*

*H5: There will be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and perceptions of outgroup members' managerial credibility.*

*H6: There will be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and generalized attitudes about an outgroup manager.*

*H7: There will be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and perceptions of outgroup members' managerial effectiveness.*

### Study I

The initial phase of this research was designed to test the first three hypotheses.

#### *Participants*

Participants for this study were 117 undergraduate students enrolled in courses at a four-year liberal arts college in the Midwestern USA in a community of approximately 200,000 people. Of the participants, 74 were female and 44 were male.

#### *Procedures*

Participants were told that their college was making an effort to offer employment opportunities for international students. Participants were also told that they were about to watch a video-tape of Youngshin Kim (her real name), a Korean national, being interviewed by the director of financial aid for a position in the financial aid office. The interview lasted approximately 12 minutes.

After viewing the video-taped interview, participants were asked to complete Neuliep and McCroskey's (1997) Generalized Ethnocentrism (GENE) scale. Participants also completed McCroskey and McCain's (1974) measure of interpersonal attraction that includes three subscales of social, physical, and task attraction, McCroskey and Young's (1981) measure of credibility that includes a subscale for competence and another for character. Each of these scales has been used throughout the communication literature. Recently Neuliep (2002) has documented the reliability and the validity of the GENE scale. Finally, participants were also asked

to indicate, on a seven point scale (where 1 = Definitely do not hire, and 7 = Definitely hire), their hiring recommendation.

## Results

### Scale Reliabilities

Inter-item reliability, as determined by Cronbach's alpha, for the GENE scale was 0.82. For the social, physical and task attraction subscales of the interpersonal attraction scale, the reliabilities were 0.70, 0.70, and 0.80 respectively. The reliability of the competence subscale of the credibility measure was 0.82, and for the character subscale, 0.80.

### Correlations

Several bivariate Pearson's product-moment correlations were calculated between ethnocentrism and the measures of interpersonal attraction, credibility, and hiring decisions. These correlations are presented in Table 1. As predicted, ethnocentrism was negatively and significantly correlated with hiring recommendations, social attraction, competence, and character. Ethnocentrism was also negatively correlated with task attraction, but not significantly. The correlation between ethnocentrism and physical attraction was positive, but not significant.

## Study II

The second phase of this research was designed to test the second set of hypotheses.

**Table 1** Bivariate Correlations Between Ethnocentrism and Measures of Interpersonal Perception

Interpersonal perception	Ethnocentrism	
	Raw correlations	Correlations (corrected for attenuation)
Hiring recommendation***	-0.21*	-0.26*
Attraction		
Social attraction	-0.29**	-0.38**
Physical attraction	0.03	—
Task attraction	-0.15	—
Credibility		
Competence	-0.18*	-0.22*
Character	-0.20*	-0.25*

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

\*\*\*Since this measure was a single item, there was no estimate of reliability available. For the purpose of this computation it was assumed the single item was as reliable as the ethnocentrism measure (0.82). Hence, since most researchers believe that single items are usually unreliable, it is likely that this estimate is not fully corrected for attenuation.



### *Participants*

Participants for this study were 123 undergraduate students enrolled in courses at a four year liberal arts college in the Midwestern US in a community of approximately 200,000 people. Of the participants, 74 were female and 49 were male. All of the participants were white.

### *Procedures*

Approximately half ( $N = 59$ ) of the participants watched a video of an Asian student manager reprimanding a white student worker while the other half ( $N = 64$ ) watched a video of a white student manager reprimanding a white student worker. The two videos were scripted and contained two six-minute scenes. In the first scene of both videos the student manager addresses the student worker regarding the frequency with which the student worker has been showing up to work late. In the second scene of both videos the student manager address the student worker about the frequency with which the student worker fails to show up at work.<sup>1</sup> For both videos, the student worker was played by the same male actor. In one video the student manager was played by an Asian male, while in the other video the student manager was played by a white male. Other than the ethnicity of the student manager, the videos were essentially identical. The video with the white student manager served as a control.

