

**Media Habits and Awareness of Native American Representation
in the Media of Young Adults**

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Abstract

Native Americans are often an overlooked population when it comes to researching representation in movies, television, and other forms of media. Moreover, little is known about general audience's awareness of such representation, especially from Native American and Non-Native American young adults. In this study, 31 high school students completed an online survey on their media consumption habits, their interest in the entertainment industry, and their awareness of Native American representation in the media they consume. While media consumption habits collected were expected for the targeted demographic, their limited awareness of Native American representation reflected an uncertainty of Native American identity and an absence of Native American content in their media consumption. These findings indicate a need for greater integration of Native American content in the media as well as further research, specifically on Native American populations, regarding awareness and consumption habits.

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Introduction

With the emphasis on diversity in the media in recent years, ethnic minority groups seemingly have made progress toward greater representation in movies, TV shows, and other forms of media. Consider *Suicide Squad* (Roven, Suckle & Ayer, 2016), a DC Comics film about the most-wanted villains coming together to act as “superheroes,” which made \$745.6 million at the worldwide box office (Box Office Mojo, 2016). One of the factors for the film’s success came from its diverse cast: four female leads, three black leads, and three more leads who were Mexican-American, Japanese-American, and Native American (Truitt, 2016). Prior to the movie’s release, casting of the Native character, played by Adam Beach, gained praise from Native communities as a hope for improving Native American representation in mainstream media (Pocowatchit, 2016). In the movie, however, Beach’s character spoke only two lines and was dishonorably killed by the start of the squad’s mission. While Beach could be considered minor compared to the other leads, it may be disappointing for Native filmgoers to see him be disposed of so quickly in a world of nearly invincible superheroes and villains, moreover, a world with few representations of Native Americans in general.

To understand the importance of representation, it is necessary to understand the role that the media industry, specifically film and television, have in adolescents and young adults’ everyday lives. 1.32 billion tickets are sold in the U.S. and Canada combined annually, with 12-17-years-olds and 18-24-year-olds purchasing 13% and 16% of those tickets, respectively (Motion Picture Association of America [MPAA], 2017). Moreover, this demographic is watching an average of 2-4 hours per day on TV on a set as broadcast, in addition to another 1-2 hours of TV shows and movies on other platforms (Common Sense Media, 2015). Additionally, mobile devices are now present in 95% of households with children under 8, as well as screen

time for mobile devices increased to 35% of all devices for the same demographic (Rideout, 2017). If the use of mobile devices among children has increased rapidly over the last few years, then it should be expected that teens and young adults have also increased their use of mobile devices for various activities, including media streaming services.

Both film and television could be a significant resource in exploring the use of ethnic representation in mainstream media and any connection to adolescents and young adults, both Native American and Non-Native American. Additionally, because we know from Erikson (1968) that adolescence is the ideal time to begin examining one's identity, my research explores whether Native American and Non-Native American adolescents are aware of Native American representation in the media they consume.

Research Questions

The following questions will be considered: To what extent are Native American and Non-Native American young adults aware of Native American representation in the media? How likely are Native American young adults to identify with Native American characters in media? Finally, is exposure to mainstream media with Native American inclusion associated with interest in pursuing a career in the entertainment industry? These research questions are meant to address the lack of research on the media habits and perceptions of Native American adolescents as well as the potential patterns that may reflect current discussions on the representation of minority groups in the media. Additionally, these questions are framed to approach the topic with mindfulness to the lack of knowledge on adolescents' interactions with media as well as the overall influence of media on their everyday lives.

Literature Review

The following literature is divided into sections about the portrayals of Native Americans in mainstream media, the understanding of identity and its relation to Native American adolescents, and examples of research of media and identity regarding other minority groups. Each section will be followed by a reflection of that section's literature in addition to a general discussion with implications at the end.

Overall Representation

The 2010 Census showed that 1.7% of the U.S. population, or 5.2 million people, identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, or a combination of one with other races. Although 57% of this population is distributed throughout the Northeastern, Midwestern, and Southern regions of the U.S., the remaining 43% are found in the Western region, including New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Alaska. Moreover, this population is growing faster than the U.S. population as a whole as they grew by 27% between 2000 and 2010, compared to 9.7 % from the U.S. population (Hoeffel, Norris & Vines, 2012). The entertainment industry, however, does not reflect the population percentage or perceivable growth. In 2016, Native Americans claimed 0.5% of the top theatrical roles as the smallest share. For broadcast scripted television shows, Native Americans claimed 0 % of the roles. For cable scripted shows, they claimed 0.3% of the roles. Finally, for digital scripted shows, they claimed 0.2% of the roles (Hunt et al., 2018). Based on those statistics, Native Americans are among the most underrepresented groups in the entertainment industry, making each role claimed even more important.

Portrayals in Mainstream Media

Given the lack of representation of Native Americans in movies and television, the few notable instances revolve around certain tropes. From past depictions as savages to the

emergence of the “Casino Indian,” these tropes limit Native Americans to one-dimensional caricatures as if they are inferior to their counterpart characters. In film, one of the first representations of Natives was *Nanook of the North* (Flaherty, 1922), a “documentary” following the lives of indigenous people in the Arctic while fictionalizing aspects of their culture to make them appear exotic and untouched, qualities of the noble savage (Boyd, 2015). Another early example of Native American portrayal was Disney’s *Peter Pan* (Disney, Geronimi, Jackson & Luske, 1953), which depicted Natives having childish syntax and exaggerated physical appearances, including the men having dark red skin, large noses, face paint, and headdresses. Meanwhile, the young women were shown as the “Indian Princess:” slim, quiet, attractive, and love interests for the white characters (Meek, 2006). While many Westerns and recent films, like *The Last of the Mohicans* (Lowry & Mann, 1992), utilize Natives as “bloodthirsty savages” against white characters, the “noble savage” trope is prevalent in mainstream film when Native portrayals are included, such as, *Pocahontas* (Pentecost, Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995). Concurrently, Boyd (2015) identified the use of whitewashing, the act of casting white actors and actresses in roles meant for Native Americans, as many Westerns have used whitewashing throughout the twentieth century. Films such as *The Legend of Walks Far Woman* (Gilmore, Levinson & Damski, 1992), which used celebrity sex symbol Raquel Welch as the Sioux warrior, and *The Lone Ranger* (Bruckheimer & Verbinksi, 2013), which cast Johnny Depp as Tonto, have reaffirmed the inaccurate depictions of Natives as a “Hollywood staple.”

In addition to the noble and bloodthirsty savage stereotypes apparent in film, another emerging stereotype is the “Casino Indian,” found mainly in contemporary television. Lacroix (2011) found that the emergence of the “Casino Indian” led to three themes: Casino Indians had little concern for their culture unless it depended on money, they were run by corrupt “chiefs,”

and they could not be genuine Native Americans. These assertions derive from Native portrayals in episodes of *Family Guy* (Zuckerman & MacFarlane, 1999-), *South Park* (Parker & Stone, 1997-), *Saturday Night Live* (Michaels, 1975-), and *The Sopranos* (Chase, 1999-2007). More recently, *Parks and Recreation* (Poehler & Sackett, 2009-2015) parodied the Casino Indian trope in various episodes through the Wamapoke Tribe, a fictional Native Tribe that runs its own casino near the fictional Pawnee, Indiana.

While the media depicting Native Americans consists of generally negative representation, there is some evidence of a positive shift in perspective, particularly from the creator standpoint. Some Native filmmakers have found success making documentaries that have been broadcasted on NBC and PBS, such as Sandra Osawa's *The Native American Series* (Taplin, Borden, Lucas & Burdeau, 1994) (Boyd, 2015). Meanwhile, critically acclaimed films, such as *Smoke Signals* (Alexie & Eyre, 1998), have embraced modern Native culture and allowed Native filmmakers to have creative control over the production process. In the instance of *Smoke Signals*, screenwriter and popular author Sherman Alexie intended for viewers to question the legitimacy of Native stereotypes in the media. In one scene, for example, the protagonist, Victor, criticizes Thomas for acting like the Natives shown in *Dances with Wolves* (Wilson & Costner, 1990) while Thomas refutes the "real Indian" claim by mentioning the savage, warrior persona as unlike the fisherman roots of his tribe. By having characters who reflect on past media representations, Alexie enabled audiences to reconsider potential stereotypes such as the "Vanishing Noble Savage" (Liu & Zhang, 2011). Additionally, the Sundance Institute's Native Film Program has allowed independent Native filmmakers to collaborate, learn, and share filmmaking with wider audiences and other Natives, a recent and notable film being *Drunktown's Finest* (Burriss, Frazier & Freeland, 2014). However, these films

are not without criticism, as Boyd (2015) pointed out. Critics and audiences have accused these filmmakers of negatively depicting Native Americans as alcohol and drug addicts. Although substance use is problematic among Native Americans ages 12 to 20, including the highest rate of drug-induced deaths in 2010 at 17.1% (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2018), the issue Boyd mentioned may be the overemphasis of substance abusers in comparison to positive representations, thereby becoming an unwanted trope. Nevertheless, given the few Native American representations in the present media, the criticism of these portrayals could reflect the need to have broader representation of Native American individuals and communities that are both realistic and positive. Most recently, apart from the Slipknot character in *Suicide Squad* (Roven, Suckle, & Ayer, 2016), DC Entertainment released *Wonder Woman* (Roven et al., 2017), which included First Nations actor Eugene Brave Rock as Chief Napi, a smuggler who is recruited to join Wonder Woman's team against the Germans in World War I. Having more dialogue than Slipknot and potential to be included in future installments, Schilling (2017) praised Chief Napi as a rare, proper representation of Native Americans in mainstream films.

