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# Association Between Adults' Perceptions of Their Parents' Parenting Behaviors During Youth and Resulting Attachment Dimensions in Adulthood in the Native American Community

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# Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

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Christine Summering

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Walden University  
2024

Abstract

Association Between Adults' Perceptions of Their Parents' Parenting Behaviors During  
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Community

by

Christine Summering

MA, University of South Dakota, 2015

MA, University of South Dakota, 2014

BA, Vanguard University of Southern California, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Developmental Psychology

Walden University

November 2024

## Abstract

Forced assimilation of Native American peoples has led to the destruction of their traditional ways of life and contributed to heightened rates of Native American children in foster care, increased domestic violence, substance abuse, alcoholism, and poverty. The purpose of this study was to understand associations between perceived parenting behaviors and current adult attachment within Native American communities and whether those associations were moderated by historical loss. The attachment theory and historical trauma theory were used as theoretical foundations for the study. Research questions for this nonexperimental quantitative study involved associations between warmth and involvement and anxious and avoidant attachment behaviors during adulthood using the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) and Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) instruments, as well as the Historical Loss Scale. 11 individuals participated in this study who were 18 or older, lived in the United States, and identified as Native American. A series of individual simple linear regressions were run for research questions. However, due to the inability to obtain a sufficient sample size, statistically significant results were not found. Further research on this topic and better access to the proposed population are recommended to support a clearer understanding of how parenting behaviors, attachment dimensions, and historical loss interact among Native Americans. This study contributes to positive social change through bringing awareness to the relationships dynamics within the Native American family system and the impact historical loss is having on that population in order to support healing for this community.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this research to my grandparents who always inspired me to dream big and get an education. Thank you for setting me on this path and providing the initial means to do so. Although you are no longer here, I know you must feel great pride in this accomplishment.

## Acknowledgments

To my sister Meagan who stuck with me day after day in my pursuit of becoming a doctor and helped keep our household running and me sane in the hardest times. To my family who has always supported my pursuit of higher education, to my Innercept crew that has stood by me for the last nine years, and to my music family who pushed me to write even though they knew I would rather be on stage. Above all to Dr. Natalie Costa who has made me from a student to a scholar. Without her wisdom, patience, and guidance I would not have survived the process.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	4
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	5
Theoretical Framework for the Study.....	10
Nature of the Study.....	12
Definitions.....	13
Assumptions.....	14
Scope and Delimitations .....	14
Limitations .....	15
Significance.....	15
Significance to Theory .....	16
Significance to Practice.....	17
Significance to Social Change .....	17
Summary .....	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	20
Literature Search Strategy.....	21
Theoretical Foundation .....	21
Attachment Theory .....	21



Historical Trauma Theory .....	24
Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts .....	27
Parenting Behaviors .....	27
Retrospective Perceived Parenting Behaviors .....	31
Adult Attachment Dimensions.....	33
Historical Loss .....	37
Summary and Conclusions .....	44
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	46
Research Design and Rationale .....	46
Methodology .....	47
Population .....	47
Sampling and Sampling Procedures .....	47
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	49
Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs .....	51
Data Analysis Plan.....	53
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	54
Statistical Analysis.....	58
Threats to Validity .....	59
External Validity.....	59
Internal Validity .....	60
Construct Validity.....	61
Ethical Procedures .....	61

Summary .....	62
Chapter 4: Results .....	64
Data Collection .....	69
Sample Demographics .....	71
Results	74
Descriptive Statistics.....	74
Statistical Assumption .....	75
Data Analysis .....	76
Summary .....	80
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations .....	83
Interpretation of the Findings.....	84
Limitations of the Study.....	84
Recommendations.....	85
Implications.....	85
Conclusion .....	86
References .....	87
Appendix A: Demographics Questionnaire .....	99
Appendix B: Revised ECR-R Questionnaire .....	101
Appendix C: PSDQ.....	104
Appendix D: HLS Questionnaire.....	106

## List of Tables

Table 1. Sample Demographic Characteristics.....	73
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables .....	75
Table 3. Warmth and Involvement Predicting Anxious Attachment.....	77
Table 4. Warmth and Involvement Predicting Avoidant Attachment .....	78
Table 5. Historical Loss Moderating Associations Between Warmth and Involvement and Anxious Attachment .....	79

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Native American populations currently represent approximately 8.7 million people in the United States based on the 2020 Census (U.S Census Bureau, 2021). This population experienced historic forced assimilation during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Anglo-Saxons. Impacts of those experiences are passed down through generations, inflicting damage via historical trauma and residual symptoms of historical loss (Brown-Rice, 2013). A disproportionate amount of Native American children reside in foster care after the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, which was meant to limit the entrance of Native American children into the foster care system (Davis et al., 2022). This appears to be caused by lack of healthy and capable caregivers and parents due to increased substance and alcohol abuse, poverty, and mental health issues (Kong et al., 2018). These maladaptive behaviors are making an impact on family systems within Native American communities (Armenta et al., 2018; Brave Heart, 2003; Bombay et al., 2011; Kong et al., 2018; Nutton & Fast, 2015). There is limited research regarding the long term impact historical loss symptoms have on parent-child relationships as well as current quality of adult relationships and attachment among this population.

The goal of this study was to examine associations between perceptions of parents' parenting behaviors during youth and resulting attachment dimensions during adulthood among those who identify as Native American. I examined historical loss as a moderator of associations between perceived parenting behaviors and attachment dimensions among participants. Information in this study can be used to inform those working in Native American communities about how historical loss may impact

relationships between children and their parents. Further support and resources can be provided to assist in rebuilding Native American cultures and addressing the importance of healthy family systems within these communities. This study will lead to potential positive social change for Native American peoples by bringing awareness regarding how services can support healthy family systems and rebuild the damage historical trauma has had on indigenous people, as well as expectations regarding how humans are treated in the United States.

This chapter includes an outline of the background of this study, research problem, and purpose of this study. It also includes research questions, hypotheses, and the theoretical framework, as well as definitions of terms, the nature of the study, significance, and limitations.

### **Background**

Native American cultures currently face high rates of child abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse, and disproportionate numbers of children in foster care services (Anderson, 2014; Chamberlain et al., 2019; Kong et al., 2018; Muir & Bohr, 2019; Rose, 2014;). Forced assimilation of Native American cultures and residual effects have led to significant struggles within these communities, especially in terms of family units (Kong et al., 2018; Rose, 2014; Sam et al., 2015; Simard, 2019). According to Brave Heart (2003), historical trauma is “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences” (p. 7). The historical trauma theory includes the following four parameters: large scale trauma which is intentionally imposed upon a specific population

by the dominant population, trauma that i experienced over time rather than during one specific event, widespread traumatic experiences, and traditional practices of the population which lead to substantial negative physical, psychological, and socioeconomic impacts.

Historical trauma leads to historical loss symptoms in terms of domestic violence, physical and sexual assaults, child abuse, lack of completion of education, psychological concerns such as alcoholism, substance abuse, mental health disorders, suicidal ideation, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and physiological issues involving as life expectancy, heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), diabetes, tuberculosis, and lack of sufficient mental and physical health resources (Brown-Rice, 2013).

Historical loss symptoms and severed relationships within Indigenous communities lead to strong negative impacts on family units (Deane et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2018; Simi & Matusitz, 2016). Disconnect from customary parenting behaviors and lack of traditional unity of indigenous cultures impacts attachment between parents and infants, as well as parent-child relationships (Anderson, 2014; Muir & Bohr, 2019; Pazderka et al., 2014; Sam et al., 2015; Simard, 2019).

Parent-child relationships are at the core of development and imperative for creating healthy attachments, which influences all relationships across the lifespan (Anderson, 2014; Chamberlain et al., 2019; Deane et al., 2018; Muir & Bohr, 2019; Pazderka et al., 2014; Sam et al., 2015; Simard, 2019; Simi & Matusitz, 2016). In terms of anxious and avoidant adult attachment dimensions, there can be an understanding of how individuals connect with others as well as themselves via a variety of relationship

contexts including romantic, familial, and peer (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; Levy et al., 1998). To date, research has not explored if parenting behaviors are impacted by experiences involving historical loss or associated with anxious and avoidant attachment within Native American communities.

I proposed to close the gap in literature through addressing associations between perceived parenting behaviors and current adult attachment dimensions among Native American communities and if those associations are impacted by experiences with historical loss. This study is needed to provide information to Native American communities about how they may be currently impacted by historical loss and what potential influence previous parenting behaviors might have on adult relationships of those individuals. This research is necessary in that it could provide further information on how historical loss may be impacting this population and how to better support more effective parenting behaviors, potentially leading to healthier attachments in adulthood and overall stronger family communities.

### **Problem Statement**

What is learned during childhood becomes the foundation of knowledge in terms of interaction with the world via engagement between parents and their children (Ainsworth & Bolby, 1989; Albert & Trommsdorff, 2014; Dinero et al., 2011; Hong & Park, 2012; Jeong et al., 2021; Leerkes et al., 2017; Steele & McKinnery, 2009; Zayas et al., 2011) These interactions lay the groundwork for how adults learn to interact with each other and influence security of relationship attachments.

The problem is that Native American cultures experience historical loss symptoms that are increasing negative parenting behaviors, leading to more insecurely attached children and disconnected communities. This affects overall family health and longevity, leading to neglect, abuse, and abandonment, with more children passed on to the foster care system (Anderson, 2014; Muir & Bohr, 2019; Pazderka et al., 2014; Sam et al., 2015; Simard, 2019). This present study is meant to fill a gap in literature by addressing perceived parenting behaviors and their associations with current adult attachment while also considering moderating effects of historical loss among those who identify as Native American.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to use a quantitative approach to explore Native American individuals' perceptions of their parents' behaviors during their youth and current adult attachment dimensions, as well as moderating effects of historical loss on those associations. This information can be used to further contribute to these communities. Assessment of historical loss can lead to knowledge that can provide targeted assistance support for Native American families.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

RQ1: To what extent is adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during their youth associated with adults' anxious-related attachment?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.



H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

RQ2: To what extent is adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during their youth associated with adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive strategies during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive strategies during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

RQ3: To what extent do adults' perceptions of historical loss moderate the association between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behavior during youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

RQ4: To what extent do adults' perceptions of historical loss moderate the association between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behavior during youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

### **Theoretical Framework for the Study**

I used the attachment theory and historical trauma theory. The attachment theory involves bond formations between children and parents and caregivers during the first year of life and the impact of those bonds on their future relationships (Simard, 2019). Attachment is determined using an attachment style assessment during the first year of life that categorizes children into having either secure or insecure attachment styles (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). Attachment styles in infancy are identified through infant responses to caretakers who are reunited after separation. Securely attached infants welcome their caretakers back after separation and are comforted by them during times of

distress (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Insecure attachment styles include two categories: avoidant and ambivalent-resistant. Avoidant infants focus more attention on distractions such as toys and ignore parents due to the belief they will not attend to them if they are in distress, and ambivalent-resistant infants seek out caregivers but are not comforted by their approach due to fear of inconsistent responses (Duschinsky, 2018). Attachment bonds are typically determined between six and 12 months after birth and have a profound effect on infants' ability to establish secure and trusting relationships throughout youth and subsequent life (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991).

