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Retention and Employability of Native American and Alaskan Native Undergraduates in Public Universities

Dottie Hines Chicquelo
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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Walden University
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Abstract

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Public Universities

by

Dottie Chicquelo

MS, University of Maryland, University College, 1996

BS, University of Maryland, University College, 1990

Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Management

Walden University

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Abstract

Scholars have called for generalized academic and social change for the United States Native American and Alaskan Native students (the U.S. NA/AN) and the need for reform continues. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at the U.S. public universities to support U.S. NA/AN students and identify strategies to improved students' employment pathways after graduation. The management problem was the lack of retention strategies used to support the U.S. NA/AN student engagement within communities after graduation. The general management problem looked at how the lack of retention strategies affected the U.S. NA/AN student employability after graduation. The 2 research sites were predominantly White institutions (PWI). An interpretive paradigm along with a purposeful sampling design helped select the unit of analysis. Face-to-face and Skype internet were used interview methods. A humanistic approach analyzed and interpreted participants' experiences. Conceptual frameworks embedded in raw textual data linked participants lived experiences at a PWI to include identity theft, microaggression, and systematic racism. The conceptual framework analysis concluded that student participants lacked employability strategy and pathways after graduation, lacked instruction in workforce readiness skills, and lacked social engagement within the educational environment and community as a workplace. The narrative discussion advances the further debate on PWI faculty, and other stakeholders as nonusers of retention and employability strategies, themes, concepts, models, and theory recommended enhancing the U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student in general when enrolled in a PWI. The same students should be employable after graduation, ready to elevate their career to achieve the highest level of self-actualization, and at the same time encouraging and advancing positive social change.

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“To My Grandmother, Willie Lee Bailey Bass

and

Uncle, Lucian Hines in loving memory.”

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Dottie Chicquelo, M.Phil., Ph.D.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Postsecondary educational institutions have not adequately served the U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native (U.S. NA/AN) student populations (Adelman et al., 2013; Nourie, 2016; Rush, 2019). Of the U.S. NA/AN population needed in the workplace, only 2.1% have masters and other professional degrees (Albert, 2019). Workforce readiness skills taught by faculty at the university were reserved for students after graduation from college. However, “Differential status and differential income are now based on higher education and technical skills” (Brown et al, 2011, as cited in Lisa, 2019, p. 1). The tendency to have students ready for the workplace before graduation is now the trend (Borg et al., 2017). Likewise, U.S. NA/AN college graduates are in the workplace. However, they are not gaining earnings compared to White college graduates (Keo et al., 2019). White college graduates who out earn U.S. NA/AN college graduates is cause for reflection.

Work is “the what”, workforce readiness is “the who” and the workplace is “the where” (Schwartz et al., 2019, para. 1). Workforce readiness is different from having a job. A job is work needed to support financial needs and can be included in making a career. A career involves a lifetime commitment following a passion and workforce in many jobs related to the passion (First Step Toward Getting A Job Starting with Indeed, 2020).

“To be employed is to be at risk, to be employable is to be secure” (Hawkins, 1999). Having employment skills ensures a person can get paid for a specific job or service with minimum skills. Employability is getting and keeping a job. Employability means having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding, and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied,

function in a particular role, and successful (Lisa, 2019; Pool & Sewell, 2007; Romgens et al., 2019; The Panther Group, 2017). Also, learning experiences are a component of employability (Peeters et al., 2017; Yorke, 2006).

Current educational programs do not provide the soft skill sets for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students need, to achieve employability after graduation (Conover Company, 2017; National Soft Skills Association, 2017). The understanding of soft skill sets from U.S. NA/AN students' perspectives and cultural experience has not been confirmed as a concern among students and other stakeholders in academia. Essential soft skills for workplace readiness include "attitude, communication, planning and organizing, critical thinking, interpersonal/social skills, teamwork, professionalism, and media rules" (Conover Company, 2017, para. 5, for more). In addition, soft skill sets facilitate business success, and applicable people skills, which reinforce the ability to communicate, resolve conflicts, and create an atmosphere that earns trust. Recent scholarly research confirmed that teachable hard skill sets determine what a person knows, which accounts for 15% of success, and soft skill sets which are people skills make up the remainder 85% of success ("The Real Skills Gap," 2016, pg. 1). With the change in campus life and the way students are being engaged, both skills will be needed (Merisotis & Hauser, 2020).

Background of the Study

The site for this scholarly research study was the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP), located in the State of Maryland and governed by the University of Maryland System, hereafter referred to as the UMCP. Native American students are not likely to attend a private university (Enrollment, 2020). The public university has been

labeled as an “engine of inequality” (College Results Online, 2020, p. 1). Likewise, the UMCP has a pyramid hierarchical structure and an agenda that emphasizes achieving elite status. Academic institutions, as stated by Washor and Mojkowski (2014), are not meeting students’ expectations; this viewpoint stands in contrast to the notion that students do not meet standardized academic and social expectations.

Because of the UMCP’s agenda, the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student persistence and involvement in educational and social possibilities are questioned (Adelman et al., 2013). For instance, the same students who feel marginalized have difficulty celebrating their heritage (Crosby, 2011) and become disengaged (Soundout, n.d.). Stakeholder managers at the UMCP have reported the use of some retention strategies; however, those strategies have not addressed concerns that support U.S. NA/AN students’ retention, and postgraduate workforce readiness and employability. Stakeholder managers and others should be aware and ready to address U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students’ issues to include cultural sensitivity upon admission (Martinez, 2014) by using retention strategies that include workforce readiness skills in the curriculum before graduation and a smooth transition into employment after graduation.

I am an advocate for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students’ academic and social achievements and a fair and accelerated collegiate experience. I worked for over a decade at the University of Maryland (UM). While a stakeholder on campus at the UM, I observed and realized that the organization’s philosophy had not, for many years, strategically changed or enhanced U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students’ retention efforts, assessment efforts, nor transformation in support of career management skill sets in support of employability for U.S. NA/AN after graduation. I witnessed the disparities and

a lack of outreach and in-reach to U.S. NA/AN students from the UM stakeholder management and others. Ferlazzo (2019, para. 6) stated, “The fact that, all too often, the educational needs of American Indian students are not met does not lie in their ability to succeed but in the system that fails to value their strengths, who they are, and where they come from”.

Stakeholders working at various public universities should identify resources that address issues hindering U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student recruitment, matriculation, retention, graduation, and postgraduate employment. Career, social, financial, and community wellbeing and policy, which are not in a place that increases persistence to graduation for the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student (Guillory, 2012; Rath & Harter, 2010). Academic and social retention strategic strategies and institutional policies should ensure U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students’ academic and social success by shrinking the academic and social achievement gap (Murphy, 2011; White House, 2011).

Retention

Institutions may implement strategies to enhance student retention to include “procedures to identify at-risk students early on; early intervention for at-risk students; having a high-quality teaching staff, curriculum, academic support; and having retention programs” (Gragg, 2016, para. 5). High retention rates for students indicate that institutions are reaching their expected goals, objectives, and mission (“Should I Stay or Should I Go; The Impact of Retention,” n.d.). When an institution of higher education only graduate 15% of U.S. NA students, and the total student population graduation rate is 75%, there is something lacking visibility that prevents others from being successful (Bean, n.d., para. 4). A retained student showing normal progression, which happens

when a full-time student (*stayer*) is enrolled each semester and graduates within approximately 4 years (Bean, n.d., para. 2) and experiences a culmination of retention strategies to include “personal issues and circumstantial factors” (Gragg, 2017, para. 1).

Guillory (2009) stated that stakeholders at various colleges and universities have tried to create unique ways to recruit, retain, and educate U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students. However, stakeholders have not demonstrated enough concern toward advancing academic and social success for U.S. NA undergraduate students and graduates (General, n.d.; Guillory, 2012; Lawson & Lawson, 2013). Retention factors and other challenges are persistent reasons that U.S. NA/AN students do not obtain advanced educational degrees (Patel, 2014; Sheehy, 2013).

U.S NA/AN students’ academic drive and behavior do not support the willingness to succeed (Race, Class, and the Achievement Gap, 2011). Most public universities have a diverse student population, however, the number of retained U.S. NA students continue to be low (Schooler, 2014). While researchers such as Adelman et al. (2013) and Lee et al. (2011) studied retention issues for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students’ success, the UMCP Native students and graduates are still lacking guidance and support to enhance a well-rounded college experience. Stakeholders at the UMCP are not trained to address U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students who may have “personal factors, low self-confidence, poor attitude toward education, poor study behaviors or problem-solving abilities” (Gragg, 2017, para. 2) from a cultural perspective. These issues affect retention to graduation and graduation to employability for U.S. NA/AN students. Hired stakeholders must be knowledgeable and able to ensure academic and social rigor (see P. Brown et al., 2011) for U.S. NA/AN students and graduates.

Employability

During this research study, I explored transparent conceptual terms and themes that are expected to enhance U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' retention and workforce readiness in support of employability after graduation. Government funding programs and parents echo the urgent need to enhance employability for students who graduate from a university, and stakeholders emphasize that professionals at universities should add more employment educational strategies to the curricula (Sumanasiri et al., 2015).

Recent scholarly research confirmed that hard skill sets determine what a person knows, which accounts for 15% of success, and soft skill sets make up the remainder of success (Conover Company, 2017, para. 1). Students who attend high schools, colleges, and universities in the U.S. are not receiving training in the soft skill sets necessary for employment (Jimenez, 2020; National Soft Skills Association, 2017). The understanding of soft skill sets from U.S. NA/AN students' perspectives and cultural experience has not been confirmed as a concern among stakeholders. The soft skill sets include attitude, communication, planning and organizing, critical thinking, interpersonal/social skill sets, teamwork (specific task) professionalism, and media rules (Conover Company, 2017, para. 2). Soft skill sets support business success, and most model "people skills," an individual's ability to "manage stress, resolve conflicts, and navigate workplace challenges" (Wascalus, 2012, para. 1). Nonexceptional organizational management strategies and campus culture, poor leadership, and unacceptable stakeholder professionalism on and off-campus contribute to failed student workplace readiness (Pool, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and identify strategies to improved students' employment pathways after graduation. Postgraduate workforce readiness for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students has not been a major topic of discussion in the scholarly literature (How to Find a Job after Graduation, n.d.). Labor factors refer to the economy, natural resources, capital, and entrepreneurship in the U.S. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), citing data from the Current Population Survey, reported that many NA/ANs in the U.S. were not working and were not looking for employment. In 2018, CPS data revealed that within the U.S. population of 2.9 million, U.S. NA/ANs accounted for 1.1% of the U.S. civilian noninstitutional population age 16 and older (para. 1). The unemployment rate for this population was high at 6.6% as compared to the rate of 3.9% in the overall population. Further, the U.S. NA/AN population had the highest rate of unemployment in the U.S. labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019).

This scholarly research study's outcome was intended to advance positive social change by recommending university stakeholders to use new and enhanced retention strategies for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students in support of retention and employability, which is a "university-wide responsibility" (Cole & Tibby, 2013, para. 2).

Moreover, in this scholarly research study, I explored how representatives from universities could help enhance workforce readiness and efforts to shrink the unemployment gap for U.S. NA/AN graduates from public universities. Enhanced retention strategies that support workforce readiness could advance self-actualization for

U.S. NA/AN students and graduates from public universities and other educational institutions. With this scholarly research study, strategies for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate and graduate students. The same strategies may improve students' use of hard and soft skill sets to improve their employment opportunities after graduation for which this research study was intended to achieve.

The participants shared textual analysis of “what” and structural analysis of “how” their disengagement becomes a reality (Bowen, 2005; Goulding, 2005; Padilla-Díaz, 2015) due to a lack of retention strategies connected to foreseen employability issues. Inductive reasoning supported the development of concepts, patterns, and themes from an in-depth analysis of unstructured raw textual data (Hird, 2015; Woods, 2006). The conceptual framework analysis allows retention themes considered credible and transferable, to be shared with stakeholders at the UMCP and pedagogy (Jabareen, 2009) to ensure employability and positive social change.

Problem Statement

The management problem I studied was the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation. Reasons for the low retention rates of U.S. NA/AN students in U.S. universities remain unclear. The retention rate for half of all NA high school graduates was only 1 year while in university (Adelman et al., 2013).

The academic and social integration of student retention into a college or university setting is especially important parts of the university experience (Tinto, 1987, 1993). Tinto's (1975) theory noted that a lack of integration and engagement in the academic and social university environment leads to low commitment and an increase in

the probability that students who leave will pursue other goals. High attrition indicates that the mission of the school, which should have been to educate students, was not carried out. Students who drop out of university, are called “leavers” (“College Student Retention,” n.d., para. 3). A leaver departs a university and does not return to that or any other university (“Enrollment management and programs to increase retention.,” 2017, para, 3). They are often tagged as lazy or unwilling to learn (Hickok, 2015). Some NA/AN students living in the U.S. are not privy to the same educational opportunities and job training as students in urban schools. Situations such as a lack of financial support may cause a student to give up on education and become lost within themselves (Lowrey, 2019). Retention strategies for U.S. NA/AN students should be quite different because of that populations’ unique need for achieving academic and social achievement.

Disengagement

Disengagement refers to students’ boredom and lack of obligation and involvement in academic and/or social interaction with others, and other factors that wipe out a well-rounded university experience (Brint & Cantwell, 2012; Maloshonok, 2014; Shore, 2016). Previous findings indicated that U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students disengaged themselves from academic and social opportunities that supported retention, high levels of educational experiences, and positive outcomes (“Data Collection Strategies II: Qualitative Research,” 2013). Also, the term “disengaged” (America’s Promise Alliance, 2014) from an academic environment and social perspective continued to be evident for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate and graduate student when retention strategies were not effective. Some scholars concluded that disengagement issues were reasons for some students (*stop-out*) leaving university before completing their academic

expectations (Washor & Maojkowski, 2014). However, those same students/graduates classified as nontraditional by McFarland et al. (2019) could return to their academic endeavors.

In 2014, 67% of U.S. NA/AN high school students graduated (Morris, 2015). Nationally, only 49% of U.S. NA/AN high school graduated (Cook, 2015). During the school year 2016-17, for all public schools in the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, U.S. NA/AN high school graduates totaled 72% of the adjusted cohort graduation rate (“Public High School Graduation Rates,” 2019). As of 2019, and compared to 60% of the total population, 17% of U.S. NA/AN high school graduates pursued a four-year university degree (Enrollment, 2019). the NA student that graduated high school was only expected to be retained at the university for one year (Adelman et al., 2013). Of the 17% continuing their education after high school in 2019, U.S. NA/ANs represented 1% of the undergraduate student body with 10% receiving a bachelor’s degree and 17% an associate degree (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2019). Whereas, in 2020, 16% of U.S. NA attained a bachelor’s degree or higher and only 9% attain associate degrees” (Native American students in higher education, 2020, para. 1). The fact remains that high rates of U.S. NA/AN student’s drop-out, or leave public universities in the U.S. (Hunt & Harrington, 2010; Patterson et al., 2015).

General Management Problem

The general management problem was how the lack of retention strategies affected U.S. NA/AN students’ employability after graduation. In a review of literature, Austin (2013) concluded, “High educational attainment is the factor most likely to increase American Indians’ odds of securing employment” (paras. 5-6). As Austin (2013)

continued, “In 2011, about 1 in 4 Native American and Alaskan Natives U.S. (26.4%) lived in poverty” (para 2). The 1.3% of NA/AN peoples are economically mentally depressed and referred to as “*ghost sickness*” or “*heartbreak syndrome*” (“Anxiety and Depression Association of America,” 2019, p. 1), and their jobless rates continue to be high (Austin, 2013). President Barrack Obama remarked, “The painful legacy of discrimination means that . . . Native Americans are far more likely to suffer from a lack of opportunity—higher unemployment, and higher poverty rates” (White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2013, para. 29). In contrast, M. N. Thompson (2013) stated, “Contrary to expectations, experiences with ethnic discrimination were unrelated to university outcome expectations (CEOs)” for Native American postsecondary students.

Employers seek job candidates who have not only academic training but also those who have studied and trained in soft skill sets. Universities’ failure to hold accountable stakeholder managers who have not worked with a diverse student population and who lack the skill sets that help U.S. NA/AN . undergraduate students acquire knowledge (Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Sabri & Sabri-Matanagh, 2013) in support of workforce readiness is unacceptable.

This research study identified 2 research sites because of concerns with the participant selection process. More explanation in chapters 3, 4, and 5. In addition, explanation will be given for the selection of only U.S. Native American participants in chapters 3, 4 and 5. Using a purposive technique, I identified 6 NA undergraduate students and graduates who attended the UMCP and the UMBC. The selected participants addressed the issues of retention and strategies they experienced while attending a public White institution. It was important to select participants who could

share conceptual terms and themes that enhanced the selection of retention themes as opposed to general information (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Waters, 2016).

Unstructured raw textual data from a participant who had not experienced the phenomena in the same way as another confirmed the fact that generalizing to all U.S NA/AN undergraduates was not the aim of this research study.

I wanted the participants to speak about how their lived experiences affected retention and employability after graduation. Precise boundaries helped determine sound practices and beliefs associated with the selected U.S. NA undergraduate students and graduates who participated in the scholarly research study. Precise boundaries supported the transparency, transferability, truthfulness, and credibility of this scholarly research study. Some key boundaries were the number of venues and locations for the interviews, the selection criteria for the number of participants, and how long and how often participants were interviewed (Trochim, 2006). Snowball sampling, a nonprobability technique, encouraged participants to identify other potential participants who qualified for the research study, if needed (Glen, 2014).

Conceptual Frameworks

This qualitative research study used a qualitative research methodology and a phenomenological research design to search for subjective meaning (“Difference Between,” 2015). The conceptual framework and analysis used an interpretative approach. The study was data-driven (inductive) to identify conceptual frameworks embedded in the raw textual data. The selection of U.S. NA/AN participants and the description of the phenomena determined the raw textual data needed (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven) qualitative data

analysis took place when data linked to theoretical variables and theorists who studied the exposed meaning of retention strategies (Ruona, 2005) and securing work placement after graduation.

A theoretical perspective existed when procedures, assumptions, or ideas were organized to justify and make clear action or question (Crossman, 2019; Harris, 2003). Although a grounded method uses open-ended interview questions, “it does not seek out additional cases, conduct additional observations, nor compare those observations against the concepts developed from earlier observations” (Jabareen, 2009, para. 2). Empirical evidence from documentation of patterns found in the conceptual framework analysis supported reasons for U.S. NA undergraduate student retention issues occurring among undergraduate and graduates.

The use of generalized retention strategies experienced by U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and graduates during their university experience remains insufficiently researched. For instance, theoretical variables cannot simplify U.S. NA/AN students’ origin and cultural experiences because those experiences are fundamentally different from non-native and other multi-ethnic students’ values and established beliefs (Schooler, 2014). Vicarious reinforcement (Suzuki, 2009), a theoretical explanation, which model’s aggressive behavior (Apps et al., 2015) does not encourage student retention and workforce readiness issues. These theoretical concepts are not relevant and were not investigated during the scholarly research study. Below are some theoretical models and names of noted scholars who have researched the following themes: involvement, stakeholders, a hierarchy of needs, theory of x, y, and z, and the key to

employability model that have causal relationships and history derived from something and consists of other related links (Jabareen, 2009).

A deeper understanding of theoretical models and the use of qualitative analysis supported the conceptual framework analysis that reinforced retaining U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students at the UMCP and UMBC and to ensure workforce readiness.

Table 1

List of Theoretical Models and Names of Noted Scholars

Theoretical Model	Scholars
Involvement theory	Astin (1993), Brint & Cantwell (2012), Lundberg (2010), Roberts & McNees (2010), Student Development theory (1999)
Stakeholder theory	Donaldson & Preston (1995), Wright, (2018), Miles (2012)
Hierarchy of needs theory	Hopper (2020), Wascalus (2012)
theory X, Y, and Z	Aydin (2012), Friesen (2015)
Key to employability model	Pool & Sewell (2007)

Nature of the Study

Qualitative researchers explore and address the question of what or how but not why (Polkinghorne, 1989, 2011). The phenomenological design was non-numerical and non-descriptive, and a philosophical approach searched for subjective meaning (“Difference Between Case Study and Phenomenology,” 2015; Moustakas, 1994). During the scholarly research study, it was important to get conceptual terms and themes from U.S. NA/AN participants that would help understand the phenomena as opposed to having limitless data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Waters, 2016).

Taking into consideration time, money, human resources, and transport (Oliver, 2006), using a purposeful sampling technique supported resources that assisted with the identification and selection of the research site. The qualitative study used purposeful sampling in support of a small sample schema (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007) and not a defined number. Postsecondary data for the U.S. NA student population is left out of data reporting and research because of small units of analysis (Challenges, 2020). A small unit of analysis (15-20) from the sampling frame was expected to ensure that the U.S. NA/AN participants and the interviewer could establish a bond and results would be valid (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). According to Morse (1994), if the participant count was too large, the raw textual data might become repetitive. Further, Green and Thorogood (2009, 2004, 2012) and Mason (2010) stated that usually after 20 or more participants are interviewed, there will likely not be any more relevant information, and saturation would occur.

. I designed the scholarly research study to use all U.S. NA/AN participants' raw textual data, which occurred after interviewing 6 U.S. NA/AN. participants (Latham, 2014).

Research Questions

. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and identify strategies to improved students' employment pathways after graduation. The overarching research question, 2 research questions, and 5 interview questions guided the scholarly research study.

Overarching Research Question

What retention strategies at public universities affect U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native undergraduate students' employment after graduation?

Research Questions

RQ1. How do U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' heritage and culture influence retention strategies at the University of Maryland that support employment after graduation?

RQ2. What retention strategies at the University of Maryland U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' ability to secure a job after graduation?

The 5 questionnaire questions aligned with the purpose of the study (Bryman, 2015). The phenomenological research design supported the collection of unstructured raw textual data. Research questions and interview protocol were intended to solicit the beliefs, ideas, reasons, and attitudes of U.S. NA/AN participants who experienced a lack of academic and social retention support and employability themes while obtaining a degree in higher education at the UMCP (Appendices B). A subjective approach identified concepts, patterns, and themes from an in-depth analysis of unstructured raw textual data rather than themes identified before the study's implementation (Hird, 2015; Woods, 2006). The Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (Chicoine, 2003) and NVivo 11 Starter software were expected to analyze the raw textual data.

Grounded theory, a paradigm of inquiry, may have supported this scholarly research study; however, a grounded theory cannot link a question to the phenomena during the beginning of the research (Osborne, 1994).

Definition of Terms

This qualitative and in-depth scholarly research study highlighted significant conceptual terms, historical acts, and political decisions that provided an understanding of retention strategies and workforce readiness for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and graduates. The following definitions should enhance the reading of the research document.

Aboriginal: A person related to or inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists; indigenous (“Aboriginal,” n.d.).

Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) includes the United States of America public schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, except for the Bureau of Indian Education schools. State education agencies calculate the ACGR by identifying the ‘cohort’ of first-time ninth graders in a particular school year - cohort is then adjusted by adding any students who transfer into the cohort after 9th grade and subtracting any student who transfers out, emigrate to another country or die. – the percentage of students in the adjusted cohort who graduate within 4 years with a regular high school diploma. – initial start date – 2010-11

Blood quantum: A person’s ethnic identity is determined by a formula to measure the amount percentage of blood a person has from the identified group. “The generations in a family tree that is pure blood divided by the total number of marriages that took place with peoples who are of mixed blood will give the blood quantum” (Lewis, n.d.).

Civilian noninstitutional population: This population consists of people in 50 states in the United States and the District of Columbia aged 16 years or older. Also, members of this population are not incarcerated in penal, mental facilities, or homes for

the aged, nor are they on active duty in any branch of the military (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

Cracker: Some European Americans used the whip to beat slaves. Because of the whip, Cracker referred to the sound of the whip and the color of the skin after a person had been whipped (Demby, 2013).

Dawes roll: The federal government kept a list of the names of five Indian tribes: Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole Indians, who during the Allotment Era between 1898 and 1914 received 160-acres of land when they arrived in Oklahoma, Indian Territory (Dawes Roll, 2016).

Day School managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs consisted of educational classes, general advising, meals, and transportation to and from home. The school was not a boarding school. Students had to return home daily (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, 2012).

Ethnicity refers to heredity, which does not define ethnic differences. “Ethnicity is a shared cultural heritage. The most common characteristics distinguishing various ethnic groups are ancestry, a sense of history, language, religion, and forms of dress” (Cornell & Hartmann, 2007, para. 4; Ethnicity as a Distinctive Set of Claims, para. 4; Race and Ethnicity Defined, para. 4).

Ethnocentrism creates an attitude of superiority that may result in increased egos that may lead to segregation among “ethnic identities, discriminatory acts, and other ways to demean the manhood and womanhood of another individual”. European Americans were ethnocentric, that is “they tend to support their group above others” (Ropers & Pence, 1995, p. 1).

Headright: After 7 years, each European American who traveled and lived in Virginia for 3 years or died in that territory received a grant for 50 acres of land that included their heirs. This provision was called the London Company's Greater Charter of 1618. (Baird, 1990).

Indian. An Indian is a member of a federal, tribe, state recognized by the United States. The tribe is subject to guidelines created by the U.S. government. Additionally, an Indian is a person, who follows his/her heart and spirit without proof of the blood, government intervention, or high cheekbones not under federal law and tribal law and vice versa. However, "there is no single definition of the term Indian" (American Indians and Alaska Natives - Who is Indian? What is an Indian Tribe? 2014, March 24, p. 1).

Indian Intercourse Act of 1834: Commissioners who went to Indian country in 1832 created a plan of interaction and regulation among tribes and the United States. The plan, known as the Indian Intercourse Act, allowed tribes to establish their governments; however, officials of the United States retained the right to oversee those operations. Some historians believed the plan created the Indian Territories, but eventually, that belief was debunked (Congress passes the first Indian trade and Interact Act, 2015).

Indian Territory: The Indian Territory, now known as Oklahoma, was the land north and east of the Red River and south of Kansas and Nebraska. The original 5 tribes received land after the Bureau of Indian Affairs staff placed their names on the Dawes Rolls. The land was not sufficient for farming. Most of the children received land; however, they did not know how to farm. The boarding school experiences prevented training in farming (Kill the Indian, Save the man, n.d.). Oklahoma opened its territory to White homesteaders on April 22, 1889, in an event known as the first great Oklahoma

land rush, which was tantamount to the annulment of the territory (“Brief History of the Formation of Oklahoma Territory,” n.d.).

Labor force: The availability of people able to work. The numbers show the % of the total population (Amadeo, 2020).

Latinx (pronounced “La-teen ’ex) is the “gender-neutral alternative to Latino, Latina, and even Latin@” (Ramirez & Blay, 2016, para. 1). Scholars, journalists, and activists employ the term in their research and conversation. This term is more inclusive and used more commonly used by “trans, queer, gender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, or gender fluid” people (2016, para. 1).

Maturation - Being strong and able to handle emotional situations without being a burden to others. Maturation is a continuous development from a young age to adulthood. <http://www.alleydog.com/glossary/definition.php?term=Maturation>

Mother Earth: A term used by Native Americans to appreciate the land (Means, 1996).

Native American: The federal government and the amount of pure blood a person has determined by a quantum validates a person who claimed citizenship as a Native American in a tribe. Historically, spoken language and practice of cultures were the only identification requirements (Siek, 2012).

Native American Indian: The term used to reference the nation of a person and a native’s self-determination of their homeland (d’Errico, 2005, p. 1).

Nativization Model: “A second language used by adult parents becomes the native language of their children Andersen” (Al-Asfour’s, (2018; Andersen, 1985, pp. 1-4).

Origin – The heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before they arrived in the United States of America.

Retrieved from www.nces.ed.gov

Race -The color of a person’s skin references an individual's race. For instance, White people are a race (Christian, 1989). A *Race* is an identity that labels a class of people who celebrate the same cultural expression, and beliefs. Scholar Lopez, (1994, p. 1) supported “referents of terms like Black, White, Asian, and Latino (*Latinx*) are social groups and are not genetically distinct branches of humankind” (Drraji, n.d., para. 1).

Racial categories – products of history and circumstances, not of our innards (King, 2019, para. 122).

Red Skin: The practice of killing and scalping as proof of killing Native Americans to earn a bounty. From the bloodiness of the scalp, the term “Red Skin” was derived (Muwakkil, 2004).

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) – NA/AN children taken from their families and Native cultural training was a terrible act of relocation. A Congressional Act in 1978 insisted the movement stop. The ICWA (25 U.S.C. § 1902 protects Indian belief and heritage (Indian Child Welfare Act, n.d., p. 1; Johnson, 2010, para. 1).

White: The term used for Europeans of British and Protestant descent and eventually all Europeans regardless of their religious beliefs (Spring, 2007). “White” identity referenced “European, Middle-Eastern or North-African, Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Eastern, Arab, and Polish descent” (Fox, 2010, p. 2).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Simon (2011) defined assumption as a study not relevant if it fails to justify and prove a fact. Hillstrom (2013) stated that before the realization of the assumed is known, the justification should be a fact-based on “cultural/racial/ethnic identities” (para. 1) Hillstrom (2013) stated that before the realization of an assumption, the real need of the student should be known based on the student’s “cultural/racial/ethnic identities” (para. 1). For instance, some participants would not identify themes that would support successful academic and social retention strategies for U.S. NA/AN students which was an assumption. I assumed that some U.S. NA/AN students were neither visible nor transparent and were presumed to have assimilated into the mainstream student population. Scholars such as Creighton (2007) mentioned that some U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students needed motivation, techniques on challenging a rigid curriculum, and how to improve self-esteem (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010), which could have enhanced workforce readiness. Another area of concern for U.S. NA/AN students, which continuously echoed in the literature, was that 80% of the teachers for NA/AN tribal students and students who self-identify as U.S. NA/AN are White (Garland, 2013). This same issue is apparent in a high school on the Warm Springs Reservation in Central Oregon, which is referred to as “a lack of cultural understanding among teachers” (Clarren, 2017, para. 11)

Scholar A. S. Smith (1991) concluded that in the 19th century, the natural rights theory, which supported the First Amendment and freedom of speech for Cherokee and other Native American Indian Nations, should be culturally grounded by Anglo-

Americans. In contrast, Native cultural training from parents continues to encourage U.S. NA/ANs to be quiet, listen, and quickly speak to show respect for elders (Stokes, 1997). A college environment expects much dialogue and openness to diversity discussions (Jaipuria, 2015). Another assumption was that stakeholder managers lacked retention strategy and creativity to increase dialogue among U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and peers. It was an assumption that participants answer to research questions and questionnaire questions were good ways to ensure dependability of the study's final analysis (Universal Teacher, n.d.).

Limitations

Researchers cannot be objective about their research topics (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). There are unique challenges when it comes to dealing with biased beliefs and practices (Trochim, 2001). However, bias during qualitative research is not considered a bad thing if the interviewer is willing to divulge their views and assumptions and maintain transparency during the research process. Bias identified in a qualitative research study is not considered non-scholarly. The interviewer is willing to divulge their views and assumptions and maintain transparency during the research process.

Throughout this study, I maintained transparency with participants by explaining all procedures, rights, and responsibilities. Furthermore, I assured them they were able to express their views and freedom, which helped mitigate concerns about bias (Chan et al., 2013). Another potential limitation arose from the selection of additional potential participants recommended by a participant who may have experienced the phenomena took the form of snowball sampling, which involves asking participants to recommend

other people who may have experienced the phenomena and might be interested in contributing to the study (Andale, 2015). I determined how, when, and where the request would occur if needed. The possible limitation is that the accuracy (validity and reliability) of unstructured raw textual data from participants recruited through snowball sampling may not be relevant due to transferability and dependability. Besides, the accuracy (validity and reliability) of the raw textual data from the snowballed participant may not be relevant, accurate, and dependable enough to transfer.

Another potential limitation was problems with audio and video recording devices. A break in communication between interviewer and interviewee could cause raw textual data to not be recorded, nonverbal cues may not be identified with audio-only mode, and technical issues may create a loss of raw data (Saumure & Given, 2015). Probing supports transferability of conceptual frameworks and dependability of data collection (Universal Teacher, n.d., Writing@CSU [Colorado State University], n.d.). Probing is when an answer lacks clarity and a more in-depth explanation if needed (Sandberg, 2012).

Limitations of using various designs may become a challenge. Considered for this study was case study research design, which uses other research techniques (Yin, 2009, 2014). The case study used a qualitative or quantitative approach that supported lived experiences of U.S. NA/AN participants, other groups, and what took place at an event ("Difference Between," 2015). Phenomenological research design and grounded theory as a paradigm of inquiry; the latter omitted the importance of a question linked to the phenomena at the beginning of the research with participants (Osborne, 1994).

Delimitations

Delimitation defines the scope and identifies a portion of the population that does not fall within that scope. One delimitation in this study was that the geographic region and the campus environment determined how the organization played a role in the study (Simon, 2011). Delimitations highlighted the subject of interest, confirmed the criteria for selection of U.S. NA/AN participants, and reinforced the importance of truthful answers to research and questionnaire questions (Ph.D. Student, n.d.).

The undergraduate population at the UMCP consisted of 15,945 men and 13,923 women for the 20117-2018 academic year. About 72.0% of the students came from within the state of Maryland. The average age of all transfer students was 22 years. The transfer population was 3,492 students. The transfer of student enrollment was 15.1% part-time and 84.9 full-time. A transfer student may believe their movement is progressive. However, the institution that is losing the student may classify the transfer as a drop-out or leaver (Bean, n.d., para. 2). If a U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student transferred from another public university, they were not eligible for the study since they had not experienced the full academic and social involvement on and off-campus.

Because of a U.S. NA/AN first-year undergraduate student not completing one academic year within the UMCP environment and campus life, nor aware of their personal, academically, or social challenges connected to the experience of retention strategies, the student was not eligible and did not participate in the study.

I determined the outcome for this study would be student focused only. Transferability (external validity) of lived experiences, research outcome and interpretation of the narrative discussion supported credibility and reliability. However, I

anticipated that the themes mentioned by participants would be current. Continued scholarly research and improved retention and employability strategies for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and graduates will enhance retention and graduation and employment after graduation (Writing@CSU, n.d.). “I am the narrator, and I am changing the narrative” (Chicquelo, Personal Communication, July 2019).

Significance of the Study

The management problem was the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation. As mentioned, a phenomenon of interest in this scholarly research study was retention, which means to support students to return each semester or quarter for four years or until cleared to graduate (Student College Retention, n.d.). Some public universities have been guilty of not adequately educating the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student population (Adelman et al., 2013). I compared research findings with other contextual, rich, and thick descriptive data (Harper & Cole, 2012). The current literature reviews supported the research scope to address the need for policy and procedures, government, and scholars to address systemic gaps in “higher education and workforce development to build streamline pathways to good jobs” (Jimenez, 2020, para. 4; see Peeters et al., 2019). The literature review did not reveal any additional retention strategies, workforce readiness skill set, and employability strategies not already identified for U.A. NA/ undergraduate students and graduates (Murphy, 2011; White House, 2011).

