

# The Importance of Cultural Values in the Stigmatization of Mental Illness

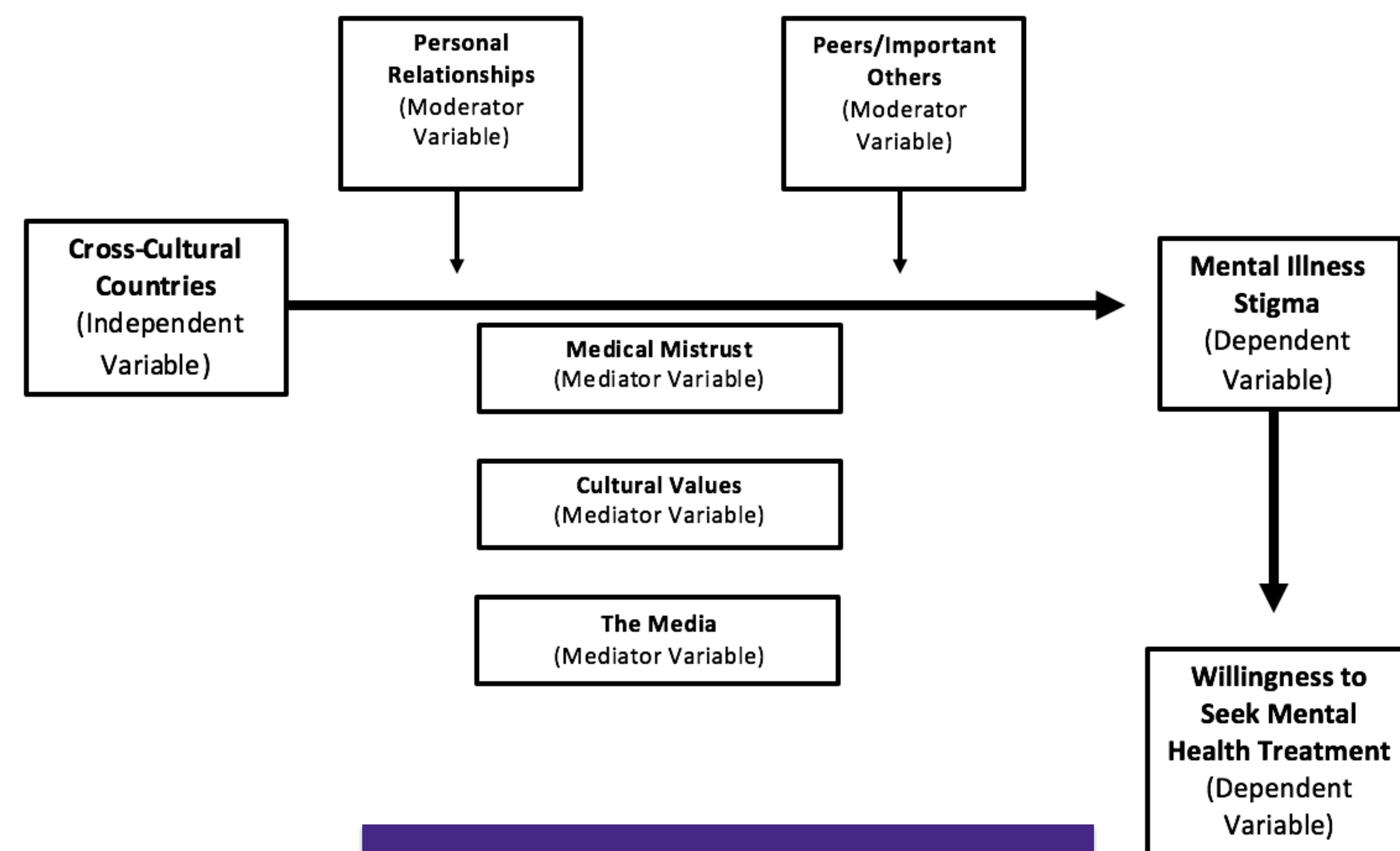
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## Introduction

- Research has indicated that people often have negatively perceptions and frequently stigmatization others who have a mental disorder.
- Otto (1999) concluded that when mental health consumers ( $N = 1,301$ ) self-reported how they experience stigma, they were commonly hurt by “witnessing stigmatizing comments of depictions of mental illness” with almost 80% overhearing hurtful or mean comments about mental illness.
- These findings suggest that people with mental illness are stigmatized and made to feel ashamed due to their illness.