What is missing from research on the positive and negative portrayals of Native Americans is the methodology for determining viewers' reactions to the media, as the articles merely present a general overview of the known portrayals. Potential studies on the reaction and impact on Native viewers, or perceptions from non-Native viewers, could have reinforced the conclusions drawn. Additionally, a discussion regarding the potential positive portrayals that Native Americans could have, such as everyday social roles ranging from firemen to doctors, as recommended by Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman and Stone (2008), would have been helpful as an application for the findings. Until such research is available, research on the effects of

positive and negative portrayals from other racial and ethnic groups, as examined in a later section, can provide a perspective that may contribute to understanding the current issues of Native American representation.

Cultural Identity and Self-Esteem

One of the common tasks seen in adolescent development is the need to evaluate one's identity. This developmental stage is the first time that people think about the way their identities impact their lives, though the other factors in this stage make the evaluation challenging at times, especially when it comes adolescents from minority backgrounds. Self-esteem is also important as adolescents can be unsure and self-conscious about finding their identities within the greater community (ACT for Youth, 2018). The following section will expand on these processes and incorporate the perceived identity and self-esteem challenges for Native American adolescents.

In the context of Erikson's (1968) definition of identity, identity development is important for adolescents as it entails exploration and commitment by "defining who they are, what they value, and the directions they choose to pursue in life" (Berk, 2013, p. 468). A subcategory of identity development, ethnic identity, has been discussed in recent research within Native American communities. Lieber (1996) defined ethnic identity as identification through cultural traits, such as language or religion, within a specific group. This definition is separate from tribal identification, as the latter would determine the cultural traits. However, Whitesell, Mitchell, Spicer, and Voices of Indian Teens Project Team (2009) preferred the term "cultural identity," specifically, Native American identity, as "the extent to which adolescents adopted an identity as [Native American] and participated in practices, traditions, and spiritual beliefs resonant with tribal culture," (p. 3). "Cultural identity" is used in multiple studies regarding Native Americans, including a study applying Erikson's theory of identity

development (1968) to Native American adolescents in North Carolina through in-class questionnaires (Garrett, 1999). Like Whitesell (et al., 2009), Garrett found that the cultural identity of an individual, particularly those who identify as Native American, has greater influence on personal wellness than race or ethnicity. Although the finding suggests that students value cultural identity, the limitations of this study include the geographic location, self-reported surveys, and the imbalance between Native Americans and Non-Native Americans, with only 20 Native American students among 155 participants. Because of the small sample, the findings cannot be generalized, and further research incorporating a larger sample size of Native Americans is necessary.

Sanchez (2003) also used cultural identity in a synthesis on down-linked electronic media in classrooms, which included one's cultural identity perceived by others from misrepresentations of Native Americans in the media. These misrepresentations could lead Native American children and adolescents to struggle with identifying between "American dominant" culture and Native American culture. The synthesis introduces the significance of one's cultural identity perceived by others, which suggests that adolescents look to the media for representations of cultural identity. Padilla-Walker (2007) affirmed that this view of negative representations, such as violent minority characters, could kindle prejudice and fear among European American teens while providing negative stereotypes of what minority teens should aspire towards. Although Padilla-Walker, without conducting original research, assumed that minority groups look to such characters, a critical observation is that one's perceived cultural identity may differ from adolescents' preferred cultural identity, especially Native American adolescents' cultural identity, and learning more about their preferred cultural identity may clarify any flaws in their cultural identity perceived by others.

Additional research relating to media has attempted to accentuate the impact of Native American representations on identity by providing an overview of the current media landscape and research supporting a negative impact. Through the psychology of invisibility (Fryberg and Townsend, 2008), in which social representations “foster or make viable some possible selves while restraining or rendering invisible other possible selves” (p. 188), members of minority groups may not pursue certain occupations or roles because such opportunities lack positive or any individuals representing those minority groups in such fields. By having difficulty to imagine themselves pursuing certain opportunities, those individuals are at risk of feeling marginalized, especially by majority groups that have narrow perceptions of them due to the lack of positive or any representations of them in society, making invisibility consequential to both minority and majority groups. The psychology of invisibility can extend to media as limited social representations could inhibit audiences to stereotypes of minority groups, including Native Americans (p. 178). In regards to the third research question (is exposure to mainstream media with Native American inclusion associated with interest in pursuing a career in the entertainment industry?), I found the psychology of invisibility to be relevant as the opposite, visibility, could enable Native American individuals to imagine themselves in certain opportunities if they saw other Native Americans in those roles. Furthermore, if Native American individuals saw positive or any representations of themselves in the media they watch, then they potentially could have greater interest in pursuing a career in media than those who do not see positive or any representations of themselves. Although this notion depends on an individual’s affiliation to their cultural identity, I believe that it is worth exploring in the present study as it may be a relevant approach to understanding self-esteem and identity among young adults.

In analyzing available content online, Leavitt, Covarrubias, Perez and Fryberg (2015) found that Native Americans were typically portrayed as mythical or poor, uneducated, and prone to addictions. In addition to identifying the generalization of Native American groups, the researchers also questioned “superstar role models” as efficient in lifting self-motivation in Native American groups as those models may be considered atypical and unachievable. Although their research supports the need for improved representations, the researchers limited their research to simple internet searches of Native American images on Google and Bing; extensive research of other media platforms would have bolstered their argument. Outside of traditional media, Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman and Stone (2008) conducted four studies surveying Native American high school and college students regarding Indian mascots and found that exposure to mascots led to lowered personal and community worth. However, the mascots were a less important factor negatively impacting them but more of the limited portrayals of Natives in general that compounded negative feelings from mascots, relating to the components of the psychology of invisibility (Leavitt et al., 2015).

My review of the relevant literature on ethnicity/cultural development in adolescence clearly indicated to me the impact of culture in adolescent self-esteem. While self-esteem, confidence in one’s capabilities, derives from adolescents’ close friendships, romantic appeal, and job competence (Berk, 2013), another source of self-esteem could come from the way adolescents perceive their identity. Phinney (1992) found that through the process of ethnic identity development, in which adolescents actively explore for an ethnic identity within the community, high school students’ self-esteem was related to their ethnic identity development status, though the results may vary among different ethnic groups as Native American students were not included in the study. Mitchum (1989) suggested that the negative influences within

Native American culture, such as alcoholism and unreported sexual abuse, could cause Native adolescents to have negative perceptions of their ethnic identity, and therefore lower self-esteem, leading to poor academic success and motivation. However, the impact of self-esteem previously mentioned was not explicitly evaluated within the school environment in Mitchum's study.

Whitesell et al. (2009) expanded on their impact by conducting a three-year longitudinal study adolescents from three Native American groups throughout high school and found that cultural identity was largely unrelated to academic achievement whereas self-esteem, specifically factors connected to self-esteem, was related to academic achievement. The researchers found that self-esteem's impact depends on an individual's affiliation with individualistic and collectivist identities, suggesting that Native American culture consists of values that are collectivist, in which self-esteem is perceived differently from that of individualistic-centered values. Similarly, another study (Bergstrom, Cleary, & Peacock, 2003), which included interviews from Native American adolescents, found that identity development from a Native American perspective "has less to do with striving for individualism and more to do with establishing connections and understanding ourselves in relationship to all of the things around us" (p. 33). In other words, the role of self-esteem in Native American adolescents may be different in contrast to other ethnic groups, making any research specifically on Native American adolescents and self-esteem crucial.

Most of the research regarding identity and self-esteem are published as syntheses that do not expand on their claims through application, making them seem as if they formed such presumptions without Native American input. The Whitesell's (et al., 2009) longitudinal study has what I consider to be the most comprehensive methodology that could be included to research on film or media, though the challenge would be determining the connection to identity

and self-esteem. The values presented in mainstream media may be more individualistic and have less connection to cultural identity, meaning that Native adolescents may not relate to the representations in the media and disregard them. On the other hand, the lack of representing their values, whether it be through characters or storylines, may lead to lower self-esteem.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that the impact of representations in mainstream media are contingent on what Native American adolescents value and therefore difficult to comprehend without direct dialogue with adolescents.

Examples of Research from other Minority Groups

Due to the limited research on Native Americans and media with methodology, it is important to consider research on other minority groups. Much research has focused on African Americans, who purchased 14 percent of all movie tickets sold in the U.S. in 2016 (MPAA, 2017). Although Blacks constituted 17.4 percent of characters on television, compared to the actual share population of 13.2 percent (Hunt & Ramón, 2015) and 12.2 percent in overall media (Smith, Choueiti, & Pieper, 2016), they still have limited roles in mainstream media. Most Black actors are cast in minor roles, usually as a sidekick or comic relief. Most Black leads are in comedies that are segregated from their white counterparts (Ward, 2004). Additionally, many Black roles relate to athletes, musicians, and violent criminals (Watkins, 2000). Given that research has shown that Black youths watch twice as much television a day than other groups (Ward, 2004), there is a strong potential for media to have an impact on their values or self-esteem relating to ethnic identity.

Ward (2004) researched the connection between media consumption and self-esteem among Black high school students by having them evaluate their media viewing patterns and the way they perceive themselves. Results showed that self-esteem varied depending on the media

genre (music videos and sports programming being the most influential if regularly consumed), a student's identification with TV characters (with those who identified with White characters having lower self-esteem), and specific characteristics included in the research (specifically religiosity). Despite the study not being longitudinal to determine if media consumption directly influenced self-esteem, the study shows that not all adolescents of the same minority group will share perceptions of the media (Ward, 2004), especially with the large presence of Black-oriented media separate from mainstream media. Nevertheless, the varied experiences should not undermine the impact of mainstream media as the lack of input from Black in creating most mainstream media can lead to distorted perceptions from other groups, including the Black adolescents who do consume mainstream media (Topos Partnership, 2011).

