

The Interaction of Culture, Self-Perception, and Depression in Native American Youth

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ABSTRACT: *Previous studies have focused on understanding how acculturative stress affects the depressive symptoms of minorities; however, there is little research on the varying effects of culture on self-perception. This study examines how culture affects self-perception and depression of Native American youth using data collected from 132 high school students attending a public high school located adjacent to a Native American Reservation in Northern Michigan. The study addresses issues such as participation in cultural activities, cultural values, self-esteem as well as depression, suicidal ideation, and perceived discrimination. Individuals who identified and participated in their native culture were not found to have lower rates of depression and suicidality. Furthermore, individuals who are more involved in their culture were found to have higher rates of perceived discrimination. Finally, Native American youth were found to have higher rates of depression but also to have higher self-esteem. The study concludes by suggesting that tying self-esteem and ethnic pride together may explain the prevalence of high depression rates, high self-esteem rates, and high rates of perceived discrimination in Native American youth.*

INTRODUCTION

Depression is one of the most common mood disorders, with Major Depression Disorder affecting about 20% of Americans (Singh & Gotlib 2014). Depression is characterized by continuous sadness, loss of interest, insomnia, lack of appetite, feelings of guilt, and sometimes suicidal ideation (Singh & Gotlib 2014). Individuals with depression often suffer from the inability to form new relationships,

the deterioration of current relationships, and rejection, which has been found to intensify the severity of their depressive symptoms (Rappaport, Moskowitz, & Antono 2014). Major Depressive Disorder is the leading cause of disability for adolescents because it is a period of transition in identity away from that of their family to a more individual sense of self (Sheets & Craighead 2014).

One strong predictor of depression has been found to be household income (Whitbeck, McMorris, Hoyt, Subben, & LaFromboise 2002). Whites living in poverty are 1.5 times more likely to experience Major Depressive Disorder than those living above the poverty line (Riolo, Nguyen, Greden, & King 2005). Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be poor as well as more unemployed than the general population (Collins, Hall, & Neuhaus, 1999). This places minorities at a great risk of having a negative self-perception and depression (Collins et al. 1999).

Belonging to a group helps individuals develop a sense of self, which can reduce depressive symptoms (Lusk, Taylor, Nanney, & Austing 2010). For example, integration has been found to be negatively correlated with Major Depressive Disorder, while rejection of both the new culture and the culture of origin (marginalization) has been found to increase depressive symptoms (Yoon, Chang, Kim, Clawson, Cleary, Hansen, & Gomes 2013). Acculturative stress both “intergroup and intragroup” has been found to be positively correlated with depressive symptoms (Kim, Hogge, & Salvisberg 2014). However, as flexible racial identities become more accepted, the severity of acculturative stress lowers which, in turn, seems to lower associated rates of depression and suicide (Lusk et al. 2010).

Chinese Americans have been found to report depressive symptoms less frequently than many other groups because they do not want to damage the family’s reputation and honor (Hsieh & Bean 2014). However, they have been found to report more of the physical symptoms of depression such as fatigue, headaches, and continual exhaustion (Kim & Lopez 2014). This makes sense given previous research indicating that those with a separated cultural identity experience more stress (Damji, Clement, & Noels 1996). In contrast, Mousseau, Scott, and Estes (2013) found that Native American youth

HARMAN: DEPRESSION IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

reported less depressive symptoms when they held traditional cultural values. Overall, greater participation in Native culture has been positively correlated with having both a strong cultural identity and less depressive symptoms (Whitbeck et al. 2002).

Given this ambiguity, this study will seek to determine whether identifying with and participating within Chippewa Native American cultural traditions in Northern Michigan is more beneficial to the tribal member's mental health than identifying with the dominant cultural group.

RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

Lusk et al. (2010) suggested that the more a Native American identifies with their ethnic identity, the higher their self-esteem. Other research suggests that the higher an individual's self-esteem, the less depressive symptoms they experience (Kim et al. 2014). Given that the more a Native American identifies with their ethnic identity, the higher their self-esteem (Lusk et al. 2010) and that the higher an individual's self-esteem, the fewer depressive symptoms the individual experiences (Hovey, Kim, & Seligman 2010), we can expect to find that **(RE1)** *the more a Native American identifies with their ethnic identity, the less depressive symptoms they will report.* Lorenzo-Blanco, Unger, Baezoconde-Garbanati, Ritt-Olson, and Soto (2012) suggested that loss of cultural values increases family conflict. Other research found that the greater the family conflict, the more depressive symptoms a Native American reports (Sheets & Craighead 2014). Given that a loss in cultural values is associated with an increase in family conflict (Lorenzo-Blanco et al. 2012) and the greater the family conflict, the more depressive symptoms a Native American experiences (Sheets & Craighead 2014) we can expect to find that **(RE2)** *the greater the loss of cultural values, the more depressive symptoms a Native American will experience.*