Prior to watching the videos participants completed Neuliep and McCroskey's (1997) measure of generalized ethnocentrism (GENE). Following the videos participants completed McCroskey and McCain's (1974) measure of interpersonal attraction that includes three subscales of social, physical, and task attraction, McCroskey and Young's (1981) measure of credibility that includes a subscale for competence and another for character, and two measures developed for this particular study, including a Generalized Attitude about Manager (GAM) scale and a Managerial Effectiveness (ME) scale. The GAM scale was based on McCroskey and Richmond's (1989) Generalized Attitude Scale and was composed of six bipolar, seven-step scales (i.e., good-bad, wrong-right, harmful-beneficial, fair-unfair, wise-foolish, negative-positive). Participants were asked to indicate their feelings on each of the six bipolar scales about "the student manager." For the ME scale, participants were asked to indicate their feelings about "the student manager's strategy/conduct with the student worker" on five bipolar, seven-step scales (i.e., effective-ineffective, efficient-inefficient, capable-incapable, adequate-inadequate, and skillful-unskillful).

## **Results**

### *Scale Reliabilities*

Inter-item reliability, as determined by Cronbach's alpha, for the GENE scale was 0.70. For the social, physical and task attraction subscales of the interpersonal

attraction scale, the reliabilities were 0.80, 0.85, and 0.82 respectively. The reliability of the competence subscale of the credibility measure was 0.84, and for the character subscale was 0.83. The reliability for the GAM scale was 0.89 and for the ME scale 0.89.

### Correlations

Several bivariate Pearson's product-moment correlations were calculated between ethnocentrism and the measures of interpersonal attraction, credibility, GAM and ME for each group. Because the reliability of the GENE scale was lower than expected, the correlations were corrected for attenuation.<sup>2</sup> The correlations are presented in Table 2. As predicted, for the participants watching the video depicting the Asian student manager, ethnocentrism was negatively and significantly correlated with physical, social, and task attractiveness, competence, character, and generalized attitudes about the manager. Ethnocentrism was not significantly correlated with managerial effectiveness. For the participants watching the video with the white manager, none of the correlations were significant. To test the hypothesis that the correlation coefficients across the two samples were equal, each correlation coefficient was converted into a *z*-score using Fisher's *r*-to-*z* transformation. Then, making use of the sample size employed to obtain each coefficient, these *z* scores are compared (See Cohen & Cohen, 1983, p. 54). The obtained *z* scores and significance values are reported in Table 2. Three of the seven correlations coefficients are significantly different, including the correlations for social attraction, physical attraction, and character. In each case, the correlations were greater in the Asian student manager video condition.

In order to directly compare the two groups, a  $3 \times 2$  multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) factorial model was employed with level of ethnocentrism (high, moderate, and low) by video condition (white vs. Asian student manager) as the independent variables and the measures of interpersonal attraction, credibility, GAM, and ME as the dependent measures. The results revealed significant multivariate effects for ethnocentrism  $\Lambda = 0.792$ ,  $F(14, 220) = 1.92$ ,  $p = 0.025$  and video

**Table 2** Bivariate Correlations Between Ethnocentrism and Measures of Interpersonal Perception

Interpersonal perception	Asian manager video	White manager video	<i>z</i>
Social attraction	-0.76***	-0.06	5.06***
Physical attraction	-0.61***	-0.17	2.90**
Task attraction	-0.39***	-0.18	1.24
Competence	-0.22*	-0.12	0.55
Character	-0.33**	-0.01	1.98*
Generalized attitudes	-0.31**	-0.08	1.29
Managerial effectiveness	-0.07	-0.15	0.43

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

condition  $\Lambda = 0.714$ ,  $F(7, 109) = 6.24$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . There was also a significant interaction effect  $\Lambda = 0.806$ ,  $F(14, 218) = 1.77$ ,  $p = 0.04$ .

In examining the multivariate effect for ethnocentrism, three statistically significant univariate tests were observed, including social attractiveness,  $F(2, 122) = 6.55$ ,  $p = 0.002$ , physical attractiveness,  $F(2, 122) = 4.27$ ,  $p = 0.016$ , and generalized attitudes about the manager,  $F(2, 122) = 3.19$ ,  $p = 0.050$ . The rest of the univariate tests were not statistically significant.

In examining the multivariate effect for the video condition, two statistically significant univariate tests were observed, including social attractiveness,  $F(1, 122) = 23.3$ ,  $p = 0.000$  and physical attractiveness,  $F(1, 122) = 8.98$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . The rest of the univariate tests were not statistically significant.