As children progress from infancy through adolescence to adulthood, new assessments can be used to determine current attachments. Adult attachment styles include anxious or avoidant attachment in terms of relationships between individuals and other significant people during their adulthood including colleagues, spouses, family members, and friends (Jones et al., 2015). Broadly, adults who experience attachment anxiety struggle to believe others will not leave and are constantly concerned about being rejected or abandoned, so they increasingly seek validation and reassurance. Those who feel attachment avoidance tend to push others away when they are approached with emotions or physical intimacy, as being vulnerable is not safe (Chopik et al., 2019). This response appears to be an evolved version of avoidant and ambivalent-resistant infant attachment behaviors, as adult attachment anxiety resembles ambivalent-resistant types and adult attachment avoidance resembles avoidant types. The historical trauma theory proposes cultures who are persistently exposed to trauma over time (slavery, genocide, war, assimilation) experience physiological, physical, and emotional distress (Brown-

Rice, 2013). This involves addressing those who have experienced prolonged systemic trauma and populations who are exposed to persistent and large scale traumatic events inflicted by dominant cultures leading to disruption of normal routines, leading to long standing physical, social, economic, and psychological struggles that last across generations (Sotero, 2006). Intergenerational transmission of trauma in terms of children's mandated attendance in boarding schools and forced assimilation of populations has led to sensitivities to stress responses in Native American peoples and PTSD symptoms (Evans-Campbell, 2008). Further, Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native men have the shortest life expectancies at 68.6 years (Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 2019). This is followed by non-Hispanic Black males at 71.3 and non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native women at 75 (Arias & Xu, 2019).

### **Nature of the Study**

I used a quantitative nonexperimental survey design to determine associations between adults' perceptions of their parents' behaviors during youth and attachment dimensions in adulthood. A quantitative design was used for determining relationships between these variables. I used a single-stage sampling design with individuals who identified as Native American, were 18 and older, and lived within the United States. There were around 3.7 million American Indians and Alaska Natives residing within the United States in 2020, and an additional 4.7 million identified as American Indian/Alaska Native and another race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). I used a convenience sample as participants volunteered from participating universities with high Native American

populations as well as community centers that were located on reservations and social media outlets. A series of linear regression analyses was run to test moderation effects.

### **Definitions**

*Adult Attachment Dimensions:* Attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance.

*Democratic Participation:* Taking into account children's preferences when making family plans, allowing children to have input regarding family rules, taking children's desires into account before asking them to do something, encouraging children to freely express themselves even when disagreeing with parents, and channeling children's misbehaviors into more acceptable activities (Robinson et al., 1995, p.823).

*Historical Loss:* Symptoms of experiencing losing one's culture, people, land, and family (Brown-Rice, 2013).

*Parent:* Primary caregiver including but not limited to grandparents, aunts, uncles, foster parents, and guardians.

*Reasoning and Induction:* Explaining consequences of children's behaviors, giving children reasons why rules should be obeyed, emphasizing reasons for rules, helping children to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging them to talk about consequences of their own actions, explaining how to feel about good and bad behaviors, talking over reasons with children when they misbehave, and telling children expectations regarding behaviors before they engage in activities (Robinson et al., 1995, p. 823).



*Verbal Hostility:* Anger towards children, yelling or shouting when children misbehave, arguing with children, and disagreeing with children (Robinson et al., 1995, p.824).

*Youth:* Time that passes between being a child and adult.

### **Assumptions**

I assumed all participants were truthful about their heritage and connections with Native American cultures. I also assumed participants read and understood informed consent paperwork outlining the purpose, potential risks and benefits, and process of the study. In addition, I assumed participants responded honestly to questionnaires and were transparent with their responses in order to come to accurate conclusions. These assumptions were necessary as it was not possible to determine if participants truly were Native Americans or if their responses were accurate in terms of their experiences during youth or current adult relationships .

### **Scope and Delimitations**

I focused on Native Americans who were 18 and older who were willing to answer questions about how they their parents growing up in respect to warmth and involvement, reasoning and induction, democratic participation, verbal hostility, and nonreasoning and punitive parenting practices. I collected information regarding current adult attachment dimensions and perceived parenting behaviors during youth, as well as current feelings involving historical loss.

I excluded those who were under 18, as well as individuals who did not identify as members of Native American communities. I also excluded anyone living outside the

United States. Participants were also asked to disclose demographic information involving tribe state or reservation, and primary caregivers and parents during youth. I selected Native American populations that were best able to recall and communicate results of being parented by individuals who were impacted by forced assimilation of Native Americans. Results of this study can be generalized to individuals who identify as Native American or have been raised by individuals who identify as Native American.

### **Limitations**

Potential limitations of this study included the method of data collection and participant biases involving memory. I used a convenience sampling technique which involved recruitment from universities that had large populations of Native American students, cultural centers within universities, and community centers on reservations with local tribes, as well as social media. Lack of direct access to this population limited who was able to respond and who had access to the study.

This research was limited by potential behaviors of participants in terms of honesty of answers either due to unintentional factors such as lack of memory, misinterpreting questions, and believing responses to be accurate or intentional. Response bias was addressed through anonymous surveys, which hopefully reduced bias due to participants not having their names associated with their responses.

### **Significance**

This study involved addressing associations between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during youth and their own resulting attachment dimensions in adulthood and if these perceptions were moderated by historical loss. I looked to better

understand how to support individuals and families in terms of establishing healthy connections and reducing occurrences of domestic violence, substance abuse, child abuse, foster care placements, and child abandonment. My goal was to provide additional information that may support further healing of Native American populations. Support of healthy parenting behaviors can be addressed, and helpful parenting traditions can be integrated into these populations for future generations. This study could be helpful by offering information regarding how historical loss is impacting individuals in these communities, specifically in terms of parent-child relationships and social change within cultures.

No research to date has examined if historical loss moderates associations between perceived parental behavior and adult attachment dimensions. This research will lead to positive social change through understanding adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during youth and resulting attachment dimensions in adulthood within Native American communities in order to justify and promote targeted support to families who may be struggling with insecure attachment or unhealthy family relationships.

### **Significance to Theory**

The Attachment theory was used to address complexities of parenting behaviors and adult attachment. Understanding how individuals perceive their parents' parenting behaviors in addition to potential moderating influence due to historical loss could inform and lead to a further body of research when considering adult attachment dimensions. Having a better understanding of additional predictors of adult attachment other than

infant attachment style can potentially lead to further awareness of what impacts adult relationships and how to intervene earlier to support healthy adult relationship outcomes.

This research involved using the historical trauma theory to address how historical loss experiences impact Native American communities. Information through this study could also support further validation of the historical trauma theory and current concerns regarding how these communities have been impacted by residual effects of trauma that have been passed down from generation to generation.

### **Significance to Practice**

This research can be used in the field of mental health, social work, and education by providing further knowledge regarding connections between individual perceptions of their parents' behaviors when they were children and resulting adult attachment behaviors, as well as how those connections are influenced by historical loss and cultural trauma. This information could potentially lead to additional insights regarding working with families and individuals in Native American communities who experienced trauma related to struggles within their culture by providing supportive information to those individuals and families. It may also provide information to Indian Health Services (IHS) to show the need for further assessment of current policies regarding supports that are provided to Native communities and allotment of resources within the IHS system.

### **Significance to Social Change**

Information through this study may support positive social change through awareness of how historical loss may be influencing parenting behaviors, potentially revealing the need to reintegrate traditional native parenting behaviors within indigenous

cultures and rebuild healthy relationship patterns for future generations. Results of historical loss and current trauma among Native American populations is a prominent topic, and this study can provide a better understanding of how to support individuals who are victims of systemic racism as well as those who may knowingly or unknowingly promote ways of dominant cultures at the cost of minority cultures. Knowledge that is acquired through this study has the potential to promote positive social change and assist clinicians in terms of productive strategies to aid in working with Native American populations such as identifying types of traditional parenting behaviors that promote secure attachment and recognizing the impact historical loss can have on individuals who identify as Native American.

### **Summary**

This chapter includes the background, problem statement, purpose, research questions and corresponding hypotheses, theoretical framework, and nature of the study. The chapter also includes definitions of terms that were used in the study as well as explanations of assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. Chapter 1 included information about attachment styles and dimensions, parenting behaviors, and historical loss. I used online assessments to research variables and address the gap in literature. Online surveys were sent to individuals who identified as Native American and were recruited through college campuses that had high rates of Native American students or catered to Native American populations, as well as local tribes and social media sites. Research regarding the gap in literature is addressed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 includes a thorough literature review of current and applicable research, including literature search strategies and theoretical foundations. Attachment and historical trauma theories were used as theoretical frameworks. Further elaboration of research regarding parenting behaviors, adult attachment dimensions, and historical loss is addressed in Chapter 2. In addition, this chapter includes information regarding the nature of the study, as well as why this study is necessary to fill a gap in literature.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Forced assimilation of Native Americans through boarding schools and reservations was an attempt by the dominant culture to completely remove cultural traditions and tribal ways of life, which has significantly impacted family systems, especially in terms of traditional Native American parenting behaviors (Muir & Bohr, 2019; Nutton & Fast, 2015). Historical loss is the main component of the historical trauma theory. In 2011, the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes recognized substance abuse, childhood maltreatment, mental health problems, poverty, and domestic violence as increasing concerns among Native American populations, which are all known symptoms of historical loss (Brown-Rice, 2013; Kong et al., 2018). There continues to be substantial evidence that these concerns have not decreased but rather continue to be prevalent, with more children ending up in the foster care system and fewer parental figures to support healthy continuation of Native American cultures (Davis et al., 2022). A total of 31,582 youths who identified as indigenous or indigenous+ (more than once race apart from Native American) within the foster care system that year with the average age being 6.59, compared to non-indigenous youths with an average age of 7.52. The most common reasons for why indigenous children enter the foster care system include use of drugs and alcohol by parents and neglect (Davis et al., 2022). Neglect and self-medicating behaviors could be due to experiences with historical loss. It is important to ensure parents are engaging in necessary skillsets to form secure attachments to their children, which is difficult when struggling with symptoms of historical loss (Chopik et al., 2019).

It is a problem that Native American communities face higher rates of historical loss symptoms, and those symptoms impact welfare of their people, communities, and continuation of cultures. The intention for this quantitative study was to examine associations between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors in their youth and resulting attachment issues in adulthood among Native Americans and potential moderating effects of historical loss on those associations. Previous research has focused on adult attachment and parenting behaviors among White/non-Hispanic/nonindigenous participants but none have looked at the impact historical loss has on these relationships in Native American communities. For Native American communities, historical loss symptoms and insecure attachment could lead to irreversible impacts on mental health, personal relationships, and success of cultures.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The Thoreau database was used to collect articles for this research. The following search terms were used: *Native American, attachment, American Indian, indigenous, native tribes, native people, parenting, adult attachment dimensions, parenting styles, historical loss, and retrospective accounts of perceptions of parenting behavior*. This search was limited to full text peer reviewed articles that were published between 2014 and 2019.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

#### **Attachment Theory**

The current study is grounded in two theoretical frameworks: the attachment theory and historical trauma theory. The attachment theory involves bond formations



between children and caregivers during the first year of life and impacts of those bond on their current and future relationships (Simard, 2019). This is determined using an attachment style assessment called Strange Situation during the first year of life that categorizes children into having either secure or insecure infant attachment styles (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

Attachment styles are determined through observations of infants' behaviors with their parents (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). Secure attachment is identified by observing children's responses to their parents' attention after crying or otherwise alerting parents of their needs and subsequent ability to be reassured and return to a calm state away from parents. Insecure attachment styles include three categories: avoidant, dismissive, and disorganized. Avoidant attachment is identified through infants' hesitant responses to parents and resistance to being calmed or consoled after reuniting. Dismissive attachment result from infants who keep their distance from parents upon return and do not seek them out for comfort or connection. Disorganized attachment is when infants appear to be fearful of parents' responses to their attempts to seek comfort and become disordered in terms of their behaviors, often shifting from crying to resolved apathy (Levy et al., 1998). Attachment style is mostly solidified between six and 12 months of age and has a deep impact on infants' ability to form secure and trusting relationships throughout childhood and subsequent life (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991).