Mousseau et al. (2014) suggested that the more cultural values a Native American has, the less depression they experience. Other research has found that the less depression an individual experiences, the less suicidal ideation that individual reports (Han et al. 2014).

Given that the more cultural values a Native American has, the less depressive symptoms they report (Mousseau et al. 2014) and the less depression they experience, the less they report having suicidal ideation (Han et al. 2014), we can expect to find that **(RE3)** *the more cultural values a Native American has, the less suicidal ideation they will experience.*

Gartner, Kiang, and Supple (2014) suggested that the greater amount of cultural socialization received from a family member, the stronger their ethnic identity. Other research found that the stronger a Native American's ethnic identity, the higher their self-esteem (Lusk et al. 2010). Given that the greater amount of cultural socialization an individual receives from a family member, the stronger their ethnic identity (Gartner et al. 2014) and that the stronger a Native American's ethnic identity, the higher their self-esteem (Lusk et al. 2010), we can expect to find that **(RE4)** *the more cultural socialization provided by a Native American's family member, the higher their self-esteem.*

Whitbeck et al. (2002) suggested that the more discrimination an individual feels, the more depression the individual experiences. Other research shows that the more depression an individual reports, the more suicidal ideation the individual experiences (Han et al., 2014). Given that the more discrimination an individual feels, the more depression the individual experiences (Whitbeck et al. 2002) and that the more depression an individual experiences, the more suicidal ideation the individual reports (Han et al. 2014), we can expect to find that **(RE5)** *the more discrimination an individual feels, the more suicidal ideation they will report.*

Whitbeck et al. (2002) found that lower participation in cultural activities increased perceived discrimination. Other research suggests that perceiving more discrimination increases a Native American's suicidal behavior (Gomez, Miranda, & Polanco 2011). Given that lower participation in cultural activities increases the amount of discrimination an individual perceives (Whitbeck et al. 2002) and that perceived discrimination increases a Native American's suicidal behavior (Gomez et al. 2011), we can expect to find that **(RE6)** *The less*

HARMAN: DEPRESSION IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

a Native American participates in cultural activities, the more suicidal behavior they exhibit.

METHODS

Participants in this study consisted of 132 students attending a Northern Michigan high school located near a Native American reservation. The age range for participants was 13-19 years old.

Procedure

Surveys were given out in homeroom classes. The teachers of these classes received a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, asking for consent to hand out surveys in their class, and reassured of their students' anonymity. The students also received a cover letter to give to their parents, which included a link to the survey online. Contact information for the researcher, academic advisor, and the chair of the Institutional Review Board in case of any questions or concerns was also provided. The teachers gave consent to hand out surveys in the last 20 minutes of class. Students in these classes were told the purpose of the study, asked for their participation, reassured of their anonymity, and told that participation in the study would not affect their grades. The surveys were handed out and students were prompted that when they were finished they could put their surveys in an unmarked manila folder in the front of the room to ensure their anonymity. After all the surveys were collected the teachers brought the manila folder to the office for the primary researcher to collect at the end of the day.

Survey

The survey consisted of eighty-six questions divided into ten sections: *depression, self-esteem, suicide attempt history, participation in cultural activities, perceived discrimination, cultural values, ethnic identity, cultural socialization, self-criticism,* and

demographic questions such as *gender, age, parent's income, and race*. Instructions preceding each section explained both the purpose of the section and the response categories for the questions that followed.

RESULTS

Population Statistical Overview

A high school located near a Native American Reservation in Northern Michigan was provided with 132 surveys. The surveys were distributed to each homeroom class. Students were given class time to complete the surveys and they were returned to the teacher immediately upon completion. Surveys with missing data were included in the analysis and cases with missing data were omitted automatically via SPSS pairwise deletion.