The conceptual framework challenged the understanding of the how and what of interest in academic and social retention strategies among stakeholders and U.S. NA/AN

undergraduate college students and graduates. The conceptual framework analysis and narrative discussion ensured new and enhanced themes, theoretical concepts, and models. The narrative discussion added to the understanding of how and what would increase interest in academic and social retention strategies among stakeholders and U.S. NA/AN college students and graduates. The outcome of this scholarly research study provides a more in-depth and account of retention strategies and employability for U.S. NA/AN undergraduates.

Expected Contribution to Retention

The contribution from this study to the body of knowledge regarding retention of U.S. NA/AN undergraduate and graduate students attending institutions of higher education in support of workforce readiness after graduation was contingent on the research conceptual framework analysis and narrative discussion. This qualitative phenomenological study was student focused. For at least 4 years, a retained student remains enrolled and resides on campus and is expected to graduate after being cleared of all requirements and obligations (College Student Retention, n.d.). The collection and interpretation of unstructured raw textual data into conceptual concepts and themes had the potential to improve insights into retention strategies for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and graduates. Shrinking the systemic academic and social achievement gap is expected to enhance academic and social retention achievement (Murphy, 2011; White House, 2011). Stakeholder managers and other colleagues at other educational institutions are expected to apply the study's conceptual framework analysis and narrative description to similar student retention situations. Findings will highlight descriptions of credible and transferable academic and social retention strategies that

support student workforce readiness (Jabareen, 2009). The results of this research study may impact stakeholder management topics and may yield recommendations as to how others are involved in the planning and control processes of retaining U.S. NA/AN students.

Recommendations are expected to include a selection of projects worthy of investment, including the means to identify who and what will be affected and resulting in identification and engagement of social change agents (General, n.d.). The act of encouraging other scholars to read other research outcomes in comparison to this research study's data analysis "requires determining who your audience is, where your audience is, and how to reach them" (16.2 Disseminating your findings, p. 1). Possible readers are expected to be people:

who do not express enthusiastic interest but might nevertheless benefit from an awareness of the research? Participants and those who share some characteristics in common with participants. Other scholars who study similar topics.

Policymakers, organizations that do work in an area related to the topic of the research are another possibility. All inquisitive and engaged members of the public represent a possible audience. Present at events, professional conferences, newsletters, scholarly journals. (16.2 Disseminating your findings, n.d., p. 1)

Expected Contribution to Employability

Contributions from this scholarly research study are expected to help professionals develop workforce readiness skill sets in support of internal capacity and external opportunities for NA/AN undergraduate and graduate students. The conceptual framework analysis and the narrative discussion supported and encouraged U.S. NA/AN

undergraduate students' transition into a supportive postsecondary employment environment. Enhanced planning and control processes and conceptual frameworks should heighten recruitment efforts, retention, and persistence and support improved grade point averages (GPA) and graduation rates for the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student by supporting the goal of workforce readiness. Each reader will understand the urgency of moving forward with recommendations in the conceptual data analysis (Goulding, 2005; Gray, 1997). The narrative discussion supports positive social change that affects U.S. NA/AN graduates' employability after graduation. It is unacceptable for a student who graduates and who works in their field of study to not feel "satisfied" (Pool & Sewell, 2007, para. 6).

The Implication for Positive Social Change

A positive social change was reflected in the conceptual framework analysis and narrative discussion of this study. The true meaning and how retention effect and what and the importance of workforce readiness strategies to enhance employability for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and graduates are understood. Efficient organizational and stakeholder management strategies should support U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' academic and social success, retention to graduation, and employability. The same retention strategies continuously reported out by scholars which have not been practiced that should enhance the pathway to employability after graduation for U.S. NA/AN students and graduates. For instance: poverty, native language, financial aid, academic advising, first-year programs, relevant programs, just to name a few (Adelman, Taylor, et al., 2013).

The elimination of unwanted themes reported from this research study will enhance the entire public university system's programming in support of the inclusion of U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' voices at the University of Maryland. Furthermore, exposure to other students with different ethnic identities, and stakeholders' willingness to create a learning environment will encourage academic and social engagement.

The inclusion of U.S. NA/AN students' voices and exposure to other students with different ethnic identities, as well as managers' efforts to include other stakeholders, will create an environment that will shrink the gap that has consistently prohibited positive social change for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students. New and advanced retention strategies for the U.S. NA/AN undergraduates will help shrink an employment gap for U.S. NA/AN graduates and other factors that have consistently prohibited positive social change. Invite other people to share their thoughts and recommendations called "crowdsourcing" as an innovative approach and recommendation for U.S. NA/AN students, graduates, and other stakeholders (Pisano, 2015, para. 2). Documented conceptual terms, themes, and solutions will be highlighted when reading student-related literature review ("Post-Secondary Success for Native American Students," 2011; University of Maryland, Office of the Registrar, 2014) from this research study.

Summary and Transition

Historically, Native American and Alaskan Natives in the United States are members of over 566 different tribes and villages that celebrated different languages, customs, languages, spiritualities, and narratives (Legislation signed by President Obama,

amended the federal law to exclude the word “Indian” and refer instead to “*Native American*”; the names “*Eskimo*” and “*Aleut*” become “*Alaska Natives*” (Varagur, 2016, para. 4). The new law confirmed that all potential and selected participants for this study be referred to as U.S. *Native American* (NA) and *Alaskan Native* (AN) as their origin, race, and ethnicity during this research study.

Healy (2007) mentioned that calling a person a U.S. NA as not that important. The only reason a Native identifies by another name was out of respect for tribal and nations’ beliefs. The educational system for U.S. NA/AN students was implemented by tribal elders and others within their community. After some time, the European American (EA) settlers enforced other ways to civilize and educate the U.S. NA/AN population and took the Indian country as their own. Because of the EAs and the desire for superiority, treatment of U.S. NA/ANs was harsh and demeaning, which caused assimilation into the nonnative culture and acceptance of the Western style of living. As time passed (150 years plus), U.S. NA/AN children experienced many changes in their tribal educational system (Rose, 2017) that affected their psychological, sociological, and pedagogical behavior.

The management problem was the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation. The general management problem was how that lack of retention strategies affected U.S. Native American/Alaskan Native students’ employability after graduation. I selected a qualitative research method, a phenomenological design, a purposeful sampling technique, and an interpretive paradigm. Inductive and deductive (theory-driven) qualitative data analysis is appropriate

for use with theoretical variables and theorists (Ruona, 2005).

Recent and limited multidisciplinary databases, theoretical frameworks, and methods of inquiry linked the research study phenomena. Current multidisciplinary databases offered little historical or relevant research related to undergraduate U.S. NA/AN students' lived experiences in support of retention, which linked to employability after graduation, at the university. It was believed that stakeholders at the UMCP lacked strategic strategies to help shrink systemic retention gaps that affect employment after graduation for a U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student (Murphy, 2011; White House, 2011).

The United States' education system felt short of preparing students for college and workforce readiness in several ways (Jimenez, 2020). For example, U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students did not learn the soft skill sets that enhance employability in the workplace (Conover Company, 2017). Furthermore, cultural beliefs and customs were not integrated into educational training that affected U.S. NA/ANs' workplace readiness skill sets. Finally, stakeholder managers have not addressed the issue of recruiting and hiring U.S. NA/AN faculty and staff. The University of Maryland's (2015) Cultural Diversity Report highlighted that in the fall semesters of 2012, 2013, and 2014, the university employed only one NA person as tenure-track faculty.

The lack of administrative support, low interest in educational decisions, and inattention to social engagement for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students triggered low recruitment, low retention rates, drop-outs, and students not graduating (Sheehy, 2013, para. 6). Change within the environment and organization has not focused on the fundamental units of the university, nor on the team or working group as a means for

improving conditions for the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students in support of self-actualization. Organizational change systems and management should focus on organizational effectiveness and ensure important issues are not neglected (Principles of Management, n.d.).

Transferability and dependability of the conceptual framework, analysis, and narrative discussion support validity as well as challenge researchers to share and update previous multidisciplinary databases for literature reviews and dialogue. New strategic managerial and leadership strategies and operational practices will contribute to favorable retention strategies and enhance employability models, resulting in implications for positive social change at the research site, other public and private colleges universities, and academic institutions in general. Expect a more in-depth account of the phenomena as the research advances to the multidisciplinary databases in the search of the literature in support of U.S. NA/AN students' employability after graduation in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and identify strategies to improved students' employment pathways after graduation. The management problem was the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation. The general management problem was how that lack of retention strategies affected U.S. Native American/Alaskan Native students' employability after graduation. Based on a 2004 research study conducted by Blum and Libby (as cited in Harward, 2007), "40-60% of all adolescents are chronically disengaged from their academic experience" (p. 2) and 40% are chronically disengaged from academics (Crotty, 2013). I believe most U.S. NA/AN undergraduate and graduate students have not demonstrated concerned philosophies toward advancing academic and social success (Lawson & Lawson, 2013a). Besides, the stakeholders' lack of concerns for the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student hinders retention and workforce readiness after graduation. Mears (2007) stated that studies should have personal accounts from participants to influence the targeted stakeholders to change.

Search Strategy

There was an urgent need to expose U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student issues in multidisciplinary databases for literature reviews (Student Voices, 2011). National assessment results from national and extensive research databases have not and do not systematically report academic and social performances for the U.S. NA/AN student (Gentry & Fugate, 2012; Larimore & McClellan, 2005). The omissions demonstrated the

lack of importance in U.S. NA/AN students' academic and social retention and advancement (Crosby, 2011; Schooler, 2014a; Whitesell, Mitchell, Spicer, & the Voices of Indian Teen's Project Team, 2009). Because of the small number of samples drawn, which was usually 1% of the U.S. NA students in schools, some analyses are not worthy to be mentioned (Grigg, Moran, & Kuang, 2010; 2019). However, the Indian Country Today (Lee, 2017) documented a report from the so-called "Largest Study of American Indian Students Shows Mixed Results" stating over 16 thousand U.S. NA/AN students attended public and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools. Moreover, the same research study results remained the same; U.S. NA/AN student scores are still lower than those of other ethnic groups.

I selected empirical and nonempirical electronically retrieved multidisciplinary literature reviews from databases by using computerized and hard copy searches. There was limited textual data from peer-reviewed journals, articles, books, papers, and various NA/AN organizations connected to the research questions and phenomena. Several articles and reports highlighted themes in support of academic achievement and retention for multi-ethnic students. However, there is a need for new and enhanced themes to support retention strategies that will shrink the academic and social gap for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students to enhance workforce readiness after graduation.

Electronic Search Terms

Electronic searches, social media, and electronic databases identified journals, articles, reports, newspaper articles, magazines, and studies that were common to the following ethnic identity search terms: *Aboriginal, Alaska Native, Alaskan Native, American Indian, European American, Black Indians, First Peoples, First Nations, Half*

Breed, Indian, Indian Country, Indigenous Peoples of America, Injun, Native, Native American, Native American Indian, Caucasian, European, European-American, Settler, and White. Other terms used to identify data were *employment, employers, engagement, disengagement, college, higher education, retention, retained, workforce readiness, workplace readiness, leadership, management, retention, stakeholders, tribal and traditional schools, undergraduate, multi-ethnic, diversity, inclusion, origin, Black Indian, Cracker,* and others. Some combinations of terms, as well as other phases uploaded in different databases, yielded some data relevant to the purpose and problem statements. Not all search terms had some connection to the research question and U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students. All terms cross-referenced into different databases and search engines did not identify needed data. The combination of some terms identified other terms and/or phases, which yielded some additional data as related to research questions and phenomena. Paper documents, for instance, peer reviews, various journals, newspaper articles, reference books, dissertations, and written communications did little to support the investigation.

The following databases included PsycINFO, ERIC, Google, the Internet, SAGE Journals, Walden University Library, other libraries, Web Directories, World Wide Web, Owl, social media, and other electronic databases and assisted in identifying textual data. However, using various terms in database searches could have missed some important data analysis by identifying other articles not necessarily needed (Evans, 2002).

Based on phenomena and the scholarly research questions, it took a considerable amount of time searching for additional and current multidisciplinary literature data to justify, or challenge, the problem. Data analysis and discussion of retention strategies and

employability outcome and what the experience was like for a U.S. NA/AN student was not relevant. Most strategies generalized. However, some identified theoretical concepts did add to the understanding of the lack of retention strategies at public universities that could help support U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' employment after graduation.

Results from Professional and Academic Literature

A retained student having normal progression happened when a full-time (*stayer*) student returned and retained each semester or quarter for about or around 4 years until cleared to graduate (College Student Retention, n.d.). The management problem was the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation.

Disengagement referred to the lack of obligation and involvement in academic and social interaction with others that support a well-rounded experience (Brint & Cantwell, n.d., as cited in Maloshonok, 2014) in support of retention, community involvement, and employability after graduation.

“Native Americans are regularly omitted from national studies, in large part due to their small population size . . .” (Clarren, 2017, para. 10). Assessments of White, African American, Latinx, and Asian undergraduate students highlighted in literature reviews were continuous (Assessing Student Engagement, 2015). The National Survey for Student Engagement was a tool often used to measure the engagement of students. The national survey identified undergraduate students, analyzed retention, and graduation rates. However, their method of inquiry only focuses on first and senior undergraduate students. Besides, the U.S. NA student population was missing from the actual report's evaluation. Conceptual framework, raw data analysis, and conceptual framework

analysis/narrative discussion of the lack of effective retention strategies and what employability experiences would be like for a U.S. NA/AN undergraduate graduate (New Direction for Student Services, 2005) was not relevant in literature. Even if the U.S. NA/AN student was assessed, any statistical data for the U.S. NA/AN student that was reported and assumed accurate, remained questionable (Adelman et al., 2013; Faircloth et al., 2010; Hunt et al., 2008).

This research study did not hypothesize nor used deductive procedures (Andrade, 2009). A U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student that celebrated diversity and one's origin, heritage, and values while attending the UMCP was not the same as an U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student whose self-identified cultural belief was not as transparent. An interpretive approach (contextual features) "examines contextual features ... such as culture, gender, employment, or wellbeing of people" (Matua, & Van Der Wal, 2015, para. 1). However, gender, economic situation, and age were not themes associated with the outcome of this research study.

Theoretical Statements

Theoretical concepts and models (attachment, involvement, stakeholder hierarchy of needs theories, the key to employment model, and theory x y, and z) added to the understanding of what caused a lack of productive retention strategies that support employability after graduation. The U.S. NA/AN early childhood development and socialization skill sets affect postsecondary education for employability (Wascalus, 2012).

Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow born in New York in 1908 and died in 1970 developed the psychological theory hierarchy of needs. The theory-based factors/themes are human motivation and progression, management training, and personal development. The theory supports “the responsibility of employers to provide a workplace environment that encourages and enables employees to fulfill their unique potential self-actualization” (Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Motivational Model, 2006, para. 1). Maslow stated the steps must follow an order. The first 4 levels of human needs are (a) physiological: hunger, thirst, bodily comforts; (b) safety/security, out of danger; (c) belongings and love, and (d) esteem to achieve gain approval and recognition (Huitt, 2007). The growing need for self-actualization includes cognitive-to know - to understand, and explore, aesthetic – symmetry, order, and beauty, self-actualization – to find self-fulfillment and realize one’s potential, and self-transcendence – to connect to something beyond the ego or to help others find self-fulfillment and realize their potential (McLeod, 2007, 2016). Scholar Mittelman challenged the Maslow study whereas he concluded that self-actualizing did not identify what was special about the participant; the participant was just being “very open” (1991, 2016, para. 1).

Key to Employability Model

The theoretical and practical framework for employability was called the “*Key to Employability*” model (KTE) model (Pool & Sewell, 2007). Scholars Pool and Sewell stressed there was more to getting a job than a student graduate being employed for the first time in their field of study, or the student get a lower-level job not necessarily what he or she may have wanted because of economic needs.

The KTE model informed parents, and others who had not researched employability a simple and easy read about employability for students graduating from university. Furthermore, the model was used as a tool for other stakeholders who use it as a measurement tool in support of employability and outcomes. The stakeholders at the UMD do not provide NA undergraduate and graduate students:

- clarity of structured interventions intended to focus on the student's area of interest, and
- explain with ease to students and others the promotion of employability within higher education without clouding other issues, and knowledge transfer activities offered.

Public universities, especially at the UMCP, had opportunities to work with businesses in support of employability for students (Pool & Sewell, 2007), for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students.

Theory X, Y, and Z Models

How the U.S. NA/AN graduate should act in different situations within the workplace, how the U.S. NA/AN graduate work and respond to close supervision skill sets should most likely, be developed before university graduation. Self-actualization desires should be in place and a plan of action confirmed. McGregor addressed some concerns that U.S. NA/AN employees may face in the workplace which are *x*, *y*, and *z theory Models*. Authoritarian management supports a person being a dictator. A person practicing the *theory x* management style was not corporative. An employee who was a recent U.S. NA/AN graduate from the UMCP knew not to be accretive in the workplace unless a reward was inevitable. The manager was not a team player. The situation

resulted in the employer being forced to accept instructions and involvement within the work environment. The manager did not believe in flexibility, for example change in the mission and goals of the organization. The manager had bad listening skills and thought the employee lazy. The *theory x* management style would harm U.S. NA/AN employability and longevity in the workplace.

In contrast, *theory y* had a supportive doctrine. The manager was truly a team player. The manager supported the goals and objectives of ideas, programs, and organization. The U.S. NA/AN employee had the opportunity for rewards because of self-confidence, self-discipline, and usually positive sense of judgment and maturity, and freedom to do their best. The *theory y* manager believed in assured actualization for the employee (Friesen, 2015).

Theory z as William Ouchi stated was not within McGregor's thought pattern. *Theory z* as a Japanese management style improved the doctrine of *theory y*. The U.S. NA/AN employee should be trusted and given autonomy (Aydin, 2012, para. 2). The Manager should not doubt that the U.S. NA/AN employee having a strong interest in the productivity of the organization and being successful (Douglas McGregor's X & Y Theory, Managing an X Theory Boss, & William Ouchi's Theory Z, 2006).

Vicarious reinforcement (Suzuki, 2009) was a theoretical explanation of modeling aggressive behavior (Apps, Lesage, & Ramnai, 2015). Some students followed the behavior of another student or graduate and the behavior was not beneficial to academic and social success and workplace readiness. As Pool and Sewell (2007) stated, vicarious reinforcement could include an example of encouragement and reflective values from another employee as well. As a result, the recent graduate more likely will be self-

efficient and motivated to be successful while performing and adhering to workforce readiness skill sets.

Historical Perspective

Cultural Appropriation/No Appreciation

Cultural appropriation started when European Americans (EA)s and a nonnative colonial society claimed superiority and control over U.S. NA/ANs existence and survival in North America. The nonnative settlers refused to appreciate cultural beliefs, traditions, and practices, just to mention a few themes, of the first peoples of color on earth (Scientific Racism, 2011). In recent literature reviews, other scholars reported the same themes (Academic Achievement Rate, 2011). Settlers' harsh beliefs and practices demeaned and marginalized indigenous peoples to the point of accepting the dominant group's' philosophy of human survival (Why Does Cultural Appropriation Happen? 2011). The Settlers were not satisfied until they had forced NA/ANs to be good servants known as "the Good Indian Syndrome" (Valandra, 2013, para. 4; Western Education of Alaska Natives Prior to 1867, n.d.).

Two Ethnic Identities: One Story

Literature reviews from multidisciplinary databases have provided historical perspectives (Schooler, 2014c), academic and social experiences, and expectations (Bergstrom, 2012) of two ethnic identities: NA/AN. Mainstream cultural biases and other issues have enhanced concerns (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015) as well. The historical journey and red roads traveled by the NA/AN are so similar.

The first people of color on earth were Native Americans (NA) (Scientific Racism, 2011). Other selected names that identify the NA included *American Indians*,

First Peoples of Color, Indians, Indigenous Peoples, Natives, Native Americans, Native Peoples, Native American Indians, or the Red Man (names used interchangeably), who migrated from Asia (Muhammad, 2015). *Aboriginals, Alaskans, Alaska Indians, Alaska Natives, First Peoples, Indians, Indigenous, Indigenous Indians, Injuns, Native North Americans, and Tribal Peoples* (Alaska Native Education, n.d.; Blackhorse, 2015a; Brunner, 2000-2012; Crazy Bull, 2013; Definition of Terms, 2011; Piquemal, 2005). The NAs are referred to as the original peoples of North, South, and Central America (Profile: American Indian/Alaska Native, 2015).

The U.S. NA/AN peoples represented only 1.7%; 5.2 million in the U.S. (American Indian and Alaska Native Population, Demographics, 2013). In the year 2010, the Census results indicated that U.S. NAs were the poorest group of people in the United States of America (U.S.) with 32.4% of youth who had not reached the age of 18 living in impoverished conditions (Justice or Else, 2015). In 2011, 33% of U.S. NA/AN students were living below the poverty line while attempting their educational goals compared to 12% of White students (Aud, Hussar, Johnson, Kena, & Roth, 2012). To be exact, in the year 2016, U.S. NA/ANs were still living below the poverty line (Native American population 2021, 2021) as stated below:

On the Oglala reservation in Oglala, Lakota County is the poorest county in the Nation. We have two grocery stores in the county, which charge \$3.00 for one tomato. Everyone lives on welfare. The closest Walmart is 92 miles away in Rapid City, South Dakota. Many Natives do not have electricity or plumbing for water. The in-ground water is contaminated with uranium and not suitable for

drinking. (Vigil Piafpybitt, Oglala/Comanche Tribes, Personal Communication, August 22, 2016)

As of 2019, the education system in South Dakota, with 60% of students living in poverty was rated the lowest than what could ever be expected coupled with continued high unemployment. These and other factors are limited to NA students' continued education and self-actualization (Lowrey, 2019). As Patel (2014) mentions 6 years ago, NA student retention and other factors that remain constant hinder U.S. NA/AN students' advanced opportunities to complete their education. By July 1, 2050, an estimate of 8.6 million NA/ANs will be living in the United States of America. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated an increase of 2.7% in the U.S. NA/AN population (11.2 million) on or before July 1, 2060. However, the total U.S. NA/AN population will continue to remain small with an estimate of 2% of the total population in 2050 (Demographics, 2013)

Native American

Settlers started the process of cultural genocide by forcing Native American (NA) students, under unpleasant circumstances, to attend non-traditional schools (Copeland, 2007; Foster, 2013; Reyhner, Lee, & Gabbard, 1993). Native American and Alaskan Native U.S. (NA/AN) children identify as human beings, a real person only, and only if they verbally spoke, daily dress attire and eating habits were like the dominant group (Taylor-Adams, 2012). The philosophy continued in the pursuit of academic and social integration and oppression (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008b cited in Schooler, 2014c; Hunt, 2008; Hunt & Harrington, 2008; Zehr, 2008) for many Native American/Alaska Native U.S. (NA/AN) peoples.

Alaskan Native

Alaskan Native U.S. (AN) experiences were much like the Native American (NA) experiences. In 1784, AN child endured North American practices of education (Mission Schools) after Shelikhov opened the first Native Alaskan School. The school's first priest started teaching in "1796 at the Russian Orthodox Church" (para. 2). The invasion of Alaska was in 1799 and Russian-American fur-trading companies were established. Gregorii Shelikhov and his followers killed many AN people. Alaskan Native hostages who survived the "killings" work on "the Three Saints Bay coast the Three Saints Bay southwest of Kodiak Island" where they built trading posts ((Western Education of Alaska Natives Prior to 1867, n.d. para. 1). Although the Russian-American Company took Alaskan resources without any threats or opposition before the invasion, the company gave back by supporting the mission school and teaching technical training to the Russian and Native Alaskan peoples in navigation, seamanship, and crafts (Darnell & Hoem, n.d. a).

In Alaska, the Russian and Native Alaskan were labeled mixed blood. Shelikhov believed that children should learn to speak the Russian language, practice Christianity, and arithmetic work readiness skill sets that supported managers at the company (Darnell & Hoem, n.d. b). The benefit of Sholokhov's children being civilized or westernized ensured loyalty to the Russian American Company (Western Education of Alaska Natives Prior to 1867, n.d.).

Traditional Educational Practices: Cherokee Nation

The Cherokee Native American Nation had the largest number of tribal groupings reported by the 2010 Census (American Indian and Alaska Native Population, 2013;

American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage Month, 2012). The community was valued, stated Spring (2007) through learning and self-actualization (Bergstrom, 2012). A vast number of U.S. NA/AN tribal affiliations, the Cherokee nation's educational system, and theoretical practices are highlighted in Chapter 1 that supports social education for U.S. NA/AN students. Some Cherokee beliefs are leading practices in many other tribes/villages within the U.S. and Canada. The homes for U.S. NA/ANs were places of identity and love within the extended family, clan, band, or just among tribal members (Horse, 2001).

Before the Civil War (Byers, 2003), Cherokee NA children's identity development lacked infestation from colonial ideas. U.S. Native American (NA) parents taught their children survival tactics inside and outside of the home (Institute for Higher Education Policy, [IHEP], 2007). Native children received wisdom and training from elders and warriors (Towery, 2005) through storytelling and oral his and her stories. The Cherokee children attended Cherokee tribal schools, which meant leaving the reservation was not necessary. The U.S. NA/AN and other aboriginal children are still attending tribal schools on reservations managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); name changed to the Bureau of Indian Education (Camera, 2015). Without the authority of White colonialism, NAs learned without using printed books (Reyhner, 2006).

Native Americans (NA) children were highly praised by parents. The expectations for NA children were to be tough and independent. When uncontrollable, punishment did not consist of spanking or time-outs but verbal and public shamed. Yet, some tribes did believe in a penalty (Szasz, 2007). An Elder had the duty of caring out the punishment along with other children involved in the same act (see also Mmari & Blum, 2009). Other

scholars believed that the NA child was timid and dependent (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004).

Official alphabet: Cherokee Nation

Native Americans were not just physical fighters as a defense. In 1809, the Cherokee Nation claimed its official alphabets. The syllabaries (the name for letters) consisted of 86 characters (Sequoyah Biography, 2016). Talking leaves was the name associated with the graphic representations of the syllabary characters. The colonial language of choice was English. The White men's letters and words are known as 'speaking leaves' highlighted the English language (Stevens, 2007). Syllabaries helped create the first Cherokee Native American newspaper is known as the Cherokee Phoenix. George Gist, or Guess who never spoke English, created and manufactured the writing and reading tools in Cherokee and English. Mr. Gist, a Tennessean, was born in 1770 and expired in 1843, dates questionable by many scholars. George, given the name Sequoyah, which meant Siquaya pig foot in the Cherokee language, leg injury resulted from an accident while hunting; military combat, or from a disease - reasons in question (Sequoyah Narrative, 2010).

The Cherokee Nation's General Council adopted and encouraged others to use the Cherokee alphabets. Cherokee Council members initiated a fund drive and purchased a printing press in 1825 (Davis, 1930). The Native Americans were then able to communicate across the country in different tribal languages after learning to read and write. They were also literate enough to challenge legal documents and treaties written against them by European Americans (EA). The statement from the Bauu Institute (The Sovereign Status of Native American, 2008, pp. 2-3) stated that Indigenous Native

American tribes are sovereign nations that retain many of their pre-colonial traditional indigenous rights. Sovereign immunity was one of those rights. Native Americans expect a seat at the table during legal decisions that may influence their sovereignty, education, and economic security.

There were legal cases, for both parties presented to the Supreme Court. The Native American's (NA) sovereign status allowed "self-government, self-determination, and self-education" (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002), which was one case of many. A few judgments favored complaints litigated by NAs, as well. Eventually, an order to stop written communication between tribes had devastating repercussions on the opportunity of learning to read and write in different languages. To continue the U.S. Native language genocide, the state of Georgia guards destroyed the printing press and the syllabaries. The Phoenix newspaper ceased publication, which cut off communication among U.S. NA communities, although in 2007 it was re-published in English only (First Native American Newspaper Founded, 2015).

Sequoya's direct descendant publicly criticized Sequoya as a liar. He insisted that Sequoya was not the person responsible for the talking leaves. Regardless of the controversy surrounding the legitimacy of Sequoya's creation of the syllabaries, the benefit of 25% of all Cherokees being able to read and write out-weighted the legitimacy of who should wear the crown (Worthy, 2004). Although destruction came to Sequoya's work, the state of Oklahoma ensured that his legacy would live on forever. A Bronze by Vinnie Ream (completed by G. Julian Zolnay) and given in 1917 by Oklahoma Location to the National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol, the State Capital building in

Washington, District of Columbia, and a Sequoia tree was named in his honor (Sequoyah Narrative, 2010; Stevens, 2007).

Lack of exposure to traditional culture

After the collapse of all means of written communication between tribes, the government and NA agents continued their plot against NA students who did not attend a government school. Previously, the Federal government, being so upset with NAs, endorsed the Civilization Fund Act on March 3, 1819 (The History of Federal Educational Policies, 2014). The act allocated \$10,000 each year, in grant money earmarked to remold the NA into an acceptable human being through education (Frank, 2011). The educational holocaust continued by taking NA kids from mothers, fathers, and cultural teachings. In 1867, the Commission on Indian Services communicated to Congress that, children must be educated. However, they must stay away from their homes for an extended period (Indian Child Welfare Act, n.d.; State and Federal Policies, 2011). The Commission on Indian Services request to Congress was accepted.

The NA kid went to schools far away from home and did not see family members for many years. The European Americans (EA) agreed with the commission and felt NA students needed a proper education (Aboriginal People, Resilience, and the Residential School Legacy [APRRSL], 2003; Ambler, 2006; Subways, 2008). The age of NA children taken from their homes for a proper education ranged between the ages of 5 and 8. Baby snatching was discontinued between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Some NA students could not leave school until the age of eighteen (n.d.) Yet, some NA students did not finish high school due to some states allowing NA students to leave school between the age of fourteen and seventeen years. The NA student could not leave school

without the parent's permission. Other states required students to stay in school until age eighteen (n.d.).

Assimilation. Assimilation ensures that a minority, a U.S. NA/AN practices the culture and origin to include the heritage of superior group ethnic identity (Thompson, 1996). Social control dominated if a person assimilated (similarity), enjoyed, or pretended to enjoy the taste of other cultural food, attire, language, wellbeing, and any customs and beliefs. Many NAs had no choice other than to accept assimilation. White settlers created considerable mistrust. As a result, NA cultures and traditions began unfavorable change (Almeida, 1997; Clark, 2006; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Foster, 2013; Martin, 2005; Stone, 2011; Why Does Cultural Appropriation Happen? 2011). Assimilation was one of many practices enforced, which traumatized NAs. The way of assimilating the NA peoples was an opportunity for the White settlers to mandate educational genocide (Huffman, 2001b). For instance, Helen Sekaquaptew observed an NA student returning home that reflected a distant relationship during a family reunion and who stated, "I didn't feel as ease in the home of my parents now. My father and my mother, my sister, and my older brother, friends, and others told me to take off those clothes. The European Americans' aimed to reorient NA children against their previous values and family; an act of acculturation and in many cases, and the challenge was successful" (Buck, 2006; Davis, 2001, pp. 2-5).

Children of NA descent could not leave a day school without consent from a parent. Some children returned home for a day or during the weekend. While at home, a NA child was not supposed to forget their new cultural beliefs while attending school; it went against educational intention. The only reason U.S. NA/AN children, in most

instances, were forced to attend school was to assimilate and change their patterns of thought.

Theory of Cultural Identity

Scholars Oetting and Beauvais's (1991) theory of cultural identification and orthogonal model recognized increased identification with more than one culture and part of groups based on their culture. The model did not support the notion of identifying with one culture affecting the identity with another culture (Pederson, 2000). Assimilated U. S. NA/AN dressing, articulation, music, and stories. The NA child was brainwashed with lies and forced to forget all things associated with their cultural background (Skerry, 2000; Taylor-Adams, 2012; The History of Federal Educational Policies, 2014) before the possibility of receiving the label of an educated person.

The first culture that a person learned is enculturation. The original culture should not be secondary when seeking interrelation with other cultures (Akrofi et al., 2008; Robinson, 2005). Acculturation is usually the second cultural experienced (Sutton, 2013). Acculturation (culture) occurs when a person enjoys the other food, clothing, habits, and ways of living their life. The EA's enculturated and acculturated the first peoples. The EAs taking advantage of their kindness and vulnerability. There were no questions, stated Castagno (2012), that privileged White people's philosophy on superiority, imperialism, and assimilation was still transparent at institutions promoting continued education.

Assimilation does not happen until acculturated (the second culture) into another ethnic identity or group stated Thompson (1996). He also believed that assimilation does not always result from acculturation. Acculturation does not exclude all things about the past culture and there is no obligation to accept another way of living life (Patel, 2014).

Beliefs and customs of the EA, who considered themselves the dominant group, insisted that acculturation took place (Lakey, 2003). The salad bowl replaced the melting pot (Sutton, 2013b), which described acculturation to assimilation.

Scholar Jones (2012) referred to the acculturation and assimilation period between the years 1887 to 1934. Scholars mentioned from 1776 to 1934, governed federal policy were the years of Indian assimilation, stolen land, and war (Indian Country Today, 2016, July 28). Many NA clans had no choice but to accept the colonial belief system (Valandra, 2013) and forget about their own. The social exchange among EAs, White, and NAs did does solve complex and computational problems (Cosmides & Tooby, 2007). Assimilation of U.S. NA/ANs into EA culture caused change in custom, language, spirituality, communication, group association, and other forms of engagement (Conley, n.d.). The EAs practiced acculturation by enforcing cultural changes in U.S. NA/AN diet and appearance (Define in Your Own Words, 2014). Although EAs had control over the NA/ANs, they were guilty of acculturation; the practice of cultural habits typical of NA/AN experience. In return for NA/ANs goodwill, EAs were guilty of NA/ANs cultural genocide (Friedman, 2011b).

Moving against NA culture, Congressman Henry Dawes author of the Dawes Act of 1887 and the so-called General Allotment Act (Marchard-Cecil, n.d.) believed a good citizen was a person employed and wore clothing that represented the western region of the country. The Congressman maintained that citizens take care of their owned land, which had to be a decent dwelling and transportation (wagon). Children are educated in schools and the citizen must have the physical stamina to hold their liquor. Boarding schools for NA students supported the congressional representative's philosophy. The

school mission enforced the criterion for citizenship. However, the NA was not eligible for citizenship in the United States until 1924 (Lomawaima, 2011). “This tardy naturalization, which was a constitutional civil right guaranteed to other American citizens. “Native Americans were not allowed to vote in city, county, state, or federal elections; testify in courts; serve on juries; attend public schools; or even purchase a beer, for it was illegal to sell alcohol to Indians” (Rollings, W., 2004, p. 127). Alcohol was banned and against the law for anyone to sell it where Indians resided and lived (Eddins, 2020).

Educational districts

The U.S. NA children were required to attend school in their educational district. An academic officer (Expansion of Public Education 1844 – 1876, n.d.) enforced the requirement. The NA parent was not in favor of Christians teaching their children. The fear escalated when teachers’ curricula insisted that NA children spent days singing nontraditional songs, participating in unacceptable ceremonies, and other non-favorable activities (APRRSL, 2003). The federal government felt the school was not a place for NA cultural expression. Basket weaving and other forms of NA arts were discontinued at all NA schools (Lomawaima, et al., 2002).

