

# Cultural Background Matters When Sharing Culturally Relevant Subject Matter

Hew Yeh, Laura Kunze, Stevie LoTempio, Katia Montanez  
Department of Psychological Sciences, Palomar College

## Introduction

- Being aware of implicit biases helps avoid unjust outcomes for people of color (Thompson, 2019)
- Students work harder in courses where they perceive the instructor to be credible (Rezvani & Miri, 2021)
- White people in the United States tend to be more trusting when compared to people of color (Evangelist, 2022)
- Students perceive instructor credibility differently depending on the race of a professor (Hendrix, 1997)
- Increasing the perceived credibility of instructors may help in the delivery of diverse cultural curriculum
- This study seeks to examine if the cultural background of a speaker impacts their perceived credibility as well as if the participant race impacts this rating

## Hypotheses

- H1. The Native American speaker would be perceived as more credible than the Caucasian speaker
- H2. White participants would perceive the speaker to be more credible than people of color (POC) would
- H3. The Native American speaker would be perceived as more credible than the Caucasian speaker among POC than those who are Caucasian

## Method

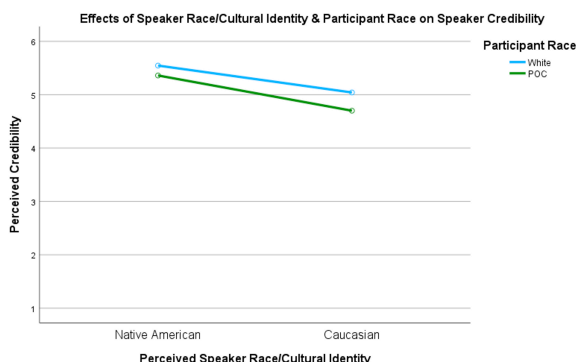
### Procedure

- Participants were given a brief presentation regarding Kumeyaay history
- Participants either had a Caucasian presenter or a presenter that introduced themselves as Native American
- Participants were given a post-workshop survey measuring speaker credibility
- Once the surveys were collected, participants were debriefed and thanked for their help in the study

## Results

### Two-Way ANOVA

No interaction was found,  $F(1, 86) = .10, p = .76$



### Main Effects

- Participant race did not have a statistically significant impact on credibility ( $p = .30$ )
- Speaker identity impacted credibility ratings ( $p = .02$ )

**4.85**  
Caucasian Speaker  
Mean Score

**5.42**  
Native American Speaker  
Mean Score

Participants were asked to rate the credibility of the speaker on a scale from 1 to 6. On average, the Caucasian speaker was rated as less credible ( $M = 4.85$ ) than the Native American speaker ( $M = 5.42$ ).

### Participant Demographics

- 90 Palomar College Students
- Ages 18 to 44 ( $M = 21.74$ )
- Majority Hispanic/Latino: 55.6%

Variable	1.	2.	3.	M	SD
1. Speaker's Identity				1.60	.49
2. Participant's Race	.07			5.15	1.64
3. Perceived Credibility	-.25*	.03		5.08	1.13

\* $p < .05$

### Study Design

- $2 \times 2$  Factorial Design
- Independent Variable: Speaker's Perceived Cultural Identity
- Participant Variable: Participant Race (White or POC)
- Dependent Variable: Speaker Credibility Rating

## Discussion

- **Conclusion:** The findings suggest that when presenting on culturally relevant subject matter, having a presenter whose background reflects the presentation topic may be beneficial to student success and learning
- **Limitation:** Due to a shift in the composition of our research team, one member had to fill in the role of the Native American speaker despite not actually being Native American
- **Directions for Future Research:** Future studies should test these effects with an actual Native American speaker. Additionally, studies can test this effect with different presenter backgrounds and presentation topics.

## References

- Evangelist, M. (2022). Narrowing Racial Differences in Trust: How Discrimination Shapes Trust in a Racialized Society. *Social Problems*, 69(4), 1109-1136.
- Hendrix, K. G. (1997). Student perceptions of verbal and nonverbal cues leading to images of black and white professor credibility. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 8(3), 251-273.
- Rezvani, R., & Miri, P. (2021). The impact of gender, nativeness, and subject matter on the English as a second language university students' perception of instructor credibility and engagement: a qualitative study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12.
- Thompson, M. K. (2018). Bias on Trial: Toward an Open Discussion of Racial Stereotypes in the Courtroom. *Michigan State Law Review*, 1243.