

CHAPTER 2

INDIGENOUS WORK ACROSS THE EMPLOYMENT CYCLE: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

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Native American and Indigenous Peoples' World of Work, pages 27–68



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doi:[10.1108/978-1-80592-527-920251002](https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80592-527-920251002)

ABSTRACT

Indigenous employment is a crucial but often ignored area of economic and human development in the social sciences scholarship. Most disciplines that engage with Indigenous affairs (e.g., health, education) acknowledge symptoms of poverty and underemployment but fail to address underlying issues related to work. Disciplines responsible for employment research (e.g., organizational sciences) have historically served government (e.g., the military) or private corporations (i.e., human resources), limiting empirical translatability to Indigenous experiences. Further, the sparse publications on Indigenous employment available appear in journals that are only tangentially concerned with employment issues and not connected to dedicated Indigenous employment research programs. This article describes a quantitative content analysis on 215 empirical Indigenous employment studies. An inductive coding technique on manifest content derived 25 Indigenous employment-related constructs. The most frequently occurring constructs included Indigenous career development, (under)representation, cultural (mis)fit between employees and their organizations, and relationships at work. Statistical dimension reduction techniques identified two Indigenous employment experiences trending across the empirical findings: (1) *Culturing work*, and (2) *Negative experiences at work*. *Culturing work* describes how culture impacts participation in employment; for example, work within Indigenous communities, building relationships, and maneuvering work expectations while maintaining cultural identity, ethicality, and authenticity at work; while *negative work experiences* described experiences like overload, discrimination, mental health detriments, role conflict, being devalued, and organizational supports that stifle or facilitate positive work experiences. We discuss how these trends occur across the employment cycle with examples at each employment stage. Directions for future research and practice are presented throughout.

Keywords: Indigenous; employment; work issues; management; human resources

Indigenous employment is a serious and preeminent issue for Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (CANZUS). Indigenous Peoples in these countries are more likely to be under- or unemployed, experience higher rates of relative and absolute poverty, and, when employed, hold lower skill, wage, and status positions compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018; Development, 2016; Health Canada, 2014; Ministry of Social; Ogunwole, 2006). Shockingly, this situation has not garnered the attention of social scientists despite their commitment to other socially significant issues impacted by employment, like disparities in chronic illness (e.g., Adamsen et al., 2018), substance use (e.g., Callaghan, 2003), and presence in the criminal justice system (e.g., Perreault, 2009). To illustrate, the articles we found in our review were scattered across journals, disciplines, and topics; studies were often one-off and

unconnected with other employment literature (e.g., management, business, or industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology), making improvements in Indigenous employment difficult to engage with or ill-informed (Murry & James, 2021; Salmon et al., 2023). Further, studies were often exploratory or superficially included Indigenous-specific analyses, few described partnerships with Indigenous community members, had an Indigenous author, or reported research practices in line with ethical standards when working with these communities (Koster et al., 2012; LaVeaux & Christopher, 2009; Poupart et al., 2009), and none appeared in special issue on Indigenous persons' work issues like this one.

The time is ripe for change. In 2007, the United Nations (UN) released its *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP; United Nations General Assembly, 2007). The declaration made 46 statements, with about four-fifths outlining the rights of Indigenous Peoples (e.g., the right work without discrimination or forced assimilation; see articles 5, 17.3, and 21.1) and the remainder describing how the declaration can be used to support them. Signing the declaration meant a commitment to take steps to acknowledge and protect those rights or cease practices and policies that obstruct them. Of the 159 nation-states present, eleven without Indigenous populations abstained, 144 signed, and four declined. Not surprisingly, the four that declined, i.e., CANZUS, are all nation-states founded upon what has been called settler colonialism, where the colonists stayed, built new nations, and became the majority at Indigenous populations' expense. Indigenous Peoples who survived epidemics of European-introduced diseases were removed from their lands and/or confined on reserves, reservations, and settlements, denied freedoms of religion, movement, and legal protection (e.g., *The Indian Act amendment of 1880* in Canada; *The Indian Removal Act of 1830* and the *1883 Code of Indian Offenses* in the USA). While Indigenous Nations often entered into Treaties for peaceful co-existence (e.g., Hayward & Wheen, 2016), embargoes blocked trade and participation in the economy, and survivors were subjected to forced assimilationist policies, racism, and, in some countries, state-sanctioned genocide (Best & Gorman, 2016; Jones, 2006; Reyhner & Singh, 2010). Despite the diversity between and within Indigenous Nations, the legacy of colonization has been strikingly similar for the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada; Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Hawaiian Natives in the United States (US); Aborigine and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia; and Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Across CANZUS, Indigenous Peoples die younger (Bramley et al., 2004; Smylie et al., 2010), experience worse mental health (Hunter & Harvey, 2002), and score significantly lower on indices of human development (Cooke et al., 2007). Research suggests that the more exposure an Indigenous Nation had to colonizing processes, the worse off their contemporary outcomes (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; McQuaid et al., 2017).

To the extent that naming rights might lead to repatriation (Tuck & Yang, 2012), acknowledging the rights of Indigenous Peoples in these locations could potentially threaten resources and authorities of non-Indigenous landowners, governments, and enterprises nationwide (e.g., Article 8. b, see Gover, 2015).¹ To their credit, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada reversed their decisions between 2009 and 2010. Although the US remains unsigned, each of the CANZUS countries have embarked on a process of *reconciliation* to build relationships with the lands' Indigenous Peoples; recognizing hard truths about the past and present, establishing authentic engagement between communities, and promoting sustained action to address inequities, including those in employment (Geboe, 2015). In Canada, 2015 marked the beginning of our “age of reconciliation” (O’Byrne, 2019) with the release of the government-funded Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report (TRC, 2015a). Although less broad in scope than the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996) two decades earlier, the TRC report contains a volume with 94 Calls to Action that has helped motivate and incentivize steps each sector can take to address the inequities (TRC, 2015b). This study supports Calls to Action #7a, closing the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada, and #92b, ensuring that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and educational opportunities (TRC, 2015b), as well as those with similar missions outside of Canada.

CURRENT STUDY AND OBJECTIVE

Using a comprehensive sample of the empirical literature on Indigenous employment experiences, we conducted a quantitative content analysis adapted specifically for literature reviews (Gaur & Kumar, 2018). Our objective was to describe the state of the science concerning Indigenous employment experiences in a way that is accessible to: (1) scientific audiences in I-O psychology, organizational behavior, human resources, and management, and related fields, and (2) grassroot and community shareholders aiming to improve employment conditions and opportunities for Indigenous employees. To do this, the results of our content analysis are presented in statistical terms, followed by a qualitative discussion that recontextualizes our results within the employment cycle, from pre-employment to employment, to exit. Together, these findings inform a series of recommendations for organizational researchers, practitioners, and Indigenous community members, which are explored in detail.

¹This potential is mitigated by the caveat that the declaration shall not be used to disrupt the integrity or unity of the State (Article 46.1).

METHOD

Sample

Our search derived 215 articles that contained empirical findings pertaining to Indigenous experiences in wage-based employment settings (a list of our references can be found on our website here: <https://indigenousresearch8.wixsite.com/indigenous-organizat/blank-3>). Articles were published between 1978 and 2023 ($M=2012$, median = 2014, mode = 2019) and significantly increased per year ($r=0.81$, $p<0.001$; See Figure 2.1), with a notable dip during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indigenous populations represented across the empirical research were from the US a third of the time (31.3%, i.e., Native American/Native American, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian Native [AI/AN/HN]), followed by Canada (23.4%, i.e., First Nations, Métis, and Inuit [FNMI]), New Zealand (21.9%, i.e., Māori), and Australia (18.8%, i.e., Aborigines). Nine articles (4.7%) did not include an Indigenous sample, but investigated variables related to Indigenous employment experiences, e.g., selection decisions/resume studies using hypothetical Indigenous job applicants. Most studies occurred in non-educational or undefined workplace settings (67.9%), although there were clusters in post-secondary (16.7%), student settings (12.6%), and teaching in middle and high school (2.8%). Most samples were over the age of 18 (92.1%).

