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Influential Factors Affecting the Career Success of Professional Northern Plains Native American Males: A Qualitative Study

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INFLUENTIAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE CAREER SUCCESS OF
PROFESSIONAL NORTHERN PLAINS NATIVE AMERICAN MALES:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

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for the degree of

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This dissertation, submitted by Adam J. Guilmino in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to better understand successful vocational experiences among Northern Plains Native American males. Most studies completed up to this point have approached the issue of Native American career exploration from a problem-based perspective. This study used a Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) methodology to examine the experiences of Native Americans who have been nominated by their tribal community as career successful members of their community.

Eight male members of two North Dakota Native American tribes were interviewed using semi-structured qualitative interview protocol. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed for domains and categories. Eight domains emerged from the data analysis: (a) obstacles, (b) definition of success (in general), (c) definition of success (in high school), (d) definition of success (in relation to job), (e) definition of failure, (f) self-perception, (g) positive influential factors to career success, and (h) message to students. The most salient variables related to career success included family emphasis on education and multidimensional social support. Other variables that influenced the career success of this sample included high motivation to succeed and determination to overcome obstacles.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

"Can we change the adults? Probably not," Randy Finn, an Ojibwa activist and

businessman, said in February 2003 at a town meeting. "Can we change the youth, give

them hope? Maybe we can (Oakes, 2004)". Among America's most disenfranchised and

underserved people, Native Americans have the lowest incomes and highest rates of

infant mortality, teen suicide, diabetes, and alcoholism in the United States (Ogunwole,

2002). It is hoped that through this journey of career exploration that the unique values

and strengths of the eight North Dakotan Native American participants are brought to the

forefront.

The terms "Native American" and "American Indian" are labels that encompass a

diversity of languages, lifestyles, religions, kinship systems, and organizations (Polacca,

1995). Many tribes have a unique relationship with the U.S. government in that they are

recognized as sovereign nations, both in law and through treaties. There are many ways

of defining "Indian": the genetic definition, having a certain percentage of Indian blood

as established by the federal Register of the United States. Other definitions include:

community recognition, being recognized as Indian by other Indians is paramount

because federal and state governments do not recognize all tribes; enrollment in a

recognized tribe; and self-declaration, the method used by the Census Bureau.

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The 2000 Census revealed the population of Native Americans and Alaska Natives to be 2.4 million people, which represents about 0.9 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Although a small portion of the population, little attention is paid to educational and career development and success among this unique population. Wells (1989) surveyed thirty-three two and four-year colleges and universities with high percentages of Native American students, and found that over half of the students dropout within their first year. Overall, the graduation rate was a troublesomely low 27.3%. A report issued by the Full Employment Action Council (2001) showed an average unemployment rate of 43% for Native Americans living in the 28 states with the largest concentrations of Native American populations. These troubling statistics are an invitation to explore not only why there is such hardship and discouraging information regarding career attainment, but also gives us a chance to discover how Native Americans have overcome a history of oppression in order to write their own story.

The purpose of the present study was to listen to the stories of eight Northern Plains Native American males who were community-nominated as successful in their career, and gain a better understanding of how these individuals have succeeded, and what defines success. By understanding how community-nominated individuals have succeeded in their careers, it is my hope that this information can be passed on to younger generations as community record, as mentorship, and as instructive data for vocational and personal counselors who work with and within Native American communities. In addition, it is my intent to move away from a deficit-model of career exploration and

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focus on a strength-based model of career exploration. Finally, it is my intent to broaden the scope of CQR methodology to domains outside of therapy research. The following literature review summarizes the findings of previous research focused on Native American education, along with poverty and employment issues. Also discussed is the impact of racism and oppression along with a history of cultural genocide that this unique population has experienced. In addition, diversity and acculturation issues give a broad account of values that are unique to some Native American cultures.

Review of the Literature

Most studies have approached the issue of Native American career success by focusing on the "unsuccessful" aspects, also known as a deficit model, of Native American culture, and the barriers that coincide with being a minority. The negative attention the literature has given to the Native American people is discouraging to the outsider looking in, and gives a pessimistic view of life as a Native American. This review of the literature attempts to give an evenhanded account of the Native American experience. However, as the goal of this project was to explore Native American models of success, the deficit-based literature is also explored.

Diversity within the Native American Culture

Demographics

Estimates of the population of North America at the time of Columbus' initial contact with Native Americans vary from around 1 million to 18 million (Stiffarm & Lane, 1992). Slavery, disease, introduction to alcohol, warfare, and the federal policy of forced removal from traditional lands all contributed to the devastation of Native

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American populations. Most population estimates indicate that between 95 percent and 99 percent of the indigenous population was wiped out between 1500 and 1900. Even by the most conservative estimates, the population decreased by two-thirds during this time (Stiffarm & Lane, 1992).

Today, Native Americans and Alaskan Natives are a heterogeneous group made up of 562 federal and state recognized tribes (Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA], 2000). There are 208 tribes not recognized by federal or state governments (BIA, 2000), partly because federal recognition is a long and arduous task. The U.S. Census Bureau (2001) indicates that there are about 2.48 million Native Americans. The population is young; 41% are under 20 years of age, compared to 29% of the general population. The median age for Native Americans is 22.9 years, compared to 31.1 years for European Americans. About 57% of the population falls in the childbearing years (ages 14 to 44) (Indian Health Service [IHS], 1996). Projections show that by the year 2050 the Native American population will reach 4.3 million, nearly doubling today's number.

About 67% of all Native Americans and Alaskan Natives live outside of reservations (Census Bureau, 2001). With the shift to the cities, an increase in interethnic and intertribal marriages has occurred. Currently, more than 60% of all Native Americans are of mixed backgrounds, the result of intermarriages among African American, White, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian populations (Peregoy, 1999). Enrolled tribal members living in the city are subject to many of the same social pressures and urban survival problems (e.g., discrimination, acculturation, loss of identity) as other ethnic minorities (Trimble, Fleming, Beauvais, & Jumper-Thurman, 1996).

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For the purpose of this study, the focus is on Native Americans living on reservations in North Dakota. The Census Bureau (2001) reports an estimated 33,000 Native Americans living in the state, of which 60% of the population lives on or near reservation communities. Approximately 13,000 Native Americans living in North Dakota are under the age of 20. There are five federally recognized tribes and one Native American community whose lands are located partially or in whole within the state of North Dakota.

Citizenship

The problem with determining who is Native American lies in the discrepancy in criteria. Each Native American nation sets its own criteria for membership. Some nations require that a person document a certain percentage of Native American heritages to be considered a member. Other nations require that ancestry be traced to someone who was on a tribal census in a particular year. The federal government sets criteria to identify who is Native American for the purposes of federal programs. These standards typically include measures of blood quantum and vary from program to program (Jaimes, 1992).

There is a wide range of cultural identification among Native Americans. Some consider themselves Native American because they have a great-grandparent who was Native American, whereas others are born on reservations and enter school speaking a mixture of their native language and English. Others are raised in the city and have no knowledge of tribal language or customs. A large group, however, moves in and out of both worlds, trying to maintain a precarious balance between their Indian and American identities (Solberg, 2002).

An individual who does not have citizenship in a Native American nation may struggle with his or her sense of identity and self-esteem. Lack of citizenship not only means inability to participate in political processes and lack of access to social and health benefits, but may also imply that an individual's place in the community is unclear, if that individual is accepted as a community member at all. The struggles are most likely to be severe if the individual is recognized neither by his or her nation as a member nor by the United States as a Native American.

Deindividuation of Native American Culture

Forced relocation of Native American people led to further decimation. The Trail of Tears is the most famous of much relocation. In 1838 the U.S. military forced the "Five Civilized Tribes" of the Southeast to march to Oklahoma to clear the way for white settlement. Many died of disease, exposure, and malnutrition along the way. Eight thousand, or nearly 50 percent of the Cherokees that had survived earlier epidemics, failed to survive the Trail. Six thousand, or 15 percent, of the Choctaws died. Approximately 50 percent of the Creeks and Seminoles died. The Chickasaws suffered severe losses as well. The Navajos suffered a similar relocation known as the Long Walk. After 9,000 Navajos surrendered to Kit Carson in 1868, 3,500 died in captivity (Stiffarm & Lane, 1992).

Suspicion and mistrust are natural outcomes and important survival skills for people who have experienced attempts at genocide. Many interactions with the dominant society have had dire consequences for Native Americans. Trauma experienced by

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generations of Native Americans has led to unresolved grief in many cases (Brave Heart-Jordan & DeBruyn, 1995).

The U.S. has a long history of discrimination against Native Americans; and although societal attitudes toward Native Americans may have improved somewhat in recent years, more change is needed (Watts, 1993). To demonstrate, Markstrom-Adams (1990) examined the attitudes towards Native American reflected in novels published in the 1970s and 1980s. A less stereotypical and more culturally sensitive attitude was reflected in these novels as compared to earlier works. However, a study by Haertel, Douthitt, Haertel, and Douthitt (1999) demonstrates the subtle nature of contemporary gender-racial discrimination. They found that research participants rated a Native American Indian woman job candidate lower than a White man, although the two candidates had identical vitae and audiotapes. It is questionable if attitudes towards Native Americans have improved or has it taken on a different form (i.e. derogatory college mascots, offensive jokes, naming vehicles after tribes).

As mentioned earlier, it is possible for Native Americans to struggle with identity on varying levels (e.g., federal recognition, within own community, versus dominant culture). Perhaps the most destructive to Native Americans' image and uniqueness is the lack of freedom given to tell his or her own story. As we have seen time and time again, Native Americans in media are stereotyped, simplistically characterized, romanticized, and misinterpreted (Peace Party, 2001). These forms of oppression perpetuate the deindividuation of Native American identity, thus casting a shadow over all tribes and incorporating them into one homogenous group.

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Acculturation

The cultural heritage of Native Americans is defined by each tribe's values, beliefs, arts, cultural habits, family systems, social organization, health and medicine, and religion (Johnson, Swartz, & Martin, 1996). Each of the cultural qualities is impacted by the changing level of acculturation of tribe members. Acculturation is defined as changes in the original patterns of distinct groups towards a more dominant culture that have continuous contact with each other (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovitz, 1936). Differing levels of acculturation occur as some tribal members choose to maintain the traditional way of life, others choose to return to traditional ways after growing up and the dominant society, and others opt for different levels of assimilation into the dominant culture.

Not all Native Americans are equally connected to their heritage. Some, often through force and sometimes through choice, have taken on the values and norms of the dominant society to some degree. Others have maintained traditional values and ways of life. Some Native American groups have maintained their cultural identity while appearing to blend with the dominant society. Small family groups of Native Americans took on the outward appearance of white people, yet were able to maintain their culture (Porter, 1983).

Theories of assimilation and acculturation initially developed by anthropologists, but also generally accepted by members of the dominant society, stated that mixing (both socially and biologically between Native Americans and other ethnic groups), would eventually result in the loss of the Native American culture (Oetting & Beauvais, 1991). Those who are not seen as having easily identifiable native characteristics or

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phenotypical features often have been assumed not to be Native American, yet this is not necessarily an accurate reflection of cultural identity (Porter, 1983). In addition, it is possible for people to identify with more than one culture (Oetting & Beauvais, 1991). This may happen because of mixed ethnic heritage or through extensive exposure to other cultures.

For some Native Americans, especially those living on reservations, feelings and expressions of cultural conflict may influence vocational decision-making. Everett, Proctor, and Cartmell (1983) stated "An awareness of varied styles of acculturation is important to the psychologist who wishes to relate across cultures. The structuring of psychological interventions must consider where the Native American client is along the acculturation continuum" (p. 601). Stone (1981) developed a Generations Diagnosis and Placement Process based upon Conflicts Resolutions Theory to assist counseling staff to evaluate and identify cultural identity conflicts experienced by Native Americans. The Process focuses on assisting clients to take the "best" of both worlds, while maintaining their own unique tribal Generational Identity. This model assumes that compromising one's values to adjust to mainstream society is the ideal method of acculturation. There is slight empirical support for this model of acculturation. In fact, the model is based on conflict resolution on an individual level and has little evidence to support its claims on a societal level. Viewing this model on a societal level, it puts the responsibility of the Native American to conform to a culture that may not be congruent to his or her own, thus compromising one's identity.

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Juntunen, Barraclough, Broneck, Seibel, Winrow, and Morin (2001) address the issue of "living in two worlds" in their study. The authors conducted a qualitative study examining the career journey of eighteen Northern Plains Native Americans. An important issue the emerged from the study was the participants' early experiences with White culture having an effect on their perceptions of two worlds. Two participants reported, "We have to live like Whites when we are out there," and "Those [White] people are way different from us...they don't understand a lot of our ways." This struggle to conform to mainstream society may force Native Americans to part ways with traditions and values unique to their heritage. Acculturation of Native Americans is not a positive aspect, because it is a reminder of forced assimilation, and the loss of traditions and values (Atkinson and Morten, 1998). It means conforming to the dominant culture, which goes against many Native American customs and values.

As we have seen, Native Americans struggle with acculturation issues on a level that the dominant culture may not ever understand. Researchers can take this opportunity to examine the specific qualities and value systems Native Americans incorporate in their traditions in order to gain a better perspective of Native American life. By tapping into these unique characteristics, it offers people of different cultures a chance to hear about the unique experiences of being a Native American. This, although minimal in multicultural understanding, is a step in the right direction to give different cultures a chance to see what life is like for Native Americans.

Values

Native American culture varies from one tribe to another. There are 562 federally recognized tribes in the United States, each of which has its own customs and beliefs (Russell, 1997). The tendency in past research has been to lump all tribes into a single group, without regard for gender, socioeconomic status, tribal-specific structures (i.e. patrilineal vs. matrilineal structures), educational attainment, and lifestyle. Differences in the values and beliefs of Native American cultures from those of the mainstream culture have been widely discussed in the literature (e.g., Mercer, 1996; Olson & Wilson, 1984; Williams & Ellison, 1996).

The degree to which these differences are evident between the dominant American culture and tribal cultures depends largely on the degree of acculturation experienced by the tribes and their individual members. Some of these values are in opposition to such mainstream values as individualism, acquisition of material wealth, private capitalization, interest-group politics, domination and mastery, labor specialization over generalization, rapid technological change, and social meaning of interpersonal relationships (Garrett, 1995; Olson & Wilson, 1984).

The following paragraphs draw contrasts between selected and widely shared Native American core cultural values and non-Native American values and associated behaviors and attitudes. These brief descriptions are somewhat idealized. They cannot reflect the wide variations within Native American communities that result from different levels of cultural assimilation among individuals nor the differences among various

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Native American cultures; yet these values are common enough that they may be maintained by members of the dominant culture.