Attachment is important in terms of developing a healthy view of self and others, an aspect of social and emotional identity, which is initially experienced through parenting behaviors and experienced during infants' first year of life (Ainsworth &

Bowlby, 1991). I used the attachment theory to understand parent-child connections and the impact of those relationship on future relationships, revealing how parenting behaviors influence attachment outcomes from infancy through youth and potentially adulthood. Parenting behaviors in infancy are a strong indicator regarding whether infants develop secure or insecure attachments (Planalp et al., 2019).

Parents of securely attached infants are present and attentive to their needs and display kindness, sympathy, and compassion (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). Avoidant attachment infants have parents who are often dismissive, indifferent, and resistant to engaging in physical connection, and they struggle to give support when their children are most in need during times of distress, while dismissive attachment infants have parents who are more focused on themselves and have greater concerns for their own wellbeing and comfort than their infants, displaying unpredictability in terms of their attention to their children's needs. Disorganized infants have parents who may be depressed, disengaged, and cruel, leaving them to fend for their own needs and lacking comfort and security (Duschinsky, 2018). Distrust is created when infants believe their caregivers are not able to meet their needs in terms of proximity, willingness, and engagement, and in turn, that distrust can build over time into a habitual thought process in which all relationships are viewed through the lens of fear and disappointment (Fraley & Rolsman, 2019).

As children progress from infancy to adolescence to adulthood, new assessments can be conducted to determine current adult attachment styles. It is possible that the attachment styles developed during infancy can change as a child experiences different

close relationships, however, research shows that the core attachment style during infancy does appear to have a strong influence on adult attachment and can impact connections and relationships across the lifespan (Fraley & Rolsman, 2019). Hazan and Shaver (1987) took the original attachment research done by Bowlby and expanded it to apply to the attachment connection in adulthood, specifically around romantic relationships, but the concept has now been expanded to a variety of relationships in adulthood including peers, romantic partners, coworkers, and family members (Jones et al., 2015). Individuals who experience attachment anxiety in adulthood struggle to believe that others will stick around and are constantly concerned of being rejected or abandoned so they increasingly seek validation and reassurance. Those who feel attachment avoidance in adulthood, tend to push others away when they are approached with emotions or physical intimacy, as the notion of being vulnerable is not safe (Chopik et al., 2019). Brennan et al. (1998) then viewed adult attachment through the lens of anxious and avoidant attachment dimensions as opposed to the four infant attachment styles Bowlby proposed early in the lifespan (secure, avoidant, dismissive, disorganized) to bring more awareness to the varying degree of attachment rather than a singular label.

### **Historical Trauma Theory**

A second theory that guides this project is Historical Trauma Theory that proposes communities who are persistently exposed to trauma over time (slavery, genocide, war, assimilation) will bear long term physiological, physical, and emotional distress (Sotero, 2006). Historical Trauma Theory builds from multiple theoretical frameworks within social epidemiology including psychosocial theory,

political/economic theory, and social/ecological systems theory bringing to light the impact of physical and mental stress deriving from environmental issues, past and present traumatic experiences, and lack of provisions due to class inequality and discrimination (Sotero, 2006). The first noted use of historical trauma as a theory emerged in the mid 1990's among the behavioral and health sciences as a form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kirmayer et al., 2014). Historical trauma is identified by trauma being “transferred to subsequent generations through biological, psychological, environmental, and social means, resulting in a cross-generational cycle of trauma” (Sotero, 2006, p.95). Historical Trauma Theory looks at those who have experienced prolonged systemic trauma and illuminates that populations exposed to persistent, large scale traumatic events inflicted by the dominant race led to the disruption of their normal, natural routine and path creating long standing physical, social, economic, and psychological struggles that appear across generations, thus helping to explain the physical and mental health challenges of this population (Sotero, 2006). The amount of time an individual within the Native American culture thinks about these losses is considered a modern experience of historical trauma and is identified within the theory as historical loss (Armenta et al., 2018). Historical loss is not limited to the actual experience of losing one's traditions, culture, or land, but rather just the knowledge that it has happened to one's community is enough to experience historical loss (Armenta et al., 2018).

The Native American community currently struggles with a disproportionate amount of both physical and mental health related issues compared with other populations with five times the rate of alcohol dependency than the general U.S

population (Ehlers et al., 2013; Muir & Bohr, 2019). For example, adolescents in the Native American community who think about historical loss, identify their overall loss of culture, loss of people, and cultural mistreatment to be predictors of high anxiety and stress (Armenta et al., 2018). Native Americans are known to have the shortest life expectancy of any cultural group as reported by the Center for Disease Control in 2019 with an average life expectancy of 68 years for men and 75 years for women compared to the highest life expectancy of 87 years for non-Hispanic Asian females and 83 years for non-Hispanic Asian men (Arias & Xu, 2019). The intergenerational transmission of trauma because of the use of mandatory boarding schools and forced assimilation has created a sensitivity to stress response in the indigenous population genetically passed down from generation to generation leading to symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and a further negative impact on the family system (Muir & Bohr, 2019). PTSD has been identified as one of the most prevalent mental health concerns facing the Native American population.

Historical Trauma Theory was utilized for this study to discern how the impact of historical loss on the Native American culture may, in turn, be a factor that predicts parenting behaviors and ultimately dimensions of anxiety and avoidance in adult relationships.

The research questions used looked at the association between adults' perception of their parents' parenting behaviors while they were growing up including warmth and involvement, reasoning/induction, democratic participation, verbal hostility, and non-reasoning/punitive and the participants anxious or avoidant related attachment, as well as

whether or not the participants perceptions of historical loss moderate the relationship between the parenting variables and the adult attachment dimensions. These research questions offered further understanding of the association of adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors have on anxiety and avoidance in relationships in adulthood among those in the Native American Community and how historical loss may moderate that association. This information can be used to support further care for those in the Native American community around family relationships, healthy parenting behaviors, and ways to encourage secure attachment between children and their caregivers, as well as potentially aid those struggling with historical loss and the impact of that trauma on their individual lives and culture as a whole.

### **Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts**

#### **Parenting Behaviors**

One of the most impactful researchers on parenting behaviors is Diana Baumrind, the developer of the three most well known types of parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Baumrind, 1971). Her research derived of a desire to understand what specific parenting behaviors supported healthy early growth and development among preschoolers and if there were a consistent pattern of parenting behaviors that indicated a specific type of social/emotional development/relational outcome. The results of that research found that specific parenting behaviors of being controlling and demanding, while also warm, rational, and receptive to their child's communication showed to consistently supported healthy social and emotional developmental outcomes among their children (Baumrind, 1971). Baumrind (1971)

identified that “high parental control and positive encouragement of a child’s autonomous and independent strivings” (p.1) revealed children who were themselves “self-reliant, self-controlled, explorative, and content” (p.1). It was also revealed that “discontent, withdrawn, and distrustful” (p.2) children had parents with similar behaviors and were more detached and less warm than the other parents. This same pattern emerged with the children who were the “least self-reliant, explorative, and self-controlled” (p.2), as they had parents who were themselves “noncontrolling, nondemanding, and relatively warm” (Baumrind, 1971). This research revealed that showing consistency in parenting behaviors had an impact on the developmental outcome of the child and how the specific responses and behaviors shaped the child’s social and emotional development. Immense research continues to be done that supports these results and gives reliability to the understanding that the responsiveness and engagement of the parent during the early childhood years is clearly connected to children reaching their appropriate developmental milestones (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Chopik et al., 2019; Dinero et al., 2011; Fraley et al., 2013; Gleeson & Fitzgerald, 2014; Hong & Park, 2012).

Jeong et al. (2021) established a global systematic review of parenting interventions that promote early child development during the first three years of life and found that despite cultural and demographic differences in parents, globally there is a need for responsive parenting behaviors, especially in low-middle income countries/communities to support healthy brain development when they are the most vulnerable to experiences and the environment that surrounds them. Engaging in responsive parenting behaviors such as reading books together and participating in hands

on stimulation games, as well as building up knowledge of effective positive discipline skills, maltreatment prevention, behavior management, attachment and parental sensitivity, and parental mental health benefit both the child and the parent, leading to healthier relationships and developmental outcomes (Jeong et al., 2021).

Darling and Steinberg (1993) consider parenting style as a characteristic of the parent, as well as a “constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and create an emotional climate in which the parents’ behaviors are expressed” and parenting behaviors, more specifically, as “goal-directed behaviors through which parents perform their parental duties” (p.488). Baumrind considered the most important parental duty to be exposing a child to the social expectations of others while supporting them to establish and uphold personal integrity, balancing the pull to follow rules and please others with their autonomy of thought and behavior (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). This undertaking is fulfilled through the way parents respond to their children by engaging in parenting behaviors. The parenting behaviors that have been assessed in this research are warmth and involvement, reasoning/induction, democratic participation, verbal hostility, and non-reasoning/punitive strategies through the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ).

The parenting behaviors of warmth and involvement have been measured by the following: knowing the name of their child’s friends, being aware of problems or concerns about their child in school, giving praise when their child is good, giving comfort and understanding when their child is upset, expressing affection by hugging, kissing, and holding their child, showing sympathy when their child is hurt or frustrated,



telling their child they appreciate what the child tries or accomplishes, being responsive to child's feelings or needs, encourages child to talk about the child's troubles, has warm and intimate times together with child, and apologizes to child when making a mistake in parenting (Robinson et al., 1995). Parenting behaviors of reasoning/induction have been measured by the following: explaining the consequences of their child's behavior, giving the child reasons why rules should be obeyed, emphasizing the reason for the rules, helping their child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging child to talk about the consequences of (his)(her) own actions, explaining how they feel about his/her good and bad behavior, talking it over and reasoning with their child when the child misbehaves, and telling their child the expectations regarding behavior before the child engages in an activity.

Democratic Participation have been measured by the following parenting behaviors: considering child's preferences in making family plans, allows child to give input into family rules, takes child's desire into account before asking their child to do something, encourages their child to freely express themselves even when disagreeing with parents, and channels child's misbehavior into a more acceptable activity (Robinson et al., 1995). Verbal hostility have been measured by the following parenting behaviors: exploding in anger towards their child, yells, or shouts when their child misbehaves, argues with their child, and disagrees with their child. Non-reasoning/punitive strategies will be measured by the following parenting behaviors: punishes by taking privileges away from their child with little if any explanation, punishes by putting their child off somewhere alone with little if any explanation, uses threats as punishment with little or

no justification, when two children are fighting, disciplines children first and asks questions later, appears to be more concerned with own feelings than with their child's feelings, and when their child asks why they have to conform, states: because I said so, or I am your parent and I want you to.

Parenting behaviors have been assessed through the lens of warmth and involvement, reasoning/induction, democratic participation, verbal hostility, and non-reasoning/punitive strategies by way of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ). Participants have been asked to consider how, in each of these areas, they perceive their parents' parenting behaviors during youth. That information has been used to evaluate the relationship between perceived parenting behaviors and adult attachment dimensions.