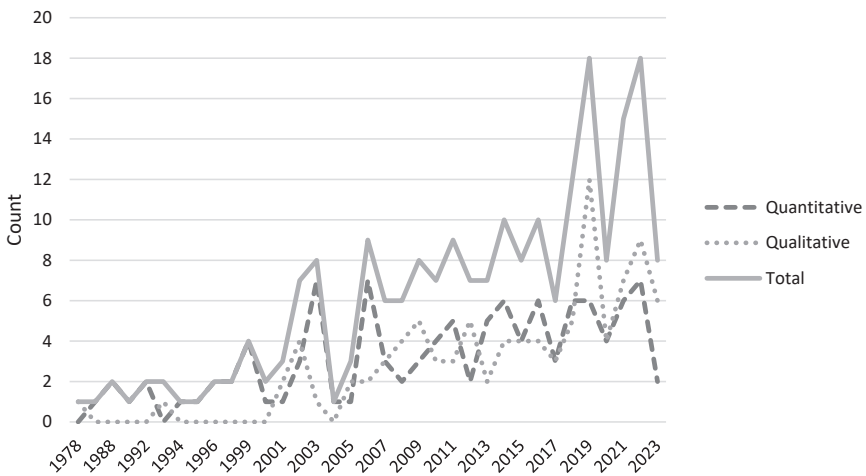


Figure 2.1 Line chart of quantitative, qualitative, and total empirical studies on indigenous employment by year.

Methodologically, studies were evenly split between quantitative (51.6%) and qualitative (44.7%) or mixed methods (3.7%).² There was considerable ranges in sample size, ranging from 2 to 24,840,335 ($M = 2,212,299$, median = 66, mode = 16). Samples sizes differed depending on the number of Indigenous participants in the sample, *range* = 0–823,890 ($M = 8,434$, median = 30), *percent* = 0–100% ($M = 61\%$, median = 100%), and whether the study was qualitative ($M_N = 26$) or quantitative ($M_N = 623,051$).

PROCEDURE

Study Search and Identification

Following PRISMA protocols (Tricco et al., 2018), we conducted a systematic literature search to identify empirical articles on Indigenous employment through exhaustive searches of several research databases (i.e., Scopus; see Figure 2.2). Boolean operators were used to include the widest range of topically relevant journal articles possible, while enforcing eligibility qualifiers to maintain study integrity. Search terms included terminology related to Indigenous populations in the CANZUS states, i.e., FNMI, AI/AN/HN, Aborigine and Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal, and Māori. To be considered “employment” research, the study’s title and/or abstract had to include (a) the term “employment” directly, or (b) one of its synonyms (e.g., work, career, employment, job, profession, occupation, business entrepreneurship), or (c) focus on employment-related constructs (e.g., selection; Zedeck, 2011).

The search resulted in 4,208 records, after removing duplicates. Abstracts were then screened using six exclusion criteria: (1) studies were not from the CANZUS countries, (2) not empirical (e.g., conceptual, position papers) and peer-reviewed (dissertations were included since they were reviewed by a doctoral committee, however book chapters and gray literature were not), (3) the term “indigenous” did not pertain to Indigenous Peoples (e.g., biological specimens, indigenous as applied to non-immigrants), (4) samples did not specify results for Indigenous employees (e.g., aggregated results with other underrepresented minorities), (5) the level of conceptualization did not include employee experiences (e.g., industry studies such as tourism), or (6) measured variables or constructs identified were not related to employment (e.g., educational aspirations, service delivery). Abstract screening eliminated 3,920 articles.³ Of the 288

²Studies were only coded as mixed method when both studies had data on Indigenous employment. Otherwise, the method that produced Indigenous employment findings was coded as a single quantitative or qualitative method. This reduced the estimate of mixed methods studies.

³To track exclusion decisions, a subsample of 2,037 abstracts were coded for which exclusion criteria they met. In order of frequency, articles were excluded for criteria #6 the most (51%), followed by criteria #2 (24%), #1 (12%), #3 (9%), #4 (4%), and #5 (0.04%).

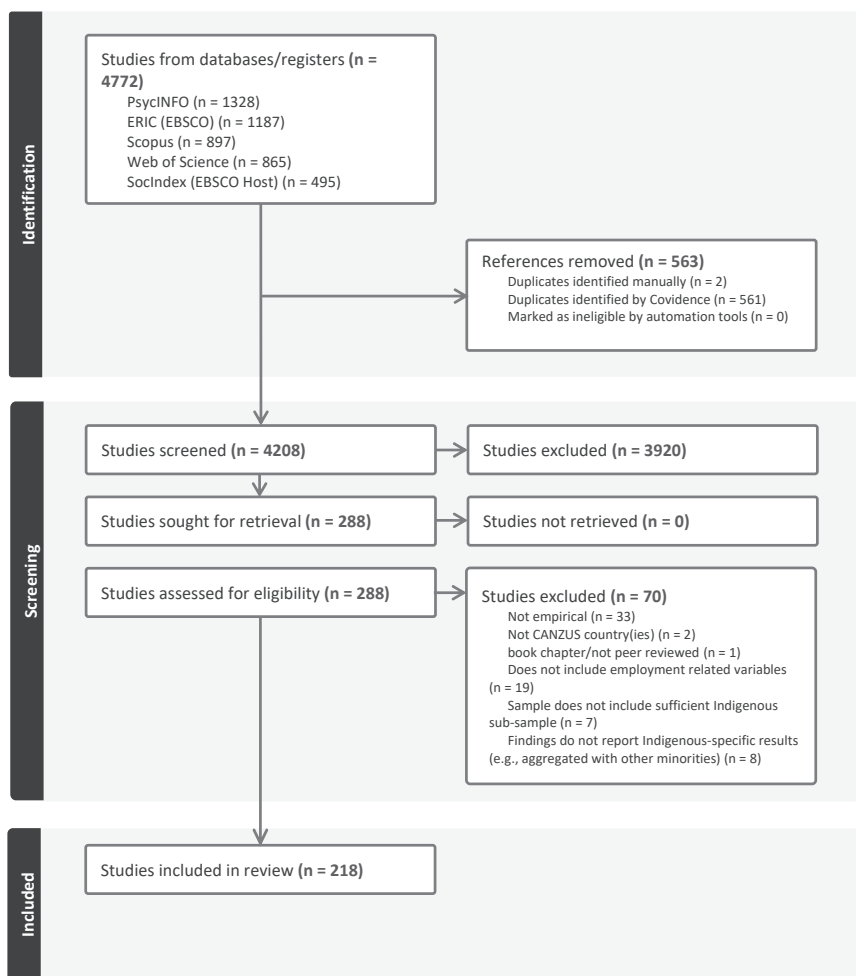


Figure 2.2 PRISMA Screening flow chart of article inclusion and exclusion.

full-text records, an additional 70 were excluded based on the same criteria listed above ($n = 218$, see [Figure 2.2](#)). During the full text coding process, an additional three articles were removed due to results that did not meet our criteria precisely, for a final N of 215 studies.

Coding Procedure

To extract content of interest from the empirical Indigenous employment literature, we used a form of quantitative content analysis ([Krippendorff, 2018](#)) adapted for literature reviews ([Gaur & Kumar, 2018](#)). The

process involves four broad stages: (1) data collection, (2) coding, (3) analysis, and (4) interpretation. Our coding decisions included inductive code creation, focus on manifest (or explicit) content, and used a conservative standard for ambiguous content, the justifications of which are described below.

Inductive coding involves a process where codes for tallying were created as their meaning units (e.g., constructs; variables studied) were encountered during the review (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This decision was appropriate due to the exploratory nature of this study and the lack of comprehensive frameworks available to guide our Indigenous employment research. Manifest, or explicit, coding was selected over latent, or interpretive, coding to increase the reliance on empirically verifiable findings rather than authors' perspectives (Cash & Snider, 2014). Manifest coding means that evidence for a construct would not be credited to an article unless it was directly observable in the results section. Finally, we used a conservative (versus liberal) standard for interpreting ambiguous data (e.g., Downe-Wamboldt, 1992), such that article findings that were not clearly related to a construct's code did not receive a positive coding (i.e., "present"). The combination of these lean coding decisions meant that our findings were descriptive of the empirical findings with the least amount of imposition of meaning from the researcher as possible, in terms of what was counted and how often it was counted. It is possible that these lean coding standards underestimated the presence of some constructs, however, the decisions help provide a depiction of the research that is resilient to bias and scrutiny around subjectivity.