General Values

Generally speaking, cultural values of Native Americans revolve around sharing of resources, cooperation, extended family, present-time orientation, noninterference, harmony with nature, consensual leadership, belief in the supernatural and in power found in nature, and respect for elders (Green, 1995; Herring, 1996).

Although Native American values vary, enough similarities are shared to allow basic generalizations (Herring, 1990). The most important commonalities are Native American views of (a) a harmonious universe in which every object and being has a sacred life; (b) humans as part of, and not superior to, nature; (c) nature as being sacred; (d) the rights and dignity of the individual; (e) leadership being based on outstanding ability and earned respect (Herring, 1990). These values, however, are not as common among other Americans. In addition, few Native Americans really appreciate the values of middle-class Anglo-America (Herring, 1996). Native Americans, however, are pushed to adapt to the Anglo-American society if they are to survive in today's world. Yet their cultural identity must be kept intact, and must be permitted to flourish without further dissolution.

Work Values

Native Americans' ideas about work choice vary from one person to another. Many native people choose to work among other Native Americans (Smith, 2004). Some are finding work in nontribal employment, but others are securing work that facilitates

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their "living the Red Road," that is, living as close to the way their ancestors lived as is possible today (Smith, 2004). Some Native Americans' goals may be the same as those found in the dominant culture, such as defining success in terms of monetary returns. Others view success in terms of what they can give back to the tribe, a view more in line with social interests (Jean, 2003).

McDiarmid and Kleinfeld (1986) compared the occupational values of rural Eskimo secondary students with those of urban white adolescents. No significant differences were found between the two groups' occupational values. It was found that Eskimo students preferred to work in their hometown even if it required a pay cut. Additionally, the Eskimo students preferred jobs that helped their community, even if it meant a pay decrease. Studies such as this one typically compare Native American vs. non-Native American groups. Specifically in McDiarmid's 1986 study, the researchers took it a step further and compared urban vs. rural groups. It seems that a comparison of this nature especially when confounded with different ethnic groups is unjust and perpetuates the point that White culture is the norm and other cultures need to adjust their belief systems to fit in.

The literature on work values of North Dakota Native Americans is limited. The lack of research in this area is basis for conducting this study. Not only have we seen researchers unfittingly compare different ethnic groups on intrinsic values (i.e., McDiarmid and Kleinfeld, 1986), but we have also seen from Smith (2004) that finding specific work values for a cultural group can be a difficult task. This topic in particular, appears that there may be more within-group differences for work values then there are

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between-group differences. It is reiterated that there are several hundred Native American tribes each with their own unique identity, and just like with mainstream culture, there may be more within-group differences then between-group differences. To label all Native Americans as adhering to specific work values would be unjust.

Social Values

Cultural customs that are traditionally taboo in one culture may be ordinarily displayed in another. For example, in social interactions, Native Americans tend to have a reserved, cautious manner, feel little need to explain things verbally, and maintain less eye contact in conversation. In addition, they often use another person to help them communicate (Edwards & Edwards, 1980). Wing, Crow, and Thompson (1995) stated that Muscogee (Creek) Indians, especially those traditional members of ceremonial grounds, typically looked down while speaking to elders or guests and allow them to speak first.

In their recent experience with ethnographic interviewing of Native Americans, Kawulich and Curlette (1998) observed that asking or rephrasing a question either may result in an appropriate response or may be met with skepticism and silence, depending on the subject. Asking too many in-depth questions about certain subjects may be considered rude. It may be helpful to note that many Native Americans are reticent about sharing their thoughts and feelings out loud. Stone and Njumbwa (1994) conclude that this hesitation necessitates sensitivity and empathy on the part of a counselor to ensure correct understanding of the problem.

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The researchers mentioned above all conducted studies involving primarily Native American participants with no comparative norm group. It is with this type of research methodology that the advancement of multicultural sensitivity takes place. Yet, it is still discouraging to see these authors use their data which was acquired from specific tribal communities and generalize to other Native American communities. Wing et. al. (1995) systematically made references to the specific population under investigation, and did not sway to make grand generalizations about their findings to other Native American groups. This form of research is hoped to be obtained from this study.

Cultural Preservation Values

Preservation of native tradition is of great importance among Native American nations. According to Mosak (1977), "To get along with oneself is thus the fourth life task" (p. 100). "At the route of all inner conflict lies a dualism, the assumption that there are two I's, two opposing forces within us" (Mosak, 1977, p. 101). For Native Americans, cultural preservation may be one of the primary issues in relating to one's self or in preserving a sense of belonging. This is evidenced by the fact that many Native Americans have expressed the need to teach their native languages and customs to the children of the tribes. They have shared their fears that native traditions will die out. As a result, tribal colleges and others are increasing the number and variety of native languages and other Native American oriented courses offered to students. Furthermore, in discussing the life task of self, Mosak (1977) states, "Only on the basis of equality, of mutual respect, can we live in peace with others and with ourselves" (p. 100). The

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communal nature of many tribal cultures unifies members and makes them feel a sense of belonging.

The preservation of native language is important to the survival of a culture. Although there are nearly 200 languages within the Native American population, the number of proficient speakers is decreasing (Hodgkinson, 1990). For years, reservation schools encouraged families to speak English around their schoolchildren in order to encourage the learning of the English language. As a result, the children were exposed to little of their native language and had poor modeling of English usage. Many Native Americans use two languages, but are not proficient in either language. Families with limited English proficiency are considered to be seriously disadvantaged (Hanson, Lynch, & Wayman, 1990).

With a growing sense of conforming to dominant culture values, it seems like Native Americans are in a situation of losing their sense of identity. As Hodgkinson (1990) points out, even the Native American language is becoming extinct. When a group of people are expected to cease the use of their native language, one can only imagine the loss of identity and feelings of disempowerment that accompany that directive. The language of Native American people appears to be the one commonality among all tribes that is heavily influenced to discontinue use from mainstream population.

Community Values

The Native American culture is characterized by large family systems and loyalty to family ties. Recent changes in the culture and economy have led to a greater number of tribal members living in urban areas. For various reasons including training, college, and

employment, nearly two-thirds of Native Americans have moved to the city. In order to maintain familial and cultural ties, and to support and contribute to the maintenance of the home, many return to the reservation on weekends and ceremonial days. This dedication impacts the decision-making process as well as employment opportunities.

For Native Americans with strong extended family networks, family members may be interdependent and individual needs are met in many ways. According to Everett, Proctor, and Cartmell (1983), there may be protocols within individual families for dealing with important issues and problems, and seeking help from outside the family may be difficult. A Native American client may also be ambivalent about committing himself or herself to specific decision and course of action because of the larger decision-making process that occurs with a strong extended family network. Understanding a client's family structure and involvement of family members becomes an important component for assisting certain Native American clients to make effective decisions, which may impact vocational choices. This issue will be addressed in the results section of this study.

Education

History has recorded the cross-cultural struggles that have existed between Euro-Anglo beliefs and Native American ways. The educational process has been a central force in the attempt of Anglo-American males to assimilate and even to annihilate the cultural practices of the Native American. These policies and processes have created distrust towards the educational system that exists today (Harrison, 1997; LaForge, 1996; Rowland, 1994; Wright, 1991). Clark (1992) expanded on this issue when he stated, "The

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comparatively low educational attainment among American Indians is a complex, multivariate problem which affects Indian participation and performance at all points along the educational pipeline" (p. ii).

Statistics

High school graduation rates are low, about 66% versus 75% for the general U.S. population (Pavel, Skinner, Calahan, Tippeconic, & Stein, 1998). As well, annual income for Native Americans is about $12,338, 62% of the national average, with the poverty rate being about three times the national average (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). The educational experiences of Native Americans range from Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools located on reservations to mainstream schools. Compared to 66.5% of the general population, only 56% of Native Americans complete four or more years of high school (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). Native Americans also struggle with a dropout rate of 35.5% as compared to the U.S. rate of 28.8% (National Center for Education Statistics, 1994). In addition, Native American students are less likely to complete high school than are students of other races (Johnson, Joe, Locust, Miller, & Frank, 1987).

Barriers

Although Native Americans are making significant gains in educational achievement, relatively few have earned bachelor's and master's degrees, and a total of 128 Native Americans had earned doctoral degrees in 1991 (Carter & Wilson, 1992). Senate subcommittees, researchers, educators, and students report the following conditions as educational barriers: inadequate academic preparation, insufficient financial

support, a perceived discouraging institutional climate, and problems in adjusting emotionally and socially to the college culture and system (Cotera, 1988; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Layton, Blaine, & Rokusek, 1990; Pottinger, 1990; U.S. Department of Education, 1991; Wells, 1989; Wright, 1991).

These barriers can be summarized into three categories: academics, economics, and culture (Keating, 1996). Inadequate academic preparation in math, language areas, and science impacts completion of basic courses required by colleges across the nation. Likewise, deficits in these areas require remedial assistance through courses or tutoring for Native American students. Discrepancies between Native American language and Anglo-Euro language taught in classrooms may interfere with academic performance (Keating, 1992, 1996; Killackey, 1988).

Behavioral expectations of teachers (non-Native American) for their students can cause conflict in the classroom. For example, in the Navajo tradition the role of the student is as a listener not an active, vocal participant. This is based on the cultural mores that a student respects the teacher by listening, not asking questions or responding as many non-Navajo teachers would expect from their students (Keating, 1992). Possible implications of this difference in communication style can lead teachers to eliminate points given for participation or label students as "shy or uninterested."

The second barrier of financial inadequacy from loans, grants, and scholarships hampers covering the cost of basic living expenses. This deficit is often compounded by lack of money management skills and needs of extended family systems existing in poor economic states (Keating, 1992). Native Americans typically live well below the poverty

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level, a factor that has an effect on all people regardless of ethnic, racial or cultural background. Low per capita income levels were found among the Navajo where 67% of families are below the poverty level and unemployment averages 40% (Keating, 1992). Many families do not have running water or electricity and also lack sufficient funds to provide proper nutrition for their children who typically have to spend many hours a week on buses. All of these are obvious impediments for students to function effectively in schools.

The third barrier, Euro-Anglo cultural dominance with its hidden curriculum, increases stress and requires cultural adjustment by the Native American student (Clark, 1997; Cotera, 1988; Layton et al., 1990; Wells, 1989; Yurkovich, 1994; Yurkovich, 1997). This cultural dominance exists in colleges across the nation. It refers to the unwritten and unspoken values, dispositions, and social and behavioral expectations that govern the interactions between teachers and students within schools (Smith, 2005). More concretely, the hidden curriculum is the unwritten and unspoken rules of how to successfully navigate through the nebulous academic culture of higher education, which is essential to academic success.

An example of the hidden curriculum is suggested that there is an appropriate way students should interact with faculty when discussing grades (i.e., one-on-one meeting behind closed doors), which might not be transparent to all college students. For instance, the educational, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds of some Native American college students have not adequately prepared them for successful navigation through the academic cultural minefields of higher education (Smith, 2005). But it is important to

emphasize that just because students are unfamiliar with the academic culture of postsecondary institutions one should not infer that they lack the intellectual capacity to learn the hidden curriculum.

Native Americans are typically taught by Anglo-American teachers through the use of English (a non-Native American language), illustrations from the material-acquisition view, and nonritualistic foci. Textbooks continue to report distortions, stereotypes, omissions of fact, and other negative misunderstanding about Native Americans. Low achievement expectations by many teachers result in Native American students being either labeled or tracked (Herring, 1992).

This situation, if valid, is an educational double standard. In essence, present educational systems do not consider Native American values or ethnicity in their prescribed social expectations. This lack of consideration may be reflected in the hopelessness, helplessness, and alienation currently expressed by many Native American children (Herring, 1992).

These barriers are also influenced by the extended Native American family systems. This system requires different roles and responsibilities that alter priority-setting and decision-making processes (Tafoya, 1986). For example, the student may "stop out" from the educational process to accommodate financial, physical, or supportive needs of the large extended family (Tafoya, 1986). This sense of obligation, which many Native Americans adhere to, may be seen by non-ethnic minorities as a lack of commitment to education or lack of motivation at the same time perpetuating a view that the Native American experience is not valid.

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Strategies to Overcoming Educational Barriers

There appears to be a basic assumption that if one reduces or eliminates these barriers there will be greater success for the Native American student in higher education. Recent statistics on graduation rates have not demonstrated that this is the case; problems still remain even with program changes. Rosella, Regan-Kubinski, & Albrecht (1994) have identified that educational strategies must focus on facilitating entry, increasing competitiveness for advancement, and insuring completion once the Native American is in the system. More importantly, supports must be available that allow Native Americans to navigate their way through academia while maintaining their Indian identity in an educational system and culture that continues minimal recognition of their language, culture, and traditions.

Compensatory education has been the prevailing strategy employed by public schools throughout the United States to deal with the problem of underachieving Native American youth (Mehan and Tellez, 1992). Compensatory education received its impetus in the mid 1960s when Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, one of the many legislative shots fired in the war against poverty. Compensatory education programs addressed the poor school performance of America's low-income students. The most notable of these was the Head Start Program. Adopting a sports metaphor, Head Start accepted uncritically America's belief in life as a race, a competition in which people get ahead by hard work and individual effort (Mehan and Tellez, 1992). What made Head Start unique was its acknowledgment that White middle- and upper income kids had an advantage in the race for success. In order to level the

playing field for poor and minority groups, the government provided considerable sums of federal money to school districts. Schools across the United States instituted programs to compensate for the presumed deficiencies in the family and cultural arrangements of poor and minority students (Cole and Griffin, 1987).

In general, compensatory education has worked on a remedial principle. Students who have been unsuccessful in school are placed into special programs or "tracks." The curriculum in compensatory education programs is often reduced in scope, content, and pace and is delivered to students in simpler form at a slower pace (Mehan and Tellez, 1992). The hope is that underachieving students will develop skills that will enable them to be promoted to regular education or even college bound programs or tracks.

Despite their commendable goal of attempting to compensate for perceived cultural differences through remedial instruction, tracking systems that segregate underachieving students in special programs have been criticized for contributing to the very problems they were set up to solve. Students placed in remedial tracks seldom catch up to their peers (Oakes, 1985). They seldom have the benefit of equivalent curriculum or instruction (Cicourel & Mehan, 1983; Oakes, Gamoran, & Page, 1993; Page & Valli, 1990), and they often suffer the stigmatizing consequences of negative labeling (Mehan, Melhis, & Hertweck, 1985; Mercer, 1974).

Unfortunately, the current programs that focus on how to reduce the attrition rates among Native American students continue to operate from a cultural deficiency model. For instance, many retention programs work under the assumption that these students need help only with academic skills such as critical reading, analytical, and writing skills.

