

Do Parents' Emotions Affect Their Preschoolers'? A Cross Cultural Study Between Native American and European American Families

Vanity Hernandez, Emma Dalton, Ainsley Burchette, Zoe Raba, and Seunghee Han

Hollins University, Department of Psychology

Regression

Correlations

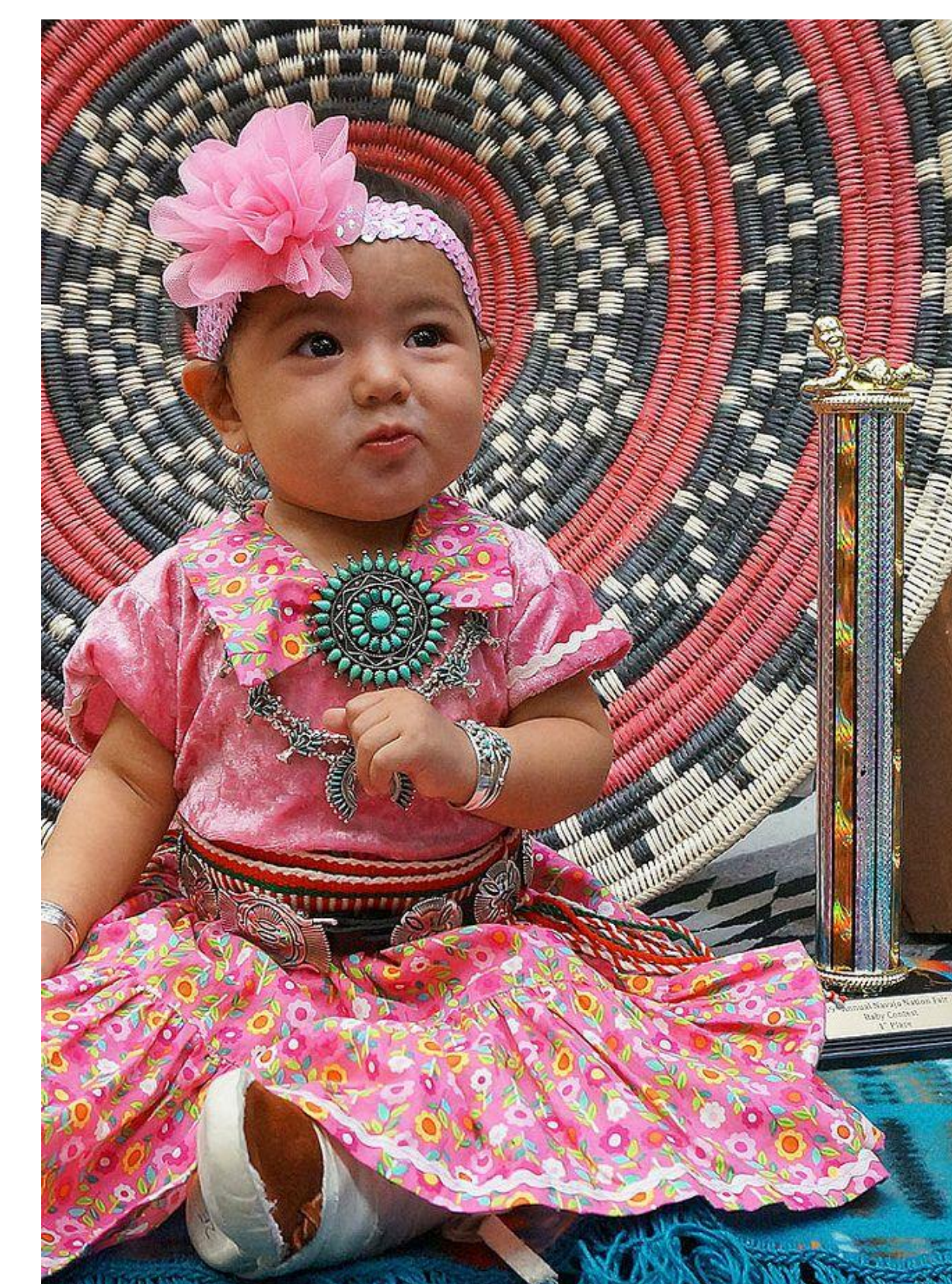
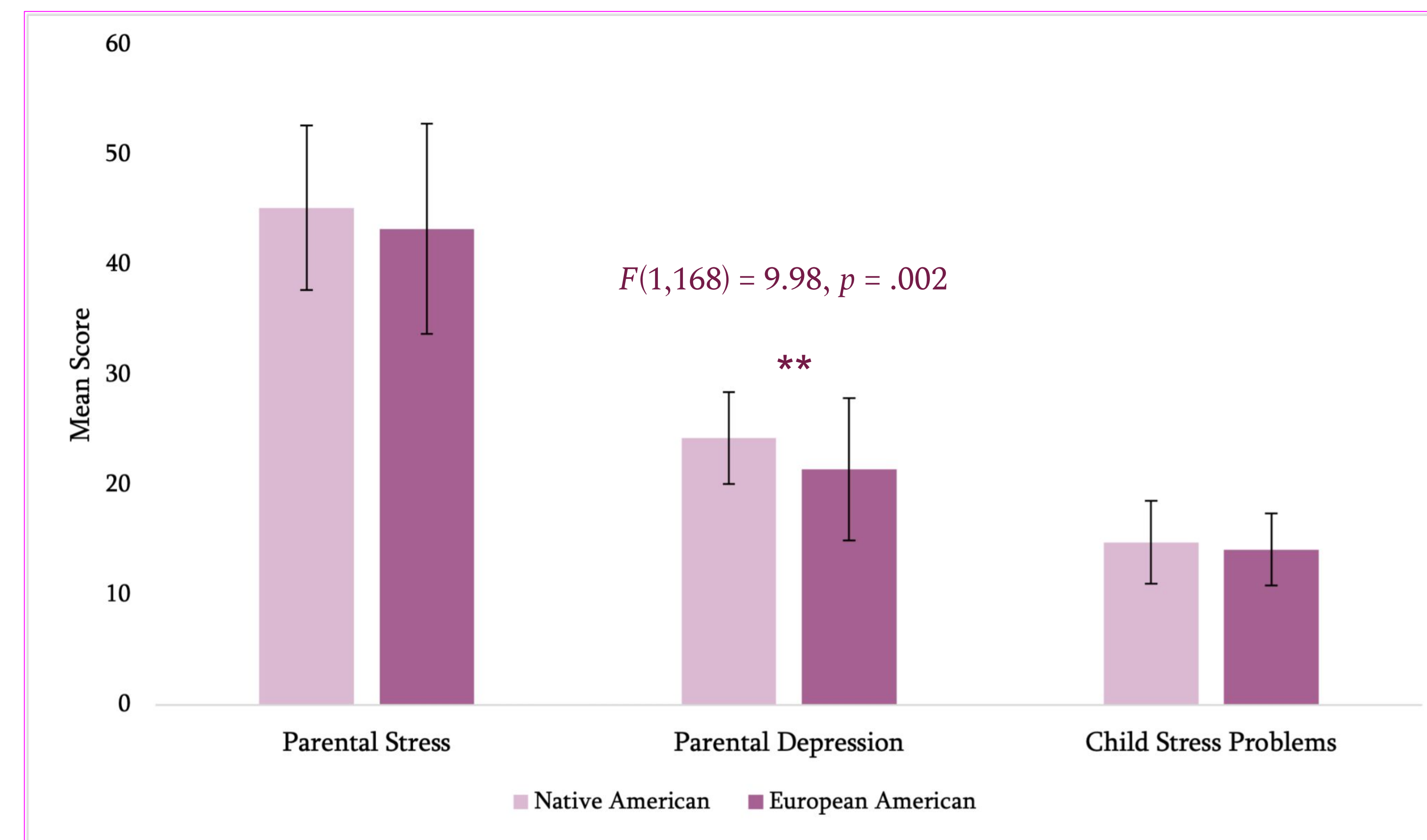
	Parental Stress	Parental Depression	Child Stress Problems
Parental Stress	-	.593***	.528***
Parental Depression	.497***	-	.465***
Child Stress Problems	.587***	.531***	-
Means (NA/EA)	45.2 / 43.3	24.3 / 21.4	14.8 / 14.1
SD (NA/EA)	7.5 / 9.6	4.19 / 6.5	3.8 / 3.3

