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# The relationship between the associated symptoms of first nation peoples' historical losses and organizational commitment in the Canadian workplace

Justin W. Wilson  
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# Walden University

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Walden University  
2014

Abstract

The Relationship Between the Associated Symptoms of First Nation Peoples' Historical  
Losses and Organizational Commitment in the Canadian Workplace

by

Justin W. Wilson

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Psychology

Walden University

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## Abstract

Researchers have found that minorities suffering from traumatic stress report increased levels of stress in the absence of supportive and committed work environments; however, a paucity of empirical research exists for First Nations Peoples (FNP). The purpose of this quantitative correlation study was to examine the nature of the relationship between FNP's associated symptoms of historical loss, assessed by the Historical Loss and Associated Symptoms Scale, and organizational commitment, as measured by the Three Component Employee Commitment Survey. A total of 118 residential school survivors completed surveys. Correlation analysis was used to determine the significance of historical loss in relation to organizational commitment among survivors. Results showed an inverse relationship between affective commitment and associated symptoms of historical loss and between continuance commitment and associated symptoms. No statistically significant correlation was found between normative commitment and historical loss or associated symptoms. Findings can help inform targeted engagement, recruitment, and retention initiatives designed to accommodate FNP perspectives and experiences into organizational culture and systems. Implications for positive social change include better understanding of factors impacting career progression among FNP, such as organizational commitment. Results may also inform culturally safe interventions that help FNP to be successful.



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## Dedication

*Lhawininukvayaqvs nugva.*

To my family, who have been patient, supportive, and loving; to all my relations for the sacrifices they have made; and to the future generations whose lives we influence with today's choices.

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Firstly, to the Creator for reminding us that nothing is ever perfect. I am humbled and overwhelmed by all that I have received and grateful for all that I have, and have not, experienced. To my chair, Dr. Stacy Orr-Sprague, for her guidance, support, and patience for what can only be described as a life altering experience. To Dr. Thomas Diamond for his subject matter expertise, professional humility, and culturally grounded support. To Dr. Gary Burkholder for his keen attention to detail and personal and professional commitment to make me a better academic.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996c) reported that First Nations Peoples (FNP) employed within Canadian federal departments during the 1990s constituted less than 1.04% of the total workforce. The commissioners cited a combination of (a) racism, (b) lack of commitment, and (c) fewer chances for advancement as top barriers to the attraction and retention of these workers. Workplace barriers were defined by factors that included (a) stereotyping, (b) exclusion, (c) culture clashes, and (d) hostile environments that devalued spiritual and cultural beliefs. Liao, Joshi, and Chuang (2004) suggested that today's global corporate environment is operating within an increasingly diverse context and thus requires a greater understanding of diverse traits and perspectives. FNP represent an important demographic in this regard, with over 600 registered bands accounting for 3.8% (1,172,790) of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2009b). This population has grown nearly eight times faster than the national average, representing a major potential labor source for job vacancies. Having a greater understanding of FNP experiences and challenges in the workplace can assist in this endeavor.

Canada has built a wide reputation as a humanitarian country; however, the Royal Commission also reported that the relationship between Canada and FNP has reflected a dark contradiction to this perception, evident in harmful colonial prejudices and sociocultural genocide (Chrisjon, Young, & Maraun, 2006) manifested within Indian residential schools (IRSs). Several researchers (Brown, 2004; Ing, 1991, 2001; Plouffe,

2001; RCAP, 1996b; Vedan, 2002) argued that IRSs and their effects on FNP have led to a general lack of trust in authority figures. Morrisette (1994), for example, argued that IRSs' mandatory severing of First Nation children from their families of origin has frustrated important relationships between children and their families, subsequently leading to emotional withdrawal, fear of intimacy, and fear of rejection, in addition to dysfunctional social modeling and impaired self-functioning. In fact, several researchers (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995; Brown, 2004; Ing, 1991, 2001; RCAP, 1996b; Vedan, 2002) have argued that IRSs were designed to take the Indian out of the child.

Canadian society is beginning to acknowledge the historical atrocities experienced by this population group, with the first official Canadian government apology delivered on June 11, 2008 as well as the dignitary status assigned to the four host FNP groups at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Both events marked important milestones in acknowledging the experience of FNP and their struggle to heal and regain economic equality (Salee, Newhouse, & Levesque, 2006). Officials representing British Columbia refer to this period as a new relationship, a time of interaction based upon truth and reconciliation (Patterson, 2006). Yet, it is unclear as to what impacts truth and reconciliation are having on the workplace; Littig and Williams (1978) argued that minority workplace experiences are often negatively influenced by social and environmental factors that may increase their social distance from dominant employee populations.

Findler, Wind, and Mor Barak (2007), as well as Liao et al. (2004), argued that negative social factors limit the successful integration of minorities, because they cannot

(or perhaps are not willing to) self-identify with a hostile social environment. If FNP are experiencing greater social isolation and less overall career progression than dominant populations due to their demographic dissimilarity, these factors may be worth investigating due to the resulting bias, discrimination, and exclusion they might otherwise be experiencing. Examples are provided in Turner and Myers's (1999) research, in which the authors identified subtle discrimination during the review and promotion process. As one Native American faculty member reported, "Because these environments are not of our culture . . . we're never fully accepted. . . . It's a racist society, period" (p. 52). In fact, minority faculty exhibited decreased productivity and less overall job satisfaction, citing the lack of a supportive workplace environment as a key barrier. Additional examples of minority underrepresentation was found in senior bureaucratic positions according to Starks's (2009) findings.

Several theorists (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Liao et al., 2004) have also investigated the impact of unsupportive work environments and found that perceived organizational support is positively correlated with organizational commitment. Scott's (2006) research findings add to the validity of this study given reported low levels of organizational commitment among FNP, specifically nurses, citing fears of losing culture as a potential factor (Anonson, Desjarlais, Nixon, Whiteman, & Bird, 2008). To overcome these barriers, Dwyer (2003) argued that recruitment of and advancement programs for FNP must incorporate sociocultural methods, tools, and approaches that are broader and more collaborative, especially because First Nation culture has been historically oppressed (Duran, Firehammer & Gonzalez, 2008). IRS

literature (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995; Brown, 2004; Duran, 2006; Ing, 1991, 2001; Morrissette, 1994; Plouffe, 2001; Vedan, 2002) often refers to a consistent series of cognitive, affective, and behavioral experiences that were harmful to childhood development. These experiences are illuminated by reports of feeling exploited, culturally devalued, and subjected to the effects of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as well as a myriad of sociocultural effects collectively known as RSS (Brassfield, 2001; Chrisjon et al., 2006).

Bombay, Matheson, and Anisman (2009) investigated multiple intergenerational processes of FNP and referred to the collective association of PTSD, depression, and maladaptive appraisal/coping mechanisms factors as *historical loss*. In this study, I examined the effects of historical loss in the Canadian workplace to determine if there are any potential relationships with organizational commitment. If any relationships are found and organizational commitment levels are reduced as a consequence of historical loss, then it may help to explain the reduced ability of the FNP to develop a sense of belonging and attachment within their employing organizations.

### **Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment research commonly references correlates of individual job satisfaction, turnover intention, and organizational effectiveness as evidenced by research in numerous countries including the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia (Felfe et al., 2008; Meyer et al., 2002; Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2006; Scott, 2006; Wang, 2006). Global interest in organizational effectiveness has

prompted organizational commitment researchers to examine a plethora of antecedent, consequence, and dispositional factors. Yet, very few studies have specifically examined personality factors beyond those of *big-five* variables of openness, conscientiousness, agreeability, extraversion, and neuroticism (Mayfield, 2008; Organ & Lingl, 1995; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). Given the experiences of FNP with IRSs and intergenerational trauma, in this study I added the maladaptive feature of historical loss to explore what, if any effects this variable may have on organizational commitment.

Several researchers (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1994; Felfe et al., 2008; Kwantes, 2003; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002) argued that organizations seeking to enhance the quality of the psychological relationship employees have with their employers should seek to have a greater understanding of important traits and environmental considerations in order to measure overall commitment. Allen and Meyer (1990) and Meyer and Allen (1984) argued that organizational commitment is predicated upon three important subfactors: (a) affective commitment, the extent to which employees identify with the organizations within which they are employed, the extent of their emotional attachment to the organization, and the degree to which they wish to become involved with the organization; (b) continuance commitment, the perceived cost of leaving the organization; and (c) normative commitment, the perceived obligation to remain with the organization. It is generally understood that the higher the reported affective commitment the lower the intention to leave the organization and vice versa (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Shore, Tetrick, Shore, and Barksdale (2000) argued that continuance commitment was originally predicated upon the side bet theory, which assumes employees are constantly evaluating their organizational membership in socioeconomic terms. For example, if the cost of leaving the organization, such as in status and/or benefits, is higher than the potential inducements to leave, such as with higher financial compensation and/or a greater work-life balance, the respective employee is likely to possess a high continuance commitment. Meyer et al. (2002) argued that the last core feature of organizational commitment suggests that those employees reporting higher normative commitment may be more willing to reciprocate group norms to an extent beyond expectations due to an inherent need to repay personal obligations.

Reciprocation is an important concept, considering that organizational commitment is based upon congruency and trust (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972). Because specific sociocultural values and beliefs of FNP have been described with a collectivistic orientation (Blue, Darou, & Ruano, 2000; Brant, 1990), it is important to include in the context of affective commitment, because it has an important relationship with collective self-concept (Johnson & Chang, 2008). Although self-concept is beyond the scope of this study, it is noteworthy because it does highlight the importance of communal values FNP place on workplace relationships. FNP culture has been characterized as collectivistic (versus individualistic) in which greater importance is placed on cooperation rather than competitiveness. Collectivism may have important implications for normative commitment and affective commitment, because both organizational commitment sub factors have been described as employees feeling understood and supported by the

organization. Without such support, research has posited that their level of organizational commitment will be significantly lower (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Liao et al., 2004; Meyer et al., 2002).

### **First Nation Historical Losses**

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF; 2009) estimated that over 86,000 first generation survivors of IRSs remained alive as of 2009 with approximately 237,350 intergenerational survivors (i.e., second, third, and fourth generation, respectively) representing nearly one out of every three FNP alive today. IRS literature (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995; Doyle, 1997; Graham, 2001; Halkow, 1996; Henderson, Kunitz, Gabriel, McCright, & Levy, 1998; McCormick, 1995; Moran, Bifulco, Ball, Jacobs, & Benaim, 2002; Morrisette, 1994; Plouffe, 2001; Quigley, 1991; RCAP, 1996b; Vedan, 2002) includes a comprehensive account of the emotional, cultural, and psychological violence to which First Nations children were subjected such as self-devaluation (Ing, 1991); social distance (Ing, 2001); compromised self-worth and self-efficacy (Morrisette, 1994); unhealthy social modeling, compromised parental efficacy, and self-hatred (DeGagne, 2007; Henderson et al., 1998; Kim & Cicchetti, 2003; Silmere & Stiffman, 2006); chronic and unresolved PTSD and RSS (Brassfield, 2001; Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995; Chrisjon et al., 2006); anomie depression (Plouffe, 2001); extreme distrust of Caucasians (Brassfield, 2001; RCAP, 1996b); and how these maladaptive factors can impede healthy interpersonal relationships (Becker, 2008; Fisher, Bacon, & Storck, 1998; Henderson et al., 1998; Hendin & Cheek, 1997; Hoglund, 1997; Wink, 1991).

Statistics Canada (2009a) reported that FNP are nearly 10 times more likely than non-FNP to be placed into custody or on probation or remanded by legal authorities. Health Canada (2009) reported that alcohol and substance abuse (73% and 59% higher incidence rates than non-FNP, respectively), spousal homicide (18 times the incidence of non-FNP), and suicide (up to 11 times the incidence of non-Aboriginals) are specific challenges. Statistics Canada also reported that less than 47% of FNP have reported completing Grade 12 and only 2% have reported completion of graduate studies. Many qualitative researchers have attributed these statistics to individual, family, and social dysfunction directly related to trauma induced within IRSs (Brown, 2004; Ing, 1991, 2001; Vedan, 2002). In spite of the described challenges, Statistics Canada (2009b) reported that the population of FNP within Canada is growing nearly 8 times faster than the national-average growth rate, rendering FNP a potential source for job vacancies going forward.

### **Problem Statement**

Matthews (2006; see also Bombay et al., 2009) found that employees suffering from traumatic stress reported increased levels of stress when they did not have access to supportive and committed work environments. Studies on minority employees reflect that organizations failing to cultivate and sustain meaningful workplace relationships with minorities actually hinder their career progression and organizational commitment (Findler et al., 2007; Liao et al., 2004; Littig & Williams, 1978). The literature thus suggests that there may be a relationship between the resultant associated symptoms of

trauma experienced by minorities, their workplace underrepresentation, and their lack of organizational commitment. Currently, however, this relationship has never been explored in the Canadian workplace with First Nation's employees and the associated symptoms of their traumatic historical losses. The purpose of this study was to examine this relationship in greater detail and in doing so identify possible intervention strategies.