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As a result, most retention programs provide students with services such as tutoring, mentoring, remedial courses, freshmen seminars, and college survival skill courses (e.g., time management, note-taking, and test-taking strategies), none of which have been sufficient in "leveling the playing field" for ethnic minorities.

Smith (2005) recommends that teachers develop a knowledge base about the various cultures (including languages) of their students, and incorporate this cultural knowledge into their teaching strategies and curriculum. It appears essential for teachers to understand the cultural traditions of their students, especially in areas that may cause students to have restricted positive experiences in science and mathematics. It also seems important for teachers to have an appreciation of the learning styles and strengths of their students, particularly those whose backgrounds differ from the mainstream. In light of this, teachers may want to closely monitor their own spoken and unspoken expectations of Native American students with regard to success in science and mathematics, and extend their own education and understandings so that they may meet the needs of and encourage all students in traditional fields of study. Although this approach is putting the onus of responsibility on educators to be multicultural competent, and this is a step in the right direction, this focus still ignores the account of the Native American student.

To find solutions to these problems, research on Native Americans must focus on the Native American experience. Duda (1980) suggested that extensive cross-cultural ethnographic data are needed to address concepts such as achievement motivation and high academic achievement among Native Americans. One way to meet this challenge is

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to explore and identify those factors that contribute to the successful completion of a college degree.

Winrow (2001) responded to the challenge by qualitatively exploring factors that contributed to the success of Native Americans in his study. In his study, Winrow interviewed eight senior-level Native American students at a north central university using a semi-structured qualitative interview protocol. The individuals who participated in his study were highly motivated individuals who persevered in their educational pursuit. They were active in seeking out the support and assistance they needed to be successful. They came from families that valued higher education. They had identifiable role models and mentors both at home and at school. Additionally, the participants were effective at interacting with others in the Euro-American culture of the university, while maintaining their self-identity as Native American.

Five themes emerged from Winrow's (2001) data analysis: (a) the meaning of success (participants were more likely to define success in terms of meeting personal goals than in monetary terms), (b) taking active steps to be successful (participants recognized support services on campus and were active in seeking out this support; support was sought from Native-based programs and individuals as well as from supportive non-Native individuals), (c) family support, role models, and mentors (participants all reported having a great deal of support from their families and other significant people in their lives; participants also had identifiable role models and mentors both at home and on campus), (d) learning experiences (all participants reported having stopped and started college from one to four times prior to their current attempt at

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college; individuals used what they have learned through their previous experiences in college to be successful in their current attempt) and, (e) connectedness with other Native Americans (it was important for participants to maintain connection with other Native Americans both at home and on campus).

Although the information obtained from Winrow's (2001) work gives us valuable insight into how Native American college students perceive success and what has contributed to their positive experience in college, there is still a lack of understanding about what career success means. The recent literature has shown that Native Americans, as a whole, have low college retention rates and even lower entrance rates. Therefore, exploring college students' success is limiting the area of research to a particular subgroup of a larger Native American nation and not capturing the true essence of the Native American worker. I proposed to take this one step further and look at the factors of community-nominated successful Native Americans who are established in their career.

Traditional and Non-Traditional Education

Throughout the education section, one can see that the general tone is focused on helping Native Americans succeed in majority culture education system. It was not the intent to project a one-sided stance on this topic, but yet to give an account of what the literature says about this area. I suggest that there are different types of education, many of which have nothing to do with traditional high school and college completion.

An example of non-traditional education is demonstrated by the Native American tribes residing in North Dakota. Portman and Dewey (2003) discuss the account of one

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tribe where members are making an effort to salvage what they can of their traditional Indian heritage. Tribal members are making an effort to preserve a language which is spoken little in the current generation but has been recorded in books and tapes and is being taught within the education system. The native religious practices are now being revived. The music, songs, dances, sweat lodge healing, and arts and crafts have again become a part of life within the tribe. Tribal members who live a traditional lifestyle are sharing their knowledge with other tribal members as the means by which the older members are perpetuating and preserving their cultural heritage.

The teachings of traditional customs and values should not be dismissed because learning does not take place in a classroom. It seems all to often that researchers are proponents of "fitting" Native Americans into traditional education systems, when it seems the focus should be on the preservation of Native American traditions and how those traditions can be passed down to younger generations. This study has given the participants a chance to tell the reader what traditions and teachings have been important to their career success, without the assumptions placed upon them about academic achievement.

Poverty and Employment

Statistics

The economic conditions on the reservation appear to be a pervasive problem. The average rate of poverty for Native American families is 23.7% and goes as high as 47.5% in South Dakota, as compared to the 10.3% rate of poverty for the general population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). These socioeconomic factors contribute to

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limit educational and employment opportunities, which in turn keeps unemployment high (Johnson, Swartz, & Martin, 1996).

The poverty rate for Native Americans in North Dakota is more than three times the rate for all races in North Dakota: 38% compared to 11%. Native Americans are nearly three times as likely to live in households without plumbing facilities as the general North Dakota population. Unemployment varies from reservation to reservation, but averages 63% for North Dakota Native Americans as compared to the overall U.S. rate of 5.1% (North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, 2006).

Fitzgerald and Betz (1994) have argued that racial discrimination and economic conditions have strongly affected the career behavior of racial/ethnic minorities in the United States, but these issues have not been taken into account in most traditional career development theories or career counseling practice (Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994; Leung, 1995). Such external issues as discrimination and poverty have a disproportionate effect on racial/ethnic groups, limiting the options that individuals may consider and restricting their access to a wide variety of opportunities (Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994). The strong relationships between socioeconomic status and educational attainment and occupational level have led to a continuous cycle of poor and poorly educated minority individuals.

Fitzgerald and Betz's (1994) argument is valid, but also discouraging given the deficient literature in relation to Native American vocational counseling. As we have seen, the dismal statistics of poverty within Native American communities in combination with a history of oppression seems to perpetuate the lack of career attainment among these individuals. Research has focused on the deficits of Native

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Americans in relation to socioeconomic prosperity, but now is the time to turn our attention to a more individualized level of career exploration.

World of Work

An individual's knowledge of the world of work partially depends upon the depth and breadth of past work experience and the degree of exposure to people working in a wide range of occupations (Choney, Berryhill-Paapke, & Robbins; 1995). The environments where people live provide the opportunities to obtain work experience and learn about jobs. Individuals living in an environment with high unemployment and limited job opportunities may have restricted knowledge of the world of work. Native American reservations typically have limited job opportunities resulting in high unemployment. A report issued by the Full Employment Action Council (2001) showed an average unemployment rate of 48% for Native Americans living in the 28 states with the largest concentrations of Native American populations.

There are many perpetuated myths about Native Americans that negatively impact vocational assessment and intervention process. Among these myths is the belief that Native Americans hold the same values as the dominant society (Bowman, 1993). Such values include: monetary gain as deciding factor in job choice, traditional working hours, and work among people. Another myth is that all Native Americans have the same traditional beliefs and practices. Yet another myth is that Native Americans define work the same as the dominant society. Cultural stereotypes, coupled with restrictions on career opportunities, result in barriers to career development (Bowman, 1993).

Reservation and Non-Reservation

Several studies have reported that Native American adolescents and adults living on reservations often demonstrate more limited knowledge of a wide range of occupational possibilities then do non-Native Americans (Day, Rounds, & Swaney; 1998). For example, a study conducted by Martin, Dodd, Smith, White, and Davis (1984) examined whether there were any differences between non-Native American and reservation Native American adolescents on three indices of knowledge of the world of work. The three indices that were compared were: (a) past work experience, (b) knowledge of vocational training time that is required to obtain various jobs, and (c) self estimates of capabilities to obtain various occupations. The non-Native American adolescents were high school students from a large city in Montana and the Native American adolescents were high school students from two Montana Native American reservations.

In terms of work experience, the non-Native American adolescents had obtained work experience at significantly more jobs than did the Native American adolescents. In addition, the non-Native American adolescents were more knowledgeable about the amount of vocational training time that is required to attain various occupations. The groups did not differ in their self-estimates on whether they believed that they had the capabilities to attain various occupations. The average self-estimates scores were high for both groups, which showed that both the non-Native American and Native American adolescents were confident in their capabilities to attain a wide range of occupations, irrespective of the extent of their past work experience or knowledge of occupations.

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Martin et al. (1984), found differences in work experience between reservation and non-reservation adolescents, that leads the reader to believe economic opportunities play a part in vocational experience. In addition, an understanding of educational attainment to meet certain job requirements was also found to be a difference, which may lend the reader to believe that continuing education is not discussed with Native American students. This study would have had more merit if non-reservation Native Americans were added to the study, as a control group. To compare Native American and non-Native American students is inherently assuming that there is a difference in economic resource attainment, as well as cultural beliefs about work.

McDiarmid and Kleinfeld (1986) compared the occupational values of rural Eskimo adolescents to a sample of urban Alaskan White adolescents. They attributed variances in occupational values between the two groups to differences in experiences with various occupations. Few of the Eskimo students' parents held professional or highly skilled wage jobs that offered intrinsic satisfaction. The researchers reported that one parent, when asked why so few rural students were interested in health professions, responded, "They don't know anyone who has done this. There aren't any doctors or dentist out here. They can't imagine themselves doing it" (p. 28). The researchers concluded that the rural Eskimo students might seek greater intrinsic satisfaction from work if they were more familiar with occupational areas that offer such rewards.

As McDiarmid and Kleinfeld (1986) point out, a lack of role models may hinder the occupational development or choices of occupational attainment of the rural Eskimo population. What we have seen in the previous two studies is the comparison of Native

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American to dominant culture on levels of occupational attainment and values. As with most studies that unequivocally compare these two groups, factors of cultural diversity, history of oppression, resource availability, and other important variables are overlooked in the equation and the result is an underlying message that ethnic minority experiences are not, but should be, similar to the dominant culture.

Epperson and Hammond (1981) reported substantial differences in the vocational interest patterns of a sample of Zuni adolescents when their interests were compared to the national normative sample for the Kuder-E. They attributed differences, in part, to a lack of familiarity by respondents with some of the occupationally related activities that are used as items in the Kuder-E. They interpreted these findings as a reflection of cultural differences or differences in socialization between individuals in the Zuni and normative samples. This study, like many others, compares Native American vs. non-Native American populations and the results are oversimplified to report cultural differences between the two groups. Research that compares between group differences appears to perpetuate stereotypes and an underlying message that groups who do not conform to dominant culture values are somehow less than, or inferior in their beliefs. In addition, the accuracy of measurement for ethnic minorities, in relation to the Kuder-E is questioned, as with all dominant culture assessments.

Gade, Fuqua, and Hurlburt (1984) also found substantial vocational interest differences on the scales of the Self-Directed Search between two Native American samples when compared to normative data. The Native American samples consisted of Swampy Cree and Peguis high school students. They interpreted the differences in

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interest profiles as a reflection of long-term cultural and socialization experiences and the limited range of work models found on the reservations in the Midwest region. What we have seen in the previous studies, including this study, is the between-group comparison of Native Americans to the "norm." As stated before, there is a message that groups other than the "norm" are somehow wrong in their beliefs. This comparison only widens the gap between cultures and has little merit in advancing the experiences of Native American populations. In addition, the validity of the Self-Directed Search, when measuring the interests of groups other than the dominant group, is called into question.

In a comparison of the results from Native American (primarily Navajo) and non-Native American clients who received vocational evaluations at a clinic in northern Arizona, Martin and O'Connell (1986) found that Native American clients with disabilities had less experience in the world of work than did the non-Native American clients with disabilities. Native American clients had held significantly fewer jobs and had worked in the labor force for fewer numbers of years. In addition, there was more variability in the types of past jobs held by the non-Native American clients. Since the majority of Native American clients lived on the Navajo reservation, a possible explanation of the findings was attributed to the restricted nature of the labor market.

The findings from these studies suggest that environmentally imposed restrictions for Native American adolescents and adults living on reservations, which affect their acquisition of world of work experiences, may limit their perceptions of occupational possibilities (Day, Rounds, & Swaney; 1998). In turn, narrowed perceptions of occupational possibilities could result in job choices that do not fully meet their

vocational needs or potentials. Likewise, if actual jobs do not exist in a particular community, then there may be an actual limitation in addition to the perceived limitation.

Additionally, external pressures resulting from economic, mobility, and family or social factors may influence individual motivation and ability to make vocational decisions. Regarding economic or social pressures, Toubbeh (1985) stated that "As a group, Native Americans rank at the bottom of virtually every social statistical indicator. They average one of the highest rates of unemployment, the lowest level of educational achievement, the lowest per capita income, and the poorest housing and transportation in the nation" (p. 3). It is difficult for some individuals living within such environmental constraints to focus on vocational development when basic survival needs must be met first. Morgan, Guy, Lee, and Cellini (1986) indicated that many Native Americans view career development and choosing of a job differently than most non-Indian people. Many Native Americans view family, home, and community as the center of their existence rather than a job or career. This may lead to different reasons for choosing jobs among Native Americans when compared to non-Native Americans. For example, a job may be part of a way of life that is passed on from generation to generation or working in a nontraditional job may be viewed as of secondary importance to the extended family and community involvement (Choney et. al., 1995).

As we have seen, values surrounding job choice may be different among Native Americans compared to mainstream society. Differences in values may translate into different definitions of success. For example, dominant society may view settling for a low-paying job to be unsuccessful, especially in regard to career. On the other hand, if the

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job allows for community involvement and to work among people of similar cultural background, then this may be seen as successful. It is with these differing viewpoints of what constitutes success that the focus of this study resolves to answer the question of what defines success.

Adults with disabilities living in the Pueblos of New Mexico were interviewed as part of the Pueblo Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Study (Martin & O'Connell, 1986). The average length of employment for the last two jobs in which the individuals had worked was less than two years. The most common reason given for leaving their past two jobs related to being employed in unstable jobs. The most often stated problem associated with securing employment was a lack of available jobs.

O'Connell (1987) stated that Native Americans living on reservations are more likely than individuals from the general population to live in rural areas, representing residency patterns in geographic locations with sparse resources. These resources are often underutilized because of transportation barriers. Traditional values, beliefs, and customs maintained by Native Americans provide a source of strength to cope with external pressures. Traditional strengths include the family, the tribe, religious beliefs, and the land itself.

From a national survey of 332 vocational rehabilitation counselors who work with Native Americans, researchers Martin, Frank, Minkler, and Johnson (1988) found that over 70% of the counselors reported the importance of working with clients' nuclear and extended families. Fewer than 30% of the counselors, however, said there was usually support from the client's nuclear and extended family during rehabilitation. A lack of

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trust toward counselors is a primary reason for less than full support from family members. While 100% of the counselors reported that it was important to establish a trusting relationship with clients, only 50% of counselors working with clients living on reservations said that trust existed toward the vocational rehabilitation service system.