## The Current Study

- The purpose of the current study was to examine how American and International students perceive mental health stigma, while exploring how various variables impact the mental health stigma and help seeking behaviors.
  - Mediator Variables: Medical Mistrust, Cultural Values, and the Media
  - Moderator Variables: Personal Relationships and Important Others
- Hypotheses
  - American students will hold significantly less stigma toward mental illness, and will be significantly more likely to seek professional help than International students.
  - Both American and International students’ perception of mental illness will be significantly negatively impacted by the media and will be significantly positively impacted by having a personal relationship with someone who has been diagnosed with a mental illness.

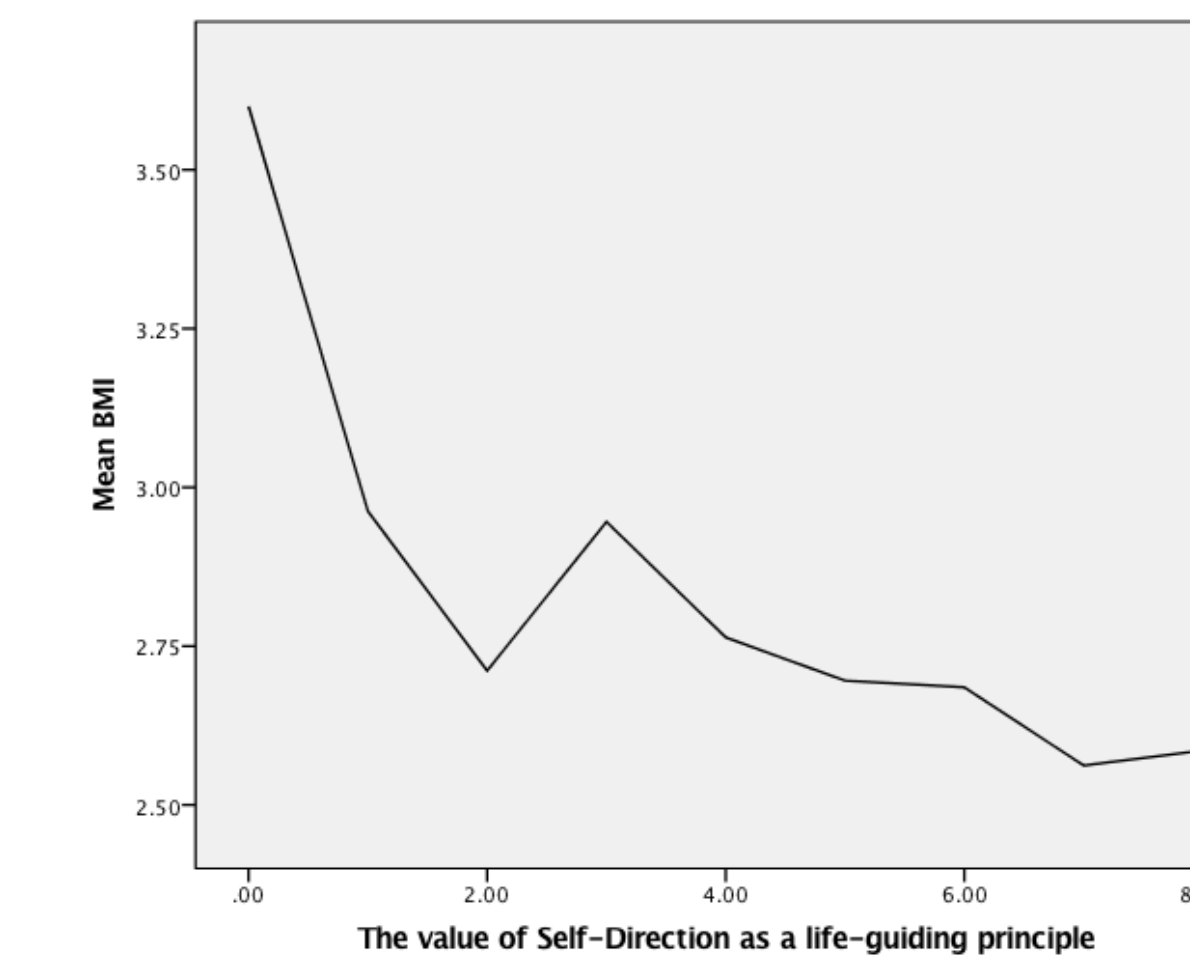
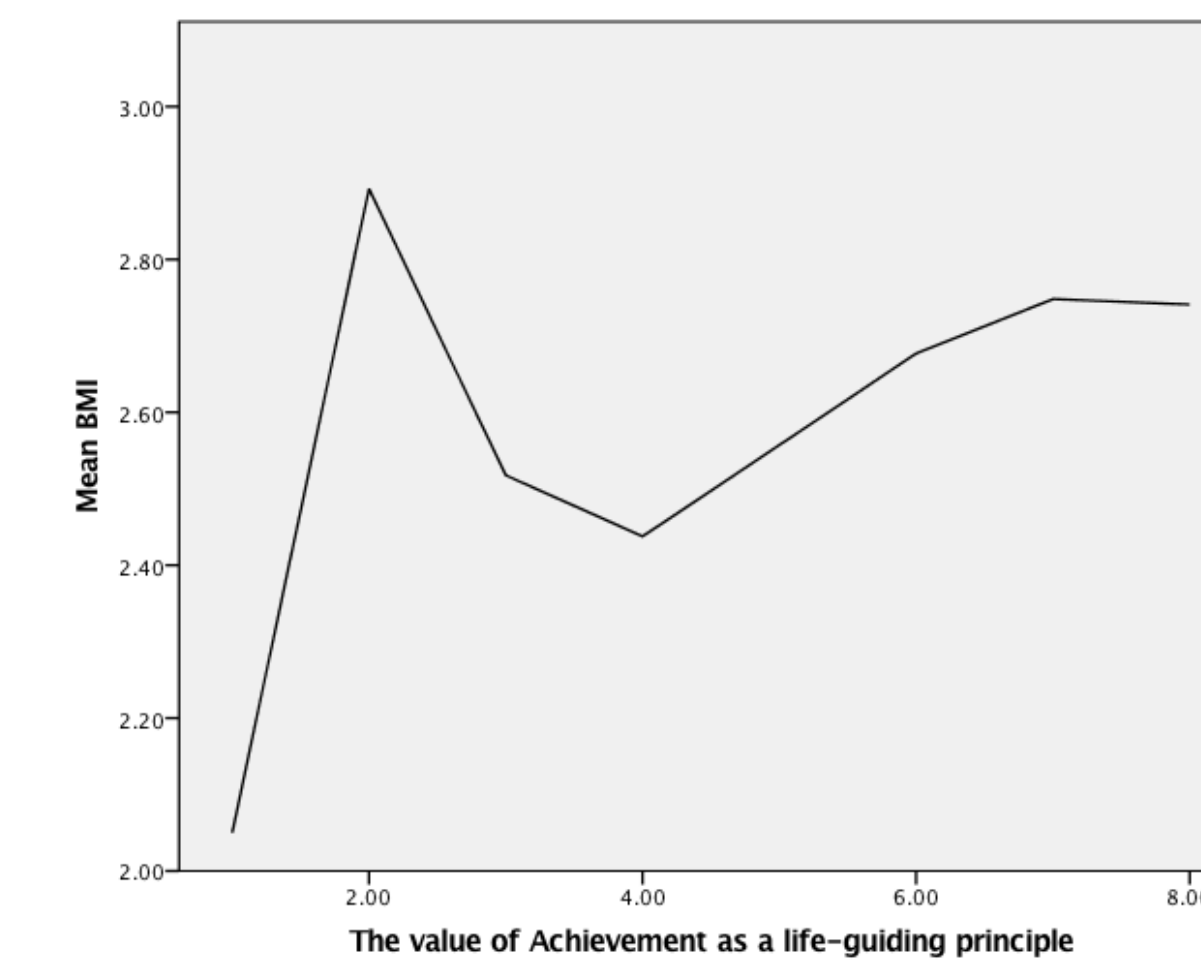
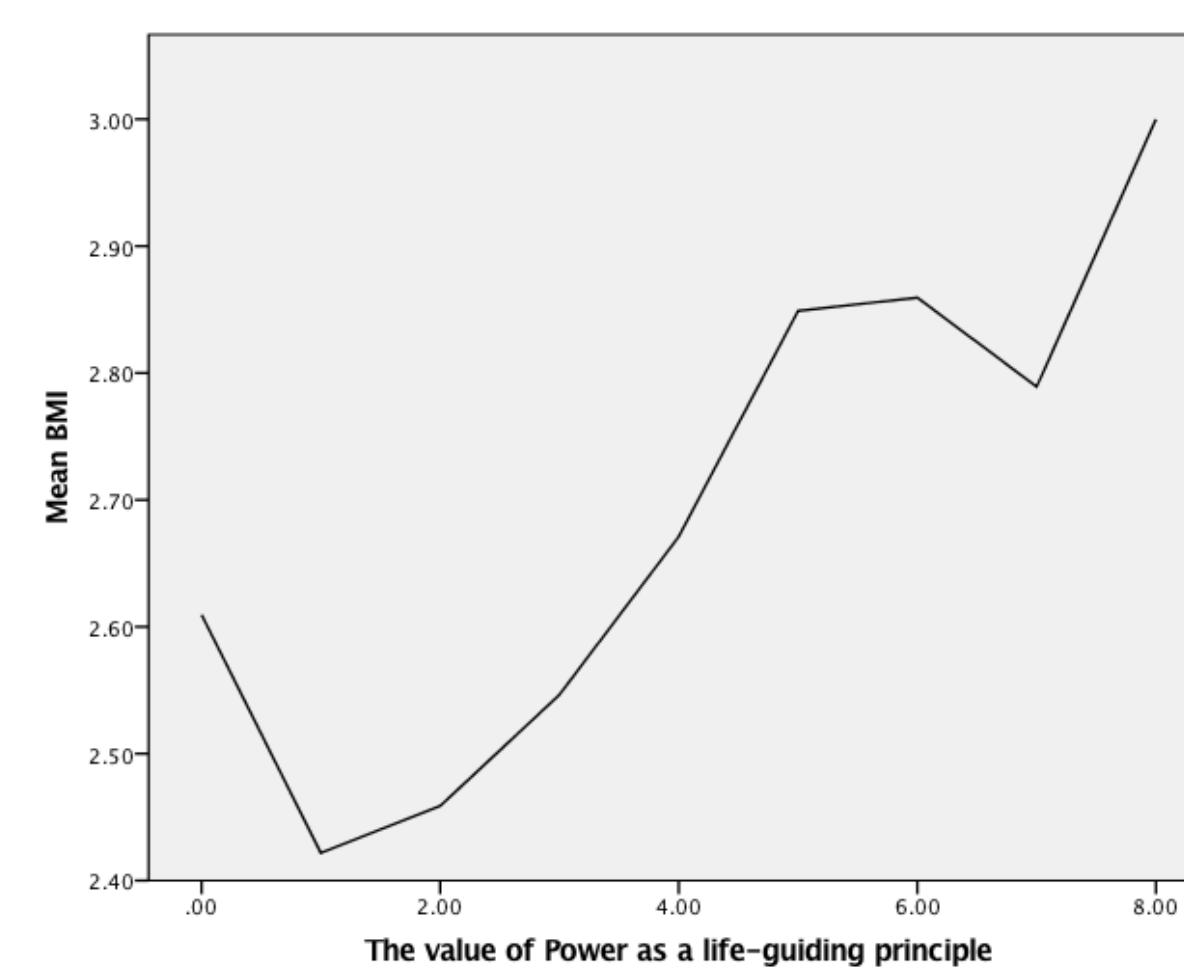
## Methods