All respondents were between the ages of 14 and 18 (n=128). There were 19 respondents the age of 14 (14.8%), 32 age 15 respondents (25.0%), 29 age 16 respondents (22.7%), 35 age 17 respondents (27.3%), and 13 age 18 respondents (10.2%). Females comprised 52.7% (n=129) of the respondents. There were 49 White respondents (38.6%), 59 Native American respondents (46.5%), and 16 respondents that reported their race as Other (12.6%). The majority of respondents (51.1%, n= 47) reported their parents' income as being between \$10,000 and \$49,999, while 31.5% of the respondents (n=29) reported their parents' income as being between \$50,000 and \$69,999.

Around half of respondents (48.6%, n=54) reported having *depression* 1-2 days in the past week, but few (3.6%, n=4) reported being *depressed* every day during the past week. Just under half of the respondents (48.4%, n=62) reported *being bothered by things that usually don't bother [them]* never/less than 1 day in the past week, while around a third of respondents (31%, n=40) reported that they never or rarely (less than 1 day in the past week) *[had] trouble keeping [their] mind on what [they were] doing*. Just over half of respondents (51.2%, n=66) reported *feeling depressed* at

HARMAN: DEPRESSION IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

least 1 day in the past week, with fewer (17.1%, n=21) reporting that they *felt that everything [they] did was an effort* 3-4 days in the past week.

While only one respondent strongly agreed (0.8%, n=1) with statements which indicated a high level of self-esteem, about half of the respondents (50.8%, n=65) agreed that they *feel that [they] have a number of good qualities*. When asked whether they *feel useless at times*, respondents were equally distributed with 23.4% (n=30) in disagreement, 26.6% (n=34) neutral, and 25% (n=32) in agreement to the statement. About half of the respondents (49.6%, n=64) agreed with the statement of *I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others*.

The majority of respondents (79.4%, n=100) indicated that they [had never] *tried to kill [themselves]*. Very few reported (12.7%, n=16) that they tried to kill themselves 1-2 times *in the past year*, with only two (1.6%, n=2) reporting that they tried to kill themselves more than 4 times in the past year.

Although 68.5% (n=63) of respondents indicated that they *been to a pow-wow* more than 5 times in the past year, only about a fifth of respondents (19.6%, n=18) reported [*dancing*], and only 9.8% (n=9) reported [*being*] *in a drum group or [singing] at any of these pow-wows*. About the same number of respondents (10.8%, n=10) reported that they've *gone hunting* 3-4 times in their life, with around a third of respondents (30.1%, n=28) indicating that they've *done any beading* 1-2 times in their life. Interestingly, many respondents (69.9%, n=65) indicated their overall *knowledge of tribal language* consisted of only some words, with, about half (54.8%, n=51) reporting in that they were able to *speak* some tribal words.

Sadly, almost half of respondents (48.8%, n=59) indicated that they had experienced *discrimination* a few times a year, although 65.6% (n=84) did indicate that they had never been *threatened or harassed*. Few respondents (9.4%, n=12) indicated that *people act as if you are not as good* on a daily basis, and most (74%, n=94) reported never [*receiving*] *poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores*.

Many respondents (65.5%, n=84) either strongly dis-agreed, disagreed, or felt neutral about their *ethnic identity*, although about one third of respondents (34.9%, n=45) agreed that they *have a lot of pride in [their] ethnic group*. Finally, less than half of respondents (45.8%, n=60) felt neutral about having a *strong attachment towards [their] own ethnic group*.

Reliability of Composite Variables

Depression. The frequency of depression was measured using ten indicators. Pearson's two-tailed correlations between the indicators revealed that most of the relationships were significantly intercorrelated at the $p < .01$ level. The weakest, insignificantly correlated relationship was found between the reverse-coded item *I felt hopeful about the future* and the indicator *my sleep was restless* ($r(10) = .058$, $p > .05$). A weak but significant correlation was found between the indicators of *I felt that everything I did was an effort* and *I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me* ($r(10) = .239$, $p < .01$). A moderate significant correlation was found between the indicators of *I felt fearful* and *I felt depressed* ($r(10) = .362$, $p < .01$). A moderate significant correlation was found between the indicators of *I felt lonely* and *I felt depressed* ($r(10) = .567$, $p < .01$). Cronbach's alpha was calculated for this composite and it was found to have an accept-able level of internal reliability ($\alpha = .792$).