Another example of a minority group that has been researched regarding media representation and potential impact is Latinos, who purchased 21 percent of all movie tickets sold in the U.S. in 2016, the largest of any minority group (MPAA, 2017). Despite amounting to 17.1 percent of the U.S. population, Latinos represent only 5.6 percent of characters on television (Hunt & Ramón, 2015) and 5.8 percent in overall media (Smith, Choueiti, & Pieper, 2016), making them one of most underrepresented groups. Common stereotypes include hypersexuality, especially as the "Latin Lover" or as "exotically dangerous," and having thick accents compared to other groups (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Research concerning Latino viewers includes social identity threat, or the consequence of one's social identity being "culturally devalued" in society (Schmader et al., 2015, p. 55). The researchers applied this idea by examining how types of stereotypical representations of Mexican Americans could evoke social identity threat from Mexican American viewers. In their first study, 111 Mexican American college students were recruited to individually watch to movie clips, one from a

realistic drama, *Come and take it Day* (Carey & Mendiola, 2001), and one from an unrelated comedy, *Next Friday* (Alvarez, Curtis & Carr, 2000), and to rate each clip based on portrayal quality, one's group identity importance, as well as emotional response. Results indicated that the Mexican American students felt shame, guilt and anger after watching the stereotypical portrayals in both the comedy and drama clips. However, students who indicated group pride as part of their identity had fewer negative reactions to the clips than those who did not indicate group pride, which relates to Phinney's (1992) finding that ethnic identity development impacts adolescents' self-esteem in select ethnic groups. This finding is intriguing because the impact of media on a Native American individual's self-esteem could depend on whether that individual is closely affiliated with a tribe as a close affiliation may counter some of the negative ramifications of problematic representation.

In the second study (Schmader et al., 2015), 85 college students, either Mexican American or European American, individually watched the same videos from the first study but were told that they were watching the clips with a different person in another room. Without them knowing, the "different person" was a prerecording of someone laughing at the stereotypical jokes in the clips, and the person match a participant's ethnic identity to elicit "in-group" reactions. Results showed that both Mexican and European American students felt more shame, as well as some guilt, when the "in-group" person laughed at the stereotypical clips. Identity importance was not a major factor for shame in Mexican Americans, but self-esteem was. Though the Mexican American group was found to have lower positive implicit attitudes towards Latinos than European Americans immediately after watching the clips, the issue with these studies is the use of short clips from only two movies that purposely displayed stereotypical portrayals of Latinos. The films may have not been relevant or known to

participants considering that they were released well before the year of the article's publication (Schmader et al., 2015), and more recent films with Latino portrayals could have led to more authentic reactions from participants. Another problem was not having a way to record the long-term effects of the stereotypical portrayals on participants, which could include what their implicit attitudes toward Latino media representations were before the studies.

Despite the research on Blacks and Latinos being limited due to the methodology in connecting cultural identity to media representations, one takeaway could be that the impact of the representations depends on the way individuals consume media. For Native American adolescents, an important factor to consider is the extent of mainstream media in Native communities. Because Natives can also make their own content that could be viewed by the community, the messages from their content could diverge from the messages in mainstream media regarding representation and personal identity. One implication would be bridging the gap between the two mediums with cultural interpreters from both sides to make mainstream media better represented and to promote cultural identity (Levo-Henriksson, 2007). Nonetheless, further research will need a larger set of media that Native American viewers would consume as well as consider the media that they value, which may or may not be the same variables.

Implications

The literature has shown that there is a general need to improve the representations of Native Americans, and one of the medium of doing so is through mainstream media. Although the stereotypes throughout film history and recent media are apparent, it is imperative that further research discusses positive ways that Native Americans can be represented. Ethnic identity, which relates to shared cultural traits within a group (Lieber, 1996), is virtually similar

to cultural identity, which emphasizes participation in cultural practices within a group (Whitesell et al., 2009), alternative to combine both would be simply “Native American identity.” The potential of negative representation, and lack of any representations could lead to adolescents feeling invisible in their community, and therefore having lower self-esteem. However, ethnic/cultural identity may not be a factor in determining self-esteem, due to self-esteem’s reliance on individualism, suggesting that Native American identity focuses more on a collective identity within the community. Furthermore, research on other minority groups show that the impact of representation may depend on whether mainstream media is valued by a group, compared to self-made media created by that group.

The missing element in most of the research reviewed is a methodology in determining the actual impact of representations on adolescents. Statements about negative portrayals and emphasis on identity and self-esteem were made, but there is still little known about Native American adolescents’ media consumption habits and if those habits are the result of their values. Considering that nearly all of the research on ticket sales and viewership did not include Native Americans as a single demographic but rather often combined with Asian Americans and other minority groups as “other,” the role of media platforms, especially film and television, in Native American adolescents’ identity and self-esteem, as well as the adolescents’ usage of these platforms, has yet to be evaluated. Moreover, by combining Native Americans with Asians and other minority groups in academic research, researchers are contributing to inherent biases as well as the lack of understanding of Native populations, for at least the acknowledgement of limited data could strengthen the need to conduct more research targeted at these populations.

Based on the limitations of the research, an improved study could be framed by understanding how Native American adolescents perceive media, such as film and television, in

their everyday lives and what they think are the positive and negative impacts of the Native representations present. However, instead of approaching the question of representation as the means of exploiting Native American adolescents' identity, an alternative approach could be gathering information on what specific films they watch and what characters they like or value. Additionally, gathering information the adolescents' interest in the entertainment industry could lead to a better understanding of the resources opportunities made available to them, which a lack of interest may be another potential factor in the lack of representation in mainstream film on and off-screen. Furthermore, a larger sample size consisting of more Native American adolescents in geographic locations such as reservations would benefit the validity of any assertions made.

Methodology

Participants

Thirty-one students attending 3 select independent high schools in New Mexico were recruited to participate in this study. Since New Mexico has one of the highest populations of Native Americans per state population (Hoeffel, Norris & Vines, 2012), the independent high schools were selected based on the possibility of having current Native students as well as the simplified process of receiving approval to conduct research on their students. The high schools' faculty and staff acted as intermediaries by emailing the students a voluntary online survey. Eligible participants were age 18 or over, which they indicated in the electronic consent form to access the survey. Participants were anonymous except for 3 identifying factors: name of their affiliated high school, their gender, and if they considered themselves to be Native American.

Measures

Data was gathered on three measures: media consumption, Native American awareness, and interest in the entertainment industry. The first measure was intended to understand the role of media to each participant: preferred forms of media and time consumed for each, preferred platform to watch, preferred content, and preferred performers. For the movies section, for instance, participants were asked the following questions in order: do you watch movies? On average, how many movies do you watch per week? Which platform(s) do you use to watch movies? Of the platforms you indicated, which do you use the most to watch movies? What are your three favorite movies? Who are your three favorite movie actors/actresses? Participants are prompted with multiple choice answers for the questions 1-3 (yes or no, number of movies, and a list of popular platforms). Questions 3-6 provided open responses for participants to provide the most relevant answers based on their preferences (question 3 included an open response for platforms that are not included in the provided list). The TV section used the same questions, though participants are asked to indicate the number of hours they watch TV per week instead of number of shows. Although movies and TV were the primary sections, an additional section was included for participants to indicate the other forms of media they use and which they spend the most time on. Additionally, if movies and TV section were irrelevant to the participant, the participant could skip the sections.

The second measure was intended to understand participants' awareness of Native American characters in the media they watched, which the entire sample's responses could provide insight on Native American's presence throughout mainstream media. If a participant indicated knowing a Native American actor/actress from a form of media, the participant is prompted to identify such actors/actresses, the form of media they are included in, and if they

had the role of a main character in that form of media. For media types outside of movies and TV shows, participants were simply asked to identify a Native American figure in any media. If participants could not identify Native American figures, they could skip this section.

The final measure was intended to find trends in self-esteem regarding interest to pursue a career in the entertainment industry. The primary trend considered was to see if participants who identified as Native American had interest in the entertainment industry and were aware of Native Americans in the media they consumed, particularly in the content and actors/actresses they indicated to be their favorites. Other possible trends include interest in the entertainment industry while indicated gender and favorite content and actors/actresses, as well as non-Native American interest in the entertainment industry. Through these trends, self-esteem could be seen as pursuing a career in the entertainment industry as the result of the content and actors/actresses watched, which could have implications of high or low self-esteem when ethnicity and gender are considered. Although this measure is limited to the questions asked, it could provide general insight on the influence of representation in media.

Procedure

An application with assessment materials was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Tufts University. The application included the research overview, a list of potential schools in New Mexico to recruit, a transcript of the online survey, and the link to the online survey. After receiving approval, recruitment emails were sent to the potential schools' deans, principals, or presidents for additional approval. The transcript of the online survey was provided upon request. Once permission was received by a school, a short description of the research and the link to the online survey was sent to faculty and staff, who identified eligible participants and acted as intermediaries by emailing the description and link to them. Participants then had the

choice to complete the survey at their convenience as the surveys were administered electronically through Tufts Qualtrics. No costs were incurred by neither the schools nor the participants, and no compensation was provided to participants.

Results

Population

Thirty-one students completed the survey within 2 weeks of opening the link sent to them. 12.9% (n=4) considered themselves to be Native American, while the remaining 87.1 % (n=27) identified as Non-Native American. 61.3% (n=19) identified as female, 35.5% (n=11) as male, and 3.2% (n=1) as non-binary/ third gender. Of the 4 Native American participants, 75% (n=3) identified as female and 25% (n=1) as non-binary/ third gender.

Media Consumption

To analyze the initial research questions through the data, it is important to recognize the role that media has on young adults, which the following subsections expand on based on the media consumption habits indicated in the survey. Each subsection describes the responses from all participants, followed by responses from Native American participants.

Movies

Of the 31 participants who completed the survey, 96.8% (n=30) indicated that they watched movies. Of those 30 participants, 90% (n=27) watch, on average, 1-2 movies per week, while 10% (n=3) watch 3-4 movies per week. No participant indicated watching 5 or more movies per week.