- A convenience sample of 399 American and International students were collected.
- 51 cases were omitted due to missing values(348).
  - 332 students were American and 16 were International students
  - 53.7 % Females, 44.0 % Males, 2.2% Other 2.2%
  - 45.4% Freshman, 20.7% Sophomores, 17.2% Juniors, 8.6% Seniors, and 3.2% held a Bachelors degree or higher
- Participants electronically signed an informed consent form and were asked to complete an online Qualtrics survey, which consisted of various questionnaires.
  - Beliefs towards Mental Illness Questionnaire (BMI)
  - Perceived Stigma Questionnaire (PSQ)
  - Inventory of Attitudes Toward Seeking Mental Health Services (ATSMHS)
  - Physicians Trust Scale (PTS)
  - Short Schwartz Value Survey (SSVS)

## Discussion

- When participants were asked, “How do you think the media portrays individuals with mental illness issues?” participants responded somewhat negatively ( $M = 2.06, SD = 0.79$ ).
- When participants were asked “Do you have a personal relationship with someone who has been diagnosed with a mental illness?”, 59.8% of participants responded yes and 40.2% of participants responded no.
- These preliminary findings confirm the importance of personal contact with people who have a mental health diagnosis for reducing stigma toward mental illness.
- More importantly, these findings point to the significant role that cultural values play in stigma toward people with mental illness suggesting that cultural transmitters such as popular media, enculturation processes, and cultural differences must be examined in future research.
- On-going research examine transnational samples will be discussed in addition to the meaning of these results for training mental health professionals.

## Results



- Separate multiple regression analysis were performed on the BMI and PSQ, with personal relationship, respondents’ gender and ATSMHS, and SSVS as predictors using the backward elimination method.
- PSQ scores resulted in a best prediction equation  $PSQ = -.068(\text{Personal Relationship}) + 3.38$ .
- Regression analysis of BMI scores yielded a best prediction equation of  $BMI = 4.27(\text{Personal Relationship}) - 2.07(\text{Gender}) + .05(\text{Power}) + .03(\text{Achievement}) - .05(\text{Self-Direction}) + 1.67$ .
- This result means that those who *do not* personally know someone with a mental illness, males, those who place more importance on the values of Power and Achievement, and place less importance on the value of Self-Direction report significantly greater stigma towards those diagnosed with mental illnesses.