Self-Esteem. Self-esteem was measured using ten indicators. Pearson's two-tailed correlations between the indicators revealed that most of the relationships were significantly intercorrelated at the $p < .01$ level. A weak but significant correlation was found between indicator *I feel that I have a number of good qualities* and the reverse-coded item *I wish I could have more respect for myself* ($r(10) = .214$, $p < .05$). A moderate and significant correlation was found between the indicator *I take a positive attitude toward myself* and the reverse-coded item *I feel I do not have much to be proud of* ($r(10) = .599$, $p < .01$), while a strong, significant correlation was found between the reverse-coded items *I certainly feel*

HARMAN: DEPRESSION IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

useless at times and *at times I think I am no good at all* ($r(10)=.714$, $p<.01$). Cronbach's alpha was calculated for this composite and it was found to have a good level of internal reliability ($\alpha=.878$).

Participation in Cultural Activities. Participation in cultural activities was measured by two sub-groups which included fifteen indicators for participation in cultural activities/skills and two indicators for knowledge of cultural language. Pearson's two-tailed correlations between the indicators revealed that most of the relationships were significantly intercorrelated at the $p<.01$ level. Weak and insignificant correlations were found between the indicators *been to a pow-wow* and *been in a drum group or sang at any of these pow-wows* ($r(15)=.155$, $p>.05$), while a weak but significant correlation was found between the indicators *gone spear-fishing* and *gone hunting* ($r(15)=.209$, $p<.05$). A moderate, positive, and significant correlation was found between the indicators *made ka-nik-a-nik* and *gone to sugar bush* ($r(15)=.445$, $p<.01$). Cronbach's alpha was calculated for this composite and it was found to have an acceptable level of internal reliability ($\alpha=.771$).

Perceived Discrimination was measured using eight indicators. Pearson's two-tailed correlations between the indicators revealed that all of the relationships were significantly intercorrelated at the $p<.01$ level. A weak but significant correlation was found between the indicators *receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores* and *called names or insulted* ($r(8)=.231$, $p<.01$). A moderate significantly correlated relationship was found between the indicators *people act as if they think you are dishonest* and *people act as if you are not smart* ($r(8)=.680$, $p<.01$). Understandably, the strongest, significantly correlated relationship was found between the indicators *treated with less courtesy than others* and *treated with less respect than other people* ($r(8)=.832$, $p<.01$). Cronbach's alpha was calculated for this composite and it was found to have a high level of internal reliability ($\alpha=.900$).

The importance of *cultural values* was measured using twelve indicators. Pearson's two-tailed correlations between the indicators revealed that most relationships were significantly inter-

correlated at the $p < .01$ level. A weak significant correlation was found between the indicators *being honest, telling the truth and not getting into trouble* ($r(12) = .193, p < .05$), while a moderate significant relationships were found between the indicators *practicing, or living one's culture; native ways and living by strong moral, religious, or spiritual principles* ($r(12) = .342, p < .01$) as well as between the indicators *being humble and helping other people in your community* ($r(12) = .455, p < .01$). Finally, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for this composite and it was found to have a good level of internal reliability ($\alpha = .809$).

Ethnic Identity was measured using six indicators and Pearson's two-tailed revealed that all were significantly intercorrelated at the $p < .01$ level. A weak but significant correlation was found between the indicators *I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group and I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs* ($r(6) = .287, p < .01$). Moderate significantly correlated relationships were found between the indicators *I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group and I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group* ($r(6) = .674, p < .01$), and between the indicators *I participate in cultural practices of my own ethnic group and I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group* ($r(6) = .435, p < .01$). Cronbach's alpha was calculated for this composite and it was found to have a good level of internal reliability ($\alpha = .843$).

Cultural socialization was measured using five indicators and Pearson's two-tailed correlations revealed that all were significantly intercorrelated at the $p < .01$ level. A moderate but significant relationship was found between the indicators *my family members read to me Native American story books and my family members have done things to celebrate Native American history* ($r(5) = .501, p < .01$), while strong significant correlations were found between the indicators *my family members read to me Native American history books and my family members read to me Native American story books* ($r(5) = .787, p < .01$), and between the indicators *my family members have taken me to Native American cultural events and my family members have done things to*

HARMAN: DEPRESSION IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

celebrate Native American history ($r(5)=.726$, $p<.01$). Not surprisingly, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for this composite and it was found to have a good level of internal reliability ($\alpha=.853$).