The focus of this section is to provide the reader with a glimpse of research conducted on Native American career experiences. As we have seen, there is likely to be a tendency for researchers to use a "normative" sample when comparing Native American experiences (O'Connell, 1987; Toubbeh, 1985; Choney et. al., 1995). This form of investigation has limitations in that the collective experience of a culture cannot be condensed into one research sample, and more importantly, there are more differences within-groups then between-groups. The focus of investigation now turns to the individual experiences of Native Americans.

Career Success

Studies mentioned earlier speculate that the focus of career exploration should be explored by comparing normative data with the Native American experience. This approach has led readers down a path siding with the dominant group while trying to explain the deficiencies in the minority groups' beliefs. We now turn our attention to hearing from Native Americans their views on career development.

A review of the literature suggests that little is known about how Native Americans define career success, with one exception. A groundbreaking article by Juntunen, Barraclough, Broneck, Seibel, Winrow, and Morin (2001) found that career appears to be an important and valuable concept among Native Americans in their

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sample, and it is viewed as being a long-term commitment, requiring planning for the future, having a relationship to personal and family goals, and being part of one's identity. Using CQR methodology, Juntunen et al., (2001) interviewed 18 Native American participants, ages 21 to 59 years to hear from them about the meaning of career and the ideas related to it.

The purpose of the Juntunen at al. (2001) study was to explore the definitions and meanings of career and career choices or career development among a Native American sample and to identify related concepts generated by the participants. The participants typically defined career as being a lifelong endeavor, with some participants having the view that career is a representation of lifelong goals, planning, or activity. Sixteen of the eighteen participants described success as being measured by one's ability to contribute to the well-being of others. The need to contribute to family and community members was a common theme and frequently was expressed as a benchmark of success. The discussion of achievement and success tended to exclude money and material gain, something that is typically evident in white society.

An interesting finding in the Juntunen et. al.(2001) study, which relates to this study, is the high value on education as a supportive factor in the participants' career journey. Ten of eleven participants reported that family influence played an important role in their career journey, with seven of those specifically noting a family emphasis on education. From their findings, it appears that the participants found the support of their family and altruism towards their community as important parts of their culture. These two variables have a great impact on job attainment, specifically which jobs will fit and

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meet the values. In addition, receiving support from family can also lead to self-esteem about fulfilling job requirements and allow for greater advancement in the workplace when the family offers support. This aspect of what influenced the participants to do well throughout their careers will be investigated in this study, to determine if variables other than family support have been influential in career success.

The findings in this study suggest that it is important to consider the community context, relationship between acculturation and levels of education, and decision-making when working with Native American clients in career exploration. The qualitative approach utilized by Juntunen et. al. (2001) is a step away from a deficit-model of investigation and is more pertinent to finding strengths within Native Americans. This study was an early attempt at understanding career concerns for Native Americans, and thus lays the foundation for this current study.

Statement of the Problem

As noted in the literature review, most of the research conducted has focused thus far on the negative aspects of Native American career development, barriers encountered throughout the life journey, and ways for helping individuals in the counseling session. The problem with focusing on this aspect of the problem is that little research has been conducted to look at those Native Americans who are successful in their career. Additionally, there is no information to date that informs us about the characteristics of Native Americans who are successful in their careers, what factors they contribute to their success, or how they define success. Examining these personal characteristics and

experiences will provide valuable information that can be used to develop strategies and programs to help improve the rate of successful Native Americans in their career journey.

Koegel, Donin, Ponterotto, and Spitz (1995) conducted a content analyses of three leading career journals over an eight-year span. Out of the 844 journal articles they analyzed, only two articles included Native Americans and only 3% incorporated qualitative methods. Koegel et al. (1995) state, "Clearly, more research needs to focus on the career development of Native Americans."

No one theoretical framework has been developed to explain the career behavior of racial/ethnic minorities (Leong & Brown, 1995). Rather, writers have focused on the delivery of culturally appropriate career counseling, and some have described models for appropriate intervention. Future research regarding the influence of race/ethnicity in vocational behavior could benefit from the same ideas espoused earlier. Namely, we need to move beyond studies of racial/ethnic differences in career choice to a fuller understanding of the academic and career experiences of racial/ethnic minorities.

Research on Native Americans living on reservations, without comparing them to a normative sample, is scarce (Koegel et. al., 1995). By focusing on Native Americans living on reservations, we will have a first-hand account of individuals' lives and career journey to share with other individuals in the community who are overlooked by researchers.

<center>Purpose</center>

The purpose of this study is to explore factors that Native Americans attribute to their career success. In so doing, it is my hope to add to the sparse body of research that

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identifies positive factors of career phenomena that Native Americans experience throughout their life journey. Within this study, the question of what career success means to Native Americans living on reservations is asked. The goal is to identify characteristics of vocational successful Native Americans.

To analyze the data, a qualitative method called consensual qualitative research (CQR), developed by Hill, Thompson, and Williams (1997), was implemented. CQR was chosen as the data analysis method because it is a systematic and rigorous method for intensely studying open-ended responses of a small sample; especially those of an understudied population. Further, CQR is appropriate for exploratory research focused on making meaning of participants' perspectives (Williams, Soeprapto, Like, Touradju, Hess, & Hill, 1998; Williams, Judge, Hill, & Hoffman, 1997). In addition, constructs that might not be predicted by theory can then emerge directly from the data.

A qualitative approach was chosen because qualitative methods of inquiry, which often rely on interviews or other means of direct observation to contextualize phenomena, allow for the exploration of the full experiences of participants from their own points of view and in their own words. Such approaches thus have the potential to produce conceptual models and theories that maximize proximity to the actual lived experiences of participants, a form of internal validity that is a strength of the qualitative approach to research (Hoshmand, 1989; Patton, 1990). Although qualitative methods are only just beginning to gain visibility among counseling psychologists (Polkinghorne, 1994), such methods are particularly useful with understudied populations or phenomena, for whom

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the information needed to build a foundation for sound quantitative research is often either unreliable or unavailable.

Qualitative approaches are thus promising for illuminating the previously understudied career development experiences of Native Americans who have managed to reach success as defined by their own community. The career development experiences of community-nominated successful people are here to provide an opportunity for us to examine the commonalities and differences among their varying paths to success in the work world. Empirical study of this nature is much needed, not only in order to ensure inclusiveness in theoretical models of career development but also because career interventions are, or should be, driven by such theories.

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CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the CQR research methodology used in this study, which entails a description of the research team, description of the participants, and the procedures used in the study. The current study has the benefit of looking at the topic of Native American career success from a positive perspective. Most of the research conducted thus far has focused on the deficiency model—factors that negatively impact Native Americans. Using CQR methodology, it was the intent to identify the factors that have contributed to the career success of the Native American participants.

Research Team

A team of four researchers took part in the analysis and worked together to construct a shared understanding of the data. The team consisted of the primary researcher, a faculty member who served as auditor, and a primary transcript analysis team of two volunteer doctoral/masters level students who began as graduate assistants and completed the project for credits in a research practicum. Because the interpretation of the data employs the knowledge and understanding that individual team members bring to it, it is important to briefly describe the members of the team. As the primary researcher, I am a doctoral candidate who has completed advanced coursework in career

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theories and the application of career counseling, as well as advanced coursework in multicultural counseling. I have experience teaching career counseling and have worked with the target population, both individually and in groups, involving therapeutic endeavors. My responsibilities included: conducting interviews, transcribing and analyzing transcripts, overseeing the consensus processes and assisting with the mapping process described below.

Allison Baker is a Native American doctoral level counseling student. Aften Miller is a Caucasian master level counseling student. Both researchers have completed coursework in career and multicultural instruction. Both team members' responsibilities included: conducting interviews and analyzing data. Cindy Juntunen Ph.D., who served as the auditor in the analysis process for this project, is a faculty member and accomplished author in the field of psychology, vocational psychology specifically. Dr. Juntunen brings extensive knowledge and experience with the subject matter as well as with the CQR method to her work with this study.

The team met weekly to discuss the transcripts and to share interpretations. They made decisions about the meaning of the data by consensus and verified those decisions by systematically checking them against the raw data, as described in Hill et al (1997). Every effort was made to seek input from all team members equally. No team member had prior knowledge of any of the individual participants.

Though we attempted to limit our assumptions in conducting the interviews and analyzing the data in this study, we acknowledge several implicit assumptions. First, we assumed that higher education is valuable and that participants would directly correlate

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their career success to attaining a college education. Within this assumption we also assumed that those individuals that attended college succeeded due to financial resources and Native American programs implemented within the university as a means of offering an atmosphere of shared cultural identity. Second, we assumed that Native American spirituality would have an influence on the career success of the individuals. Third, we assumed that racism would be a large obstacle the participants had to overcome in order to succeed in their lives. Given these assumptions, the purpose in this study was to articulate career successful Native Americans' perceptions of the factors that have contributed to their career success.

Preliminary Study

The preliminary study was designed to assess high school students' beliefs about who they consider to be successful members of their community. Once high school students nominated successful community members, the main purpose of the study was to focus on these individuals and their career journey. A nomination procedure was chosen as a means of avoiding researcher bias of defining who or what comprises success. Three high schools on or near two Native American reservations in North Dakota participated in the preliminary study.

Participants

Nominating surveys were completed by students attending high school on or near two North Dakota reservations. Fifty-two students ($\underline{M}$ age = 15.65, $\underline{M}$ grade = 9.8), participated in the preliminary study. The high school participants comprised of thirty males and twenty-two females, with twenty participants being of Native American

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background and thirty-two participants being Caucasian. Twenty participants lived on a reservation while thirty-two participants resided off of a reservation. Students who did not receive parental consent were excluded from the preliminary study.

Measures

One parental consent form approved by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board (See Appendix A). One agreement form for the adolescent participant approved by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board (See Appendix B). A list of questions asked to the student participants in regard to nominating successful individuals in the community (See Appendix C).

Procedure

Contact was made with the school principal to attain permission to conduct research in their school. Once permission was given, the research team conducted a focus group with the students who received parental permission to participate. Thirty minutes was allotted from a class period to conduct the group. The researcher asked the following questions to participants who returned a signed parental consent form: (a) what does it mean to be successful? (b) define career. (c) define career success. (d) list 3 Native Americans living around your community that you think are successful. (e) why do you believe they are successful? Each student wrote their answers on a sheet of paper and anonymously turned in their answers. Nominations were confidential and students were not made aware of the nominations.

Once a threshold of five nominations for one candidate was reached, then that person was contacted for an interview. High school students were compensated with

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nutritional snacks. Participants who did not have parental consent forms could not participate in the study and thus an extra activity was given to those individuals.

Main Study

The main study consisted of interviewing eight Native American males who were nominated by high school students as successful members of the community. These individuals were then interviewed to discover what they attribute to their success.

Participants

Eight Native American males, living on reservations in North Dakota, were recruited to participate in the primary study, based on high school nominations. The age of the participants ranged from 38 to 65 years old. Five participants were enrolled members of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and three participants were enrolled members of the Sioux Tribe. The composition of participants' family of origin varied, though all were raised in homes with at least one blood relative. Educational achievement ranged from high school completion to graduate education: 1 participant had completed high school, 3 participants had completed college, and 4 participants had completed advanced graduate work. Occupations included: 3 participants worked for the tribal government, 1 participant was a general physician, 1 participant worked for the border patrol, 2 participants were in education, and 1 participant worked as an administrator in a hospital. All participants were married and had at least one child. Hill et al. (1997) suggest that an optimal number of participants for conducting CQR range from 8-15 participants. Some participants declined to participate for reasons unknown. The criterion

for participation is that a person must be at least 18 years of age so that permission does not have to be given by a consenting adult.

Measures

One consent form for participants approved by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board (See Appendix D). One list of questions to ask nominated participants approved by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board (See Appendix E). Interview questions were initially developed based on the current literature. As the research team met to finalize the interview, it was observed that biases toward education and Native American spirituality were present, so the questions were adjusted to allow the participant to discuss those issues if they deemed necessary. Demographics information was verbally obtained during the interview.

Procedure

Data was collected by means of an in-depth, semi-structured interview. Congruent with qualitative methodology, the interview questions were open-ended to allow new constructs to emerge that might be limited by a more restricted interview structure (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interviews were chosen as a method of inquiry because of the depth of data they can provide and the importance of obtaining the essence of each participant's perceptions of their experiences (Hill et al., 1997). Interviews were audiotaped with one team member facilitating the interview.

Initial contact with the nominated participants was made by telephone call. The participant was told, by a member of the research team, that they had been nominated as a successful person in their community, and explained the nature of the study. Once

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participants agreed to participate, meeting times and places were arranged. Interviews

lasted roughly an hour and were audio taped for later transcription and analysis. The

interviews were semistructured, wherein each of the specific questions was asked but the

interviewer was also encouraged to follow up on important ideas that fell outside the

realm of those questions. Proper consent forms, with information regarding

confidentiality, were presented at the beginning of the interview. Information regarding

the nature of the study, the procedures in which the study will be implemented and

analyzed, right to withdraw, and a reminder that the session will be taped was also

explained. Participants were compensated with a ten dollar gift card to a local shopping

center.

<center>Data Analysis</center>

Data analysis was based on the CQR method of Hill et al. (1997) and followed a

procedure similar to that of Pearson and Bieschke (2001) and Juntunen, Barraclough,

Broneck, Seibel, Winrow, and Morin (2001). In the CQR method, a primary team:

develops warm-up and interview questions related to the topic at hand, conducts the

interviews, conducts the analyses, and external auditors review the analyses and provide

feedback to the primary team. There were three steps to the data analysis: (a)

identification of domains, (b) development of categories, and (c) audit of categories.

The research team transcribed all interviews. Once transcribed, all team members

read each transcript independently and coded domains onto each verbalization the

participant made. Qualitative data is analyzed to look for broad interest areas, or domains.

Because the team brainstormed possible domains before the interviews (based on the

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literature), they then looked to find whether these broad interest areas, or domains, were prevalent in the transcript. Domains were clarified, updated, or discarded as interview analysis necessitated. All members then met and reviewed transcripts and assigned consensus domains to each verbalization of participants. When uncertainty arose about coding specific data or if there were conflicting opinions as to how the data should be coded, the team reached a consensus before continuing. As analysis continued, new domains emerged while others may not have been needed. The team decided consensually whether to add or delete a domain. It is important to remember that not everything fit neatly, for the process, tries to "fit subjective structure onto subjective data" (Hill et al., 1997, p. 545).