Measures

In quantitative content analysis, units of meaning are represented as codes (Krippendorff, 2018). Similar to variables, codes represent units of meaning by which the content in qualitative data can be labeled and enumerated. Recently, the method has evolved to include its use in reviews of scholarly literature (Gaur & Kumar, 2018). Our codebook contained 37 codes, 11 for article demographics and 25 of theoretical interest. Article demographics included year of publication, method used (e.g., quantitative), total sample size, proportion of Indigenous sample (0-100%), Indigenous population/referent country (e.g., FNMI from Canada = 1, AI/AN/HN from USA = 2, Aborigine or Torres Straight Islander from Australia = 3, Māori from New Zealand = 4), adult sample (=1), gendered analysis (=1), occupational setting (i.e., non-educational occupation [= 1], post-secondary faculty/staff [= 2], primary/secondary teachers [= 3], primary/secondary/tertiary students [= 4]). Codes of theoretical interest were rated on a binary scale of 0 "not present" to 1 "present"; see Table 2.1 for a list of construct codes.

Analysis

Descriptive, principal components, and comparative analyses were conducted to describe the state of the literature on Indigenous employment experiences. Descriptive analyses were used to provide a variable-centric view of Indigenous employment experiences, while principal components analysis (PCAs) and statistical comparisons were conducted to describe larger patterns in the research. Descriptive statistics involved frequencies of code occurrences and the PCA was conducted on codes' correlation matrices using varimax rotation. Statistical comparisons were run using a multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) with article demographics as independent variables on dependent variables defined by the PCA, and a multivariate analysis of co-variance (MANCOVA) where year of publication and percent of Indigenous sample were added as covariates to the MANOVA. Statistically significant comparisons were interpreted using conventional confidence intervals of 95% (i.e., $p < 0.05$) with Bonferroni corrections for multiple tests. Analyses were run using SPSS, version 28.

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

Of the 25 codes of theoretical interest, code presence ranged from 1.40% to 25.58% of the time. The top five variables or themes identified were career development (under)representation, cultural congruence/person-organizational fit, relationships at work (e.g., mentors), discrimination, barriers, and work in community. See [Table 2.1](#) for list by frequency.

Principal Components Analysis

To reduce the number of indicators ([Tabachnick et al., 2013](#)) required to describe Indigenous employment experiences, we ran a PCA using varimax rotation on the correlation matrices of our 25 codes of theoretical interest. The KMO equaled 0.63, indicating that a mediocre, but still acceptable, amount of the code's underlying variance could be explained by components representing their shared variance ([Kaiser & Rice, 1974](#)). The PCA identified 10 components with eigenvalues over 1, explaining 65% of the item variance. Since eigenvalues are vulnerable to overestimation, we ran a parallel analysis using the SPSS syntax provided by [O'Connor \(2000\)](#). Parallel analysis calculates components and their eigenvalues based on a random set of data with the same number of cases and items as one's actual data. PCA components should only be interpreted if their eigenvalues are

TABLE 2.1 Percentages of Indigenous Employment Experience-Related Codes

Construct Codes	%
Career development	26
(Under) representation	21
Cultural congruence/person-organization (mis)fit	20
Relationships at work	20
Discrimination	18
Barriers	15
Work in community	15
Strategic maneuvers	14
Conflict	13
Selection	12
Skills/training	12
Leadership	10
Value of work	10
Job attitudes	10
Mental health	7
Recruitment	7
Devalued	7
Overload	7
Organizational-level perceptions	6
Defining work	5
Policies	5
Entrepreneurialism	5
Performance	4
Decision-making	3
Health and safety	1

above what could be expected by chance. By this standard, four components' eigenvalues were higher than could be expected from chance alone, together explaining 36% of the total item variance. The four components were free of cross-loading items (i.e., loading on more than one component ≥ 0.40 ; Kline, 2016), and each contained a minimum of three items per component (see Table 2.2). Internal consistency (i.e., Cronbach's alpha) between each components' items were below the conventional cut-off of 0.70 (John & Benet-Martinez, 2000) on three of four of the components. *Culturing work* was at the cut-off ($\alpha = 0.71$) and negative experiences were close ($\alpha = 0.65$), however the components we labeled anti-discrimination policies and practices ($\alpha = 0.53$) and employee development ($\alpha = 0.44$)

TABLE 2.2 Principal Components of the Empirical Findings of Indigenous Employment Research.

Code	Culturing Work	Negative Experiences	Anti-discrimination Policies and Practices	Employee Development
Value of work	0.69			
Cultural congruence/fit	0.68			
Defining work	0.62			
Strategic maneuvers	0.53			
Work in the community	0.52			
Relationships at work	0.50			
Career development				
Entrepreneurialism				
Overload		0.76		
Devalued		0.59		
Mental health		0.58		
Organizational-level perceptions		0.55		
Discrimination		0.54		
Conflicts at work		0.50		
Barriers				
Policies			0.75	
Recruitment			0.59	
Selection			0.57	
Leadership				
Decision making				
Health/safety				
Skills/training				0.75
Performance				0.67
Job attitudes				0.50
Representation				
Percent of total item variance explained by component:	16%	8%	6%	6%
Cronbach's alpha of single-component loading items:	0.71	0.65	0.53	0.44

Note: Item loadings below 0.40 not shown.

were unacceptably low. Consequently, the latter two components were not included in the following statistical comparisons, although we will return to them in the discussion section.

Statistical Comparisons

The initial 2 (quantitative or qualitative) \times 3 (non-educational sector, educational sector, student study) MANOVA was statistically significant in omnibus multivariate tests for both method type, $F(2, 208) = 7.56, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.07$, occupational setting, $F(4, 418) = 4.13, p = 0.003, \eta^2 = 0.04$, and their interaction, $F(4, 418) = 4.19, p = 0.002, \eta^2 = 0.04$, power = 0.92. Being quantitative or qualitative was significantly associated with *culturing work*, $F(1, 215) = 13.83, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.06$, but not for *negative work experiences*, $F(1, 215) = 3.55, p = 0.06, \eta^2 = 0.02$. About 3% of quantitative studies were about *culturing work* compared to 26% of qualitative studies, whereas 6% of quantitative studies and 14% of qualitative studies produced results about *negative experiences at work*.

Occupational setting was significantly related to both *culturing work*, $F(2, 215) = 3.83, p = 0.02, \eta^2 = 0.04$, and *negative work experiences*, $F(2, 215) = 5.06, p = 0.007, \eta^2 = 0.05$. Post-hoc tests revealed that research in faculty/teacher occupational settings (25%) were significantly more likely to report results on *culturing work* than non-educational occupational settings (14%; $p = 0.003$) or with students (<1%; $p < 0.001$), and non-educational occupational settings were more likely than studies about students to report *culturing work* ($p = 0.003$). Similarly, faculty/teacher occupational settings (23%) were more likely to report on negative experience at work than non-education occupational settings (6%; $p < 0.001$) and studies with students (4%; $p < 0.001$), however non-education occupational settings were not more likely to describe *negative experiences at work* than employment studies with students ($p > 0.05$).

The interaction between method and occupational setting was marginally significant for *culturing work*, $F(2, 215) = 2.69, p = 0.07, \eta^2 = 0.03$, and significant for *negative work experiences*, $F(2, 215) = 6.50, p = 0.002, \eta^2 = 0.06$. Graphs of the interactions between method approach and occupational setting showed that the primary effect was driven by methodological approach, where, regardless of occupational setting, qualitative methods produced more findings on *culturing work* and *negative experiences at work* (see [Figures 2.3](#) and [2.4](#)). *Culturing work* and *negative experiences at work* were highest in the faculty/teacher occupational settings, with the widest gap being between faculty/teachers and the others for *negative experiences at work*. Adding covariates to the model (i.e., in our MANCOVA, not shown) did not fundamentally change the relationships identified in our initial tests.