It is well documented that FNP in Canada have been significantly affected by traumatic historical losses (Ing, 1991, 2001; RCAP 1996b). The tragic stories of First Nations children forcibly taken from their families to live in often abusive circumstances has been, and continues to be, a source of trauma for the FNP, as well as a source of shame for Canada (Canadian Broadcast Corporation, 2008). RSS and its resultant intergenerational effects (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009; Brassfield, 2001; Braveheart-Jordan, 1995; Ing, 1991; 2001; Morrissette, 1994; Plouffe, 2001; RCAP 1996b; Vedan, 2002; Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004) have been well documented. Its associated traumatic symptoms of historical losses include depression, anxiety, self-devaluation, compromised self-worth, learned self-hatred, compromised parental self-efficacy, anomie depression, compromised social skills, unresolved posttraumatic stress, and extreme distrust of Caucasians. These losses manifest not only at home, but also in the workplace, particularly as it pertains to career planning and advancement (Dwyer, 2003; Kapsalis, 2006; McCormick, Neumann, Amundson, & McLean, 1999).

Dwyer (2003) and RCAP (1996c) have documented FNP underrepresentation in the Canadian workplace and have cited culture clashes and a lack of organizational

commitment as obstacles to their career progression. In the past decade the Canadian government has developed programs (see Committee for the Advancement of Native Employment; INAC, 2011) dedicated to assisting this group, but despite these efforts a huge underemployment and retention problem continues (Anonson et al., 2008; Dwyer, 2003). In fact, INAC failed to formally participate in this study.

Various theories as to why FNP are underrepresented include fear of continued enfranchisement (loss of culture), but there is a paucity of sound research that could inform and guide policy and treatment to correct this problem (Scott, 2006). As the FNP group represents one of the fastest growing populations in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2009b), growing at eight times the national average, this demographic reflects an important labor pool.

### **Purpose of Study, Research Questions, and Hypotheses**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to ascertain the nature of the relationship between the independent variable associated symptoms of historical loss and the dependent variable of organizational commitment among FNP (Chapter 3 provides additional information).

#### **Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss, and affective commitment among FNP?

**Hypothesis (H1).** A statistically significant relationship exists in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the

Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and affective commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

**Null hypothesis.** There is no statistically significant relationship in FNP between associated symptoms of FNP historical losses, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and affective commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

## **Research Question 2**

Is there a statistically significant relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss and normative commitment among FNP?

**Hypothesis (H2).** A statistically significant relationship exists in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and normative commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

**Null hypothesis.** There is no statistically significant relationship in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck, et al., 2004a), and normative commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

### **Research Question 3**

Is there a statistically significant relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss and continuance commitment among FNP?

**Hypothesis (H3).** A statistically significant relationship exists in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and continuance commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

**Null hypothesis.** There is no statistically significant relationship in FNP between historical loss and the associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and continuance commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for the study was based upon two theories: (a) historical trauma based on intergenerational psychological distress and losses acquired during attendance at IRSs, and (b) organizational commitment (Chapter 2 provides additional details). IRSs (Ing; 2001; Morrissette, 1994) were examined because of the significance these schools played in fostering compromised self-esteem, self-worth, and social relationships. Whitbeck et al.'s (2004a) research of The Historical Loss Scale and The Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale were chosen because the instruments

were designed for FNP as evidenced by Whitbeck, Chen, Hoyt, and Adams (2004b) subsequent research.

Organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1984) describes the multidimensional effects of behavioral and attitudinal elements measured by the factors of normative, affective, and continuance commitment and their influence on job satisfaction, job effectiveness, maintenance of organizational membership, and organizational performance (Scott, 2006).

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms were used throughout the study and are defined for purposes of the research (Chapter 3 includes a more detailed analysis of each term):

*First Nations Peoples (FNP)*: FNP was defined by the RCAP (1995a) as a political term describing the first inhabitants of Canada. Terms such as Aboriginal, Indian, or Native Canadian are not considered respectful to FNP. *Peoples* is capitalized denoting the international significance of a sovereign, complex, and unique body of people. In the immediate context of this study, FNP includes Aboriginal, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Reference is also made to Native American, Aborigine, Maori, and other indigenous Peoples around the world.

*Historical and Intergenerational trauma*: According to Brave Heart-Jordan (1995), intergenerational trauma is “the transfer of features or symptoms or trauma across generations, from the survivors to their descendants” (p. 7).

*Organizational Commitment*: According to Allen and Meyer (1996), organizational commitment is “a psychological link between the employee and the organization that makes him/her less likely to voluntarily leave the organization” (p. 252).

*Residential school syndrome (RSS)*: RSS is defined as any survivor of an IRS who subsequently experience posttraumatic stress syndrome, as identified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., text rev.; *DSM-IV-TR*, American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000), symptoms in specific sociocultural ways such as loss of culture, and so on. (Brassfield, 2001).

### **Significance**

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to meaningful social change in two ways. First, the study contributes to a greater understanding of how FNP historical losses affect organizational commitment in the workplace. Findings should contribute to a more informed dialogue aimed at changing the perceived relationship between Canada and FNP from that of a dark contradiction (RCAP, 1996c) to a global best practice through employee engagement and improved representation within the workplace. Secondly, the study contributes a greater understanding of First Nations employees’ traits and perspectives that not only encourages greater personal pride, but may also help reduce unproductive stereotypes within the workplace (Dwyer, 2003; RCAP, 1996c).

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

Some key limitations must be discussed including the generalizability of any findings. According to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (2010), over 615 registered bands of FNP reside within Canada, which include Inuit, Aboriginal, and Métis peoples. The diversity of cultures, languages, beliefs, and values inhibits the study generalizing findings to all FNP; therefore, no population exclusions will be made (Stewart, 2009). Secondly, the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey was not standardized using First Nation populations, making any results exploratory. A final limitation is the use of a convenience sample with self-report questionnaires and the influence of social desirability bias including inflated self-image, dishonesty, fear of public disclosure, and other biases common to any self-report instrument (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Nerdhoff, 1984). Social desirability bias reflects the tendency of research participants to deny socially undesirable traits while claiming socially desirable ones and is considered a form of self and other deception, respectively. Nerdhoff (1984) argued that 2 ways of limiting social desirability bias is to reject the scores of high scoring participants as well as providing self-administered questionnaires to maximize anonymity, thereby reducing the salience of social cues. To assess social desirability bias on the historical loss scale, the Social Desirability Response Set was used to evaluate its impact on the scale (Hays, Hayashi, & Stewart, 1989).

### **Summary**

Dwyer (2003) and RCAP (1996a) reported that FNP are underrepresented within the Canadian workplace. According to organizational commitment theory (Allen &

Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1984), if employees have higher job satisfaction, they are more likely to remain in their job roles and contribute to positive organizational outcomes. Social distance may only exacerbate the problems of historical losses because if FNP report their workplace environments are unsupportive, unsupportive environments may lead to diminished organizational commitment (Eisnerberger et al., 1997; Liao et al., 2004; Littig & Williams, 1978) as seen in Scott's (2006) findings. Literature focusing on IRS, RSS, and historical losses by the children who attended these schools may suggest an answer (Becker, 2008; Bombay et al., 2009; Hoglund, 1997; Morrisette, 1994; Whitbeck et al., 2004; Wink, 1991). Research of these schools suggests that FNP ability to practice their spiritual and cultural traditions and customs were prohibited and curtailed, leaving many children feeling confused, helpless, and coupling with anomie depression, self-hatred, and compromised relationships (Plouffe, 2001; Vedan, 2002). Duran (2006) refers to the combination of these harmful experiences as a symbolic soul-wound, or a sociocultural defeathering of identity according to Brave Heart-Jordan (1995). Collectively, the literature suggests FNP were hindered in their ability to cultivate healthy, well-adjusted self-perceptions especially in regard to positive affiliation (Becker, 2008; Hoglund, 1997).

Employers attempting to attract, engage, or retain FNP may view accommodating this population an insurmountable challenge. To begin to overcome this barrier, it is important to understand how the combined effects of historical losses are perceived by FNP inside the workplace. Having an understanding of FNP loss as it pertains to commitment (specifically belonging and attachment) could provide insights into how to

increase instrumental access to supportive networks that might facilitate their career advancement (Findler et al., 2007; Liao et al., 2004).

This study could inform proper organizational outreach programs to support the recruitment and retention of the first nation employees in a way that is cognizant, respectful and inclusive of their past. Having an increased understanding of historical loss will not only increase affective commitment and normative commitment for employees of this population, but with the heightened employee commitment, increased performance for the enterprise should also be enhanced (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009; Organ, 1977). Chapter 2 includes a comprehensive examination of the types of historical losses experienced by FNP and how they may relate to organizational commitment. Chapter 3 outlines the research methods followed by a detailed review of the results, recommendations, and suggestions for future research in Chapters 4 and 5.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

Matthews (2006; see also Bombay et al., 2009) found that employees suffering from traumatic stress reported increased levels of stress when they did not have access to supportive and committed work environments. Researchers also reported that organizations failing to cultivate and sustain meaningful workplace relationships with minorities actually hinder career progression and organizational commitment (Findler et al., 2007; Liao et al., 2004; Littig & Williams, 1978). The literature thus suggests that there may be a relationship between the resultant associated symptoms of trauma experienced by minorities, their workplace underrepresentation, and their lack of organizational commitment. This chapter includes a comprehensive review of three primary areas. The first is a history of FNP historical losses highlighting the intergenerational transmission of loss and trauma. Secondly, minorities and underrepresented groups and their experiences within the workplace are examined. Finally, a description of the three-component model of organizational commitment is provided.

### **Organization of Review**

First, research on the historical experiences of FNP provides a theoretical discussion of socioeconomic and cultural losses experienced in Canada. Foundational aspects of intergenerational trauma will be explored specifically examining RSS and historical loss, including the relationship between stress response and minority experiences in the workplace (Bombay et al., 2009). Finally, research from Meyer and

Allen (1984) will be provided to investigate the theoretical foundations of organizational commitment. Collectively, I will investigate each construct independently; highlighting the need to examine how historical loss might impact organizational commitment for FNP.

### **Search Procedures**

A full search of the EBSCO and PROQUEST dissertation and theses databases was performed in addition to the PsycARTICLES and Business Source Premiere databases. Focus was placed on peer-reviewed journals involving industrial and organizational psychology and studies involving minorities such as FNP, Aboriginal, Aborigine, Native American Indian, and Maori populations. Specific delimiters included *organizational commitment, workplace, inclusion, demographic dissimilarity, racism, dispositional factors related to organizational commitment, underrepresented groups, trauma, traumatic injuries, historical loss, and intergenerational trauma*. Articles published from 2006 to 2014 were sought; however, there are older peer-reviewed articles included because they represented key theoretical interpretations pertinent to the study.

Whitbeck et al.'s (2004a) development of the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms was specifically chosen for this study because the instruments were designed to take FNP contemporary and historical experiences into account. Whitbeck et al.'s (2004b) subsequent research provided further reliability and validity using a sample of American Indian participants. Careful critique of these

quantitative studies shows that although the concept of historical loss was specifically developed for use with FNP, it was not standardized for use in the workplace.

### **Background of the First Nations Peoples**

FNP within Canada represent a number of complex cultures that have been shaped into distinct political entities based upon common language, cultural tradition, and complex trade and social networks (Canada Parliament, 1983; Kunkel, 2008; RCAP, 1996a). Many researchers (Cornell, 2000; Kunkel, 2008; Manuel, 2007; Stock, 2005) described the social fabric of FNP as encompassing a collectivistic orientation rooted in their spiritual self-perception as caretakers and stewards of the land. This belief influenced their values of sharing, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility. Brant (1990) referred to these characteristics as forming specific cultural rules and ethics that comprised the behavior of FNP such as the ethics of *noninterference* and *noncompetitiveness*. High interdependency among hunting and gathering societies was required for collective survival in harsh environments. FNP have thus been described as representing collectivist ideals because of their historic interdependency. Hofstede and McCrae (2004) described culture as an integral facet of a collective ethos that serves to differentiate one group from another. These collective characteristics also served to influence individual personalities within the society (Johnson & Chang, 2006, 2008). Collectivistic societies are designed to integrate individuals into strong, cohesive in-groups often supported through extended families.

Researchers who have investigated FNP collectivism (Kunkel, 2008; Manuel, 2007; Stock, 2005) found evidence that this characteristic was influential in the

promotion of values such as sharing. The practice of sharing is directly correlated with individual survival within a group or tribe. The sharing of resources was viewed as a personal obligation and moral duty. With a high degree of sharing and interpersonal cooperation, Salee et al. (2006) posited that the social structures of FNP were governed by social harmony, which was a significant indicator for collective social welfare.

FNP existed in this way for many years until Canada was colonized. In reviewing the colonial impact, Kunkel (2008) reported that the sharing values of FNP conflicted with colonial values. Kunkel attributed this conflict to the fact that Euro-Canadians participated in a capitalistic economy and government via maximization and production principles. These sociocultural practices and beliefs translated into unfamiliar competitive behavior to the FNP that promoted individualism over collective living. Hofstede (1984) highlighted the important differences between individualism and collectivism. Eurocentric individualism refers to individuals concerned only for themselves, their immediate families; and is in sharp contrast to collectivism, which refers to members of a clan or group expecting others of their in-group to protect their welfare in exchange for loyalty.

Many researchers (Brown, 2004; Kunkel, 2008; Manuel, 2007; Salee et al., 2006; Stock, 2005) continued to find evidence of the traditional values of sharing, respect, and responsibility within the spiritual and cultural practices of FNP and how these may conflict with modern living. One of the most poignant reminders of such contradiction relates to land stewardship, land development and the perception of FNP as a problem impeding progress.