The next phase of the data-analysis process involved developing categories for every domain in each case. Once again, team members worked independently to construct a statement about the categories of each domain. The team then came to a consensus about how to construct the wording of each category. The next step was cross-analysis—an examination of categories across participants. Once the process was completed, the cross-analysis was sent to an external auditor, who provided the team with feedback.

The next step in analysis was to cross analyze the data by securing an auditor outside the team to review tapes and transcripts. The auditor made recommendations for category revisions or clarification. A stability check was completed. After stability was completed, the team continued to audit and refine categories. The auditor recommended changing the title of some categories, absorbing one into another, and eliminating some

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that are deemed irrelevant (Hill et al., 1997, p. 548). For example, a domain of hobbies was collapsed into another domain of self-perception. An important aspect of the audit was to ensure researcher bias did not distort coding analysis. It was identified that the interview questions did not guide the domains, but the domains emerged from the interview questions.

Following completion of analysis, a narrative was developed from the primary investigator that accounts for the categories across cases. In each domain or topic area, there is a summary statement with one or two direct quotes from the participant that captures the essence of the domain. Within analysis, illustrative cases accompany description.

The last step of the process was member checking, a method suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) to assess the validity of the analysis. The final consensus version of the transcript was sent to the participants for feedback. Participants were encouraged to make comments and to return to the primary investigator if they had feedback. As of this date, participants had not returned transcripts with feedback.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of information gathered from the interviews. It is organized into two parts: domains and categories. Domains are the broad ideas used to group or cluster information or data about similar topics. Categories are a summary of the content of each domain. The final analysis and coding of the transcripts by the research team produced a list of 8 domains and 37 categories. Participants' words are included throughout the presentation of findings to illustrate the conclusions and bring their voices into the representation of their experience. To protect the confidentiality of participants, names are replaced by numbers and the name of any location discussed has been omitted.

To determine how frequently the categories apply to the whole sample, so that claims about representativeness to the sample can be made, the following definitions are given. A category that applies to all cases is considered to be *general*. If the category applies to half or more of the cases it is considered *typical*. If it applies to either two or three to just less than half of the cases it is considered *variant*. Any category that applies to only one of the cases is dropped because it is not considered to be descriptive of the sample. Table 1 outlines the domains, categories, and frequency of each category.

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Table 1. Domains, Categories and Frequency of Response.

Domains	Categories	Frequency of Response
Positive Influential Factors to Career Success	General Family Support	Typical
	Support Systems Other than Family	Typical
	Family of Origin Push for Education	Typical
	Parental Modeling of Work Ethic	Typical
	Personal Motivation	Typical
	Community Influences	Typical
	Support from Acquired Family	Variant
	Spirituality	Variant
	Financial Resources	Variant
Obstacles	Financial Resources	Typical
	Overcoming Obstacles	Typical
	Social Barriers/Racism	Variant
	Physical Health	Variant
Self-Perception	Positive View of Self	Typical
	Coping Effectively with Stress	Typical
Message to Students	Support System	Typical
	Attain Education	Typical
	Set Goals	Typical
	Avoid Drugs and Alcohol	Variant
	Positive Belief in Self	Variant
	Personal Values	Variant

Table 2. cont.

Domains	Categories	Frequency of Response
Definition of Success (In General)	Family Success	Typical
	Financial Success	Variant
	Community Success	Variant
	Personal Happiness	Variant
	Educational Success	Variant
	Altruism	Variant
	Effort	Variant
Definition of Success (In High School)	Material and Financial Gain	Variant
	Adult Influences on Success in High School	Variant
Definition of Success (In Relation to Job)	Giving Best Effort	Typical
	Fulfilling Job Requirements	Variant
Definition of Failure	Lack of Effort	Typical
	Stop Learning	Variant
	Mental Health Difficulties	Variant
	Lack of Fulfilling Family Obligations	Variant
	Influence on the Community	Variant

Domains and Categories

Positive Influential Factors to Career Success

The domain of Positive Influential Factors to Career Success is a general domain in that it appears in all eight of the transcribed interviews. Data in this domain centers on the factors that have led the participants to be successful in their careers. Participants were asked during the interview to identify what has contributed to their career success. Nine categories emerged from this domain.

General Family Support

The category titled General Family Support, a typical category, occurred in seven of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of having support and encouragement, in any endeavor, from their family as related to their current career success. Seven participants reported having parents or older siblings encouraging and supporting them throughout their life. The seven participants all reported that having verbal support was important to their achievement.

> P5: My dad was an influence because he told me to go to school so that I could have an easier life than him. He told me to go to college and make something of myself. Mom always wanted me to go to school and was the glue in our family. I got my character and heart from my mom and learned to treat others with respect and kindness. I always got a lot of attention and encouragement which helped out. Me and my twin brother have high expectations of each other and he looks up to me like I look up to him.

> P7: Family support is needed to help you out along the way. My dad encouraged me in whatever I did. I have been successful with challenges because of support from my wife and kids. The family support has really been helpful and important to me.

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Support Systems Other than Family

The category titled Support Systems Other than Family, a typical category, occurred in six of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of having supportive people in their lives, outside of their family, has helped them achieve career success. Six participants reported having role models or mentors they looked up to and have helped them throughout their life.

> P4: My teachers gave me the right step to start off. We went to church everyday and they taught us right from wrong. You need to listen to our education leaders.

> P5: I had a family physician who was a role model for me. An elderly woman in the tribe was a role model who pointed me in the right direction towards the Indians into Medicine Program while I was still in high school. My teachers took a special interest in me and were very encouraging. Kids have to have a mentor or teacher take hold of them and tell them they have the potential to do anything. Someone recognized my abilities and pointed me in the right direction and I am thankful for that.

> P7: The biggest factor to my success was people telling me I had the potential to succeed and were willing to work with me to develop that potential.

Family of Origin Push for Education

The category titled Family of Origin Push for Education, a typical category, occurred in five of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of their family's (i.e., family of origin) involvement in pushing them to go to school and its relationship to their current career success. Five participants reported that their parents and older siblings encouraged them to go to school and not give up.

> P6: My family always wanted me to go to college and make something of myself and not struggle like they did. My parents were supportive in keeping me in school and not letting me drop out.

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P7: My dad instilled the value of education in me because he thought with an education I could do whatever I wanted to because he only had a third grade education.

Parental Modeling of Work Ethic

The category titled Parental Modeling of Work Ethic, a typical category, occurred in five of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of their parents' work ethic as influencing the participants' current career success. Five participants reported that their parents had a strong work ethic and this was learned from the participants.

P7: My father was the motivational factor in my life as far as work because he worked very hard his whole life. This work ethic was instilled in me by my father.

Personal Motivation

The category titled Personal Motivation, a typical category, occurred in four of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of how personal motivation and willpower to not give up is related to their career success. Four participants reported that they did not give up during school even when times were difficult. This motivation appeared to be intrinsically driven, yet the four participants reported seeing their parents' determination as they were growing up and this trait is what inspired the participants.

P6: My determination in life is key to where I am today because I did not give up.

P8: I attended school everyday and took hard classes. I thought education was important and I was committed to achieving my goal of education.

Community Influences

The category titled Community Influences, a typical category, occurred in four of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of community resources helping them become successful in their careers.

> P1: Community connections (e.g. where you live, work, and the economy) are important factors to success. I see helping each other out as a circle of life. Helping each other out hasn't let me fall off of the track and go into depression because of the support I got from everyone.

Support from Acquired Family

The category titled Support from Acquired Family, a variant category, occurred in three of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of having support from their acquired family as helping them achieve career success.

> P2: My greatest influence is my wife because she helped me realize I needed to talk to a counselor about the war and about my addiction. My wife is always open to me sharing my feelings and emotions.

> P7: I have been successful with challenges because of support from my wife and kids. The family support has really been helpful and important to me. My wife would pick up the slack when I went to school or had to work extra hours. Kids I see as being successful have family support or family structure to help them out.

Spirituality

The category titled Spirituality, a variant category, occurred in three of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of having a spiritual connection as being influential in helping them achieve career success.

> P2: I owe my success to my religion and it goes back to my younger days when I went to catholic school.

P8: The creator had a plan for me to be a successful student and gave me the ability and purpose to stay focused in school. Everyone is blessed by the creator who gives everyone something special within each of us.

Financial Resources

The category titled Financial Resources, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view that having financial resources has helped them achieve career success.

P6: Getting scholarships to go to college helped me out along with financial aid because my parents could not afford to send me to college.

Obstacles

The domain of Obstacles is a general domain as it occurred in all eight transcribed interviews. Data in this domain centers on obstacles participants have experienced throughout their lives, as well as steps participants have taken to overcome these obstacles. Participants were asked about obstacles they have encountered throughout their life which have impacted their current career success. Four categories were extracted from the information the participants provided during the interview.

Financial Resources

The category titled Financial Resources, a typical category, occurred in five of the transcribed interviews. This category represents the participants' experiencing financial difficulties while attending college. The lack of financial resources available to the participants included: financial aid, scholarships, and money to pay for housing while attending school. Five participants reported that finding money to attend college was difficult. Although five participants made explicit comments about lack of financial

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resources for college, comments were also made about lack of financial resources in general.

P2: School was expensive and scholarships only paid for books and tuition.

P3: I stay awake some nights wondering if we are going to have enough money to cover the expenses.

P4: It was hard to get scholarships to go to college.

Overcoming Obstacles

The category titled Overcoming Obstacles, a typical category, occurred in five of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' experiences of overcoming obstacles throughout their lives. One participant reported receiving money for college which helped overcome the financial obstacle, while four participants reported dealing with obstacles in the moment and using them as teaching tools for future obstacles one might encounter.

P1: I take hurdles one at a time and once I pass one I move on to the next.

P8: Use obstacles to make changes and deal with them as they come. Don't give up in the face of obstacles. Preparedness and training helps to overcome challenges in life.

Social Barriers/Racism

The category titled Social Barriers/Racism, a variant category, occurred in three of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of a struggle between Native American culture and dominant culture. In addition, it also reflects a struggle within Native American communities. One participant mentioned the conflict between his culture and the dominant culture while two participants reported a struggle

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between their community and the neighboring Native American community. Both

participants reporting within community struggles did not state that this had an impact on

their career development. It was mentioned more in terms of viewing the struggles within

the community and how this may affect younger generations and their Native American

identity. As for coping with these struggles, the three participants reported that having a

strong family support system helped them succeed in establishing their own identity.

> P2: A social barrier exists…there is a wall that exists between two Native
> American reservation communities…and there are barriers to when new people
> move in town.

> P4: There is a challenge of being Native American versus the outside world.

Physical Health

The category titled Physical Health, a variant category, occurred in two of the

transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of overcoming a

physical ailment or disability as challenging. Except for the participant who could have

earned a football scholarship if it were not for knee surgery, all other participants

reporting physical health concerns reported that although physical health was an obstacle,

it ultimately did not hinder them from becoming successful in their career. Ultimately the

participant with knee surgery completed college but it was postponed due to physical

limitations. Participants reporting physical concerns appeared to have coped sufficiently,

by means of medical treatment, and overcame or are dealing effectively with their

problem.

> P2: After I got hurt and I already had three knee surgeries I thought, there's no
> way the university is going to give me a football scholarship.

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P3: My health is an obstacle because I am a diabetic and I always need to check my blood sugar.

Definition of Success (In General)

The domain of Definition of Success (In General) is a general domain as it occurred in all eight transcribed interviews. It contains the participants' view of what it means to be successful in life. Participants were asked to define success during the interview. Seven categories were extracted from this domain.

Family Success

The category titled Family Success, a typical category, occurred in four of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' views of family situation as correlated to their success in life. Four participants reported how taking care of their family and fulfilling their responsibilities to their family was an important part of their success. Family responsibilities included: financial support, academic achievement of children, children's reliance of government funding, and emotional support. One participant reported having a path set for his children to follow was an important part of his success. Likewise, another participant reported that if his children go to college and do not use food stamps and welfare then he would be considered successful.

P1: How well my family is functioning is a measure of success.

P5: Raising a good respectful family who can stand on their feet is a measure of success.

Financial Success

The category titled Financial Success, a variant category, occurred in three of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects how the participants view financial status as

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a correlation of success in their life. For example, the more money one acquires the more successful he s considered in life. Three participants reported that having money can be viewed as being successful.

P1: Money is a measure of success.

Community Success

The category titled Community Success, a variant category, occurred in three of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of the community functioning effectively as related to their success in life. One participant reported that he intended to give back to his community because of a scholarship that he received to go to college.

P1: The direction the community is heading is a measure of success.

P6: I believe passing on knowledge and giving back to my community is considered successful.

P8: The well-being of the tribe and community are measures of success. Low unemployment rate, less substance abuse, and good quality of life are markers for success. Poverty leads to negative things people need to face. Children being strong and healthy are measures of success. Making positive changes in the community would be successful. Maintaining personal habits, quality time with children, supporting education, and not abusing things would be successful.

Personal Happiness

The category titled Personal Happiness, a variant category, occurred in three of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of a person's level of happiness as related to success in life. Three participants reported that being happy in life is directly related to being successful in life. One participant reported that no matter what one does in life, if they are happy then they are successful.

P2: Success of being comfortable and happy where you are at …personal satisfaction is success.

P5: Success in life means being happy.

Educational Success

The category titled Educational Success, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of educational attainment as related to their success in life. Two participants reported that education is an important part of success and they believe they are successful because of the amount of education they have attained. Education was usually mentioned as a means of gaining access to more opportunities in life as opposed to having only a high school degree.

P1: Education is an important measure of success.

Altruism

The category titled Altruism, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of doing good things as related to a person's success in life. Two participants reported that doing good things for others is a sign of success. One participant reported going above and beyond "medical protocol" and giving his patients extra time and attention was a sign of success.

P2: Personal satisfaction of helping my patients is success.

P7: Doing good things in this world is successful.

Effort

The category titled Effort, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of putting forth a best effort in life as related to success in life.

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P6: Success means being good at what you do no matter what you do. Try your best and give 110% then you are successful.

Definition of Success (In High School)

The domain of Definition of Success (In High School) is a general domain as it appeared in all eight transcribed interviews. Data in this domain centers on what the participants' view of success may have been when they were in high school. Participants were asked during the interview to report what their definition of success may have been when they were in high school. Two categories emerged from the data.

Material and Financial Gain

The category titled Material and Financial Gain, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects how the participant may have viewed money and material possessions as a measure of success when in high school.

P2: High school success would have been having a nice car, a lot of money, and a lot of worldly possessions.

P6: Success in high school was to make a lot of money.