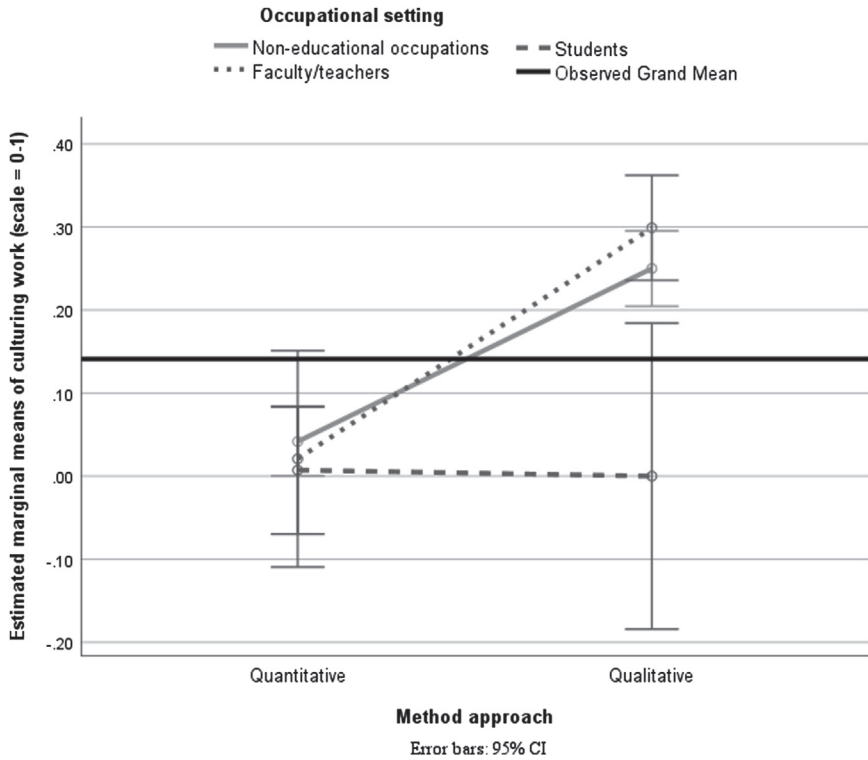


Figure 2.3 Interaction between method approach and occupational setting on culturing work.

DISCUSSION

Our content analysis offers a unique assessment of the empirical research on Indigenous employment experiences in the settler colonial nation-states of CANZUS. We identified which topics are investigated by frequency as well as higher order trends across the literature. The most frequently studied or identified topics were Indigenous career development (under)representation, cultural (mis)fit between employees and their organizations, relationships at work (e.g., mentors), discrimination, barriers to employment, and work within Indigenous communities. However, our components analysis identified trends across the research, where (1) the effects of one's cultural values and identity at work (i.e., *culturing work*) and (2) *negative work experiences* explained the most variance across studies on Indigenous employment experiences. Our analyses help to define the state of the science and depict Indigenous employment experiences for those interested in understanding Indigenous experiences in wage-based employment. In

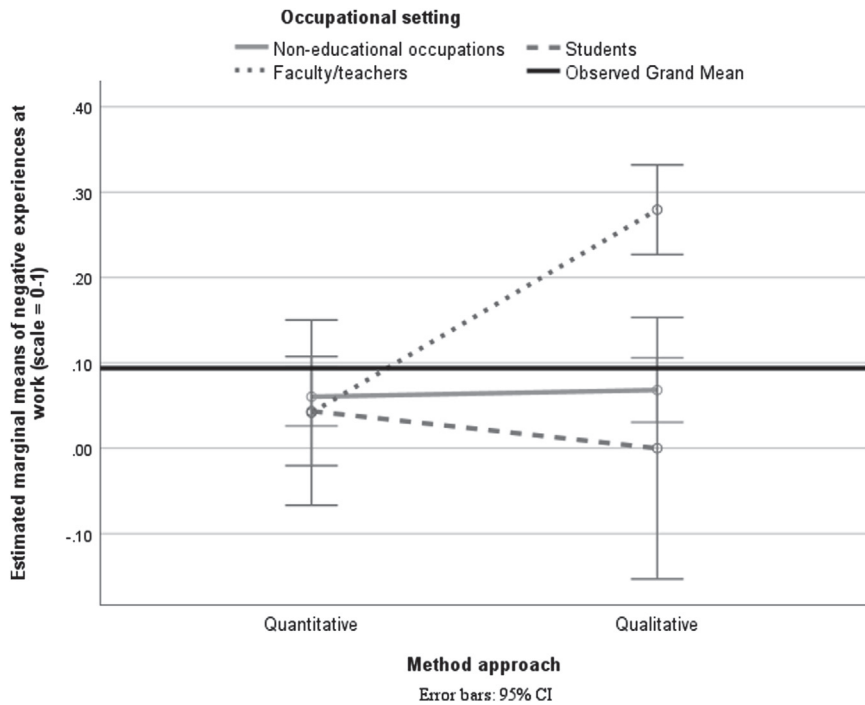


Figure 2.4 Interaction between method approach and occupational setting on negative experiences at work.

the following sections, we expand on our statistical findings by situating them within the employment cycle (see [Figure 2.5](#)). We will then transition to the implications and applications of our research, provide recommendations for community practitioners, and end with an overview of our limitations with recommendations for researchers to build upon.

The Employment Cycle

Popular outlets for information about Indigenous employment, e.g., government reports ([Commonwealth of Australia, 2018](#); [Ministry of Social Development, 2016](#); [Health Canada, 2014](#); [Ogunwole, 2006](#)), generally provide comparisons to non-Indigenous citizens or offer demographic breakdowns of rates by gender, age, and race/ethnicity. Such descriptions are useful for identifying where resources are needed, however, they do not offer context or detail enough to help Indigenous employees navigate employment nor guide innovations in Indigenous scholarship and organizational practice ([Arikan & Shenkar, 2022](#)). To address this gap and provide

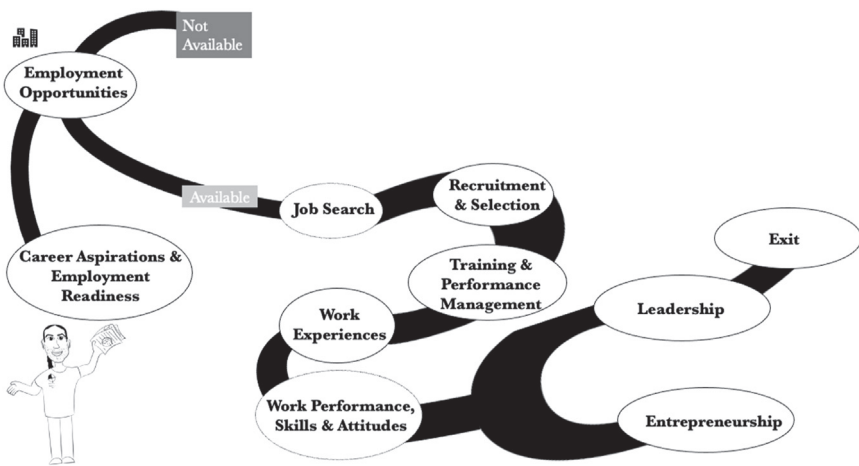


Figure 2.5 Visual map of the indigenous employment journey.

context and depth to our statistical findings, we organized the research using an adapted employment cycle framework, from (1) pre-employment, to (2) employment, to (3) exit. Our employment cycle framework is similar to other models, such as the employee life cycle model (Cattermole, 2019; Gładka et al., 2022; Skorikov, 2007; Sorgdrager et al., 2004), in that it provides a sequential yet cyclical way of ordering activities (e.g., attraction and retention). However, as Gładka and colleagues (2022) noted, “There is no consensus among researchers not only regarding the essence of the phenomenon but neither the terminology describing it” (p. 41). Since our focus is on Indigenous Peoples’ employment experiences rather than within-organizational activities, we felt the term employment, v. employee, cycle better reflected the scope (e.g., including pre-employment experiences) and purpose of this review.