Self-criticism was measured using twelve indicators and Pearson's two-tailed correlations revealed that only a few were significantly intercorrelated at the $p<.05$ level. Weak and insignificant correlations were found between the indicators *I think of myself as a complex person, one who has "many sides"* and *I am very satisfied with myself and my accomplishments* ($r(12) =.117$, $p>.05$) as well as between the indicators *I am very satisfied with myself and my accomplishments* and *I tend to be satisfied with my current plans and goals, rather than striving for higher goals* ($r(12)=.140$, $p<.01$). However weak and significant correlations were found between the indicators *I am very satisfied with myself and my accomplishments* and *I enjoy sharp competition with others* ($r(12)=.190$, $p<.05$). Cronbach's alpha was calculated for this composite and it was found to have a low level of internal reliability ($\alpha=.540$). Given the lack of acceptable internal reliability, all research expectations using this variable were assessed using the individual indicators.

DATA ANALYSIS

RE1: *The more a Native American identifies with their ethnic identity, the less depressive symptoms they will report—not supported.* Pearson correlations were run to determine if the indicators of *Ethnic Identity* affected those of *Depression* and no significant relationships were found. A simple linear regression equation was calculated using a Native American's strength of *Ethnic Identity* to predict *Depression* and an insignificant regression equation was found ($F(1,42)=4.019$, $p>.05$). Given both the insignificant correlations and regression equation, RE1 was not supported. This could, however, be due to the lack of mutually exclusive coding categories for race and ethnic identity, as respondents were free to mark multiple categories. Past research has found varying rates of

depression in individuals that identify with their native culture, individuals that identify with the dominant culture, individuals that identify with both cultures, and individuals that reject both cultures. Future researchers should examine whether identifying with their native culture, identifying with the dominant culture, or identifying with both is more beneficial for Native American youth.

RE2: *The greater the loss of cultural values, the more depressive symptoms a Native American will experience—not supported.* Pearson correlations were run to determine if the indicators of *Cultural Values* affected *Depression*. Despite some significant relationships, such as the moderate negative but significant correlation found between the *Cultural Values* indicator *Sharing with others* and the *Depression* indicator *I felt hopeful about the future* ($r(41)=-.350$, $p<.01$), a weak and insignificant correlation was found between the composite variables themselves ($r(41)=.212$, $p>.05$). A simple linear regression equation was calculated predicting *Depression* based on a Native American's *Cultural Values* and an insignificant regression equation was found ($F(1,41)=1.787$, $p>.05$). Given both the insignificant correlations and regression equation, cultural values were not found to be associated with depression for Native Americans. Lack of significance in the current study may, however, be due to tribal differences; the Chippewa of Northern Michigan may have different cultural values than the tribe studied by Mousseau et al. (2014). For example, this tribe may value more community involvement whereas the Mousseau et al. (2014) scale used to operationalize cultural values in the current study seemed more focused on individualistic participation.

RE3: *The more cultural values a Native American has, the less suicidal ideation they will experience—not supported.* Pearson correlations were run to determine if the indicators *Cultural Values* affected *Suicidal Ideation* and only one significant correlation was found. A weak negative, but significant correlation was found between the *Cultural Value* indicator *Sharing with others* and the *Suicidal Ideation* indicator *How many times, if ever,*

HARMAN: DEPRESSION IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

have you tried to kill yourself ($r(49)=.288, p<.05$). Not surprisingly, then, when a simple linear regression equation was calculated predicting *Suicidal Ideation* based on a Native American’s *Cultural Values*, an insignificant regression equation was found ($F(1,49)=3.112, p>.05$). Given both the insignificant correlations and regression, cultural values were not found to be linked with suicidal ideation for the Chippewa.

Table 1: Pearson Correlations between Indicators of Perceived Discrimination and Suicidal Ideation

	Treated less courteous	Treated with less respect	Receiving poorer service than others	Treated as less smart	Feeling viewed as dishonest	Treated not as good as others	Called names or insulted	Threatened or harassed	Perceived discrimination
Overall number of times tried to kill self	.179	.118	.139	.225	.348	.277	.243	.249	.290
	*			*	**	**	**	**	**
	.049	.193	.126	.013	.000	.002	.008	.005	.002
N:	121	123	122	121	122	123	120	123	116

Notes: The first line shows the Pearson correlation coefficients.