## **The Indian Problem**

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 prohibited lands within Canada from being ceded or expropriated without due diligence. The provisions of the Proclamation effectively placed a legal burden on the Crown to develop such treaties, which came to be known as the “Indian problem” (Satzewich, 1997, p. 228). Government officials were required to address this issue to expedite Canadian settlement. Sir John A. McDonald, the first Prime Minister of Canada, stated in 1887, “The great aim of our civilization has been to do away with tribal systems and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit for the change” (as cited in Fleras & Elliot, 1992, p. 39). Similar sentiment would be translated into bureaucratic policies, as summarized by the Minister of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, who declared, “I want to get rid of the Indian problem....Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question” (p. 40). Table 1 summarizes the policy decisions related to FNP.

As part of the growing assimilation and paternalistic protectionism evident within policy related to FNP, the government of Canada began to gradually civilize Indian tribes (i.e., enfranchisement). The 1857 Gradual Civilization of Indian Tribes Act (Province of Canada, 1857) reads:

Whereas it is desirable to encourage the progress of civilization among the Indian Tribes in this Province, and the gradual removal of all legal distinctions between them and Her Majesty’s other Canadian subjects, and to facilitate the acquisition of property and of the rights accompanying it . . . Her Majesty . . . enacts as

follows. . . . Such persons shall be deemed Indians within the meaning of the said Act. . . . The term “Indian” shall mean any person who . . . is able to speak, read and write either the English or the French language readily and well . . . and is of good moral character. . . . The legal rights and habilities [sic] of Indians and those of Her Majesty’s other subjects, shall cease to apply to an Indian so declared to be enfranchised (p. 84).

The term *enfranchised* would effectively eliminate First Nations status as identified in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The attempts of the Government of Canada to solve the Indian Problem thus began to take a new turn by perpetuating a systematic attack on the cultures, social systems, beliefs, and traditions of FNP, which some referred to as a process equivalent to sociocultural genocide (Chrisjon et al., 2006). In essence this act was attempting to legislate the Indian out of the Indian.

### **Indian Residential Schools**

The RCAP (1996b) reported that IRSs were originally modeled after U.S. industrial schools. Their primary purpose was to help Native American Indians integrate into White society by equipping them with the modern skills necessary to maintain employment and contribute to the dominant Canadian society. This new model of industrialism was expected to assist in the development of a modern Canadian economy by integrating and enfranchising FNP, which was viewed as one of the most complicated of Indian problems.

Table 1

*First Nations Policy by Type of Decision*

Date	Sociocultural	Spiritual	Economic	Political
1880			Authority given to superintendent generals to administer the estates of deceased Indians including the removal of widows	
1881–1884	Potlatch illegalized	Sun dance and other ritualistic dances banned		
1885–1894	Passes must be approved by Indian agent for any Indian entering or leaving the reservation	Any parent refusing to send their children to an IRS was subject to imprisonment	Superintendents given authority to remove any part of a deceased Indian's will	Traditional hereditary governance systems replaced by elected officials, as per the Indian Act (band council system)
1911	Residential schools are enacted and legalized		Indian Act amended to allow for justified expropriation of Aboriginal lands to make way for municipal interests	All local by-laws enacted by band council were subject to the approval of Indian agents
1914–1920		Indians practicing dancing or wearing spiritual regalia outside of reserves northwest of Manitoba were subject to fines	Parliament amended Indian Act rendering it illegal for anyone to support Aboriginal land claims	
1969				Introduction of 1969 white paper to eliminate First Nations status
1996	The last federally run IRS is closed			

*Note.* IRS = Indian residential school.

The IRSs formed a strategic partnership with Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches that founded schools within all but three Canadian provinces. As of 1931, 44 of the schools were Catholic, 21 were affiliated with the Church of England, the United Church sponsored 13, and two were sponsored by the Presbyterian. The AHF

(2009) reported that, between the years 1800 and 1990, over 130 IRSs operated within Canada with operating costs totaling \$1,504,225,122 (RCAP, 1996b).

The RCAP (1996b) suggested that the primary purpose of IRSs was to disrupt the cultural patterning of the children of FNP through a three-stage process—separation, socialization, and assimilation through enfranchisement. With children physically separated from their parents, resocialization (Ing 1991, 2001) would drive a cultural and spiritual wedge between the children and their communities and cultures of origin. It was hoped that the children would learn that the Indian world as they knew it was obsolete, backward, and immoral. Then, with cultural enfranchisement and resocialization achieved, the values and beliefs of FNP would now model Euro-Canadian values and practices that would help them become well-adjusted and productive members of an industrialized society.

The RCAP (1996b) argued that many Canadian officials referred to IRSs as the visionary vehicle that would liberate savage peoples from cultures deemed unfit to cope with rapidly changing circumstances. Adult FNP were perceived as too ignorant, superstitious, and helpless to adapt; however, children were viewed as hopeful candidates for Canadian progress, candidates who would help solve the Indian problem once and for all (Campbell & Pal, 1991; DeGagne, 2007; Henderson et al., 1998; Morrisette, 1994; RCAP, 1996b; Quinn, 2007). According to the RCAP (1996b), authorities of the IRSs taught children of FNP to reject their heritage, home communities, and ultimately, their identities, leaving many ashamed of their origins and place within Canadian society. Language, cultural practice, tradition, and beliefs were to be suppressed and replaced by

individualistic foreign values such as law and order, an industrious mindset, and security of property.

**Curriculum.** The curriculum of IRSs was based upon the Canadian societal values of cleanliness, productivity, respect, order, independence, and lawfulness (RCAP, 1996b). Boys were to attend courses in agriculture, carpentry, shoemaking, blacksmithing, and printing. Girls were to learn sewing, shirtmaking, knitting, cooking, and laundering. At all times, First Nations children were to act, look, and behave as civilized White children. The RCAP (1996b) reviewed official departmental records and found that retrogression was unacceptable; FNP must not be allowed to revert back to their primitive and savage ways. The curriculum of IRSs was also heavily based upon the Christian morality used to supplant the spirituality of FNP (e.g., advanced curriculum courses entitled *The Evils of Indian Isolation*). FNP speaking in their Mother tongue was prohibited; English was to be spoken at all times. Traditional stories, legends, beliefs, and sociocultural practices were prohibited and punishable (Ing, 1991, 2001).

**Punishment for noncompliance.** For many FNP, their hair is a sacred symbol and extension of self-identity. Brave Heart-Jordan (1995) recounted the story of Zitkala-sa who was required to cut her hair when she entered boarding school.

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck and heard them gnaw off my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother, I have suffered extreme indignities....In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. (p. 20)

Zitkala's story exemplifies the humiliation many First Nations children were subjected to as they entered IRS. Brown (2004) estimated a 47% death rate among First Nation children. Many could not endure the punishment and ran away; others became severely ill due to deplorable living conditions. Official evidence from the Bryce report (RCAP, 1996b) estimated a death toll ranging from 24% to as high as 40% ( $N = 15$ ) over a 25-year period. Although many Canadians were concerned by these statistics, an official inquiry into the 1,537 deaths identified in the report was never initiated. Given the lack of adequate record keeping, the full impact of attendance within IRSs may remain unknown.

The RCAP (1996a) documented other typical corrective disciplinary measures practiced by IRSs including food deprivation, unlawful confinement, serving rotten food, severe beatings, lashings resulting in severe lacerations, forcing children to stand barefoot in the snow, placing needles under their tongues for speaking their mother language, and rubbing their faces in excrement for bedwetting. Duran (2006) referred to the damaging effects of IRSs as a "soul wound" (i.e., soul sickness, ancestral hurts, or spiritual injuries), which was experienced by nearly one in three FNP and has resulted in what has come to be known as a form of intergenerational trauma (p. 16).

**Effects on historical loss.** Whitbeck et al. (2004a) investigated the effects of historical trauma in a sample ( $N = 143$ ) of American Indian parents of children aged 10 through 12 and identified three significant constructs: perceived loss, anger/avoidance and anxiety/depression. Historical trauma was identified using a focus group of elders to help specify the kinds of historical losses FNP incurred in addition to the emotions elicited from these losses. Historical loss was defined as "losses that are ever present,

represented by the economic conditions of reservation life, discrimination, and a sense of cultural loss” (p. 121). Whitbeck et al. referred to the historical losses of FNP as a form of ethnic cleansing that did not end with military defeat, but endured over time leaving many with daily reminders of historical loss perpetrated by IRSs in particular. These losses included loss of languages, loss of family systems, and loss of traditional healing practices in addition to the psychosomatic effects of anxiety, being uncomfortable around Caucasian people and avoiding social situations.

The RCAP (1996b) suggested the outcomes associated with IRSs included shame of traditional identity, low self-worth, and poor parenting skills. Many researchers (Halkow, 1996; Henderson et al., 1998; Iwama, 2000; MacDougall, 2007; Quigley, 1991) have suggested that the organization and curriculum of IRSs represent a foundational erosion of the identity, dignity, independence, and overall self-respect of First Nations People. The AHF (2009) estimated that from those originally exposed first hand to the atrocities of residential school and thus left with RSS, there are an estimated over 86,000 first-generation survivors alive today, and there are approximately 237,350 intergenerational survivors (i.e., second, third, and fourth generation). It is believed that each generation subsequent to those directly affected RSS were also exposed to intergenerational RSS. The number of survivors who experienced RSS represents nearly one in three FNP and does not account for those now deceased.

Doyle (1997) and Moran et al. (2002) classify these types of injuries and abuses as psychological and emotional violence leaving many intergenerational survivors with a tendency to experience fear, torment, degradation, rejection, isolation, humiliation,

depravation, and cognitive disorientation. Having to manage all of these symptoms of loss could have an effect on the ability of these survivors to connect to their workplaces.

**Convergence of multiple trauma processes.** The RCAP (1996b) reported that IRSs were mandated to eliminate all traces of the Indian. The process of removing Indian identity has been described as contributing to high levels of cognitive and emotional repression as evidenced by (a) learning not to trust, (b) learning not to feel, and (c) learning not to communicate (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995; Ing, 2001; Quinn, 2007). Morrissette (1994) reported that survivors of IRSs have developed a severe form of maladaptive self-functioning that adversely affects their personal and social relationships, as well as their parenting skills and affective maturity (Brown, 2004; Ing, 1991, 2001). Collectively, the injuries sustained by the students of IRSs not only affected their self-esteem and self-worth, but also their overall self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 2006; Blatt & Levy, 2003; Bowlby, 1969, 1973).

Bombay et al. (2009) argued there are a number of various trauma processes that converge when examining the collective effects of historical loss. These are trauma and the stress response, depression, substance abuse, and PTSD. Additional traumas include psychological trauma compounded by the forced removal of First Nations children from their families of origin. Henderson et al. (1998) found that parental separation had serious, irreversible psychological damage on children that manifested as (a) withdrawal and alienation from self and society, (b) identity orientation psychosis, and (c) substance abuse linked with an antisocial personality disorder. Examples of forced removal in second and third generations were researched by Fisher et al. (1998). These researchers

reported high levels of youth pathology, depression, suicide ideation, substance abuse, emotional dysfunction, social awkwardness, and alienation, as well as high incidence of conflict and overall pessimism toward life.

Ing (1991) provided further evidence of maladaptive consequences. Child rearing practices of FNP were heavily influenced by psychological loss as a consequence of attendance within IRSs. The RCAP (1996b) accounts of forced removal, coupled with social isolation from significant others of origin, resulted in minimal connection with their families, first language, and/or cultural practices (see Farley, Lynne & Cotton, 2005; Totten, 2010; Weaver, 2008 for specific examples). Many qualitative researchers have interviewed IRS survivors and found they often repress their experiences, felt they lacked positive coping strategies, and felt distrustful of sharing with anyone perceived to be an authority figure (see Brown, 2004; Ing, 1991, 2001; Morrissette, 1994; Vedan, 2002).

**Intergenerational trauma and residential school syndrome.** Brave Heart-Jordan (1995) studied healing from the historical trauma and unresolved grieving of the Lakota Sioux. Brave Heart-Jordan found that FNP are unable to effectively mitigate the trauma response brought on through the onset of colonization (see also Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Phillips & Williamson, 2011) because important sociocultural coping mechanisms were forcibly removed. Consequently, Brave Heart-Jordan argued that rather than passing on effective coping strategies to subsequent generations, survivors often pass on maladaptive pathological grieving mechanisms. Brave Heart-Jordan posited that pathological grieving inhibits the psychic energy necessary to invest in modified environments. She used the term *intergenerational trauma* to describe

traumatic experiences not limited to first-generation survivors of IRSs but passed on to subsequent generations. Bombay et al.'s (2009) findings illustrate an example of how intergenerational trauma occurs, stating that when the first generation has had an adverse traumatic response, they will develop maladaptive appraisal and coping strategies which often results in parental deficits that are subsequently passed on to the other generations (see Menzies, 2008 for additional examples).

Brave Heart-Jordan (1995) defined intergenerational trauma as “the transfer of features or symptoms of trauma across generations, from the survivors to their descendents” (p. 7). In a recent study of 143 First Nations participants, Bombay, Matheson and Anisman (2011) found that children of Indian Residential School survivors were at increased risk for depression, likely owing to greater sensitivity to their experiences of childhood adversity, adult traumas, and perceived cultural differences. Brassfield (2001) and Chrisjon et al. (2006) refer to First Nations Peoples intergenerational experiences as residential school syndrome. Brassfield argued that RSS manifests in individuals who have “attended an IRS or [are] closely related to, or involved with a person who has attended such a school” due to the sociocultural effects of forced removal of FNP from their cultures of origin, in addition to the symptoms of PTSD including hypersensitivity, avoidance, intrusive memory, and detachment (p. 80).