### **Retrospective Perceived Parenting Behaviors**

The PSDQ has been used globally as a measurement of parenting styles since its inception in 1995 and expansion in 2001 and is often used as a variation of its original form to provide more targeted results, such as considering dimensions of authoritarian parenting or viewing parenting styles through retrospective means (Oliviari et al., 2013). This study utilized retrospective perceived parenting practices similarly to Chipman et al. (2000) who utilized the PSDQ to view retrospective perceptions of parenting practices in inmates and non-inmates. Their study utilized the full 62- item questionnaire and asked participants to answer the questions based on their perception of their mother and fathers' behavior growing up. Chipman et al. (2000) utilized parenting styles as the dependent variable while this study utilized parenting behaviors as the independent variable.

With the PSDQ being used worldwide it is important to consider how the instrument is able to accurately assess parenting behaviors between different cultures such as the Native American culture. Tagliabue et al. (2018) looked at the use of the PSDQ retrospectively in Greece, Italy, and Sweden and found that the permissive parenting style questions were not valid across cultures and were removed to focus on the authoritative and authoritarian parenting style items on the questionnaire. Another retrospective study utilizing the PSDQ was done with Italian adolescents looking back on their childhood and reporting on perceived parenting behaviors for both their mother and their father and also found the permissive parenting style items to be the least reliable in populations outside the traditional American culture.

This research study has also removed the permissive parenting style items from the questionnaire and will focus on the authoritarian and authoritative items as a means of adapting the PSDQ for this culture.

Utilizing retrospective reports is a useful tool in research as it gives the opportunity for researchers to contribute information and experiences from periods outside the current time and place. Srivastava et al. (2010) looked to better understand what contributes to a valid retrospective report and found that the Big Five Factors (extroversion, agreeableness, dependability, emotional stability, and intellect) (Goldberg, 1990) continue to be the tried and true means for measuring reliability in perceived behaviors over a single or two factor model. The PSDQ utilizes the big five factors as the questionnaire addresses the following items that relate to these areas: warmth &

involvement, reasoning/induction, democratic participation, verbal hostility, and non-reasoning/punitive strategies (Robinson et al., 1995).

Bell and Bell (2018) also sought to understand how accurate and viable retrospective reports of family can be through analyzing data of 198 parents and 241 children describing their family situation at a given point in time and then 25 years later recounting the previous account to determine accurate retrospective reporting. They found varying results to the questions in terms of accurate reporting between the two occasions but the areas that were most consistent in accurate reporting were in areas dealing with emotion. Those results leave a strong possibility that participants reporting on perceived parenting behaviors during youth could produce accurate retrospective reports due to the increased emotion around interactions with parents/caregivers during youth.

### **Adult Attachment Dimensions**

As discussed earlier in the chapter, John Bowlby was the first to utilize the concept of attachment styles in his seminal research on the relationship between an infant and their caregiver (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby believed that infants establish patterns of response/behavior with their caregivers which created internal working models they then use as a blueprint for future relationships beyond the walls of the family system (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Hazan and Shaver (1987) would then take those established infant attachment styles, view them through the lens of the emotional bond, and apply them to adult relationships, believing the same underlying responses to caregiver would repeat in relationships later in life.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) developed three adult attachment styles out of Bowlby's infant attachment styles and labeled them secure, avoidant, and anxious-resistant. They believed that in the relationship between two adults there will be evidence of secure attachment, confidence that the other person will be with them when needed and the ability to rely on others and be relied upon; anxious-resistant attachment- fear that their partner/close relationship may not fully love them and are quick to be defensive or frustrated when their needs are not met; or avoidant attachment, where the individual seems detached and unwilling to seem dependent on their partner/close relationship or feel like their partner/close relationship is dependent upon them (Fraley et al., 2000).

Fraley et al. (2000) took the adult attachment styles from Hazan and Shaver (secure, avoidant, and anxious-resistant) and created an assessment to identify two dimensions of attachment (attachment-related anxiety, attachment-related avoidance) rather than simply applying a category to an individual. These dimensions looked at how an individual perceives themselves through the lens of attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance by determining their experience of high or low avoidance and high or low anxiety within adult relationships.

Adults whose parents' behaviors included empathy, patience, and compassion during childhood and who taught them emotional regulation find they feel safer to explore the world and build secure relationships during youth and in the transition of adulthood (Hong & Park, 2012). On the other hand, adults whose parents allowed their personal frustration and fears to influence a negative, dismissive, and judgmental response to their child's behavior find that they struggle with feeling safe to emote and

end up building insecure relationships with both themselves and others across the lifespan (Hong & Park, 2012). High levels of responsiveness, warmth, and care from parents have shown to be the foundation for forming a secure attachment, whereas low levels of responsiveness, and high levels of control and rejection have shown to be predictors for insecure attachment (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

A 52-year longitudinal study using Baumrind's parenting styles looked at the impact of parental behavior in early childhood on later adult attachment dimensions and revealed that there was a high correlation between parental warmth/care and children's positive relationships when they progress to adulthood, as well as between low engagement/high control and children's negative relationship experiences in adulthood (Huppert et al., 2009). In viewing parental behavior during the toddler years, researchers have also found that maternal care and nurturing towards children at 18 months of age significantly predicted children's subsequent attachment style with romantic partners during early adulthood (Fraley et al., 2013).

Chopik et al. (2019) utilized data from the Block and Block Longitudinal Study of Cognitive and Ego Development, the Intergenerational Studies, and the Radcliffe College Class of 1964 study with participants ranging in age from 13 to 72 assessed over a 59-year period to determine if attachment orientation changed over the lifespan. Attachment orientation is defined as an individual's position on two dimensions: attachment-related anxiety, and attachment-related avoidance. They found that in relation to attachment-related anxiety there was a huge reduction over time, especially for men and with attachment-related avoidance there was a linear decline over time in both men and

women. The study found that overall attachment orientations appear to be moderately stable across the lifespan (Chopik et al., 2019). This information seems to indicate that attachment formed in youth are likely to carry on into adulthood and significantly impact close relationships and overall connections with others.

As outlined previously, research shows that parental behaviors are a substantial influence on adult attachment. Gleeson and Fitzgerald (2014) hypothesized that the adult attachment dimensions of the participants would be highly similar to perceptions of parenting engagement during youth. They found that securely attached participants identified more positive attributes to their parents with their mother being confident and sympathetic and their father being fair, understanding, and attentive. Avoidant and anxious individuals identified their parents with negative attributes, with their mother being seen as unpredictable and inconsistent, and their father as troubled and disinterested. This study revealed an association between perceived parenting behaviors and adult attachment with securely attached individuals reporting perceived parenting behaviors during childhood that are consistent with warm and responsive parenting and insecurely attached individuals reporting parenting behaviors during childhood that were unresponsive and distant.

Fraley et al. (2013) found that infant attachment styles are connected to the quality of an individuals' caregiving environment, as well as parents' close relationships and social competence. This study recognized that maternal sensitivity, changes in maternal sensitivity, and father absence all contribute to insecure attachment styles during

infancy. Fraley et al. (2013) also pointed out the impact of individual experiences within relationships, including parental figures, as a significant component of adult attachment.

In a study by Mahasneh et al. (2013) data collected from a random selection of 564 undergraduate students at Hashemite University in Jordan revealed that authoritative parenting behaviors were positively correlated to anxious-ambivalent and avoidant attachment and negligent parenting behaviors were positively correlated to avoidant attachment. They also found that authoritarian parenting behaviors were positively correlated to secure attachment styles, revealing that parenting behaviors is an influencer and contributor to adult attachment. Differing results of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive) may be due to cultural component, as typical results for parenting styles and attachment tend to be authoritative parenting styles to predict secure attachment and authoritarian parenting style to predict insecure attachment (Doinita & Maria, 2015).

### **Historical Loss**

Historical Loss comes from Historical Trauma Theory and is considered the symptoms associated with the loss of people, family, land, and culture experienced by the Native American Community (Brown-Rice, 2013). As stated earlier, historical loss is not limited to the actual experience of losing one's traditions, culture, or land, but rather just the knowledge that it has happened to one's community is enough to experience historical loss (Armenta et al., 2018). This loss of culture, land, and traditions was intentionally implemented by the dominant population to forcefully educate Native Americans on the *right* way to be human and in turn created an overwhelming sense of



isolation and rejection that deeply warped this culture's ability to see themselves existing in any authentic capacity among white people (Whitbeck, et al., 2004). According to Sotero (2006), this is the first phase of historical trauma. The second phase is indicated through the devastating response of the first phase on the population and the third and final phase reveals a continuation of this pain passed down to subsequent generations through stories, bias, and fear (Sotero, 2006). The loss of indigenous culture was solidified in 1871 when the U.S. congress determined that all Native Americans were to be official wards of the state and were required to assimilate into the dominant white culture and forced to leave behind their traditional way of life (Brown-Rice, 2013).

The literature reveals that both the past and present environmental experiences of the Native American culture meet the criteria for historical loss (Bassett et al., 2014; Brown-Rice, 2013; Ehlers et al., 2013; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Kirmayer et al., 2014; Nutton & Fast, 2015). Historical loss symptoms include societal-environmental concerns such as domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, lack of education, unemployment, and poverty; psychological concerns such as alcoholism, drug abuse, low self-esteem, mood disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders, history of abuse and neglect, loss of cultural identify, and suicide; and physiological concerns such as low life expectancy at birth, heart disease, sexually transmitted infections, diabetes, tuberculosis, lack of health insurance, and trauma (Brown-Rice, 2013).

Much research has been done on evaluating how parental behavior impacts adult attachment within the White, Black, and Asian communities, but little to none has been done on the Native American people who makeup 1.6% of the U.S population

(Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; U.S Census Bureau, 2021). For centuries Indigenous communities have been faced with the challenge of maintaining their culture and traditions amidst the ever dominating Anglo-American lifestyle and beliefs. During that time, the process of assimilation had prevailed, and the creation of reservations thousands of miles from their homeland further removed the native residents from the only way of life they knew and forced them to face different climates, seasons, food sources, and threats (Stremlau, 2005). This forced assimilation continued with the creation of boarding schools in 1860, designed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to remove children from their families and traditions in order to train them in the ways of the new society. They used tactics of forceful integration such as not allowing children to speak their native tongue or practice cultural holidays or traditions less they be disciplined. This led to significant struggles within the community, especially in the family unit and continued on through the closing of the final boarding school in 1973 (Kong et al., 2018; Rose, 2014; Sam et al., 2015; Simard, 2019).

It is important to understand that the experience of being involuntarily removed from the traditional Native American culture through reservations, boarding schools, and violent interactions with colonizing population is considered an experience of historical loss. Historical loss refers to the loss of people, land, family, and culture in the Native American community (Brown-Rice, 2013). Research of Native American children in the foster care system revealed that the absence of these important factors, connection to people, land, family, and culture has an influence on the development of insecure attachments, leading to struggles in social and emotional development (Anderson, 2014).

The connection to one's culture, despite the placement outside of it in foster care situations, is imperative in development for a young child and there appears to be a higher level of struggle for those children placed in transracial families outside their individual culture and appearance (Anderson, 2014). Current information on this population reveals that the separation of children from their parents through residential boarding schools as an attempt to remove sacred cultural customs has been highly traumatic and led to adults who are disconnected from their traditional parenting behaviors and their culture more broadly (Maxwell et al., 2022).