Natives could worship and give thanks to the Creator and expressed love to Mother Earth and Father Sky, which was unacceptable behavior determined by new Settlers. Some NA parents were Hindus and Muslims (Early Education of Indians, n.d.), the Christian faith taught by new Settlers was considered holier than any NA/AN beliefs. The government’s mission converted, eradicated, and assimilated NA kids. As mentioned, the government's mission was to erase Native languages, cultures, spirituality,

and ceremonies from NA children's cognitive thoughts.

Compulsory Education Ordinance

The Compulsory Education Ordinance for U.S. Native American Children was implemented in 1890 (Marr, 2002) to enforce the attendance of elementary school. The ordinance was not just for NA students but every child. The ordinance for children did not approve working under the age of 9. If a child were over 9 years old, they could not work unless there was evidence of having a Certificate of Proficiency showing proof of attending primary school. The age of twelve was the cutoff age for attending school if living in rural areas (Compulsory Education, n.d.; Early Education of Indians, n.d.). When a student went beyond the age of compulsory education, they moved on to postsecondary education. Some Native students attended college, universities, and other institutions offering continued education (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, 2012).

Prayer towns

John Eliot (Spring, 2007) indicated that prayer town was a term used to identify the location of NA children detached from their families. The reason for taking U.S. NA/AN children to Prayer Towns (established in the 1600s) was for formal education and conversion to Christianity; to eliminate contact between the child, their parents, and other family members for many months (The History of Federal Educational Policies, 2014). Estelle Reel was Superintendent of NA Schools from 1898 to 1910. After reading her beliefs, I can honestly say she was a *race theorist* and a true *eugenicist*. The full expression of Estelle Reel's philosophy of NA children is captured in the following statement and its original context. She believed:

The Native American Indian child is of lower physical organization than the White child is of corresponding age. His forearms are smaller, and his fingers and hands less flexible; the very structure of his features ... and his offspring cannot be taught like the children of the White bones and muscles will not permit so wide a variety of manual movements as is customary among Caucasian children, and his very instincts and modes of thought are adjusted to the imperfect manual development.

In like manner, his face is without the complete development of nerves and muscles, which give character to expression. The children of our aboriginal landholders are now warding of the nation, and in the minds of most right-thinking peoples, they are entitled to kindly consideration. (Lomawaima, 1996)

Philosopher Reel believed that academic training at the Chilocco Indian School succinctly put NA children in their place. Native Americans were too ignorant to excel intellectually, however, they should be citizens. In a 1905 News release, Reel stated that NAs should not become members of the EA society. She wanted NAs to appreciate their cultures and to understand the need for practical training such as manual labor, agriculture, and trade training. Likewise, their living quarters to be equipped with only necessities and physical training as a spiritual advantage. Reel had a belief in an appropriate domestic curriculum for NA girls that shaped NA's character and intellect. The domestic curriculum trained NA girls' hands for weaving and pottery (Lomawaima, 1996). Nevertheless, her beliefs contrasted with those of others who supported the notion of "Kill the Indian, Save the Man" (Subways, 2008, pp. 1-2). Reel did not believe in Captain Pratt's philosophy of "Kill the Indian, Save the Man" (Facts about American

Indian Education (FAIE), 2011, p. 1; Lomawaima, 1996; Subways, 2008, pp. 1-2; Taylor-Adams, 2012).

Boarding Schools: North America

The first boarding school established in 1754 continued the boarding school philosophy (The History of Federal Education Policies, 2014). Civilizing NA children in the late 1800s were due to boarding schools' curriculums (Davis, 2001). Boarding schools were safe havens for teaching the NA how to be human stated Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan (Jacobs, 2006). Supporters of EAs boarding schools became more aggressive as time passed. Opportunities for EAs to offer unacceptable educational practices continued. Church societies ran residential and nonresidential boarding schools for NA children (Aboriginal People . . . , 2003).

The "religious industry" (Belle & Smith, 2004a) for ANs along with government policy and the U.S. forced children into boarding schools which mirrored the same journey as NA students (Educational Policies, 2004). Likewise, assimilation was the goal for ANs (Government Schools in Alaska, 2004). Reverend Sheldon Jackson was a believer that "teachers must try to educate [The Native] out of and away from the training of their home life" (Darnel & Hoem, n. d. c., para. 5). The U.S. AN elders mentioned that attending boarding schools, and not being able to bond with family and friends and celebrate their cultures and heritages (Graves & Shavings, 2004) created apathetic attitudes resulting in a lack of social and academic readiness (Shore, 2016b). The Russian American Company Vocational Schools supported by the Russian government, Army, and Navy closed in 1916 before the transfer of Alaska to the United States during a period of 1866-1877 (ten years). Native Americans and ANs began to feel the threat of

the U.S. Federal Government with loss of land, ethnic belief, and Native languages which have continued the Westernization plaque today (n.d.).

In 1931, the Secretary of the Interior transferred the responsibility for educating AN from the Bureau of Education to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) known today as the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 (modern federal Indian Law) gave rise to Indians having the opportunity to govern their people. However, the government, realizing they would still have a say over the Indian affairs decided who would be considered and who would not be considered Indian. The appointment of Mr. John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs took place in 1934 (Western Education of Alaska Natives Prior to 1867, n.d., para. 15).

After much discussion between Commissioner Collier and Committee Chairman Burton Wheeler, it was determined, after the enactment of the IRA into law that:

...all persons of Indian descent who are members of a recognized Indian tribe now under Federal jurisdiction, and all persons who are descendants of such members are considered Indian. On June 1, 1934, residing within the present boundaries of any Indian reservation, and shall further include all other persons of one-half or more Indian blood. (Indian Reorganization Act, 1935) are Indian.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) supported boarding schools and the youths' cultural genocide process (Buck, 2006; Lambert, 2008). The BIA and Indian Health Services worked with tribes and tribal nations (Myths and Facts, 2010) to ensure an alliance with the White man's agenda. Indian Health Services' involvement shrunk the U.S. NA/AN population by allowing non-consensual sterilization of young U.S. NA/AN girls and women. Between 1970 and 1976, the Indian Health Services providers performed 25-

50% of non-consent sterilization of NA women. There was the discontinuation of health service and children displaced if the Native women did not comply (Rutecki, 2010). The practice has since stopped.

The Cherokee Male Seminary was one of the first boarding schools in 1805. The seminary housed NA male students and received support from the Cherokee National Council in Oklahoma. The Cherokee Male Seminary prepared students for a university setting and higher education. The NA languages were not in the curriculum (Mihsuah, 1991). The Cherokee Female Seminary opened its doors in 1851 (Mihsuah, 1993; Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States, n.d.). The seminary staff educated over 3,000 NA young women for teaching positions (Mihsuah, 1993). Most of the NA students were daughters of elite mixed types of blood. The elite mixed bloods had fair complexions. Their up-scaled curriculum advanced their socio/economic status. Mixed types of blood were identified as ethnic minorities. However, NAs included among or labeled ethnic minorities was not true due to their sovereign nation status (Lomawaima et al., 2006). After 1871, the progressive Cherokees, as mentioned by Mihsuah (1991) were the dark skin mixed-bloods and labeled a lower-class person than the affluent mixed-bloods. They also had an academic curriculum, modeled after the Mt. Holyoke College curriculum which was believed to be a lesser educational challenge (Racial desegregation, n.d.; Reyhner & Eder, 2006).

Since the opening of the first Cherokee Indian School and to the day, colorism was still strong. The lack of being bright and almost White was not only an Indian country issue but remained a national and international ethnic identity problem, as well. In the year, 2015, being fair skin continued to afford better educations, influential friends,

more pay, inclusion, and easy assimilation into the White world. Scholar Hunter believed that if a person were in line with mainstream non-native culture, life, in general, would be better. Colorism and racism were hard to battle. The White race showed their racist beliefs through media and artistic expression and what benefits one could gain by following their beliefs and values (2008, p. 248). Anglo-Saxon ((White) people did not make it known that Native American (NA) and African blood running through their veins (Bahrapour, 2018) resulted in being mixed blood. Another term that had historically remained in dialogue was “a half-breed” (J. Brown & Schenck, 2004, p. 322), which also referred to a racist and cultural difference.

Residential schools

Students of NA descent attended school during the day (Day Schools) and returned to their reservation after classes (Jacobs, 2006). Harjo said while giving her convocation address at Carleton College that NA students did not forget their Native values and customs while attending boarding schools. In contrast, parents could not enhance Native cultural identity when their child(s) visited home. The government imposed unfavorable consequences for any attempt to re-introduced students to the Native cultural experience (Gerber, 2010; *The History of Federal Educational Policies*, 2014). In 1882, a Congressional assembly concluded that a School Inspector could be an asset to the school system. After some time, the title of School Inspector changed to Superintendent of Indian Schools (Lomawaima, 1996). In 1892, Superintendent Daniel Dorchester favored on-reservation (residential) schools. By 1902, according to David Wallace Adam (Jacobs, 2006), there were increased numbers of boarding schools. Of the 154 boarding schools, almost 21,500 NA students attended. Brenda Child (1998) argued

that boarding school experiences devalued U.S. NA/AN cultural experience and heritage. Native American (NA) students could not assimilate back into their native home environment and traditions after attending a boarding school stated Child.

The universal language was English and spoken by all U.S. NAs (Stevens & Gielen, 2007). Only 27% of 5.1 million U. S. NA/AN spoke their native tongue that was usually understood at the age of 5 years old or older (American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month [AIANHM], 2012). Of the 566 federally recognized U.S. NA/AN tribes of which the list does not include state, and non-state-recognized tribes (American Indian and Alaska Native profile, 2013), there are only 200 U.S. NA languages spoken (Native American Nations, 2012). Boarding school experiences and U.S. NA/ANs not being able to speak their Native tongue had a severe jolt on separated children from their homelands. Some parents who attended boarding schools are still not aware of their origin, heritage, and culture so, therefore, cannot pass on cultural beliefs to their offspring. Europeans and others set into motion the destruction of Native heritage and culture. Laws and treaties endorsed the assimilation process for Native children. Parents feared thoughts of their children experiencing the abuse of forgetting and learning a new dialogue (Lajimodiere, 2012) which often occurred while being a hostage in boarding schools. The AN language has vanished with only 20 dialogues spoken (Alaska Native Language Classes and Degree Programs, 2016).

Al-Asfour's (2018) stated Nativization, was a practice whereas parents used their second language (*English*) when communicating with children. More U.S. NA/AN children are mastering the English language with exposure to social media, English-speaking teachers and peers, and other means of communication. The elimination of

conversations among U.S NA/AN children, elders, and other members of the community that speak their tribal language is evident. The U.S. NA/AN student may not feel safe talking or even letting others know they can speak a tribal language, especially after not being able to talk while in bondage (Rotondaro, 2015). Native American children lost maturation after being in captivity for extended periods, during the assimilation process and being held hostage in boarding schools. Regardless of the perceived trauma, that impacted the children, U.S. NA agents insisted that students should forget about family and home by any means necessary (McCann, 2005).

Historically, falsehoods pictured the U.S. NA/AN student as one lacking skill sets needed to be a good student while attending traditional schools. The expectation was that NA students “learn to read” and “read to learn” (Reyhner, 2001, p. 2). The U.S. NA student’s transformation was to act like a EA student known as vicarious reinforcement modeling (Fox & Bailenson, 2009; McLeod, 2011). For instance, to watch a person’s behavior when receiving a reward or punishment and modeling that same behavior can result in changed attitude and belief patterns.

Nonresidential Schools

The off-reservation boarding school system started in 1879 (Reyhner, 1992; Taylor-Adams, 2012). The non-residential boarding schools started because of President Ulysses Grant’s 1869 People Policy. The policy was highly regarded in the twentieth century, which was another strategy to attack NA cultures. Captain Richard H. Pratt converted an old military base located in the state of Pennsylvania into the Carlisle Indian School (Keoke & Porterfield, 2001; The History of Federal Educational Policies, 2014). In contrast, other scholars believed that General Richard Henry Pratt started the first

school at Fort Marion, which was a prisoner of war camp in Augustine, Florida (Compulsory Education, n.d.). Regardless of the start date and location of the first school, Reyhner (1992) believed that school administrators should have the same goal, which was to assimilate NA students into the dominant culture, dilute family identity and beliefs, and ensure travel back to the reservations was impossible to avoid students trying to escape the school environment (Ambler, 2006; Jacobs, 2006). Every Indian and mixed-blood child was expected to attend a boarding school for at least four years (Jacobs, 2006). The boarding schools also trained other minority students who attended government schools unwillingly (Keoke & Porterfield, 2011). However, Calloway (1999) and President Jefferson, as asserted by Jewett (2002) believed that it was possible to change the liberal thinking of NAs, unlike black peoples.

Non-Native troops forcefully took NA students to Keams Canyon, Arizona for boarding school. When NA students got out of line, their hair was cut, maybe locked in small rooms for extended periods, and their mouth washed out with soap for unwanted verbal communication (Reyhner & House, 1996; Taylor-Adams, 2012). Richard Monette indicated that NA children who attended the North Dakota boarding school stood erect in a straight line for extended periods and were reprimanded if they moved (Smith, 2003). In 1902, there were twenty-five federally supported non-residential boarding schools in existence and educating 6,000 NA students (Racial Desegregation, n.d.). In 1918, the outdated means of teaching NA children ceased to exist, and the government runs non-residential boarding schools closed.

Apology for educational abuse

There were lengthy testimonies in the year 1996 from NA/ANs and others affected by the boarding schools. Remarks of Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs in the Department of the Interior (Briefcase Warrior) acknowledged the settlement on September 8, 2000, at the 175th Anniversary, the establishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, now known as the Bureau of Indian Education. Because of NA abuse, Professor Gover (Buck, 2006) supported reparation as an apology for “ethnic cleansing and cultural annihilation” (Darling, 2000), although he believed that money was not a remedy for the solution. The briefcase warrior believed in apologies and recommended education for NAs in hope of eliminating ignorance and the enhancement of self-support. His apology is widely known as the “Never Again” speech

Although the Clinton administration did not back him (Buck, 2006).

On May 6, 2004, Senators Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Senator Daniel Inouye, and others introduced a congressional bill. The bill intended to reinforce the apology of Gover and add the United States of America as an endorser (Buck, 2006). Since June 15, 2004, Kevin Gover’s Bureau of Indian Affairs’ apology was the official act on behalf of the U.S. However, President Barack Obama of the United States signed the 2010 Department of Defense Appropriations Act (H.R. 3326). The bill had 67 pages of which page 45 had a written apology to Native Peoples in the United States. The White House press release highlighted the H.R. 3326 Act, which did not reference the apology to the NA community (Emerging Visions, Mark Charles, n.d.; Capriccioso, 2010; First Peoples Worldwide, 2010).

Regardless of any apology, recommendations and suggestions made by Gover and

Campbell, and President Obama did not and have not stopped the abuse and forced assimilation that continued to threaten the legacy and heritage of Native American/Alaskan Native (NA/AN) peoples. “It’s time for the U.S. to follow Canada’s lead in establishing a truth and reconciliation commission and to acknowledge the havoc its policies have wrought” (Carasik, 2015, para. 2).

Boarding Schools: Province of Canada

The United States (U.S.) educational program created by Europeans for U.S. NA/AN children migrated to the Province of Canada. Canadian officials studied the 1876 U.S. boarding school system model and supported the method of educating NA students (Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [IRSRTC], 2008, 2010). Residential school was the official name used for boarding schools by the Canadian educational program (Schenker, 2008). Scholar Johansen (2004) description of NA students’ experiences at Canadian residential schools fit the model of U.S. NA/AN non-residential schools in the United States of America. Parents who hide their children from Canadian authorities experienced abuse and jail time. Given the history of the U.S. non-residential schools, the Canadian government allowed the same abuse during their educational process for U.S. NA/AN children.

Aggressive assimilation

The Canadians were overly aggressive when moving the NA toward Indian removal and assimilation (Orbe, 1998). In the year 1920, compulsory attendance began for all NA children ages 7-15 years attending boarding schools (Stanton, 2011). Priests, NA agents, and police officers coordinated the forced removal of NA children from their families (Taylor-Adams, 2012). The Canadian philosophy, as stated by Sarah Shenker

(2008) was, "Kill the Indian in the child" (p. 2; Stanton, 2011, para. 4). By 1948, 60% of the NA school-age population attended Canada's residential schools. The NA children did not practice their indigenous beliefs, culture, religion, language, nor participate in other cultural practices (Stanton, 2011).

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1991 and Reverend Doug Crosby of the Oblate Conference of Canada admitted that the Canadian government deprived the NA of their rights. After approximately 150,000 children had assimilated, the last federally run residential school closed its doors to NAs' physical and emotional abuse in 1996 (A Timeline of Residential Schools, 2008; Stanton, 2011). Some other scholars believed the residential schools closed in the 1970s (Subways, 2008).

Common Experience Payment

Under the Common Experience Payment (CEP), a decision in 2005 ensured 2 billion dollars went to NAs, who had attended residential schools and were still living as of May 30, 2005, and others who had experienced criminal court orders made against them. Elders experienced challenges with filling out forms, because of language barriers, and other requirements needed to obtain payouts. Native Elders did not understand guidelines (Reimer et al., 2010). The younger NAs got involved in helping others to speed up the payout process. As of September 19, 2012, no new applications for the financial Common Experience Payment are on file (Common Experience Payment, 2012).

Indian Residential Schools Settlement

On May 10, 2006, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement between the Government, NA residential students, and others was enacted (Nagy & Sehdev,

2012). The final court approval of the settlement agreement was on March 8, 2007. On September 19, 2007, all NA boarding school survivors were eligible to apply for class action compensation (Residential Schools Truth Commission [RSTC], 2008). Native Americans had received their full payment; however, only 32% got a portion of their award (Reimer et al., 2010).

As early as 1928, documentation revealed that the abolishment of social justice was evident in boarding schools as mentioned in the Meriam Report. However, the struggle continued (Lambert, 2008). Native American (NA) children and their children's children continued to hear storytelling of what their Elders experienced (Prime Minister, 2008). Storytellers from the United States of America, as well as Canada, had an advert backlash on NA/AN students attending, not only institutions of higher learning but other schools, as well. The NA historical Holocaust is a thorn in Canadian history (Stanton, 2011). However, as Stanton stated "to penetrate the collective consciousness of the people" is a challenge (2011, para. 18).

A person denied the freedom to practice one's traditional customs and beliefs experience adverse reactions (Copeland, 2007) while seeking acceptance by the dominant group. "The genocide and suffering of the Red Man are unforgivable" (The Nation of Islam [NOI] Research Group, 2015)

21st Century

Of the 5.1 million U.S. NA/ANs including those with more than 1 race as confirmed by the American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month report (AIANHM, 2012) 2.9 million peoples identified as U.S. NA/AN only (AIANHM, 2011a). It has been projected that 8.6 million U.S. NA/ANs' will be confirmed by July 1, 2050 (AIANHM,

2012). Lands set aside for NA/ANs by the United States government are known as “colonies, communities, Indian colonies, Indian communities, Indian Rancherias, Indian reservations, Indian villages, pueblos, Rancherias, ranches, reservations, reserves, settlements, and villages” (Geographic Terms and Concepts-American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Areas, American Indian Reservations-Federal [G-AI, AN, NHA], 2010).

After many years, the U.S. NA/AN people still suffer. The colonization experiences, in both the United States and Canada, affected their physical, social, financial, spiritual, emotional, languages, and cognitive development (Bosman, 2015; Historical and Political Context, 2012; Hunt, 2008). As of 2012, there were 325 reservations. However, the Hawaiian homeland did not make the count (Reservations, 2014). One-third of the U.S. NA/AN population lived on reservations that offered NA students limited access to higher education (American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month [AIANHM], 2011b).

As of 2020, there were 326 Indian land areas set aside by the United States government for U.S. NA/AN homeland (Indian Affairs, 2020). The Census Bureau geography division disclosed that there were 310 U.S. NA/AN legal reservations and trust lands. A Memorandum of the agreement was signed in January 2016 between the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to “conduct the tribal boundary and annexation survey to enforce the accuracy of legal boundaries, names and official status of federally recognized Amerindian reservations and/or off-reservation trust land as well as counties, incorporated places and minor civil divisions” which the survey is conducted yearly (Tribal boundary and annexation survey, 2020). NOTE: Most U.S. ANs live in

Village.

The Federal Relocation Policy, during the 1950s and 60s, insisted that U.S. NA/ANs be scuffled to what they called urban areas. As of the year 2012, 60% of urban U.S. NA/ANs who are intertribal meaning, “hold citizenship with one tribe but are descendants of multiple tribes” (Minthorn, 2020, p. 1) being the lowest of any other population, lived in metropolitan cities (Overview: Demographics, 2012). Urban U.S. NA/ANs identify as multiracial are scattered, and invisible (Regional and Cultural Differences, 2010). Native American and Alaskan Native U.S. children living in urban areas were expected to have more opportunities for a college experience and workplace opportunities that would enhance their socioeconomic status while living the urban life (Historical Lost Trust, 2010). However, the fact remains that, U.S. NA students still lag far behind with 1% of undergraduates graduating compared to White undergraduates at 71.8% (FAIE, 2011).

Public Schools: North America

The federal government supports three levels in public schools, which are primary, secondary, and postsecondary. The federal government provides elementary, secondary, and higher education support to U.S. NA/AN students directly through federally funded schools and public schools. Ninety% of NA students were educated in various educational districts. The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, formerly the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funded by the Department of the Interior, were responsible for the education of 10% of NA students (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). As stated by Morris (2015), 93% of U.S. NA K-12 students attend public schools while 7% (48,000) attend 183 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools. There were 183

reservation schools. The BIE manages fifty-seven of the reservation schools. Individual tribes and their sovereign status (Morris, 2015) govern the control of the other schools. Moreover, U.S. NA K-12 students are not graduating from BIE schools. The U.S. U.S. NA/AN high school graduation rate of 67% was still the lowest graduation rate of any other high schools of different ethnic/racial/origin in 2018. For the same year, the BIE schools with a 53% graduation rate compared to 80% nationally were continuing to lag as well (Schultz, 2018).

President Obama's visit to the Standing Rock reservation in 2014 was to inspire U.S. NA youth to be more encouraged to continue and reach their educational goal with confidence and ease (Introduction, 2014b). However, Sheehy (2013) stated that U.S. NA students trying to get an education face challenges more so now than ever before (Morris, 2015). The funded congressional Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools have not improved educational practices or school housing for the U.S. NA student (The History of Federal Educational Policies, 2014). As stated by Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., BIE schools' conditions are deplorable which have "falling ceilings; broken water heaters; electrical hazards; rotten floors; and rodent-infested classrooms" and it takes months to years for repairs to happen (Morris, 2015, para. 5 & 8). School buildings have no windowpanes in windows and nonworking water heaters. During the winter months, classrooms were frigid, and windows were covered with old blankets. The infrastructure lacked paved roads to and from reservation schools (2015) which confirmed the BIE's lack of management and leadership, and an accountability system. The dismissal of the previous director of the BIE was March 2016 and was based on corrupt hiring practices (Santhanam, 2016).

The great digital divide continues in Indian country because of the lack of broadband internet service. Tribal land does not have high-speed internet connections or reliable cell phone connections, which ensures a worldwide educational experience (Wang, 2018). However, the latest report mentioned telecommunication for U.S. NA and AN citizen to include teachers and students would improve to support the educational broadband service spectrum (Jardin, 2019). The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) accessed and allowed tribes and tribal colleges and universities to apply for a 2.5 GHz-band. Educational broadband service spectrum licenses first before other bids take place from other entities (FCC proposal could boost broadband internet on tribal land, 2019). Access to internet broadband would enhance tribal education, economic stability, health care, and governmental involvement, and workplace readiness on tribal land.

No Child Left Behind Act

The *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* originated from and was introduced by President Lyndon Johnson's Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB], 2012). The U.S. Federal Government signed the NCLB Act of 2001 into law. The focus was to evaluate standardized test scores in public schools. The President of the United States in the year 2004 was Mr. George Bush. He had a strong commitment to supporting the NCLB Act. The President also signed an Executive Order that mandated recognition of U.S. NA students who needed academic support (Executive Order: American Indian and Alaska Native Education, 2004). The 2006 Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) published that approximately 54% of U.S. NA students graduated from high school. In the year 2007, only 51% of U.S. NA high school students graduated (High School Drop-out in America, 2010). The 51% of

U.S. NA graduated high school students in 2010 was a downswing compared to 54% in 2008. In the year 2011, not even 50% of U.S. NA students completed high school (Post-secondary Success for Native American Students, 2011). The BIE schools in Alaska were subject to the same guidelines of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act with limited exceptions.

Elected November 4, 2008, the 44th President of the US, Barack Obama (President Barack Obama, 2013), and others supported a change in mandates that the latest No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act expected from students. President Obama's approach relieved (a) the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) timelines and school improvement, (b) accountability requirements, and (c) flexibility in using federal education funds (Elementary and Secondary Educational Act of 1965 [ESEA] Reauthorization ...2012). According to Dr. Wiese, President of the American Indian Association in Illinois, Natives had gained the ears of government leaders (Rickert, 2012). However, the National Education Association was not in favor of suggestions in support of President Obama's initiatives that would improve education for U.S. NA/ANs.

Before the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the U.S. did not track the achievement gap among U.S. NA/AN students and their peers. Here again, there has not been a change in the tracking of U.S. NA students' "college participation rates" (Challenges, 2019, para. 1). It has shown that U.S. NA/AN students were 13 points behind White students and 15 points behind Asian/Pacific Islanders in 12th-grade readers. In math, the scores were not any better with 17 points lower than White kids and 31 points lower than Asian/Pacific Islanders within the same 12th-grade level (Tirado, 2010).

Literary scholars, critics, and writers continuously report that U.S. NA/AN students are

still lagging far behind White students in academics (Emerson, 2018; Schultz, 2018; Adelman et al., 2013; Hunt, 2008; PSSNAS, 2011). It has been mentioned that U.S. NA students do not have the same energy to succeed academically (Race, Class, and the Achievement Gap, 2011). As mentioned earlier, Dunn (2015) said that the old ways of governing by the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act were not working. Changes are overdue.

He also stated that President Barack Obama encouraged changes to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) of 1965 before the 2015-16 academic years. Revisions were made to the ESEA and was replaced with Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 signed into law by President Obama on December 10, in support of “tribal consultation, Native language immersion programs, cooperative agreements, accountability, and reporting standardized test results” (Lee, 2016). There was continued support for the restructuring of teacher evaluations, state intervention in low-performance schools, a closer look at special education, and discretionary funding availability for the Bureau of Indian Education (p. 1). Although the law was enacted so that Native communities could have more say about their educational system, student failure persisted along with failed school administrations (Boone, 2018).

Racial and Cultural Identity Development Model

Stakeholders are not aware that, a productive relationship with a U.S NA/AN student is as important as a relationship with other student groups (Hunt et al., 2008; Kamau, 2012). Job and workforce readiness skill sets have not been a concern for some U.S. NA/AN undergraduate and graduate students. In support, stakeholders must first be comfortable knowing who they are, aware of other student origins, heritages, and

invisible cultures, and other marginalized identities. The racial and cultural identity development (RCID) model (generic identity model) developed by Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1989) helps with identity issues.

The five stages as stated by Sanchez (2008) and Sue and Sue (1999) are:

- Conformity - a student assimilates into a culture and embraces the same heritage and beliefs.
- Dissonance - question if messages and means of communication are genuine and factual. The message received may not be noteworthy compared to the “understanding of their culture and the dominant culture” (p. 5). The inconsistency created a person to question if their cultural beliefs are genuine and if assimilation has happened (Schooler, 2014c).
- Immersion and resistance – a student understand their heritage and able to ignore the culture that may threaten their dominant cultural beliefs.
- Introspection - a student examines extreme feelings that cause issues with self-identity development.
- Integrative awareness - a student has comfort and belief in their culture, as well as other nationally known views.

Belief patterns of participants and the attitude expressed are the visual part of identity. Identity was associated with who the person was, who others of the same group, and who others were of another group (Sue, 1990). These same attitudes and beliefs were “cultural masks” (Huffman, 2001a, p. 7). *Racial identity development models* were useful in providing a framework for understanding the

experience of U.S. NA/AN students who were qualitatively different from that of a non-native or any other multi-cultural student. Other ethnic groups must understand the attitudes of U.S. NA/AN students towards self, and others of the same racial and ethnic background, which was crucial (Whittaker & Neville, 2012).

Skin color

Skin color was still a defining factor as it related to Renaissance scholarship. Europeans identified that skin color supported superiority (Wheeler, 1999). Racial identity framed people based on skin color and linked their character and heritage to a style and behavior (Tinto, 1993). What a person looks like determined what, how, and when accepted and predetermined behavior expectations (Chavez, Guido-DiBrito, & Mallory, 1999; Landor & Smith, 2019). Donald Trump, the 45th United States of America President (November 8, 2016 – present) stated in 1993 that, "...will tell you right now, they don't look like Indians to me, and they don't look like Indians ... and they do not look like Indians to Indians ... (Donald Trump and Federal Indian Policy: 'They don't look like Indians to me', 2016; Subcommittee on Native American Affairs of the Committee on Natural Resources House of Representatives, 1993, October 5) while addressing an issue with Indian gaming.

The U.S. NA consisted of many colors, in an array of black and very pale white to fair (Perlmann, Waters & Levy, 2005) as well as the U.S. ANs. With skin color variation, stated Perlmann et al. (2005), a U.S. NA student whose ethnic identity appeared White found it easy to assimilate into the mainstream of society. Sue and Sue (2003) stated that being able to pass as a White person within a university setting and among other students

and other stakeholders was an unethical practice. In contrast, an advantage for the individual because of expected favoritism and a warmer acceptance.

Some terms linked to historical events remain unappealing to U.S. NAs and their communities (Muwakkil, 2004). The Republican National Committee Chair Michael Steele used the word “*honest injun*” in 2010 to “assure voters that his party did not need a makeover to be more relevant” (Nittle, 2017, para. 1) which was offensive to then, referred to as the Native American Indian (NAI) communities (2017). Unacceptable labeling, such as *Redskin* and *Squaw* was disrespectful terms for U.S. NA/ANs as well. The term *Redskin* was derived from the fact that historically, U.S. NAs painted themselves red when wearing regalia for special events and during wartime (Evans, 2007; Mott & Obermeyer, 1990). The term, which does not identify a permanent complexion, also referred to scalping the U.S. NA to earn a bounty. The term, “*Indian giver*” was another expression recently used by Jessica Simpson, which gave the impression that Natives gave something and took it back. In contrast, the term “*Indian giver*” was a negative reflection on Europeans who did not honor promises to Native people upon arrival on Native land (Nittle, 2017).

Craniometrics research analysis

Looking at skin color from a medical perspective, Dr. Blumenbach’s study of Craniometrics determined a person’s character as it associated with “sex, race, or body type” (Turnbull, 2012, pp. 5-6) merely by measuring the skull of that person. Dr. Blumenbach based on his craniometrics research analysis insisted that a physical appearance corresponded to a racial category. Blumenbach divided humans into five ethnic subcultures although he admitted that “craniometrics variables of different

populations overlap, making any definitive classification impossible” (2012, pp. 5-6).

The location of all races was in different geographical areas (Turnbull, 2012). The races were Whites or Caucasians or Caucasoids, and Mongolian or yellow, which referred to East Asians. Other races identified were, the Malayan or brown race known as Southeast Asians, the Ethiopian black race or Negroids, (King, 2019), and the American Indian or red race, which identified as the Native American. Blumenbach believed that “American Indians to be part of the American (Indigenous peoples) race. They were not inferior to the Caucasian race and were potentially good members of society” (pp. 5-6; Davies, 1998, p. 734; Blumenbach, n.d., para. 1).

He believed that some peoples have a color other than the so-called White person. The change of skin color was a disease known as negroid. They were still of White decent under the colored skin; however, they were victims of a non-contagious form of leprosy. They never marry (Rush, 2011). Dr. Blumenbach’s identities were associated with the complexion of one’s skin color that strengthens the fact that “skin color is still associated with more race-conscious views and higher levels of perceived discrimination” (Glenn, 2009, p. 56; Hunt et al., 2008, p. 63). On the contrary, Anthropologist Franz Boas in 1911 who practiced racial differences had no idea as to how people were separated from one part of the world to another. Racial theorist and eugenicists reported racial categories and labeled as racial profiling (King, 2019).

On a personal note, Dustin Richardson, a Cherokee Nation tribal roll member, 2009 UMCP graduate, and former UMCP President of the American Indian Student Union, expressed concerns about being a Native American student in the Diamondback, a student newspaper. He often expressed his belief that “You constantly have to defend

your identity" (Hampton, 2009b, pp. 1-3). Mr. Richardson also felt:

It becomes a little frustrating when seeing a Redskins logo during football seasons, and it can be frustrating when a professor makes a racist comment during class. The University does not support Native Americans. If Native American students feel the University of Maryland does not support, nor advocate for their needs while, in college, something needs to change. (D. Richardson, Personal Communication, June 2, 2009)

Since that time, National Geographic magazine apologized "for its past promotion of inherent differences among racial categories and the rank ordering of societies as primitive and uncivilized" (King, 2019, para. 9) in their 2018 cover story.

The Educational Pipeline

Scholarly research and literature review reported that U.S NA/AN student's experiences are "fragmented" (Minthorn, 2020, p. 1) on college campuses. Their unique struggles while trying to continue their education at schools lacked sensitivity to U.S. NA/AN cultural beliefs and practices and attempts to dialogue with others (Bryan, 2018; Crosby, 2011). Scholars, critics, and writers continuously report that U.S. NA/AN students are behind White students in academics (Emerson, 2018; Schultz, 2018; Adelman et al., 2013; Hunt, 2008). The U.S. NA/AN are 1% of the undergraduate population and less than 1% of the graduate population" (Native American students in higher education, 2020, para. 1). Only one hundred thirty-five of NAs earned an undergraduate degree (bachelor's) or higher, with the national average being 27.9% in 2012 (Kessler, 2012). The U.S. NA/AN university student's ultimate academic goal was to graduate and not necessarily maintain a high-grade point average (GPA; Crosby,

2011). The future seemed incredibly challenging for U.S. NA/AN students getting through the educational pipeline. Some scholars, because of historical events and challenges, understood that U.S. NA/AN youth are one of the least likely ethnic and racial groups to enter a post-secondary institution or graduate from one (Garland, 2013; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Hunt et al., 2008; Reeves, 2006).

Historical beliefs targeting the traditional educational system continued to have an adverse lingering conclusion (Stanton, 2011) which challenged U.S. NA/AN students' retention and graduation to include lasting employability. The U.S. NA/AN students are not encouraged to obtain a higher education. Schools are a system of mistrust among U.S. NA/AN in Indian country. The first-year experience of a university can be incredibly challenging (Guillory et al., 2008; Milsom, 2015; Reeves, 2006; A New Social Science, 2014), especially if religious, vocational, forced acculturation and assimilation components are issues (Rodriquez & Mallinckrodt, 2018, [Abstract], p. 1; Carney, 1999a; Deloria, 1978).