A survivor of IRS often feels frightened, helpless, passive, or angry. Many of the symptoms identified by RSS are consistent with Brave Heart-Jordan's research that has been categorized as psychotic numbing, affective intolerance, psychosocial impairment, impaired ego maturation, the social negation of bereavement, self-disenfranchised grief,

despairing lifestyles, self-hatred, and difficulty with initiating new social networks (Morrissette, 1994).

Becker (2008) argued that, if hidden and underlying tones of anger and rage are present during early and late childhood, the developing child may often demonstrate poor social judgment and interpersonal difficulties therefore impeding positive social involvement (Barnes, Josefowitz, & Cole, 2006; Fossati et al., 2009). Gonzalez, Natale, Pimentel, and Lane (1999) investigated the clinical effects of forced relocation of a Nicaraguan man and found he was behaviorally disorganized, had elevated levels of shame, acted hostile toward his host country, and often felt alienated from others. Hornby and Witte (2008) examined a sample of Maori students placed in residential schools and examined the effects of placement on long-term employability. These researchers reported that 43% to 56% of these emotionally and behaviorally disturbed youth left school before graduation and tended to be unemployed following their departure. Matthews (2006) research findings reported that employee suffering from PTSD had lower employability, which was attributed to a lack of organizational support. Collectively, the literature highlights how minority populations experiencing trauma can negatively impact their workplace experiences.

**Summary.** The RCAP (1996c) described IRSs as designed to enfranchise FNP by replacing their values, beliefs, and social institutions with foreign values and industrious practices. Brave Heart-Jordan (1995) described the longitudinal effects of boarding schools as weakening the cultural foundation of FNP societies that historically contributed to their overall quality of life (Salee et al., 2006). The forced removal of First

Nations children from their families and alienating them from their cultural practices of origin left these children with the realization that they were truly alone in their effort to cope with what Duran (2006) referred to as a split between their traditional practices and the pain associated with rapidly changing circumstances, leaving many with arrested development in their attempt to cultivate a positive identity and healthy outlook towards life (Mazor & Tal, 1996; Morrissette, 1994) in addition to self-devaluation, increased social distance between relationships, compromised self-efficacy, altered parental efficacy, learned self-hatred, and anomie depression (Halkow, 1996; Henderson et al., 1998; Iwama, 2000; MacDougall, 2007; Plouffe, 2001; Quigley, 1991).

### **Minority Experiences in the Workplace**

Studies conducted by Dwyer (2003), Ford and Whiting, (2007), Kapsalis (2006), Liao et al. (2004), RCAP (1996a), Starks (2009), and Turner and Myers (1999) have focused on minorities and underrepresented groups, arguing that that minority status can impede job satisfaction, career retention, and organizational commitment. Conclusions include that dissimilarities increase social distance placing minorities at increased risk for workplace strain, reduced organizational support in addition to reports of racism and discrimination. Petersen and Dietz (2008), for example, found a significant positive relationship with the demographic preferences of organizational managers. The literature suggests that ethnic groups do report less on the job support and access to in-group benefits that might otherwise aid in their career advancement.

Empirical studies of the representation of FNP within the workplace are sparse and have been typically confined to the field of government (Dwyer, 2003; RCAP,

1996a) or health (Scott, 2006). The RCAP (1996a) first reported that less than 1% of all federal employees were FNP, often attributing this to a combination of racism, conflicting values and beliefs, and differences in management and leadership styles. Dwyer's (2003) study reported that White males dominated senior government positions of power and authority leaving many First Nations employees feeling alienated. Dwyer cited that FNP considered their work environments had "deeply ingrained" racist stereotypes (p. 882).

Dwyer (2003) cited barriers to career advancement as, "The real reason for ineffective career development . . . stems from barriers of a character different from those faced by other designated group members" (p. 883). For example, the collective versus the individualistic orientation of FNP (Blue et al., 2000; Brant, 1990; Hofstede & McCrae, 2004) may signify dependency rather than independence (Ford & Whiting, 2007). Brant (1990) argued that FNP often place great value on collectivism and the ethic of avoiding a competitive spirit. Such values are fundamentally and diametrically opposed to Western values and norms of leadership that often reward leaders for exhibiting aggressive and competitive behavior and using power for personal, as opposed to collective, gain. Salee et al. (2006) suggested that sociocultural differences such as these can facilitate the exclusion of FNP because they are perceived to have subordinate values, beliefs, and practices.

Dwyer (2003) cited examples of negative feedback in performance reviews were often perceived as paternalistic, reporting that supervisors would often double and triple check the work of FNP while not practicing the same for employees who are non-FNP.

Ford and Whiting (2007) reported similar findings arguing that recruitment programs of gifted Black students placed little to no attention on strategies for retention and success, citing too much emphasis placed on Black students' deficits. Deficit orientations were defined as students of color are viewed as culturally deprived or disadvantaged. These researchers argued that deficit orientations adversely affect the psychological development of diverse students because adolescents learn to internalize deficit thinking surrounding their abilities and then sabotage their achievements to maintain self-consistency (Shamir, 1991).

In another more recent study of FNP within the workplace, Anonson et al. (2008) focused on recruiting and retaining undergraduate nurses located within Saskatchewan, Canada. Their sample of nurses reported assimilation pressure to adapt to competing worldviews that significantly differed from their own cultures, beliefs, and languages. The resultant underlying fear of enfranchisement was specifically noted, which caused the participating nurses to recall a variety of historical social, cultural, and legal memories specific to their experiences as FNP within Canada. Anonson et al. concluded that professionals throughout the workplace must be educated to understand the unique needs of such minority populations by recognizing the importance and preservation of their values and beliefs.

### **Social Identity Theory**

Liao et al. (2004) argued that social identity theory could be used to understand behavior in the workplace. The theory posits that individual employees will define themselves in relation to their social environment and identify with others based upon

perceived similarities. Once identification is achieved, Cunningham and Sagas (2004) posited that individuals will subsequently organize themselves into social categories through the process of interaction with others who have perceived similarities. Those possessing similar characteristics tend to reinforce their social identity through group integration, thus increasing group cohesion. Cunningham and Sagas (2004) examined the effects of racial dissimilarity on organizational commitment with a sample of 31.5% Black and 68.5% White athletic coaches ( $N = 235$ ). Their findings showed that organizational commitment was lowest for Black coaches. Cunningham and Sagas hypothesized that lower organizational commitment may be due to high levels of (a) interpersonal conflict, (b) low levels of social integration, and/or (c) the inability to form a common in-group identity.

Liao et al. (2004) posited that when dissimilar employees interact with a dominant group they might often experience the negative consequences of exclusion. Data from their study indicated an inverse relationship between ethnic dissimilarity organizational commitment. Hierarchical regression analysis revealed that the interaction between ethnic dissimilarity and organizational support accounted for 17% of the variance in organizational commitment. Liao et al. cited that dissimilar employees reported higher pressure to conform, which could result in psychological and emotional distress as found in the Anonson et al. (2008) study.

Findler et al. (2007) conducted research with a sample of Israeli workers ( $N = 114$ ) to examine the effects of diversity and inclusion on organizational commitment. Controlling for gender, immigrant status, and age as markers of diversity characteristics,

the results of a regression analysis indicated that social support and involvement in decision-making accounted for 53% of the variance in organizational commitment. Social support and integration are important considerations (Littig & Williams, 1978). Littig and Williams also examined the issue of social support. They found that Black students ( $N = 103$ ) who reported a low need for affiliation and a low self-esteem experienced the widest social distance from the dominant majority.

Findler et al. (2007) argued that it is important for employees to (a) feel a part of critical organization processes, (b) have access to information and resources, (c) feel they have an influence in decision making, and (d) experience a sense of connectedness with both peers and supervisors. Related literature (Cunningham & Sagas, 2004; Liao et al., 2004) indicates that these employees with in-group status tend to benefit by granting them access to important networks that aid in their job effectiveness, career advancement, and receipt of social benefits. Turner and Myers (1999) examined underrepresentation of minority faculty ( $N = 64$ ) in educational environments. Native American's were found to be underrepresented among University faculties in the Midwestern region of the United States. Interviews and objective data from the study highlighted (a) ethnic bias, (b) unsupportive work environments, (c) isolation and limited access to mentoring, and (d) a devaluation of research introduced by minority faculty. Turner and Myers wrote that supportive work environment is the most important factor in enhancing productivity and job satisfaction.

Morris, Shinn, and DuMont (1999) examined various contextual factors related to minority New York police officers ( $N = 372$ ). The findings indicated that minorities

experience greater negative interaction with dissimilar managers and less support from their managers than do their White counterparts. Path analysis showed that management support (and peer social support were the most important predictors of organizational commitment for this population of workers).

Restubog, Hornsey, Bordia, and Esposito (2008) argued that employees who have lost trust in their employing organization socially withdraw from their respective groups, especially when they are treated unfairly. Notable was the suggestion that, when authorities behave unfairly, people tend to believe that the overall group is unworthy of respect or pride. Vigoda-Gadot (2006) highlighted how abusive supervision and coercive persuasion can shift helping behavior within an organization into misbehavior. Abusive or coercive use of supervisory power includes (a) exploitive supervisory methods, (b) hostile displays toward a lack of compliance, or (c) complete avoidance of physical contact with employees.

### **Summary**

Minority literature suggests that the circumstances FNP experience in the workplace may be influenced by their dissimilarity (Dwyer, 2003; Findler et al., 2007; Ford & Whiting, 2007; Stark, 2009). These dissimilarities are not only due to differing value systems and beliefs, but also to the experiences of this population with colonization and Canadian society in general (RCAP, 1996a). As a consequence, FNP will not typically experience equal access to in-group benefits to increase their career advancement, let alone satisfy their needs for belonging and purpose (McCormick, et al., 1999). The lack of access to important prosocial values and benefits within the workplace

(e.g., psychological attachment and a supportive organizational environment) may account for the underrepresentation of FNP (Abbott, White, & Charles, 2005). Dwyer (2003) and Starks (2009) argued that the government is not adequately addressing the needs of all Canadian citizens because minorities, such as FNP, are not adequately represented in senior Canadian government roles. Ford and Whiting (2007) viewed this as a waste of both talent and potential that might otherwise be used to increase organizational outcomes.

### **Organizational Commitment**

Meyer and Allen (1984) defined organizational commitment as the psychological relationship employees have with their employers. Early research into organizational commitment focused on the Becker side bet theory of commitment (what was later to become continuance commitment) suggesting that organizational commitment was viewed as a construct to measure employee turnover intentions. However, not all researchers limited organizational commitment to just the economic rationale of continuance commitment. Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974) argued that commitment also has an attitudinal component. Data from their study indicated a significant relationship between what they referred to a “stayers” and “leavers” and their attitudes at the time of departure (p. 603). Porter et al. (1974) defined organizational commitment as “the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (p. 604). They posited that the attitudes of employees are influenced by more than solely job satisfaction. Such attitudes are characterized by three factors, including (a) belief and acceptance of the organizational goals and values, (b) a

willingness to go above and beyond stated expectations (or exerting extra effort), and (c) a desire to maintain organizational membership. Meyer, Allen, and Gellatly (1990) built upon Porter et al. attitudinal research by characterizing the differences between attitudinal (or affective commitment) and calculative factors (or continuance commitment).

Meyer et al. (1993) referred to organizational commitment as a “complex and multifaceted” construct (p. 538) and first introduced the three-component model of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen posited the new model defined unique factors from multiple dimensions within a single framework. The three components of the model are economic costs (i.e., continuance), emotions (i.e., affect), and obligations (i.e., normative). Meyer, Becker, and Vandenberghe (2004) referred to each dimension as identification (i.e., affective commitment); socialization and reciprocity (i.e., normative commitment); and investment (i.e., continuance commitment). Affective commitment is based upon personal involvement and values congruency. Normative commitment was based upon organizational socialization and the importance of reciprocity, while continuance commitment denoted the evaluation of investment associated with the organization.

### **Affective Commitment**

Affective commitment represents employee emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their employing organization (Meyer et al., 2002). Meyer et al. (1990) posited that affective commitment signifies overall attachment to the respective enterprise due to employee desire to remain with the organization, whereas continuance commitment is based upon maintaining employment to fulfill a need (p.

710). Meyer and Allen (1991) described an affective commitment as representing how employees think about their relationships with their employing organizations in terms of the extent of congruency with their own values and goals.

Allen and Meyer (1990) examined affective commitment antecedents and found a variety of predictors including job challenge, role clarity, and manager receptiveness to suggestions, peer cohesion, interactional justice, and performance feedback. The data showed that employees who felt comfortable and competent within their roles reported higher affective commitment. Meyer et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis ( $k = 144$ ,  $N = 47,073$ ) and found that affective commitment was influenced by (a) self-efficacy, (b) organizational support, (c) overall job satisfaction, (d) promotion satisfaction, (e) coworker satisfaction, (f) withdrawal cognition, (g) voluntary absence, and (h) job performance. Meyer et al. argued that affective commitment, organizational support, and job satisfaction are key factors that must be managed in order to stimulate organizational commitment.