Pre-Employment

Our review gleaned that the Indigenous employment journey begins as early as elementary and middle school (e.g., Gore et al., 2017), usually framed in terms of career aspirations. By high school, Indigenous students, even those with little connection to their communities and cultures, desire to work with and for the benefit of their communities (Cheng & Jacob, 2008) and intergenerational continuity through tradition is observed in career goal setting when done within families (Marshall et al., 2011). Further reflecting elements of *culturing work* in preemployment, Mohawk scholar and psychology professor Rod McCormick and colleagues developed a Career-Life Planning Model for First Nations youth that centered culturally important components such as connectedness, balance, roles and

responsibilities, values and meaning, gifts, aptitudes, and skills (McCormick & Amundson, 1997). Youth viewed it as beneficial to career exploration and self-awareness (Neumann et al., 2000). However, this stage also introduces *negative pre-employment experiences*. For example, Indigenous girls and youth living on reservations are particularly susceptible to low job efficacy, lack of transportation, and inadequate job availability (Amick, 1999; Hoffmann et al., 2005) and Native American high school graduates are employed at lower rates than their non-Indigenous counterparts (Feygin et al., 2019).

In college, Native American students have been found to be similar to non-Indigenous students on their work-community role salience and career decision-making efficacy (Brown & Lavish, 2006) and motivations for specific lines of work (e.g., social work; Limb & Organista, 2006). The better they do academically, feel confident to manage their career, and get support from others, the more they explore career options and make career related goals, at least in science, technology, engineering, and math (Turner et al., 2022). However, a study with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates found that students varied in goals, clarity and uncertainty about employment after college and recommended long-term planning, yearly check-in's, networking panels, developing employability skills, offering a well-being hub, and hiring an Indigenous employment specialist to assist transition (Eady & Keen, 2021).

Unfortunately, despite college education, literacy, numeracy, and technological skills' ability to reduce disparities in labour market outcomes for First Nations (Hu et al., 2019), as does college education for Māori (Theodore et al., 2018) and Native Americans (Carroll & Li, 2022), Indigenous Peoples in CANZUS countries are underrepresented in higher education (González & Colangelo, 2010). When they do attend, the degrees/credentials they pursue are associated with lower wages and positions of status (Free et al., 2007). Like employment, Indigenous education rates are complicated and should be understood within the context of centuries of ethnocentric, assimilationist or exclusionary policies and practices and the bottom-up (Indigenous-led) and top-down (policy-response) movements to revise them. For our purposes, it is sufficient to acknowledge that the pathways to employment are also wrought with challenges that involve *culturing work* and *negative work experiences*.⁴

⁴While a discussion of the extensive history of Indigenous education is outside of the scope this review (see, e.g., Berry, 1968; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; González & Colangelo, 2010; Reyhner & Eder, 2017), it should be acknowledged that assimilation is related to positive education as well (Kerbo, 1981). Unless the ways community members change to succeed are volitional (i.e., acculturation) and beneficial to both the individuals and their communities, it may be in conflict to the historical struggles of Indigenous communities to maintain their Nations' cultural identities and political sovereignty (see e.g., National Congress of American Indians; Assembly of First Nations).

Employment

Regardless of career choice and education, Indigenous individuals who apply for jobs and gain employment or start their own companies enter a landscape of organizational processes that have largely evolved within the enterprises and economies of the colonial nation-state and their international trade relations. In the sections below, we discuss events or locations that our statistical analyses identified as important concentrations within the research (see [Table 2.2](#) and [Figures 2.3](#) and [2.4](#)). Although the components analysis did not specifically associate these events to *culturing work* and *negative work experiences*, reviewing research findings related to these events still demonstrates forms of how *culturing work* and *negative experiences at work* are relevant to the larger discussion on Indigenous employment. As such, we will explicitly mention instances where *culturing work* and *negative work experiences* may be related. In addition, other frequently occurring constructs (see [Table 2.1](#)) will be interspersed within the discussion for parsimony. Leadership and entrepreneurialism will be discussed in their own sub-section due to their unique location in the employment cycle.

Recruitment and selection

Our principal components analysis identified a unique component for research related to hiring policies, recruitment and selection. Primary studies that pertained to recruitment were often qualitative (about two-thirds of the time), and half of the studies that reported findings about work policies occurred among them. For example, [Rerden and Guerin \(2015\)](#) asked about the use, benefits, and challenges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment policies, of which recruitment and retention were named as a method for achieving the critical mass necessary to effectively deliver services to Aboriginal communities, provide mentoring, and improve awareness and protection of cultural heritage, demonstrating the importance of *culturing work*. Other studies found that having organizational level diversity policies increased Māori employees' sense of belonging ([Kuntz & Pandaram, 2022](#)).

Outside of studies that reference policy, *culturing work* is reflected in qualitative studies that repeatedly voice the need for targeted culturally responsive recruitment strategies. Specifically, greater recruitment of Indigenous employees is needed in academia (e.g., [Roland, 2011](#)), policing and criminal justice (e.g., [Riley, 2002](#)), healthcare ([Sánchez et al., 2016](#)) and childcare ([Hutchins et al., 2009](#)). Similarly demonstrating *culturing work*, quantitative studies on recruitment efforts have shown that Native American employees were attracted to work that involved services to Native American students and gave back to the Indigenous community (e.g., [Oxendine et al., 2018](#)). However, other studies problematize recruitment efforts that are out of step with the incentive and merit systems of their hiring institutions, warning that they may result in *negative work experiences* and unsuccessful

retention when Indigenous employees are hired for work that is not formally recognized or supported (e.g., [Louie, 2019](#)).

Selection research with Indigenous employees was primarily quantitative, except for a subset of qualitative studies that simply expressed the need for hiring practices that selected more Indigenous employees (e.g., Mi'kmaq women leaders, [Robinson et al., 2019](#)). Quantitative selection studies were comprised of mock resume and interview studies, comparisons of Indigenous employees to non-Indigenous employees on selection tests, competencies for employability, and novel selection tests. Resume and mock interview studies showed mixed results related to *negative work experiences*. While the majority showed bias against Indigenous applicants (e.g., Aborigines ([Hughes & Davidson, 2011](#); [Leon, 2022](#)), Native American women ([Härtel et al., 1999](#)), and Māori ([Singer, 1996](#))), a minority found no bias (e.g., [Button & Walker, 2020](#)), and one found a preference for Māori applicants, if they were highly merited ([Jackson & Fischer, 2007](#)). Adding nuance, [Young and Fox \(2002\)](#) showed that for teacher positions, Native American applicants were rated comparably to non-Indigenous candidates, but lower for school principal positions. [Singer \(1988\)](#) found discrimination of Māori applicants' interviews, but not for their resumes. [Shapiro and Neuberg \(2008\)](#) described how Black reviewers discriminated against Native American job candidates, but only when they thought their decisions would be reviewed by a White audience to avoid accusations of preferential treatment. Together, the evidence reveals a legitimate concern for racial selection bias in certain sectors, but also that bias may be more concerning for higher status positions, using certain methods, and under certain racial compositions of the selection committee.

Selection research also speaks to differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous applicants that affect hiring rates. For example, while Māori applicants score similarly to Pakeha (i.e., White New Zealanders) on interviews ([Gibb & Taylor, 2003](#)) and measures of conscientiousness ([Brown et al., 2005](#)), Māori military recruits score lower on verbal reasoning and numerical business analysis, but not on general numeric reasoning ([Guenole et al., 2003](#)). Similarly, First Nations individuals living in remote areas scored lower than Canadian Forces recruits on verbal cognitive ability and vocabulary, but less so on non-verbal tests ([Vanderpool & Catano, 2008](#)). The results from these studies suggest that tests that rely on verbal ability will produce adverse impact (i.e., higher Indigenous applicant rejection rates regardless of discriminatory intention), a problem which [Pearson and Daff \(2011\)](#) took to task by developing a series of non-verbal cognitive tests for Aborigine mining employees. Adverse impact also occurs when hiring standards discriminate against groups that have higher proportions of Indigenous applicants. These include policies that screen for criminal backgrounds ([Naylor & Heydon, 2022](#)), limited positions for

those in rural localities (Kimmel, 1997; see Feygin et al. (2019) and Murry and Wiley (2017) regarding disability), and the absence of pro-Indigenous employment media (Giang, 2013), all of which negatively impact Indigenous more than non-Indigenous applicants but do not specifically target applicant race/ethnicity. Finally, a small sub-set of studies sought to identify competencies required for jobs on reserve/reservation (e.g., fire department, Dixon et al., 2019).