For watching movies, participants chose which platforms they regularly use from 6 different options: media streaming services, movie theaters, computers, smartphones/tablets,

TVs, and an optional space to add additional platforms. Participants could choose as many options as needed to reflect their habits. Of the listed platforms, 76.7% (n=23) of participants used media streaming services, 70% (n=21) used movie theaters, 60% (n=18) used computers, 50% (n=15) used smartphones and tablets, and 40% (n=12) used TVs. No participant indicated additional platforms with the optional space. Although the indicated use of media streaming services and movie theaters is similar, that similarity diverges when it comes to the most used platform: 56.7% (n=17) of participants indicated media streaming services as their most used platform, followed by 26.7% (n=8) for computers, 20% (n=6) for TVs, 13.3% (n=4) for smartphones, and 3.3% (n=1) for Redbox. No participant indicated movie theaters as the most used platform to watch movies.

Included among the participants, all the Native American participants indicated that they watched movies. 75% (n=3) of participants watch 1-2 movies per week, and 25% (n=1) watches 3-4 movies per week. For platforms regularly used to watch movies, 100% (n=4) of participants indicated that they used at least 3 of the listed platforms, all sharing media streaming services and computers as responses. In addition, 50% (n=2) of participants used smartphones tablets, 50% (n=2) uses used TVs, and 25% (n=1) used movie theaters. In terms of most used platform to watch movies, 50% (n=2) used computers the most, 25% (n=1) used smartphones the most, and 25% (n=1) used Netflix (media streaming service) the most. However, it should be noted that 50% (n=2) of participants indicated that they watch Netflix on their smartphones or computers, showing the overlap of media streaming services with physical devices.

In terms of favorite movies, participants enjoyed a wide variety of genres and periods. As Table 1 demonstrates, 83 unique movies were identified, though the majority of the movies were released in the last 10 years. Although most movies are specific, some of the responses were

vague, such as *Star Wars*, *Fast and Furious*, *Superman*, *Spider-Man*, *Harry Potter*, and *The Lord of The Rings*, for they all consist of multiple entities within their franchises. Additionally, multiple movies were identified more than once from different participants, including *Iron Man* (Arad, Feige, & Favreau, 2008), *The Avengers* (Feige & Whedon, 2012), and *Thor* (Feige & Branagh, 2011).

Table 1

Favorite Movies Identified by All Participants

Pretty in Pink	The Big Sick	One Day	The Perks of Being a Wallflower	Silver Linings Playbook	National Lampoon: Christmas Vacation	Moonlight	The Holiday	Super 8
Superbad	Monty Python and the Holy Grail	Skyfall	Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl	Star Wars	Baby Driver	Clueless	The Dictator	Treasure Planet
Atlantis: The Lost Empire	Brother Bear	Inception	Grand Budapest Hotel	Amélie	Heathers	Virgin Suicides	Sleepless in Seattle	Stardust
Inception	Anna Karenina	The Emperor's New Groove	Places in the Heart	The Heat	Arrival	Lion	The Book of Life	Sausage Party
The Saw Series	Zombieland	Girls Trip	The Conjuring	Fast and Furious	Rush Hour	Doctor Strange	Thor	Jigsaw
The Foreigner	The Great Gatsby	Planet Hulk	Ridiculous 6	Iron Man	Superman	The Avengers	James Bond Series	The Hunger Games
The Notebook	Endless Love	Spider-Man	Split	Annabelle Series	The Conjuring Series	The Hobbit	Moana	The Stanford Prison Experiment
It	The Lucky One	The Green Mile	Dunkirk	Wonder Woman	Kill Bill	Scott Pilgrim vs. the World	Jaws	Tangled
Good Will Hunting	War Dogs	Thor: Ragnarok	Salt	Madea's Big Happy Family	Dismissed	The Hangover	Harry Potter	The Lord of The Rings
Justice League	Iron Man 3							

The following movies were identified by all Native American participants as their favorites: *Arrival* (Levine et al., 2016), *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (Hahn, Trousdale, & Wise, 2001), *The Book of Life* (Berger et al., 2014), *Brother Bear* (Williams, Blaise, & Walker, 2003), *It* (Grahame-Smith et al., 2017), *Jaws* (Brown, Zanuck, & Spielberg, 1975), *Kill Bill* (Bender &

Tarantino, 2003), *Lion* (Canning, Fielder, Sherman, & Davis, 2016), *The Lucky One* (Di Novi, McCormick, & Hicks, 2012), *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* (Gitter et al., 2010), *The Stanford Prison Experiment* (Emery et al., 2015), and *Treasure Planet* (Conli, Clements, & Musker, 2002).

Due to the wide range of favorite movies, participants also had a wide range of favorite actors and actresses. Table 2 shows the 68 unique actors and actresses identified, with many being identified multiple times by different participants. The most identified people were Jennifer Lawrence, Johnny Depp, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Scarlett Johansson. Some participants indicated only one actor/actress, and only 6.7% (n=2) of participants indicated that they didn't have any favorite actors/actresses. Some of the actors and actresses were assumed based on an apparent misspelling, specifically Gal Gadot and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. Additionally, one participant indicated James Bond as a favorite, though it is unclear which actor the participant intended to identify.

Table 2

Favorite Movie Actors and Actresses Identified by All Participants

Brie Larson	Zoe Kazan	Saoirse Ronan	Chevy Chase	Blake Lively	Emma Watson	Reese Witherspoon	Taraji P. Henson	Meryl Streep
Johnny Depp	Al Pacino	Tom Cruise	Natalie Portman	Jason Bateman	Ansel Elgort	Jonah Hill	Ruby Rose	Cara Delevingne
Zendaya	Joseph Gordon-Levitt	Winona Ryder	Anne Hathaway	Helena Bonham Carter	Melissa McCarthy	Sofia Vergara	Ben Stiller	Liam Hemsworth
Jennifer Lawrence	Vin Diesel	Paul Walker	Jennifer Aniston	Chris Hemsworth	Jackie Chan	Leonardo DiCaprio	Anthony Hopkins	Harrison Ford
Michael Fassbender	Tom Hiddleston	Cate Blanchett	Gal Gadot	Scarlett Johansson	Lili Reinhart	Katherine Langford	Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson	Megan Fox
Salma Hayek	Sofia Vergara	Chyna Anne McClain	Jin Tian	Hillary Duff	Tina Fey	Amy Poehler	James Bond	Kerry Washington
Amy Poehler	Uma Thurman	Chris Pine	Sandra Bullock	Eddie Redmayne	Ziyi Zhang	Jay Zhou	Hugh Jackman	Will smith
Gabrielle Union	Cole Sprouse	Channing Tatum	Tom Holland	Sacha Baron Cohen				

The following movie actors and actresses were identified by 3 Native American participants as their favorites: Anne Hathaway, Ben Stiller, Cara Delevingne, Chris Pine, Johnny Depp, Ruby Rose, Sofia Vergara, Uma Thurman, and Zendaya. One Native American participant did not provide favorites due to not having any.

TV Shows

Of the 31 participants, 80.65% (n=25) watch TV, while 19.35% (n=6) do not watch TV. Of the 25, 28% (n=7) watch 1-2 hours of TV per week, 40% (n=10) watch 3-4 hours, 24% (n=6) watch 5-10 hours, and 8% (n=2) watch 10 or more hours.

For watching TV, participants chose which platforms they regularly use from 5 options: TV, media streaming services, computers, smartphones/tablets, and an optional space to add additional platforms. Like movies, participants could choose as many options as needed to reflect their habits. Of the listed platforms, 80% (n=20) participants used media streaming services, 72% (n=18) used TVs, 48% (n=12) used computers, and 44% (n=11) used smartphones and tablets. In terms of most used platform, media streaming platforms were by far the most used with 64% (n=16) participants using them, 24% (n=6) for computers, 24% (n=6) for TVs, and 12% (n=3) for smartphones and tablets.

Included among the 25 participants, all Native American participants indicated that they watched TV. 25% (n=1) watches 1-2 hours of TV per week, 50% (n=2) watch 3-4 hours, and 25% (n=1) watches 10 or more hours. For platforms regularly used to watch TV, 100% (n=4) participants indicated that they used TVs, media streaming services, computers, and smartphones and tablets, which comprise of all the listed platforms indicated by the 25 participants. In terms of most used platform to watch TV, 50% (n=2) used computers the most, 25% (n=1) used smartphones the most, and 25% (n=1) used Netflix (media streaming service) the most.

Like movies, participants' favorite TV shows range from a wide variety of genres and periods. Table 3 shows the 50 unique shows identified, and although the number of shows is noticeably less than the movies identified, it is worth mentioning that most of the shows identified have lasted for multiple seasons, thus providing more content than the average movie. Additionally, some of the responses, specifically the NBA, NCAA, and CBA, are vague as they comprise of thousands of games across the nation, creating inconsistency in viewership.

Table 3

Favorite TV Shows Identified by All Participants

House of Cards	Crazy Ex-Girlfriend	Parenthood	Game of Thrones	Vampire Diaries	Skin Wars	Gossip Girl	Insecure	She's Gotta Have It
Big Little Lies	Shameless	The Blacklist	Stranger Things	The Office	Criminal Minds	Parks and Recreation	RuPaul's Drag Race	Bob's Burgers
Grey's Anatomy	Friends	Master of None	Girls	The Big Bang Theory	Breaking Bad	Veep	Broad City	Mindhunter
Pretty Little Liars	Scandal	The Walking Dead	South Park	Bighead	American Horror Story	Strangers	The Flash	NBA
Once Upon A Time	Forever	Orange Is the New Black	Power	Sherlock	Chopped	Big Brother	My 600 lb. Life	Rick and Morty
Archer	Riverdale	13 Reasons Why	NCAA	CBA				

The following TV shows were identified by 3 Native American participants as their favorites: *Bob's Burgers* (Bouchard & Dauterive, 2011), *Breaking Bad* (Gilligan, Johnson, & MacLaren, 2008-2013), *Broad City* (Becky et al., 2009-2011), *Grey's Anatomy* (Rhimes, 2005-), *RuPaul's Drag Race* (Bailey et al., 2009-), *Shameless* (Wells, 2011-), *Stranger Things* (Duffer & Duffer, 2016-), *Veep* (Iannucci, 2012-), and *9-1-1* (Buecker et al., 2018-). One Native American participant provided the same answers as the previous question on favorite movies, so that response was not included in this section.