Note: Correlations for Native Americans are below the diagonal and European Americans above the diagonal. *** $p < .001$

Demographics (%)	Native American	European American
Female Child	52.3	52.4
Male Child	47.7	47.6
Mother Graduate College	73.8	66.7
Father Graduate College	84.6	73.3
Mother Employed	80	65.8
Mother Unemployed	20	34.2
Father Employed	99.5	98
Father Unemployed	1.5	2
Income < \$60k	32.3	38.1
Income > \$60k < \$100k	43.1	38.1
Income > \$100k	24.6	23.8

Introduction

Parental stress has been shown to have a negative effect on children's behavioral and emotional development (Stelter & Halberstadt, 2011). The associations, however, are rarely studied for Native Americans. The current study is important as Native American children are an under researched demographic, and they deserve the resources that would help them acknowledge the differences and ramify the potential long-term effects that so many other Native Americans face (Wuster et al., 2020). Our hypothesis is that Native American parents experience higher parenting stress and depression than European American parents, and, in turn, have negative influences on children's stress problems.



References

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		B	SE	P-Value
Native American	Parenting Stress	.217	.056	<.001
	Parental Depression	.286	.100	.006
European American	Parenting Stress	.134	.035	<.001
	Parental Depression	.119	.052	.024

Methods

Participants

The Child Development Lab collected data from 248 US families from December 2021 to January 2021 via Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants were compensated for their time. The current study used 170 families including 105 European Americans (Child M age = 52.58 mos; Mother M age = 29.84 yrs; Father M age = 32.27 yrs) and 65 Native Americans (Child M age = 64.55 mos; Mother M age = 30.58 yrs; Father M age 33.53 = yrs). Each completed multiple surveys, 3 of which are the subject of this present study (Table 1).

Measurement

- Parenting stress: Parents responded 18-item scale of the Parental Stress Scale ($\alpha = .92$)
- Parental depression: Parents responded 10-item Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale ($\alpha = .82$)
- Child stress problems: Parents responded a 7-item subscale from the Child Behavior Checklist (e.g., "My child can't concentrate, can't pay attention for long"; $\alpha = .84$)

Discussion

Our hypothesis that Native American children and parents have more stress problems than European American children and parents was not supported. However, we did find that Native American parents have significantly higher depressive symptoms than EA parents do. Mental disorders among Native Americans are extremely common, and depression for parents is even more so (Whitbeck et al., 2006). When unresolved, these issues lead to physical ailments (Dorgan, 2010) and stigma surrounding mental health help within Native communities. The current study, while revealing of significant differences between NA and EA parental depression, was limited by the small sample size of NA families. Despite this, the same conclusion of higher depressive symptoms in NAs is found in many other studies. Future studies should examine the causes of these higher depressive symptoms: Is it a result of generational trauma, or the ongoing mistreatment and misappropriation of mental health resources? Furthermore, in the future, how do these undertreated mental health issues affect their children's ability to manage their own depression and other possible illnesses, and is there anything to be done to prevent this?