Skills and attitudes

Our fourth principal component pertained to Indigenous employee development, with topics including skills, training, performance, and job attitudes, studied almost equally with quantitative and qualitative methods. Work-related skills, skills-based education, and training helped to dissolve disparities in labor market outcomes for Native Americans (Hu et al., 2019) and improved publication rates and grant awards for Native American and Alaskan Native junior researchers (Buchwald & Dick, 2011). Skill development increased employment rates for Native Americans on parole (Roberts et al., 1997), supported First Nations members in recovery into carpentry (Beaudry & Perry, 2023), positively influenced First Nations women's career decisions (Goodwill et al., 2019) and youth's transitions from high school to post-secondary education (Britten & Borgen, 2010). Additionally, skill-based training helped prepare Indigenous executives in Canada's federal public service (Dwyer, 2003) and Indigenous entrepreneurs in the US (Hunt-Oxendine, 2009) and Canada (Tamtik, 2020). Skill development also advanced Indigenous community-level agendas for self-determination. For example, job analysis and training supported skills necessary for the Tribal acquisition of private companies (Watson & Rowe, 1976), sectors controlled by the federal government (Brescia & Daily, 2007), and the transition from Band-control to self-government (Gibson, 2015).

Skills-based training often occurred alongside job performance studies, where performance was described by the skills required. However, performance was also investigated through the lens of *culturing work*, which indicates there are culturally relevant differences in Indigenous ways of understanding and appreciating performance at work. For example, Indigenous employees engage in similar tasks at different rates than colleagues with the same job (MacEachron, 1994), bring unique sets of skills (Locke et al., 2023a, Locke et al., 2023b) and define success or meaningful work differently than their non-Indigenous peers (Juntunen et al., 2001; Ruwhiu et al., 2021).

Job attitudes were assessed mostly with quantitative methods and co-occurred with the skill/training literature about a third of the time. In line with *culturing work*, an employment program that incorporated Native American culture improved job efficacy and job attitudes (Gaiko et al., 1999), paid time off to attend training was associated with their job

satisfaction (Wares et al., 1992), and a training primer's relevance to one's job led to improved learning, motivation to learn, self-efficacy, and goal commitment during a training for Native American educators in the Pacific Northwest (Murry, 2015). Although not represented by this component, notable studies on Indigenous job attitudes occurred outside of the training context as well. For example, Haar and Brougham found that among Māori, cultural satisfaction at work predicted organizational citizenship behaviors (2011), cultural well-being at work predicted career satisfaction (2013), organizational-based self-esteem had a stronger effect for Māori job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors than Pakeha employees (2016), and that work-life balance mediated the relationship between job control and job satisfaction and affective commitment, both of which decreased turnover intentions (2022).

Teachers and post-secondary faculty

Comparative analyses on occupational sector found that research on teachers and faculty was more likely to report *negative experiences at work* compared to other occupations. This was due to the proportionality of negative experiences reported per occupation rather than raw counts. For example, while only one-fifth of our studies' samples were comprised of Indigenous teachers and faculty, those samples reported a third of the discrimination experiences and person-organization misfit, two-fifths of the employment barriers, over half of the identity conflicts, two-thirds of overload and mental health consequences from work, and four-fifths of being or feeling devalued.

While *negative work experiences*, such as discrimination, are well-documented in non-educational occupations among Māori (e.g., Houkamau et al., 2017), Aborigines (e.g., Temple et al., 2019), and First Nations alike (Waite, 2021), teaching and faculty jobs appear to commodify and exploit the cultural identities of Indigenous employees in ways non-educational occupations do not. Aborigine early career researchers speak about getting used by their institutions to check boxes for diversity, being handed off responsibilities to “fix” diversity issues viewed through stereotypical perspectives of Indigeneity and being placed on organizational committees and included in job-irrelevant meetings simply to “check off” equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) policy boxes (Locke et al., 2023b). Native American faculty in the USA report a range of work stressors, including overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity, cultural taxation, and discriminatory experiences, particularly against Native women (Walters et al., 2019). Similarly describing *negative work experiences* in the post-secondary context, First Nations faculty describe conflicting expectations of research productivity, community service, and Indigenization efforts on campus, fearing loss of personal identity amid pressures to personify Indigeneity, and experience

stigma against their community work in merit assessments and promotion (Henry, 2012). Māori academics report experiencing tokenism, devaluation, role conflict, overload, and mental health consequences (Haar & Martin, 2022; Pio et al., 2014).

A counterpoint to these negative depictions is that Indigenous teachers and faculty are not passive recipients of such *negative work experiences*. In line with *culturing work*, Indigenous employees often described innovating methods to maintain ethical behavior, cultural identity and values within Western institutions, which we coded as “strategic maneuvers.” While Indigenous employees strategize such maneuvers in non-educational occupations (Castagno et al., 2022), particularly in leadership positions (e.g., Hill et al., 2001), it appears to be a necessary part of teaching and faculty positions. For example, despite feeling significant misfit with their discipline, Māori who had worked in business schools spoke of “strategies” to (1) navigate their academic careers according to standards within the discipline and (2) carve out a meaningful career that better aligns with their identities and associated responsibilities (Staniland et al., 2020). The “navigation” strategy helps with making progress toward their career and gaining acceptance and recognition from colleagues and employers. However, it is insufficient to address misfit for Māori with strong ties to their cultural identities and communities or where the misfit is deleterious. The “carving” strategy enabled them to find meaning in their work, maintain relationships, prioritize a Māori agenda, and resist institutional norms that conflicted with their identity. However, this strategy sometimes meant exiting the organization. Among Māori who had attained status, a third strategy involved directing efforts at structural changes so that misfit would not be an issue for Māori students and faculty in the future.

Leaders and entrepreneurs

Indigenous leaders and entrepreneurs represent a unique stage in the employment cycle, either where Indigenous employees are promoted to higher status positions or go into business for themselves. The research on Indigenous leadership and entrepreneurs is almost exclusively qualitative and exemplifies the *culturing work* and *negative experiences at work* components we identified. Status as a leader or being one’s own boss provides more freedom and authority for *culturing work* that is conducive to their cultural values, identity, and community commitments. However, they are not free from the negative experiences or need for strategic maneuvers discussed above.

Leaders

The need for and benefit of having Indigenous people as leaders within an organization have been voiced in multiple occupations, including child

welfare (Oates & Malthouse, 2021), education administration (Robinson et al., 2019), social work supervision (Wallace, 2019), and among public service executives (Dwyer, 2003) and health managers (Hill et al., 2001). Indigenous leaders support their Indigenous employees (Coates et al., 2023), address conflict (Holmes & Marra, 2011), commit to Indigenous clients and patients (Hoban & The Rumbalara Community, 2002), and employ servant-orientated or collective leadership styles different from non-Indigenous leaders (e.g., Haar et al., 2019). Unfortunately, Indigenous leaders are underrepresented (see Gale & Crothers, 2011 for Māori example) and report many of the same *negative experiences* as non-leaders, such as overload, devaluation, tokenism, burnout, identity conflict, and barriers to advancement (e.g., Coates et al., 2023; Hill et al., 2001; Hoban & The Rumbalara Community, 2002; Holmes et al., 2009).

Entrepreneurs

An entrepreneur is someone “who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk” (Random House, 2023). In this broad sense, entrepreneurs have always been present in Indigenous economies (e.g., the water canals of the Tohono O’odham) even if the entrepreneurs responsible are not in the historical record. However, in the literature, the term Indigenous entrepreneurialism usually denotes enterprises that engage with the market economy. The literature on Indigenous entrepreneurialism is vast (see Dana & Anderson, 2007) in part because of governmental initiatives to promote entrepreneurialism, out of the largely unfulfilled hope that it would address Indigenous poverty rates (Shoebridge et al., 2012). Despite the volumes of commentaries, case studies, and policy reviews, the empirical research with Indigenous entrepreneurs is meager and overwhelmingly exploratory (i.e., qualitative).