### **Continuance Commitment**

Meyer and Allen (1984) suggested that continuance commitment is best viewed as the manner in which employees calculate their “economic rationale” because an employee will assess the perceived costs or penalties associated with departing organization (p. 373). This includes considerations such as maintaining employment in the absence of suitable alternatives or other environmental conditions and time, money, or effort invested in a particular course of action. Meyer and Allen referred to continuance as a process of *behavioral persistence* because the need to cope with being

committed to an organization influences one's psychological state and subsequent behavior. Allen and Meyer (1990) identified the following antecedents of continuance commitment: (a) transferability of skills and education; (b) relocation; (c) the time and energy required to learn a job role; and (d) the investment made in the local community such as status and memberships in local groups or committees.

### **Normative Commitment**

Meyer et al. (2002) described normative commitment as commitment involving any obligation an employee has to remain with the organization. Such obligation can consist of the socialization pressure to remain loyal to a work team or employer or the normative obligation to reciprocate for benefits received from employment such as training, any on the job perks, and affiliation that takes place as a result of employment (Meyer et al., 1993). Meyer and Allen (1991) referred to normative commitment as commitment behavior that represents "the right and moral thing to do" (p. 66). They equated normative commitment to lifetime commitment (p. 66).

### **Workplace Impact**

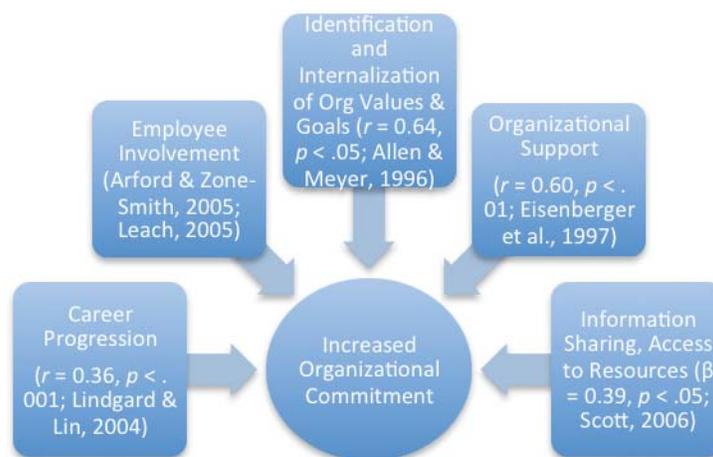
Meyer and Allen (1991) described organizational commitment as combined affective, continuance, or normative factors constituting the psychological view of an employing organization. Bateman and Strasser (1984) suggested that the level of commitment initiates a rationalizing process individuals use to evaluate their current work situation and subsequently influence attitudes consistent with that level of commitment. If the psychological state is incongruent with the organizational environment, it is then plausible that employee organizational commitment may limit

organizational effectiveness (Angle & Perry, 1981). Angle and Perry argued that employers must not only recruit potential employees to join and participate in the organization, but they must also motivate them to become dependable and innovative. Their findings showed a strong relationship between organizational commitment and the manner in which employees view their own adaptability. The data indicated that low organizational commitment negatively influences organizational performance because employees concurrently exhibiting low adaptability and innovation also exhibit low motivation and creativity.

Research has found that organizational commitment results in a variety of organizational effects that involve (a) turnover intention (Abraham, 1999; Felfe et al., 2008); (b) job performance (Bateman & Strasser, 1984; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991); (c) employee attendance (Meyer & Allen, 1991); and (d) organizational withdrawal (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). Podsakoff et al. (2007) argued that organizational commitment is important for organizations to cultivate because it stimulates the strategic intellectual capital of employees while reducing costs associated with turnover. Their meta-analysis results provides evidence that stressors such as negative emotions or attitudes, as well as job-related strains, accounted for 34% of the variance in organizational commitment and 25% of the turnover-intention variance. Podsakoff and colleagues concluded that organizations must create challenging learning environments complimented by supportive management practices in efforts to mitigate negative strain within the workplace.

### **First Nations and Organizational Commitment**

Scott's (2006) research examined nurses of FNP across Canada ( $n = 70$ ). Through administration of the Conditions of Work Effectiveness and organizational commitment Questionnaire, the purpose of the study was to test perceptions of workplace empowerment against organizational commitment. The overall findings indicated that nurses reported higher continuance commitment than affective commitment and normative commitment, suggesting that these nurses remained within their organizations out of necessity rather than out of desire. Normative commitment findings showed that 59.4% of the respondents indicated no obligation to remain with their current employers. Affective commitment findings showed that 78% of the respondents reported they did not feel any emotional attachment or sense of belonging with their current employers. Interestingly, the nurses of FNP participating in the Scott study redacted the *Obligation to Organization* heading and replaced it with *Obligation to Community*, signifying the importance of communalism and collectivism (Blue et al., 2000; Brant, 1990). Figure 1 illustrates features of organizational commitment that may increase FNP employee commitment.



*Figure 1.* Features of organizational commitment potentially important to First Nations employees. Org = organizational.

The Scott (2006) data clearly showed differences in mean scores based upon employment status. Part time nurses reported higher affective commitment than full-time nurses. Total empowerment (e.g., access to information, support, and informal power) accounted for 44% of the variance in affective commitment, 35% in normative commitment, and only 8% in continuance commitment. Access to information and formal and informal power accounted for 50% of the variance in affective commitment. Similar findings were evidenced for normative commitment accounting for 50.5% of the variance. Consistent with her hypothesis, Scott predicted that the more organizational power possessed by nurses, the higher the reported normative commitment and affective commitment. Scott's results are consistent with research investigating the impact of trust and empowerment on organizational commitment (see Laschinger, Finegan, & Shamian, 2001; Laschinger, Finegan, & Wilk, 2009).

Scott's (2006) research findings, specifically highlighted from questionnaire feedback and notations, revealed that 78.6% of the participating nurses reported little to

no organizational support, which was defined as (a) feedback and guidance from peers, subordinates, and supervisors; and (b) emotional, professional, or technical support. Nurse participants consistently reported that they (a) received constant criticism from managers, (b) were extended little to no support or guidance, (c) perceived they were valued minimally, and (d) perceived a lack of trust between staff and managers. The described results are consistent with those reported within an earlier study conducted by the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada (2000), which found that lack of managerial support was the primary reason for nurse turnover.

Scott (2006) viewed the research findings of low affective commitment as holding implications for job satisfaction, positive work outcomes, and overall job retention. Key discussion points highlighted the importance of cultivating empowered work structures to increase both affective commitment and normative commitment. These findings, combined with those reported by Dwyer (2003), include specific sociocultural variables of FNP (including loss of culture fears) and organizational practice that may facilitate an increase in organizational commitment within the workplace, yet the study did not elaborate on elements such as historical loss. Understanding historical loss might be effectuated by increasing trust between the organization, as a measure of perceived organizational support; management; and employees as well as increasing the sense of belonging and purpose for these employees.

### **Summary**

The RCAP (1996c) reported that IRSs were designed with the purpose of enfranchising FNP. The consequences of stripping children away from their families of

origin and supplanting their preexisting values, beliefs, and social institutions with industrial values and skill sets was described by Duran (2006) as a traumatic *Cartersian split*. With one out of every three FNP considered intergenerational survivors of IRSs (AHF, 2009), the long-term psychological effects of these schools has been characterized by researchers as compromised self-worth, self-devaluation, and increased social distance (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995; Doyle, 1997; Graham, 2001; Halkow, 1996; Henderson et al., 1998; Matias, 2007; McCormick, 1995; Moran et al., 2002; Morrissette, 1994; Plouffe, 2001; Quigley, 1991; RCAP, 1996b; Vedan, 2002). These symptoms have been classified as a form of PTSD commonly known as RSS that can be passed on intergenerationally (Brassfield, 2001; Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995; Chrisjon et al., 2006).

Within the workplace, FNP may be hypersensitive to experiences stimulating the memories associated with enfranchisement of their identity, values, or beliefs, especially when confronted with demographic dissimilarity (Dwyer, 2003; Findler et al., 2007; Ford & Whiting, 2007; Stark, 2009). Dissimilarity may suggest that, if FNP have value systems and beliefs (Blue et al., 2000; Brant, 1990; McCormick, 1995; McCormick et al., 1999) dissimilar from those of a dominant in-group, they may experience bias, discrimination, and increased social distance from those in a position to share the social benefits of career advancement (Findler et al., 2007; Littig & Williams, 1978). Social identity theory (Liao et al., 2004; Mor Barak et al., 1998) posits that lacking access to social benefits within the workplace may account for cognitive and affective appraisals resulting in no psychological attachment to the unsupportive organizational environments. In the case of FNP, a lack of effort toward reciprocating norms would be

expected within an environment that already excludes their participation (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Collectively, these findings may only exacerbate the underrepresentation of FNP within the workplace due to the importance of positive emotionality and affiliation in stimulating greater affective commitment and normative commitment respectively (Erdheim et al., 2006; Joo & Lim, 2009; Meyer et al., 2004).

The findings of the Scott (2006) study clearly indicated that First Nation nurses reported little to no affective commitment or normative commitment. Scott cited a lack of trust and an unsupportive work environment as two mediating causes. This has important implications for decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover intention because nurse participants did not have healthy psychological relationships with their employer. Porter et al. (1974) argued that, in such a scenario, the employees would be expected to demonstrate less identification with, and less involvement in, their employing organization, as well a decreased desire to maintain their organizational membership. Less desire to maintain organizational membership represents a hypothesis that could support the RCAP (1996c), Dywer (2003), and Kapsalis (2006) reports of FNP underrepresentation within the workplace necessitating further investigation of how historical loss manifests in the workplace (this relationship was explored in greater detail in Chapter 3).

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

Chapter 3 contains an overview of the procedures of the study. Included are descriptions of the research design, the research approach, the setting and sample, psychometric instruments planned for use, and the data collection, analysis, and protection of participant rights. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between FNP historical losses, the associated symptoms of historical loss, and organizational commitment in the Canadian workplace.

### **Research Design and Approach**

The design of the study is based upon three factors. First, Creswell (2009) suggested that modern research inquiries must consider the importance of advocacy, because traditional elements of inquiry and epistemological perspectives are often imposed on marginalized groups such as FNP. Any emancipatory qualities that new knowledge generated by the study may have in liberating FNP from the historical enfranchising effects of oppression are therapeutic, with the potential of enhancing belonging, sacredness, and liberation from the negative effects of colonization (Mihinoa & Twiname, 2011; Simpson, 2001; Smith, 2005; Waldergrave & Tamasese, 1994). The second factor relevant to the design of the study is the literature reports of survivors experiencing varying degrees of historical trauma and loss, including intergenerational residential school syndrome (Bombay et al., 2009; Brassfield, 2001; Ing, 1991, 2001; Morrissette, 1994; Whitbeck et al., 2004a, 2004b). Historical loss was the independent variable.

The final factor considered in the design of the study is the underrepresentation of FNP within the workplace, which was measured by the dependent variable of organizational commitment. Workplace literature has identified institutionalized barriers such as fears of enfranchisement, racism, and culture clashes as possible inhibitors to career advancement (Anonson et al., 2008; Dwyer, 2003; Kapsalis, 2006; RCAP, 1996c; Scott, 2006). Social identity theory (Findler et al. 2007; Liao et al., 2004; Littig & Williams, 1978; Scott, 2006; Starks, 2009) posits that minorities could experience greater workplace exclusion and less career progression due to exclusion from important social-networking functions as a consequence of their dissimilar characteristics. The research design was intended to empirically examine the relationship, if any, between the criterion and independent variables that have not been researched as a single study. There were no time or resource constraints expected.

### **Setting and Sample**

Van Selm and Jankowski (2006) reported three categories of sample frames: (a) recruited samples, obtained by consulting and selecting from an existing sample frame where participants are given a password to control entry; (b) unrestricted samples, obtained by communicating the survey openly to anyone; and (c) screened samples, obtained by screening data in the survey responses so that only responses from the required sample are analyzed. An unrestricted sample frame was chosen in order to mitigate sampling error by opening the survey to as many participants of FNP as possible. The sample consisted of male and female FNP who self-identify as an IRS survivor's or intergenerational survivor's between 18 and 65 years of age. Participants

must be currently working, or have worked, for an organization not affiliated with FNP, including federal or provincial civil servants or workers within for-profit or not-for-profit companies. It is expected that the sample frame consisted of a slightly larger younger demographic because they are more familiar with personal computers.

### **Sample Size**

Because there are no studies that could be found investigating the statistical relationship between organizational commitment and historical loss, a medium effect size of .25 was chosen; therefore, using G-Power power analysis software, the study utilized an alpha value of .05 and a desired power of .80, yielding a sample size of 123 (Cohen, 1992). Efforts to mitigate potential coverage and sampling errors (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006) in the study included contact with a community partner organization (i.e., the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council). Their assistance was requested in distributing e-mail invitations to individuals identifying as FNP to maximize participation. A secondary venue was created within a virtual community forum of FNP on social-media outlets such as Facebook. FNP participants received weekly instructions posted online. Upon their receipt of the initial invitation on Facebook, they had an option to link to a secure site where they could complete the survey on the SurveyMonkey website. As a security precaution, participants had access to all required debriefing and contact information within the informed-consent page, and if respondents failed to acknowledge the informed consent, they were disallowed from completing the survey. The self-administered survey was posted for an anticipated period of 60 days.

The study utilized four independent instruments combined into a single self-administered survey that took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The combined instrument began with basic demographic questions immediately followed by the Social Desirability Response Set (Hays, Hayashi, & Stewart, 1989), the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and the Three Component Model – Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993). Approval was sought from the institutional review board (IRB) to ensure the rights of human participant's were protected. Once IRB approval # 11-01-12-0040956 was received, for quality control and formative assessment purposes, the survey was privately tested (not released to the public) to ensure all links were operating correctly and data could be properly exported in efforts to minimize error variance (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005).