In examining the multivariate interaction effect, one univariate test was significant, that is; for social attractiveness  $F(2, 122) = 75.5$ ,  $p = 0.006$ . The rest of the univariate tests were not statistically significant.

### Discussion

The results of the studies reported here indicate that ethnocentrism negatively influences interpersonal perceptions within the organizational context. In Study I, all of the hypotheses were supported. The weakest support was for the first hypothesis, which predicted a negative correlation between ethnocentrism and interpersonal attraction for the outgroup member interviewee. Although the correlations for physical and task attraction were very small and non-significant, the correlation between ethnocentrism and social attraction was substantial and statistically significant. The correlation corrected for attenuation (i.e.,  $-0.38$ ) suggests that ethnocentrism may account for over 14% of the variance in the social attractiveness of an outgroup member interviewee. This represents substantial support for the overall hypothesis for attraction, although task attraction is much more central to this context than is social attraction. The second hypothesis of Study I received consistent support. This hypothesis predicted a negative correlation between ethnocentrism and perceived credibility of the outgroup member interviewee. The correlations between ethnocentrism and competence and character were both statistically significant and negative. The third hypothesis of Study I predicted a negative correlation between ethnocentrism and hiring recommendations of the outgroup member interviewee. This hypothesis was also confirmed—the relationship was both negative and statistically significant. The predictable variability in hiring decisions based on ethnocentrism was not particularly large—about 7%. However, the absence of a reliability estimate for the measure of hiring recommendations restricted a higher prediction. Future research should use a somewhat more sophisticated measure to insure the ability to compute an appropriate correction of the correlation.

In Study II, three of the four hypotheses were supported. Hypothesis 4 predicted that there would be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and perceptions of managerial attraction of an outgroup member manager. This

hypothesis was supported. For participants watching the Asian-manager video, ethnocentrism and perceptions of social, physical, and task attractiveness were negatively and significantly correlated. For the control video, none of these correlations were significant. In addition, the correlations for social and physical attraction in the Asian student manager condition were significantly different (i.e., higher) than those same correlations in the white student manager condition. The direct comparison of the correlations on task attraction between the two conditions was not statistically significantly different, however. Similarly, the additional tests of between subjects effects indicates that, compared to the white student manager video, perceptions of the Asian student manager were significantly different (i.e., lower) for both social and physical attraction, but not for task attraction.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that there would be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and perceptions of managerial credibility of an outgroup manager. This hypothesis was generally supported. For participants watching the Asian manager video, ethnocentrism and scores on measures of the outgroup manager's competence and character were negatively and significantly correlated. For the control video, none of these correlations were significant. The direct comparison of the correlations indicates that the correlation between ethnocentrism and character in the Asian manager video is significantly different than the same correlation in the white manager video. But the comparison of the correlation between ethnocentrism and competence in the Asian manager video was not significantly different than the same correlation in the white manager video. In addition, for the tests of between subjects effects, perceptions of competence and character did not differ significantly.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that there would be a negative and significant correlation between ethnocentrism and generalized attitudes about the outgroup manager. This hypothesis was partially supported. For participants watching the Asian manager video, ethnocentrism and scores on the Generalized Attitudes about Management (GAM) scale were negatively and significantly correlated. For the control video, this correlation was not significant. The comparison of the correlations between ethnocentrism and GAM the Asian manager video was not significantly different than the same correlation in the white manager video. The test of between subjects effects on ethnocentrism and GAM was statistically significant, however.

Finally, Hypothesis 7 predicted that there would be a significant and negative correlation between ethnocentrism and perceptions of managerial effectiveness (ME) for an outgroup member manager. This hypothesis was not supported. For participants watching the Asian manager video and the control video, scores on the ethnocentrism scale and scores on the ME scale were negatively correlated, but not significantly. In addition, the test of between subjects effects was not significant.

The between groups comparisons notwithstanding, the correlational analyses indicate that ethnocentrism is significantly, and negatively, correlated with perceptions of attraction, competence, character, and generalized attitudes about outgroup managers. In order to conduct the between groups comparisons, the independent variable (i.e., ethnocentrism) was converted into a categorical variable (i.e., high,



moderate, and low ethnocentrism). In many cases the categorization of continuous variables has negative consequences. These consequences include the loss of information about individual differences, loss of effect size and power in the case of bivariate relationships, and loss of measurement reliability among others (MacCullum, Zhang, Preacher, & Rucker, 2001). Thus, more faith should be placed with the correlational analyses for the interpretation of these results.