Quantitative research has shown that programs promoting First Nations entrepreneurialism increase participation in the workforce (Curry et al., 2016) and that Māori businesses do not differ from Pakeha businesses in their entrepreneurial culture (i.e., innovation, risk taking, and proactivity; Haar et al., 2021). Qualitative studies have investigated the motivators (Henry, 2017), facilitators (Foley, 2003), barriers (Russell-Mundine, 2007), and unique qualities of Indigenous entrepreneurship (Cutcher & Dale, 2023). For example, in Shoebridge et al. (2012), Aboriginal entrepreneurs report being motivated by profit, being the best at something, being viewed equality with non-Aboriginals, uncontrollable life events, improving family situations, and a desire to hire Aboriginals, innovate, and be self-employed and a role model. Facilitators included the presence of role models, spouses that helped run the business, education or industry experience, confidence, drive, ambition, risk taking, family support, and the ability to capitalize on culture. Barriers included not knowing where to get advice

or assistance, lack of mentors, racism, constrained access to capital, family pressures to hire kin and share profits, or not charge for services/retail, and government assistance that is helpful but time consuming, restricting, and frustrating. Similarly, Aboriginal women report economic (e.g., self-sufficiency) and social (e.g., intergenerational and interracial connecting) motivations for becoming an entrepreneur alongside resource (e.g., capital) and cultural (e.g., traditional wealth-sharing norms, gender roles, non-business priorities) barriers (Cecil, 2014). The available evidence suggests that the tensions between remaining true to one's Indigenous identity and its associated responsibilities, on the one hand, and adapting to Western organizational cultures and buffering the effects of racism, on the other, still pertain to entrepreneurial employment.

Exiting organizations

It is unclear how *culturing work* and *negative experiences at work* appear when Indigenous employees exit an organization, since so few studies included exit variables. One that showed non-different quit rates for Native Americans compared to non-Native American in corporations (Hom et al., 2008) and another where Native American men, but not Native American women, were fired more for poor performance in the army (Strader & Smith, 2022). Haar and Brougham (2022) showed that work-life balance predicted job satisfaction and affective commitment, both of which decreased turnover intentions among Māori employees. Investigations on *why* Indigenous employees leave, retirement planning, transition, succession, mentorship and apprenticeship are sorely needed.

Implications and Applications

The implications and applications of this study are far reaching. This study summarized the most comprehensive collection of empirical literature on Indigenous Peoples' employment experiences in the CANZUS states to date. Similar to Salmon et al.'s (2023) observations about the Indigenous management and organization literature, we found the empirical literature on Indigenous employment experiences to be scattered, siloed, and lacking integration theoretically, chronologically, or topically. The situation makes it very difficult for knowledge to accumulate or for concentrations and specializations to emerge in human resources, conferences, journal outlets, or within appropriate disciplines. Up to this point in history, scholarship on Indigenous employment either superficially documented the existence of the problem, or occurred in a popcorn style, dependent on whether a researcher happened to be in that context, or if, by luck, an Indigenous scholar chose to emphasize such cultural dynamics in their workplace (e.g.,

Jarod Haar's extensive work with Māori employees). It is our hope that this study will resonate with Indigenous employees and provide evidence of their experiences in a way that is useful to their creation of safe and meaningful workplaces. We also hope that our use of constructs and methods that are familiar to organizational practitioners (e.g., human resources) and researchers (e.g., I-O psychologists) will support their intentionality and comfort to meaningfully and thoughtfully engage with the persistent employment issues confronting Indigenous applicants, employees, and the employers who hire and retain them.

Recommendations for Indigenous community members

The value of this research to Indigenous community members depends on their place in the employment cycle. For our Indigenous leaders and entrepreneurs, who have the authority or flexibility to implement structural changes, we would direct them to the recommendations for practitioners below. To our Indigenous faculty and researchers, we would similarly direct them to the below recommendations for future research. Despite their personal connections and lived experiences with the data, their positions within organizational structures make the utility of our findings similar to non-Indigenous organizational leaders and researchers that share commitments to Indigenous employment and community development.

For the remaining majority of Indigenous employees, our findings offer value across the employment cycle. For example, during pre-adolescence, adolescence, or others in the pre-employment stage, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members can start conversations about employment and career early and often. One study with Native American grandparents and their adolescent grandchildren found that grandparents did not talk to their grandchildren about their careers and held incorrect beliefs about their aspirations (Cross & Day, 2008). Given the influence of family and peer support on career goals and exploration (Turner et al., 2022), families can help their young ones prepare for the *negative work experiences* that await and hand down strategies for *culturing work* that help them thrive without having to compromise their identity or values. Perhaps similar to the advice Indigenous mentors give their Indigenous mentees in the health sciences (Murry et al., 2022), there may be ways to carve paths within wage-based employment that succeeds on performance metrics while maintaining cultural integrity and even advancing Indigenous agendas for representation and self-determination (e.g., Staniland et al., 2020).

During the employment stage, Indigenous community members can use our findings to be aware of gatekeepers and hurdles to selection and advancement, pursue skills to support their job security and upward mobility, and practice discretion as to the places they apply and invest themselves, assuming their job attitudes, e.g., job satisfaction, depending on factors like *culturing*

work opportunities. For employee exit, unfortunately, the research does not provide much input. However, anecdotally, Indigenous leaders and entrepreneurs should invest in apprenticing and mentoring up-and-coming Indigenous youth before they retire, in the interest of transferring knowledge, wealth, and momentum to the next generation. Indigenous employees might consider planning for retirement in ways that not only meet their physical or financial needs, but also allows them to continue their participation in ceremonial or traditional life or meets their culturally informed ideas around aging well. Finally, while Indigenous employees should probably expect *negative work experiences* such as discrimination to continue to occur, they should recognize that these are collectively experienced, not necessarily the result of personal imperfection, and born from historically-embedded racial-tensions that are recognized as unethical in contemporary times and should no longer be tolerated. If lateral movement is possible, Indigenous employees should feel empowered to leave their place of employment when conditions are unsafe or unhealthy, whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. Additionally, the prevalence of *negative work experiences* we demonstrated should motivate and support collective action against anti-Indigenous racism.

Recommendations for practitioners

Our findings present multiple ways community practitioners can introduce organizational changes that support Indigenous peoples directly and indirectly. Across initiatives, supporting Indigenous employees' ability to work in accordance with their cultural values and eliminating *negative work experiences*, such as discrimination, are paramount. Supports for future and current Indigenous employees and leaders can also come in the form of promoting initiatives that address issues in the recruitment and selection processes, enhance Indigenous skill and professional development, and create culturally safe work environments.

Addressing recruitment and selection processes

Practitioners can develop and implement culturally responsive recruitment strategies to increase the representation of Indigenous employees. This process entails collaborating with Indigenous communities and organizations to invest in Indigenous youth pre-employment and tailor recruitment efforts and job designs specific to the needs and preferences of Indigenous candidates (e.g., *culturing work* opportunities). For example, Indigenous individuals tend to go into public sector work over private (Ng & Sears, 2015), science, technology, engineering, math (Scoppio & Luyt, 2016), and clinical fields (Jeffe et al., 2007), perhaps in response to faster or more inclusive/anti-racist policies in certain sectors (e.g., Kurtulus, 2016). Along with learning how to attract Indigenous candidates, the selection process needs to account for the presence of unconscious discriminatory biases

(e.g., as in the resume studies) or unintentional adverse impacts (e.g., presence of criminal background or disability) that may impede the successful hire of these candidates. This can involve anti-discrimination policies, providing diversity training for hiring managers, augmenting selection criteria for with more holistic assessments, implementing targeting recruitment practices, or ensuring Indigenous representation on selection committees.

Culturally tailored skill and professional development

Practitioners should design and facilitate opportunity for skill and professional development tailored to the needs of Indigenous employees, future and current. By far, skill development was the most potent reducer of employment-related disparities (e.g., [Hu et al., 2019](#)). In addition to training typical job-specific skills, programs can teach strategies for promoting *culturing work* (e.g., Indigenous mentoring practices (e.g., [Murry et al., 2022](#)), policies can incentivize new forms of professional development (e.g., ceremonial involvement), and resilience trainings might be offered to dampen the effects of negative experiences in the workplace. Examples might include workshop, trainings, or support groups for identity affirmation, strengths-based approaches, and within-organization community building (e.g., Indigenous employee and ally networks).