The second line shows the significance (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

RE4: *The more cultural socialization provided by a Native American’s family member, the higher their self-esteem—not supported.* Pearson correlations were run to determine if *Cul-*

tural Socialization affected *Self-Esteem*. While a moderate and significant correlation was found between the *Cultural Socialization* indicator *My family members have taken me to Native American cultural events* and the *Self-Esteem* indicator *On the whole, I am satisfied with myself* ($r(48)=.334, p<.05$), other relationships between the indicators were insignificant and the composite variables *Cultural Socialization* and *Self-Esteem* were also not significantly related ($r(48)=.055, p>.05$). A simple linear regression equation was calculated predicting *Self-Esteem* based on a Native American's *Cultural Socialization* and an insignificant regression equation was found ($F(1,48)=6.784, p>.05$). Given both the insignificant correlations and regression equation, no significant relationship was found between cultural socialization and self-esteem for Native Americans in this study.

RE5: *The more discrimination an individual feels, the more suicidal ideation they will report—supported.* Pearson correlations were run to determine if indicators of *Perceived Discrimination* affected those of *Suicidal Ideation*; all but two of the indicators of *Perceived Discrimination* were found to be significantly correlated with the *Suicidal Ideation* indicator *How many times, if ever, have you tried to kill yourself*. A weak correlation was found between the *Suicidal Ideation* indicators *How many times, if ever, have you tried to kill yourself* and the *Perceived Discrimination* indicators *People act as if they think you are not smart* ($r(48)=.225, p<.05$) and *People act as if you are not as good* ($r(48)=.277, p<.01$), as well as between the composite variables *Perceived Discrimination* and *Suicidal Ideation* ($r(48)=.290, p<.01$). A simple linear regression equation was calculated predicting *Suicidal Ideation* based on *Perceived Discrimination* and a significant regression equation was found ($F(1,48)=2.124, p<.05$) with an R^2 of .234. Thus 23.4% of the variance in *Suicidal Ideation* can be explained by *Perceived Discrimination* within the current study group. Given both the significant correlations and the significant regression equation, RE6 was supported.

RE6: *The less a Native American participated in cultural activities, the more suicidal behavior they exhibit—not sup-*

HARMAN: DEPRESSION IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

ported. Pearson correlations were run to determine if the indicators of *Participation in Cultural Activities* affected those of *Suicidal Behavior* and no significant correlations were found. The overall correlation between the composite variables *Participation in Cultural Activities* and *Suicidal Behavior* was also insignificant, negative and weak ($r(48)=-.113$, $p>.05$). Interestingly, despite a lack of significance for the small study sample, the majority of relationships between cultural activities and suicidal behavior were negative, such as “*gone spear-fishing*” ($r(48)=-.257$, $p>.05$), “*been in a drum group or sang at any of these pow-wows*” ($r(48)=-.033$, $p>.05$), and “*picked berries*” ($r(48)=-.146$, $p>.05$). Lack of significance could be due to a lack of opportunities for individuals to participate in cultural activities within the community, as the number of students who participated in each was fairly low. When a simple regression equation was calculated, however, an insignificant equation was found ($F(1,48)=3.230$, $p>.05$). Given both the insignificant correlations and insignificant regression equation, RE7 was not supported.

DISCUSSION

Perceived discrimination was found to explain a little less than a tenth of overall suicide attempt history but was found to be significantly correlated with various indicators of cultural socialization. A simple linear regression equation was calculated predicting the amount of cultural socialization a child receives from a family member based on perceived discrimination and a significant equation was found ($F(1,79)= 2.34$, $p<.05$), with an R^2 of .065. Thus, 6.5% of the variance in the amount of cultural socialization received from a family member was explained by perceived discrimination. The amount of cultural information available for children could contribute to feelings of not belonging to either group.

Perceived discrimination was found to be a significant part of Native American youth’s lives. Educators should be considering what messages, manifest and latent, are being taught about the

Native American culture and school board members should examine the resources that are available for cultural activities. Policy makers as well as community members should look at their current practices and messages to evaluate what contributes to the youth feeling discriminated against. School strategies should attempt to increase the awareness of discrimination by examining messages taught to decrease depression and suicidal ideation in students.

When a simple linear regression was calculated to predict participation in cultural activities based on the amount of cultural socialization received by a family member, a significant equation was found ($F(1,74)=6.36, p<.01$) with an R^2 of .353. Thus, 35.3% of the variance in participation in cultural activities was explained by the amount of cultural socialization provided by a family member. This makes sense given past research indicating the importance of family in all types of socialization (Hughes & Chen 1997).