Although in North America these boarding schools finally closed in 1973, their effect seems to continue influencing families and communities of those involved and may even linger as a generational affliction, possibly causing high rates of child abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse, and a disproportionate number of children in foster care services among the Native American communities (Anderson, 2014; Chamberlain et al., 2019; Kong et al., 2018; Muir & Bohr, 2019; Rose, 2014;).

Zayas et al. (2011) found that adults who identify as insecure in their adult attachment style will likely engage in the same parenting behaviors as their parents and pass down this pattern of low responsiveness, high control, and rejection, perpetuating the family system and leading to further unhealthy relationships. This prevalence of child abuse, substance abuse, domestic violence, and child abandonment experienced in the Native American population appear to be passed down over generations beginning with those who were a part of the assimilation process (Kirmayer et al., 2014). Traditional parenting behaviors for this population would include prebirth storytelling and

community involvement with the mother; tribal practices to restore mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual balance; developing intuition to child's needs; utilizing a swing/harness to keep baby close; breastfeeding; naming ceremonies; playing out in nature with family and peers; and natural consequences as a form of discipline (Pazderka et al., 2014). Research shows that Native American women are experiencing higher rates of post-partum depression due to the lack of support and overall experience of becoming a mother in their current situation (Maxwell et al., 2022). The Keetoowah tribe of Oklahoma revealed that mental health concerns among mothers and a lack of access to prenatal care influenced their experience of historical loss during this time (Maxwell et al., 2022).

The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 was established to support Indigenous children and families in receiving welfare when struggling with harm and neglect but was never able to truly offer relief or systemically change these patterns and the individuals affected continue to struggle with a safe and stable home environment, as well as a quality life (Kong et al., 2018). Researchers found that Indigenous people experiencing abuse during childhood were more likely to engage in or experience intimate partner violence as adults, as well as have depression and that those who report experiencing historical loss are also more likely to have anxiety and experience psychological distress (Armenta et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2018).

Nutton and Fast (2015) found that within the Indigenous culture there is a belief that the experience of one generation will be passed down and impact the families for seven generations to come. They also found that children of individuals who resided in

boarding schools were at a higher risk for depression and substance abuse, as well as not being adept, vulnerable, engaged, or empathetic parents. Evans-Campbell (2008) found that historical trauma was most often viewed through the lens of the individual and that the perspective of the family was less researched. The research that has been done on a familial level seems to hypothesize that historical loss will impact the family communication and parenting behaviors of descendants (Maxwell et al., 2022). Evans-Campbell (2008) also found that historical loss was prevalent among those who were generations removed from the forced assimilation experienced by the indigenous people and despite not having experienced it themselves they reported 18.2% of respondents thought daily about loss of land, 36.3% thought daily of the loss of their indigenous language, and 33.7% had daily thoughts around the loss of culture. In addition, 45.9% of respondents thought daily of the impact of alcoholism on their community and 48.7% recounted intrusive thoughts around historical loss *at least some of the time*.

Descendants of those who experienced forced assimilation and resided in residential boarding schools were often focused on ancestral trauma and felt that their personal problems were not substantial enough to be addressed (Rose, 2018). Those who were forced to leave their homes and attend boarding schools, by design, lost the opportunity to learn traditional parenting behaviors and instead adopted extremely toxic and negative fear-based experiences that inevitably carried over into their own relationships and parenting (Evans-Campbell, 2008). Evans-Campbell (2008) also found that there was resiliency among respondents, revealing the ability to form deep emotional attachments with others, practicing traditional values, supporting others, and giving help

to future generations. They found that engaging in traditional cultural practices brought individuals together within the community and created a barrier between them and the harsh impact of historical loss, giving them an identity to focus their attention on.

Kirmayer et al. (2014) even hypothesized that the return to traditional cultural practices is a form of therapeutic intervention unto itself.

Bombay et al. (2011) explored the generational connection of those who attended residential boarding schools and the impact on their children. In Canada, 143 indigenous adults completed three sets of questionnaires to determine measures of depressive symptoms and adult traumatic experiences, impact of family by residential boarding school, perceived discrimination, and exposure to adverse experiences during youth. Researchers found that individuals who had parents in Indian Residential Schools experienced greater depressive symptoms, more frequent adverse childhood experiences, higher number of adult traumas, and perceived discrimination than those who did not have parents who attended (Bombay et al., 2011). Kirmayer et al. (2014) report that over 140,000 indigenous children went through the residential school program in Canada alone and were victim of a system that removed their language, spiritual practices, culture, and severed both family connections and opportunities for traditional parenting behaviors.

Kong et al. (2018) looked at 479 Native American adults and found a link between childhood maltreatment and both depressive symptoms and fearful attachment style, indicating that abuse and neglect experienced in childhood has a deep impact on developing an insecure infant attachment style, specifically being fearful to connect and

be vulnerable in relationships, as well as experiencing depressive symptoms. These are the same symptoms as those associated with historical loss (Armenta et al., 2018). Experiences of domestic and sexual abuse, alcoholism, and suicide are far higher in the indigenous communities and in some cases have risen in prevalence over the last 20 years- showing that the current state of this culture is dire and continues to need support and attention in order to alter the systemic challenges these communities face (Kirmayer et al., 2014). As outlined above historical loss seems to be continuously affecting this culture and prolonging the impact on its people leading to the outcome of further generations of unhealthy and insecurely attached individuals.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Native American populations are at risk for further disintegration of their cultures, and in turn, collapse of family systems in terms of cases of domestic violence, mental health problems, substance abuse, neglect, impoverishment, and removal of children from their homes into the foster care system (Kong et al., 2018). This historic loss of culture could influence the way Native American parents behave with their children and lead to development of insecure infant attachment styles and struggles with relationships across the lifespan. Parenting behaviors and adult attachment have previously been researched, but there has yet to be a study that focuses on moderating effects of historical loss specifically within Native American communities. This study will fill the gap in the literature by addressing historical loss within Native American communities and understand how it impacts parenting behaviors and influences adult attachment.

Chapter 3 includes information about the research design, recruitment of participants, and instrumentation. This chapter also includes the research study plan and threats to validity.



### Chapter 3: Research Method

This nonexperimental quantitative study involved examining the relationship between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during youth and resulting attachment dimensions in adulthood moderated by historical loss within Native American communities. These results will be used for further understanding historical loss and Native Americans' perceptions of parenting behaviors and current attachment dimensions.

This chapter contains information regarding research methods for this study. Specifically, I address procedures, sample instruments, population, and the setting. Data collection and the statistical analysis plan are reviewed as well as potential threats to validity and reliability. This chapter will conclude with ethics to protect participants' rights and wellbeing.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

A nonexperimental quantitative study design was used to establish whether there were statistically significant associations between perceived parenting behaviors and adult attachment dimensions. I used published instruments to collect data and identify if perceived parenting behaviors predict adult attachment dimensions and whether these associations were modified by experiences involving historical loss. A quantitative nonexperimental descriptive correlational research design was the most appropriate of available designs for this specific research to identify and assess this topic.

I collected both current and retrospective information. I used the Internet for participants to access instruments in the survey and therefore there was a limitation

regarding participant's ability to access the Internet and take time to complete assessments. In this study, the independent variable is perceived parenting behaviors, the dependent variable is adult attachment dimensions, and the moderator is historical loss. Results will support the current body of research and be used to address the gap in literature that was previously discussed in Chapter 2.

### **Methodology**

This section includes a description of the population, sampling and sample procedures, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, as well as instrumentation and operationalization of constructs.

#### **Population**

The target population for this study were individuals who were 18 or older, self-identified as Native American or indigenous to North America and are currently living in the United States. The target population size for this study is 178 participants. Participants reported their demographics including location in the United States, education level, age, gender, and tribal affiliation. I targeted higher education centers that enrolled high rates of Native American students including tribal colleges and universities (TCUs), popular social media sites, and local tribes in the North Idaho area.

#### **Sampling and Sampling Procedures**

I used a nonprobability sampling strategy which can include snowball, purposive, and convenience sampling to ensure Native American individuals from across the country participate, in addition to the local tribe as long as they meet the criteria of being 18 or older and identified as Native American. A probability sample (random, systematic,

stratified, or cluster) sample was not appropriate as I required more specific individuals who would not typically be found through random selection and would not guarantee the necessary number of people.

A link to an online assessment through SurveyMonkey was sent to selected colleges and TCUs within the United States that had high enrollment of Native American students. This limited access to all individuals in the country who identified as Native American, although snowball sampling was used to reach further individuals within the population. This research is not a true representation of the population. Time and resource constraints exist in terms of length of procurement of assessments and level of Internet access. This study includes participants who were Native American, 18 or older, and lived within the United States. Participants were not included if they do not meet criteria.

The current number of Native Americans within the United States is 8.7 million (US Census, 2021). An *a priori* power analysis was conducted using G\*Power version 3.1.9.7 to determine the minimum sample size that was required to test study hypotheses. Results indicated the required sample size to achieve 70% power for detecting a medium effect at a significance criterion of  $\alpha = .05$  was  $N = 178$  for linear bivariate simple regression analyses. Thus, an obtained sample size of  $N = 178$  was adequate to test study hypotheses with 11 predictors. According to Stevens (2002), sample size estimates should be based on a power value of no less than .70.

## **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

Participants at universities were recruited through diversity offices on their campus. I contacted main diversity centers for Native American students and requested research links either through email or posted flyers at the center. The following schools were considered: Institute of American Indian Arts, Fort Lewis College, Northeastern State University, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, University of Alaska (Fairbanks, Southeast, and Anchorage Campuses), East Central University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Lake Superior State University, New Mexico Highlands University, University of Minnesota- Morris, Cameron University, University of New Mexico, University of Montana Western, Montana State University-Billings, New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, University of Central Oklahoma, and the University of South Dakota. The following TCUs were considered as they had majority Native American enrollment: Dine College, Navajo Technical College, Haskell Indian Nations University, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Bay Mills Community College, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Sitting Bull College, Turtle Mountain Community College, United Tribes Technical College, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Leech Lake Tribal College, Oglala Lakota College, Sinte Gleska University, Sisseton Wahpeton College, Blackfeet Community College, Chief Dull Knife College, Aaniih Nakoda College, Fort Peck Community College, Little Big Horn College, Salish Kootenai College, Stone Child College, Northwest Indian College, College of Menominee Nation, and Nebraska Indian Community College.

Additional recruitment was done with the local Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and I sent research links to their website in order to see if there was any interest in disbursement among this population, as well as posting on Facebook with a link to the assessment. Snowball sampling was used for individuals from these recruitment areas who passed information about the study to others.

The link led to a flyer advertising the study. The flyer included a brief description of the study, measures, and demographic information. Once participants consented to the study, they followed a new link to SurveyMonkey where data were collected. Participants were provided with informed consent forms on the first page after clicking the link. This form communicated the study was voluntary and completely confidential, and data were only used and recorded for research purposes. If participants did not consent and decided to not complete assessments, they were not included in the study. Data were collected through SurveyMonkey. The completed assessment included answers to all questions for all three instruments met. Participants completed the ECR-R, (PSDQ, HLS, and demographics and background questionnaires with questions about age, associated tribe, gender, and relationship with parents.

Upon completion of the study, participants were provided with information regarding the U.S. Department of the Interior to address ways the United States is working with Native American populations to honor commitments to those communities. They also received a link to the HIS website for mental health support, as well as directions to reach out. Due to anonymity, participants are only able to gain access to the

final publication if they request it from me directly. The Walden IRB approval number for this study is # 08-02-23-0755648.