Using policy to create culturally safe work environments

Looking across our findings on *culturing work*, *negative work experiences*, and other factors contributing to Indigenous employment experiences, community practitioners can advocate for policies, procedures, and practices that address the barriers faced by Indigenous employees in the workforce ([Lai et al., 2018](#)). Evidence exists that positive employment outcomes are associated with assimilation (e.g., [Kuhn & Sweetman, 2002](#); [Martinez & Lowrie, 2009](#)), however, such findings are in direct conflict with the historical struggles of Indigenous Nations to maintain their cultural identities and political sovereignty (see e.g., National Congress of American Indians; Assembly of First Nations). In an ideal case scenario, Indigenous employees would not have to leave their Indigeneity at the workplace door to be successful. Where Indigeneity is part of job, as described in our sections on post-secondary/teaching work, leaders, and entrepreneurs, work that commodifies Indigenous culture and identities creates conflicts on a spectrum of superficial tokenism to valued overwork and impossible expectations. The creation of culturally inclusive work environments that value and respect Indigenous cultural identities and commitments without exploitation are especially important in jobs where Indigenous identity is part of the work. This can involve implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, fostering cross-cultural understanding among employees, and promoting Indigenous cultural awareness and appreciation.

*Study limitations and recommendations for future research***Recommendations to address limitations**

As with all studies, there are limits to what our study can claim that could be addressed with future research. For example, unlike [Salmon et al. \(2023\)](#), our sample was restricted to empirical articles that focused on Indigenous employee experiences from the CANZUS states and we only included peer-reviewed empirical articles. We selected these inclusion criteria with the hopes that our conclusions would assist reconciliation in these settler-nation states and have value to audiences and stakeholders where scientifically rigorous information is an asset. Unfortunately, this excluded dozens of articles of personal or case study descriptions where methods sections were not present. Having read those articles too, we contend that those articles covered more but not different content than what we included, however it is possible that those testimonies and case studies contained information that is relevant to understanding Indigenous employment experiences that we did not include in our data or discussion. Future research should assess the gray literature, personal reflective accounts, case studies, and non-conventional sources describing Indigenous employment experiences (e.g., social media). Secondly, while our codebook was developed inductively, meaning we created codes for constructs as they appeared in the literature, we recognized and labeled those constructs based on the disciplinary lens of our training (i.e., I-O psychology), which emphasized psychological constructs. It is likely that if this review was done through the lens of a different discipline (e.g., economics) or emphasis (e.g., adherence to CBPR, [Petrucka et al., 2012](#)), different studies would have been included or constructs coded for, or similar constructs would have been labeled differently. Future research should replicate this study using different perspectives.

Thirdly, our results are based on statistical inferences. We structured our discussion based on our two strongest components of *culturing work* and *negative experiences at work* and argued that those components are relevant even when they are not the subject of study. However, those components only explained 24% of the variance in our sample of studies. Given the number of qualitative studies and quantitative studies that used different predictors and/or outcomes variables, meta-analysis was not possible. Future research should use different methods to scan the literature (e.g., meta-thematic analysis; meta-analysis on sub-sets of studies with similar x-y relationships) as well as different methods to understand experiences (e.g., Indigenous methodologies; [Kovach, 2009](#); [Wilson, 2008](#)). Fourthly, our review focused on the CANZUS states. While this increases the likelihood of generalizability and transferability to Indigenous employees within British-occupied settler nation-states, it also means that this study should not be used to make inferences about Indigenous employee experiences with different histories,

politics, or cultural dynamics (e.g., Africa, Latin America, Taiwan, Siberia). Future research should explore Indigenous employment experiences where colonialization took different forms (e.g., Philippines, Singapore) as well as explore if our results hold within other settler-colonial regions (e.g., South Africa, Algeria).

Recommendations beyond the limitations

While our research offers a summative depiction of evidence-based experiences available in the literature, we simply could not comment on certain topics related to employment due to the lack of research. Outside the this study's limitations, the most prominent areas for future research include works that explore underrepresented stages of the employment cycle (e.g., pre-employment and employee exit), changes in relevant constructs (e.g., barriers and career aspirations) over time, and understanding Indigenous employment experiences from an intersectional lens.

Exploring the pre-employment and exit stages of the employment cycle

Future studies that investigate and track how pre-employment conditions affect employment experiences and outcomes for Indigenous individuals could focus on constructs from organizational science (e.g., [Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007](#); [Gelfand et al., 2007, 2017](#)). The research we reviewed was often situated in the context of underrepresentation or Indigenous and non-Indigenous unemployment disparities (one-fifth of the studies in our sample). For example, compared to their White peers, Native American high school graduates are less likely to be employed or in college ([Feygin et al., 2019](#)) and when they are employed, they are more likely to hold low skilled or lower status positions ([Byars-Winston et al., 2015](#)). Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders are employed full time at lower rates and earn less when they are employed (e.g., [Birch & Marshall, 2018](#)), as are First Nations (e.g., [Lamb et al., 2018](#)) and Māori (e.g., [Gale & Crothers, 2011](#)). While these trends are important to consider in the context of pre-employment, since upcoming generations will be shaped by the work-related social realities in their environments (e.g., number of employed family members, availability of mentors, networks, intergenerationally transferred skills, and identification with work or certain kinds of work), strengths-based approaches are needed to avoid over-simplified deficit model theorizing.

Along with this focus on the employment cycle, much more research should be done on why Indigenous employees leave organizations, Indigenous retirement planning, transition, and, when relevant, succession, mentorship and apprenticeship. Available evidence on Indigenous mentorship, for example, suggest that culture impacts the purposes, methods, and impacts of otherwise mainstream practices (e.g., [Atay et al., 2023](#); [Atay &](#)

Murry, 2023; Murry et al., 2022; Sawyer et al., 2023). It is likely this is true in other domains as well. In Indigenous cultures, aging is considered an honorable process, and reaching Elderhood is an achievement. Children are taught that becoming an Elder is a community-granted title reserved for those who embody cultural traditions, walk in humility and integrity, and are deserving of respect and reverence (Rowe et al., 2020). Western cultures' celebration of youth, on the other hand, produces fear around aging (especially aging as a woman; Gosselink et al., 2008), viewing it as a process to be reversed, or at the very least, avoided at all costs (North & Fiske, 2015).

Changes in Indigenous employment across time

A notable gap in the Indigenous employment literature was the complete absence of studies over time. Longitudinal studies that track Indigenous individuals' employment experiences over time can elucidate the long-term effects of *culturing work* and *negative work experiences*, including individual differences and career trajectories, organizational supports and job satisfaction, safe work environments and well-being, discrimination and stress, burnout, and turnover, and sources of personal fulfillment and self-actualization. This longitudinal perspective can inform targeted interventions and policies to address employment disparities and provide realistic expectations for Indigenous employees as the move through the employment cycle.

Indigenous employment experiences from an intersectional lens

Researchers should consider the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) of Indigenous identity with other aspects of diversity, such as gender, biculturalism, socioeconomic status, and geographic location or residence patterns (e.g., urban v. reserve). Understanding how multiple identities intersect and interact with workplace dynamics can provide a more holistic understanding of Indigenous employment experiences and avoid ecological and atomistic fallacies, e.g., one-size-fits all pan-Indian approaches.

CONCLUSION

Indigenous employment is an important topic for humanitarian, practical, political, and theoretical reasons. The value of describing the state of the science around Indigenous employment is important for the science, however it is even more important for the Peoples affected by the circumstances the research is trying to comprehend. Underemployment leads to poverty (Kendall, 2001), which gives rise to environments where members of a community cannot meet their needs, coping mechanisms are more

necessary, and healthy outlets and coping mechanisms are less available (Palmer, 2022). The situation is not a natural state, but a traceable consequence of human relationships and government policies (Bodley, 2014). If actions and research can support Indigenous employment and enterprises that meet their own needs, in and out of the market economy, it will simultaneously help to address the consequences associated with poverty (e.g., health, nutrition, and housing). Such activities advance the spirit and purposes of reconciliation (e.g., Geboe, 2015; TRC, 2015), in that justice and our collective welfare is prioritized. We hope that this and other studies like those in this special issue can join the continued efforts of Indigenous and allied non-Indigenous constituencies working to improve Indigenous participation in the workforce and beyond.

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