Because of the diverse range of favorite TV shows, participants also had a variety of favorite TV actors and actresses. Table 4 shows the 50 unique actors and actresses identified,

with many being identified multiple times. The most identified people were Neil Patrick Harris, Amy Poehler, Winona Ryder, and Evan Peters. 12% (n=3) of participants indicated that they didn't have any favorite actors and actresses. Interestingly, 3 NBA stars- Kobe Bryant, Kevin Durant, and Shaquille O'Neal were identified as favorite actors, despite O'Neal being the only out of the 3 with acting experience.

Table 4

Favorite TV Show Actors and Actresses Identified by All Participants

Rachel Bloom	Kate McKinnon	Aidy Bryant	Neil Patrick Harris	Ian Somerhalder	Kevin Spacey	James Spader	Winona Ryder	Rainn Wilson
Jennifer Aniston	Amy Poehler	Gina Rodriguez	Andy Samberg	Patrick Dempsey	Mila Kunis	Aziz Ansari	Millie Bobby Brown	Kim Cattrall
Benedict Cumberbatch	Robin Williams	Laurence Fishburne	Chandler Riggs	Shemar Moore	Matthew Gray Gubler	Kerry Washington	Cole Sprouse	Steven Yuen
Evan Peters	Emma Roberts	Nick Kroll	David Tennant	Bryan Cranston	Michael C. Hall	Kobe Bryant	Kevin Durant	Shaquille O'Neal
Ginnifer Goodwin	Tina Fey	Hillary Duff	Angela Bassett	Connie Britton	Justin Roiland	Kit Harrington	Johnny Galecki	Julianna Margulies
Taraji P. Henson	Samira Wiley	Lily Reinhart	KJ Apa	Blake Lively				

The following TV actors and actresses were identified by 3 Native American participants as their favorites: Andy Samberg, Angela Bassett, Connie Britton, Evan Peters, Gina Rodriguez, James Spader, Laurence Fishburne, Robin Williams, and Winona Ryder. One Native American participant did not provide favorites due to not having any.

Other Media

Although media outside of movies and TV shows were not the focus of this study, participants has the option to indicate the other forms of media they use regularly. 30 participants answered this section while 1 participant left the section blank. Participants could choose as many forms from the following: music, social media, books, video games, magazines, and a space for additional media forms. Of the 30 participants, 100% (n=30) listen to music, 90% (n=27) use social media, 63.3% (n=19) read books, 43.3% (n=13) play video games, and 13.3%

(n=4) read magazines. No participant indicated additional media forms. In terms of the most used media form, 50% (n=15) indicated that they spent the most time listening to music, followed by 40% (n=12) for social media, 16.7% (n=5) for video games, 3.3% (n=1) for books, and 0% (n=0) for magazines. While the breakdown of media forms most used is similar to the initial question of regular use, the noticeable difference was the rapid decline of books from regular use to most used media form.

Included among the 30 participants, all Native American participants indicated that they used at least 3 of listed media forms regularly, and 1 used all the listed media forms. In terms of the most used media form, 75% (n=3) indicated that they listened to music the most while 25% (n=1) spend the most time using social media.

Interest in the Entertainment Industry

After participants indicated their media consumption habits, they were asked if they have ever considered pursuing a career in the entertainment industry (inclusive of all media platforms). Of the 31 participants, 58.1% (n=18) responded yes while 41.9% (n=13) responded no. For the 18 that responded yes, they were then asked to indicate what roles they were interested in pursuing, as seen in Table 5. 18 unique roles were identified across the industry, not limited to media production roles. Some roles were identified multiple times by different participants, the most popular being acting by 44.4% (n=8) of participants, screenwriting/writing by 27.8% (n=5), directing by 22.2% (n=4), producing by 11.1% (n=2), and playing music by 11.1% (n=2). The only confusing response was “bar,” for it is uncertain what specific role the participant was indicating in this context.

Table 5

Potential Roles in the Entertainment Industry Identified by Select Participants

Director	Producer	Bar*	Actor	Singer	Model	Basketball Player	Musician	Designer
Professional Gamer	Makeup Artist	Character Creator	Dancer	Performer	Screenwriter	Photographer	Cinematographer	Set Designer

Of the 4 Native American participants, 50% (n=2) were included in the 18 that responded yes to interest in the entertainment industry. One participant was interested in screenwriting, and the other was interested in acting, directing, and screenwriting.

Native American Awareness

The first research question comprises of the following subsections on awareness of actors and actresses, movies and TV shows, and other forms of media. Each subsection describes the responses from all participants, followed by an elaboration of responses from Native American and Non-Native American participants.

Awareness of Native American Actors and Actresses

Of the 31 participants asked if they could name a Native American actor or actress, 32.3% (n=10) indicated that they could. When prompted to name a Native American actor or actress, they provided the responses shown in Table 6. Participants had the ability to identify more than one actor or actress if desired. 20 unique individuals were identified, with some being identified multiple times. The most identified individuals were Jason Momoa by 30% (n=3) of participants, Megan Fox by 20% (n=2), Taylor Lautner by 20% (n=2), and Russel Means by 20% (n=2).

Table 6

Native American Actors and Actresses Identified by Select Participants

Roger Willie	Wes Studi	Adam Beach	Russel Means	Benjamin Bratt	Graham Greene	Julia Jones	Eddie Spears	Booboo Stewart
Taylor Lautner	Lou diamond Phillips	Alex Rice	Jason Momoa	Danny Trejo	Megan Fox	Michael Spears	Angelina Jolie	Trixie Mattell
Patricia Michaels	Forrest Goodluck							

Included among the 10 participants, 3 Native American participants indicated that they could name a Native American actor or actress. The following 15 individuals were identified by the 3 participants: Roger Willie, Wes Studi, Adam Beach, Russel Means, Benjamin Bratt, Graham Greene, Danny Trejo, Megan Fox, Taylor Lautner, Michael Spears, Angelina Jolie, Trixie Mattel, and Patricia Michaels. Moreover, 33.3% (n=1) identified 8 of those individuals, 33.3% (n=1) identified 5 of those individuals, and 33.3% (n=1) identified the remaining 2 individuals.

The 7 Non-Native American participants identified 8 unique individuals: Booboo Stewart, Taylor Lautner, Lou Diamon Phillips, Alex Rice, Jason Momoa, Russel Means, Megan Fox, and Forrest Goodluck. Additionally, Russel Means, Megan Fox, and Taylor Lautner were identified by both a Native American participant and a Non-Native American participant.

Awareness of Movies and TV Shows with Native American Characters

Of the 31 participants asked if they could name a movie or TV show with Native American character, 58.1% (n=18) indicated that they could. When prompted to name such movies or TV shows, they provided the responses shown in Table 7. Participants had the ability to identify more than one movie or TV show if desired. 30 unique movies and TV shows were identified, 70% (n=21) being movies and 26.7% (n=8) being TV shows. Although it was expected that the TV shows have various seasons and episodes from which to identify Native

American characters, some of the movie responses were vague, particularly *The Twilight Saga* (Godfrey et al., 2008-2012) and *John Wayne Movies*. The most identified movies and TV shows were *Smoke Signals* (Alexie & Eyre, 1998) by 13.3% (n=4) of participants, *The Twilight Saga* by 10% (n=3), *The Lone Ranger* (Bruckheimer & Verbinksi, 2013) by 10% (n=3), *Dances with Wolves* (Wilson, J & Costner, 1990) by 10% (n=3), and *Game of Thrones* (Benioff et al., 2011-) by 6.7% (n=2).

Table 7

Movies and TV Shows with Native American Characters Identified by Select Participants

Windtalkers (M)	The Twilight Saga (M)	Apocalypto (M)	CSI (TV)	Fargo (TV)	Dances with Wolves (M)	Smoke Signals (M)	Turquoise Rose (M)	The Lone Ranger (M)
Wind River (M)	Pocahontas (M)	The Last of the Mohicans (M)	Game of Thrones (TV)	Iron Man (M)	Thor (M)	Sausage Party (M)	Criminal Minds (TV)	Breaking Bad (TV)
The Book of Life (M)	The Indian in the Cupboard (M)	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (TV)	Reel Injun (M*)	Eréndira (M)	New Girl (TV)	Running Man (M)	Geronimo (M)	John Wayne Movies (M)
The Revenant (M)	House of Cards (TV)	Justice League (M)						

M = Movie, TV = TV Show, M = Documentary*

Included among the 18 participants, 3 Native American participants identified the following 15 movies and TV shows: *Windtalkers* (Chang et al., 2002), *The Twilight Saga*, *Apocalypto* (Davey & Gibson, 2006), *CSI* (Bruckheimer, 2000-2015), *Fargo* (Coen, Coen, & Hawley, 2014-), *Dances with Wolves*, *Smoke Signals*, *Turquoise Rose* (Johnson, Tulley, & Hamilton, 2007), *The Lone Ranger*, *Wind River* (Berg et al., 2017), *Breaking Bad*, *Book of Life*, *The Indian in the Cupboard* (Kennedy, Marshall, Startz, & Oz, 1995), *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* ((Wolf, 1999-), and *Reel Injun* (Fon et al., 2009). Moreover, 33.3% (n=1) identified

10 of those movies and shows, 33.3% (n=1) identified 6, and 33.3% (n=1) identified 1. However, the second and third participant each identified a movie that the first already identified.