### **Instrumentation and Materials**

The following three psychometric instruments were used in the research: (a) the Social Desirability Response Set - 5, (b) the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale, and (c) the Three Component Model - Employee Commitment Survey. All raw data will be made available by request of the researcher.

#### **The Social Desirability Response Set – 5**

The Social Desirability Response Set was standardized by Hays et al. (1989) and takes approximately one minute to complete (compared to the Crowne Marlowe Scale, which takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete). Five items serve two purposes. The first is to act as a control variable to suppress self-presentation effects on multivariate

predictability. The second is to measure participant response bias. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *definitely true*, 5 = *definitely false*). Scoring is based on summing the responses and averaging the total score; 1 = low social bias and 5 = high social bias. Hays et al. provided extensive descriptive statistics and a Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.66 to 0.68 with a test-retest reliability of 0.75. No data on validity coefficients could be found. Appendix A provides the most current version of the Social Desirability Response Set and Appendix B provides the permission obtained to use the instrument for the study.

### **The Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale**

Whitbeck et al. (2004a) standardized the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale to measure historical trauma and any associated feelings. The scale was developed in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms involved in transmitting historical trauma, loss, and grief across generations of First Nations Peoples. Whitbeck et al. (2004a) stated, "The important point here is that ethnic cleansing did not end with military defeat...rather, it persisted for generations...faced with daily reminders of loss" (p. 121). Bombay et al. (2009, 2011) described the scale as having strong cross-cultural validity in assessing ruminations of loss in addition to resulting symptomology.

The Historical Loss instrument consists of 12 items and is scored using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *several times per day* to 6 = *never*, with the option of responding *don't know/refuse to answer*); higher scores indicate a greater amount of perceived loss. The Historical Loss Associated Symptoms instrument also utilizes a 7-point Likert-type

scale used for scoring the 17 items (1 = *several times per day* to 6 = *never*, with the option of responding *don't know/refuse to answer*); higher scores reflect greater anger, anxiety, and social avoidance of Caucasians. Internal reliabilities for the scales range from 0.94 to 0.90 for both scales respectively (Whitbeck et al., 2004b). Due to lack of validity data on these scales it should be noted that the results of this study are exploratory only (Whitbeck et al., 2004b). Appendix A provides the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale and Appendix B provides the permission obtained to use the instruments.

### **The Three-Component Model-Employee Commitment Survey**

The Three- Component Model Employee Commitment Survey was developed by Meyer and Allen (1984) and later revised by Meyer et al. (1993). The 18-item instrument includes three subscales (i.e., affective, normative, and continuance commitment) that measure overall commitment of employees to their organizations. A 7-point Likert-type scale is used for scoring (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). All items are summed and averaged to provide a total score ranging from 1 to 7 (Scott, 2006). Meyer and Allen (1997) reported reliability coefficients for the instrument ranged from .74 - .89. Allen and Meyer (1996) reported both exploratory and confirmatory factor findings indicating that all three factors were distinct although no validity coefficients were listed. Results from this study should therefore be exploratory only. Meyer et al., in a study of Canadian nurses ( $N = 603$ ), reported internal reliabilities of 0.74, 0.82, and 0.83 for affective, continuance, and normative commitment respectively; 98% of which were women with a mean age of 40. Scott's (2006) study utilized a sample of ( $N = 70$ ) First

Nations nurses with internal reliabilities as follows: affective commitment = .72; continuance commitment = .81; and nonnative commitment = .78). Appendix A provides the items of the Three Component Model – Employee Commitment Survey, and Appendix B provides the permission to use the instrument for this study.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Researchers (Creswell, 2009; Mitchell & Jolley, 2004) have posited that nonexperimental, quantitative survey-design methodologies provide a vehicle to numerically describe the attitudes, opinions, or statistical relationships within a sample population. Given the strengths of survey methodology, the nonexperimental study included a cross-sectional, online survey to quantify the relationship between (a) the independent variable of historical loss and associated symptoms (Whitbeck et al., 2004a) and (b) the dependent variable of organizational commitment, as a measure of employee commitment (Meyer et al., 1993). The criterion variable was based upon the three subscales of affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Descriptive statistics were provided highlighting age, sex, ancestry (Status, Metis, or Inuit), and so on.

### **Data Procedures**

Koon et al. (2009) postulated that quantitative data analysis within the social sciences can take advantage of e-infrastructure to increase researcher productivity such as export capabilities and preservation of data integrity (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). This study used an Internet-based, self-administered questionnaire that allowed for data collected to be easily imported directly into statistical analysis software.

IBM/PASW/SPSS was used for data analysis. Evans and Mathur (2005) advanced that, if

online surveys are properly designed, they can provide advantages, such as low administration costs, ease of data entry and analysis, convenience, and controlled sampling via screening participants to ensure adherence to survey criteria.

Sax, Gilmartin, and Bryant (2003) identified some limitations of online surveys including concerns over user technical know-how, confidentiality, and anonymity that might limit participation. Little can be done to mitigate the effects of nonresponse bias unless control measures are enacted that require participants to fully complete each question before exiting the survey. Selm and Jankowski (2006) identified keys to overcoming these limitations include selecting sampling frames from newsgroups, bulletin boards, and community forums that organize themselves around specific topics as these users may have increased technical ability.

Participants received an enhanced security e-mail from the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council to make them aware of the survey effort and ask for their participation. The enhanced security option utilized secure socket layer (SSL) protection that protects data between SurveyMonkey and survey respondents (the link contains an encrypted URL) that prevented unauthorized access. Participants advanced by clicking on the link where they were sent directly to SurveyMonkey in order to complete the survey (no identifying information was requested). All raw data were secured by Verisign, stored on an encrypted website, and downloaded to a password protected hard drive for a period of 5 years (after which all files will be destroyed). No follow up procedures were provided (see Protection of Human Participants section for additional information).

Raw data were then imported into SPSS software version 16, which was used to analyze and tabulate descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was performed to tabulate participant demographic information such as age and sex (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). Correlation analysis was utilized to calculate the relationship between the Historical Loss Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), The Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and the Three Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al, 1993). Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was calculated in addition to post hoc tests to determine any potential organizational commitment subscale trends.

### **Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss, and affective commitment among FNP?

**Hypothesis (H1).** A statistically significant relationship exists in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and affective commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

**Null hypothesis.** There is no statistically significant relationship in FNP between associated symptoms of FNP historical losses, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and affective commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

**Research Question 2**

Is there a statistically significant relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss and normative commitment among FNP?

**Hypothesis (H2).** A statistically significant relationship exists in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and normative commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

**Null hypothesis.** There is no statistically significant relationship in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and normative commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

**Research Question 3**

Is there a statistically significant relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss and continuance commitment among FNP?

**Hypothesis (H3).** A statistically significant relationship exists in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and continuance commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

**Null hypothesis.** There is no statistically significant relationship in FNP between historical loss and the associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and continuance commitment, as measured by the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993).

### **Protection of Human Participants**

The researcher closely monitored the legal and ethical rights of all participants during this study. If at any time the participants appeared to be negatively affected or chose to withdraw, the data collection on those participants would cease immediately. Ethical guidelines set forth by the University IRB in addition to the Canadian Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics (2009) were consulted due to the involvement of FNP as research participants. Steps were taken to conform to the core principles of justice, respect for individuals, and concern for their welfare as collective peoples. Exit procedures also included a splash screen identifying contact information of the Indian Residential Survivor's Society and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

### **Summary**

Evans and Mathur (2005) asserted that, if the sample frame is designed correctly, online surveys have certain advantages such as (a) low administration costs, (b) ease of data entry and analysis, (c) convenience, and (d) controlled sampling. Sax et al. (2003) and Van Selm and Jankowski (2006) argued that the limitations of online surveys include (a) sampling bias, (b) coverage error, (c) sampling error, (d) confidentiality and

anonymity concerns, and (e) technical difficulties. To manage coverage and sampling error, the study used a nonrandom sampling approach to maximize data collection.

A nonexperimental, self-administered survey was selected for the study to assess the statistical relationship between the independent variables of historical loss and associated symptoms of historical loss and the criterion of organizational commitment. Inferential correlation analysis assessed the effects of historical loss and associated symptoms of historical loss, as measured by the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and organizational commitment, as measured by the Three Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993), on each of the affective, normative, and continuance commitment subscales. The survey began with basic demographic information followed immediately by the Social Desirability Response Set (Hays et al., 1989) designed as a measure to manage participant self-presentation bias. Respondents scoring high on the instrument will be excluded from further analysis. All three instruments were combined into a single survey, which will be uploaded to the SurveyMonkey Internet site. Participants within the unrestricted sample (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006) received an e-mail invitation with a link to the survey and directions regarding its completion. As an added security precaution, to participate in the study, all participants were required to acknowledge the informed consent or they were automatically barred from completing the survey. To ensure that the privacy rights of all participants were safeguarded, no personal information was collected and all respondents were informed that their

identification and responses would be reported in a strictly anonymous fashion. Chapter 4 describes the statistical results in greater detail.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this nonexperimental quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between FNP historical losses, the associated symptoms of historical loss (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and organizational commitment (Meyer et al., 1993) in the Canadian workplace. Meyer and Allen (1984) described organizational commitment as the psychological relationship employees have with their employers that is measured by three subscales: (a) affective commitment, the extent to which employees identify with, have an emotional attachment to and their motivation to become involved with the organization; (b) continuance commitment, the perceived cost of leaving the organization measured primarily in economic terms; and (c) normative commitment, the perceived obligation to remain with the organization. Understanding these relationships should not only support the recruitment and retention of the First Nation employees but also help facilitate culturally appropriate career advancement that is cognizant, respectful, and inclusive of their past experiences.

The following research questions were investigated in this study:

1. What is the relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss, and affective commitment among FNP?
2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss and normative commitment among FNP?

3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss and continuance commitment among FNP?

From each research question, the following hypotheses were tested using correlation analyses:

1. A statistically significant relationship exists in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss and affective commitment.
2. A statistically significant relationship exists in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss and normative commitment.
3. A statistically significant relationship exists in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss and continuance commitment.

Information in this chapter includes sampling frame used, results from data collection and analysis, and post hoc analysis used to gauge any potential trends. The chapter begins with the sampling frame used, a demographic analysis of the sample followed by analyses of the three hypotheses, and concludes with a summary of outcomes.

### **Data Collection**

Data from Statistics Canada (2009a) indicates that North American Indians accounted for 60% Status Indians followed by 33% Metis, 4% Inuit and 3% other. This study used an unrestricted sample frame (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006) to broaden the representativeness of the survey and mitigate sampling error by opening the survey to as many FNP participants as possible (which included Inuit, Metis, Aboriginal, North

American Indian, Maori, or Aborigine). The sample frame consisted of male and female FNP who self-identified as Indian Residential School survivors or intergenerational survivors between 18 and 65 years of age. To be eligible, participants had to be currently working, or have worked, for a federal or provincial organization or employees in the for-profit or not-for-profit sector.

### **Description of Sample Frame**

Participants were recruited from the National Aboriginal Human Resource Council of Canada and to First Nations professional and student associations located on Facebook. Surveys were distributed and collected via Survey Monkey. All participants were informed of their privacy in the informed consent splash page. Five types of data were collected from the sample: Five demographic items, five social desirability items (Hays et al., 1989), 29 items from the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and 18 items from the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993). Once the surveys were retrieved from SurveyMonkey, data were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM/PASW/SPSS) version 20. To ensure accuracy of data recording and coding, all data were entered into the IBM/PASW/SPSS twice and compared. As per IRB approval, data were collected from December 2012 until February 2013; 127 people responded. Of these, nine surveys were incomplete, resulting in a total response rate of 92.9% ( $N = 118$ ).

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

A majority of respondents identified as Status Indians 77% ( $n = 91$ ) and were female 61% ( $n = 72$ ). Nearly 77% of participants were 35 years of age or older ( $n = 91$ ), with 57% ( $n = 74$ ) having attended university or graduate level studies. Fifty percent ( $n = 60$ ) identified as being either a child or grandchild of a survivor. Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.

### Data Assumptions

Cronbach alpha test of reliability was conducted on each of the subscales. Reliability of the scales ranged from .55 (unacceptable) to .93 (excellent; George & Mallery, 2003). Even though the NC and social reliability scales had unacceptable reliability, the analyses using these scales continued. However, caution must be taken in the interpretation of the analyses that use these scales, and additional testing may be necessary. Means and standard deviations, along with reliability statistics for the subscales are presented in Table 3.

Table 2

*Demographic Characteristics of Sample*

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Ethnicity		
Status Indian	91	77.1
Inuit	3	2.5
Metis	11	9.3
Native American Indian	10	8.5
Aborigine/Maori	3	2.5
Age grouping		
18 – 25	15	12.7
26 – 34	12	10.2
35 – 44	32	27.1
45 – 54	32	27.1
55 – 64	27	22.9
Education		
Did not finish	6	5.1
High school	9	7.6
College	29	24.6
Technical/vocational	6	5.1
University	40	33.9
Graduate school	28	23.7
Survivor type		
Other	5	4.2
Survivor	23	19.5
Child of survivor	30	25.4
Grandchild of survivor	30	25.4
Great grandchild of survivor	8	6.8
Relative of IRS survivor, but did not attend	22	18.6

*Note.* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error.