The Academic Gap Widens

From fall 2003 to fall 2013, the U.S. NA/AN high school student population continuously dropped from 0.6 million to 0.5 million (Racial/Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools, 2016). American (NA) high school student graduation rates continued to decline since 2008 while White and Asian graduation rates continued to rise (Ebner, 2013). The 2009 to 2012 American College Test (ACT) tests for all subjects except science made a decline in the present percentages for NA high school graduates (Attainment of College and Career Readiness, 2013). Ahniwake Rose reported in an Education Week article that

only “67 percent of Native students graduated from high school –a figure well below the national average” (2007, para. 2).

The National Statistics Center for Education Statistics (NCEA) predicted that “Of the projected 50.4 million public school students entering prekindergarten through grade 12 in fall 2016, White students would account for 24.6 million ... 0.5 million American Indian/Alaskan Native U.S. students” (Elementary and Secondary Education [Enrollment], 2016). The Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander high school student population would increase while a steady decline in enrollment in the fall 2015 school year for the White student population. The U.S. NA/AN high schoolers’ statistical data, in support of moving them through the educational pipeline, was not calculated in the report (2016). It has been reported that for the U.S. NA/AN students, there continued to be a decline in public and secondary school graduation rates. The rate of 1.0% in 2016 would decline to 0.9% in 2025 (Enrollment and Percentage Distribution of Enrollment in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools by Race/Ethnicity and Region: Selected Years fall 1995 through fall 2025; [Table 204.50], 2015). Of the 14,217 NA high school graduates who took the 2013 ACT, 4% (English), 26% (Reading), 22% (Mathematics), and 18% (Science) met the university readiness benchmarks by subject. In 2014, 67% of U.S. NA/AN high school student graduated (Morris, 2015). Nationally, only 49% of NA high school students graduated (Cook, 2015). “The University of Maryland at College Park through their undergraduate admissions recruitment efforts do not have an agenda in place to recruit or reach out to eligible high school potential graduates from Indian country in support of first people’s inclusion and continued education. Nor are there

sufficient resources to enhance their college readiness process if recruited” (Chicquelo, Personal communication, 2014).

Through observation, legal documents, qualitative and quantitative method, experimentation, research designs, business management decisions, and storytelling, just to name a few, researchers have highlighted various factors and concepts that cause disengagement for the U.S. NA/AN that revert to assumed management and leadership of stakeholder’s poor decision making. I believe the following factors/themes and gaps are of no concern to stakeholders when it comes to U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students attrition which hinders recruitment, retainment, graduation, workforce, and workplace readiness after graduation.

Age factors

Age was reported to be a risk factor associated with non-traditional U.S. NA/AN students who are thirty years old, which is not uncommon when enrolling in a postsecondary educational institution (AIANHM, 2011b). The low enrollment of the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student attending university remains a concern (Pember, 2012). The average age of an undergraduate student is 18-21 years of age (UMD Undergraduate Student Profile, 2017, October; UMCP student population stats, 2019).

Financial stability factor

Because of the financial instability of some U.S. NA/AN students, the high tuition cost increase student drop-out (IHEP, 2007; Lonsdale, 2011). Most first-year students (54%) to include the U.S. NA/AN students received financial assistance in the form of grants, scholarships, and worked while in school (work-study) (What UMBC financial aid are you eligible for? 2019). Sixty-two % of NA students are more in need of financial

assistance from the federal government than 56 % of White students (Challenges, 2019). In contrast, some faculty, staff, and researchers believed that student learning has become more of an important issue because of continued increases in tuition and fees (Brint et al., 2012a).

Two-thirds of independent U.S. NA/AN undergraduates, which was almost 20%, lived on an annual income lower than \$20,000 during the 2008 year. The median income in 2010 for a U.S. NA/AN household per year was \$35,002 (Hunt et al., 2008; The 2011 American Indian Survey for American Indian & Alaska Alone Population in 2010) compared to 2011, which was \$35,192, nationally (AIANHM: N, 2012). In 2014, the median household income slightly increased to \$37,227 (Income in the Past 12 Months, 2014). At least 33 % of school-age U.S. NA/AN children lived at the poverty level compared to White children at 12 % (Aud, Hussar, Johnson, Kena, Roth, Manning, ... Zhang, 2012). The U.S. NA/AN family was at a 24 % poverty rate compared to 28.3 % for all humans in the U.S. Domestic Violence, drug abuse are other threats to continued education (Bryan, 2018; Poverty rates for families and peoples for whom poverty status is determined, 2014).

Western-style teaching: Non-Native factors

Research by Mary Jo Tipperconnic Fox (New Directions for Student Services, 2005) suggested that mainstream western-style teaching known as colonial teaching caused U.S. NA sociological and psychological issues. As one scholar stated, peoples should be proud of their life experiences and appreciate the experiences of others (Brown, 1994). The lack of organizational transformation and stakeholder managers' unwillingness to design policies and curriculum and teacher preparation that affected U.S. NA/AN issues and

pedagogy created systemic communication gaps (American Indian school dropouts and pushouts, 2020).

Language factors

There were 566 federally recognized U.S. NA/AN tribes in 2013 which the list did not include state, and non-state-recognized tribes (American Indian and Alaska Native profile, 2013). There were 574 federally recognized tribes as of 2020 (An overview, 2020). There were 231 federally recognized U.S. Alaskan Native tribes and villages (Alaskan Tribes: Regional organization and culture, 2020). In contrast, it was reported in the same year that “229... located in Alaska” and the others “located in 35 other states” (An overview, 2020). Of the 500 original native languages spoken, only 27 % of 5.1 million U.S. NA/ANs spoke their native tongue that was usually understood at the age of five years old or older (American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month [AIANHM], 2012). There were only 250 NA languages spoken (Native American Nations, 2012). Most of the U.S. AN language has vanished and only 20 spoken dialogues remain (Alaska Native Language Classes and Degree Programs, 2016).

There was no consideration or praise for speaking Native languages stated Oakes and Mayday (Garland, 2013). English was considered the universal language and was expected to be spoken by all US. NAs (Stevens & Gielen, 2007). Boarding school experiences and U.S. and Canadian NA/ANs not allowed to speak their Native tongue had severe jolt on children separated from their homelands. Several parents who attended boarding schools have not reclaimed nor taught tribal languages to the children. Parents fear the thoughts of their children experiencing the abuse of forgetting and learning a new dialogue (Lajimodiere, 2012) which often occurred while being a hostage in boarding

schools (Rush, 2019).

. The fear of conversations among U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students, elders, and other members of the community that spoke their tribal language has been evident; however, it was not expressed by participants in this study. The U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student may not feel safe talking or even letting others know they can speak a tribal language at a predominantly White institution (PWI). There must be collaboration among students and others in the educational system to support accountability (Jimenez, 2020) and support for the native languages.

Teacher: Role model factor

Invisible are U.S. NA/AN role models who are so important for the student when seeking trust (Fox, 2005; Hunt et al., 2008; Kamau, 2012; Lundberg, 2010). Studies on retention support the fact that U.S. NA/AN students' academic and social outcome was better when they experienced trustful relationships with NA/AN faculty and staff members (Rush, 2019). The student was able to adjust, as well as remain persistent (Jackson, et al., 2003; Kuh, et al., 2001) when personal and relational issues affected personal and social development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The U.S. NA/AN student does not have a visual learning style in the classroom. As Andre Cramblit stated, visual input "comes from traditional instructional techniques that rely on modeling" (2014).

Giving a voice to one Native American and tenured Professor, Valandra grew up on the Rosebud Indian Reservation. Valandra received a Doctor of Philosophy from SUNY-Buffalo, New York. She added to the dialogue by saying that the NA academic Professors lacked respect for their professionalism but expected to adhere to the ivory

towers (Valandra, 2013). Some Educators have no interest in the diverse understanding of NA spoken words or meanings (Adelman et al., 2013). Valandra was able to move forward knowing racism awaited (2013).

Alaskan Native (AN) students attended Wagner's school in Sovoonga and Gambell, Alaska. The two villages are located on St. Lawrence, part of the Bering Strait land bridge with a population of 1,400 Alaskan Natives. Ahniwake Rose, Executive Director of the National Indian Education Association stated:

We want our children to achieve academically, but we need to be able to design programs that deal with the challenges they face day-to-day. The federal government is not going to understand what those challenges are. How should teachers make school relevant to kids who spend much of their time hunting and gathering berries, with limited exposure to peoples other than their White teachers who have achieved academic success? Even though many traditions are still strong, Native American/Alaskan Natives in St. Lawrence worry that sending children away from their homes to higher education could endanger the Yupik language and culture. (Garland, 2013, paras. 8-9)

Race factors

U.S. Native American (NA) children are still experiencing racism and hatred (Lonsdale, 2011; Mmari & Blum, 2009). The historical myth continues to identify U.S. NA as fighters, scalpers, and drunks (Lonsdale, 2011; Rush, 2019). Students are still struggling for acceptance as stated:

You see it in the bus system, when you get on the bus, some bus drivers, do not even give Natives respect. They see us sitting there, like sometimes when I used

to have long hair I will be sitting there, you know, waiting for the bus, and you know, I would not get up in time. Some of the buses just pass me by. (Mmari & Blum, 2009, p. 12)

Labeling/mascotting factors

Multiple databases suggested that identification labeling and offensive mascots demean Native people (; Mascots and Imagery, 2015 Muwakkil, 2004). The *labeling of deviance theory* founded by several to include Frank Tannenbaum who referenced the labeling theory in the 1930s and Edwin Lemert explained labeling in his 1951 book, *Social Pathology*. Becker, in 1963 defined the term as an "outsider to describe a labeled rule-breaker or deviant that accepts the label attached to them and view themselves as different from "mainstream" society (History, n.d., p. 1).

Deviant labeling against an inferior person and group encourages students or other stakeholders the opportunity to practice labeling. For instance, deviance labeling is leading a U.S. NA/AN student to believe that there are no desires for them to be academically successful (Race, Class, and the Achievement Gap, 2011). A student who discusses U.S. NA/AN issues in dorm rooms and wherever other students congregate are not transparent when U.S. NA/AN students are not present or permitted to contribute to the conversation (Ronk, 2015). This behavior could cause secondary deviance known as master status ("Labeling Theory", n.d.). For instance, a NA student could be viewed as an intelligent person and labeled at the same time, second-grade citizens. The lack of input from U.S. NA/AN students during conversations on mascotting and other ethical labeling has given an opportunity to "slander, defame, and vilify Native people indigenous cultures, and tribal nations and continues a legacy of racist and prejudiced

attitudes” (Cohen, 2014, para. 2). ‘Wagon burners’ and ‘Prairie n-----s’ are other terms that anger Natives (Reilly, 2003, para. 5). Demeaning labels and representations affect egos and self-esteem (Reeves, 2006). Labeling affects a U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student retention while in school and graduate’s employment path opportunities.

However, “from a structural-functionalist perspective, one of the positive contributions of deviance is that it fosters social change (“Deviance and Control”, n.d., p. 1).

Starr (2014) mentioned that most peoples are not aware of the harm resulting from various mascot tings. The Center for American Progress (CAP) report revealed that mascot ting remains very harmful to U.S. NA/AN students which, triggers mental health issues and lowered self-esteem. The narrative discussion from Missing the Point; The Real Impact of Native Mascots and Team Names on American Indian and Alaskan Native Youth Report mentioned that U.S. NA/AN students are most affected when negative mascot- ting happens within their environment. Nevertheless, all mascots (talisman, amulet) are not labeled bad. Some Mascots are named Smokey Bear, stones, jewels, cosmetics, and hair trims. On the College Park campus, the mascot known as Testudo is a well-known representative of good messaging, education, and appreciation.

Sports perspective. The Boston Braves co-owner Mr. George Preston Marshall renamed the Boston Braves football team after Lone Star Dietz’s heritage known as the “Redskins” (Shin, 2013, p. B8). It was not a secret that one-man, Dietz former coach of the Boston Redskins, was a self-proclaimed Lakota Nation member. He self-selected Native American (NA) heritage to avoid serving in the military. Mr. Erny Zah represented the Lakota Nation. He was not happy about the Redskins mascot. He articulated, “They are spitting on us. They are spitting on our culture, and it is upsetting”

(“Victoria’s Secret apologizes for Native American headdress used in the Annual Fashion Show,” 2012, p. 1).

Mr. Marshall later honored Dietz in the year 1933. A monument was on the ground of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium, in Washington, the District of Columbia, to honor George, founder of the team, and a known racist. The removal of the monument took place in the year 2020. The removal of the name from the “Ring of Fame”, known as the history wall at the Redskin's Park also took place. "Any mention of him on the Redskins’ website was also deleted” (Lee, 2020). From 1933 – 1936 the team was known as the Boston Redskins. From 1937 to 2020, the Washington Redskins as their official name and relocated to Washington, the District of Columbia, and soon afterward, to Maryland.

In 2013, the Oneida Indian Nation in Upper State New York spearheaded the Redskins Football team’s mascot name-change initiative. President Barack Obama (U.S.A.) mentioned that he would consider changing the Redskins football team name if it were offensive to a group of peoples (Jones, 2013). In contrast, the owner of the Redskins team since 1999, Mr. Daniel Snyder was not hearing it (Barnes, 2013; Bennie, 2013).

Mr. Snyder stated he would never change the r-word (Cohen, 2014). Mr. Snyder supported monetary benefits extended to Native American (NA) communities (Jones, 2014) by his franchise. There were mixed emotions among NA and other tribal members about the generosity of handing out 3,000 coats and other items sent to members of various tribes from the Redskins franchise, which hoped the fans would re-evaluate their support for the 84-year-old traditional Redskins mascot at that time. Not honoring the

outrage request to discontinue using a demeaning mascot name resulted in Daniel gaining a reputation and labeled a bully. The National Football League (NFL) commissioner finally reprimanded Snyder, the chief, and the other 31 NFL owners who were bullying gang members (2014).

Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington, DC supported the team name change (Swalec, 2020) and mentioned that Mr. Snyder had no choice but to change the team name after repeated requests from various stakeholders, and the community put dollar bills in front of “change the name”. I believe in “never say never” (Chicquelo, Personal Communication, 2020, July 13). It was official, the Redskins and Redskins logo is no more as of Monday, July 13, 2020. Indigenous groups and big sponsors like FedEx Field, Nike, Pepsi, and others to include the racial climate of the country, put pressure on Mr. Dan Snyder, owner, and Coach Rivera to frantically worked hard to come up with a name for the team (De la Fuente & Sterling, 2020) team name should be changed if the team plans to return to the nation’s capital (Fendrick, 2020).

Fashion perspective. The Victoria Secret lingerie maker had an annual fashion show in the year 2012. One model was barely dressed, while in a two-piece outfit and a costumed mascot of a full-feathered NA war bonnet. Wearing a full eagle feather war bonnet by a NA shows honor, respect, and bravery. Disrespect for NA ceremonial, spiritual, and magical beliefs demean and continuously affect egos and self-esteem (Reeves, 2006). The gesture of mascot ting by female modeling gained an apology from the company (Li, 2012).

The Title VII Indian Education Act was written to protect U.S. NA/AN students attending K-12th non-traditional schools while celebrating their cultural identity. The

traditional toss of graduation caps and moving the tassel on the graduation cap from one side to the other during graduating ceremonies should not be the only tradition accepted (Cook, 2015). Native American (NA) graduating high school seniors lacked permission to celebrate artistic expression by adorning their graduation regalia with eagle feathers and other traditional symbols (Nico, 2019). A NA student, while preparing to graduate from high school, stopped beading her high school graduation cap because of not having the freedom to practice her religion and be proud of her heritage. The only thing she wanted to do on her graduation day was to wear her beaded cap during the graduation ceremony. The stakeholders said no; a plain cap or no cap (Waln, 2019). The Alaskan Native high school graduate adorned a cap with beads. The graduate was encouraged to celebrate high school graduation, heritage, and spirituality. However, there was a strict policy to avoid offensive symbols by students filling out a form for approval (Early, 2019). I believe how ironic, a non-native can go to a football game and wear a full chief bonnet without any reprimand – mascotting is a rare form (Chicquelo, Personal Communication, 2020).

College perspective. Dartmouth College is a school located on Abenaki tribal land in Hanover, New Hampshire, and formerly a Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut. Congregational Minister Eleazar Wheelock founded the school in 1769 (Dartmouth Offers an Education Like No Other, 2013). The college was one of the first Native American NA Schools (Dartmouth, 2003, 2008) along with Harvard and William and Mary (Carney 1999b in Crosby, 2011). Minister Wheelock did not have a good record of caring for U.S. NA children and most children died due to various diseases (Lott, 2010). However, Dartmouth’s Native American Studies program, implemented in the year 1972,

addressed “social, political, and economic needs” (Vision & Mission, 2013, para.1) for U.S. NA students.

The former Director of the Native American Program, Colleen Larimore had conversations with tribal members to discuss approving a mascot to honor them (Lott, 2010). However, having a U.S. NA mascot endorsed the idea that any and every one could wear native regalia, which would create a concern leading to more offensive mascots and racism (2010). Dartmouth dismissed the Indian mascot in the 1970s. The school referred to as the ‘Big Green’ remained without an official mascot until October 1, 2003. The Big Green adopted ‘Keggy the Keg’, an unofficial anthropomorphic beer keg mascot. Keggy the Keg was listed as number 8 (2010) among the Top Ten College Mascots (Bell, 2013).

Nonetheless, after Dartmouth thought the bias reporting against U.S. NA/AN students had stopped, it started the second cycle. The Dartmouth college newspaper wrote that on Tuesday, October 13, 2015, a U.S NA student posted flyers around campus, which advised students that it was ok to celebrate the controversial Columbus Day for the entire year and to wear old clothing to highlight Natives on campus (Flower, 2015). Consequently, another student mentioned that a black mark had been drawn through the word “*Columbus Day*” on the flyers and “*Indigenous Peoples Day*” was visibly written over it (para 11). The first Indigenous Peoples Day slogan became official and celebrated in Berkeley, California, which removed the “*Columbus Day*” era (Meyer, 2019).

The past chair of History and Native American Studies for 12 years at Dartmouth, Professor Colin Calloway stated that the incident supported the notion of a student generation gone and another student generation arriving, but the Dartmouth campus

climate remained the same; chilly (Flower, 2015). Stakeholder management within the organization did not effectively ensure the campus culture remained warm and welcoming in support of the positive social change. Un-friendly climate, while attending college complicates student success (Hampton, 2009b; Mocking Native American Students Claim Mocking at the University of California, San Diego Event, 2010).

Departure factors

Some of the same U.S. NA/AN students did not have an opportunity to express and tell lived stories about attending school which had not been a priority until recently. Some historical themes that caused disengagement for some Native students were abuse, gangs, rape, absent parents, violence at home, and school, just to name a few (Introduction, 2014a). Lack of adequate teacher skill sets linked to the U.S. NA/AN experience today, curriculums that have no mention of U.S NA/AN student origin and heritage, and test biases contributed to student departure. Teachers are not using skill sets taught at home by Native parents/guardians, which could be integrated into some student learned habits while in the classroom setting (American Indian school dropouts and pushouts, 2020).

Integration factor

Several factors/themes have been named that may hinder academic and social engagement, retention, and employability after graduation for the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students. Integration was most important in shrinking the disengagement gap (Rendon et al., 2014). Integration stated Tinto (1975) support a student remaining in college (Johnson et al., 2007). A person's original culture may be challenged when acclimated to other cultures (Akrofi et al., 2008; Robinson, 2005). Academic integration

on a university campus highlights both grade performance and intellectual development (Tinto, 1993). Some scholars believe academic integration is a strong impression of a student's commitment to completing the academic requirements for graduation.

Brint et al. (2012a) argued that students committed to an educational institution should understand the commitment to good grades (academic integration). Social inclusion is involved in activities that support the educational institution (Belgarde et al., 2007; Feldman, 2005; Tinto, 1975). However, Brint (et al. 2012a) confirmed that a U.S. NA/AN student should avoid alternative involvement consisting of extracurricular activities (social integration), which result in social condemnation. The thought of social condemnation was so relevant and had strong ties with the U.S. NA/AN student boarding school experience. For instance, U.S. ANs in some small villages suffered because of not having high schools until the 1980s. The students had no other choice other than to gain an education in boarding schools (Garland, 2013). Some experiences created the notion of not having the option to participate in cultural activities or the free will of celebrating diverse expressions. As a result, some U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students continued to have difficulty in being who they were.

Lack of integration: Incongruence and isolation

There are two reasons for the lack of integration stated Tinto (1987): incongruence and isolation. Incongruence happens at an early age for U.S. NA/AN students attending schools. Other multi-ethnic students were not receptive to their cultural beliefs, language, and true spirituality (Academic Achievement Rate, 2011). Tinto (1993) and Tierney (1992) stated that incongruence was in the sense of an experience that happens to most students. The experience, which became exceedingly unnoticed resulted

in a student withdrawal (*stop-out*), drop-out (*leaver*), transfer, or remain (*stayer*) disengaged. “*Pushouts*” (Hickok, 2015, para. 3) was used in the Alaskan school system describing a lack of stakeholder caring, leadership skill sets, and responsible practices (para. 2) toward retaining the AN student.

There are arrays of contextual and personal conditions associated with incongruence. Some conditions noted were “a lack of adequate preparation, academic challenges, disengagement from extracurricular activities, and perception of the quality of campus life when coming from non-traditional and non-majority ethnic and racial backgrounds” (Brint & Cantwell, 2012a). Total disengagement from social and academic networking was the worst (Malaney & Shively, 1995). However, the term “disengaged” (Don’t Call Them Dropouts [DCTD], 2014, para. 2) from an academic environment was a more acceptable term than drop-out.

Drop-out (*leavers*). A student drop-out (*leaver*) referred to, as mentioned above was a U.S. NA/AN student not in school or on a school roll. The student who identified as a drop-out was usually between the ages of 16 through 24 and did not have a high school diploma. “Over one-half of our entire children drop-out of school every year” stated Dr. Dorene Wiese, Ojibwe, the American Indian Association founder (Drop-out prevention of American Indian urban students featured on Public Television, 2012, p. 1). The United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2011) published in 2007 that White student drop-out was 5.3 % and NA student drop-out was 19.3%. The ratio for U.S. NA students living on and off the reservation that drops out before graduating from high school was 3 out of every 10 students (American Indian school drop-outs and push-outs, 2020; Reyhner, 2006) compared to the change in data for

the 2012 national drop-out rate for U.S. NA/AN which was at 51 % (United States Department of Education, 2011).

The drop-out pipeline and lack of educational success continue (Sheehy, 2013, para. 6). The drop-out rate has increased because of the lack of involvement (Hunt et al., 2008). Schencker (2008) said that some students stay out of school for no apparent reason. Recent research suggested that labeling a student as a “*drop-outs*” (leavers) was not a useful term. Most schools attended by U.S. NA/AN students are “drop-out factories” (Sheehy, 2013, para. 6). Tinto (1987) theorized the student drop-out model confirmed his study did not address non-traditional or adult learners. Incongruence and isolation produce unpleasant interaction, which reduces the student academic and social satisfaction and unfair college experience.

Graduation factors

North American (NA) school’s expectation of students dropped from academic success to just getting a passing grade (Shore, 2016a). On average, only 50% of U.S. NA students graduate from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) high schools. Of those that graduated from BIE high schools, fewer attended post-graduate schools (Morris, 2015). These statistics support the notion that U.S NA students were not interested in continued education. Unfortunately, here again, U.S. NA/AN tribal graduation rates and other data are not consistently and readily available in annual educational reports that should reveal statistical data. Without reliable and accurate data analysis, continued scholarly research and literature review (Adelman et al., 2013), suggested halts academic and social change. The U.S. NA/AN student and pre-and post-high school graduates do not receive attention from governing boards, and unfavorable compromises for positive social change will

continue (Introduction, 2014b).

The University of Maryland College Park

North America, known as Turtle Island, belonged to the U.S. Native American peoples before the land genocide (Austin, 2013; Mercier, 2014). In what is known as College Park, Maryland, Indian Tribes possessed the land. After some time, the colonist, other tribes, and Indians created war. Eventually, treaties were signed to restore peace. Prince George's County in Maryland was named on the 22 days of May 1695. After many decades, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission members appreciated the historical landmark and commissioned the streets in College Park to have tribal names (Burch, 1965). For instance, there is *Apache Street, Ash Avenue, Blackfoot Place, Catawba Road, Cherokee Street, Cheyenne Place, Dartmouth Avenue, Delaware Place, Eutaw Place, Fox Street, Indian Lane, Iroquois Street, Keota Terrace, Muskogee Street, Navaho Street, Osage Street, Seminole Street*, to name a few. Most of the streets/roads are within walking distance from the UMCP campus (Streetview, 2020).

The Native American Medicine Wheel, which took on the form of a circle with a cross in the middle of the wheel, gives high value to the importance of the Universe. Each ethnic group, as mentioned in Chapter 2 (White, Yellow, Black, and Red), are represented in the circle (Native American Medicine Wheel, n.d.) There are different colors between the cross's 4 open spaces: *white, yellow, black, and red* (Medicine Wheel, n.d.). The same circular form represents the 4 directions: *white (north), yellow (east), black (south), and red (west)*. However, colors within the wheel vary among different tribes and nations. Official colors representing the UMCP are *white, yellow, black, and red*, as well.

The official mascot for the UMCP is a bronze terrapin that weighs an enormous 300 pounds and is named *Testudo* (Testudo, 2013). The mascot unveiling was May 23, 1933. It was customary that students rub the Testudo's nose for good luck (All about Testudo, 2013). Most students and other stakeholders believed the testudo symbolized "creation, protection, and longevity" (Native American Symbols, Turtle, and Tortoise, 2010, p. 1). Others view the sacred turtle as a symbol of "healing, wisdom, and spirituality" (Native American Turtle Mythology, n.d., para. 1). After some restoration, the original Testudo was a whopping 1000 pounds. Students, staff, and visitors have viewed other similar statues and artifacts throughout the campus grounds as well. In U.S. NA cultures, tribes and different nations have distinct symbolisms for the sacred turtle.

The following statements are personal testimonies, whereas I have observed U.S. NA/AN situations on Turtle Island at the UMCP for several decades. Some sections are biased:

The UMCP has not recruited or hired NA/AN faculty over many years. The staff that identified as U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native remain invisible and non-transparent. Increasing the low U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student enrollment was not a priority. After many years of unwanted challenges, issues and staying steadfast to embrace Native cultures, it was noted that student services and implementation of programs made an academic and social difference during the 1997-2014 academic years. Due to the lack of sensitivity toward the U.S. NA/AN student retention during their matriculation and retention at the UMCP, the programs were set-up to fail. There was no recruitment material for the potential Native student. U.S. Native Americans and Alaskan Natives

students accepted as first-year students, slowdown, or transfer students did not receive orientation reflective of their cultural heritage before the first day of class nor after. (2018)

Organizational and development issues lack strategic policy change. Recruitment of NA/AN staff and students, and additional state and federal funding are not earmarked for the advancement of U.S. NA/AN students' academic and social success to include implemented retention strategies and workforce readiness training. Expect a more in-depth personal testimony expressed on the dedication page of this research study.

(Chicquelo, Personal Communication, September 8, 2017)

The U.S. Native American/Alaskan Native College Student

Tribal Affiliation. There are over 566 federally recognized U.S. NA/AN tribes (Federal and State Recognized Tribes, 2016). Likewise, many non-federally recognized tribes and villages exist (Blackhorse, 2015b). The NA/AN student origin is “a person having origins with any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment” (Summary of Guidance, 2010, para. 4). The U.S. NA/AN student and graduate from one of the UM System sites might self-identify as *Aboriginal, Alaskan, Alaskan Indian U. S., American Indian, First Peoples, First Person of Color, Indian, Indigenous, Indigenous Indian, Indigenous Peoples, Injun, Native, Native American, Native American Indian, Native North American, and Native Peoples. Additional names are the Red Man and Tribal Peoples* (names used interchangeably) (Blackhorse, 2015a; Brunner, 2000-2012; Crazy Bull, 2013; Definition of Terms, 2011; Piquemal, 2005). The above names that identify with the NA/AN undergraduate students and graduates living in the United States are

eligible to participate in the study. Yet, the names do not mean the same by cultural expressions, application, or implication. The above names are interchangeable among college students and others (Horse, 2001).

Most U. S. NA/ANs refer to their homeland or tribal village when asked, “Where are you from?” (Many AI/AN Families are Multi-cultural and Adapt to Their Surrounding Culture, 2010, para. 6). For instance, some NA/ANs identify with their cultural identity and may not use AI. A Native could self- identify by using a tribal name. For instance, “Cherokee” and would be “accurate, clean, and free of bias” (p. 269). Although there remains ethnic diversity within and between tribes and nations (Ford, 2000) similarities, still exist. Migration, inter-tribal marriage, music, language, and the infusion of tradition and custom have linked some tribal nations’ beliefs together and created diversity in two ways; “ability, and ethnicity” (Ford, 2000, para. 1). These ideals may not be appreciated and shared when and wherever NA/AN peoples live, work, attend school, and play.

Self-selection: Ethnic identity

Previously, the U.S. NA/AN student attending schools under the University of Maryland System self-selected their ethnic identity by using the term “Indian” (Cultural Identity, 2010, para. 1) during the registration process until the 2010 academic year. The race category for American Indian/Alaskan Native U.S. students started during the 2010-11 academic years. The Department of Education mentioned that the self-selected ethnic identity option would track ethnic and racial identities of students (The Implementation Schedule, 2007) and would allow each student to claim two or more racial and ethnic identities. The student could use the “two-part question for self-identification” (Should

the Two-Part Question Be Required or Made Optional? 2007, para. 6).

The Alaskan Native U.S. students do not refer to themselves as Indian. The University of Maryland System profile for the Alaskan Indian (AN) student is Alaskan Native U.S., which represented ANs in North American (Institutional Research and Planning Assessment ([IRPA], 2013). The names used to identify potential participants for the research study was U.S. Native American (NA) and Alaskan Native (AN) undergraduate students and recent graduates. I put U.S. to represent both identities to ensure that reads are aware all participants presently live in the United States. As previously stated, and for the benefit of this research study, there were other identifiers, such as geographic information documented for all student participants. However, this study did not generalize nor use participants' real names as identifiers.

The UMCP staff was not consistent when identifying the U.S. NA/AN community within official reports. The UMCP's 2013 Diversity Plan referenced the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student population as "Native American" (The University Will Recruit, Retain, and Graduate a Diverse Student Body, 2013). The UMCP's Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment office's (IRPA) ethnic category referenced the student group as "American Indian or Alaska Native: U.S." (Diversity Strategic Plan, 2012), which was not consistent with the UMCP 2013 Diversity Plan.

Student enrollment/Retention

The multi-ethnic student enrollment at the UMCP included U.S. NA/AN, U.S. Asian, U.S. Black, African American, U.S. Hispanic, U.S., Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander, and others with two or more identities, foreigners, and unknown identities. The various options for a student to self-select their ethnic identity does not

support the real enrollment numbers. In short, the actual enrollment number for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students have and continues to be suspect (Native American students in higher education, 2019).

Fall, 2012 academic year. The small number of U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students matriculating in higher education institutions has and continues to be in small numbers (Pember, 2012). Accurate statistical reporting in multidisciplinary databases and literature text reviews for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student remains questionable (Adelman et al., 2013; Faircloth et al., 2010; Hunt et al., 2008). Thirty-seven U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students attended the UMCP campus during the Fall/2012 academic year (the University of Maryland, Office of the Registrar, 2012). In contrast, the 2012 UMCP Cultural Diversity report affirmed the enrollment of thirty-five U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students for the Fall/2012 academic year (Program of Cultural Diversity [Appendix]).

Fall, 2013 academic year. The UMCP had a Fall/2013 enrollment of 10,788 multi-ethnic students (The University of Maryland, Undergraduate Profile, NOTE 5, 2013b). The Office of the Registrar (2013) at the UMCP site divulged that twenty-seven U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students were on campus during the Fall/2013 academic year (New Freshman Profile, 2013). There was 3 (0.1%) U.S. NA/AN undergraduate transfer students for the Fall 2013 academic year (New Transfers & Others, 2013). Thirty (0.1%) U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students out of 26,658 undergraduate students were on the UMCP campus (The University of Maryland, Undergraduate Profile, 2013b). The 2013-14 CP cultural diversity report referenced the achievement gap was a concern. In addition, the report mentioned African American, Hispanic (Latinx) and other non-White

students as “low-resource students” (Institutional Plan to Improve Cultural Diversity, 2015, para. 8). Out of 27056 undergraduates, and for the fall 2013 school year, thirty-three U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students were enrolled and for the fall 2014, there were thirty-six (0%) U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students (Student Demographics, 2014; Table 1. Undergraduate students, 2015). As of February 4, 2014, the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student achievement measures were not available for the UMCP location (IPEDS Data Feedback Report, Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment, 2014). The UMCP 2016 academic year reported 0.1% (thirty) U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students out of 28,472 undergraduate students (Race/Ethnicity, 2016, October). The expectation is that by the year 2018, an 8% increase in U.S. NA undergraduate student total enrollment would happen (Cultural Diversity Report, 2013). The report did not reference an increase in the U.S. AN student population.

The Organization

The organization referenced in the research study is the University of Maryland, College Park. The phenomenon of “organization development” is not just a matter of speculation. Contingency means that one thing depends upon other things or that an organization's transformation may be contingent upon the situation. What works in one sitting may not work in another setting. There may not be one best way. In short, contingency theory means, “it depends” (Draft, 1992). Many successful organizational change decisions have grown out of a crisis. Organizational theory is not a collection of facts, nor a matter of speculation, but a way of thinking about the organizational culture and climate (Burke & Noumair, 2015). The organizational theory postulated ways to see, analyze, and understand the UMCP more accurately and profoundly.

The culture of an organization and its environment had enormous control over how stakeholder management progress stated, George Courous (2014). Most stakeholders lacked professional development, which was needed to support cultural sensitivity to U.S. NA/AN students. Some departments within the larger organizational structure had their own culture that governed decision making to include a top-down hierarchical managerial style (Hanks, 2016). Stakeholders had hidden agendas, and lucidity was confirmed.

Change Agents

Change agents make a case for change and ensured whoever lead the discussion has a clear vision. Me, being the change agent for this study recommended benefits of change and an effective way of securing support (Rethink Organizational Development-Its Relevance in Modern Organizations: Embrace Transformative Change, 2015) in support of the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student and graduate at the UMCP. The word “change” (Fisher, 1996) was associated with unknown and unfavorable consequences for many years. People resist change in many ways hoping their resistance would encourage management to change their thoughts and notions (pp. 121-131).

As educational practices change, opportunities for the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students should change in a positive way (Hunt et al., 2008; Seidman, 2007). Some change agents lack support when an open system of shared values and beliefs are needed (Jahangir, 2004). Change and improved leadership skill sets, and strategic management strategies are required to develop internal capacity and external opportunities. New policy, procedures, primary goals, and operational practices are needed to ensure U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student’s academic and social growth. However, it is expected that there will be challenges for leaders and stakeholder managers working with

various generational beliefs; baby boomers (age 51-68), generation Xers (age 30-50), Y millennials age (11-29) and, possibly Elders (Bio, 2014). Generation Y U.S. NA/AN students and graduates, known as “*digital natives*” and not the older generation “*digital immigrants*” (Prensky, 2001), are grown-up millennials, trained, and “work from home” (WFH). The same digital natives have within the last 10 years reached an 80% approval rate. As of 2015, WFH captured two-thirds of U.S. workers telecommuting at least two days out of the month (Landrum, 2017).