The results of the two studies reported here indicate that ethnocentrism negatively affects interpersonal perceptions in organizational contexts. The implications of these results are significant. In an increasingly growing diverse workplace, managers and subordinates of different cultures and ethnicities are likely to find themselves interacting together. To the extent that such interactants are ethnocentric, interpersonal perceptions and communication will be negatively influenced.

In addition to providing leadership functions, one of the primary functions of management, in any organization, is performance appraisal of subordinates (Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Li & Karakowsky, 2001). The results of this study suggest that in cases where managers and subordinates are of different cultures or ethnicities, subordinate ethnocentrism may interfere with the interpretation of managerial appraisals. If ethnocentric subordinates perceive managers of different cultures/ethnicities to be less attractive, less competent, and less credible, they may be less likely to accept their appraisal and any of the recommendation contained therein. Following the work of Grant (1992, 1993) and Grant and Brown (1995) which indicates that threats to one's social identity fosters ethnocentrism, ethnocentric subordinates who receive less than positive performance appraisals from culturally or ethnically different managers may respond ethnocentrically by differentiating managers from their ingroup along stereotyped and attitude dimensions. Compounding this effect, ethnocentric subordinates may also engage in ethnocentric attributional bias (Taylor & Jaggi, 1974). In this case, ethnocentric subordinates will construct external attributions for their negative performance appraisals (e.g., "The reason I received such a negative evaluation is because my manager is white/black/Hispanic/Japanese, etc.").

As mentioned in the review of literature, the position of an effective manager is one that fosters a certain level of obedience and compliance by subordinates (Brehm, Kassin, & Fein, 1999). The results of this study indicate that this central feature of manager-subordinate communication may be handicapped by ethnocentrism. In this case, ethnocentric subordinates who perceive managers of different cultures/ethnicities to be less attractive, less competent, and less credible, may be less likely to comply with the requests of their managers.

That ethnocentrism and managerial effectiveness were not correlated may be a methodological artifact of the experimental induction. By design, the same script was used for both videos; that is, the managerial tactics used by both the white and Asian student manager were the same. Moreover, as scripted in each video, the student worker complied with the manager's request. Thus, the manager was, in fact, effective. Another possible explanation is that while ethnocentrists perceived the Asian student manager as less attractive, credible, and competent and held negative



attitudes about him, they nevertheless were able to separate those perceptions in their judgment of his managerial actions. Another explanation is that the Managerial Effectiveness scale, although reliable, was not a valid measure of managerial effectiveness.

Although the results of this study are straightforward and consistent with much of the past research on ethnocentrism and communication, this study is not without limitations. A methodological weakness of both studies reported here is the use of one person as the stimulus. Participants in Study I viewed one Korean person. Participants in Study II saw only one white student manager or one Asian student manager. Although we have no reason to suspect that these individuals were somehow atypical of their group membership, it is possible that the participants were reacting to these persons as individuals rather than as outgroup (or ingroup) members.

Participants in this study watched videos and may have been somewhat detached. Watching a video and actually engaging in interaction may produce different results. Perhaps the negative effects of ethnocentrism are more (or less) pronounced during actual face-to-face interaction. Another limitation is that two of the dependent measures were created specifically for Study II. They should be further assessed for their reliability and validity.

Finally, this research should be replicated using participants of different cultures/ethnicities. Both studies tested white participants observing an Asian interviewee or student manager. Normative ethnocentrism scores vary culturally, and so the results seen here may vary accordingly.

## Notes

- [1] Scripts of the scenes are available from the first author.
- [2] Measurement error lowers the coefficient of correlation. A correlation corrected for attenuation is calculated according to the formula:

$$r_{\infty\omega} = \frac{r_{xy}}{\sqrt{r_{xx} r_{yy}}}$$

where  $r_{xx}$  and  $r_{yy}$  are the reliability coefficients of the measures (e.g., GENE, attractiveness, etc.). The subscripts  $\infty$  and  $\omega$  indicate true scores in  $x$  and  $y$  (see Guilford & Fruchter, 1978).

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