Table 3

*Cronbach Alpha Reliability for Subscales*

Subscale	$\alpha$	No. of items	$M$	$SD$
Historical Loss	.93	12	2.94	0.94
Associated Symptoms	.90	17	2.87	0.92
Affective Commitment	.87	6	3.44	1.35
Continuance Commitment	.84	6	4.47	1.28
Normative Commitment	.58	6	3.86	0.94
Social desirability	.55	5	0.35	0.74

The normality of the subscales was assessed with five one-sample Kolmogorov Smirnov (KS) tests (Pallant, 2010). Results of all tests were not statistically significant (see Table 4) therefore normality can be assumed for the five subscales used to assess the research questions.

Table 4

*KS Test Results for Subscales*

Subscale	KS *
Historical loss	.996
Associated symptoms	.734
Affective commitment	.244
Continuance commitment	.293
Normative commitment	.323

*Note.* All values for KS statistic were not statistically significant.

In addition, Pearson correlations were conducted to assess the relationship between SDS and the other subscales. Results of the correlations showed significance for only AS and SD,  $r = -.29$ ,  $p = .002$ . A correlation coefficient of  $-.29$  represents a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). When using a variable as a covariate in analyses, the covariate should be chosen for its effects on the dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Because there was only a small relationship found for SDS and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss (but no other scales), SDS was not controlled for in the analyses. Results of the correlations are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Correlation Results for Subscales with SDS*

Subscale	SDS
Historical Loss	.06
Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss	-.29**
Affective Commitment	-.07
Continuance Commitment	.09
Normative Commitment	-.17

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Data Analysis**

**Research Question 1.** What is the relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss, and affective commitment among FNP? The null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant relationship in FNP between associated symptoms of FNP historical losses, as measured by the *Historical Loss Scale* and the *Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale* (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and affective commitment, as measured by the *Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey* (Meyer et al., 1993). An inverse relationship was found between affective commitment and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss ( $r = -.32, p < .001$ ); this is a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). What this means is participants reporting high values of Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss reported lower values of affective commitment. No significance was found between Historical Loss and affective

commitment ( $r = .16, p = .079$ ) indicating a partial rejection of the null hypothesis. Table 6 presents the results of the correlations.

Table 6

*Pearson Correlations between AC, AS, and HL*

Historical loss scale	AC
Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss	-.32**
Affective Commitment	.16

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Research Question 2.** Is there a statistically significant relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss and normative commitment among FNP? The null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant relationship in FNP between historical loss and associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the *Historical Loss Scale* and the *Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale* (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), respectively, and normative commitment, as measured by the *Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey* (Meyer et al., 1993). Results showed no significant correlation between normative commitment and Historical Loss ( $r = -.10, p = .281$ ) and between normative commitment and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss ( $r = -.07, p = .435$ ), as predicted by the null hypothesis.

**Research Question 3.** Is a statistically significant relationship between historical loss and the associated symptoms of historical loss and continuance commitment among FNP. The null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant relationship in

FNP between historical loss and the associated symptoms of FNP historical loss, as measured by the *Historical Loss Scale* and the *Historical Loss Associated Symptom Scale* (Whitbeck et al., 2004a), and continuance commitment, as measured by the *Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey* (Meyer et al., 1993). Correlation analysis resulted in no statistically significant association between continuance commitment and historical loss ( $r = -.16, p = .08$ ), however a statistically significant positive relationship was found between continuance commitment and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss ( $r = .34, p < .001$ ). Participants reporting higher values of continuance commitment also reported higher levels of Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss. The null hypothesis was therefore partially rejected.

### **Post Hoc Analysis**

In addition to assessing the research questions, a post hoc analysis was conducted to assess if there were differences in scores of the five scales (Historical Loss, Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment) by gender. Prior to analysis, the assumption for equality of covariance was assessed with a Box's M test. The Box's M test tends to be a very sensitive test, and thus an alpha level of .001 was used to determine significance for it (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The results of the test were not significant at the .001 level ( $p = .031$ ) and thus the assumption was met. The results of the MANOVA showed no differences by gender,  $F(5, 112) = 0.58, p = .71, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$ . Since the MANOVA was not significant, the individual ANOVAs were not interpreted.

A second MANOVA was conducted to assess for differences in the five scales by survivor type. Because there were so few “other” and “great grandchild of survivor,” these categories were combined into a single “other” group. The Box’s M test for equality of covariance matrices was not significant ( $p = .041$ ) at the  $p = .001$  level of significance. Results of the MANOVA are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

*Results for MANOVA on Subscales by Survivor Type*

Source	MANOVA	ANOVA $F(4, 113)$				
	$F(20, 362)$	HL	AS	AC	CC	NC
Survivor type	3.97**	10.74**	10.16**	0.97	2.06	1.00

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . HL = Historical Loss; AS = Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss; AC = Affective Commitment; CC = Continuance Commitment; NC = Normative Commitment

The results of the MANOVA showed significant differences in the scales by survivor type. Since the MANOVA was significant, the individual ANOVAs were examined separately. There were significant differences in Historical Loss ( $p < .001$ ) and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss ( $p < .001$ ) by survivor type. Pairwise comparisons were conducted for these scales to assess for the individual pairwise differences among the survivor types. Those who were direct survivors had significantly lower Historical Loss scores compared to all other survivor types. Those who were direct

survivors also had significantly higher Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss scores compared to all other survivor types.

Spearman correlations were also conducted to assess the relationships between the five subscales and age, education, and survivor type. Results of the correlations showed a statistically significant inverse relationship between age and Historical Loss,  $r = -.42, p < .001$ ; those experiencing Historical Loss were younger. The Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss and age was statistically significant ( $r = .34, p < .001$ ), suggesting those who are older reported more symptoms associated with loss. Positive relationships were found between education and affective commitment ( $r = .26, p = .004$ ) and between education and normative commitment ( $r = .29, p = .001$ ), suggesting that participants with higher levels of education also reported higher affective and normative commitment. Results of the correlations are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

*Spearman Correlations between Subscales, Age, and Education*

Subscale	Age	Education
Affective Commitment	.03	.26**
Continuance Commitment	.13	-.11
Normative Commitment	.14	.29**
Historical Loss	-.42**	-.05
Associated Symptoms	.34**	-.19*

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . HL = Historical Loss; AS = Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss; AC = Affective Commitment; CC = Continuance Commitment; NC = Normative Commitment

### **Summary of Results**

Results showed significant relationships between Age and Historical Loss and Age and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss. Significance was also found between IRS Survivor Type and Historical Loss and IRS Survivor Type and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss. Additional analysis also revealed significant relationships between education, affective commitment and normative commitment as well as education and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss. Significant generational relationships, denoted by IRS survivor type, were also found with continuance commitment as well as both Historical Loss and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss respectively.

Chapter 5 includes discussion of the importance of this study, interpretation of study findings (including limitations), as well as key implications necessary for social change. The chapter concludes with a presentation of recommendations for future studies.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

Researchers examining minority employee's (Dwyer, 2003; Findler et al., 2007; Liao et al., 2004; Littig & Williams, 1978; RCAP, 1996c) experiences in the workplace have found limited career progression and lower organizational commitment. Research of First Nations employees by Anonson et al. (2008) identified assimilation and enfranchisement fears to be a factor in lower organizational commitment. These fears may be consistent with cognitions of perceived loss and resultant symptomology (Whitbeck et al., 2004). The purpose of this study was to examine historical loss and associated symptoms of historical loss to determine if there were any workplace relationships with organizational commitment as a possible indicator for career advancement. With lower reported levels of affective and normative commitment, First Nations participants in this study reported lower emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with their employing organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002). Overall results of this study are consistent with Scott's (2006) conclusions that First Nations employees remain within their organizations out of necessity rather than out of desire.

A discussion of the Results as they apply to FNP career progression is presented as a foundation for positive social change, including recommendations, based upon study findings, to help minimize enfranchisement fears (Anonson et al., 2008). Additionally, the study concludes with limitations and insights for further studies as well as take home messages and a final summary.

### **Study Findings**

Research Question 1 identified the relationship between historical loss, associated symptoms of historical loss, and affective commitment. Results showed no significance between Historical Loss and affective commitment while an inverse relationship was found between affective commitment and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss. Higher scores indicated greater anxiety, depression, anger, or social avoidance of Caucasians (Whitbeck et al., 2004). Results support the notion that values and cultural differences may account for the higher values of Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss including the degree of allostatic overload First Nations employees may be experiencing (Bombay et al., 2009). On the other hand, post hoc analysis showed a positive relationship between education and affective commitment and between education and normative commitment. The relationship between education and affective commitment suggests that a greater psychological relationship exists between First Nations participants with higher reported levels of education and the employing organization as a sign of both goal and values congruency (Meyer & Allen, 1991) as well as greater social loyalty and reciprocation for benefits received from the employing organization (Meyer et al., 2002).

Research Question 2 identified the relationship between Historical Loss, Associated Symptoms, and normative commitment. Results showed no significance between normative commitment and Historical Loss or normative commitment and Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss, as predicted by the null hypothesis. Research

Question 3 identified the relationship between Historical Loss, Associated Symptoms, and continuance commitment. Results indicate a partial rejection of the null hypothesis as no significance was found between continuance commitment and Historical Loss; however, a statistically significant relationship was found between continuance commitment and associated symptoms of historical loss. Post hoc tests revealed an inverse relationship between survivor type and continuance commitment, suggesting that grandchildren and great-grandchildren of IRS survivors reported greater behavioral persistence in terms of calculating the economic rationale of remaining with the organization in the absence of suitable alternatives (Meyer & Allen, 1984).

Post hoc analyses showed an inverse relationship between age and historical loss as well as an inverse relationship between survivor status and associated symptoms of historical loss. A positive relationship was found between survivor status and historical loss. The data suggest there may be cognitive dissonance (Goldsmith, Barlow & Freyd, 2004) associated with older participants being more reluctant to ruminate about historical losses while simultaneously reporting higher psychosomatic symptoms. This suggests that IRS survivors identified greater psychosomatic effects of historical loss while intergenerational IRS survivors reported more ruminations about historical losses, indicating more willingness to understand what has, or is currently, affecting their family members. These findings are consistent with Whitbeck et al.'s (2009c) reported findings that First Nations adolescents were more likely to ruminate about historical loss than their parents or caretakers. Similar findings were found with Ing's (1991, 2001) qualitative research that identified parental participants reporting reluctance to discuss IRS

experiences with their children. This finding raises an important question that if cognitive dissonance is a factor preventing recovery, then understanding more about the experienced trauma may enhance interpersonal relationships, adaptive self-functioning and may help restore important familial relationships severed by IRS (Brown, 2004; Ing 1991; 2001; Morrissette, 1994).

### **Implications for Future Research**

Meyer and Allen (1984) defined organizational commitment as the psychological relationship employees have with their employers. Allen and Meyer (1984) argued that a firm sense of belonging and values congruency help define the psychological relationship between employee and employer. Educated First Nations participants in this study reported a higher sense of belonging and attachment to the organization. This finding raises an important question as to what types of prosocial access, or in-group benefits that might account for their increased organizational commitment (Abbott et al., 2005; McCormick et al., 1999). Since a larger percentage reported less education, the mixed results from this study suggest there is room to increase organizational commitment for First Nations employees by determining specific methods that increase emotional attachment as well as creating a stronger sense of belonging. This is especially important for younger First Nations employees who reported greater ruminations about historical loss. Future research should be geared towards identifying what specific group and organizational norms have the highest instrumental value for both career advancement and congruency training; especially if First Nations employees are distrustful of authority

figures, or vice versa (Brown, 2004; Dwyer, 2003; Ing, 1991, 2001; Morrissette, 1994; Vedan, 2002).

To ensure this study conforms to benefits to First Nations communities as indicated by the tri party research and just therapy methodology (Canadian Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics, 2009; Mihinoa & Twiname, 2011; Waldergrave & Tamasese, 1994), specific research should be dedicated to understanding generational differences of historical loss and symptoms associated with historical loss. This research would include understanding the role age plays in assessing historical loss and those approaches that would be more efficacious by age; understanding the influence of residence—remote versus urban—on historical loss or associated symptoms of historical loss; and the role socioeconomic status might have on historical loss and symptoms associated with historical loss. Additionally, reporting the results of this study to the Aboriginal Human Resource Council and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada may also help facilitate healing and wellness.

### **Limitations of Study**

A key limitation of this study is the generalizability of findings. There are over 615 registered First Nations Bands across Canada (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010); in addition, there have been significant changes to how Aboriginal people are defined under section 91(24) of The Indian Act (Stevenson, 2002). How a First Nations person is defined is a matter of national interest and involves considerable uncertainty, as two new generations of people may now be eligible for Indian status; this further limits generalizability. Secondly, while using an un controlled Internet-based, self-administered

questionnaire had many positive benefits, Fricker and Schonlau (2002) cautioned about the possibility of data quality errors such as honesty and completeness of responses for items involving sensitive questions. Data from the SDS (Hays et al., 1989) had a small relationship with the Associated Symptoms of Historical Loss score and was therefore not controlled for when interpreting the results. Finally, an additional limitation is the potential for multiple response error when interpreting the results (Kraut et al., 2002). Caution should be used when interpreting the findings.