The U.S. NA/AN student and graduate is known to appreciate and value being around family (Bryan, 2018). The new wave of *generation Ys* who were born between 1981-1999 and WFHs is a benefit in support of U.S. NA/AN graduates who are more productive when able to work and play around family and home (2018; Bolton, Parasutaman, Hoefnagels et al., 2013). Thinking outside of the box is entirely expected. “Unfortunately, at the UMCP managers have wanted more credit than deserved at the expense of others not being successful” (Chicquelo, Personal Communication, January 11, 2015).

Stakeholder theory

The concept of a stakeholder has been widely debated and could be confusing (Miles, 2012, [Abstract]). This research study relied on R. Edward Freeman (2016), who is known to be the father of *stakeholder theory*, who identified stakeholders to include decision-makers involved in the social, political, economic, and educational arenas and their connection to the company/organization. Some stakeholders lack skills needed to recommend and implement strategies to recruit, retain, engage, and graduate U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and others continuously. Some U.S. NA/AN

undergraduate students and graduate students lacked encouragement from stakeholders in support of their cultural pride in traditional forms while achieving their educational aspirations (Aldeman et al., 2010; Hunt et al., 2008). Student pride should be a continuous pride known and practiced before graduation and during post-graduation employment within the work sector.

Involvement theory

According to Hutley (n.d.), it was a fact that “students learn by the slogan, get involved” (Morgan, 2002, p. 1). Astin (1993), a noted scholar studied and researched student satisfaction. The *theory of involvement* affirmed the first-year college student satisfaction based on subjective (reflexivity) experiences. Alexander Astin’s 1999 theory supports involvement in concepts of input, environment, and outcome. Various educational systems knowingly deprived U.S. NA/AN students of a well-rounded college experience (Stone, 2011). Lack of academic and social support can diminish student programming to a halt (University of South Dakota (USD) Student Condemn Native Studies Program, 2013).

As reported in the UMCP, Cultural Diversity Report for 2015, U.S. NA/AN stakeholders were invisible and non-transparent to the U. S. NA/AN undergraduate student. For instance, the Fall/2012 UMCP report identified 17 NA/AN staffers, the Fall/2013 report identified 17 NA/AN staffers, and the Fall/2014 report identified 15 NA/AN staffers at the UMCP (Table 5. Staff, 2015). The NA/AN staffers did not raise concerns nor support U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and graduate current problematic situations at that time. There was a lack of urgency to challenge complacencies to foster challenging issues.

The admission office doors were open for U.S. NA/AN potential undergraduate student. However, being welcomed should be a main approach (Yazzie-Mintz, 2020). Stakeholders need to recognize that being a good leader in their field is to know the importance of retention strategies that support a warm and acceptable climate for the nontraditional students before their arrival (Johnson, Soldher, Leonard, Alvarez, Inkelas, Rowan-Kenyon, & Longerbeam, 2007). Most U.S. NA/AN students fit into the nontraditional and adult learner profile (Tierney, 1992).

For instance,

- The information should identify what the pre-college student experienced that caused academic and social disengagement before coming to college "input."
- High school students get a few visits to a college campus before leaving the protection of the home environment, family, and others that may love them.
- The appropriate time for other students, faculty, staff, managers, and other stakeholders to become engaged in U.S. NA/AN first-year student life should be upon arrival (Ten Transitions Stages of First-year Students, phases 1-3).

Reverend Sheldon Jackson was a believer that “teachers must try to educate [The Native] out of and away from the training of their home life” (Darnel & Hoem, n. d. c., para. 5). The college environment usually has “unwritten rules” (Zuker, n.d.) of college life. *Astin’s theory* did not consider a “cultural clash” which was an ethnic belief conflict and could have been evident while U.S. NA/AN students attend school (Portillo, 2015).

Program assessment

The support of a well-rounded college experience is not a priority for educational institutions that recruit and matriculate U.S. NA/AN students (Stone, 2011). The

“attitudes, beliefs, and values” (Theory Overview, n.d., para.1) influence the success of each student’s result. A student’s grade point averages and faculty readiness should be measurable as well (Assessing Student Engagement, 2015; Hunt, 2003).

The previous American Indian Student Union (AISU) Advisor at the UMCP implemented several educational and social programs that enhanced diversity and inclusion for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students during the 2013-14 academic year. Because of managerial and leadership decisions, which were beyond the advisor's control and the lack of interest in the academic and social ramifications and disappointments experienced by U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students, the 7th and 8th Annual NA Symposium and Poster Competition was canceled for the second year. The only signature program mentioned in the 2013 Cultural Diversity report at the UMCP was the 6th Annual NA Symposium and Poster Competition (The Office of Multi-ethnic Student Education, 2013). There were several other successful programs implemented in previous years.

The 2013 UMCP Cultural Diversity Report only provided high marks to African American and Hispanics’ (Latinx) programming success. The undergraduate U.S. NA/AN program assessment results lacked documentation in the report (Multicultural Involvement and Community Advocacy [MICA], 2013b; Nyumburu Cultural Center, 2013; Office of Multicultural Student Education [OMSE], 2013; Office of Diversity Education & Compliance [ODEC], 2013; Student Success Initiative, 2013; The David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans, 2013). The Multicultural Involvement and Community Advocacy (MICA) department stakeholder managers communicated that their staff-initiated programming opportunities

with the AISU, but not at the same volume as the Office of Multi-ethnic Student Education (OMSE) (Multicultural Involvement and Community Advocacy [MICA], 2013a). The MICA office and other academic units contributed small amounts of financial support for OMSE undergraduate U.S. NA/AN student events. However, none of the stakeholders offered structured program planning processes.

The 2016-17 Institutional programs in the Cultural Diversity Annual Progress Report, UMCP assessment for most programs, under MICA focused on social identity, public speaking, and leadership. Nowhere in the report was an assessment of U.S. NA/AN student retention strategies and workplace readiness. The office of Undergraduate Admissions reported “American Indian and Alaska Native students increased from 11 to 15” in the graduate schools to indicate some recruitment (Table 1: Increase Representation: Data to Demonstrate Where Progress has been Achieved/Indicators of Success, 2016-2017). The programs planned and implemented in the Office of Multi-ethnic Student Education (OMSE) targeted Black and Latino (Latinx) male undergraduate students and women of color. The only reference to American Indians (this research study reference U.S. NA) was students who visited the office for tutoring, which was about 0.25%. The MICA office implemented “39 programs for APA Heritage Month, 24 for Black His-story Month, 42 for Latino (Latinx) Heritage Month, thirty-five for Pride Month, and only 4 programs for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students (Table 1: Increase Representation: Data to Demonstrate Where Progress has been Achieved/Indicators of Success, 2016-2017).

The UMCP Incentive Awards Program, which recruited Baltimore City and Prince George’s County MD inner-city Black high school students indicated some

reference to employment and the community (Table 1: Increase Representation: Areas Where Continuous Improvement is Needed, 2016-2017). The Admissions office at the UMCP was not eager to recruit U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students from working as well as poverty-stricken families (College Profile, 2015).

Hampton (2009a) indicated that the UMCP planned to cancel the only 2 Native American (NA) courses taught during the academic year 2009 because of budget cuts. An U.S. NA student-working group established in 2010 was instrumental in drafting a UMCP proposal and curricula for a minor in American Indian Studies. The written plan presented to the former Provost for Academic Affairs and his team failed implementation before the Provost left the university in 2011. Although classes were re-instated with 25% NA content in 2012, U.S. NA students as a group were not encouraged to unite and challenge the administration (Course work in Native American studies, 2012). *The Diamondback*, which was a student-written newspaper released a statement on the 26 of November 2013 highlighting the working group would resume the challenge during the spring semester, 2013, which did not happen (List, 2013). Members of student groups at the UMCP demanded the same request for a minor during the 2016 academic year (For the American Indian Student Community, 2016). Stakeholder management supported the continuation of inadequate coursework and administrative support, and a lack of student recruitment (Adelman et al., 2013). Lack of academic and social support diminished programs to a halt (University of South Dakota (USD) Student Condemn Native Studies Program, 2013).

In the year 2016, the same issues remained a concern for students. On Monday, December 12, 2016, an article in *The Diamondback* (student newspaper) highlighted

student demands. A letter dated November 2016 and endorsed by 25 UMCP student groups to include the American Indian Student Union was sent to UMCP administrators, which outlined sixty-four demands for new and enhanced programs and resources for marginalized students attending the university (*The Diamondback*, 2016). The groups recommended some of the same concerns mentioned decades ago for U.S. NA/AN students. For instance, NA/AN tribes that developed the land presently occupied by the university should be honored each year at an appropriate time. A minor in Indigenous studies, and additional funding for the AISU and administrative offices to support recruitment, programming, and scholarships for high school and college U.S. NA/AN students (For the American Indian Student Community, 2016) is needed.

The same student felt alienated and threatened by the learning environment, thus not having a good experience while in college (Huffman, 2001a; Hunt et. al., 2008). Although the 25 student group demands were appreciated, the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate non-assimilated student continued to have trouble blending into the traditional setting on campus. Although in 2013-14 President of the American Indian Student Union (AISU) at the UMCP said that he assimilated because the “Native American Indian community has never done anything for me although I identify with my tribal affiliation when I go home.” (J. Cummings, Personal Communication, October 9, 2013)

In 2016, it was reported that 16 classes were taught under the UMCP American Studies department, and a proposal for a minor was being considered. However, after reviewing the list of 16 classes with at least 25% NA content, the only class that came close to issues affecting NA/AN student’s and graduate’s employability after graduation

was the Sociology of Race Relations: Analysis of Race-related Issues class with a primary focus on American society. The class description highlighted, “historical emergence, development, and institutionalization of racism; the impact of racism on its victims; and racially-based conflict” (Course work in Native American studies, 2012). However, there was no information about a Native American studies program on the UMCP website. Under the American Studies program heading of diversity and identity, there appeared to be 1 NA 3 credit hour course; “*Perspectives on Identity and Culture: Introduction to Native American Cultures of the United States*” which highlighted American Indian peoples culture experienced in the U.S. of America (Diversity and identity, 2019).

Academic and social support

The U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student should have an opportunity to engage in socio-cultural student-based organizations. Engagement enhances academic success (Harrington & Hunt, 2010; Moses & Banh, 2010). Social inclusion takes on the form of involvement in activities that support the educational institution (Belgarde et al., 2007; Feldman, 2005; Tinto, 1975). However, Brint (et al., 2012a) supported the notion that the student should avoid alternative involvement consisting of extra-curricular activities (social integration), which resulted in social condemnation.

Some programs planned and implemented in support of U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students at the UMCP did not include recommendations received from elders, spiritual leaders, family members, and other NA/AN Natives in the surrounding communities”. (Fred Nordhorn, Elder, Advisor to the American Indian Student Union, University of Maryland, Personal Communication, October 20, 2014).

There have been several Native Nations represented by U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students attending the UMCP over many academic school years. Nevertheless, the planners did not consider inter-tribal diversity and inclusion programming that most tribes/villages celebrate and value. The lack of support from Elders and other Natives could be more reasons to support Crazy Bull (2013), who voiced that North Americans believed Native Americans only understand the “3 Fs” which are “food, fun, and fashion” (p. 1). The UMCP invited all undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to attend conferences, service-learning opportunities, study abroad trips, alternative break getaways, workshops, forums, town hall meetings, and open dialogue sessions in support of retention, engagement, and employability. The U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student and graduate was not encouraged and motivated to take advantage of academic and social opportunities and involvement in extra-curriculum activities.

I was a stakeholder in the Office of Multi-ethnic Student Education (OMSE) at the UMCP. I was the same stakeholder that reorganized the AISU in 1990. Unfortunately, for the organization, the fall 2014 semester started with serious issues and challenges.

There were opportunities for U.S. NA/AN, undergraduate students, to engage in and enhance their leadership and managerial/leadership skill sets. For instance, being a member of the American Indian Student Union (AISU). Unfortunately, U.S. NA undergraduate students were unofficially serving in leadership positions as the President and Vice President of the AISU and failed to contact other members before implementing major decisions and changes. Native American and Alaskan Native Elders, the AISU advisor and other student members concluded that improper protocol, unacceptable

behavior, false statements, and lack of loyalty to the organization were evident. Trust and leadership from the 2 self-selected officers were unacceptable. (JayWinter Nightwolf, Elder, Personal Communication, October 22, 2014)

In the fall of 2018, after having a conversation with the then Coordinator for the AISU at the UMCP who expressed to remain anonymous, mentioned there were only ten active members of the organization. Decisions made by the OMSE director, and the AISU Executive Board (made up of two members) decided (fall, 2014) to move the organization advisory responsibilities to a non-Native staff person in another unit on campus was questionable. The lack of supportive operational practices and professional leadership for the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student and graduate forced the cancellation of academic and social programming.

The Office that managed the academic and social outcomes for U.S. NA/AN students created an office atmosphere that canceled U.S. NA/AN long-standing programming for the 2014/15 academic year. Other administrative decisions resulted in the U.S. NA/AN advisor to retire (Fred Nordhorn, Elder, Personal Communication, October 20, 2014). The outcome of situations supported facts that stakeholder managers at the UMCP lack planning and control processes to include “tracking what actually happens against what was planned to happen” in support of U.S. NA/AN student academic and social wellbeing (General, n.d., para, 3).

A Gap in the Literature

A gap in literature reviews explored the notion that most stakeholder managers and other staff do not explore current policy and procedures in support of retention strategies and employability of U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students at the UMCP. Some

themes not shared with U.S. NA/AN students and graduates found in multidisciplinary databases and literature reviews could support personal and social issues that could arise in the workplace. Some identified themes could affect racial and cultural identity and academic and leadership development.

Academic and social integration, which supports student persistence, is missing for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students in support of shrinking the disengagement gap (Rendon, Jalomo et al., 2014). Native American/Alaskan Native U.S. (NA/AN) undergraduate students usually attend colleges and universities where there is a small enrollment of U.S. NA/AN students (Pember, 2012). Academic and social integration supports student persistence and helps shrink the disengagement gap (Rendon, Jalomo et al., 2014).

A knowledge gap caused by small samplings limits comparative analysis and data reporting. Accurate reporting of statistical data remains a national issue for the Native American and Alaskan Native U.S. student population (Adelman et al., 2013; Factsheets, 2020; Faircloth et al., 2010; Hunt et al., 2008), which hinders an overall evaluation of the academic and social assessment of engagement, retention strategies, and employability after graduation.

In 2000, the U.S NA/AN labor force participation rate was 59.6%. In 2017, the labor force participation rate dropped 4% to 55.6%. The same year, 7.8% of U.S. NA/ANs were unemployed (Labor market trends for American Indian and Alaska Natives, 2000-17, 2018, p. 1). The current Central Population Survey reported that of the 2.9 million U.S. NA/ANs, there was a 6.6 % unemployment rate and the lowest

workforce rate of the total population since 2013 (American Indian and Alaska Natives in the U.S. labor force, 2019).

As stated previously, the actual figures and statistics about U.S. NA/AN. data made public are questionable. The success of the organization depends on integration. The organization's vision and goals must be clear (Covey, 2007). Stakeholders working with U.S. NA/AN. students and graduates who lack exposure and experience, communication skill sets, and transparency in goal settings produce unfavorable objectives, which results in unfavorable outcomes (Sabri et al., 2013c; Sabri et al., 2013a). The significance of addressing hidden themes that affect retention and employability for U.S. NA/AN students and graduates was the rationale for this research study.

Summary and Conclusions

American Indian and Alaska Native U.S. (NA/AN) student preparation for college, retention, and being employable after graduation needs overhauling, which continues to be a historical issue. The U.S. NA/AN student is as capable as any other student to do well in college. This research study got to the root of best practices and academic and social support strategies needed to enhance the U.S. NA/AN student's retention, engagement, workforce readiness, and employability after graduation. The scholarly research question was: *How were some U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native undergraduate students attending public universities retained to enhance employment after graduation?* The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and identify strategies to improved students' employment

pathways after graduation. The management problem I studied was the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation. The general management problem looked at how the lack of retention strategies affected U.S. Native American/Alaskan Native students' employability after graduation.

The use of multidisciplinary databases in search of the literature text review ensured that the use of qualitative methodology and data analyses would not be redundant (Bryman, 2015). The form of inquiry used search terms, conceptual framework analysis, historical interpretations, theoretical models, policies, and other data. Themes that spark evidence of lack of retention for U.S. NA/AN students were not generalized, wide spread or everyday expressions. National assessment results in various databases did not report accurate academic and social performances for the U.S. NA/AN student (Gentry & Fugate, 2012; Larimore & McClellan, 2005).

There are various theoretical concepts and models (attachment, involvement, stakeholder hierarchy of needs theories, the key to employment model, and theory X, Y, and Z discussed. Theoretical concepts and models added to the understanding of what caused a lack of interest in academic and social involvement in various programs for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and graduates. Theories and models added some understanding of workforce readiness and employability skill sets. Most stakeholders did not demonstrate concerned philosophies toward advancing the academic and social success of enrolled U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students (Lawson & Lawson, 2013a).

Educators and others must be aware that a productive relationship with U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and graduates should be required just as much as a

relationship with other student identities (Hunt et al., 2008; Kamau, 2012). In support of understanding this research study's comprehension, transparent conceptual terms were listed to enhanced understanding of reading, some situations, and research data. Chapter 3 will explore the research methodology used to select participants, the interview protocol, the data collection, and data analysis procedures that support phenomena.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and identify strategies to improved students' employment pathways after graduation. The management problem I studied was the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation. The general management problem was how that lack of retention strategies affected U.S. Native American/Alaskan Native students' employability after graduation. To identify challenges, myths, concerns, and barriers that hinder undergraduate and graduate U.S. NA/AN students at the UMCP that support workforce readiness, and employability after graduation, Chapter 3 used a nondescriptive approach. A qualitative research approach was the overarching framework for the study (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). The approach helped analyze and interpret unstructured raw textual data, identify different perspectives, and evaluated a wider scope of opinions and themes that supported retention strategies and employability after graduation for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students and graduates from a lived experience. The approach also allowed me to create ways of extracting and understanding the U.S. NA/AN students' disengaged college experience. A phenomenological design supported inquiry and summary.

Research Questions

The research question for the research study was: *How were some U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native undergraduate students attending public universities retained to enhance employment after graduation?*

The overarching research question, two research questions, and 5 questionnaire questions guided the study.

Overarching Question: What retention strategies used at public universities affect U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native undergraduate students' employment after graduation?

RQ1: How do U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native undergraduate students' heritage and culture influence retention strategies at the University of Maryland that support employment after graduation?

RQ2: What retention strategies used at the University of Maryland affect U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native undergraduate students' ability to secure a job after graduation?

Because of a diverse cultural background for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students at the research sites, retention strategies varied to enhance academic and social success. It was questionable if workforce readiness skills were taught before graduation to undergraduate students or even considered a stakeholder's priority to ensure employability (Cole & Tibby, 2013; Pool & Sewell, 2007).

- *Retention:* in a university setting retain students who return and who are retained each semester or quarter, a full-time student usually enrolled for 4 years, and usually graduate within or around the 4-year enrollment (College Student Retention, n.d.).
- *Employability:* getting and keeping a job. Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding, and personal attributes that make a person

more likely to choose and secure an occupation in which they can be satisfied and successful (Pool & Sewell, 2007).

- *Disengagement*: the lack of obligation and involvement in academic and social interaction with others that may support a well-rounded experience (Brint & Cantwell, n.d., as cited in Maloshonok 2014).

Until 1997, disengagement was not an important issue among college students.

Kurt Wiesenfield, who taught at Georgia Tech stated in 1996 that students were becoming lazy and not interested in learning through hard work and believed a “chance to learn” was “less than worthless” (Christman, 2014, para. 4). Student disengagement results indicated stakeholders were not using retention strategies based on U.S. NA/AN student needs to support workforce readiness after graduation according to Christman (2014).

Research Design and Rationale

Social phenomena are things that exercise an external influence on people.

Phenomenological research seeks to explore and addresses the question of what or how, and not why (Gray, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1989; Using good qualitative wording for these questions, 2011) during this research study. The phenomena of interest and purposeful sampling supported access to U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students (Gledhill et al., n.d.). Based on these facts, the phenomenological research design supported the desired outcome and narrative discussion of the study.

A phenomenological research approach lined up with a knowledge framework for human science, and grounded theory research favored a natural science with traditional theory construction. Natural science research was the leader in knowledge-based science

for an extended period (Ingthorsson, 2013). In comparison to phenomenological research design and *grounded theory* as a paradigm of inquiry, the latter omitted the importance of a research question linked to the retention and employability phenomena during the beginning of the research with participants. Both approaches were considered exploratory which permitted the use of inductive reasoning during raw data analysis (Osborne, 1994). Inductive reasoning allowed the breakdown of raw textual data that came from identified themes. *Grounded theory*, based on theoretical development (Egan, 2002) and a systematic approach highlighted deductive reasoning (Burney, 2008). The deductive reasoning (objective) approach was top-down (rule-driven) which would have supported the general and concluded with specialized guidelines and procedures (p. 7; Hird, 2015). The interpretation of the data and final analysis would have been quite different if a grounded theoretical approach had been the only approach used (Hird, 2015; Thomas, 2003).

As science became more aggressive, a "*humanistic approach*" evolved. In recent years, humanistic interest has taken a lead on its own in the field of science by embracing the use of qualitative research methodology and human discovery. Various researchers believed that acquired knowledge from the study of the human experience would be credible, and not necessarily measured, or weighed (Lane & Newman et al., 2006). I examined in-depth, productive, and meaningful information from lived experiences shared by Native American (NA) participants. During the investigation, I did not employ data triangulation; the process of comparing data from stakeholders and U. S. NA/AN undergraduate students as participants. This study had a student-only focus.

There was a consideration for a case study research approach. However, a case study uses a variety of research techniques (Yin, 2009) and a qualitative or quantitative approach with the investigator relying on an individual, a group, or an event's experience ("Difference Between," 2015). A phenomenological design was used to collect retention strategies that should have supported a well-rounded university experience and supportive issues that enhanced employability after graduation. The design was believed to be more credible and transferable in support of the conceptual frameworks' analysis and narrative discussion than triangulation and grounded theory.

Role of the Researcher

During this research study, I served as the researcher, interviewer, and transcriber (names used interchangeably) in this qualitative inquiry (Klooper, 2008), [Abstract]). I developed a framework based on the problem statement and a scholarly research question for the qualitative research study (Klooper, 2008, [Abstract]). I selected the method of interview and interview sites and selected potential and participants approved for the study (Purposive Sampling, 2015). The selected Native American participants had experienced academic and social disengagement while matriculating at the University of Maryland research sites. I was not able to identify or select any U.S. AN potential student and graduate participants for this study.

Methodology

The term methodology referred to the way I conducted the study, including how the data collection was approached and data analysis (Research Methods, n.d.). The purpose, problem, and assumptions for the study assisted with the selection of the method. Qualitative and quantitative were the primary data collection methods

considered. Different methodologies were selected for both the positivist who uses an “objective approach that relies on facts and quantitative data” (Research Philosophy, n.d., para. 1) and the phenomenologist who explore “subjective human interests and focuses on meanings rather than hard data” (Research Philosophy, n.d., para, 1) since different answers are needed for different types of problems.

Qualitative Design

A qualitative research methodology (exploratory and subjective) as mentioned in Chapter 2 investigated empirical data and identified, described, and explored themes (Crosby, 2011) connected to retention strategies and employability. By using an inductive approach (Patton, 1990) the study encouraged narrowing raw textual data into possible conceptual concepts and themes that caused concern of phenomena (Hird, 2015). Jon Hird (2015) mentioned that inductive reasoning used a bottom-up approach (rule-discovery) which moved toward general themes, observations, and conclusions. The sample size was small (Defranzo, 2011). The qualitative method of inquiring included direct observations and unstructured interviewing which searched for descriptive data. During a direct observation, I spent an enormous amount of time watching participants. Accordingly, I became a part of the culture and the environment (McLeod, 2017).

The theoretical perspective was phenomenological (interpretive) which supported the natural understanding of social phenomena, how the phenomena were experienced, and what people (humans) perceived it to be (Qualitative vs Quantitative Research, 2012). An interpretive paradigm (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007) along with a purposeful sampling design helped select the unit of analysis (Purposeful Sampling, 2015N). An inductive approach supported the identification of patterns and themes of analysis from

unstructured raw textual data rather than themes identified before the study was implemented (Hird, 2015; Woods, 2006). It was noted that inductive reasoning was recognized in scientific method when forming hypotheses and theories (Bradford, 2017, para. 5).

Quantitative Design

The natural science method (quantitative) used the positivist approach. Positivists seek facts or causes of phenomena apart from the subjective states of individuals. The quantitative method's design was gradually determined and presented during the actual research process (Qualitative vs Quantitative Research, 2012). Quantitative data collection methods included various forms of surveys – on-line and paper surveys, questionnaires, inventory, face-to-face interviews, observations, and demography that produced percentages or statistical analysis as data which was usually unbiased (McLeod, 2017; Quantitative Research, 2012). The scientific method used deduction to test hypotheses and theories. In other words, "In deductive inference, we hold a theory, and based on it we make a prediction of its consequences" (Bradford, 2017, para, 1). Quantitative Research used measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research. Quantitative data collection methods are structured more so than qualitative data collection methods. However, "deductive reasoning is allowed to apply theories to specific situations" (Bradford, 2017, para. 5).

Procedures for Participant Recruitment and Data Collection

Description of Research Sites

University of Maryland College Park/Research Site 1

An official request to obtain a list of sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate U.S. NA/AN students was presented to the Legal Office at the UMCP after the Walden University Institutional Review Board's (IRB) approval. A "*Letter of Cooperation*" was written by General Counsel, which gave the approval for research at the UMCP and a letter from the Vice President's office for Research and the IRB at UMBC. The letters were forwarded to the IRB office at Walden University. After Walden IRB approval, permission to receive the business cases was requested and retrieved from the office of the Registrar at both research sites. The student lists were not public records. Extreme measures were taken to keep the official list confidential.

I received permission to access the official lists of potential participants. All computer-generated files were password-protected to eliminate tapering. All hard copies of U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student and graduate files and other documents remained in a locked file when not in use. All passwords and keys were retrieved after each section of inquiry. I will destroy all personal information retrieved from the registrar and shred all hard copies 5 years after completion of dissertation process. Deletion of all emails and text messages and tape recordings will be erased as well after 5 years of protection. Each participant who completed the interview process received by mail a "*Certificate of Appreciation*" as an expression of gratitude. Each participant who completed the interview process received a summary of the research study's results via email.

Student population. The UMCP had no U.S. NA/AN student enrollment for the fall 2009 year. The fall 2013 had an enrollment of 33 (0.1%), fall 2014, 36 (0.1%), fall 2015, 30 (0.1%) (Table 4 Students: University of Maryland, College Park, 2016-2017). The fall 2016 annual survey of the university reported out that the College Park population was 26,350 full-time undergraduate students and 95.0% of first-year students returning. Of the enrolled 2016 student population, 0.1% (30) was U.S. AN (College Profile Data, 2016). The fall 2017 profile for the fall full-time undergraduate student population was 27,708 (92.8%), and of the total population, 7,621 (25.5%) are first-year students. The population for the fall 2017 semester remains 0.1% (28) full-time undergraduate U.S. NA/AN students (UMD Undergraduate Student Profile, 2017, October). The 2018 fall enrollment was 24 male and 18 female U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students (Statewide headcount enrollment gender by ethnicity, 2018).

Faculty (U.S. NA/AN), tenured on track at the UMCP was fall, 2009, 2 males (0.1%), fall, 2013 to fall, 2015, 1 male (0.1%), and fall, 2016, 1 male, 1 female (0.1%); Table 5: Faculty UM, CP, 2016-2017).

University of Maryland Baltimore County/Research Site 2

The University of Maryland in Baltimore County (UMBC), Research Site 2 (RS2) Maryland is a PWI. The university is known as an ‘honor university’ and was founded in 1966. The UMBC is a residential campus and seats on 500 acres setting in suburban Maryland in the heart of the nation’s political center, 10 minutes from Baltimore and 30 minutes from Washington, District of Columbia. The UMBC was cited as “the #1 up-and-coming "school to watch" and #6 in undergraduate teaching at national universities, and one of the top 5 "most innovated schools" in the nation” (School mission

and unique qualities, 2019). The UMBC had two live mascots. One named Campus Sam and one named Gritty. In 2007, True Grit revealed he had a sister, Trudy Gritty, at a volleyball pep rally. Both mascots were Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, the state dog of Maryland. The UMBC's costumed mascot has been identified as True Grit and Fever. The mascot known as the True Grit Retriever is in front of the Retriever Activities Center on the UMBC campus.

A recent research outcome concluded that alcoholism among the U.S. NA/AN community was another stereotype that U.S. NA/ANs are known to drink obsessively and much more than any other ethnic group. Social epidemiologists have indicated that “it can affect everything from job prospects to the kind of diagnosis a doctor gives” (Bezruczyk, 2019). The White House in Washington, D.C. honored the Code Talkers from 33 tribes during a Gold Medal Ceremony held November 20, 2013. While Native American honorees were seated, the close captured screen displayed in full view of the word, “*Alcoholic*”. Michael Steel, press spokesman apologized for the close-captured company who were employed by the U.S. capital to highlight the Code Talkers (Schilling, 2019). As I stated, “What a racist; de-humanizing things that happened” (Chicquelo, Personal Communication, 2019). “Alcohol is permitted for students of legal age at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County” which was an interesting statement on the UMBC website (Campus services, 2019). The undergraduate students at RS2 average age was 18-21 (50.3%) for the 2018-19 academic year (What is the age of everyone at this school? 2019). Historically, many tribes across the Americas fermented fruits and plants before being introduced to stronger fermented drinks by English and Spanish colonialists. Moreover, multiple Native cultures had long histories of using

mind-altering substances (such as peyote and ayahuasca) in certain rituals (May 1994). However, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health reported that “nearly 9.2% of NAs ages 12 and older were current heavy alcohol users, the highest rate of any ethnic group” (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2015).

I had no verbal contact with any of the undergraduate or recent graduates from the UMBC, below are some comments from students highlighted from the UMBC User Reviews and Rating sheet, 2019. “You’re looking to get an education and have a social life don’t come here. The class size for the 101 classes for STEM majors is huge. You must teach yourself everything. Exactly why I’m transferring to Towson” (TUgang, January 2019). At the UMBC (RS2) there were “19 students for every instructional faculty member, ranks among the lowest in comparison to the national average of 14:1” (Student to faculty ratio is well below average, 2019).

Student population. For the 2017-18 academic year, at the UMBC, the total enrollment was 13,662 students whereas 11,234 undergraduates include 7,446 male and 6,216 female students. There were 2,428 in graduate programs. (Student population at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, [UMBC]2018). The U.S. NA population was reported as 18 men and 10 women undergraduate students. Whereas the UMBC admissions facts stated, the enrollment for 2018 was 13,767 to include 11,260 first-year undergraduate students. The 48% ethnic breakdown identified African American (17.2%), Asian American (19.6%), Hispanic (7.1%), and other (4.7%). There was no mention of a U.S. NA/AN student population (Undergraduate admissions, 2019). The NA faculty consisted of 1 person who was a visiting professor in the department of American Studies. The U.S. NA student undergraduate population at the UMBC campus for the fall

2015-16 academic school year started with 16 male and 12 female U.S. NA students. The fall 2016-17 academic years started with 16 male and 10 female U.S. NA students. There were 13 male and 14 female U.S. NA/AN students for the 2017-2018 academic years compared to the 24 male and 18 female U.S. NA undergraduate students at UMCP (Statewide headcount enrollment gender by ethnicity, 2019). The average freshman retention rate, an indicator of student satisfaction, was 88% for the 2017-2018 academic years (Academic life, 2019). The UMBC had a similar enrollment number of U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students as compared to the UMCP.

The UMBC Human Research Protection Program Human Subject Research at UMBC Institutional Review Board was a community partner. It was a challenge to connect with an office for direction through the UMBC directory when attempts were made to identify a link for IRB information failed. After connecting with the UMBC Vice President for Research, I received IRB requirements to conduct the research on the campus. The appropriate documents were sent to UMBC management by utilizing the IRB process with expectations of management understanding the purpose of the research study and granting approval to conduct the study.

I could not confirm if the organizational structure at the UMBC which is referred to as research site 2 (RS2) showed evidence that stakeholder managers, faculty, staff, students, and community advocates did not have a desire and responsibility to honor the same goals and strive for accountability and success (McLaughlin, n.d.) for U.S. NA/AN students. Further, I could not confirm that change within the UMBC organization for the U.S. NA/AN students was needed. However, I believed that review of raw textual data from participants would indicate whether RS2 was worthy of inquiry. To confirm the

approval to conduct the research at the UMBC, I requested a “*Letter of Cooperation*” be forwarded to the Walden University IRB office. After approval to conduct the research study, the request for participant selection proceeded.

Potential Participant Selection

The University of Maryland College Park referred to as research site 1 (RS1) and the University of Maryland Baltimore County referred to as research site 2 (RS2) defined the boundaries for the study to include 6 self-identified U.S. Native American/ sophomore, junior and senior undergraduates, and recent graduates. Although I solicited for U.S. AN student participation, no one showed an interest. Potential participants were exposed to, learned, and experienced retention strategies not supportive of U.S. NA engagement, retention, and employment after graduation. Socialization for U.S. NA students into the climate of the UMCP begins during the first academic year. Both research sites encouraged students to self-select their origin and ethnic identity. The U.S. NA participants self-identified their ethnic identity and named their tribal affiliation. The results appear in the data analysis as an identifier. However, tribal affiliations remained irrelevant during this research study (Guion, Diehi, & McDonald, 2012).

Student/Graduate Not Eligible for the Study

First-year (*freshmen*) students were exempt from this study based on the first-year academic demands (Guillory et al., 2008; Milsom, 2015; Reeves, 2006; A New Social Science, 2014). The participants were expected to have an academic and social connection with stakeholder managers and other students by the second year (See Reeves, 2006). Not completing one academic year on campus or not being aware of personal, academic, or social and environmental provocations that may be challenging

are reasons for disqualification of first-year students for this study. A participant classified as a full-time student “stayer” and not a “slowdown” known as a student “going from stayer to taking a few courses” (Bean, n.d., para. 2) was eligible to participate in the study. However, none were identified or volunteered for the research study. A student who had terminated college because of unforeseen reasons, for instance, financial aid or family issues, and was referred to as “*stop-outs*” (Bean, n.d., para. 2) and was eligible for the study with documented proof of withdrawal. A transfer and stop-out U.S. NA undergraduate student may have experienced issues with phenomena. However, the experience with the phenomena must have taken place and confirmed at one of the research sites to become eligible to participate in the study.

Credentials

I did not:

- require a potential Native American/ participant to have an official tribal membership card,
- require a potential Native American/ participant to have or presently live on a Native American reservation, or in an Alaskan Native village before attending the university,
- attempt to obtain information from stakeholders at the University of Maryland – College Park and Baltimore County who may have a personal contact with a potential Native American participant, nor
- a potential Native American participant that does not identify as a sophomore, junior or senior undergraduate Native American student or recent U.S. Native American/Alaskan Native graduate from the University of Maryland College

Park and Baltimore County.