## **Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs**

### ***Adult Attachment Dimensions***

Adult attachment dimensions are measured with the Experiences in Close Relationships- Revised (ECR-R) developed by Fraley et al. (2000). The ECR-R is appropriate for the current study because it measures adult attachment dimensions through the lens of attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance. The ECR-R does not require permission to replicate for non-commercial research. However, an e-mail has been sent to inform Fraley et al. of this study and intention to use instrument. In 2004, Sibley and Liu reviewed the reliability of the scales and found that the anxiety and avoidance sub-scales of the ECR-R had Cronbach's alpha internal reliability of .94 and .93, respectively. Cronbach's alpha above .90 is considered an excellent range of internal consistency (Tavokol & Dennick, 2011). Wei et al., (2007) tested construct validity of the ECR-R two ways-through the regular 36- item ECR and through the 12-item shortform ECR-S and found the chi-square difference was non-significant between the two. Further evidence of construct validity was seen through the positive correlation between the anxious attachment and dimensions, as well as the avoidant attachment and dimensions when using both the ECR and ECR-S (Wei et al., 2007). Also, Fraley et al. (2000) reported that the internal consistency reliability was .90 for the ECR-R scale. The previous results came from a population of undergraduate

psychology students in America. No further information was given on their demographics.

### ***Perceived Parenting Behaviors***

Perceived parenting behaviors is measured by the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) developed by Robinson et al. in 1995. The PSDQ is appropriate for the current study as it was designed with the ability to retroactively consider parenting behaviors through the perspective of the adult child using their report on how they viewed their parents' parenting behaviors during youth. The PSDQ is in the public domain; however, an e-mail was sent to Robinson et al. to inform of this study and intent to use instrument. They assessed the reliability of the measure and found that parenting dimensions showed Cronbach alpha of .91 for authoritative items and .86 for authoritarian items, which both land above the good range of reliability (Tavokol & Dennick, 2011).

In 2013, Olivari et al. gathered data from several studies that have used the PSDQ to assess the reliability and found that the reliability was excellent with 96% of the articles reviewed showing Cronbach alpha for authoritative (.71-.97) and authoritarian (.62-.95). Concurrent validity of the PSDQ was tested through multiple subscales and different uses of the instrument offered a variety of perspectives of the same parenting style, which also increased the validity. The participants of these studies were a wide range of individuals including those from America, Canada, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Chipman et al. (2000) used the PSDQ on 465 adults- retrospectively considering how they perceived their parents' parenting behaviors during childhood with alpha being

.91 on authoritative pattern and .86 on authoritarian pattern revealing all ranges above the good range of reliability (Tavokol & Dennick, 2011).

### ***Historical Loss***

Historical Loss is measured with the Historical Loss Scale, developed by Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, and Chen in 2004. This test was built to assess historical trauma among Native American individuals. Permission for use of the Historical Loss Scale has been sent to inform Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen of this study and intention to use instrument. In 2004, Whitbeck et al., published their establishment of the Historical Loss Scale and reported it has Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .92 which is in the excellent range of reliability (Tavokol & Dennick, 2011). The Native American population has been used exclusively with this scale.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Data analysis is done through Version 28.0.1.0 of SPSS. After data collection, data cleaning has taken place to identify any missing data or potential outliers. Survey Monkey will report only completed assessments for analysis, removing the need to sort out any missing responses from the assessments. Outliers will be identified using a boxplot in SPSS. If an outlier is found, analyses will be run both with and without the outlier to determine any significant change. If significant change is found, or due to the outlier, a relationship is established that was not there before, the outlier will be removed, and those results will not be included.



### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

RQ1: To what extent is adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during their youth associated with adults' anxious-related attachment?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

RQ2: To what extent is adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during their youth associated with adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive strategies during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive strategies during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

RQ3: To what extent do adults' perceptions of historical loss moderate the association between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behavior during youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

RQ4: To what extent do adults' perceptions of historical loss moderate the association between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behavior during youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive statistics are used initially to provide a summary of the sample including measures of central tendency and variability (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, minimum and maximum variables, kurtosis, and skewness).

Correlation analysis has been run on both the parenting behaviors variables and attachment dimensions variables. An individual simple linear regression has been run for each hypothesis. To test the moderation hypothesis all continuous variables are standardized to avoid issues with multicollinearity. Interaction terms have been created between each independent variable (warmth & involvement, reasoning & induction, democratic participation, verbal hostility, nonreasoning/punitive) and the moderator (historical loss). SPSS has been used to run the simple linear regressions and calculate the standardized values and create the interaction terms. An individual simple linear regression has been run for each hypothesis. Due to the number of multiple regressions that are being run, there is a possibility of type I errors occurring. To deal with this, Andrade (2019) recommends using a Bonferroni correction. This method entails the *P* value of .05 being divided by the number of statistical tests being performed. For this study, 20 regressions are being performed, so using the Bonferroni correction will make the *P* value .0025. What this means is that the regressions will be considered significant only if the *P* values associated with these tests are  $< .0025$ .

### **Threats to Validity**

#### **External Validity**

External validity applies to how able the results of the data collected can be utilized outside the context of the specific study. For this population, history effect may be a threat to external validity as there have been new discoveries made around the conditions and outcomes of individuals who attended residential boarding schools in North America. Mass graves have been located on the sites of residential boarding

schools indicating mass genocide of residents without proper burials or opportunity for families to establish traditional burial practices (Engels, 2021). This evidence could lead to further feelings of historical loss at this time due to the recent uncovering of these mass graves in 2021 with the discovery of 215 unidentified children found buried on the grounds of a former residential boarding school in British Columbia (Engels, 2021). Participants may also not have a strong connection to their heritage, and this could impact their perspective on the research questions or even participating in the study at all.

### **Internal Validity**

Internal validity considers how the association between variables is established and determines whether there can be other reasons for the association to occur. Threats to internal validity include participant self-report bias and recall bias. Participant self-report bias and recall bias is possible with the participants and is not something that will be able to be prevented. Assessment instructions include an overview of expectations and explain the importance of being open and honest about responses. There may be self-report bias present in those who choose to participate in the survey due to possible personal reasons that may draw them to participate such as anger towards the Native American community, their parents, or experiences during youth. These reasons will never be disclosed and therefore impossible to control for. Self-report bias may also occur when an individual chooses to respond to the questions in a way that they perceive will make them more socially acceptable. The self-report biased will attempt to be addressed through having participants be anonymous. Recall bias may be present due to the retroactive nature of the PSDQ asking participants to reflect on perceived parenting behaviors during

their youth. There is nothing that can be done to minimize this bias as memory is beyond the control of the researcher.

### **Construct Validity**

Construct validity is used to determine if an instrument will operate as intended and is utilized when considering questions like “to what extent...is this test measuring the variable in question” (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Potential threats to construct validity include not having a sufficient number of participants and violating the statistical test assumptions. Not having a sufficient number of participants would impact the statistical results as it would not be able to be a true representation of the current population of Native American individuals being studied, as the guidelines of statistical analysis require a power of no less than .70. The sample size will be addressed by not ending data collection until a surplus above the sufficient number of participants are collected based on the power analysis. The potential violation of statistical test assumptions will be addressed by precisely following the data analysis procedures outlined above and applying the outcome to the current body of research.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Ethical procedures will include the ethical concerns related to recruitment materials, data collection/intervention activities, and the treatment of data. Participants are recruited through advertisements sent to colleges across the country that have a high number of Native American Students through contact with the student support or cultural centers on campus. Prior to data collection each college or partner organization will have a form filed with the IRB showing their permission for students to be utilized from the



college and advertisement to be made available. Students will be directed to complete the assessments provided through the SurveyMonkey link and will be on a voluntary basis. No student will be expected to participate due to their attendance of these Universities or participation in the student support or cultural centers on campus. The recruitment e-mail/flyer will state the voluntary and anonymity status of participants and no identifiable information will be requested. The informed consent form will outline the right to refuse participation or end the survey at any time. At the end of the study participants will be given information on how to reach out to appropriate hotlines to discuss any mental health concerns that may have been triggered during the survey process.

Confidential data will be accessed by the researcher only through Survey Monkey's secure website. Survey Monkey employees engaged in yearly security trainings, are HIPPA compliant with complex passwords and encrypted data using TLS cryptographic protocols (SurveyMonkey, 2018). The initial data has been collected and stored on the Survey Monkey site, while the analyzed data has been stored on the researcher's personal computer under password protection. All data will be kept for the duration of the study and will be destroyed five years after completion of study in compliance with Walden University guidelines. The data collected on the Survey Monkey servers will remain confidential and no identifying information will be linked or available.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 included an outline of the research design and rationale, methodology, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, instrumentation and

operationalization of constructs, threats to validity, and ethical procedures. This quantitative causal-comparative study involved examining relationships between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors in childhood and resulting attachment dimensions in adulthood in Native American communities.

I analyzed data from Native American participants who were 18 or older and recruited from universities around the country that had high rates of Native American students. I used informed consent forms, demographic questionnaire, PSDQ, ECR-R, and HLS. Concerns regarding reliability, validity, and ethical dilemmas were limited. Chapter 4 includes a presentation and discussion of data collection and results.

## Chapter 4: Results

I sought to understand associations between perceived parenting behaviors and current adult attachment within Native American communities, as well as whether those associations were moderated by historical loss. This nonexperimental quantitative study involved examining whether links between parenting behaviors and adult attachment dimensions vary as a function of participants' ratings of historical loss. A series of individual simple linear regressions was run for each research question. Due to limited participants, research questions were altered to focus on parenting behaviors involving warmth and involvement as well as anxious- and avoidant-related attachment dimensions. Moderation of historical loss was assessed. Research questions were:

RQ1: To what extent is adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during their youth associated with adults' anxious-related attachment?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

RQ2: To what extent is adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during their youth associated with adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is not an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive strategies during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is an association between adults' perception of their parent's non-reasoning/punitive strategies during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

RQ3: To what extent do adults' perceptions of historical loss moderate the association between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behavior during youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does not moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do not moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do not moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do not moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do not moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' anxious-related attachment.

RQ4: To what extent do adults' perceptions of historical loss moderate the association between adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behavior during youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do not moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do moderate the association between parent's warmth and involvement during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do not moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's reasoning/induction during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do not moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's democratic participation during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do not moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's verbal hostility during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>0</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss do not moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

H<sub>a</sub>: Adults' perceptions of historical loss does moderate the association between parent's non-reasoning/punitive during their youth and adults' avoidant-related attachment.

Chapter 4 includes an outline of data collection procedures including demographic information, the data collection process, and descriptive statistic results and data analysis derived from raw data that were collected through online surveys.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for this study involved collecting participants from different universities and colleges that had a large population and recruitment of Native American students. On May 29th, 2023, 43 different colleges and universities were selected, and each IRB was emailed about their interest in posting the research flyer to their student body. Of the 43 schools, six said they were unable to participate, 24 did not respond after an additional follow up email in August 2023, and 13 responded. Of those who responded ten schools needed separate applications for approval from their IRB or local reservation and only three schools were willing to have the flyers distributed to their student body. These schools were The University of South Dakota, Chief Dull Knife College, and The University of New Mexico. The decision to not pursue approval from affiliated reservations or IRB boards at those schools was due to the length of time it would take to



receive that approval (roughly three-six months) before even starting the data collection in comparison to the length of time available to collect data (three-six months total).