### **Recommendations to Address Enfranchisement Fears**

This study provided starting insights on First Nations employees' experiences in the Canadian workplace; clearly, more research is needed. Specifically, targeted research by profession and research involving First Nations employers might provide additional insights into how to meaningfully engage and retain First Nations employees. Additional recommendations for action include Canadian organizations developing cultural safety programs (Brascoupe & Waters, 2009; Papps & Ramsden, 1996) specifically designed to build on the unique cognitive and affective needs of FNP, especially regarding increasing the efficacy of recruitment and retention programs. Similar approaches can build on Dywer's (2003) core recommendation to collaboratively develop socially and culturally based career advancement programs alongside First Nations employees. Organizations such as the Aboriginal Human Resource Council of Canada can also provide assistance to organizations in the form of leadership circles, assessment tool-kits, training for front-line personnel, as well as recruitment fairs; all are designed to provide industry and government with access to this growing labor pool in a culturally grounded manner.

Scott's (2006) recommendations may also be especially useful here by cultivating empowered work structures, increasing trust, and training managers and leaders to provide organizational support all in efforts to instill a sense of psychological belonging and purpose for these employees. Finally, culturally based, and culturally safe, counseling support services should be provided to First Nations employees potentially suffering from multiple trauma in addition to onset depression (Bombay et al., 2009; Grynderup et al., 2013).

### **Implications for Social Change**

The implications of this study are far reaching, particularly as the study pertains to the post Canadian apology for Indian Residential Schools and the growing movement towards truth and reconciliation. As Mosby (2013) stated:

real truth and reconciliation can only occur when settlers genuinely begin to understand and take responsibility for the legacy of systematic violence and oppression that characterized the residential school system and Indigenous settler relations in Canada more generally. These experiments therefore must be remembered and recognized for what they truly were: one among many examples of a larger institutionalized and, ultimately, dehumanizing colonialist racial ideology that has governed Canada's policies towards and treatment of Aboriginal peoples throughout the twentieth century. (p.171)

Much can be gained from cultivating stronger day-to-day relationships with First Nations employees that encourage internships and mentor/mentee relationship exchanges that cultivate stronger leadership development and career advancement. Conversely,

organizations also have the opportunity to become more involved with the First Nations communities in efforts to establish stronger relationships with First Nations youth in efforts to help Canada add to its rich and vibrant labour pool.

At the individual and familial level, results have shown that intergenerational survivors have greater cognitions of historical loss; this represents an opportunity to rebuild the symbolic connections IRSs were designed to sever. Healing and wellness (Blue et al., 2000; McCormick, 1995; Quinn, 2007) programs that utilize cultural and spiritual methods can assist in rekindling traditional *rites of passage* that meaningfully transfer knowledge from elders to an ever growing young majority.

### **Conclusion**

Joshi and Chuang (2004) argued that to help Canada become competitive, organizations must not only recognize the importance of operating in a global environment by integrating diverse traits and perspectives throughout workplace environments. Arguably, this may help First Nations employees to feel a greater sense of belonging inside the organization (Brascoupe & Waters, 2009). The FNP population has grown nearly eight times faster than the national average and represents a major backfill opportunity for Canadian organizations. To achieve greater FNP recruitment and retention requires a detailed understand of their unique historical and contemporary needs. Results from this study clearly showed a need to redress Historical Loss as a means to increasing Organizational Commitment. The question remains as to whether Canadian organizations will take up the challenges associated with truth and

reconciliation and do its part in integrating the unique perspectives of FNP into all levels of Canadian institutions or silently perpetuate their continued colonization.

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## Appendix A: Instrumentation

**Demographic Questionnaire**

It should be noted that all participants will be directed to an informed consent page that must be completed before being able to proceed. Before proceeding, please take a moment to verify the following:

- I am 18 years old or older and under the age of 65.
- I am a survivor, or intergenerational survivor (meaning child, grandchild, or great grandchild), of an Indian Residential School
- I am a current employee, or was an employee, of a non-First Nations organization (such as a provincial or federal civil servant, or employee of a not for profit or free enterprise.

Please exit the survey (by clicking exit below) if all three boxes are not checked. If all criteria are met, please click next.

Please select the most appropriate response.

Item	Question	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Responses
1	Ethnicity		Status Indian
			Inuit
			Métis
			Native American Indian
2	Sex		Male
			Female
3	Age		50+
			26 – 49
			18 – 25
4	Education		Graduate School
			Undergraduate or Technical
			High School or Other
5	Indian Residential School Survivor		Are you a survivor of an Indian Residential School?
			Are you a child of an Indian Residential School Survivor?
			Are you a grandchild of an Indian Residential School Survivor?
			Are you a great grandchild of an Indian Residential School Survivor?

### Social Desirability Response Set

Listed below are a few statements about your relationships with others. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling a number from 1 to 5 using the scale below.

Item	R = Extreme Score of 1. All others are zero.	Definitely True 1	Mostly True 2	Don't Know 3	Mostly False 4	Definitely False 5
6	I am always courteous even to people who are disagreeable.	R				
7	There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.					R
8	I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.					R
9	I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.					R
10	No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.	R				

### Historical Loss Scale and Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale

Please answer the following questions by deciding to what extent each item is characteristic of your feelings and behavior. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling a number from 1 to 5 using the scale below.

Our people have experienced many losses since we came into contact with Europeans (Whites). I will read you types of losses that people have mentioned to us,

and I would like you to tell how often you think of these from never thinking about them to thinking about them several times a day.

**Do you think of this...**

	<i>LOSSES</i>	Several Times a Day	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly or only at special times	Never	DK/ REF
		1	2	3	4	5	6	9
11	The loss of our land							
12	The loss of our language							
13	Losing our traditional spiritual ways							
14	The loss of our family ties because of boarding schools							
15	The loss of families from the reservation to government relocation							
16	The loss of self respect from poor treatment by government officials							
17	The loss of trust in whites from broken treaties							
18	Losing our culture							
19	The losses from the effects of alcoholism on our people							
20	Loss of respect by our children and grandchildren for elders							
21	Loss of our people through early death							
22	Loss of respect by our children for traditional ways							

Now, I would like to ask you about how you feel when you think about these losses. How often do you feel ...

	<b>FEELING</b>	Never 1	Seldom 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5	DK/ REF 9
23	Sadness or depression						
24	Anger						
25	Like you are remembering these losses when you don't want to						
26	Anxiety or nervousness						
27	Uncomfortable around white people when you think of these losses						
28	Shame when you think of these losses						
29	A sense of weakness or helplessness						
30	A loss of concentration						
31	Bad dreams or nightmares						
32	Feel isolated or distant from other people when you think of these losses						
33	A loss of sleep						
34	Feel the need to drink or take drugs when you think of these losses						
35	Rage						
36	Fearful or distrustful of the intentions of white people						
37	There is no point in thinking about the future						
38	Like it is happening again						
39	Like avoiding places or people that remind you of these losses						

### Three Component Model of Employee Commitment Survey

Listed below is a series of statements that represent feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling a number from 1 to 5 using the scale below.

Item	R = Reverse Coded	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
Affective Commitment Scale								
40	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization							
41	I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own							
42	I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization							R
43	I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization							R
44	I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization							R
45	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me							
Continuance Commitment Scale								
46	Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire							
47	It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to							
48	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my							

Item	R = Reverse Coded	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
	organization now							
49	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization							
50	If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere							
51	One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives							
Normative Commitment Scale								
52	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer							R
53	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now							
54	I would feel guilty if I left my organization now							
55	This organization deserves my loyalty							
56	I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it							
57	I owe a great deal to my organization							

## Appendix B: Permissions

This section includes e-mailed permission requests to utilize psychometric instruments for research purposes.

### Social Desirability Response Set (SDRS-5)

From	"Dr. Ron D. Hays" <drhays@ucla.edu>
Date	August 15, 2010

#### About Our Surveys

##### Permissions

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<[http://www.rand.org/health/surveys\\_tools/about\\_permissions.html](http://www.rand.org/health/surveys_tools/about_permissions.html)> when using these products. In some cases, the materials themselves include specific instructions for citation.

Some materials listed are not available from RAND Health. Those links will take you to other websites, where you will find instructions for use.

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<http://www.iprc.unc.edu/longscan/pages/measures/Ages12to14/writeups/Age%2012%20Caregiver%20Social%20Desirability.pdf>

<http://www.iprc.unc.edu/longscan/pages/measures/Ages5to11/Socially%20Desirable%20Response%20Set.pdf>

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On 8/15/2010 2:09 AM, Justin Wilson wrote:

Permission to Use SDRS-5 Hello Dr. Hays,

I am seeking permission to use the SDRS-5 as part of my PhD dissertation research. Will you grant me permission to use your psychometric scale for research purposes?

Best,

Justin Wilson  
PhD Student  
Organizational Psychology

### Historical Loss Scale and Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale

From: Leslie B Whitbeck <lwhitbeck2@unlnotes.unl.edu>  
Reply-To: Leslie B Whitbeck <lwhitbeck2@unlnotes.unl.edu>  
Date: Mon, 31 Jan 2011 09:05:15 -0500 (EST)  
To: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@waldenu.edu>  
Subject: Re: Permission to Use Instruments

Of course you may use the measure. I would appreciate your sharing your findings and citing us. Do you want an electronic version of the measures. If so, we will send it. I am attaching our last paper.

Les B. Whitbeck, Ph.D.  
Bruhn Professor of Sociology  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
739 Oldfather Hall  
Lincoln, NE 68588-0324  
Phone 402.472.5562  
Email: lwhitbeck2@unlnotes.unl.edu

Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@waldenu.edu>  
01/30/2011 04:23 PM  
To  
<lwhitbeck2@unl.edu>  
Subject Permission to Use Instruments

Hi Dr. Whitbeck.,

I am a PhD student examining the relationship between First Nations intergenerational trauma and organizational commitment in the Canadian workplace. I came across your research of the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale. I am seeking permission to use your scales in order to complete my dissertation. I would be grateful for any associated reliability/validity research you can attach to help me with my statistical analysis (standard deviations, correlation/regression coefficients) or any recent research you have done. I am available to discuss this in greater depth and would be happy to share my results with you upon completion.

Best,

Justin Wilson

### Three Component Model of Employee Commitment Survey

From	<support@flintbox.com>
Date	October 27, 2009

#### TCM EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT SURVEY LICENSE AGREEMENT - FOR STUDENT USE

Licensee: Justin Wilson  
 Walden University  
 Industrial/Organizational Psychology

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Sincerely,

Flintbox Customer Support  
Email: [support@flintbox.com](mailto:support@flintbox.com)  
Phone: 604.678.9981  
Website: [www.flintbox.com](http://www.flintbox.com)

## Curriculum Vitae

## Justin Wilson

justinwilson@telus.net

## Education

**Professional Solutions Focused Life, Team, Organizational & Executive Coach (2006)**

Erickson College – Vancouver, BC

**Ph.D., Organizational Psychology (2014)**

Walden University – Minneapolis, MN

**M.Ed. in Adult Education and Distance Learning (2005)**

University of Phoenix – Phoenix, AZ

**Honours B.A. in Native Studies & Business Administration (1995)**

Trent University – Peterborough, ON

## Professional Experience

LANGARA COLLEGE – Vancouver, BC	2009 – Present
<b>Department Chair &amp; Regular Instructor</b> ( <i>Aboriginal Community Development – ABST 2230; Urban Aboriginal Strategies – ABST 2240; Colonization and First Nations Peoples – ABST 1100; Contemporary Aboriginal Issues – ABST 1115; First Nations and Criminal Justice – ABST 1102</i> )	
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA – Vancouver, BC	2009-2010
<b>CS Instructor</b> ( <i>Aboriginal Health Administration</i> )	
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA – Vancouver, BC	1999 – Present
<b>Organizational Development Consultant</b> ( <i>INAC, FNTO</i> )	
CITY OF VANCOUVER – Vancouver, BC	2007 – 2009
<b>Senior Human Resource Consultant III</b> ( <i>Innovation &amp; Learning Practitioner</i> )	
NATIVE EDUCATION CENTRE – Vancouver, B.C.	2006 – 2007
<b>Sessional Instructor</b> ( <i>Psychology 101; Entrepreneurial &amp; Small Business Development; Organizational Behaviour; Customer Service</i> )	
LIL'WAT BUSINESS CORPORATIONS – Mount Currie, B.C.	2004 – 2006
<b>General Manager</b> ( <i>Fuel, retail, forestry, power, land development, concrete &amp; aggregate</i> )	
HEILTSUK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP – Waglisla, B.C.	1995 – 1999
<b>General Manager</b> ( <i>Aboriginal Capital Corporation</i> )	

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### Certifications, Professional Affiliations & Achievements *(past and present)*

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Certified Integral 360° Profile Coach ~ Certified Change Management Specialist ~ Lean Six Sigma Green Belt (in-process) ~ C Rating to administer Psychometric Tests and Instruments ~ Certified Insights Discovery Practitioner ~ Certified True Colours Facilitator ~ Professional Solutions Focused Coach ~ Member, International Coaching Federation (ICF) ~ Member, Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) ~ Member, BC Organizational Development Network (BCODN) ~ Member, BC Chapter ICF ~ Chairperson, B.C. Capacity Initiative Council ~ Member National Honour Society of *Psi Chi* ~ Class IV unrestricted license with Air Endorsement ~ Certified Fast Rescue Operator, RHIOT School, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary

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### *References*

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*References are available upon request.*