The 15 Non-Native American participants identified 19 unique movies and shows: *The Twilight Saga*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Pocahontas*, *Dances with Wolves*, *The Last of The Mohicans*, *Smoke Signals*, *Game of Thrones*, *Iron Man*, *Thor*, *Sausage Party* (Ellison et al., 2016), *Criminal Minds* (Davis, 2005-), *Eréndira* (Quefféléan, Ziegler, & Guerra, 1983), *New Girl* (Meriwether, 2011-), *Running Man* (Linder, Zinnemann, & Glaser, 1987), *Geronimo* (Cook, et al., 1993), *John Wayne Movies*, *The Revenant* (Golin et al., 2015), *House of Cards* (Willimon, 2013-), and *Justice League* (Berg et al., 2017). Additionally, *The Twilight Saga*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Dances with Wolves*, and *Smoke Signals* were identified by both Native American and Non-Native American participants.

The 18 participants were then asked which of the movies and TV shows they identified had Native American main characters. Table 8 reflects the 17 movies and shows that 66.7% (n=12) of participants identified. 33.3% (n=6) indicated that none of the movies or shows they previously mentioned had such main characters. The most identified movies and shows were *Smoke Signals* (M) by 33.3% (n=4), *The Twilight Saga* by 16.7% (n=2), *The Lone Ranger* by 16.7% (n=2), and *Dances with Wolves* by 16.7% (n=2). It should be noted that *Dreamcatcher* (Kasdan, Okun, & Kasdan, 2003) was added among the responses despite not being previously mentioned.

Table 8

Movies and TV Shows with Native American Main Characters Identified by Select Participants

Windtalkers (M)	The Twilight Saga (M)	Apocalypto (M)	Dances with Wolves (M)	Smoke Signals (M)	Turquoise Rose (M)	Dreamcatcher (M)	The Lone Ranger (M)	Pocahontas (M)
The Last of the	Game of Thrones (TV)	Iron Man (M)	Thor (M)	Reel Injun (M*)	Eréndira (M)	Running Man (M)	Justice League (M)	

Mohicans (M)								
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M = Movie, TV = TV Show, M = Documentary*

Among the 12 participants, 2 Native American participants identified the following 9 movies and shows: *Windtalkers, The Twilight Saga, Apocalypto, Dances with Wolves, Smoke Signals, Turquoise Rose, Dreamcatcher, The Lone Ranger, and Reel Injun*. Moreover, 50% (n=1) identified 8 of those movies and shows, while 50% (n=1) identified 2. However, the second participant identified a movie that the first already identified.

The 10 Non-Native American participants identified 12 unique movies and shows: *The Twilight Saga, The Lone Ranger, Pocahontas, Dances with Wolves, The Last of The Mohicans, Smoke Signals, Game of Thrones, Iron Man, Thor, Eréndira, Running Man, and Justice League*. Additionally, *The Twilight Saga, The Lone Ranger, Dances with Wolves, and Smoke Signals* were identified by both Native American and Non-Native American participants.

Awareness of Other Media with Native Americans

Of the 31 participants asked if they could name a Native American figure from other types of media used that they, 35.5% (n=11) indicated that they could. When prompted to name figures, they provided the responses shown in Table 9. Participants had the ability to identify more than one individual if desired. 11 unique individuals and entities were identified by the 11 participants, with 54.5% (n=6) of those individuals related to books and 18.2% (n=2) related to video games. The most identified figures were Sherman Alexie by 45.5% (n=5) and Leslie Marmon Silko by 36.7%. It is important to note that some of the figures were identified by their works, such as Elizabeth Cohen Van Pelt and Loir Alvord's "The Scalpel and the Silver Bear" (paired together to represent the book). Additionally, the Counter-Strike: Global Offensive

response was identified for the “Native American team” without further detail, so it was considered as one entity.

Table 9

Other Media with Native American Figures Identified by Select Participants

Sherman Alexie (Books)	Louise Erdich (Books)	Leslie Marmon Silko (Books)	Simon Ortiz (Books)	Alex Rice (M/TV)	Connor Kenway, Assassin's Creed 3 (Video Game)	Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (Video Game)	Ron Baker, NBA (Sports)	Beyoncé (Music)
Elizabeth Cohen Val Pelt and Lori Alvord (Books)	Paula Gunn Allen (Books)							

Among the 11 participants, 3 Native American participants identified the following 5 figures: Sherman Alexie, Louise Erdich, Leslie Marmon Silko, Simon Ortiz and Paula Gunn Allen. Moreover, 33.3% (n=1) participant identified 4 of those figures, while 33.3% (n=1) identified 2 and 33.3% (n=1) identified 1. However, the second and third participants identified a figure that the first already identified.

The 8 Non-Native American participants identified 7 figures and entities: Sherman Alexie, Alex Rice, Connor Kenway, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, Ron Baker, Beyoncé, and Leslie Marmon Silko. Additionally, Sherman Alexie and Leslie Marmon Silko were identified by both Native American and Non-Native American participants.

Discussion

Based on the media consumption data, the commonality among most participants is watching media multiple times every week, potentially showing the significance of the media consumed every day. Although many participants indicated that they still use movie theaters or traditional TV (broadcast and cable) to watch movies and shows, the majority of students

consider media streaming services as their top way of consuming media every day. One of the potential confusions was overlap between media streaming services and devices to stream, including computers, smartphones and tablets, and even television sets. Thus, the data may not be accurate as more participants could be using media streaming services than indicated from the survey. Moreover, with 90% (n=27) of participants watching an average of 1-2 movies per week (roughly 3-4 hours per week), and 92% (n=23) ranging from 1 to 10 hours of shows per week (with an average of 3-4 hours per week, though greater distribution between options), it is possible that participants value movies similarly to shows due to the versatility and variety of content in media streaming services. Another reason for the similar distribution could be the accessibility of both movies and TV shows in media streaming services, for many services, such as Netflix and Hulu, display both mediums together.

As the Tables 1-4 show, participants vary across a wide range of movies, TV shows, actors and actresses. For the purpose of this study, the data will be considered in the context of the following section on Native American representation, and will not be analyzed in its own section. However, given the familiarity of the movie, shows, and individuals in most of the responses in the tables, most participants value content from mainstream sources, reaffirming the significance of their responses in the following section.

Native American Representation

As Tables 6-9 show, there is a smaller amount of known content with Native American representation. With 32.3% (n=10) of participants able to identify a Native American actor or actress, 58.1% (n=18) able to identify a movie or show with Native American characters, 38.7% (n=12) able to identify a movie or show with Native Americans as main characters, and 35.5% (n=11) able to identify a Native American figure from another form of media, the consensus

indicates that roughly a third of participants are aware of content with Native Americans. The exception would be the 58.1% (n=18) who could identify a movie or show. However, with both the 18 participants and the other sets ranging from 10 to 12 participants, there is an imbalance of awareness of Native American representation.

Despite Non-Native American participants outnumbering Native participants, Native participants provided a higher rate of responses in this section than Non-Native American participants. Regarding Native American actors and actresses, 25.9% (n=7) of Non-Native American participants identified 8 unique individuals, while 75% (n=3) of Native American participants identified 15 unique individuals. Regarding movies and shows with Native American characters, 44.4% (n=12) of Non-Native American participants identified 19 unique movies and show, while 75% (n=3) of Native American participants identified 15 movies and shows. Regarding movies and shows with Natives as main characters, 37% (n=10) of Non-Native American participants identified 12 movies and shows, while 50% (n=2) of Native American participants identified 9 movies and shows. Finally, regarding other media with Native Americans, 29.6% (n=8) of Non-Native American participants identified 7 individuals and entities, while 75% (n=3) Non-Native American participants identified 5 individuals. In these instances, the Native American participants provided more responses or were within 4 responses of matching the Non-Native American participants, who at least doubled (or quadrupled) the Native American participants. However, it should be noted that one specific Native American participant identified most of content identified by the 3 Native American participants, providing 4-10 examples per question. Without this specific participant, the rate of responses for Native American participants would have been significantly lower.

With quantity of responses reviewed above, the next important aspect is the quality of those responses. Although the higher number of responses could signify an increased awareness of Native American representation, the overarching problem found in the data is the elasticity of the Native American identity. Many of individuals and media content identified as Native American were questionable. Table 10, a list of identified individuals from Table 6, reflects a web search on each individual's background.

Table 10

Native American Backgrounds of Identified Actors and Actresses

Individuals Identified as Native American	Individual's Known Background	Source Citations (Included in References)
Roger Willie	Navajo	("Roger Willie," n.d.)
Wes Studi	Cherokee	(Schilling, 2018)
Adam Beach	Saulteaux- First Nations	(Beach, 2017)
Russel Means*	Oglala Lakota	(McFadden, 2012)
Graham Greene	Oneida- First Nations	(Schilling, 2017)
Julia Jones	Choctaw/Chickasaw Heritage	(Staff, 2014)
Eddie Spears	Kul Wicasa Oyate Lakota	(Hill, 2012)
Alex Rice*	Mohawk- First Nations	(Rice, n.d.)
Michael Spears	Kul Wicasa Oyate Lakota	(Hill, 2012)
Booboo Stewart*	Blackfoot Ancestry, other backgrounds	(Park, 2010)
Trixie Mattel	Ojibwe	(Brooke, 2015)
Patricia Michaels	Taos Pueblo	(Jacobs, 2015)
Forrest Goodluck*	Navajo, other Tribes	(Doty, 2016)
Lou Diamond Phillips*	Cherokee Ancestry- Filipino/European	("Indian Group," 1990)
Benjamin Bratt	Quechua- Peru	(Wiltz, 2007)
Taylor Lautner*	Distant Native American Ancestry	(Murray, 2008)
Megan Fox*	Distant Native American Ancestry	(Staff, 2011)
Angelina Jolie	Distant Native American Ancestry	(Reitwiesner, n.d.)
Jason Momoa*	Native Hawaiian, Native American Ancestry	(Herrera, 2015)
Danny Trejo	Mexican American	(Bowles, 2010)

**Identified by Non-Native American participants*

While many of the individuals identified come from primarily Native American backgrounds, many also has questionable backgrounds. The first questionable background regards geographical identity and the incorporation of other indigenous groups. Due to its proximity to the U. S., the First Nations of Canada are often identified as Native American.

