Chapter 3

Thuam Cin Khai

Omega Graduate School

Date: July 25, 2024

David Ward, DPhil, ThM

**Introduction**

This study emphasizes the importance of raising awareness among leaders, including elders and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, about immigration trauma and posttraumatic growth. The leaders as elders and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention frequently display signs of immigration trauma. This trauma stems from the prolonged emotional effects of enduring distressing events in Myanmar and while crossing the border, often due to socioeconomic and sociopolitical prejudices.

This research examines various issues, including the socio-political transition in Myanmar during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which influenced cross-border migration to escape socioeconomic and sociopolitical prejudice.

First, many people from Myanmar migrate to developed Western, European, and Asian countries to escape socioeconomic challenges.

Secondly, the sociopolitical aspect of cross-border migration involves individuals from Myanmar being subjected to human trafficking as a means of escaping poverty, discrimination, and the pursuit of happiness. This results in irregular migration to neighboring countries like India, Thailand, and Malaysia and resettlement as refugees in third countries such as Australia, Canada, Europe, Japan, South Korea, and the United States of America.

There is an intermingling of cross-border migrants and immigration to escape from poverty and prejudice. This chapter introduces the purpose of the study, the problem and its background, the context of this research, its significance, the hypotheses to be tested, and assumptions about this type of research.

**Research Questions**

RQ1:Is there a relationship between immigration trauma and posttraumatic growth among leaders as elders and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention?

RQ2: It is not known whether leaders, such as elders and deacons, who represent the diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention show growth or not in response to immigration trauma.

**Hypotheses**

HO1 No statistically significant relationship exists between immigration trauma and posttraumatic growth among leaders, elders, and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

HO2 A statistically significant relationship exists between immigration trauma and posttraumatic growth among leaders, including elders and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

**Research Methodology and Design**

This study will utilize a quantitative correlational methodology, in which hypotheses derived from the research question will be tested using statistical analysis.

A correlational study from a validated quantitative and deductive instrument examines the relationship between two continuous variables within the same group.

This research analyzes the relationship between immigration stressors and Tedeschi's five-factor model. In her fields, Sternberg examined limited English proficiency, lack of legal status, workplace disadvantages, homesickness, and cultural dissonance (Sternberg et al., 2016). The immigration stressors that correlated to the most respected Tedeschi’s five-factor model can lead to personal strengths, new possibilities, improved relationships, spiritual growth, an appreciation for life, faith integration, and post-traumatic growth toward constructive social change (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2018; Berger, 2015).

This quantitative study will utilize a correlational design because it will examine the relationship between immigration trauma and posttraumatic growth among leaders, including elders and deacons from members of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

This study investigates the correlation between immigration stressors and Tedeschi's five-factor model among leaders, such as deacons and elders, in diaspora Myanmar churches, particularly Chin, Karen, Kachin, and others.

The study will consider various demographic factors, including age, gender, ethnicity, education, employment, marital status, immigration status (refugee, asylee, and others including F-1, diversity immigrant visa, entry year), years of service, and household income.

The primary focus is to examine the impact of immigration trauma on leaders' primary stressors and attitudes toward spiritual health and wellness. The goal is to support leaders in their journey to grow in Jesus Christ, make disciples, and contribute to positive social change.

**Population and Sampling**

The target population for this study will be from the seven active-member diaspora Myanmar churches affiliated with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. Each church selects and elects leaders in compliance with its constitution and bylaws. For this correlational research study, we anticipate approximately 60 respondents from the seven diaspora Myanmar churches sampled within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. The respondent of the following individual is anticipated: elders appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ, as specified in Ephesians 4:11-13; deacons elected by the church, in accordance with Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3 and individuals who fulfill the biblical criteria and have been selected as trustees. The trustees are responsible for formally endorsing the articles of incorporation for the religious organizations within their respective local government authorities. All respondents are expected to fully engage in the study, providing valuable input and insights.

The convenience sampling (Bell et al., 2018) will ensure that the sample population is adequately represented and that eligible respondents meet the biblical criteria until a minimum sample size of at least 60 participants is achieved. The sample size will be determined using G\*Power software (Verma et al., P., 2020). The permission to recruit leaders, elders, and deacons from the diaspora Myanmar churches will be obtained from the executive minister of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

The participants will be asked to fill out a survey with questions about their gender identity (male, female), age (<40, 40<), marital status (married, unmarried), ethnic origin (Bama, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Rakhine, Shan, other), immigration status (refugee, asylee, and others including student, diversity visa, religious worker, nonimmigrant), how long have you been residing here in the United States (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21 and more), are you the United States citizen or green card), educational attainment (high school, university, seminary), leadership roles (elders, deacons), years of service (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21 and more), leaders employment status (full-time, part-time, self-employment, volunteer), and household income (<40k, 40k+).