Official data collection began on December 11th, 2023, when Walden IRB approved data collection from The University of South Dakota and Chief Dull Knife College. Between October and December 2023 several attempts were made to discuss the possible participation of individuals from the Spokane tribe, but they were not responsive. On January 18th, 2024, the American Indian Student Services at The University of New Mexico was also approved as a data collection site. Flyers were digitally sent out to the agreed staff member both Chief Dull Knife College and The University of New Mexico on January 24th, 2024 to distribute to their study body, and again on May 5th, 2024. The University of South Dakota Native American Cultural Center received a digital flyer on January 24th, 2024. On January 21st, 2024, a separate professor in the Theater Department at University of South Dakota received the flyer and forwarded the flyer to both the Director and the Assistant Director of Student Services and Multicultural Affairs to send out on their listserv to potential participants. On March 5th, 2024, flyers were digitally sent out by the Director of the Native American Cultural Center at USD to a listserv that specifically targets Native Americans and connects with both those currently and previously on campus. Between April 5th and 7th, 2024 over 150 flyers were personally posted around The University of South Dakota campus including their “Building Bridges Conference and Native American Visiting Day”, as well as the Native American Alumni Dinner and Wacipi (Powwow) which was celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Despite hundreds of Native American individuals having access to the research flyer between the three approved schools and the on-campus events at The University of South Dakota, only 14 individuals responded. On June 11th, 2024, the Walden IRB approved to recruit additional contacts through Facebook groups that focus on Native American communities. Despite posting the flyer on over 85 different Facebook groups, no additional participants were gained. The approved data collection year from August 2023-August 2024 ended and only 14 participants had completed the survey. Due to the significantly low number of participants, adjustments had to be made regarding data analysis process and procedure.

Data collection was gathered electronically through the online platform [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com). Participants utilized the QR code or weblink on the flyer to access the survey. On August 1st, 2024, the survey closed despite not having reached the number of desired participants. Raw data from participant surveys was exported into SPSS where it was analyzed for outliers by running the frequencies of the variables. Data was stored on a password protected personal laptop and was only accessed by primary researcher. The data will be kept for five years and will not be permitted to be used for any other research in the future.

### **Sample Demographics**

A total of 14 volunteers participated in the online survey for this research, with three being incomplete and 11 being complete surveys. An a priori power analysis was conducted using G\*Power version 3.1.9.7 (Faul et al., 2007) to determine the minimum sample size required to test the study hypotheses for the 11 predictors. Results indicated

the required sample size to achieve 70% power for detecting a medium effect, at a significance criterion of  $\alpha = .05$ , was  $N = 178$  for linear bivariate simple regression analyses. Due to the limited participants gathered, the independent variable was reduced to one (parenting behaviors of warmth and involvement). A  $g^*$ power statistic test was run to determine the appropriate sample size, which revealed that a sample of 89 participants would be necessary. Results indicated the required sample size to achieve 70% power for detecting a medium effect, at a significance criterion of  $\alpha = .05$ , was  $N = 89$  for linear bivariate simple regression analyses. The collected sample size of 11 participants is far below the required number for statistical significance.

Table 1 shows demographic characteristics for the 11 participants who ranged in age from 19 to 72 years old (Mean = 31.27 , SD = 15.69 ). For gender, three (27.3%) participants were male, six (54.5%) were female, one (9.1%) identified as Transgender, and one (9.1%) identified as non-binary. In regard to education, four (36.4%) had a high school diploma, two (18.2%) had an associate's degree, two (18.2%) had a bachelor's degree, and three (27.3%) had a graduate degree. Participants were from tribes across the country including Yankton Sioux, Rosebud, Navajo, Muscogee Creek, Ponca, Lower Brule Sioux, Dine, Nambe Pueblo, and Laguna Pueblo. Five participants (45.5%) reported that they have lived on a reservation and six (54.5%) reported that they have not. Participants reported that eight (72.7%) had an immediate family member that has been enrolled in a Native American residential boarding school and three (27.3%) did not. Of those that participated, eight (72.7%) reported that they actively participate in traditional Native American cultural practices, while three (27.3%) said they did not. Heritage was

received from the mother's side for eight (72.7%) of the participants and from the father's side in 11 (100%) participants. This information gives a glance into the variety of collected participants within the Native American community.

**Table 1**

*Sample Demographic Characteristics*

Demographic	<i>N</i>	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	3	27.3%
Female	6	54.5%
Transgendered	1	9.1 %
Transgendered	1	9.1%
<i>Education</i>		
High School Diploma	4	36.4%
Associate's degree	2	18.2 %
Bachelor's degree	2	18.2%
Graduate Degree	3	27.3%
<i>Environment</i>		
Live/Lived on a Reservation	5	45.5%
Never Lived on a Reservation	6	54.5%
Relatives at Residential Boarding	8	72.7%
No Relatives at Residential Boarding	3	27.3%
<i>Heritage</i>		
Mother's Side	8	72.7%
Father's Side	11	100%

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Anxious and avoidant attachment dimensions, parenting behaviors of warmth and involvement, and historical loss were assessed for this study. Descriptive statistics were run for all variables. For ECR anxious attachment, the mean was 78.00 (SD = 19.89), range (min = 33.00, max = 102.00), skew = -1.01 (Std. Error of Skewness = .66), and kurtosis = 1.46 (Std. Error of Kurtosis = 1.28). For ECR avoidant attachment the mean was 78.91 (SD = 25.57), range (min = 25.00, max = 114.00), skew = -.78 (Std. Error of Skewness = .66), and kurtosis = .55 (Std. Error of Kurtosis = 1.28). For PSDQ Warmth and Involvement, the mean was 26.64 (SD = 9.35), range (min = 11.00, max = 42.00), skew = .01 (Std. Error of Skewness = .66), and kurtosis = -.47 (Std. Error of Kurtosis = 1.28). For Historical Loss the mean was 39.91 (SD = 16.31), range (min = 20, max = 68), skew = .81 (Std. Error of Skewness = .66), and kurtosis = -.71 (Std. Error of Kurtosis = 1.28). See Table 2.

Skewness measures the symmetry of a distribution, with a skewness value of zero indicating a perfectly normal distribution. A skewness value greater than  $\pm 1.00$  suggests significant deviation from normality (Cain, Zhang, & Yuan, 2017). Kurtosis, on the other hand, assesses the peak or flatness of a distribution. For a normal distribution, a kurtosis value of zero is expected. Values exceeding  $\pm 3.00$  indicate significant deviations, with high kurtosis (leptokurtic) showing a sharp peak and low kurtosis (platykurtic) indicating a flatter distribution (Cain, Zhang, & Yuan, 2017). The skewness and kurtosis values

suggest that the assumptions of normality were met for warmth and involvement, anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and historical loss. See Table 2.

Correlations were conducted to examine associations between the variables. ECR anxious attachment was not significantly correlated with PSDQ warmth and involvement ( $r = -.40, p = .22$ ). ECR avoidant attachment was not significantly correlated with PSDQ warmth and involvement ( $r = -.50, p = .12$ ). Historical loss was not significantly correlated with ECR anxious attachment ( $r = .43, p = .19$ ), ECR avoidant attachment ( $r = .46, p = .16$ ), or PSDQ warmth and involvement ( $r = -.38, p = .26$ ).

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables*

Variable	N	M	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
ECR Anxious Attachment	11	78.00	19.89	33.00	102.00	-1.01	1.46
ECR Avoidant Attachment	11	78.91	19.89	25.00	114.00	-.78	-.55
PSDQ Warmth and Involvement	11	26.64	9.35	11.00	42.00	.01	-.47
Historical Loss	11	39.91	16.31	20.00	68.00	.81	-.71

**Statistical Assumption**

Regression analysis was selected as the statistical method to address the three research questions. Before applying a linear regression model to examine the association between independent and dependent variables, several key assumptions must be satisfied.

These assumptions include the independence of observations, the absence of multicollinearity and significant outliers, and a moderate correlation between outcome variables. The data must meet these criteria for regression analysis to produce valid results (Harrell, Jr., 2015).

As part of the regression analysis, the Durbin-Watson test was performed to assess the assumption of error independence. Durbin-Watson values below one or above three indicate a violation of this assumption. In this study, the Durbin-Watson values ranged between 1.0 and 2.0, suggesting that the assumption of error independence was upheld. To evaluate multicollinearity, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was calculated for each predictor in the regression model. A VIF close to 1.0 suggests the absence of multicollinearity, while a VIF greater than  $\pm 5$  indicates significant multicollinearity. Since all predictor variables had VIF values less than 1.000, the assumption of no multicollinearity was not violated. Scatterplots were used to examine the homoscedasticity assumption and identify any potential outliers. The distribution of scores was evenly spread above and below zero, indicating that the assumption of homoscedasticity was met.

### **Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Linear regression analyses were performed to explore potential associations and to determine if significant predictive relationships existed among the variables of participants perceived parenting behaviors (warmth and involvement) during youth and participants anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and historical loss. The inferential

analysis employed Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and simple linear regression techniques. The statistical analysis strategy, detailed by research question and/or hypothesis, is outlined in the following section.

### ***RQ1***

A simple linear regression analysis was run to evaluate the hypothesis and determine if there was an association between warmth & involvement and anxious-related attachment.

The PDSQ warmth and involvement served as the predictor variable and ECR anxious attachment was the criterion variable. Table 3 shows that a non-significant regression equation was found [ $F(1, 9) = 1.71, p = .22$ ], with an  $R^2$  of .16, indicating that parents warmth and involvement does not significantly predict the participants anxious attachment. The null hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 3**

*Warmth and Involvement Predicting Anxious Attachment*

Variable	$\beta$	T	$p$	R	$R^2$	p
Warmth and Involvement	-.40	-1.31	.22	.40	.16	.22



**RQ2**

A simple linear regression analysis was run to evaluate the hypothesis and determine if there was an association between parenting behaviors of warmth and involvement and avoidant-related attachment.

The PDSQ warmth and involvement served as the predictor variable and ECR avoidant attachment was the criterion variable. Table 4 shows that a non-significant regression equation was found [ $F(1, 9) = 3.03, p = .12$ ], with an  $R^2$  of .25, indicating that parents warmth and involvement does not significantly predict the participants avoidant attachment. The null hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 4***Warmth and Involvement Predicting Avoidant Attachment*

Variable	$\beta$	T	$p$	R	$R^2$	p
				.50	.25	.12
Warmth and Involvement	-.50	-1.74	.12			

**RQ3**

In order to test the moderating role of the proposed variables, a series of hierarchical regression analyses as outlined in Baron and Kenny (1986) were computed. As delineated in Baron and Kenny (1986), the independent variable (centered) was entered into the first step of the regression. The moderator variable (centered) was then entered into the second step. Lastly, the interaction term (independent variable by the

moderator variable) was entered into the last step. A significant change in  $R^2$  produced by the interaction term entered on the last step would indicate that the moderator variable was influencing the association between the predictor and criterion variables.