Adult Influences on Success in High School

The category titled Adult Influences on Success in High School, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects how adults in the participants' lives helped them throughout high school. Two participants reported that the encouragement of adults in their lives helped them succeed in high school.

P8: Teacher's encouragement helped me to become successful in high school.

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Definition of Success (In Relation to Job)

The domain of Definition of Success (In Relation to Job) is a general domain as it appeared in all eight transcribed interviews. Data in this domain centers on the participants' view of success in their job. Participants were asked to define success in relation to their job. Two categories emerged from this domain.

Giving Best Effort

The category titled Giving Best Effort, a typical category, occurred in five of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of giving one's best effort in their job as related to job success. Five participants reported that putting forth their best effort in their job is viewed as successful. Participants particularly discussed how complying with rules and regulations of the job, following through on assignments, and getting along with coworkers are all measures of success in a job. One participant reported that he responds to all of his patients in a timely manner. Another participant reported that he addresses all complaints the hospital receives.

P6: Job success is doing your best at your job and giving it your best effort.

P7: Success is working hard at your job.

Fulfilling Job Requirements

The category titled Fulfilling Job Requirements, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view that doing what is expected of him at his job is related to job success.

P2: I measure success in satisfaction that our organization is doing what we are supposed to do which is providing services.

Definition of Failure

The domain of Definition of Failure is a general domain as it appeared in all eight of the transcribed interviews. Data in this domain centers on the participants identifying what failure in life would be for them. Participants were asked during the interview to define failure. Six categories emerged from the data in this domain.

Lack of Effort

The category titled Lack of Effort, a typical category, occurred in five of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of not putting forth effort as related to failure in life. Five participants reported that in order to succeed in life they never gave up in their endeavors. Two participants reported that if they had dropped out of college then they would consider that a failure.

> P2: Personal failure to me would be if you do not try.

> P6: I view failure as not giving it your all at what you do. Failure is not trying to give your best and settling for bare minimum.

Stop Learning

The category titled Stop Learning, a variant category, occurred in three of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of halting growth as related to failure in life. Three participants reported that if they were to drop out of school or stop learning new things in life then that would be a sign of failure.

> P2: Whenever you stop learning then things are going to fail. When you close you mind and say I am at the end of my career because you stop growing.

> P6: Failure would be if I dropped out of school.

Mental Health Difficulties

The category titled Mental Health Difficulties, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of having mental health difficulties as related to failure in life.

P1: Having depression can be a sign of failure.

Lack of Fulfilling Family Obligations

The category titled Lack of Fulfilling Family Obligations, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view that not taking care of their family would be related to failure in life.

> P5: Also falling out of favor with my partner by not doing my fair share would be failure. Failure would be if I did not hold up my end of the bargain by providing my family with a good life and not earning a living for them or putting food on the table. If I did not treat my family good or I was not a good parent or spouse then that would be failure.

Influence on the Community

The category titled Influence on the Community, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of not respecting and taking care of their community would be related to failure in life.

P8: Wasting a lot in the community and not utilizing the resources is a failure.

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Self-Perception

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The domain of Self-Perception is a general domain in that it appears in all eight of the transcribed interviews. Data in this domain centers on how the participants view themselves. Although this was not a direct question during the interview, data emerged

when the participants spoke of themselves and their personal characteristics. Two categories emerged from the data in this domain.

Positive View of Self

The category titled Positive View of Self, a typical category, occurred in seven of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of themselves in a positive regard. Seven participants spoke positively about themselves; stating that they are successful, a role model for others, or that they are good at what they do. For example, seven participants reported that they are good at their work. The participants also reported that they believe they are successful in life. Four of the participants reported that they view themselves as a role model for younger people and believe this is a positive influence in the lives of others.

> P1: I am successful enough to be of some importance and I am confident in what I do. Feeling good about yourself and being positive will generate to other people.

> P5: I consider myself a role model for the children on the reservation. I guess I do think of myself as a role model cause in 1988 since I have been working here, someone asked me to do the commencement speech and since then I have considered myself a role model especially for kids on the reservation. I guess most of the kids around here and my patients can see me as a role model. I also look from the standpoint of having a daughter that looks up to me.

Coping Effectively with Stress

The category titled Coping Effectively with Stress, a typical category, occurred in seven of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects how the participants have been able to cope effectively with stress throughout their lives. Seven participants reported they cope effectively with their stress and that they have never been overwhelmed with stress. One participant reported that he sought counseling to help him cope with

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prescription drug abuse. Four participants reported that they rely on family, especially significant other, as a source of support when feeling overwhelmed.

> P1: My job has been stressful but I think I have coped well. Understanding the environment and your working area, that is what keeps the stress level under control. As far as stress, I never really, really had any. Um, not to the point where I would have to seek help. Speaking about how he copes with stress…"There's one motivator I have had for several years now and that is my children and to see them grow up and live their lives.

> P4: I have not been overcome by stress yet and it has not taken me down. I don't know what's inside of me but it (stress) hasn't taken me down yet. I mean I enjoy what I do. If I had to do over again I would be there with no questions asked.

Message to Students

The domain of Message to Students is a general domain in that it appears in all eight of the transcribed interviews. This domain centers on the participants giving young students advice to help them succeed in life. Six categories emerged from this domain.

Support System

The category titled Support System, a typical category, occurred in seven of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view that having a support system will help young students become successful.

> P6: My advice is surrounding yourself with positive people.

> P7: In order to succeed in education you need to have a support system around you. Surrounding yourself with positive people is key. You need to have somebody help you.

Attain Education

The category titled Attain Education, a typical category, occurred in six of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view that attaining higher levels of education will help young students become successful in life.

> P3: I would say continue your education and try to get as far as you can, and after high school go to college and get a good job.

> P6: Stay in school because the more education you get the better off you will be.

Set Goals

The category titled Set Goals, a typical category, occurred in four of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view of setting goals as a means for young students to be successful.

> P2: Set your goals and work towards the goals. Know what you want to do and keep working towards that and you can achieve it.

Avoid Drugs and Alcohol

The category titled Avoid Drugs and Alcohol, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view that avoiding alcohol and drugs will help young students become successful.

> P6: Don't do drugs or drink.

Positive Belief in Self

The category titled Positive Belief in Self, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. This category reflects the participants' view that believing in yourself will help younger students become successful.

> P8: Take pride in your identity and who you are. Accomplishing things in life is honorable. Look in the mirror and feel proud and honored about what you have

accomplished. Earn enough feathers to create a war bonnet of accomplishments. The creator has given us each a spirit and an ability to accomplish things.

By accomplishing things; family and community will feel strong.

Personal Values

The category titled Personal Values, a variant category, occurred in two of the transcribed interviews. The category reflects the participants' view that maintaining personal values will help young students achieve success.

P2: Remember your values, personal values and morals and maintain them.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand what factors contributed to the career success of Northern Plains Native American males. The goal was to listen to the participants and find out what has helped them be successful in their career. In keeping with this goal, a qualitative research design was utilized. Interview questions were broad so that participants could feel open to sharing their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and in some cases their struggles to become successful.

One thing that comes across clearly through the interviews and domains that emerged is that these men share many characteristics and experiences that have helped them succeed in their career. Some of these experiences include: having a strong support system, personal motivation to achieve goals, and a work ethic modeled from their parents. A discussion of the findings and implications of this study, organized by domains, follows. However, before discussing the findings and implications of this study, it is important to address the issue of the nomination process resulting in an all-male sample.

Nomination represents an alternative approach to identifying successful Native Americans. Participant who received nominations beyond a cutoff point of five nominations were considered for the main study. It should be emphasized that

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nominations were from high school student community members as opposed to an outside researcher making assumptions about who is successful. The nomination approach has several implications in regard to participant selection. First, students were asked to nominate successful Native Americans in their community, and if there was difficulty naming someone, then the student may have listed the first name to come to mind. Second, fifty-two students participated in the study, thus limiting the generalizability to the sample. Third, and most important, over half of the students surveyed were Caucasian. Due to the schools being in close proximity to the reservations, it was assumed that the majority of participants would be Native American. Thus, not only do the nominated participants reflect the votes of a mixed ethnic sample of students, but the intended population this study was geared toward (Native American students) may have been overlooked given the small representation of Native American students.

The second point to consider before interpreting the results is the all male sample of nominated candidates. Two female nominations exceeded the cutoff score of five nominations, but the potential female participants were unavailable in the study. Current data on the gender roles of Native Americans living on reservations is unavailable. Specific gender roles related to career choice (i.e. men are doctors and women are nurses) may have impacted the nominations. It is difficult to say what the ratio of men to women working on the reservation is, let alone the types of jobs held by each gender.

Interpretation of the Results

The results of this study suggest there are many factors that contribute to the career success of the eight Northern Plains Native American male participants. The focus

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of discussion will be directed from categories that were typical, or more than half of participants endorsing, to allow for greater generalization. The domain Positive Influential Factors to Career Success, as this is the crux of this study, is first discussed. Five typical categories emerged from this domain which will be discussed below.

Positive Influential Factors to Career Success

The category: Family of Origin Push for Education, Parental Modeling, General Family Support, and Support Systems Other than Family are all supportive factors that the participants believe were important contributors to their success in life. The role of parental influence and support outside the immediate family has a significant, positive impact on a child's career development process. Astin (1984) stated that parents act as "value socializers," shaping their children's perceptions of the appropriateness of occupational-related decisions. Eccles (1994) theorized that parents are "expectancy socializers" who greatly influence their children's self-perceptions of being academically and vocationally competent. Young (1994) described parents as the primary providers of encouragement for their adolescents to reach vocational goals through both the modeling of career-related, goal-directed behavior and by actively providing career-related learning experiences. Participant two reported: "My dad worked for the government and that influenced my career path because I gained knowledge by watching him." Participant four reported: "My dad set a path for me and my brother and I followed in that path. I was pleased in my growing up and the way I was brought up by my parents and also having a path set in front of me to follow."

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Some researchers claim that people of lower SES lack modeling influences from parents and others (Smith, 1991; Wilson & Wilson, 1992). These researchers report that it is likely that the educational attainment of young people is influenced by parents' level of educational attainment, as well as parents' goals for their children. These same researchers claim that parents would have more difficulty transmitting high goals to their children if those goals extend beyond parents' level of educational attainment. Results from the current study are contradictory, in a positive way, to the view presented by Smith (1991) and Wilson and Wilson (1992).

It is interesting to note that none of the participants' parents attended college, yet the parents were influential in stressing the importance of education to the participants. While talking about being encouraged and pushed towards high education, no one indicated that they viewed this as a negative pressure. Rather it was viewed as support and encouragement which they will pass down to their children. These findings are congruent with existing literature in which first generation college students are supported and encouraged to achieve educational benchmarks greater than their parents (Bluestein, 2001; Josselson, 1992; Cutrona, 1996). Participant one reported his experience: "My family has always been supportive and there for me. The best message I got from my parents was when they told me that I am doing ok and I am taking care of my family and so they do not need to worry about me. My family has confidence in me." The common theme among all participants is that having family members support them and encourage them throughout their lives has been influential to their career success.

Research has demonstrated some of the positive effects of support on adolescent and young adult career development. For example, perceived support from fathers was found to be related to the education plans and career expectations of Mexican American high school girls (McWhirter, Hackett, & Bandalos, 1998). Students who are high in family social supports display a higher scholastic self-esteem (Dubow & Ullman, 1989). In contrast, a lack of social support in adolescence is related to greater vulnerability to the effects of stress and depression (Cauce, Hannan, & Sargeant, 1992; Hirsch & DuBois, 1992; Moran & Eckenrode, 1991), and is a contributor to difficulties in school (Baker, 1985; Gilbert et al., 1993).

Teacher encouragement was found to have significant direct effects on learning experiences (grades in mathematics and science), efficacy, and outcome expectancies among undergraduate college students (Ferry, Fouad, & Smith, 2000). In addition to having support from family, the participants sought out, or were fortunate to have older individuals encourage them. These individuals included role models, mentors, teachers, or supervisors. For the most part, the participants can identify individuals approaching them to provide encouragement, especially in high school. The participants place high importance on Native American role models and mentors as a reason for their success. Two participants in particular reported that if their high school teachers had not encouraged them to do their best, then their career path may not have turned out as well as it had.

The category Personal Motivation has emerged throughout all of the data. As we have seen earlier, the participants believe that their motivation to achieve their goals has

led to their success. This may be related to the support they received and the positive work ethic they viewed growing up. The participants discussed how giving up was not an option for them, not that they would let down others, but because they would never be successful if they had given up at each obstacle they encountered.

Support for the Personal Motivation category can be found throughout the literature. Brown and Kurpius (1997) showed a significant relationship between Native American students' academic aspirations and persistence in college. Kerbo's (1981) data suggest that Native American students' confidence in their ability to succeed is of greatest importance. McInerney and Swisher (1995) noted that perceptions of confidence and competence were key aspects of Native Americans' motivation for academic achievement. Rindone's (1988) finding that achievement motivation was a significant factor in postsecondary success supports this focus on personal motivation variables. A number of demographic variables have also been implicated in Native Americans' persistence challenges. Lower levels of financial support from both family and institutional sources, as well as much higher rates of other related risk factors such as, delayed enrollment, part-time attendance, financial independence, working full-time, being a single parent, and being a GED recipient (U.S. Department of Education, 1998) have been identified as personal variables that impact persistence.

Obstacles

A typical category for Obstacles among the participants was a Lack of Financial Resources. We see throughout the interviews that the participants' parents were unable to provide money for college. In addition, the lack of government and community programs

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tailored to helping Native Americans enter college was a reality for these participants. Although the participants were motivated to attend college, most had to postpone going to college until they were able to afford the expenses. Participant 4 reported his experience: "…In those days education wasn't just something handed to you. It was hard. On the reservation it was hard to get a scholarship to any place."

The literature on Native American retention in college is exhaustive with evidence to support the claim that the lack of financial resources is a major barrier to educational attainment (Tate & Schwartz, 1993; Birdsell, 1984; Tierney, 1995; Tinto, 1993). Understanding that financial obstacles are a barrier to most Native American students is important on many levels ranging from personal to societal. On a personal level, it may require students to work extended hours while attending college in order to afford the expenses of higher education. On a societal level, it may require government and tribal agencies to provide economic funding to minority students to attend college. Although the participants maintained academic standing in high school and was eligible to attend college, knowing that financial obstacles were outside of their control is disheartening. One important characteristic of these individuals is that they did not give up on their desire to attend college. Some participants joined the military to pay for college, while others attended college part time while working full-time jobs. As with any college student who is required to work while attending college, there may be a decline in academic performance due to the added stressors of balancing job and school. Although a simplified explanation, this may lead to more avenues of identifying causes for low retention rates in college.