Rationale for selection of participants was based on the small enrollment number of undergraduate U.S. NA/AN students (Pember, 2012) at the UMCP. Because of the small enrollment number of undergraduates at the research site, I eventually realized that it was unreasonable to expect 10 to 15 potential participants to identify as U.S. NA/AN and give trustworthy data (Carney, 1999a; Green & Thorogood, 2009; Harrington & Harrington, 2012). Upon approval of a change in procedures approved by the dissertation committee, and Walden IRB, the UMBC was approved the second research site for this study.

Some scholars believed in greater numbers. In contrast, Morse (2008) endorsed the notion that a broad sampling may affect the legitimacy of the data and explanation. After continued attempts to identify 10 to 15 potential participants who met the requirements to participate in the study from UMCP and UMBC failed, I had no other option than to move on with 6 U.S. NA potential participants who were eager to support the goals and objectives of the study. Working with a sample number of participants yielding more concrete raw textual data than working with a large pool of participants and retrieving irrelevant information could have had an enormous result in saturation (Mason, 2010). Mason (2010) concluded that most researchers prefer sampling in multiples of 10; however, reasons may need theorization.

Sampling

Purposeful sampling, also known as judgmental sampling (Polkinghorne, 2005) is a nonprobability-based sampling method in phenomenological design, and I choose the intended interview site and participants (Purposive Sampling, 2015). An interpretive

paradigm (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007) along with a purposeful sampling design helped me select the unit of analysis (Purposeful Sampling, 2015N). I identified patterns and themes in the raw textual data using an inductive approach. I did not want prior themes identified by prior researchers to jeopardize the credibility of the study (Hird, 2015; Woods, 2006). In contrast, grounded theory sampling would have allowed sampling of other U.S. NA potential participants, however, a grounded theory did not support participant storytelling when it comes to factionalism.

Nonprobability Based Sampling. This sampling supported the selection of potential U.S. NA participants who were available and easily accessible. However, nonprobability-based sampling did not guarantee the best possible selection of U.S. NA potential participant profiles nor confidence intervals, and margins of error (What is NonProbability Sampling? 2015).

Snowball Sampling. A nonprobability sampling method and a purposeful sampling technique are both called snowball sampling. Cold-calling and referral sampling referenced purposeful sampling along with chain sampling, chain-referral sampling (Glen, 2014). The selected U.S. AN participant had the opportunity to identify other potential U.S. NA/ANS. volunteers for the study (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007) if the participant numbers dropped below the expected number of participants for this research study. There was stratus' (male or female, tribes, clans) which were subgroups identified among U.S. NAs living in the U.S. Stratus did not affect the sampling criteria nor data analysis because the ethnic identity of the U.S. NA participants was not a deciding factor for participation in this research study.

Participant Selection

Notification of the study went out to all potential participants via email or hard copy (snail mail) to include a copy of the introduction letter and informed consent form. Of all potential participants contacted, 6 U.S. N.A participants registered for the study by filling out a copy of the informed consent form. I received via email the signed informed consent form: potential participant checked (yes) to verify willingness to take part in the research study.

Informed Consent

Before participant involvement in the study, each potential NA participant was required to read the informed consent form, ask questions, and affix their checkmark (yes) or (no) indicating they understood their rights and responsibilities before signing the form. The informed consent form outlined all pertinent information necessary for NA potential participants' understanding of the research study (Walden University, Institutional Review Board for Ethical Standards in Research, Sample Consent forms for Adults [for participants over 18], 2013). The potential participant's informed consent form underlined the importance of open dialogue, truthfulness, and confidentiality between the interviewer and participants (Adelman et al., 2013; Woods, 2006). The informed consent form gave reasons for obtaining and processing the use of unstructured raw textual data (URTD), and what perceived benefit would come out of the study. Participants could return their informed consent form through the U.S. mail, hand delivery, or electronically through email before the interview began.

Each participant had the option of interviewing onsite at UMCP and UMBC or by Skype method. There was an open space on the informed consent form for the participant

to submit a time zone for the region of their country to support scheduling the skype interview. Other arrangements were possible if potential participants were not available for the pre-selected day and time slot. The letter welcomed and at the same time, thanked the U. S. NA participant for their interest and commitment to the study. Within 2 week, selected U.S. NA participants received an electronic message informing them of the actual interview pre-selected date, time slots, and location of the interview site or skype schedule. There was no pressure to participate.

Each U.S. NA participant was informed and understood that all answers to the overarching question, research questions, and questionnaire questions would be confidential, audio recorded, protected, and always stored under lock and key during the research interview session, after the research study is completed, and up to 5 years of storage. After which, all documents would be shredded, and recordings deleted. A potential participant who declined to check yes and/or sign the informed consent form and refused to agree to the confidentiality agreement form faced exclusion from partaking in the research study. I served as the protector of potential and selected participants involvement and security during this research study.

Interview

On-Site

The approved onsite campus interview sites, RS1 and RS2 were secure and safe for face-to-face interviews and fitted the comfort and convenience of the U.S. NA participants. The on-campus interview sites were assessed to ensure no environmental barriers; for instance, quiet, accessible entries, bathrooms, ramps were conveniently available if needed, and secure for confidentiality.

Voice-over-Internet Protocol Technology

Since some participants lived in different regions of the country, I used the audio and video Skype-to-Skype Internet-based method for interviews (face-to-face online). Skype Internet-based methods of communication had become a prime form of access to participants. No boundaries, therefore, limited my ability to reach potential participants in different regions of the country and abroad, and participants were not required to travel/walk and meet at a certain place at a certain time for the interview (Rowley, 2012). Time spent traveling to another location for the interview was the consumption of valuable time (Lo Iacono et al., 2016). No venue was needed for the interview, which caused less concern for logistical and financial issues. Using Skype, the interviews were conducted in any location that was quiet, comfortable, financially affordable, and safe for the participants. The MP3 Skype Recorder was recommended because it:

- had automatic/manual recording capabilities,
- able to set it to start recording calls automatically,
- had click button and record button to record call manually (great for consent during the interview),
- recorded the interviewer and the interviewee on separate stereo tracks, and
- easily integrated with Skype Conference recording (Isaac, 2014).

Each participant was informed of the “Tutorial – How to Record Research Interview Conducted via Skype” sited at: <https://weloty.com> prior to scheduled interview. Being able to identify participants in other locations in the world using a free download tool

added more validity and accountability to the study (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013; Saumure & Given, 2015).

Epoch and Bracketing

Bracketing enhances qualitative research methodology and a phenomenological design and references mapping and phenomenological reduction. Bracketing is a pre-interview process to retrieve past experiences from the interviewer. Process bracketing consists of:

- “arranging a pre-interview with the Native American/Alaskan Native U.S. participant(s), individually,
- an explanation for an informal pre-interview intended to help explore and isolate preconceptions about the subject of the study,
- asking each Native American participant broad research questionnaire questions thoroughly and frankly.
- conceive the interview, as a conversation, rather than a one-sided information-gathering exercise, and
- write up reflections after pre-interviews” (Spirko, n.d., p. 1).

Some researchers include epoch and bracketing interview session notes in the methodology. Bracketing is a means of ensuring the systematic collection process of unstructured raw textual data and steps in processing the data is authentic (Ahern, 1999, in Chan et al., 2013). Although the first meeting is a good time for the interviewer to bracket out assumptions and beliefs about retention strategies and employability phenomena and get a feel of the U.S. NA/AN participant’s thoughts (Chan et al., 2013). I considered the participants time commitment of participant’s during this research process. It is known that some scholars prefer epoch and bracketing (words used

interchangeably (Bednell, 2006). Epoch happens when a researcher remembers something special that occurred during an event that has some connection to the interview discussion. However, during this research process, putting aside epochs during the interview eliminates the possibility of invoking other meaning into participants' lived experiences. In other words, I analyzed "not only what is told by the Native American (NA) participants but what it really means: textual and structural analysis" (Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

Using the study's research questions, I was able to identify cues that helped ease any discomforts during the interview process. Extending participants' time commitment into two different sessions (bracketing and interview) would have affected ethical procedures while conducting the research process. Only one interview session took place during this research study.

Interview Process

Each participant was assigned an identifying number. Names remained confidential. I began the interview with an icebreaker question, for instance, what is exciting about you and your life? to warm up the conversation. Then the process of identifying themes associated with phenomena (Bowen, 2005) took place starting with the overarching research question.

The Interviewer

The interview began with my presenting a standardized explanation of the research study purpose, and expectations. Each participant again at that point in the research process confirmed their signed informed consent form and verbally heard the confidentiality agreement statement. During the use of the interview protocol. I briefly

highlighted again that, the narration of lived experiences would assist with the collection of unstructured raw textual data. All verbal answers to the overarching question, interview questions and research questionnaire questions were audio-recorded, and transcriptions were written in participants' original words. I was familiar with the VoIP Skype-to-Skype method of interview and had up-to-date computer software that supported Skype communication with participants. A recording device and tapes were required that were adequate to record all raw textual data mentioned during the Skype interview session. The interview tapes were each transcribed into a written document. The transcripts were not edited for grammar or for incomplete sentences. Overall, the text appears as dictated by the participant's responses to the open-ended questions and probes. Transcription established a permanent record of the interviews which facilitated further analysis (McMillan & Borders, 2002; Creswell, 2005). I was also familiar with the overarching question, research questions, and questionnaire questions asked (Morse, 2008). Being careful and not deviating from desired outcomes made for a useful question and answer exercise (Singleton et al., 2005). The length of responses varied as they do in self-administered survey, and I employed an official business case (document), for internal use only to record the start and stop time of the interview process (See Appendix A).

Some shared and documented demographic information from the Native American participants helped keep the duration of the interview process going (Singleton et al., 2005). Theoretical saturation happened when a subjective assessment revealed there was neither new data nor themes received from participants and the same data was redundant (Research methodology, 2015, para. 3; Patton, 2002). After all interview

questions were answered, continued retrieval of biases, concerns, thoughts, and beliefs about the phenomena in the audit trail indicated new possible themes identified, and new information while reminding me of the same old ones. Participant quotes and summaries were congruent and reflected participants' views, feelings, and experiences expressed during the face-to-face and Skype interview processes. Member checking was a quality control process which gave participants an opportunity to read and correct error and to ensure reliability and content validity of transcript review (Harper, & Cole, 2010, 2012; Roller, Interviewer Bias & Reflexivity in Qualitative Research, 2014). However, this research study did not provide nor did a participant request a copy of their transcribed interview for validation.

After the interview and transcript review from the tape recording was completed, I could have requested a second interview from a participant if there was an issue with the understanding of words and comments, which may have been challenged (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). The participant would have received an email and telephone call or text. Another informed consent form signature would have not been necessary since the first signed form was still active. An explanation for a second interview request and confirmation of a day and time for the interview and convenient for both parties would have been expected. Only the questioned response would have been addressed during the interview conversation, which would have been tape-recorded and documented to include the participant's raw textual data. On the contrary, no second interviews were requested.

Tape Recording

I asked participants to answer the overarching question, research questions, and questionnaire questions (formal and informal open-ended questions) face-to-face and on-site, and virtual face-to-face Skype-to-Skype recorded interviews, which gave participants the opportunity to respond in any way they choose. Using sufficient recording equipment to recount questions and answers, I recorded biases, concerns, thoughts, and beliefs about the phenomena in the audit trail during the interview process preserved for future use (Mehra, 2002).

Recorded answers to open-ended questions and probing for other answers remained unstructured raw textual data (URTD). A second recorded copy of the same URTD provided information for coding and data analysis. With tape, and recorded versions of the URTD available, the chance of false representation of participants' responses was limited. It was especially important that the recording device was in operable condition. If the recording device were not operable, and the interview not recorded, the participant could volunteer for a second opportunity to be interviewed. If the participant had declined, the participant count could have been off by one. Another option was to select another potential participant using the snowball technique. All tape recordings were lockbox protected during the research process. All security measures were implemented after the completion of the research project and 5 years of protection started after the final approval of the research dissertation.

Audit trail

The journal entries highlighted concerns, thoughts, and beliefs about phenomena during the interview process and preserved for future use (Mehra, 2002). The audit trail is

also a “reflexive diary” (Chan et al, 2013, para. 1). The audit trail, as a reflexive diary suggested new insights as to what had happened and what should not have happened during the interview process, which helped establish dependability (reliability). To ensure transferability of conceptual frameworks (Writing@CSU [Colorado State University], n.d.) and dependability of data collection, there was clarity (Universal Teacher. (n.d.). The audit trail was stored under lock and key when not in use and shredded after 5 years of the research dissertation approval.

Triangulation

A data-triangulation research tool used by qualitative researchers helped ensure the data collected was correct (Regoniel, 2013c). Triangulation supported a more in-depth conversation with participants, and at the same time, identified facts about the retention and employability phenomena from other sources and data collections. Different databases were used in search for current literature reviews, relevant reports, and scholarly research outcomes. An informant familiar with the field could have checked the accuracy and validity of text and data retrieved as well as comments retrieved from stakeholders (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, n. d.; Regoniel, 2013b). A second reader (member checker) could have been a participant, or a key informant not connected to the research study. The second reader could also have been an NA Elder familiar with changes in various communities (Regoniel, 2013b). A second reader could have affirmed that summaries were congruent and reflected participants’ views, feelings, and experiences. If there were situations whereas NA participants answered questions without logically thinking, the same participants could have had the option of returning

for a second interview (2012a). I served in all areas as being the second reader (member checker) of the document before submission to Dissertation committee members.

Using one source of data deemed not true could have left the research study without credible (internal validity) and valid (external transferable) data (Data Triangulation: How the Triangulation of Data Strengthen your Research, n.d.). Wolcott (1994) asserted that rigorous subjectivity gives a clear message. I regulated the interview situations and eliminated the chance of rambling and other irrelevant responses that could have amounted to wasted time. If contestable evidence were critical, in the case of argument over statements during the interview and publications at the end of the study, a second interview process would take place to ensure credibility (internal validity). Findings from this research study and derived from my work as researcher, interviewer, and member checker, as well as my analysis of unstructured raw textual data (Harper & Cole 2012) retrieved from NA undergraduate students and graduates from the UMCP and UMBC the opportunity in explore academic and social retention strategies and employability.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Concepts

I contacted Ms. Jennifer Reeves (telephoned and emailed) requesting permission to redesign an instrument used in her study (2006). Ms. Reeves, a graduate student, conducted the research and addressed the first-year experience of NA students at Oregon State University. (See Appendix B) Raw textual data was collected from the units of analysis, consisting of 6 selected individuals who self-identify as U.S. NA students .I used data-generated methods, which used a semistructured and redesigned interview protocol to collect critical data during an in-depth, on-site, face-to-face interview from (1

junior undergraduate student attending the UMCP) and voice-over-internet protocol technology(1 senior undergraduate student and 3 graduates at the UMCP and 1 senior undergraduate student at the UMBC). Open-ended research and questionnaire questions were used that identified themes associated with the phenomena (Ormston, Spencer et al., 2015; See Appendix C).

The redesigned research questionnaire question tool (See Appendix C) did not lack internal validity (credibility) and did not cause biases and reliability (dependability) due to not having a pretest-posttest test. Approval from the Walden IRB, and NA participants' interest in the goal of the research study, real evidence, and reliability (dependability) ensured content validity (credibility) (Guion, 2002), and accuracy (Regoniel, 2013a). Some probing occurred during and after selected participants answered overarching, research, and questionnaire questions to understand answers to questions, and more in-depth explanations (Sandberg, 2012).

The Transcriber

Data Analysis Plan

The concept of coding is an applicable organizing principle and approach for qualitative research methodology and data analysis. New and improved data storage and analysis software, such as HyperRESEARCH, MAXQDA, (CAQDS), FreeQDA, QCMap, GATE, Raven, EYE, and others are available to help with processing and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. For instance:

NVivo 11 Starter Coding

The use of the NVivo 11 starter integrated coding tool could have displayed connections, ideas, and findings using a range of visualization tools such as “coding strips, highlighting, memos, annotations, etc. (NVivo Starter for Windows, 2016). The NVivo 11 Starter was expected to analyze qualitative non-numerical raw unstructured data. The following options were:

- “Containers used to store themes or ideas as nodes (persons, things, places, and terms) after coding.
- Ability to move nodes into different folders to organize or rearrange them in hierarchies, merge similar nodes, or rename them.
- Group sources that share common characteristics (such as interview transcripts) together with using classifications to help with organization and analysis.
- Import demographic information, such as gender and age into NVivo 11 Starter as a text file” (NVivo 11 Feature Comparison, 2016), which does not happen during this research process.
- Although there are other software tools available in the market, the NVivo 11 Starter has been universally used as a powerful analysis tool and perfect for qualitative research methodology. Skype-to-Skype interview, “While we become more and more familiar with it, we imagined that it could be a solution to conduct virtual face-to-face research interviews because of the possibility to record and easily analyze the data with software like NVivo 8 (Bertrand & Bourdeau, 2010, Research Objectives, para. 1).

Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Coding

A simplified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen coding process was recommended to examine and reduce the textual database. Open coding would have identified new thoughts and idea emergence, which would have led to new retention practice and theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990a) and needs to support employability for U.S. NA/AN students and graduates. Open coding would have analyzed cluster textual databases; participants' responses (Carlson, 2010), and compared statements for similarities and differences to obtain salient themes.

Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen coding method was as follows:

- a full description of biases and previous experiences of phenomena would have taken place. Biases uttered during the bracket out (epoch) interviews from all U.S. NA/AN participants and the interviewer before the first interview process takes place.
- identification of themes from unstructured raw textual data about how and what of the phenomena mentioned by the U.S. NA/AN during the interview protocol, and
- understanding an imaginative variation as to what of the experience and how it happened. The interviewer then writes a description of experiences and if they affected the interview process.

Open Coding Analysis

With tape-recorded versions of the unstructured raw textual data available, the chances of a U.S. NA/AN participants' responses creating a discrepant case was limited. The transcriber, using open code analysis, comparison, and evaluation of unstructured draw textual data identified themes as they pertained to phenomena. Additionally,

identifiable similarities and differences became apparent. The use of open coding processes was used to identify new retention strategies that would support employability to increase U.S. NA student social achievement (Murphy, 2011; White House, 2011) and academic success toward shrinking the systemic gaps affecting the retention and workforce readiness process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990b). A simplified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen coding process was recommended to examine and reduce the textual database (Strauss & Corbin, 1990a).

However, during the final phase of the research study, I prepared the unstructured raw textual data (URTD) for data analysis by condensing and analyzing the URTD in such a way that conclusions were drawn and verified in the form of textual material (Huberman, Miles et al., 2013b). I had the option of listening to the tape-recorded transcripts many times for understanding and coding. The tape-recorded transcripts were under lock and key when not in use. By using an inductive process, I produced multiple mini themes at which time, I put themes into magnitudes of top or low importance (Huberman et al., 2013a). The use of the inductive process allowed contrast and comparison (Huberman & Miles, 1994) in response to the overarching research question, research questions, and questionnaire research questions.

Validity

Precise boundaries supported issues of trustworthiness to include credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformity of the research study.

Internal Validity

- Credibility (internal validity) - member checking would have given participants an opportunity to read and correct errors and to ensure reliability

and content validity of transcript review, and reflexivity. Member checking allows one to reflect on personally know-how about phenomena that support the same biases conveyed by the participant (Harper, & Cole, 2010, 2012; Roller, interviewer bias, & reflexivity in qualitative research, 2014). I continued the review of the audit trail which listed some biases, concerns, thoughts, and beliefs about the phenomena and was convinced there was no new information after all interviews took place. Triangulation supported the probing into answers from the U.S. NA participants and identify additional facts as related to phenomena (Writing@CSU [Colorado State University], n.d.).

I endeavored to ensure that there were no untrue data jeopardizing the credibility (internal validity) and valid (external transferable) outcome of the research study (Data Triangulation: How the Triangulation of Data Strengthen your Research, n.d.). I increased credibility and verified the integrity of the data by reading the raw textual data during and after the interview process and completing preliminary analysis of themes (Harper & Cole, 2012a; Jensen, 2016). The “*soundness*” of the findings and “*integrity*” of data analysis supported credibility (Nobile & Smith, 2016).

I was culturally competent to ensure the handling of differences regarding cultural backgrounds and values (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). I checked the accuracy of all responses to ensure the credibility and content validity of unstructured raw text and data from participants. I tape-recorded the 6 NA participants’ unstructured raw textual data, and after reading the data, realized there was no new raw textual data received from participants (Latham, 2014).

External Validity

- Transferability (external validity) – supported elements and what had been experienced by participants and phenomena. Triangulation (mixed methods) was not used during this research study. I served as the second reader (Harper & Cole, 2012) and checked the accuracy of recorded unstructured raw textual data during interview processes.

At the end of the interview process, I retrieved many important notes and had the option of reading and rereading all the unstructured raw textual data. The second reading confirmed summaries were congruent and reflected participants' views, feelings, and experiences (Harper & Cole, 2012).

- Transferability of new data in the narrative discussion confirmed the validity of the scholarly research results, as well as the enhancement of Native American/Alaskan Native U.S. students' positive academic and social performance.

If a participant interpreted a question incorrectly, the response could have been nontransferable (external validity). Participants 1 (full-blooded Native American) 2 (Native and African American), 3 (Native and Black), and 6 (Liberian, Irish and Native) experienced different subcultures and beliefs (Minthorn, 2020), which could have affected answers to relevant questions or probing questions; however, answers did not cause a discrepancy in the data analysis. Transferability (external validity) supported elements and lived experiences, related to the study. Vivid descriptions were evident (Writing@CSU [Colorado State University], n.d.).

Concept Validity

- Dependability (reliability) – supported accuracy and truthfulness.

Participants and other stakeholders were comfortable with the research method.

The collection and implementation of raw textual data resulting in dependability (Universal Teacher, n.d.). All 6 participants were open and willing to answer the overarching, research, questionnaire questions and did not feel threatened by the questioning which enhanced truthfulness (reliability) and honest answers. Probing for additional feedback when an answer lacks understanding, and a more in-depth explanation was needed was not an issue (Sandberg, 2012). After the interview, the 6 U.S. NA participants had a better feeling about themselves and the total research process (Hoover & Morrow, 2015). For the interviewer, an audit trail can be a “reflexive diary” (Chan et al, 2013, para. 1).

Confirmability

- Confirmabilities refer to verification of the results of a research study by member checking (Harper & Cole, 2012). I completed this verification, an audit of data, and an examination of the coding process used to analyze the raw data collection for accuracy and truthfulness (Jensen, 2016).

Confirmability of the research outcome and interpretation supports continued research interest in retention and employability phenomena. Integrative topics to include “business case, control, information management, organization, planning, and stakeholder management” (General, n.d.) remained current and ongoing. The U.S. NA potential and selected participant’ biases reflective during the research study interview, depending on prior relationships with me, stakeholders, and other NA students did not

affect validity and reliability of raw textual data, data analysis, and narrative discussion. I did not have any influence over participants during the interview process, which would have been an act of reflexivity. I had the option to analyze the raw textual data while the interview process was ongoing and by using an audit trail (journal entries and reflexive notes) of my thoughts, beliefs, and concerns (Chan et al., 2013) during conversations, which eliminated biases. When there was no new raw textual data received from participants and/ information was redundant, and all research questions were answered, analysis proceeded. Although, analyzing raw textual data early, during, and after the interviews by another reader increases the credibility and identity of themes to avoid saturation (Harper & Cole, 2012; Jensen, 2016), I relied on my own findings.

Ethical Procedures

During the research study, ethical issues and conflicts of interest did not arise (University Research Ethics Review Application [RERA], 2010A). However, there were some concerns. Before inquiries for the selection of potential participants, approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Walden University (WU) and a “*Letter of Cooperation*” from the Office of General Counsel, University of Maryland College Park (UMCP). The same letter was obtained from the Office of Vice President, Institutional Research, UMBC. The IRB process included a review procedure, guidelines for investigation, informed consent form requirements, and a process to select vulnerable populations, just to name a few (Application for Research Involving Human Subjects, 2012).

The IRB Regulations Title, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46, often referred to as “*the Common Rule*,” is a federal regulatory policy for the protection of human subjects

(Code of Federal Regulations, 2010). The new policy and rules created in 1991 outlined procedures to ensure ethical treatment of human subjects in research. The UM research sites and the WU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) policy required that whoever work with human subjects, to obtain IRB approval (University of Maryland System Policy on Human Subjects of Research, 2008). The UMD System IRB requirements outlined to identify and select human subjects for a research project are the same requirements for WU approval. The statutes required that:

- each potential U.S. Native American/Alaskan Native undergraduate student and graduate selected to participate in the study must give voluntarily consent in writing to participate in the research study,
- the research/interviewer must obtain informed consent from each potential and select U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student and graduate,
- a waiver if needed, is adequately justified, and
- each potential and selected participant is confidentiality protected (Walden University, 2012).

The IRB for WU ensured all state and federal guidelines adhered to before and during the research study. The RS 1 and 2 being community partners were aware of the research study, understood the study, and approved to conduct the research documented in "*Letters of Cooperation*". As stated by an Administrator for the Human Research Protection Program and Conflict of Interest in Research in an email, "There should be no need for additional documentation for Walden to approve your IRB. The UMCP IRB does not approve non-UM investigators to recruit on campus." As stated, "if you are planning on contacting students, you will need to go through the Office of the Registrar

once you have Walden IRB Approval” (2018, January 11, para. 1). However, since I was not an employee within the UM system, there was no problem conducting interviews in public areas on campus i.e., Stamp, McKeldin, coffee shops, etc. (Smith, 2018, para. 1). However, it was concluded that the Office of General Counsel at the UMCP would be contacted before the Registrar’s official approval for the U.S. NA/AN student listserv.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and identify strategies to improved students’ employment pathways after graduation. The management problem I studied was the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation.

Methodology refers to the way researchers approached data collection and data analysis, which was qualitative for this research study. A qualitative phenomenological design was the sampling frame that investigated empirical data. Purposeful sampling, a non-probability-based sampling method in phenomenological design was used to select units of analysis (Polkinghorne, 2005). The expected 10 to 15 sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate U.S. NA/AN students and graduates were not interested as potential participants. Since there was a lack of potential participant interest at UMCPRS1, the UMBC was added as the second research site RS2. Both research sites were public PWIs. After several attempts to recruit more participants, 6 undergraduate and graduate U.S. NAs who had experienced the phenomena were willing to talk about lived experiences.

In-depth face-to-face interview on-site and Voice over Internet Protocol VoIP technology (Skype) interviews were (a) electronically tape-recorded, (b) reviewed, (c) transcribed into textual data, and (d) analyzed to obtain a cluster of themes (Colaizzi, 1978). An inductive approach identified patterns and themes from participants' unstructured raw textual data rather than themes identified before the study was implemented (Hird, 2015, para. 1; Patton, 1990; Woods, 2006). Probing occurred when an answer from participants needed more in-depth explanation. Open coding was linked to constant comparative methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Kolb, 2012). A more advanced and integrated software known as the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen coding process (Software for Qualitative Research, 2010) and the NVivo11 Starter, which are visualization tools, were identified to examine and reduce the textual database. I was the member checkers of unstructured raw textual data (Harper & Cole 2012). Because of the small units of analysis and no evidence of needed qualitative numerical raw unstructured data, a humanistic approach was used, which will be explained in Chapter 4. An audit trail, as a reflexive diary gave clarity and helped to establish dependability, reliability, and transferability of conceptual frameworks. All data was password protected in laptop and desktop computer hard drives. All email, telephone, and text messages were password protected. All hard copies, student demographic information, and other documents were stored in a storage box and protected under lock and key. I ensured safe and secure storage of all turn keys and passwords. Representatives from the UMCP and UMBC and Walden University had access to all files if there was a need to verify information.

The lack of conceptual frameworks and other supportive retention strategies for U.S. NA undergraduate students and graduates delayed the use of workforce readiness

strategies before and after graduation. As the study moved into Chapter 4, participants were asked to respond to the overarching question. 2 research questions, and 5 questionnaire questions, which guided the study. The results of the qualitative inquiries supported needed retention strategies, practices, and workforce readiness skill sets in support of more academic and social engagement (Student Engagement, 2015) in the workplace.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Previous studies established that U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students disengage from academic and social opportunities that support retention, the highest level of educational attainment, and positive academic and social outcomes (Data Collection Strategies II, 2013). Low levels of academic drive and educational attainment among NA students do not support the willingness to succeed (Race, Class, and the Achievement Gap, 2011). The negative research outcomes are not highlighting the barriers that are preventing U.S. NA/AN students and graduates from being academically and socially engaged while pursuing a postgraduate education. Students' disengagement (America's Promise Alliance, 2014, para. 2) from an academic environment occur when retention strategies are not effective. As NA scholar Rush stated, "The reality is that education in the United States wasn't built for Native people. In fact, it was built to erase us" (2019, para. 7). Although both male and female NA/ANs show low levels of educational attainment compared to the national average, 51% of the female student population advance their educational endeavors to have some college/university and postsecondary education. NA/AN men lagged with 42% pursuing some educational measures (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and identify strategies to improved students' employment pathways after graduation. This study used a qualitative research methodology and a phenomenological

research design to search for subjective meaning (“Difference Between,” 2015), conceptual framework, and analysis while using an interpretative approach. Six (6) University of Maryland System sophomore, junior, senior, and graduates participated in the research study. The findings summarize their answers to the overarching research question and two qualitative research questions.

Qualitative Approach

The research question that drove the study was How were some Native American and Alaskan Native U.S. undergraduate students attending public universities retained to enhance employment after graduation?

Overarching Research Question

What retention strategies used at public universities affect Native American and Alaskan Native U.S. undergraduate students’ employment after graduation?

Qualitative Research Questions

RQ1. How do U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students’ origin and culture influence retention strategies at the University of Maryland that support employment after graduation?

RQ2. What retention strategies used at the University of Maryland affect U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students’ ability to secure a job after graduation?

Although research questions and interview protocol were used to measure belief, ideas, reasons, and attitudes of units of analysis, there were follow-up interview research questions asked as well:

Questionnaire Research Questions

1. About your ethnic identity, how do/did you identify and why? Tribal

affiliation?

2. What are/were your experiences interacting with fellow students, staff, and faculty before graduation? Did you feel disrespected as a U.S. NA/AN at any time during your academic and social experience?
3. How has stakeholder retention strategies affected your matriculation, retention and potential or present employment pathway? Have you experienced racial micro-aggression?
4. Did/do you think assimilation, acculturation, and enculturation within the traditional environment were the best option for you to eliminate perceived notions of disengagement caused by a lack of retention strategies?
5. What work readiness strategies experienced before graduation in support of employability do you support and please explain the strategy(s)?
6. Can you recommend any other U.S. NA/AN graduates that may want to contribute to the study?

During this study, only 6 Native American participants were interviewed. Some responses to questionnaire questions from participants overlapped and listing responses would have been redundant.

Research Settings

The U.S. NA/AN children living in urban areas were expected to have opportunities for a university experience and workplace opportunities that would enhance their socioeconomic status while living the urban life. Because of their ethnic identity, their expectancy of a different world was short-lived (American Indian Urban Location, n.d.). The UMCP, a PWI was selected as a convenient location for the research site.

However, a lack of potential participants interested in the research study at RS1.

Therefore, the UMBC, a PWI, was selected and approved by the Walden Dissertation Committee, the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the UMBC IRB office.

Hereafter, two campuses are referred to as Research Sites 1 and 2 (RS1 and RS2).

University of Maryland College Park/Research Site 1

There were some personal and organizational challenges with stakeholders at RS1 in College Park, Maryland that delayed access to the U.S. NA/AN undergraduate student population and recent graduates. Identifying the right stakeholder on campus with credentials to release the requested listserv was a challenge. After three weeks of investigation, I contacted the legal office on campus. Eventually, legal counsel explained that the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 1974 governed requests for students' and graduates' names, email addresses, ethnic identities, and class standing records (Family Education \Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 2018, p. 1). The Legal Counsel mentioned that the act "prohibits UMCP from providing student and graduate information based on race, gender, or other protected identifiers. However, directory information considered "a students' names, addresses, telephone numbers, and also include a student ID number (which includes electronic identifiers) provided it cannot be used to gain access to education records," (Hlavac, & Easterly, 2015, para. 3). When a student turns 18 years of age, the demographic data and academic performance data are not released to the parent. All released demographic information must be confirmed by the student and/or the postgraduate institution can decide whether to release student records (What is directory information? 2007, p. 1). Eventually, following receipt of approval from legal counsel on campus, I received via email a link to a listserv, which

included all freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate and graduate students' email addresses (only).

Before selecting all potential participants, one signed informed consent form was received via email from a potential participant whose domicile location was in Wheaton, IL. The inability to accept the potential participant's request to participate in the research study prompted a change to the interview protocol. I submitted a "change in procedure" form, which was approved by the Walden Dissertation Committee and the Walden Institutional Research Board (IRB) to allow the use of voice-over-internet technology.

The change in procedure, to include remote audio and video conversations, created more interest in the research study. The sample included two participants in different geographical areas (Lo Iacono et al., 2016) in the U.S. and three local participants in the research area. The interviews took place in the comfort of participants and my environment.

University of Maryland Baltimore County/Research Site 2

The UMBC was identified as RS2 because recruitment efforts did not attract enough potential participants from the UMCP RS1. The UMBC RS2 was a public institution of higher education and "bills itself as an honors university" (Overview of University of Maryland-Baltimore County, 2021, p. 1). However, the student enrollment at RS2 was much smaller than at UMCP RS1. The only ethnic identities of students mentioned at the RS2 campus were "White, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Non-resident Alien, Ethnicity Unknown, and others" (College Factual, 2019). Under group listings, Native American and Alaskan Native U.S. undergraduate students were 0.2% of the undergraduate student population (College Factual, 2019).

The UMBC had an enrollment of 13,662 cohorts for the academic year 2017-2018, including undergraduate and graduate schools, full-time and part-time status. By gender, the school had 7,446 male and 6,216 female students. Among the 11,234 students enrolled in undergraduate programs, 1,160 (10.33%) were transfer-in students, 942 students transferred as full-time students, 218 transfer as part-time students, and 94% lived in Maryland. Of the total cohorts, 0.3% were Native American (College Tuition Compare, 2018; University System of Maryland, 2019).

The qualitative section of the study continued at the UMBC with the possibility of selecting additional potential participants who would satisfy the targeted 10 to 15 anticipated units of analysis. However, after several attempts to identify additional potential participants at both research sites, it was determined no other potential participants were interested in the research study. The decision to stop the solicitation for potential participants and move forward with six units of analysis was discussed with the dissertation chair and approved by the Walden University Research Reviewer (URR)

Demographics

The research study identified 6 participants (units of analysis) who completed the interview protocol. The 6 participants who volunteered for the study were selected from two separate listservs that generated email addresses for all undergraduate and graduate students. The listservs were prepared by the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) research site 1 (RS1), and the University of Maryland in Baltimore County (UMBC) research site 2 (RS2).