However, in the cases of Benjamin Bratt, Quechua from Peru (Wiltz, 2007), Jason Momoa, Native Hawaiian with Native American ancestry (Herreria, 2015), Lou Diamond Phillips, Filipino/European with Native American ancestry (“Indian Group,” 1990), and Danny Trejo, Mexican American (Bowles, 2010), it is uncertain if they would be considered Native American. Other individuals, specifically Taylor Lautner (Murray, 2008), Angelina Jolie (Reitwiesner, n.d.), and Megan Fox (Staff, 2011), claim to have “distant Native American ancestry,” though none have primary or confirmed Native backgrounds. Although Non-Native American participants indicated multiple individuals with questionable backgrounds, Native American participants also indicated questionable individuals, including Angelina Jolie and Taylor Lautner. Considering that the top 3 identified individuals—Jason Momoa, Taylor Lautner, and Megan Fox—are considered questionable, it is difficult to determine how some of the participants perceive the Native American identity.

Given the questionable responses on “Native American” individuals in the media, it is important to reflect on the political issues regarding Native American identity. Proving blood percentage to be a recognized member of select tribes (Lewis, n.d.), and the inconsistency of proof other tribes, give way to controversial situations where groups argue whether select individuals can claim to have a Native background without having proof. A recent individual in this situation is Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, who has claimed Native American ancestry, even identifying herself as a Native American in federal forms for academic institutions, despite genealogists finding no evidence of such ancestry. Her claims caused a debate as some, including tribal members, questioned her identity while others believed that she could identify the way her family raised her to identify as she is not claiming cultural affiliation (Linskey, 2018). Although Warren’s motives may not be malicious, claiming a Native American

identity may have negative implications, such as individuals trying to appear more diverse to stand out, a form of cultural appropriation that institutions may take advantage of to appear more diverse as well. Moreover, claiming a Native American identity leads to the issue of general audiences believing that select individuals, such as actors and actresses, are representations of Native American. This belief could create confusion on the importance of improving Native American representation as some may believe that it's no longer an issue due to these "Native American" individuals who are present in the media they watch.

In addition to the political implications, the question of elasticity in the Native American identity could stem from the movies and shows identified by participants. Based on the data from Table 7, there is a fair understanding of some Native American characters, such as those from *Smoke Signals*, *Pocahontas*, and *The Indian and the Cupboard*. However, many of these movies and shows resort to stereotypical portrayals mentioned in the literature review. For instance, the noble savage can be seen in *Pocahontas*, *The Indian and the Cupboard*, *Dances with Wolves*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Lone Ranger*, and *John Wayne Movies*. Some of the movies and shows include individuals considered questionable from Table 10: Taylor Lautner leads a group of Native American-identifying werewolves in *The Twilight Saga*, while Jason Momoa plays a diverse Aquaman in *Justice League* and a character in *Game of Thrones*. Moreover, many of the movies and shows do not provide clear indications of what Native American characters are included, specifically, *Iron Man*, *Thor*, *The Book of Life*, *Eréndira*, *Sausage Party*, and *New Girl*. Additionally, many of the shows identified include Native American characters in specific episodes but not necessarily consistently across seasons: *CSI*, *Fargo*, *Criminal Minds*, *Breaking Bad*, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, and *House of Cards* face this inconsistency.

Table 8 is helpful to narrow the identified movies and shows to the ones with perceived Native Americans as main characters, though the responses have issues similar to the ones previously mentioned. There are still movies with stereotypical portrayals: *Pocahontas*, *Dances with Wolves*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *The Lone Ranger*. Some of the movies and content also had questionable Native Americans as main characters: *The Twilight Saga*, *Justice League*, *Game of Thrones*, and *The Lone Ranger*, which Johnny Depp, another actor who claims to have Native American ancestry (Staff, 2011), plays a Native American sidekick in the wild west. It should be noted that there are other Native American characters in *The Twilight Saga* that participants previously identified, though none have a role as central as Taylor Lautner. *Windtalkers* has a similar dilemma, for there are Native American characters but they act as supporting characters throughout the film. Other movies and shows still do not provide clear indications of Native American characters: *Iron Man*, *Thor*, *Eréndira*, *Running Man*, and *Dream Catcher*. Finally, two movies were considered anomalies to evaluation: *Apocalypto* and *Reel Injun*. *Apocalypto* is set in ancient Mayan culture, though multiple Native American actors are in the lead roles. This movie differs from the other content with stereotypical portrayal as only Native American and Latino individuals are present, though the characters exist in a savage-like environment. *Reel Injun* is a documentary that analyzes Native American representation in film over the years, so it is difficult to assess the documentary in comparison to the other content mentioned. The two films without the issues described above—*Smoke Signals* and *Turquoise Rose*—appear to have positive portrayals of Native Americans with Native American actors and actresses as the main characters. While *Smoke Signals* was identified by multiple participants, *Turquoise Rose* was identified only by a Native American participant, and the movie's popularity is unknown given its lack of theatrical and digital release.

Finally, the responses from Table 9, although limited to 11 responses, show that there is some awareness of Native Americans in media outside of movies and TV shows. Interestingly, 54.5% (n=6) of the individuals identified are book authors, indicating that literature may be a crucial form to understanding Native American representation. Participants provided other thought-provoking responses, such as the two video game characters/entities. Ron Baker of the NBA was also a surprise figure of interest. The one questionable individual identified was Beyoncé-- although her popularity in music is apparent, her Native American identity is not, considering that she also claims to have distant Native American ancestry (Mays, 2015). While books and video games provide potential in analyzing more content from these forms for future research, the remaining examples reflect the scarcity of known Native American representation across the media and entertainment industries.

Overall, given the small number of participants who indicated an individual or media content pertaining to Native American identity as well as the limitations of the responses due to the question of elasticity in the Native American identity, awareness of Native American representation in mainstream media from the participants is limited. To answer the first research question, while Non-Native American awareness of Native American representation is not strong, Native American awareness of Native American representation is difficult to determine. Of the 3 Native American participants who identified Native American individuals and content, 33.3% (n=1) provided most of the responses. Moreover, the Native participants also identified questionable individuals, such as Angelina Jolie and Taylor Lautner. Including the Native participant who didn't identify Native individuals or content, it would be unjust to generalize the group of 4 Native American participants by stating that their awareness was much stronger than

the Non-Native American participants, for the level of awareness is subjective to each participant.

Nevertheless, the overarching theme is that, in general, participants' awareness of Native American representation appears to be separate from the content they actively consume. Of the 251 unique actors, actresses, movies, and TV shows identified in Tables 1-4, only 3.6% (n=9) appear in Tables 6-9 for identified Native American individuals and content: Megan Fox, *Iron Man*, *Thor*, *Justice League*, *The Book of Life*, *House of Cards*, *Game of Thrones*, *Breaking Bad*, and *Criminal Minds*. Considering that the 9 were previously discussed to be questionable or inconsistent with Native American representation, a possible observation is that Native Americans are not present in the content that the participants consume. There are some exceptions, specifically *Wonder Woman*, and, arguably, *Brother Bear*, that contain Native American individuals or content and were not identified in Tables 6-9. Moreover, by limiting participants to only 3 of their favorite actors, actresses, movies, and shows, there is the potential that some Native American content could have been included among their favorites. However, under the given circumstances, the content identified as the participants' favorites reflect the popular content in mainstream media, which Native American representation is scarcely present.

The previous observation leads to the discussion of the second research question: how likely are Native American young adults to identify with Native American individuals in media? First, it is important to address that this question is limited to the 4 Native American participants who completed the survey. This question would be more effective had more Native American participants been recruited. Moreover, the flaw in this question is that the survey does not directly ask the question to the Native American participants. An assumption was made that participants' favorite actors, actresses, movies, and TV shows could suffice for identifying with

Native American individuals in media. Additionally, considering that 1 Native participant didn't have favorites, it would have been beneficial to expand the question to include other favorite media.

With those limitations in mind, based on the Native participants' favorite actors, actresses, movies, and TV shows indicated in the survey, the Native participants seemingly are not "likely" to identify with Native American individuals in movies and TV. Like Non-Native American participants, Native participants liked a variety of individuals and content, as shown in Table 11. Consequently, there are not Native American actors or actresses listed as favorites, or content other than the following: *The Book of Life*, *Brother Bear*, and *Breaking Bad*. However, those three were either marked as questionable regarding Native American representation, was not identified to have Native American representation by the participant, or had Native American characters in minor roles, so the significance of their appearance in Table 11 is relatively minimal. Although Native participants may not identify with Native American individuals in the context of favorites, it is noteworthy to mention the diversity of individuals identified in Table 11, including Gina Rodriguez, Sofia Vergara, Angela Bassett, Zendaya, Ruby Rose, and Laurence Fishburne. It is possible that the participants may look up to other individuals of minority backgrounds in the media they watch and identify with them, though the execution of this research question prevents large assumptions from being made.