When comparing Whites and Native Americans on the indicators of suicide attempt history, Native Americans were found to be significantly more likely to have attempted suicide ($m= 1.57, sd=.93$) than Whites ($m=1.06, sd=.32$) ($F(1,123)=1.445, p<.05$). A simple linear regression equation was calculated predicting suicide attempts in the past year based on racial identification and a significant regression equation was found ($F(1,121)=3.42, p<.01$), with an R^2 of .088. Thus, 8.8% of the variance in the number of suicide attempts in the past year can be explained by identifying as Native American. These findings could be influenced by the high amount of perceived discrimination experienced by Native American youth. Discrimination creates distance between individuals and cultural groups; further-more, lack of belonging increases depression which in turn increases suicide attempts.

In addition to suicide attempt history, significant differences were found between Native Americans and Whites on the composite variable depression, in which Native Americans were more likely to experience depressive symptoms ($m=24.22, sd=1.29$) than Whites ($m=20.80, sd=.86$). A simple linear regression equa-

HARMAN: DEPRESSION IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

tion was calculated predicting depression based on racial identification and a significant regression equation was found ($F(1,105)=2.27, p<.05$), with an R^2 .047. Thus, 4.7% of the variance in depression can be explained by identifying as Native American. This significant relationship makes sense when considering other significant relationships between identifying as Native American and perceived discrimination and suicide at-tempts, in which these composite variables were also found to be significantly related.

Surprisingly, significant differences were also found between Native Americans and Whites on the composite variable self-esteem, with Native Americans having a significantly higher self-esteem ($m=27.15, sd=1.08$) than Whites ($m=23.98, sd=.94$) ($F(1,119)=-3.123, p<.01$). A simple linear regression equation was calculated predicting high self-esteem based on racial identification and a significant regression equation was found ($F(1, 117)=2.04, p<.05$), with an R^2 of .034. Thus, 3.4% of the variance in self-esteem can be explained by identifying as Native American. This seems to contradict the findings of previous researchers that the higher an individual's self-esteem, the less depressive symptoms they experience (Kim et al. 2014). Native Americans were found to be more likely to experience depression, but were also found to have higher self-esteem.

While racial identification may predict some variance in overall suicide attempt history, not surprisingly, depression was also found to significantly predict overall suicide attempt history ($F(1,128)= 5.88, p<.01$), with an R^2 of .213. Thus, 21.3% of the variance in overall suicide attempt history can be explained by depression. This is consistent with the findings of past researchers that depression predicts suicidal ideation (Han et al., 2014). In addition to depression, self-esteem was found to significantly predict overall suicide attempt history after calculating a simple linear regression equation ($F(1,129)= 6.61, p<.01$), with an R^2 of .253. Thus, 25.3% of the variance in overall suicide attempt history can be explained by self-esteem. Given these findings, policy makers at schools with large Native American populations should examine programs that target depression rather than self-esteem. Once again, future researchers should examine how cultural fac-

tors may positively affect self-esteem while still leaving students vulnerable to depression.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Several limitations in the design of this study may have led to errors in measurement. For instance, respondents were instructed to mark all that apply for the demographic question of racial identification. Although 46.5% (n=127) of the respondents reported being Native American, some also reported being White. Past research has found that the strength of an individual's ethnic identity was positively correlated with self-esteem while negatively correlated with depression (Lusk et al. 2010). Future research should make both cultural and racial distinctions in identity in order to better understand how culture interacts with the self-perception of Native American youth. Policy makers could then create programs that will help to better protect against depression and suicidal ideation while continuing to bolster student self-esteem.

Future studies should also look more closely at the disjunction between high levels of Native American self-esteem and higher levels of depression by examining varying types of perceived discrimination, the availability of cultural activities, and cultural socialization messages. It is possible that the high levels of self-esteem observed in the current study could be the result of tying self-esteem and ethnic pride together. The unfortunate result might be that youth become more proud of their ethnic identity but, when around non-natives, become more aware of the discrimination and repression by others of their culture and heritage. This awareness, then, might ironically be contributing to their depression. To combat this trend, policy makers wishing to decrease the suicide rates of Native youth should shift their focus from self-esteem and ethnic pride to programs more directly targeting depression and suicidal ideation.

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HARMAN: DEPRESSION IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

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