Another typical category for Obstacles among participants was Overcoming Obstacles. We see four participants using obstacles as a means of learning experience or coping with obstacles as they arise. Participant eight reported: "I probably have the most challenging and demanding job on the reservation. I put in long hours to meet the challenge of carrying out the executive responsibilities for our people. I have trained myself and prepared myself for those challenges." It becomes apparent that the participants are personally motivated and have the necessary skills to effectively deal with challenges that have been a part of their lives. It is this personal commitment to overcoming their obstacles as strength of these participants. This characteristic is reflected throughout the participants' lives as evidenced by their perseverance through college and work obstacles.

Resilience is a term used to describe a set of qualities that foster a process of successful adaptation and transformation despite risk and adversity (Benard, 1995). Persons who are resilient have the capacity to withstand, overcome, or recover from serious threat (Masten, 2001). Simply put, resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, which these participants have demonstrated. Current research focuses on resiliency in Native American youth and is exemplified by certain qualities possessed by these children and youth who, though subjected to undue stress and adversity, do not give way to school failure, substance abuse, mental health problems, or juvenile delinquency (Peacock, 2002). These youth benefit from "protective factors" provided through family (including extended tribal family who share the responsibility of child care), schools, and the community. These protective factors enable children to alter or reverse negative

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outcomes that might have been predicted for them, fostering instead the long-term development of resilience (HeavyRunner & Morris, 1997; Wenzlaff & Biewer, 1996).

A study conducted by the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (NLSAH), which analyzed a nationally representative sample of more than 90,000 young people of all ethnicities, came to similar conclusions as the participants in the current study have demonstrated. The NLSAH explored the social settings of adolescent lives, the ways in which youth connect with their social worlds, and the influence of these settings and connections on health and behavior. The study produced insights into the role of (1) families, (2) schools, and (3) the personal characteristics of individual youth in protecting adolescents from harm (Blum & Rinehart, 1997).

Parallels can be drawn between the NLSAH study and the present study in terms of factors that contribute to resilience. The NLSAH reported that healthy youth who avoided risky behavior felt strongly connected with their families. They felt they were understood, loved, wanted, and paid attention to by family members. Participants in the current study also shared a connection with their family and reported feeling supported by family members.

The NLSAH also found school-related factors in adolescent health and avoidance of harmful behaviors, which included: feeling teachers treated students fairly, feeling close to people at school, and getting along with teachers and other students. Although the first two factors were not addressed by the current participants, getting along with teachers appeared prevalent throughout the interviews. One participant reported that his teachers encouraged and supported him with his coursework.

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A final contribution of the NLSAH study involves the finding of adolescents' well-being was affected by whether they believed they had good qualities, liked themselves, and felt loved and wanted (Resnick et al., 1997). This factor also supports the conclusions of the current study in that all of the participants had positive views of themselves and believed they were supported by family.

Definition of Success (In General)

The next domain is Definition of Success (in general), in which the category of Family Success falls in the typical category. It is within this category that four participants identify their family as an important part of their own success. Participant seven reported his experience: "Success to me, because I come from a background of poverty, I believe success lies within the family. Raising a good family, every one of my kids graduated from high school. Both of my children have college experience." Participant five reported his experience: "Success means being happy, raising good kids that respect others. Maybe if the kids can leave the nest and stand on their own two feet. My children, I feel, will be ok when they leave home. I think, are my kids doing well..."

It is important to distinguish between career success and life success and hearing from the participants their definition gives us insight into the differences. It is common among the participants to feel as though the status of their family (i.e., wife and children) is a reflection of their own success. Like Native Americans in the Juntunen et al (2001) study, participants in the current study wanted to provide a good life for their children and families, but this did not mean economic prosperity, that may be important to the dominant culture. It was more important to take what they have learned and give back to

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other Native Americans. One participant summed it up by saying that he wanted to provide a path for his children to follow.

Definition of Success (In Relation to Job)

The next domain is Definition of Success (in relation to job), in which the typical category that emerged is Giving Best Effort. As we have heard the participants' stories, it becomes apparent that they have not given up in life and have not succumbed to adversities presented to them. Specifically in work, participants believed that being successful in their job meant giving their best effort in fulfilling their job duties. Participant six reported his experience: "Don't go into a career unless you are willing to do your best at it. I tell my students that they might not catch on to the material I teach sometimes but if they give it their best effort and don't quit then that would be a good step on their part. So yeah, career success for me is giving my all to the work I do."

This area of inquiry appears to be a new endeavor in the field of career counseling, as the existent research is scarce on this topic. Juntunen et al. (2001) addressed the issue of meaning of career in addition to definition of success with a sample of eighteen Native American participants. Typical responses for meaning of career included: a lifelong endeavor, and pursuit of a chosen goal. Likewise, success was viewed as a collective experience; contributing to the well-being of others. These two domains were seen as separate entities without overlap. In the current study, we see there may be a component of job success that has not been explored. If this is the case, then researchers may inquire about the meaning of success in relation to career as further areas of investigation.

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Definition of Failure

The next domain is Definition of Failure, in which the typical category that emerged is Lack of Effort. This category emerges along the same line as the previous category in that not giving one's best effort in any endeavor is seen as a failure. Participant eight elaborated on this subject by reporting: "A lack of inner drive and motivation can lead to failure. This failure can be seen as bad habits, lack of parenting, using public assistance, and lack of financial stability. Failure starts at a personal level due to quitting in life (school, job, personal commitments). Successful people are not quitters. Leadership and teachers need to help students not fail. There is a lack of commitment in our schools to help impoverished students succeed. Not putting forth best effort as a tribal leader would be failure. Not performing job duties would be failure."

Participants in this study have displayed a sense of determination in achieving their goals throughout their lives. The category of Lack of Effort did not apply to the participants' experiences as they have reported giving their best effort throughout their journey. This effort came in the form of completing school, both high school and college, and finding meaningful employment.

Failure, as defined by the American Heritage Dictionary (2006), is the condition or fact of not achieving the desired end or ends. This definition appears incongruent with that the participants provided, as "lack of effort." Literature on this topic is also scarce as to why there is a discrepancy, and it should be an avenue for further exploration.

Self-Perception

The domain of Self-Perception encompasses two typical categories. The first category, Positive Self-View, revealed that the participants view themselves as important, competent, and successful individuals. This may translate into positive self-esteem which in turn can translate into positive work productivity. One key component to this category is that each individual believed they could achieve and become successful in their endeavors, with the help of positive supportive people in their lives. Each participant identified someone in their life who gave them encouragement, which they did not specifically identify, but could lead to feeling good about one's self.

The literature on this topic appears congruent with the results of the study (Turner & Lapan, 2002). Turner and Lapan (2002) examined the relative contributions of both proximal and distal supports to the career interests and vocational self-efficacy in a multiethnic sample of middle school adolescents. Results support the hypothesis that greater supports increase vocational self-efficacy. The participants in the current study reported that they were encouraged to pursue their goals, given positive support, and was told they could be successful in their life. Although no participant explicitly made the link between support and self-efficacy, research has shown correlations between the two.

The second category, Coping Effectively with Stress, is common among the participants as they reported feeling ok with the way they handle stress. Two participants mentioned that they do not know what stress is because they have never experienced it to the extent that it affects their life. Most participants reported that they rely on family or friends for support when dealing with stress. It seems as though the participants were

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active in seeking help or a remedy for their stress instead of being the recipient of a stressor. This characteristic may translate to other areas of their life in which seeking employment opportunities, putting themselves in position for employment advancement, are ways in which they have achieved success.

To put into context the experiences of the participants in the current study, we look at a study that explored help seeking behaviors of Native American high school students. A total of 139 Native American students were surveyed (Gates, Howard-Pitney, LaFromboise, 1996). Results showed Native American boys tended to seek help from their family (parent, friend, or relative), outside resources (teachers, counselors, and school staff), or no one (most often reported). Most of the students turned to outside sources of help for academic and career rather then personal reasons. High self-esteem was found to be a barrier to seeking help from community and other helping professionals and was a factor in reduced help seeking behaviors. These findings may be related to perceiving help seeking outside of the native communities as a sign of weakness. An indication that many Native Americans are seeking help either through traditional healing practices such as medicine men or women or spiritual healing through various ceremonies was also given (Nadler, 1983; Gates, Howard-Pitney, LaFromboise, 1996).

One point of interest is that high self-esteem was found to be a barrier to seeking help from community agencies. This appears true with the current participants, as only one participant sought professional counseling. All participants reported positive beliefs in themselves, which may translate to high self-esteem, and thus they may have had the

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internal resources to cope with stress. It can also be implied that because of the social support provided by family members, the participants did not have to seek help, as support was already a part of their life.

Message to Students

The domain Message to Students incorporates two typical categories that the participants view as important for younger students. The first advice the participants agree upon is to attain as much education as possible as a means of being successful in a career. The consensus among the participants is that more education leads to greater opportunities for success. The participants instill this message into their children and feel it will help others in their life. The second advice that the participants agree upon is to surround yourself with positive support systems. By connecting with people who are successful and encouraging of your goals, this will increase the likelihood of a person becoming successful.

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Research

The participants in this study have provided valuable insight into what has worked for them. Hopefully we can listen to them and use the information they have provided to help other Native Americans achieve successfully in their careers. To that end, there are implications for career theory, career counseling, and future research that will be explored.

This study was not an explicit test of one particular theory. However, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994) may provide a theoretical framework for understanding the results of this study and for guiding future research. In particular, as

discussed by Hackett and Byars (1996), SCCT incorporates two overarching elements

that comprise the effect ethnic and cultural dynamics have on career development and

decision-making: early influences and ongoing contextual influences. The element of

early influence is most relevant to this study and includes contextual affordances (e.g.,

family and socioeconomic status) and person inputs (e.g. gender and race) that influence

the development of self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. Hackett and Byars

theorized about the role of sources of efficacy information (i.e., verbal persuasion,

vicarious learning, performance accomplishments, and physiological affective states;

Bandura, 1986), and the results of the current study provide support for these assertions.

The importance of positive encouragement (i.e., verbal persuasion) was clearly

demonstrated in this study. In both the nuclear family and extended family, and to an

extent outside influences, participants spoke of instances in which the encouragement and

support of their family and their family's belief in them helped them succeed.

Consequently, it is hypothesized that the family's belief in them increased the

participants own self-efficacy beliefs and helped them succeed in their careers, especially

in the face of challenges. In particular, the participants noted the role of their primary

caregiver as a crucial source of support.

Vicarious learning also shaped the career development of the participants. The

participants were influenced by the career experiences of those around them. This

influence is demonstrated in the work ethic of the participants. One participant noted that

his father set a path for him and he was going to follow that path and set one for his

children. Another participant reported that his father instilled a good work ethic in him

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because he watched his father work hard. The vicarious learning dynamic was further demonstrated in the participants' expectation that they would go to college. Participants also noted that because their parents always told them to go to college and get an education, they expected to go to college at some point in their lives.

The results of this study affirm the role of social support as an important contextual factor in career success, along the premises of SCCT, thereby confirming findings from previous investigations (Lent et al., 2001; McWhirter, Hackett, & Bandalos, 1998; Paa & McWhirter, 2000). In a more general sense, the results from this study affirm the conclusions that underscore the role of relational support in career development. Specifically, the findings presented here are consistent with research asserting the contextual supports on career choice (e.g., Lent et al., 2001), educational plans and career expectations (e.g., McWhirter et al., 1998); positive academic experiences (e.g., Fisher & Stafford, 1999); and job satisfaction (e.g., Harris et al., 2001).

In addition to confirming suppositions of SCCT, this study is consistent with Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1992) which has provided a useful theoretical framework for much of the empirical research that has sought to illuminate our understanding of the function of interpersonal relationships in the career domain. According to Bowlby (1982), individuals at any age are better adjusted when they have confidence in the accessibility and responsiveness of a trusted other. This comes across clearly in the current study, as the participants reported having strong social support networks. In a review of the literature on the application of attachment theory to career development, Bluestein (1995) hypothesized that characteristics of secure attachment relationships

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promote self exploration and the exploration of educational and vocational environments. Empirical research has confirmed the association between attachment and career self-efficacy (O'Brien, 1996), which is congruent with the findings of this study that participants' positive belief in themselves may have been impacted by the supportive attachments in their lives.

Consistent with the social support literature (Cutrona, 1996), supportive interactions with others prepare individuals to deal more effectively with stressful situations, such as those encountered in career exploration. Indeed, the multidimensional nature of relational influence revealed in this investigation is relatively consistent with the core set of social support functions identified by Cutrona (1996). In addition to the supportive functions of relational influence, relationships were described as influential in other important ways (e.g., role models, personality characteristics, childhood experiences). Moreover, the basic assumptions in the application of attachment theory to the career development process appear to be upheld. Specifically, these results support the view social support networks increase the likelihood of career success by reducing stress and instilling positive self-efficacy.

The results of this investigation, together with previous research (e.g., Blustein, 2001 and Phillips et al., 2001) offer further support for practitioners to attend to the relational lives of their career counseling clients. A more precise understanding of the influential factors inherent in close relationships can assist practitioners by providing a foundation from which to assess and intervene in the relational context of their clients' career concerns. More specifically, counselors are encouraged to assess the quality,

availability, and responsivity of a variety of relational resources in their clients' lives, including parents, siblings, and other significant relationships; as this was an important factor that contributed to the success of the participants in the current study. Counselors might help clients to search out and utilize significant others as sources of social support and as a secure base as they face anxiety-producing challenges within the career domain.

Furthermore, the categorical data provide a tentative guide to articulate the ways in which support systems have helped the participants. For example, counselors might use the categories that emerged within the data as a starting point to discuss with clients the specific ways in which others might be central to their career progress. This might become particularly important when an impasse has been reached using more traditional approaches to career counseling.

In terms of implications of the study for practice, counselors are trained in both multicultural and career counseling attitudes, knowledge, and skills, which can be combined to create effective career interventions for Native Americans. At the individual level, counseling psychologists can encourage their Native American clients to explore in greater depth the formulation of career aspirations and plans, as well as to help clients seek out positive support. By normalizing Native American clients' experiences with vocational challenges and by offering effective coping strategies, career counseling can serve as a tool of empowerment for Native Americans. Furthermore, results of the investigation can be used to create workshops, panels, and presentations for Native Americans. At the systematic level and acting as advocates (Fassinger & O'Brien, 2000), counselors can use the results of the study, combined with the results of prior studies, to

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promote programs and policies that eliminate or diminish potential barriers for Native Americans, such as those that enhance and maintain equal opportunity employment policies and educational opportunities, promote mentoring programs and early career exposure, and educate psychologists and the public at large on Native American career development issues, with the goal of creating more professional Native Americans.