Table 11

Favorite Movies, TV Shows, Actors, and Actresses Identified by Native American Participants

Uma Thurman (M)	Johnny Depp (M)	Chris Pine (M)	Anne Hathaway (M)	Sofia Vergara (M)	Ben Stiller (M)	Ruby Rose (M)	Cara Delevingne (M)	Zendaya (M)
Kill Bill (M)	Scott Pilgrim (M)	Jaws (M)	The Stanford Prison Experiment (M)	It (M)	The Lucky One (M)	Arrival (M)	Lion (M)	The Book of Life (M)

Treasure Planet (M)	Atlantis: The Lost Empire (M)	Brother Bear (M)	Winona Ryder (TV)	Gina Rodriguez (TV)	Andy Samberg (TV)	Robin Williams (TV)	James Spader (TV)	Laurence Fishburne (TV)
Evan Peters (TV)	Angela Bassett (TV)	Connie Britton (TV)	RuPaul's Drag Race (TV)	Bob's Burgers (TV)	Stranger Things (TV)	Breaking Bad (TV)	Veep (TV)	Broad City (TV)
Grey's Anatomy (TV)	9-1-1 (TV)	Shameless (TV)						

M = Movie, TV = TV Show

The final section in this discussion will address the final research question: is exposure to mainstream media with Native American inclusion associated with interest in pursuing a career in the entertainment industry? This research question was meant to continue the previous research question on identifying with Native American individuals in the media. The idea was if participants were aware of media content with Native Americans and identified with those individuals, they would be more likely interested in pursuing a career in the media entertainment. This idea is supposed to be a counter to the psychology of invisibility (Fryberg and Townsend, 2008), as Native American inclusion, with positive representation, could lead participants to see opportunities in the media industry, thus feeling a part of the greater community. Like the previous research question, this research question was assessed indirectly through the survey questions on favorite individuals and content in media, awareness of Native American individuals and content in media, and interest in pursuing a career in the entertainment/media industry. Because identifying with Native American individuals in the media was not a significant factor as discussed in the previous question, this research question relies on awareness and interest. Awareness was discussed in the first research question as some of the Native American participants had an awareness of Native American representation, albeit a few questionable responses.

As seen in Table 5 and the interest section in the results, 2 Native American participants were interested in pursuing a career in the entertainment industry through screenwriting, acting, and directing. One Native participant was one of the 2 participants who provided multiple responses regarding awareness, though this participant also provided the most questionable responses regarding Native American identity, including Angelia Jolie and Taylor Lautner. Nevertheless, this participant provided multiple responses for content with Native American in movies and shows as well as identified 3 Native book authors. Given that this participant is interested in screenwriting, the significance of the book authors is probable in relation to writing stories. However, it would have been more effective to have followed up with why the participant was interested in screenwriting, which could have led to stronger answers on either Native representation or select figures that the participant identified with in media.

The second participant to show interest in the entertainment industry was interested in acting, directing, and screenwriting. This participant also indicated favorites for actors, actresses, movies, and TV show. However, this participant also provided the lowest number of responses to the questions regarding Native American awareness. This participant identified two Native American individuals: Trixie Mattel and Patricia Michaels. These individuals were unorthodox compared to other responses considering that they both appeared in reaty TV, with Trixie Mattel appearing in *RuPaul's Drag Race* and Patricia Michaels appearing in *Project Runway*. In this sense, this participant had a different perception of Native American identity compared to the other participants, making the responses refreshing. Regardless of the perspective, it is still difficult to determine if Native American awareness and identifying with Native American individuals has any impact on the participant's interest in the entertainment industry. Like the previous participant, additional follow up questions regarding why the participant is interested in

the entertainments industry would be necessary to be assess any connection between awareness and interest.

Although the final research question cannot be fully assessed with the data collected, one positive assertion is that the two Native American participants, one female and one non-binary/third gender, are interested in the entertainment industry. Given the lack of diversity of Native Americans in the industry, especially those identifying as female and non-binary/third gender, their interest could reflect a desire to advocate for representation by becoming the ones representing others. Although that possibility cannot be confirmed, a more likely possibility is that they already feel welcomed in the communities they identify with and received encouragement to pursue such opportunities.

Limitations

As pointed out throughout the discussion, there were many limitations to the effectiveness of this study. The most apparent limitation was the sample, since only 12.9% (n=4) of the 31 participants identified as Native American. Considering the emphasis on Native American representation in the research questions, the small sample of Native participants greatly limited the assessment on the received responses. Although the Non-Native American responses were useful to providing a greater understanding of the perceived awareness of Native American representation in media, the initial hope was to have a larger presence of Native American respondents, which would have been rare among research studies like this one. One way to improve the recruitment process for Native participants is to expand the survey beyond the private and independent schools used for this study, especially ones closer to reservations that would have a larger population of Native American students. Moreover, direct access to students, as well as more preparation time to interact with them, could have increased the

number of Native American participants as the research would appear less impersonal and rushed. Additionally, because only students 18 years or older could participate in the study, that limited the available students at high schools who would be willing to take the study, both Native and Non-Native. By doing so, more students, especially Native American students who identify as male, could have contributed meaningful responses in addition to the ones already recorded. Likewise, it would have been useful for Non-Native participants to have the option to further identify themselves, particularly concerning racial background. Such options would have allowed greater insight on the responses from Non-Native participants, who seem too generalized at the moment by being identified as the “opposite” of Native American. Other minority group’s awareness of Native American representation would also have been advantageous to collect.

One limitation specific to this study was the focus on the New Mexican population. With greater diversity compared to other regions of the U.S., the participants recruited may have a greater awareness of Native American representation that participants in other regions lack. For instance, if this study were replicated in the Massachusetts area, there is a chance that participants wouldn’t be aware of *Smoke Signals*, a movie that takes place in the Southwest and is may be available to the Southwest population in ways that are not present in Massachusetts. Although the New Mexico population potentially provides a variety in sample, especially Native American participants, it would be effective to distribute the survey to other regions of the U.S. to see if other Native American participants respond the same way, or if other participants have a similar or different level of awareness of Native American representation.

In terms of the survey distributed to schools, the ultimate limitation was research questions not being fully applicable among the questions presented to participants. For both the

second and third research questions, explicitly stating them in a section for the Native American participants could have led to meaningful responses on how much the participants value their Native American identity and how they perceive it while consuming media and potentially contributing to media. Due to that limitation, the literature regarding identity and self-esteem could not have a greater role in the discussion of the results, decreasing the number of questions included in the survey. A future study would include such questions in additional measures of identity and self-esteem, preferably conducted with interviews. Furthermore, some of the questions regarding media consumption could have been expanded, such as “how many hours do you spend on media (TV, movies, other) per day?” Although the participants’ media consumption habits are consistent, they technically are less than what other sources are reporting (Common Sense Media, 2015), suggesting that participants may have underestimated their media consumption. Similarly, for the consumption questions on movies and TV shows, media streaming services and physical devices (smartphones, tablets, and TV sets) may be difficult to differentiate due to the intersection of media streaming services with many of such devices. Another limitation was the lack of comparison between media types; although participants indicated the platforms they used the most within each media type, there was not a question asking participants to identify their most used media type in relation to the other types. This question would have created further insight on which participants truly value movies and TV shows are their primary media types as well as those who prefer using other media types. On that note, it also would have been useful to elaborate on the other media types section, so that participants could indicate how much they consume those types and what their favorite content and individuals from that type were. With the current survey, participants who may have preferred using other media types than movies and TV shows could not be identified.

With these limitations and recommendations, the overall reasoning for most was the urge to rush the study through the IRB expedited review process. An improved study would require the full IRB review in order to ask deeper questions, especially ones on identity and self-esteem, and promote greater interaction between the researcher and the participants. Because the participants were anonymous to the researcher since the researcher was not present when the surveys were distributed and completed, it is possible that some responses were maliciously completed, completed multiple times by the same participant, or enabled participants to research answers. If a researcher were to visit the institutions and oversee, to some extent, the participants complete the survey, or perform individual interviews from students, there could have been richer answers as well as deeper reflection from the participants. Of course, interaction with the participants would complicate the IRB process, and additional approval from institutions, especially ones requiring superintendent or tribal review, would prolong the research process further than the researcher's current timeline. Thus, if this study were to be replicated, it would need the full IRB approval to reach as many participants as possible.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

Despite the limitations, what is clear of the study is that Native American representation is not a commonality among young adults. While some may be familiar with content including Native American characters, it is possible that most Americans are not familiar with Native American inclusive media, just as most participants were not aware in this study. Because Native American representation is not discussed in the public sphere to the extent that other minority groups have in recent years, this study could help push for further research on the importance of Native American representation among all populations and the media they consume on a regular

basis. Considering that little is known about Native Americans' media habits in addition to their media presence, future studies need to be intentional for both Native American and Non-Native American groups to reflect on the current distribution of representation and think of ways of improving representation.

One possibility could be the push for Native Americans in mainstream productions. In the case of *Black Panther* (Feige and Coogler, 2018), where a majority black cast played nontraditional roles within the superhero genre, the film resonated with audiences through a compelling storyline, strong characters, and the celebration of diversity. While *Black Panther's* success may not be replicated easily for other minority groups like Native Americans, that does not mean that it is impossible to recruit Native American actors and actresses for blockbusters with nontraditional and empowering roles. Of the Native American individuals identified in this study, most lacked the nontraditional and empowering elements, revealing a need to cast Native American individuals outside of the restrained roles currently limited to them. Additionally, although it is unlikely for a wave of Native American talent to emerge to the mainstream light in a similar manner to other minority groups, it would be ideal for Native representation to match the current Native population's percentage among the U.S. population.

Finally, with adolescents and young adults emerging as the next generation of primary consumers and creators, it is crucial that they are aware of Native American representation. Since they could be creating the content of the future, as well spending more time watching the new content created, having such awareness could lead to more intentional discussions on inclusivity at a higher level of authority. And by encouraging Native populations to pursue careers in the entertainment industry to eventually saturate the industry, adolescents could experience an

increase in self-esteem or embracement of identity knowing that they are valued within the greater community.

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