**Instrumentation**

The correlation study will investigate whether there is a significant relationship between immigration trauma, as measured by the Stress of Immigration Survey (SOIS), and posttraumatic growth, as measured by Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI), among leaders, elders, and deacons from diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

The instruments that will be utilized in the five domains of the Stress of Immigration Survey (SOIS) are subscales on limited English proficiency, lack of legal immigrant status, disadvantages in the workplace, yearning for family and home country, and cultural dissonance with the U.S. (Sternberg et al., 2016). The Stress of Immigration Survey (SOIS) will be scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (no stress) to 5 (severe stress).

This correlation study will explore how integrating faith and public life can influence personal strength, new possibilities, relationships, spiritual growth, and appreciation for life, leading to post-traumatic growth and constructive social change (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2018; Berger, 2015). The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) will use a 5-point Likert scale. The scale runs from 0 (indicating that I did not experience this change due to my crisis) to 5 (indicating that I experienced this change to a great degree due to my crisis).

**Variables**

The correlation study involved various dependent variables, including gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, immigration status, educational attainment, leadership positions, years of service, employment status, and household income. The independent variables included leadership roles such as elders and deacons. Data was collected using the Stress of Immigration Survey and Posttraumatic Growth Inventory to gather demographic information to measure and then analyze the relationship between immigration trauma, faith integration, and posttraumatic growth among leaders, elders, and deacons in diaspora Myanmar churches in the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and beyond.

**Table 1***Alignment of Variables to Research Questions*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Quantitative Variable(s) | Research Question | Theory or Literature Support |
| Age [under 40, over 40]  Gender [Male, Female]  Marital Status (Unmarried, Married]  Ethnic Origin [Bama, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Rakhine, Shan, Other]  Immigration Status [Refugee, Asylee, F-1, F-2 Student Visa, Diversity Visa, R1-Religious Worker Visa, Nonimmigrant Visa, Other: US Citizen, Green Card]  Education [Middle School, High School, University, Graduate School, Seminary] | Is there a relationship between immigration trauma and posttraumatic growth among leaders, elders, and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention? | The five domains of the stress of immigration are limited English proficiency, lack of legal immigrant status, disadvantages in the workplace, yearning for family and home country, and cultural dissonance with the U.S. (Sternberg et al., 2016).  Kunz’s kinetic model of refugee theory and Everett S Lee’s push-pull theory |
| Role of the Leaders [Elders, Deacons]  Years of Service [less than 5, more than 5, less than 10, more than 10, less than 20, more than 20, retired]  Employment Status [Full-Time, Part-Time, Self-employment]  Household Income [less than 40k, more than 40k] | It is not known whether leaders, elders, and deacons who represent the diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention show growth or not in response to immigration trauma. | The integration of faith and public life might relate to the diversity of influencing personal strength, new possibilities, improved relationships, spiritual growth, and appreciation for life in faith integration and posttraumatic growth toward constructive social change (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2018; Berger, 2015). |

**Validity and Reliability**

The study sample will consist of 60 elders and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. A larger sample size could yield more generalizable findings and statistical significance. Convenience sampling of the elders and deacons from active members of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention sixty in the total population of elders and deacons will yield a representative sample.

The study will ensure construct validity by adopting a systematic approach and employing suitable quantitative research methods, as Mislevy et al. (2007, 2009) suggested. The sample size of sixty participants was determined based on calculations for Pearson's r using G\*Power. A convenience sample will be utilized to select the initial sixty participants who return a signed consent form.

Cronbach’s alpha will be used to measure internal consistency and scale reliability. The expected alpha value for the study is between .70 and .90 (Alsubheen et al., 2023; UCLA Institute for Digital Research & Education, 2019). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the SOIS and PTGI will demonstrate evidence of strong internal consistency. Internal reliability coefficients for the SOIS were above the expected alpha value of .70, ranging between .75 and .87 (Utsey, 1999). The PTGI demonstrated internal reliability coefficients above the expected alpha value with a first-order scale mean of .87, ranging between .75 and .90 (Neumann et al., 2021; 2023).