It is hoped that the findings of the present study will act as a heuristic vehicle for other research in this area. The results of this study provide some preliminary indication that SCCT may be meaningfully applied to Native American men. With so little research in the area of Native American career success in general, there are many possibilities for future research. Given that the individuals in this study were all male, it would be helpful to gain insight into a woman's experience. Additional research may look at younger generations and how they experience career success.

When considering the results of this study in relation to other strands of research (e.g. Lent et al., 2000; McWhirter et al., 1998), it seems clear that support systems is important in career development. Thus, extending research generated by social cognitive career theory might provide a more complete test of this theoretical model. For example, investigations assessing degree and extent of support, together with other environmental contextual factors and barriers, would provide useful information about the effects of these variables on career development. One potential investigation would be to examine how various aspects of social support influence perceptions of barriers, as the sample in this study viewed barriers as learning tools. More specifically, it would be informative to assess the degree to which dimensions of support (i.e., emotional, social, esteem, or

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information), source of support, or personal identification for the supportive figure are important factors in countering perceived environmental barriers and progressing effectively within the career domain. One hypothesis, based on this study's results, is that emotional support is more closely related to career exploration and coping with stress, whereas esteem support is more related to self-efficacy and pursuit of goals.

An understanding of the sociocultural and socioeconomic factors relevant to support systems is needed to better understand the findings presented here and to further our knowledge of relational contexts. For example, further inquiry is needed to determine how gender and geographic location intersect to influence the interface of relationships and career development. Alternative lines of inquiry are suggested by shifting the focus from relationships to changes in career and socioeconomic status. More specifically, how might parental relationships and the supportive functions therein, be influenced by movement of one or more family members into new educational and career domains (e.g., first-generation college students)? How does movement across socioeconomic boundaries influence family-of-origin relationships in terms of the stress placed on the relationships or the availability of family members as relational resources?

The importance of support systems permeates throughout this study. For example, the background and current contexts of this sample provide numerous instances of individual and community support as significant elements in career development and success. These men discussed the support they received throughout their lives and attributed their success to the networks of which they are a part of. In particular, all of the men discussed the roles that their families of origin, wives, friends, mentors, role models,

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teachers, colleagues, and other individuals have played in their career success. This study supports new models of practice that reflects a more contextually based relational perspective for understanding career success. Models of career counseling that incorporate critical contextual information (e.g., the availability and quality of support) of relevance to clients' lives and choices are needed to assist individuals with complex real-life decisions. Such models lend support to the integration of personal and career counseling and put forth more holistic conceptualizations of effective human functioning.

Future research may also explore the relationship between successful Native Americans, or those that are resilient, and the impact of racism. As this study indicates, the participants did not view racism as directly impacting their lives, although they witnessed racism towards others. This is in contrast to the extensive literature that reports racism as an obstacle when Native Americans fail (Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994; Johnson, Swartz, & Martin, 1996; Brave Heart-Jordan & DeBruyn, 1995; Watts, 1993).

Limitations

This qualitative study is an early step in the understanding of career concerns for Native Americans, and one must apply caution when interpreting and extrapolating these results. Because this study uses a qualitative methodology, it carries with it the limitations shared with other qualitative methodologies. First, there are potential limitations based on the biases of the research team. Although the team explicitly stated and attempted to set aside their biases and expectations for this study's findings, the results of the study may reflect in part the perspectives of the research team. This is a risk for all research, and it can be particularly important to use caution in the interpretation of

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multicultural research wherein the emphasis is on a topic largely misunderstood by the majority culture.

Second, the use of only European American interviewers may have moderated the degree to which non-European American participants disclosed information and may have constrained the content of their disclosures. If there was a higher degree of perceived similarity between researcher and participant, participants may have been more candid in their disclosures.

Third, a component of CQR methodology is to present the findings to the participants and have them comment about whether the results fit with their experiences. Results were mailed to participants and were asked to respond by mail, but as of date, no participants responded. Gathering information from the participants after the study was completed could be useful and an addition to the validity of the findings.

Fourth, because of the in-depth nature of qualitative research, the sample size of this study is relatively small. The use of eight participants limits the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to all Native Americans. Although the participants in this study were of a wide range of ages and stages in career development, only two Native American tribes were represented. Therefore, we cannot assume that these results apply to members of other Native American tribes. In addition, all of the participants lived on a reservation and thus the ability to generalize these results to urban Native Americans is limited. In addition, acculturation among participants was not assessed, further limiting the generalizability of the results.

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Fifth, the schools in which the nomination process took place may have confounded the results. Although the schools were in close proximity to Native American reservations (one school was on a reservation), the majority of student participants were of Euro-American descent. What was discouraging is that some students could not name an individual and others may have named the first or only person they knew.

Sixth, all males that were nominated participated in the study. Two female nominees were unavailable to participate in the study. Having a homogenous sample may have limited the categories that emerged. A heterogeneous sample may have yielded different domains and categories.

Seventh, though not a limitation, one challenge of this type of study is the extensive time required for the coding and analysis of the data, especially the time required of the outside readers. This significant contribution of time and effort increases the confirmability and dependability of the findings, and provides greater credibility to the results of the study.

Conclusions

There were many factors that have contributed to the career success of the Northern Plains Native American male participants in this study. The individuals who participated in this study were highly motivated individuals who, through the help of support systems and encouragement to be whatever they wanted to be, have acknowledged that they have succeeded in their careers. Most of the participants reported having difficulties in life like most Native Americans (i.e., racism, lack of financial resources); however, these individuals persevered with the help of family and friends and

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did not give up in the face of adversity. Participants were active in seeking out the support and assistance they needed to be successful. They also came from families who valued higher education and were supportive of them as students. Participants had identifiable Native American role models and mentors at home, school, and work.

In order to increase the career success rates for Native Americans, it is important to continue to explore the experiences of successful Native Americans to find ways to help more Native Americans succeed in their careers. Native Americans who are succeeding in their careers have a great deal of wisdom and insight that can be used to benefit others, and it is crucial that counseling psychologists hear what they have to say.

APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM, PARENTS

With your permission, we would like to invite your child to participate in a project designed to highlight individuals who are successful members of the White Earth, Turtle Mountain, and Spirit Lake reservation community. With the consent of your child's high school, the research is being conducted by Adam Guilmino and a team of counseling psychology graduate students at the University of North Dakota.

If you consent to your child's participation in this research, he or she will be asked to nominate Native Americans within the community who they feel are successful. In addition, your child will be asked to talk about career success and what that means to him or her. This will be conducted in a group format so that a group of children can share their viewpoints. We expect that the group discussion will take no more than 30 minutes. If your child does not participate in this activity, he or she will be given an alternative activity during this same time. Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may decline to have your child participate or withdraw from the study at any time. Neither you nor your child will be penalized in any way for not participating in the study, and your child's participation or non-participation will have no effect on their relationship with the University of North Dakota of the school your child attends.

There are few risks to participating in the study. All information gathered will be shared in group format only, so no individuals can be identified. Your child's name or other information that could identify him or her will not be recorded on any of the forms or papers connected to this study. Groups will be tape recorded to help the researchers remember at a later date what was said during the group meeting.

If you choose to consent to your child's participation in the research, your child will have the opportunity to take part in a research study that will help highlight factors that contribute to career success. This may be useful to career and guidance counselors who assist children and adults in career decision-making. The other primary benefit of this study will be to help counselors (i.e. school and career) understand issues that are important for the success of high school students.

This consent form will be kept separate from the data collected in this study to ensure privacy. The information from this study will be kept for three years in a locked cabinet in the Department of Counseling at UND. After a period of at least three years, this information will be destroyed by burning or shredding. Only the researchers named above and those that make sure researchers abide by federal rules (Institutional Review

Board and auditors) will have access to this data. All information will be kept confidential. At the conclusion of the study, overall (not individual) results will be made available to any participants who wish to see the outcome of the study. Again, your child's name will not be associated in any way with these results.

Please read the statement below, indicate whether or not you consent to your child's participation, then write and sign your name on the appropriate blanks. If you have more than one child participating in the study, please sign a separate form for each child. Please return one copy of this form to the child's teacher or researcher and keep a copy for your records. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please contact Adam Guilmino at 218-779-7701, or the Counseling Department secretary at 701-777-2729. If you have any other questions or concerns, please call the Office of Research, Development and Compliance at 701-777-4279.

****

I have read the above information. I understand the purposes of this study and any questions I have about this research have been answered to my satisfaction.

_____ I DO consent to my child's participation in the study described above. I understand that my child and I can withdraw consent for participating in the study at any time without any penalty.

_____ I do NOT consent to my child's participation in this study.

_____   _____   _____
Name (print)   Signature   Date

_____
Child's name (print)

APPENDIX B
AGREEMENT FORM, ADOLESCENTS

Hello! My name is Adam Guilmino, and I am a counseling student at the University of North Dakota. Together with your school and some of my research assistants, I am doing a study that looks at who you view as successful members of your community. The purpose of this form is to tell you about the study and see if you are willing to participate.

If you agree to participate in this project, you will be asked to talk about successful people around the community in addition to describing what success means to you. I will ask the class to identify people that are successful and talk about what that means to be successful. This will be conducted in a group discussion. This should take about 30 minutes. Hopefully with your help we can identify how successful Native Americans got to be successful and how we can pass this information along to you to help with your future.

It is completely your decision whether to participate or not. Whether or not you participate will have no impact on how your teachers treat you. Your name will not be used on any of the data in order to protect your answers and your privacy. The researchers will be taking notes and tape recording your answers to help us remember what was said at a later date.

There are few risks to participating in this study. Your privacy will be protected by making everything anonymous except for this form, which will be turned in separately from the rest of the data. Neither your teachers nor your parents will be able to look at your answers and the researchers who have your data won't know who you are because your name will not be anywhere except on this sheet. If you have questions please let your teacher or me know. If something feels uncomfortable to you, please feel free to visit with your teacher or school counselor. The main benefit of this study is to help school counselors understand issues that help high school students succeed in life.

This sheet will be stored for three years in a locked cabinet in the Department of Counseling at UND. After three years, this paper will be destroyed by burning or shredding. Only the research team, and people who make sure researchers follow the rules, will have access to the data we collect today. At the end of the study, the results will be made available to anyone who wishes to see them. However, the results will be for the whole group only, as it will be impossible to identify any one individual.

Please read the statement below, indicate (with an X) whether or not you agree to take part in this study, then write and sign your name on the appropriate blanks. Please return one copy of this form to the researcher and keep a copy for yourself. If you have

any questions or concerns about the research, please contact Adam Guilmino at 218-779-7701, or the Counseling Department secretary at 701-777-2729. If you have any other questions or concerns, please call the Office of Research, Development and Compliance at 701-777-4279.

<div align="center">**********</div>

I have read the above information. I understand the purposes of this study and any questions I have about this research have been answered to my satisfaction.

_____ I DO agree to participate in the study described above. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

_____ I do NOT agree to participate in the study described above.

_____	_____	_____
Name (print)	Signature	Date

APPENDIX C
QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

Demographic Information

Age

Grade

Gender

Ethnicity and/or Tribal Affiliation _____

Do you live on a reservation?   Please circle   YES   NO

What does it mean to be successful?

Define career.

Define career success.

List 3 Native Americans living around your community that you think are successful.

What do they do and what town do they live in?

Why do you consider each person to be successful?

1.

2.

3.

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study concerning the career success of Native Americans. You have been nominated by high school students as a person they deem to be successful. This study is being conducted by Adam Guilmino, a counseling psychology student at the University of North Dakota along with three research assistants from the department of counseling.

The purpose of this project is to gain a better perspective on what factors contribute to the career success of people living in the Turtle Mountain or Spirit Lake reservations. If you elect to participate in this research project, myself or a research assistant will conduct and tape record an interview, at the place of your choosing, as a means to discovering your career path and what career success means to you. The interview should last about an hour. Potential questions that may be asked include: "In relation to career, what does success and failure mean to you?" "What would you say contributed to your success?" "Tell me about your career path?" Ultimately, your responses and the responses of several others will be compiled and analyzed to look for themes of all participants. Results from the interviews will be used to help adolescents and high school counselors and career counselors address issues that may be important to successful career development. Interviews will be tape and transcribed but identifying information will be excluded. All tapes and recorded data will be destroyed after three years.

Your participation in this study will help us collect information for future career interventions for Native American adolescents. The benefits of participating in this study are the opportunity to be involved in research tailored towards Native Americans and to think about your career path and accomplishments. The benefits also include contributing information that will help future vocational counselors provide useful services for people who may be struggling to find a career. Once the interview is complete, you will receive a 10-dollar gift card to a local discount store for your participation.

While confidentiality is always a risk in this type of study, we will actively safeguard your confidentiality in this study by: (1) not associating your name with any forms you fill out, (2) conducting the study in private, and (3) summarizing the results of all participants (with NO identifying details of any one person) in the final report. All data will be stored in locked and secured cabinets for a period of at least three years, then shredded and destroyed. Only the research team, and people who make sure researchers follow the rules (i.e. Institutional Review Board), will have access to the data we collect today.

Your decision to participate in this study is strictly voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty. If you have any concerns or questions about the study, please contact Adam Guilmino at 218-779-7701, or the Counseling Department secretary at 701-777-2729. If you have any other questions or concerns, please call the Office of Research, Development and Compliance at 701-777-4279. The Institutional Review Board is a group of individuals who work to make sure that people who participate in research projects are treated fairly, and to do so they sometimes review the work of research projects such as this one.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have!

****

I have read the above information. I understand the purposes of this study and any questions I have about this research have been answered to my satisfaction.

_____ I DO agree to participate in the study described above. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

_____ I do NOT agree to participate in the study described above.

_____   _____   _____

Name (print)   Signature   Date

APPENDIX E
QUESTIONS FOR NOMINATED PARTICPANTS

Research questions for interview with nominated participant:

1. You have been nominated by high school adolescent as a successful person; what do you think about that?
2. Do you believe you are successful?
3. Do you live on a reservation?
4. What is your occupation?
5. What is your family background/tribal affiliation?
6. Tell me about your career path? This is to include likes and dislikes about jobs, educational experiences, background influences on beliefs about career success.
7. Tell me about the stress you experience related to your jobs and how did you handle it?
8. What have been some challenges and limitations to your achievement?
9. What does success and failure mean to you?
10. In relation to career, what does success and failure mean to you?
11. What would you say contributed to your success?
12. Describe the people or things that have helped you get to where you are today.
13. Thinking back in high school, can you tell me what your definition of success might have been, and how has it changed?
14. Are you satisfied with your job or chosen career?
15. What would you say to Native American high school students living on reservations to help them succeed in life?

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