Linear regressions were completed to determine potential associations of the following variables outlined in Table 5. Attachment dimensions was the criterion variable. Parenting Behaviors of Warmth and Involvement centered was added into the model in the first step [change in  $R^2 = .16$ ,  $F$  change (1, 9) = 1.71,  $p = .22$ ]. Historical loss centered was entered into the second step [change in  $R^2 = .10$ ,  $F$  change (2, 8) = 1.33,  $p = .32$ ]. The interaction term (Warmth and Involvement X Historical Loss) was entered into the third and final step. The interaction term was not significant [change in  $R^2 = .24$ ,  $F$  change (3, 7) = 2.27,  $p = .17$ ]. Given this, historical loss did not significantly moderate the association, therefor the null hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 5**

*Historical Loss Moderating the Association Between Warmth and Involvement and Anxious Attachment*

Variable	$\beta$	T	$p$	R	$R^2$	p
Warmth and Involvement	-2.01	-2.03	.08	.50	.25	.12
Historical Loss	-2.00	-1.54	.17			

Warmth and	2.37	1.83	.11
Involvement X			
Historical Loss			

### Summary

I sought to understand associations between perceived parenting behaviors during youth and current adult attachment within Native American communities, and whether those associations were moderated by historical loss. Data were collected over a 6-month period with a total of 14 participants and 11 viable surveys. The survey included questions regarding perceived parenting behaviors, attachment dimensions, and historical loss. Perceived parenting behaviors were measured by the PSDQ, attachment dimensions were measured using the ECR-R, and historical loss was measured using the HLS. Data were electronically collected through SurveyMonkey.

Participants ranged in age from 19 to 72 and had a wide range of educational experiences, with the majority having a high school diploma along with associate's, bachelor's, and graduate degrees. Participants were from tribes across the country and were split between those who lived or had lived on reservations and those who did not. The majority of participants had members of their families who had attended Native American residential boarding schools and actively participate in traditional Native American cultural practices. All participants were Native American on their father's side, and over half also had Native American mothers.

Anxious and avoidant attachment dimensions, parenting behaviors involving warmth and involvement, and historical loss were assessed for this study. Descriptive statistics for means, standard deviation, range, skew, and kurtosis were run for all variables. Skewness and kurtosis values suggested assumptions of normality were met for warmth and involvement, anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and historical loss. Regression analysis was selected as the statistical method to address research questions. In this study, Durbin-Watson values ranged between 1.0 and 2.0, suggesting that assumption of error independence was upheld. To evaluate multicollinearity, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was calculated for each predictor in the regression model. All predictor variables had VIF values that were less than 1.000, and therefore assumption of no multicollinearity was not violated. Scatterplots were used to examine homoscedasticity assumptions and identify any potential outliers. Distribution of scores was evenly spread above and below zero, indicating assumption of homoscedasticity was met.

Linear regression analyses were performed to explore potential associations and determine if significant predictive relationships existed between parenting behaviors (warmth and involvement), anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and historical loss. Correlational analyses were conducted to examine associations between variables. Anxious attachment and avoidant attachment were not significantly correlated with warmth and involvement, and historical loss was not significantly correlated with anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, or warmth and involvement.

For RQ1, a nonsignificant regression equation was found, indicating parents' warmth and involvement did not significantly predict participants' anxious attachment.

For RQ2, a nonsignificant regression equation was found, indicating parents' warmth and involvement did not significantly predict participants' avoidant attachment. For RQ3, historical loss did not significantly moderate associations.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

I sought to examine associations between individuals' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during their youth and resulting attachment dimensions during adulthood among those who identify as Native American. I examined historical loss as a moderator of associations between perceived parenting behaviors and attachment dimensions. Parent-child relationships are at the core of development and imperative for creating healthy attachments, which influence all relationships across the lifespan (Anderson, 2014; Chamberlain et al., 2019; Deane et al., 2018; Muir & Bohr, 2019; Pazderka et al., 2014; Sam et al., 2015; Simard, 2019; Simi & Matusitz, 2016). Native American cultures are experiencing historical loss symptoms that are most likely influencing their parenting behaviors, leading to more insecurely attached children and disconnected communities (Kirmayer et al., 2014). To date, research had not explored if parenting behaviors were impacted by experiences involving historical loss and attachment dimensions within Native American communities. I aimed to close that gap in literature and address a pressing issue among a minority population.

I was unable to gather an effective number of participants to ensure data results were viable and statistically significant. Eight (72.7%) participants had immediate family members who resided in residential boarding schools, and reported they actively participated in traditional Native American cultural practices. Among participants, there was diversity in terms of gender identities (male, female, transgender, and nonbinary), as well as education completion (high school, associates, bachelors, and graduate school).

Data analysis revealed for RQ1, parents' warmth and involvement did not significantly predict participants' anxious attachment. For RQ2, parents' warmth and involvement did not significantly predict participants' avoidant attachment. Linear regressions were completed to determine potential associations between attachment dimensions, parenting behaviors involving warmth and involvement, and historical loss. Historical loss did not significantly moderate associations.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

Due to the significantly low number of participants in this study, findings could not be established. Limited data indicated parenting behaviors involving warmth and involvement did not predict attachment dimensions and experiences with historical loss did not moderate those interactions. This was due to the small sample size as there were not enough participants to render statistically significant results.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As outlined in Chapter 1, access to participants was a possible limitation of this study. I used a convenience sampling technique through recruitment from universities that had large populations of Native American students and cultural centers, as well as community centers on reservations, local tribes, and social media. Lack of direct access to this population limited who was able to respond and who had access to the study. This could have potentially contributed to lack of engagement as it took extra effort to use surveys. The survey was also time consuming with 91 total questions, which may have been why three participants started but did not complete surveys.

### **Recommendations**

Even with challenges involving collecting participants for this research, it is recommended to conduct research using Native American samples to have a better understanding of how to support these communities. This is imperative to improve overall wellbeing and lifespan of its members. Future research should focus on Native American populations and be administered by individuals who have more direct access to participants such as tribal members or academics who work with these communities, where they can gauge engagement. I relied primarily on convenience sampling as well as snowball sampling.

Research could be approached in the future through a qualitative rather than quantitative lens. This would allow further understanding of individual experiences related to attachment, parenting behaviors, and historical loss.

### **Implications**

My goal was to provide information that could promote positive social change through understanding adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting behaviors during youth and resulting attachment dimensions in adulthood within Native American communities. This justifies and promotes the need for targeted support for Native American families who may be struggling with insecure attachment or unhealthy family relationships. Potential information from this type of study may support positive social change through awareness of how historical loss may be influencing parenting behaviors, potentially revealing the need to reintegrate traditional native parenting behaviors within indigenous cultures and rebuild healthy relationship patterns for future generations.



Historical loss and current trauma among Native American populations is a very prominent topic at this time, and research on this topic can provide a better understanding of how to support individuals who are victims of systemic racism, as well as those who may knowingly or unknowingly promote the ways of dominant cultures at the cost of minority cultures. Knowledge acquired through researching this topic has the potential to promote positive social change and assist clinicians with productive strategies to aid in working with these populations. This could involve further identification of types of traditional parenting behaviors that promote secure attachment and recognizing the impact historical loss and loss of family systems can have on mental health of those who identify as Native American.

### **Conclusion**

Native American populations continue to be underserved and underrepresented in the United States. Historical trauma impacts this population, and research continues to be vitally important to support these communities. With prudent research and understanding of attachment, parenting behaviors, and impact of historical loss, there can be more targeted interventions and supports that are available to this population.

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## Appendix A: Demographics Questionnaire

1. Please indicate your age. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Please select your gender.
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Transgender
  - d. Non-Binary
  - e. Genderqueer/Gender Nonconforming
  - f. Rather not say
  - g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Please choose your race.
  - a. White/Caucasian
  - b. African American/Black
  - c. Hispanic/Latino
  - d. Asian American/Asian
  - e. Middle Eastern
  - f. American Indian/Alaska Native
  - g. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
  - h. Multiracial: \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please indicate tribal affiliation.

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5. Please indicate current education level.

- a. No High School Diploma
- b. High School Diploma
- c. GED
- d. Trade School
- e. Associates Degree
- f. Bachelors Degree
- g. Graduate Degree

## Appendix B: Revised ECR-R Questionnaire

<b>Question</b>		<b>1= Strongly Disagree.....7= Strongly Agree</b>						
<b>1</b>	I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>2</b>	I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>3</b>	I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>4</b>	I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>5</b>	I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>6</b>	I worry a lot about my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>7</b>	When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>8</b>	When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>9</b>	I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10</b>	My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>11</b>	I do not often worry about being abandoned.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



<b>12</b>	I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>13</b>	Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>14</b>	My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>15</b>	I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>16</b>	It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>17</b>	I worry that I won't measure up to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>18</b>	My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>19</b>	I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>20</b>	I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>21</b>	I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>22</b>	I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<b>23</b>	I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>24</b>	I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>25</b>	I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>26</b>	I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>27</b>	It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>28</b>	I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>29</b>	It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>30</b>	I tell my partner just about everything.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>31</b>	I talk things over with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>32</b>	I am nervous when partners get too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>33</b>	I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>34</b>	I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>35</b>	It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>36</b>	My partner really understand me and my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Appendix C: PSDQ

PARENT EXHIBITED BEHAVIOR:

1 = Never

2 = Once In Awhile

3 = About Half of the Time

4 = Very Often

5 = Always

**Rate how often your parent exhibited this behavior with you during youth.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. My parent encouraged me to talk about my troubles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. My parent knew the names of my friends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. My parent gave me praise when I was good.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. My parent showed sympathy when I was hurt or frustrated.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. My parent punished me by taking privileges away from me with little if any explanations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. My parent gave comfort and understanding when I was upset.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. My parent yelled or shouted when I misbehaved.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. My parent told me the expectations regarding behavior before I would engage in an activity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. My parent was responsive to my feelings or needs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. My parent allowed me to give input into family rules.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. My parent argued with me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. My parent gave me reasons why rules should be obeyed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. My parent appeared to be more concerned with their own feelings than with my feelings.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. My parent told me that they appreciate what I try or accomplish.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. My parent punished by putting me off somewhere alone with little if any explanations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. My parent helped me to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging me to talk about the consequences of my actions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. My parent took my desires into account before asking me to do something.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. My parent would explode in anger towards me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. My parent was aware of problems or concerns about me in school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. My parent expressed affection by hugging, kissing, and holding me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. My parent apologized to me when making a mistake in parenting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. My parent talked it over and reasoned with me when I misbehaved.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. My parent disagreed with me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. My parent and I had warm and intimate times together.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. When two children were fighting my parent would discipline first and ask questions later.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. My parent encouraged me to feely express myself even when disagreeing with them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. My parent explained to me how they felt about my good and bad behavior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. My parents used threats as punishment with little or no justification.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. My parent took into account my preferences in making plans for the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. When I would ask why I have to conform, my parents would state: because I said so, or I am your parent and I want you to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. My parent explained the consequences of my behavior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. My parent channeled my misbehavior into a more acceptable activity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. My parent emphasized the reason for rules.

## Appendix D: HLS Questionnaire

		<b>Several times a day</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Yearly or only at special times</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Don't Know/ Refuse</b>
<b>A</b>	The loss of our land							
<b>B</b>	The loss of our language							
<b>C</b>	Losing our traditional spiritual ways							
<b>D</b>	The loss of our family ties because of boarding schools							
<b>E</b>	The loss of families from the reservation to government relocation							
<b>F</b>	The loss of self- respect from poor							

	treatment by government officials							
<b>G</b>	The loss of trust in whites from broken treaties							
<b>H</b>	Losing our culture							
<b>I</b>	The losses from the effects of alcoholism on our people							
<b>J</b>	Loss of respect by our children and grandchildren for elders							
<b>K</b>	Loss of our people through early death							
<b>L</b>	Loss of respect by our children for traditional ways.							