There were three graduates and two undergraduates from the UMC, RS1 and one undergraduate from UMBC, RS2. One undergraduate participant and four graduates

attend or attended the RS1 and one participant from the RS2. Of the 6 participants, 4 were female, and 2 were male. Class standing for each participant listed below. The age range of participants unknown. The following steps were followed in support of selecting potential and selected participants for the research study from both research site locations.

The 6 participants self-identified and had various origins, races, mixed-race, and ethnicity. Although Alaskan Native U.S. undergraduate students and graduates were invited to participate in the research study from both research sites, no participants volunteered. Disengagement continued to resonate and align with historical perspectives while eliminating inclusion (Vogt-William, 2015). Because of ethical procedures and historical events taken place within U.S. NA/AN tribal community, some potential participants may not have contributed to this research study, even if the expectations were to add to NA/ANs' academic and social success (Harding et al., 2011). There are NA/AN communities and tribal concerns as to how their tribal history should be shared with researchers. Ancestral beliefs for some tribal communities protect their identity. In some instances, identity is not shared, even with others within their tribe. Ethnic and tribal affiliation was asked of each participant but was not mandatory to answer the question.

Data Collection

Recruitment and Sampling

The 6 participants, who volunteered for the study, were identified by using 2 separate listservs (obtained from UMCP RS1 and UMBC RS2) that generated email addresses for all undergraduate and graduate students. Each student received an introduction letter and informed consent form before confirming their interest and

eligibility to participate in the research study. These efforts yielded identified 6 participants (units of analysis) who completed the interview protocol.

The sample consisted of 3 graduates and 2 undergraduates from UMCP-RS1 and 1 undergraduate from UMBC-RS2. Of the 6 participants, 4 were female and 2 were male. Class standing for each participant appears in Table 2. The age ranges of participants are unknown. The steps to select potential and selected participants for the research study at both research site locations are below:

- The introduction letter and informed consent form was sent via email.
- The informed consent form was electronically checked, yes, and signed by potential participants.
- The potential participants confirmed the date, time, and location for interviews, which supported privacy and comfort for the potential participants and me.
- Prior to the interviewer and potential participants interview start time, potential participants received a short overview of the purpose of the research study.
- I confirmed that participant had signed the informed consent form and reviewed the confidentiality agreement.
- To ensure the capture of all verbal communication during interviews, potential participants agreed to the use of a tape-recording device during interviews.
- After all documents and agreements were confirmed, participants were confirmed as eligible to participate in the study.

Semistructured Interview Protocol

Semistructured interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena. I asked 6 participants the same overarching research question and 2 research questions followed by 5 questionnaire questions. The interview began with formal and informal open-ended research questions focused on identifying themes associated with the phenomena (Ormston et al., 2014). Using formal and informal open-ended questions allowed participants to be truthful and speak freely when answering research questions (McLeod, 2018, p. 1). I recorded all interview sessions and used an official business case to record the start and stop time of the interview process. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes.

Description of the Sample

The first questionnaire question asked for demographic information, such as the participants' tribal affiliation. The 6 participants self-identified with various origins, races, mixed race, and ethnicities. No 2 participants identified the same tribal affiliation, and the unique affiliations included the following: *Cherokee/Choctaw Tribes*, *Pawnee Tribe*, *Native American/Black*, *Mayan*, and *Spanish (Latin American)*, *Lumbee Tribe*, and *Liberian/Irish/Lumbee Tribe*. None of the participants identified as Alaskan Native U.S. undergraduate students and graduates were invited to participate in the research study at both research sites; however, no Alaskan Natives U.S. were among the potential participants.

Table 2

Participant Demographics by Research Site: Class Standing, Interview Format, Sex

Demographics	Research Site 1: University of Maryland College Park	Research Site 2: University of Maryland Baltimore County
Class Standing		
Undergraduate	2 (1 sophomore, 1 junior)	1 (senior)
Graduate	3	
Interview Format		
Face-to-Face	1 (junior)	
Skype-to-Skype	4 (1 senior, 3 graduates)	1 (senior)
Sex		
Female	3	
Male	2	1

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved the soundness of the findings and integrity of data, which supported credibility (Nobile & Smith, 2016). The raw textual data from this study provided information related to experiences of U.S. NA/AN undergraduate sophomore, junior, and senior students and recent graduates from a predominantly White institution. What motivated this study was the lack of information as expressed by this central research question: How were some U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native undergraduate students attending public universities retained to enhance employment after graduation?

Data Analysis Plan

As described in Chapter 3, the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen research method and the Nvivo 11 Starter software were recommended to analyze the unstructured raw textual data. Since the participant sample size was small and no need for qualitative numerical

raw unstructured data was evident, a humanistic approach was appropriate. After checking the accuracy of all participant responses to ensure credibility and content validity of unstructured raw textual data, I decided to use a humanistic approach to analyze and interpret the lived experiences of undergraduate and graduate U.S. NA/AN participants' retention and employability after graduation. "If we are to begin to understand how to support our Native students, we need to understand their lived experiences and realities" (Minthorn, 2020, p. 1).

Use of an inductive theory (data-driven) data analysis supported breaking down raw textual data so that highlights would come from frameworks. Analysis of raw textual data collected from units of analysis (6 U.S. NA participants) assisted in identifying conceptual frameworks. In addition, I employed deductive (theory-driven) data analysis, which linked theoretical variables and theorists who have studied the exposed meaning of retention strategies (Ruona, 2005) and securing a workplace after graduation.

Because of participants' racial origins and their marginalized and salient status, some of the traditional limitations of student research (e.g., small sample size, various race and ethnic identities, and other demographics) may have restricted the scope of this research study's findings. The management problem I studied was the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation. which was confirmed by participants' responses to research questions and salient themes retrieved from raw textual data. Themes established the lack of engagement, continued micro-aggression, and lack of retention strategies need to improve U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' engagement within communities after graduation.

Research Questions

I encouraged participants to inquire when they did not understand questions. Using a semi structured interview protocol gave the interviewer the option to stray away from the protocol when probing for more information after asking the initial question (“What is a semi structured interview?” 2018, para. 1). Triangulation supported the need to probe for a clear understanding of an answer from a participant in support of identifying additional themes related to the phenomena (Sandberg, 2012).

Overarching research question

The overarching question was, what retention strategies affect employment after graduation? Participants 1 (P1) through 5 (P5) were very firm with a “None” answer to retention strategies that affect employment after graduation. P6 mentioned that services available from the campus career center, such as outreach activities, résumé writing, developing a curriculum vitae, and application processes, may have been retention strategies but not sure. Kearnes (2001) stated that career building skills are “finding and using information about careers, labor markets and the world of work and then locating, securing, and maintaining work as well as exploiting career opportunities to gain advancement or other desired outcomes” (Mann et al., 2020, para. 2).

Research Question 1

How do U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students’ origin and culture influence retention strategies that support employment after graduation?

All 6 participants possessed a strong desire to identify with their ethnicity (heritage) and culture (Minthorn, 2020) while attending the RS1 and RS2. This commitment was reflected in their answers to the question.

For example, P1 responded that professors were not concerned about U.S. NA origin and culture. The Native grandmother did not believe in doctors and medicine and continued traditional practices. The participant's mother, who lived on the Choctaw reservation, did not believe in testing and memorizing. Instilled learning was accomplished by being dependent on one's self through home schooling. The *attachment theory* points out separation. However, it does not always cause anxiety (Bowlby, 1991). Attachment to parents creates bonding between infant and caregiver. It prepares one to face some challenges before adulthood with others and in the environment. Bowlby (n.d.; Harlow, n.d.) suggested attachment was an innate behavior and not so much a behavioral theory (as cited in Cherry, 2016). Some children do not feel stressed when disconnected from a parent (Wagner, 2006). Separation response may be altogether weak or even absent if the student was near adulthood and has a mature attitude (Bowlby, 1991).

P2 stated that professors did not even know about the U.S. NA experience.

All 6 participants mentioned their origin and culture had no influence on supposed retention strategies, nor did they know of any retention strategies for U.S. NA students that would support employment after graduation. It should be noted again, as referenced in Chapter 2, that U.S. NA children learn survival tactics (Cunningham, 2007), and grandparents and elders continue to share wisdom and training through oral stories.

However, some participants framed their comments to suggest that the university offered some social opportunities to them. P1 shared they could join a club that focused on some NA issues, network with others who appreciated their culture, and volunteer in settings that had a cultural focus that promoted respect for NA cultural beliefs and values.

In contrast, however, none of the networking opportunities targeted workforce readiness and some reference to employability after graduation.

Research Question 2

When asked what retention strategies affected U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' ability to secure a job after graduation, P1 and P2 were unequivocal in their statements that they knew of no retention strategies that had affected their ability to secure a job or workforce readiness skillsets after graduation. P1 shared, "I am not even interested or motivated to get a job after graduation," although graduate school was P1's next educational endeavor.

P2 shared that the only retention strategies known to them were strategies identified by their efforts. P2 also mentioned, "NA identity left out of any strategies." However, all 6 participants mentioned themes that supported their ability to secure a job and no support to their workforce readiness skill sets from the RS1 and RS2 educational environment and stakeholders. Any retention or workforce readiness strategies offered to students in their classroom settings were broad and generalized to the entire student body. For instance, participants mentioned the follow themes:

- P1: Do well in class and lab.
- P2: They had tools for general employment.
- P3: They let me talk about my NA experience.
- P4: Did not know if employer may be looking for a NA with a strong sense of identity.
- P5: Some alumni come back to the campus and talk about their job.

- P6: Professor would write a recommendation letter if I had a certain grade point average.

The answers to the research question supported the key to employability model with emphases on not having structured interventions based on what may interest the students and no structured instructions about strategies to ensure employability after graduation. Participants did not mention the universities' career center, which should be a place for resources that support career preparation, placement, and recruitment for the NA/AN undergraduate student through NA/AN employers and others (Jimenez, 2020; Pool & Sewell, 2007).

Questionnaire Research Questions

IQ1. Tribal affiliation. The first questionnaire question asked; How do you self-identify, why, and what is your tribal affiliation? A person of mixed race and ethnicity has the right to identify based on their ancestry and connection to the family (Harris, Youn-Heil, Duong, n.d.). Passing as a White person (elite mixed blood) among other university students and others was usually an unethical practice; however, such passing was an advantage for the individual because of expected favoritism and a warmer acceptance. However, all 6 participants self-identified with their origins as mixed-blood, race, and ethnicity (some terms used interchangeably).

P1 mentioned having a strong connection to their Cherokee and Choctaw bloodline. P2 self-identified as Pawnee NA and shared that they were constantly misidentified as a member of the African American and Black race: "I was raised in an African American and Black culture." P2, P3, and P5, although raised in a Black and African American culture, were aware of their Native ancestry and bloodline. Previous

research indicated that educators' assumptions about students' appearance impacted the quality of education those students received. Mihesuah (1991) stated the dark-skinned, mixed-blood NA students were viewed as low class, and their school curriculum was not as challenging as the affluent/elite mixed-blood (bright and almost White) NA students'. I believe whatever the case may be, the darker the skin-tone of a person of any origin or race, the lower their social status continues.

At the same time, expressing a racial identity is a complex task. P4 reported not belonging to a race: "My heritage may be complicated since Latin American is not a race." Nevertheless, participants asserted that there are mixed ethnic influences in Latin America, including African, Indigenous, and European origin (heritage) and culture. "Race is biological, while ethnicity is cultural. Ethnicity can be displayed or hidden, while race generally cannot be. Ethnicity can be adopted, ignored, or broadened, while racial characteristics cannot. Ethnicity has subcategories, while races no longer do" (Nittle, 2020, p. 1). P6's response echoed this sentiment: "It is important to celebrate all of my ethnic identities [Liberian, Irish, Lumbee Tribe] because they are all relevant."

In this study, and in alignment with Obama-era legislation that amended the federal law to remove the name "*Indian*" in favor of "*Native American*" and the names "*Eskimo*" and "*Aleut*" in favor of "*Alaska Natives*" (Varagur, 2016), all participants for this study were referred to as U.S. *Native American* (NA) as their origin, race, and ethnicity during this research study. No two participants identified the same tribal affiliation (Minthorn, 2020), and the unique affiliations included the following:

Cherokee/Choctaw Tribes, Pawnee Tribe, Native American/Black, Mayan, and Spanish (Latin American), Lumbee Tribe, and Liberian/Irish/Lumbee Tribe.

IQ2A. Interactions with peers. What are/were your experiences interacting with fellow students, staff, and faculty before graduation? Participants' responses portrayed a variety of experiences,

- P1: I was taught to not look elders in the eye, which was a challenge for me to overcome.
- P2: A lot of cultural grouping took place on the campus.
- P3: Stakeholders talking about NA experience and me correcting them.
- P4: A faculty person denied part of my heritage.
- P5: Stakeholders kept looking at me trying to figure out what language I speak.
- P6: White peers who felt very entitled next to me.

IQ2B. Disrespect. Did you feel disrespected as a U.S. NA at any time during your academic and social experience?

- P1: The university did not make me feel welcome.
- P2: Disrespected when another student wore NA regalia.
- P3: Being Native and Black can be viewed as a negative connotation.

During P4's undergraduate study, while serving as the President of the American Indian Student Association (AISU) at the RS1, P4 experienced racism and micro-aggression. P4 described the situation:

[Stakeholders] made derogatory, face-to-face statements and insisted I identity was a member of a race, ethnicity, and culture other than my own. It was evident by tones of vocal expressions, and very disappointing with labeling, which

included not being identified in accordance with my ethnic identity as opposed to being identified by visual looks and appearances coupled with not being able to celebrate my origin and culture freely on campus.

This response echoed Crossman's (2020, para 2) conclusion that once a person is labeled or categorized in a phenomenon known as the *mascot ting factor*, it is difficult to remove the label. P4 continued,

A Black student came up to me asking why I oversaw the AISU. "You are not Indian" mentioned the Black student. The Black student said, "Indians do not have beards and full hair." The Black student said, "Indians do not have body hair."

It is unknown if the Black student was aware of the participant's historical philosophy or beliefs. The Black student displayed a clear example of "dissonance," meaning uncertainty about whether messages and means of communication are genuine and factual. The message received was not noteworthy compared to the "understanding of their culture and of the dominant culture" (Sue & Sue, 1999, p. 5; see also Sanchez, 2008). Other participants identified feeling disrespected as well. Rush (2019, para. 7) stated "indigenous identities are not respected".

- P5: Stakeholders kept looking at me trying to figure out what language I speak.
- P6: White peers who felt very entitled next to me. Stakeholders look at me as an ID number.

IQ3A. Retention strategies. How have stakeholder retention strategies affected your matriculation, retention, and potential or present employment pathway? P1 responded,

Prior job pathway strategies were developed before attending university. It took me a long time figuring out how to study on my own. A teacher assistant helped my matriculation by helping me with my study habits.

An unexpected response was that food made a huge difference in retention strategies and affected academic and social and potential employment pathways. The participants' comments echoed the notion that a U.S. NA/AN child was not considered a worthy human if they could not eat the food of the dominant group (Taylor-Adams, 2012). P1 went on to say:

It is extremely hard to transition to a traditional school environment... I lived on a big farm and grew all the foodstuff... The dining hall food was a culture shock... Juice boxes at the university are considered the devil by me... Everybody complained about the dining hall food.

Other participants shared statements that reflected the absence or ineffectiveness of retention strategies they encountered:

- P2: No strategies to use after graduation. What is a retention strategy for employment?
- P3: I have been affected by my race. From a NA perspective, people do not believe I am Native.
- P4: The retention strategies would not affect me. I do not feel an absence of retention strategies. As Latin American, I never thought about it.

- P5: Most stakeholders did not affect my matriculation and retention with strategies. Only when encountering a NA professor did I feel a sense of belonging to the NA community.

At the RS2, the U.S. NA/AN faculty representation was 0.0% (College Factual, 2019). The RS2 had one Native visiting professor who taught in the Department of American Studies. The curriculum covered “folklore, cultural studies, museum scholarship, and material culture, American Indian studies, community art, research methods” (UMBC, American Studies, 2019). However, there was no mention of emphases on workplace readiness and employability for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students. P6 described their experience:

Research opportunity was not in support of the employment pathway.

Stakeholders looked at me as an ID number; felt like I was in a box with no retention strategies. Stakeholders did not realize I may struggle more because I was NA.

Participants reported no retention strategies to affect matriculation, retention, and still, none for the employment pathway. Participant 4 was deeply passionate about research opportunities:

- Research opportunities are not easy to find.
- Research opportunities were not for minority or NA students.
- Research opportunities were not in support of employment pathway.

IQ3B. Microaggression. Have you experienced microaggression? All 6 participants reported experiencing microaggression, which affects their academic and

social experience while attending university. P3 shared that a stakeholder changed their racial identity on application from NA to Black:

A stakeholder changed my racial identity on an application from Native American to Black and did not re-change my identity on an application when I mentioned to do so. The stakeholder did not want to believe I was Native American since I looked like a Black person.

The racial identity development models and as Tinto (1993) stated, skin color has been a determining factor for so many unfair decisions (Chavez, Guido-DiBrito, & Mallory, 1999; Landor & Smith, 2019).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, in the section on Student Enrollment/Retention, the real enrollment numbers do not support numbers reported by stakeholders. As evidenced in participants' responses, when a student self-selects their identity, it may be erased, changed, or not reported at all. When multiracial people have only one choice to identify on an application, the applicant is stripped of their "social power over their social environment" (Greig, 2015, para. 4). Participants' responses portrayed other examples of microaggression:

- P1: If they had known my ethnic identity, they may have been more biased.
- P2: Usually through social media.
- P4: The same professor made a negative comment during class about middle Europe during that time. The same professor/faculty made a negative comment about Mexicans putting bones through their nose.
- P5: Negative nonverbal communication.
- P6: I was uncomfortable answering questions.

IQ4: Remedy for disengagement. Do you think assimilation, acculturation, or enculturation within a traditional environment was the best option to eliminate perceived notions of disengagement caused by lack of retention strategies? The theory of cultural identification and orthogonal model, as mentioned in Chapter 2, expresses the idea that cultures exist independently of each other. The model indicated that recognition with one culture does not outweigh the importance of being connected to the other culture, and identifications may result in positive social and health issues (Oetting, & Beauvais, 1991). In this study, participants expressed contradictory perspectives.

Acculturation (the second culture). As mentioned in Chapter 1, if a person is born of a culture, that culture should not become second nature when the person explores or becomes involved with another culture or cultures (Akrofi et al., 2008; Robinson, 2005). Exploration might include activities such as enjoying the other groups' food, clothing, habits, and ways of living their life. Because P1 did not understand Question 4 the first time I asked, I spent additional time to explain and reiterate the question. Then, P1 shared,

I do not think I can identify as NA. Look, [I appear, I look] Caucasian. Do not wear NA ethnic identity on my sleeve. Have not discussed my ethnic identity with instructors or advisors. Although raised in an NA environment, do not have an NA personality.

Ironically, the way of living on campus, which was out of the P1's comfort zone, did not decrease the love for their NA origin and culture taught at an early age even if, stakeholders on campus, continued to stereotype the participant as being a White person.

P1 never identified on campus as a Native student, which may have made a difference in P1 experiencing a chilly climate. In addition to the above answers to IQ4, P1 mentioned,

- Heritage and culture taught by the NA family helped not to assimilate.
- Religious background helped to not assimilate.
- Spirituality helped while attending a liberal and traditional White institution.

Assimilation. P5 experienced and practiced assimilation in the traditional university setting at the RS2 their first and second years on campus because, in P5's words,

- During my freshman and sophomore years, I did not identify with my NA culture.
- Not feeling comfortable wearing NA regalia and other traditional clothing.
- The first- and second-year experiences on campus were chilly and I assimilated within the environment.

As mentioned by Sanchez (2008) and Sue and Sue (1999), according to the racial and cultural identity development model, conformity is when a student assimilates into a culture and embraces the same heritage and beliefs. However, P5 did not forget about their first culture (Chapter 2, pp. 61-62). The participant's retention strategy was to use enculturation (first learned culture) when necessary depending on topics discussed in class. The participant was enculturated during the senior year.

Enculturation (first-culture learning). P5 shared that they assimilated during the first and second year on campus because of the chilly climate and begin to enculturate during the junior and senior year's higher-quality academic and social experience. The RS2 had one visiting professor who was Native and taught in the department of American

Studies. Because of P5's parents and the NA professor's mentoring, P5 was able to re-shape and re-charge their culture. Through mentoring, the stakeholders were able to re-institute enculturation into the participant's thoughts and behaviors during the junior and senior academic years. P5's experience echoed Waters's (2008) assertion that

Native people have survived by taking the best of both worlds, integrating them, maintaining, and transforming native cultures, and ultimately buffering against negative colonizing processes through the internalization of positive identity attitudes and the externalization of native dominant group attitude. (Rush, 2019).

IQ5. Work readiness strategies. What work readiness strategies experienced before graduation in support of employability do you support? Although participants continued to express the norm of filling out applications, résumé writing, and application preparation, I was impressed with participants' suggestions of positive themes and strategies in support of enhancing their own employment strategies. The list feature participants' various responses to the question.

- P1: Member of pre-medical society. Medical school preparation. Filling out medical school applications. Put student social organizations on the back burner.
- P2: Worked as a teacher assistant. Volunteer tutor.
- P3: Microaggression not being a threat.
- P4: Encourage students to check the ethnic identity box on applications.
- P5: Beliefs in NA cultural heritage and beliefs.
- P6: Know what microaggression is. Proud of Native American heritage.

Each participant's response to research questions unfolded through their own words conveyed a glimpse of what their academic and social experiences were like attending a PWI. Although the data was presented under one broad theme, multiple subthemes arose; these subthemes were distinct yet connected in some ways. It should be remembered that this written document allows stakeholders and other stakeholders a chance to accumulate a store of knowledge and experiences that should greatly enhance educators' capacity to deal effectively with problematic features of education for U.S. NA/AN students.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I checked the accuracy of all responses to ensure the credibility and content validity of unstructured raw text data from participants. I taped recorded all U.S. NA participants' unstructured raw textual data, and after transcription, performed a data audit of the coding process and analyzed the raw textual data. This audit confirmed that new raw textual data was received from participants (Latham, 2014).

Transferability

Transferability (external validity) of themes and vivid descriptions coming out of the lived experiences of the 6 participants in this research study, and the narrative discussions supported the credibility and reliability of the study's outcome. I provided a rich account of empirical data and identified, described, and explored themes such as the context in which the research was carried out, research sites, recruitment strategies for potential participants and participants, demographics, selection and sample size, inclusion and exclusion criteria, interview settings and changes, interview protocol and questions, and raw textual data.

After reading and re-reading the raw textual data, I was able to conclude, based on the data gathered from the 6 participants, that old and new possible themes could be identified, and new information had emerged. Probing occurred after asking questions of the 6 participants to support the credibility (internal validity) and validity (external transferable) of the data. It is my belief that transferability (external validity) supported elements and lived experiences related to the study.

Dependability

Dependability was ensured when participants shared their lived experiences and answered research questions (Universal Teacher, n.d.). All data analysis was shared (Latham, 2014) to support the transfer of the conceptual frameworks. The interpretation was grounded in the data. The use of an audit trail, as a reflexive diary gave clarity and helped establish dependability, reliability, and transferability of conceptual frameworks. Some probing occurred when there was a lack of clarity when questions were asked (Sandberg, 2012).

Confirmability

I served as the member checker (M. Harper & Cole, 2012) and confirmed the data analysis. Reviewing the reflective diary helped with the dependability as well. The confirmability of the research outcome and interpretation of the data analysis provided evidence of lack of retention strategies, disengagement, and lack of academic pedagogy to ensure employability after graduation for U. S. Native American students and graduates.

Research Data Results

All raw textual data was reduced, based on participants' responses to the overarching question, research questions, and questionnaire questions. I manually transcribed participants' verbal lived experiences from tape recordings into a computerized spreadsheet. After documenting raw textual data for each participant, I looked for similarities and differences across and within-participant comments. An interpretive approach allowed themes to be analyzed and summarized. After analyzing the raw textual data, I determined the unstructured raw textual data produced salient themes.

After reading and re-reading the raw textual data and confirming the data gathered from the 6 participants, I concluded resented themes identified by recent scholars and new themes emerged. Probing had occurred after asking questions of the 6 participants to support *credible* (internal validity) and *valid* (external transferable) data. I believe that *transferability* (external validity) supported elements and lived experiences related to the study. Transferability (external validity) of themes and vivid descriptions coming out of the lived experiences of the 6 participants in this research study, and the narrative discussions supports the credibility and reliability of the study's outcome. Besides, a solid research connection to existing knowledge increases reliability.

Based on 6 participants who volunteered to answer the research study's overarching research question, 2 research questions, and 5 questionnaire questions, I concluded that stakeholders at the UMCP RSI and UMBC RS2 were not aware of the problems and had no interest in improving the engagement of Native American undergraduate students toward matriculation, retention, graduation, or employability after

graduation. The recording device recorded the lived experiences of 6 U.S. Native American undergraduate students and graduates who told their stories of systemic racism, disengagement, disrespect, harassment, lack of cultural expression, stakeholder disrespect, microaggression, and the efforts of stakeholders to prevent their expressing their identities. Stakeholders did not allow the 6 participants freewill to celebrate their race and origin; instead, stakeholders expected participants to meet preconceived expectations and to act accordingly.

Findings from previous literature about similarly oppressive treatment suggest possible consequences of participants' experiences. For example, U.S. NA graduates who work for a theory X employer who is uncompromising and refuses to change structured goals and objectives may develop a robotic attitude. theory X employers are known to practice vicarious reinforcement (Suzuki, 2009). The U.S. NA graduates could survive employment with a theory Z employer who shadowed theory Y in that the employer shows compassion, trustworthy and believed in advancing the employer; welcomed change, encouraged productivity, and wanted employee input (Chapman, 2020). However, the lack of workforce readiness strategies could still cause an unhealthy relationship and environmental disaster.

Assumptions

After themes emerged from the raw textual data to answer the research questions, some themes caused concern and echoed findings in the literature review in Chapter 2. One assumption was that some retention strategies and workforce readiness strategies were self-taught and received outside of the university. P1 described applying their religious and spiritual background to matriculation and retention and relying on that

religious background, which helped P1 not to assimilate. This theme, spirituality has helped a participant while attending a liberal and traditional White institution. Religious and spiritual beliefs were personalized when not able to openly use a cultural expression.

Another assumption was that all participants were job seekers and wanted a job after graduation. P1 described planning to return to the reservation after graduation from medical school. The same participant had worked during the summer breaks and stated that workforce readiness strategies were learned and are being learned while working in rural health clinics and while teaching school in Native communities, not in the classroom. P2 indicated they applied for graduate school after undergraduate graduation because “NAI culture taught me to work hard at whatever I was trying to accomplish.” Here again, not in the classroom.

The Native American students and graduates who attended RS2 found that Congressman Henry Dawes’s idea of a good citizen still controlled the culture of the university which was to be employed and wear clothing that represents the Western region of the country (Marchard-Cecil, n.d.). This perspective is referred to as the *fashion perspective*, as highlighted in Chapter 2. Participant 2 reported feeling disrespected from a fashion perspective when another student wore NA regalia and disrespected when someone wore a costume and presented as a NA Chief.. P6 agreed and explained that as a first-year U.S. NA students, they felt uncomfortable wearing NA clothing on campus and instead wore NA clothing around family members. P6 continued, “I present myself according to what I was wearing. Assimilation in classes depending on the topic of discussion. Felt like I stood out among stakeholders on campus when wearing native clothing.”

When considering *teacher-role model factors*, teachers must be aware of the diversity within the teaching environment and among students. However, as mentioned by several scholars, racism occurs in the classroom (Valandra, 2013). The only participant who expressed a deep connection to faculty in the teacher role model factor was P4. Overall, participants' responses implied the UM faculty have not learned effective teaching strategies in support of NA students and graduates. These findings aligned with the statement of Tarajeau Yazzie-Mintz, founder and principal consultant of First Light Education, in an interview with Anderson (2020): "The art of teaching means that you pay attention to who you're teaching" (para. 3).

P5 shared an experience with a professor that demonstrated the impact of a teacher who did not pay attention to who their students were. In addition, P5 described a professor who made a negative comment during class about middle Europe, and the same professor/faculty made a negative comment about Mexicans putting bones through their nose. P5 stated, "I was offended because I have indigenous heritage. The professor was so ignorant about anything having to do with indigenous people." P5's comments indicated the complexity of reacting in such a situation:

I was afraid because the professor would get angry with me. After all, I would think a certain way about him. I think because the professor was White, I thought that was important. I did not want to interfere with the Professor's way of thinking.

Without efforts from professors, teachers, and other stakeholders to support student and graduate motivation and progression and personal development before entry into the workplace, it may be expected that students after graduation will feel the same

disrespect and confusion in the workplace environment. It may be expected that employers will not fulfill the graduates' expectations, resulting in the students' being disconnected. As referenced in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, a graduate in the workplace will be concerned about salary to include benefits and a safe environment. Furthermore, the graduate may not satisfy the employer without the motivation and workforce readiness skill sets needed to remain employed (Tanner, 2020, p. 1).

This qualitative phenomenological study explored retention strategies used at U.S. public universities that did not support U.S. NA undergraduate students' and graduates' employment pathways and engagement within communities after graduation. Findings indicated a lack of retention strategies that have affected 6 NA participants students' employability after graduation. The lack of academic and social inclusion of U.S. NA students and graduates at the UMCP-RS1 and UMBC-RS2 prevented engaged academic and social growth and development and exposure to workforce readiness skill sets needed to enhance employability after graduation.

The participant selection protocol did not attract a participant who self-identified as an U.S. AN student or graduate. Raw textual data retrieved from 6 self-identified U.S. Native American participants shared their lived academic and social experiences while attending the UMCP RS1 and UMBC RS2. There were some themes identified after the interview protocol and analysis of raw textual data.

All 6 participants concluded that there was no evidence of direct and implicit retention strategies shared by stakeholders that positively affected the matriculation, retention, and employability after graduation for U.S. NA undergraduate students and graduates. All 6 participants believed that encouragement from stakeholders to be proud

and celebrate and communicate cultural beliefs within the academic environment and community without microaggression would have added to generalized work readiness strategies in support of employability after graduation.

To be respectful of some Native beliefs, I asked participants only to identify their tribal affiliation. All units of analysis participating in this qualitative research study identified their origins as mixed blood, race, and ethnicity (some terms used interchangeably). The race identifiers included *Native American, Black, African American, Mayan/Spanish, and Liberian/Irish*. Participants were not at risk or asked to share the knowledge that was detrimental to tribal beliefs and practices during this research study. I did not consider origin, mixed-race, and ethnicity when asking research questions; this restriction could have had a reflection on how questions were answered (McFarland et al., 2019).

The academic agenda and curricula for the general population of students at UMCP-RSI and UMBC-RS2 included the teaching of basic skill sets that supported retention strategies; however, strategies did not enhance retention for U.S. NA students' employment after graduation. Filling out applications and résumé writing were the normal offerings to enhance employability. For U.S. NA/AN students, microaggression was the norm. There should never be an incident when a stakeholder insisted that a NA student change their ethnic identity from one race or ethnicity to another on an application because the student does not fit a certain stereotype or description, as experienced by one participant. It should be realized that skin color has nothing to do with a person's self-identity which affects one's actualization. The skin-tone bias which has been evident in hiring practices is known to be "more salient and regarded more

highly than one's educational background and prior work experiences" (Bagalini, 2020, p. 3).

Participants' people skill sets refer to the ability to "manage stress, resolve conflicts, and navigate workplace challenges" (Conover Company, 2017, para. 1; Wascalus, 2012, para. 1). The use of these same skill sets by stakeholders may have eliminated some U.S. NA students' lack of inclusion while trying to navigate through a somewhat harsh and disrespectful university experience. The lack of instruction regarding basic skill sets and retention strategies in curricula that support workforce readiness and employment after graduation confirmed the lack of stakeholder accountability, service to students, and professionalism in the universities' support of U.S. NA students and graduates.

In the absence of institutional support, some participants resorted to accepting the dominant cultural philosophy and assimilation to include sacrificing their social control. However, all participants remained enculturated. Being open and able to communicate concerns that affect the identity of U.S. NA students' origin, racial, and ethnic identity in or out of the classroom was not a strong indicator of support. Further, U.S. NA students had no opportunities to discuss U.S. NA career options with other stakeholders. None of the participants mentioned any opportunities or options in any of their academic endeavors. However, when a U.S. NA student had a professor in the classroom who looked like them, there was an indication that a well-rounded university experience occurred.

Stakeholders' biases threatened and oppressed U.S. NA students affected their social and academic experiences. Further, U.S. NA students had no opportunities to

discuss U.S. NA career options with other stakeholders. None of the participants mentioned any such opportunities or mentioned that the option came up in any of their academic endeavors. However, when a NA student had the opportunity to have a professor in the classroom who looked like them, it was an indicator that a well-rounded university experience occurred.

Historically, a U.S. NA student with pale or White skin color or with the same skin color variation, according to Perlmann and Waters (2005), could assimilate into the dominant environment and ethnic background. P1 was identified as a White person by stakeholders. Sue and Sue (2003) stated that “being able to pass as a White person among other university students and others was usually an unethical practice; however, an advantage for the individual because of expected favoritism and a warmer acceptance” (p. 56). Stakeholders need to know that “*White* is a race” and that “race-the concept of an inherent ‘whiteness’” or “blackness” or “*Asianness*” that many American students have absorbed is from the earliest moments of their lives” (King, 2019, para. 3). Although King listed several ethnic identities as examples, the ethnicities of NA or even U.S. AN were not referenced. Participants provided strong evidence of microaggression in their answers to research questionnaire questions. Human feelings resulting from experiencing microaggression in a university and a workplace setting could be detrimental to the success of employability and failed workforce readiness (Pool, 2016).

Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study explored retention strategies used at U.S. public universities that did not support U.S. Native American (NA) undergraduate students’ and graduates’ employment pathways and engagement within communities

after graduation. The management problem was confirmed to indicate there is a lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation. Findings indicated a general management problem which affected retention and employability after graduation among U.S. NA undergraduate students and graduates at public universities. The lack of academic and social inclusion of U.S. NA students and graduates at the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) Research site 1(RS1) and University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Research site 2 (RS2) prevented academic and social growth and development in support of employment after graduation.

Raw textual data retrieved from 6 self-identified U.S NA participants shared their lived academic and social experiences while attending the UMCP RS1 and UMBC RS2. To be respectful of some Native beliefs, I asked participants to identify their tribal affiliation. All units of analysis participating in this qualitative research study identified their origins as mixed-blood, race, and ethnicity (some terms used interchangeably). The race identifiers included *Native American, Black, African American, Mayan/Spanish, and Liberian/Irish*.

Because of ethical procedures and historical events that have taken place within U.S. NA/Alaskan Native tribal communities, some potential participants may not have wanted to contribute to this research study even if it was expected to add to other U.S. NA/ANs' academic and social success (Harding et al., 2011). Some U.S. NA communities and tribes were concerned with how their knowledge would be shared by researchers. Knowledge for some tribal communities protects their identity.

Participants were not at risk or asked to share the knowledge that was detrimental to tribal beliefs and practices during this research study. I did not take into consideration origin, mixed-race, and ethnicity when asking research questions; the restrictions could have had a reflection on how questions were answered (McFarland et al., 2019). The participant selection protocol did not attract a participant who self-identified as an U.S. Alaskan Native (AN) students or graduates.

After the interview protocol and analysis of raw textual data, themes were identified. All 6 participants concluded that there was no evidence of direct and implicit retention strategies shared by stakeholders that affected their matriculation, retention, and employability after graduation. The academic agenda and curricula for the general population of students at UMCP-RS1 and UMBC-RS2 included the teaching of basic skill sets that supported retention strategies; however, strategies did not enhance retention for U.S. students' employment after graduation. Filling out applications and résumé writing were the normal offerings to enhance employability. For NA/AN students, microaggression was the norm.

There should never be an incident when a stakeholder insist that a U.S. NA student change their ethnic identity from one race or ethnicity to another on an application because the student does not fit a certain stereotype or description, as experienced by one participant. It should be realized that skin color has nothing to do with a person's self-identity. The skin-tone bias which has been evident in hiring practices is known to be "more salient and regarded more highly than one's educational background and prior work experiences" (Bagalini, 2020, p. 3).

People skills refer to the ability to “manage stress, resolve conflicts, and navigate workplace challenges” (Wascalus, 2012, para. 1; Conover Company, 2017, para. 1). However, from a cultural perspective, stressful situations, conflicts, and workplace challenges could be challenges within themselves when it comes to employability and workforce readiness.

The lack of instruction regarding basic skill sets and retention strategies in curricula that support workforce readiness and employment after graduation confirmed the lack of stakeholder accountability, service to students, and professionalism in the universities’ support of U.S. NA students and graduates. All 6 participants believed that encouragement from RS 1 and 2 stakeholders to be proud, celebrate, and communicate cultural beliefs within the academic environment and community without microaggression would add to generalized workforce readiness strategies in support of employability after graduation.

In the absence of institutional support, some participants resorted to accepting the dominant cultural’ s philosophy and assimilating to include sacrificing their social control. However, all participants remained enculturated. Being open and able to communicate concerns that affect the identity of U.S. NA students’ origin, racial, and ethnic identity in or out of the classroom was not a strong indicator of support. Findings indicated participants’ lack of engagement and dissatisfaction resulted from their not being able to express and openly discuss cultural beliefs in a comfortable setting and to include their cultural knowledge and wisdom in and out of the classroom. One NA participant even experienced identity theft.

Stakeholders' biases threatened and oppressed U.S. NA students, which affected their social and academic experiences. Furthermore, NA students had no opportunities to discuss U.S. NA career options with other stakeholders. None of the participants mentioned any such opportunities or mentioned that the option came up in any of their academic endeavors. However, when a U.S. NA student had the opportunity to have a professor in the classroom who looked like them, it was an indicator that a well-rounded university experience occurred.

Participants provided strong evidence of microaggression in their answers to research questionnaire questions. Human feelings resulting from experiencing microaggression and systemic racism in a university setting and a workplace setting could be detrimental to the success of employability. Non-exceptional organizational retention strategies, a biased campus culture, and poor leadership, in combination with unacceptable stakeholder professionalism on and off-campus, contributed to failed student workplace readiness, a concept consisting of more than a job and general skill sets (Pool, 2016).

Six participants confirmed the lack of retention strategies, workplace readiness, and action plans that supported employability after graduation for NA undergraduate and graduate students at both research sites. The narrative discussion in Chapter 5 will include strategic recommendations to enhance retention and workplace readiness to support employability after graduation for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate and graduate students while at the same time enhancing positive social change.

Chapter 5: Research Analysis

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and identify strategies to improved students' employment pathways after graduation. The central question for this research project was: How do some undergraduate sophomore, junior, and senior U.S. NA/AN students who attend the UMCP and UMBC encounter academic and social disengagement. This study was an exploration of academic and social issues that affected U.S. NA students and graduates attending the UMCP(RS1) and UMBC (RS2). Conceptual frameworks and research questions asked participants referenced the phenomena.

Summary of the Results

The problems that established the need for this qualitative research study were lack of engagement among U.S. NA/AN undergraduates who attended the UMCP RS1 and UMBC RS22 and the lack of workforce readiness imparted to recent graduates. It is widely known that Native Americans have a challenge with employment on and away from reservations (Al-Alsfour, 2018). In 2018, only 59.6% of NAs, including ANs, were working, compared to 62.9% of the total population (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). According to data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), the unemployment rate of the country's 2.9 million, NA/ANs was 6.6%, compared to 3.9% for the total population (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Diamond (2018) estimated the challenges that may result stating "There's high unemployment in Indian country, and it's going to create a barrier to accessing necessary Medicaid services" (para. 9). Therefore, when NA/ANs attend college and universities, it is imperative that stakeholders practice

retention strategies, engagement solutions, and that workforce readiness skill sets are prominent features of management curricula to support employability after graduation. As mentioned and confirmed by all 6 participants in this study, U.S. NA students want to incorporate their perspectives and cultural wisdom into hard and soft skill sets, and curriculum. However, U.S. NA interest is not a stakeholder's priority at the UMCP or UMBC. While technology has caused some hard skills to be obsolete, for instance, "manual and physical skills" (Lisa, 2019, p. 9), soft skill sets like 'teamwork, communication, and critical thinking have become a major job force qualification (Barnard, 2019, p. 1).

The participants selected for this research study communicated unfavorable situations and outcomes that resulted in inappropriate decisions made by stakeholders at the UMCP-RS1 and UMBC-RS2. Management and other stakeholders provided ineffective guidance to U.S. NA students because of a lack of concern for their heritage and culture; this indifference damaged the student educational experience. The lack of sensitivity to certain U.S. NA beliefs and inadequate resources and referrals led to disengagement among participants. Disengagement includes the students' lack of involvement in academic and/or social interactions that support a well-rounded university experience rather than disenfranchisement and boredom (Brint & Cantwell, 2012; Maloshonok, 2014; Shore, 2016a).

Disengagement continued to resonate and align with historical perspectives when it comes to the elimination of inclusion (Vogt-William, 2015). Historically, forced assimilation, loss of political and economic freedom, and discrimination/racism for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate graduate students hindered tribal celebration and spiritual

ceremonies in a public setting (Austin, 2013). The academic and social integration of students into a college or university setting is an important part of the university experience and a determining factor in student retention, according to Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993). Tinto (1975) noted that a lack of integration and engagement in the academic and social university environment leads to low commitment as well as an increase in the probability that students will leave and pursue other goals.

Interpretation of the Findings

The participants for this research study attended the University of Maryland in College Park or Baltimore County, PWIs of higher education. The NA participants' race and origin categories referenced North and South America, which included Central America (Nativity, 2019). While they were U.S. NA undergraduate students and graduates, they expected the same well-rounded experience as any other U.S. college student would receive. However, both research sites reflected the dominant society's middle-class values, and policies and practices reinforced the prevailing attitudes. For the White students, the university setting was simply an extension of the educational social institution of their culture (Huffman, Sill, et al., 1986, p. 32). On the other hand, US. NA participants attending the same universities brought to campus their strong sense of cultural identity and orientation toward a set of values that are different from those institutionalized in the college/university setting (Minthorn, 2020). However, some NA participants' identity was falsely defined by the dominant group and their cultural values invalidated in events that echoed the historical treatment of NAs.

This research study was an attempt to identify the educational practices and workforce readiness strategies that benefit the U.S. NA students and graduates attending

academic institutions. The research sites were responsible for ensuring that services, programs, and curricula were in place to support all undergraduate and graduate students. However, for the U.S. NA undergraduates and recent graduates, matriculation, retention, and engagement did not enhance the skill sets needed for workforce readiness after graduation. Coded themes emerged from 6 participants' responses to answering the research questionnaire questions and confirm Crosby's (2011) conclusion that the academic and social retention and advancement of U.S. NA students are not a priority in support of employability after graduation.

Retention Strategies

The 6 participants did not receive education in specific retention strategies needed to instill skill sets and support workforce readiness after graduation. The coded themes revealed a lack of academic and social involvement, racial and cultural identity development, leadership development, and strategies for employability after graduation, just to name a few. In addition, in-depth exploration of research questions yielded participant responses that indicated a lack of integration and instances of incongruence and isolation. Incongruence, or "mismatch," was participants' perception that they did not fit in with the institutional and stakeholders' approach to higher education and inclusion. Incongruence produced unpleasant interactions that greatly reduced participants' satisfaction with their university experience. The literature review in Chapter 2 identified an array of contextual and personal conditions that were associated with incongruences, such as a lack of adequate preparation, academic challenges, disengagement from extracurricular activities, and negative perceptions of the quality of campus life by

students from nontraditional or no majority ethnic/racial backgrounds (Brint & Cantwell, 2012; Malaney & Shively, 1995).

Cultural Equity

Creighton (2007) mentioned that some U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students need motivation, techniques on how to challenge a rigid curriculum, and improvement in self-esteem. The UMCP-RS1 does not have Native American faculty on campus. Faircloth and Tippeconnic (2010) described the importance of a person who looks like me and aware of skill sets needed in support of workforce readiness. I feel there was no apparent reason why both research sites did not have self-identified and visible Native Americans and other indigenous faculty and staff and advisors employed to educate and communicate with U.S. NA students and graduates. Participants reported finding it disheartening to walk around a new environment and not see people that looked like them. This isolation took a toll on participants' self-perception and resulted in the participants' wondering whether they fit in or whether other students saw them as different. This challenging set of circumstances resulted in participants' assimilating to the dominant culture.

Faculty cannot adapt to the cultural experience of all cultures. However, they can be aware of differences to the point of having an intelligent conversation. Stakeholders could encourage all students to expand their perspective and experience to respect others' beliefs, morals, and most importantly, their identity. One way to improve the environment at the universities is to require every student to take a class to immerse into another culture and experience the heritage of other ethnic identities. As one participant

stated, they wanted to be understood and empowered to share their tribal affiliation and identity, as well.

At the end of the day, all U.S. NA participants want is a feeling of belonging. Predictions indicated that NA/AN population would be 1.25% in 2016 and 1.38% in 2060 (Duffin, 2020, p. 1). People of color will become most of the American working class by 2032 (Wilson, 2016, p. 1).

Employability

Participants mentioned they received assistance with résumé writing in class; however, none received instruction about how to incorporate cultural expression and heritage within those documents. Workforce readiness enhances employability, which is getting and keeping a job. Employability is having a set of skill sets, knowledge, understanding, and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful (Pool & Sewell, 2007). However, there is more to employability than just being hired to work.

Hard skills sets

Lisa (2019) mentioned hard skills (specialized training) listed on a participant's résumé will help get the application through the applicant tracking system used to determine who may best suit the job. Examples of hard skills include the following:

Technological hard skills: Data mining, data analysis, coding.

Big data engineering: Python, Java, Excel, Computer science.

Sales and marketing: social media, outreach, strategy, forecasting; and

Accounting and finance: mathematics, bookkeeping, IT, analytics, auditing, and Microsoft Office, and risk analysis are other examples of hard skill sets and sometimes referred to by employees as “resume keywords” (Doepke, 2020, p. 1).

Soft skill sets

During this study, a participant reported that their parent continued to practice the culturally traditional way of raising a child, and that practice called for younger people to be quiet, to listen, and to speak quickly to show respect for elders (Stokes, 1997). The participant experienced culture shock because they did not know what to say or how and when to say it. A university environment requires much dialogue; the environment should be open to diverse discussions (Jaipurjar, 2015).

Soft skill sets in the form of diverse communication skills are necessary for success not only within the university setting but also in the workplace. Smith (1991) concluded that in the 19th century, the natural rights theory, which supported the First Amendment and freedom of speech for Cherokee and other training Native American Indian Nations, should be culturally grounded by Anglo-Americans. Some soft skills necessary to navigate the workplace environment are conflict resolution, leadership training, listening tips, being a team player, decision-making strategies, entrepreneurial ideas, hand-on experiences, integrity, and attention to detail. Furthermore, specific soft skill sets are needed in this digital and pluralistic society, and these sets are lacking in the academic arena (Thirunavukarasu, Chandrasekaran, et al., 2020).

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study indicated a lack of managerial consistency within the various campuses under the umbrella of the University of Maryland System. The RS1

imposed certain restrictions when requesting to recruit student/graduate participants for the research study, whereas the RS2 was more liberal with allowing more access to student demographic information as a part of recruiting potential participants for the research study. The difference in access to students and graduates from my perspective gave a clear notion of a lack of consistency. Therefore, a recommendation is that the university system has transparent guidelines for recruiting potential participants for research projects for efficiency and better management. To avoid wrong signals and in view of this circumstance, the University of Maryland System has a pivotal role in the development of fair and equitable practices.

In contrast to previous researchers' conclusions, a trusting relationship with U.S NA students and graduates attending the University of Maryland RS1 and 2. Participants had issues with persistence and involvement in educational and social possibilities (Adelman et al., 2013, pp. 29-56). They wanted opportunities to be engaged and retained and to advance their educational goals, and they needed skill sets to enhance employability after graduation.

The literature review documented an increasing body of research that attempts to explore persistence and retention in terms of non-academic or non-cognitive variables. Some of the non-cognitive variables that were related to the academic success of students included positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, and understanding and ability to deal with racism (Austin, 1977).

There were no opportunities for participants to truly learn and be aware of how to handle systemic racism; instead, they were forced to cope with the prevailing sentiment, "That is just the way it is" (Bernoff, 2020, para 3), and endure the hostile environment,

racial chanting, racial insults, racial microaggression (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Some participants felt the experience of discrimination hindered their choices and exposure to university degrees, career choices, and opportunities (Hardy, 2020). During this time in the country, more racial tension has exploded. “The COVID-19 pandemic the country is experiencing has unmasked widespread systemic racial inequalities” (Willis, 2020, para. 2). Faculty interaction, particularly when it was academic in nature, had an opportunity to support a positive effect on student success for all students (Kuh & Hu, 2001). However, satisfaction with faculty relationships appeared to vary by race, with White students reporting the greatest satisfaction (Schwitzer, 1999). When the instructor’s ethnicity or race was different from participants’, findings suggested limited learning opportunities.

The leadership at the research sites was not aware and did not utilize conceptual skills of U.S. NA students and graduates creatively, nor did stakeholders acknowledge U.S. NA students’ ability to understand complicated and abstract ideas in and out of the classroom. By using a well-developed conceptual skill set, top-level stakeholder managers should have had the ability to look at their campus environment as a holistic entity, appreciate the interrelationships between its management and teams, and understand how stakeholders affected U.S. NA students, graduates, and the overall environment.

Recommendations

Retention Strategies

As mentioned in Chapter 1 and confirmed by coding and emerging themes retrieved from 6 U.S. NA students and graduates who attended the UMCP-RS1 and

UMBC-RS2, retention strategies implemented during their matriculation had no connection to U.S. NAs' needs to enhance engagement, improve post-graduate workforce readiness skill sets, and cultivate employability after graduation. Universities should have retention strategies in place that help eliminate U.S. NA students' and graduates' involuntary disengagement from academic and social involvement while attending university.

I believe another goal is to increase enthusiasm among U.S. NA/AN students. Enthusiasm could support engagement, retention, and workforce readiness skills and enhance employment after graduation. Workforce readiness strategies presented during early intervention from high-quality teaching staff and counselors using an adequate curriculum, academic support (Gragg, 2016) and, to add to the list, workforce readiness skill sets learned before graduation will enhance employment after graduation. Stakeholders should be responsible for academic and social recommendations to deans, directors, faculty, and other stakeholders. Suggestions to support U.S. matriculation might include the following:

- Identify U.S. NA/AN students' needs, trends, and reasons for systemic communication gaps among on campus stakeholders.
- Include Native American and other Indigenous language appreciation in curricula.
- Learn about and celebrate different NA customs, spiritualities, and narratives, and treaty rights.
- Maintain stakeholder and U.S. NA engagement database by documenting interactions.

- Challenge national reporting of statistical data for U.S. NA students and populations.
- Craft, implement, and maintain strategies to build effective partnerships with tribal audiences, tribal academia, vendors, and the private sector.
- Include U.S. NA media messages on a variety of media, including Facebook, Messenger, LinkedIn, Twitter, and podcasts, in support of communication.
- Publish digital and hard-copy newsletters or campus newspapers to identify strategies to support U.S. NA students and graduates of the universities.
- Offer networking sessions, workshops, job fairs, and presentations to promote retention and workforce readiness strategies.
- Promote community involvement with U.S. NA elders, spiritual leaders, educators, and others.
- Provide information to U.S. NA students and graduates about the curriculum and expectations prior to enrollment and teach them how to move forward toward their educational goals.
- Institute a NA mentoring program.
- Hold a job fair to include U.S. NA internships, fellowships, recruitment, on-the-job training, and other opportunities.
- Work based learning experiences – connect school experiences with real work and career opportunities.
- Pursue financial aid that specifically supports U.S. NA students.

Angelique Albert (2019, March 7) wrote: “In order for NA/AN students to have opportunities for higher education, congress must continue to invest in scholarship dollars to support students. One of the main obstacles to higher education for Native students is the financial support” (para. 4).

- Develop and offer opportunities to shadow Native and Indigenous legislators, senators, and others in the political arena.
- Identify resources that will benefit the continued educational endeavors for the Indigenous community.
- Ensure that the financial aids office staff on campus is knowledgeable and can advise the U.S. NA student prior to enrollment and while matriculating.

A recently established resource for the Native community is the Native-serving Institutions Initiative. This program is “committed to supporting American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) student educational attainment in higher education” (Improving access and success for American Indian/Alaska Native students, 2019, p. 1).

Strategies to Remedy Disengagement

Universities may strengthen knowledge and apply strategies to reduce disengagement by having talking circles “to be one effective way of bringing people together in a quiet, respectful, and safe place where they can share their experiences and learn positive coping skills from each other” (Use of Talking Circles, 2014, p. 3). Talking circles can enhance,

- creating a new dialogue among managers, scholars, colleagues, peers, other students, community members, and others.

- listening in appreciation of U.S. NA students' and graduates' and other indigenous student's honest and transferable storytelling and discussions; and
- forging connections to bridge academic and social distances between NAs and other undergraduate students, faculty, and staff.

Tribal colleges and universities train US. NA and other NA students from other countries in various career and workplace training programs to prevent assimilation (Rush, 2019; Al-Asfour, 2018). I would suggest that U.S. NAs who graduate from traditional colleges and universities, such as the UMCP and the UMBC, return to Indian Country and other reservations to enhance the workforce skill sets of those already working on the reservation. I believe that additional training and new innovations create new jobs.

Implications for Social Change

Methodological Implications

The findings of this study yielded several important outcomes. The findings confirmed that all 6 participants had similar experiences while attending UMCP-RS1 and UMBC-RS2. The 6 participants' responses to research and questionnaire questions confirmed that workforce skill sets skills are needed to enhance finding a workplace after graduation that would satisfy their hierarchy of needs and accommodate their cultural desires, which had not been offered at their institutions of higher learning. This narrative reporting focused on understanding participants' individual history and past experiences. The participants' answers identified how their past experiences contributed to their present experiences while at the university and some perceived future experiences. This

narrative reporting allowed me to establish a closer bond (collaboration) with participants (Trochim, 2001) during the interview process.

Implications for Practice

This study discovered the lack of diversity and inclusion intended to enhance academic and social engagement among U.S. NA undergraduate students while attending the RS1 and RS2. This study implied that predominantly White institutions should create a policy to ensure continued professional development training, sensitivity training, and other career-building strategies for managing and teaching stakeholders. In addition, training should be reflected in the curriculum and teaching instructional methods, course design, and classroom atmosphere. Cultural awareness training should be mandatory for not just faculty, staff, and nontraditional students but for the smallest number of enrolled multi-ethnic students, to include Native American and Alaskan Native U.S. students.

Academic and employment counseling is needed for U.S. NA students and graduates to modify thinking and enhance understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of other students from diverse, racial, ethnic, and/or cultural backgrounds; these measures may enhance employment opportunities. [The career centers](#) on the campuses should have a list of direct job referrals and placements for employment opportunities available for U.S. NA students and graduates. Although some participants did receive instructions in résumé writing and learned some techniques for filling out job applications, more counseling is needed to address their cultural and heritage beliefs in support of job placement and career. Internship opportunities may support workforce readiness and enhance employability. These strategies are needed to reduce unemployment among U.S. NA/AN graduates seeking employment. Job fairs on campus should always have job

placement recruiters from U.S. NA companies and organizations who will be ready to hire graduates on-site.

A U.S. NA student/graduate should be able to identify with their cultural backgrounds and not feel a need to assimilate and accept another culture at the same time just to be accepted. Stakeholders at the UMCP, UMBC, and other PWIs should have continuing education and become familiar with racial identity development models; all students are not the same based on skin color, behavior, language, and actions.

Participants in this study shared that joining a club, although it may not have had a Native focus, enabled U.S. NA students and graduates to network, find out who was on campus, identify other opportunities to engage with others who may have the same identity, and explore other involvement opportunities. On the UMCP campus, the American Indian Student Union provided office space as well as the UMBC Mosaic Center, which were considered safe spaces for U.S. NA students and graduates and other stakeholders to discuss social issues and celebrate cultural expression. However, being able to use the facilities, free to celebrate cultural identities, and to feel safe and comfortable was a challenge for some U.S. NA participants.

Gen Z and the millennial generation are closing the generation gaps with high-speed technology. Technology could be used to enhance diversity and inclusion on and off-campus since some NA students are off campuses and are using virtual learning platforms because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It may be noted that communication was lacking among NA students and other stakeholders. Reading and writing articles for publications in campus newspapers or newsletters, for example, is an effective tool to fight against resistance, ignorance, disrespect, and lack of knowledge.

Social media platforms to include message rooms, university blogs, and the digital divide moves the message into spaces more familiar to younger students.

Parental involvement in student educational endeavors should always exist. The university can only enhance the educational journey a NA student has travel. However, the parent/guardian and family continue exposure to opportunities that will advance career and employability (Jimenez, 2020).

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and identify strategies to improved students' employment pathways after graduation. The objective of this study was fulfilled in an increased understanding of the issues affecting NA students and graduates at the University of Maryland at College Park and Baltimore County. The research questions addressed in this study were:

RQ1. How do U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' heritage and culture influence retention strategies at the University of Maryland that support employment after graduation?

RQ2. What retention strategies used at the University of Maryland U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' ability to secure a job after graduation?

The 6 NA participants selected for this research study reported conflicts related to stakeholders' values, beliefs, and motivations (Sabri & Sabri-Matanagh, 2013). The University of Maryland system has a lack of stakeholder accountability, persistence, and inclusiveness. It is imperative that stakeholder managers and others in the community increase awareness and prepare to address U.S. NA students' issues to include cultural

sensitivity upon admission (Martinez, 2014). Understanding of a very transparent culture will provide upward mobility at a postsecondary level for all concerned. Academic and social opportunities at both research sites have continued student systemic satisfaction gaps between faculty, staff, public and private stakeholders, workplace training opportunities, other undergraduate students, and graduates (Jimenez, 2020). Participants had issues with persistence and involvement in educational and social possibilities (Adelman et al., 2013, pp. 29-56). They wanted opportunities to be engaged and to advance their educational goals, and they needed skill sets to enhance employability after graduation and job security. The lack of resources and support from stakeholder managers, faculty and staff, other students, the college environment, and the community in support of NA undergraduate student retention, can only result in failure (Jimenez, 2020; Guillory & Wolverson, 2008).

Raw textual data analysis revealed themes that portrayed challenges with skills needed for employability after graduation for NA students and graduates. Findings of the literature review established that the employability of NA graduates is low within workplaces (Jimenez, 2020). The NA student and graduate need to learn soft skill sets: “Employers expect demand for soft skills to increase in the next five years” (MBA.com, 2020, para. 3). Development of soft skills allows workers to avoid conflict by understandings each other’s talents thru communicating and having a more stakeholder welcoming open door policy.

Although college readiness is reinforced, workforce readiness has not been considered within the academic and social environment at the University of Maryland College Park and Baltimore County. Furthermore, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

conveyed the same disregard for the needs of this population in their decision not to specifically report NAs' and ANs' workplace demographics since the population was so small and diverse compared to other ethnic identities (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019).

Because of the state of emergency caused by the existence of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and social distancing, some NA students and graduates are not on campus. They have the option of taking classes online and using virtual platforms from remote locations. The U.S. Native American student and graduate may encounter challenges in accessing virtual connections and telecommunication from remote areas because of the digital divide (American Indian Policy Institute, 2019) while in Indian Country and on reservations. For those U.S. NA students remaining on campus, administrators and other stakeholders should “making sure there are resources accessible to U.S. NA students when there is an emergency that calls for them to return home and acknowledging the ceremonial timeline that exists within each of their respective communities” (Minthorn, 2020, p. 1). Support from NA family members to include elders, and others will be expected.

The NA/AN undergraduate students attending the university experience anxiety when distanced from their family while away (Cherry, 2016; Hunt et al., 2008). Schoem, et al. (2004) mentioned that children's separation from parents was neither practical nor beneficial. Native family and environment ties are unyielding. The ceremony, language, and family are most important. No matter how attached some U.S. NA/AN children may be and how overly protected by family, they should not have issues when away from the family environment for a substantial period and among unfamiliar peoples (Rush, 2019;

Brooks, 2012; Bowlby, 1991). Nonetheless, U.S. NA/AN children are most productive when close to family members and comfortable when practicing cultural beliefs and practices (Bossman, 2015).

Siblings separated from parents and forced to assimilate missed an innate and nurturing experience, bonding, and cultural exposure (Patel, 2012). Acculturation was a better fit for some because their cultural heritage did not vanish. The Attachment theory and beliefs are not to say that separation from family could or could not have supported disengagement for U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students attending the UMCP.

Unfortunately, during the interview process, there was few mentions of family inclusion from participants in their academic and social experiences on campuses. Family is the most important entity for Native communities. NA students are less likely to have parents that have postsecondary degrees in their household (Challenges, 2020).

Various factors, concepts, and themes were highlighted in Chapter 2 that cause disengagement for the U.S. NA/AN students and graduates that revert to participants' lived experiences of disengagement, microaggression, and systematic racism. Themes and recommendations that emerged from this inquiry are worthy of consideration, not only for the University of Maryland system but also for all predominately White institutions of higher education, other schools, colleges, and training facilities. The conceptual framework analysis and narrative discussion enhanced themes, theoretical concepts, and models. Stakeholders at institutions of higher education should show pride in advantages and influences to form a positive relationship with U.S. NA students and graduates. As a result of this research study, policymakers, administrators, educators, faculty, staff, students, and others are exposed to additional themes recommended to

enhance engagement, retention, and graduation for U.S. NA students to enhance employability after graduation.

Tierney (1991) stated, which still has relevance today, that the lack of diversity training, inclusion, and appreciation of Native heritage from non-natives is unacceptable.

Reverting to the purpose, and problems:

- The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study explored strategies used at U.S. public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native students and *it was confirmed* that no strategic strategies are in place to improved students' employment pathways after graduation.
- The management problem studied *was confirmed* when stated the lack of retention strategies used in public universities to support U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native student engagement within communities after graduation and confirmed by 6 U.S. NA undergraduate students and graduates attending the UMCP and the UMBC.
- The general management problem *was confirmed* that the lack of retention strategies affected U.S. Native American/Alaskan Native students' employability after graduation.

From the narrative discussion Several threat factors/themes were identified that impact retention and workforce readiness skill set to enhance employment after graduation and should be added to pedagogy. Those threats include microaggression, delayed historical factors, identity theft factor, and systemic racism factor for U.S. NA undergraduate and graduate students attending PWIs.

As one scholar stated, peoples should be proud of their life experiences and likewise, appreciate the experiences of others (Brown, 1994). It must be realized by stakeholders and students that technological, socio-economic, geopolitical, and demographic developments and the interactions between them will generate new categories of jobs and occupations. Skill sets required in both old and new occupations in most industries will change, and transform how and where people work, which will lead to new management and regulatory challenges (Lisa, 2019; “Drivers for Change”, 2016, p. 8). The U.S NA and I include the U.S. Alaskan Native student and graduate should be trained and be prepared for new challenges.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is changing the way of doing business and employment opportunities. Stakeholders, U.S. NA students, and graduates are expected to integrate, be persistent, and further the process of globalization through digital connections and specific skill sets, which will enhance employability (Bakhshi et al., 2017). However, because of the lack of engagement, retention, and stakeholder accountability to ensure U.S. NA students and graduates are employable, and the National health crisis, the purpose of this study should be examined further. Lack of work readiness skills will affect self-actualization, job retention, morale, and in some cases mental health (“Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs in Pre and Post COVID-19 State,” 2020, p. 1). Dissemination of the research findings is a key component of the research action. Merisotis and Hauser (2020) stated “Long-term survival will hinge on their ability to deliver what matters most to students, employers and society” (para. 15). I encourage contributions from this scholarly research study and the analysis to be shared with others in the community. This research study enhances professionals develop and support the

use of workforce readiness skill sets to improve internal capacity and external opportunities for U.S. NA undergraduate and graduate student employability after graduation. I encourage the U.S. Native American undergraduate students and graduates to continue their post-secondary education, become employable, elevate their careers, and their highest level of self-actualization while encouraging positive social change.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol Form: For Interviewer use only!

Date: (mm) ___ (dd) ___ (yyyy)___ Time of Interview: ___:___ am ___:___ pm

Interview Site: University of Maryland College Park: Yes: ___ No: ___

University of Maryland Baltimore County: Yes: ___ No: ___

Skype-to-Skype: Yes: ___ No: ___ Telephone # _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Method of Interview: Face-to-Face (on-site) ___ Skype-to-Skype: ___

Tape Recording Mentioned: Yes ___ No ___

Interviewer: (first name) _____ (last name) _____

Participant: first name) _____ (last name) _____

Nation/Tribal Affiliation: _____ Male ___ Female ___ Other ___

Academic Standing: So. ___ Jr. ___ Sr. ___ Graduate ___ Year ___

Year/Expected graduation: Date: _____ Major: _____ Minor: _____

Ethnic Identity: Native American ___ Alaskan Native U.S, ___ other ___

Interviewer: (Briefly describe the research study ORALLY)

Informed Consent Form Signed: Yes ___ No ___

Confidentiality Agreement Overview: Yes ___ No: ___

Interview Process: Time: (start) _____ (finish) ___

Appendix B: Redesigned Instrument Request Letter

Date: October 21, 2013

To: Dottie Bass Chicquelo

From: Jennifer J. Reeves

RE: Letter of Permission:

I am the author of, “The First Year Experience and Persistence of Native American Students at One Predominantly White Four-Year Institution” (2006). The document was my master’s Thesis. I give Dottie Chicquelo, a Ph. D. student attending the Walden University permission to use the informed consent form, research design questionnaire questions in my thesis document and any other documentation with appropriate references and citations. She may edit the document according to her research topic and participant involvement. If there are any questions, I can be reached by email at jreeves12@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

Jennifer J. Reeves

Master of Science in Education, 06 Reprint with permission

NOTE: Reeves, J. (2006). *The first-year experience and persistence of Native American students at one predominantly White four-year Institution*. Reprint with

Permission

Appendix C: Research Design Questionnaire Questions

The interviewer will avoid leading questions. The U.S. Native American and Alaskan Native (NA/AN) participants will answer open-ended questions, face-to-face via in person or skype and discuss their lived experiences. There may be follow -up questions and opportunity for probing which is encouraged. All conversations between the participant and interviewer will be tape-recorded. The participant should sign the informed consent form.

The 2 research questions will guide the study:

Overarching Question: What retention strategies used at public universities affect U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' employment after graduation?

Research Questions

RQ1. How do U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' heritage and culture influence retention strategies at the University of Maryland in College Park and Baltimore County that support employment after graduation?

RQ2. What retention strategies used at the University of Maryland in College Park and Baltimore County affect U.S. NA/AN undergraduate students' ability to secure a job after graduation?

Research Design Questionnaire Questions

1. About your ethnic identity, how do/did you identify and why? Tribe affiliation?
2. What are/were your experiences interacting with fellow students, staff, and faculty at the University of Maryland at College Park and Baltimore County before graduation?
Did you feel disrespected as a U.S. NA/AN in at any time during your academic and social experience?

3. How has stakeholder retention strategies affected your matriculation, retention and potential or present employment pathway? Have you experienced racial micro-aggression at the University of Maryland in College Park and Baltimore County?

NOTE: Please take a moment to read the following definition.

"*Racial Micro-aggression*"—one of the "everyday insults, indignities and demeaning messages sent to peoples of color by well-intentioned White people who are unaware of the hidden messages being sent to them" (Sue, para. 4, in Tori Deangelo's, 2009). For instance, being in class and a derogatory word or phrase used that may have insulted you as a Native American and Alaska Natives. **NOTE:** Other ethnic groups may be guilty of the same actions.

4. Did/do you think assimilation, acculturation, and enculturation within the traditional environment were the best option for you to eliminate perceived notions of disengagement caused by a lack of retention strategies?

NOTE: Please take a moment to read the following definitions.

5. What work readiness strategies experienced before graduation from the UM in support of employability do you support and please explain the strategy(s)?

Definitions

Assimilation - to ensure the minority group lives by the dominant group's cultural beliefs (Thompson, 1996, p. 114). Social control dominates if a person assimilates (similarity) and enjoys the taste of another culture. Social control dominates if a person assimilates (simulators and beliefs). Assimilation was one of many practices enforced to discount cultural expression among Native Americans and Alaska Natives, as well as mandate educational genocide (Huffman, 2001b). It is extremely easy for Native American

students to assimilate into today's educational systems. Assimilation is a situation that could deprive them of a well-rounded university experience by not taking part in opportunities to celebrate their culture (Stone, 2011).

Acculturation - Thompson (1996) believed that acculturation in a certain group happens before assimilation and adaptation did not always result from acculturation. Acculturation (second culture) occurs when a person enjoys the other groups' food, clothing, habits, and ways of living their life. Acculturation does not exclude all things about one's past culture nor obligation to accept another way of living one's life (Patel, 2014).

Enculturation - the process of first-culture learning. Whereas acculturation refer to second-culture learning (Sutton, "Acculturation," 2013a, para.1). *(Thank the individual for participating in the interview).

Ensure confidentiality of responses and potential future interviews. The interview process has ended. The interviewer will answer any questions and concerns. Each participant who completes the interview process will receive by mail, a "Certificate of Appreciation" as an expression of our gratitude" and informed when the study is completed for their review of outcome. In addition, each participant who completes the interview process will receive a 1-2-page summary of the scholarly research study's results via email.

Again, THANK YOU

Appendix D: Acronyms

ACT -	American College Testing
APRRSL-	Aboriginal Peoples, Resilience, Residential School Legacy
AYP -	Adequate Yearly Progress
BIA -	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BIE-	Bureau of Indian Education
CBS -	Columbia Broadcasting System
CBC-	News - Canadian Broadcasting
CCSSO -	Council of Chief State School Officers
CEP -	Common Experience Payment
CT -	American College Test
CTV -	Canadian Television Network
EA -	European American
RS	Internal Revenue Service
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SIM	Student Integration Model
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCS	Uniform Course of Action
USDI	United States Department of Interior