**Data Collection and Analysis**

**Data Collection**

Informational letters and follow-up letters will be composed in compliance with the American College of Education's Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures. Once consent is obtained and approval granted to conduct the study with leaders, elders, and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, a summary of the purpose and participation requirements of the study and consent forms will be provided to leaders, elders, and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention participants (see Appendix G for the consent form and Appendix H for the permission letter). Data will be collected from 60 participants over four weeks using an in-person delivery and pick-up survey. A printed instrument to the participants to active diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. In-person, face-to-face, and email surveys help maintain data collection validity and reliability, and Google Drive is ecologically friendly (Dewaele, 2018; Rana et al., 2021).

The data collection method, surveys, will provide information for correlational examination with minimal risk to participants. To ensure that data from each survey will be properly correlated, participants will not anonymously complete the surveys from each participant's church. Participants will remain confidential during the study, and their names will not be revealed. Instruments used in the study will be submitted to the IRB for review and approval.

Once consent forms to participate in the study are received, participants will receive a thank-you email. Data will be collected through face-to-face interviews, in-person surveys, and email questionnaires, and the email or printed will include instructions on how to complete the questionnaires. Completed survey data will be stored on a flash drive and hard copy for three years. The information will be retrieved and exported to WINKS SDA 7.0 for analysis. WINKS SDA 7.0 is a software package used for statistical analysis. Survey responses of participants will be kept confidential.

SOIS data collection: Participants will be sent a link to access the SOIS. As requested, they will also be asked to complete the survey on Google Drive or with a hard copy. An email and phone call notification will indicate that the data is ready for collection. PTGI data collection: Participants will be provided a link to access the PTGI. They will complete the survey via the provided link on Google Drive or with a hard copy. An email notification will indicate that the data is ready for collection.

**Data Preparation**

All participants will answer every question on the SOIS and PTGI surveys. The SOIS and PTGI will be downloaded into WINK SDA 7.0 for analysis preparation. Survey data will be input into WINKS SDA 7.0 for analysis. Examining data will allow researchers to rectify the common issue of missing data. Preceding statistical analysis, handling of missing values, and data exclusion will be executed. Frequency distributions for the variables will be created and examined for typing errors, outliers, and missing data. The variables will be assessed for distribution normality.

**Data Analysis**

The SOIS and PTGI will be analyzed statistically, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies, following the methodology outlined by R. A. Johnson and Bhattacharyya (2019). Additionally, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the SOIS and PTGI will be assessed to support the study's reliability.

The Pearson’s r bivariate correlation will be used to determine if a significant relationship between immigration trauma, measured by the SOIS, and posttraumatic growth, measured by the PTGI, exists (Sternberg et al., 2016; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2018; Berger, 2015 ). WINKS SDA 7.0 will be utilized to calculate the composite (mean) scores for the race-related stress and perception of injustice variables. The study will involve analyzing the coefficients to determine if there is a significant relationship between the variables. The objective is to ascertain whether a relationship exists between these variables. The plan will use a one-tailed significance test to assess this relationship (Davis, 2020; Stockburger, 2016), with a significance level of .05 applied to analyze the results.

**Ethical Considerations**

The National Institutes of Health (n.d.) established ethical guidelines to protect research participants. The research will be conducted responsibly, adhering to ethical principles of respecting participants, autonomy, protecting vulnerable populations, beneficence, and justice (Hall & Ram, 2024). Professional integrity will be paramount when conducting the research (Desmond & Dierickx, 2021). The research will conform with applicable federal, state, and local laws concerning protecting human subjects. Epistemic objectivity will be maintained throughout the process to prevent perceptions of bias while conducting research.

Correlational research has ethical advantages. The study of relationships between independent and dependent variables, or correlational research, has an ethical advantage because participants do not have to be subjected to potentially harmful treatment (Grand Canyon University, Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, n.d.). The data collection method, surveys, will provide information for correlational examination with minimal risk to participants. Participants will not complete the surveys anonymously to ensure that data from each survey will be appropriately correlated. During the study, participants will remain confidential. To protect the confidentiality of participants, their names will not be disclosed at any point during or after the study. Additionally, the instruments utilized in the study will undergo thorough evaluation and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure compliance with ethical research standards.

Once the study is approved, potential participants will receive a recruitment letter (see Appendices). Consent forms will include a summary of the study's purpose and participation requirements and be distributed in person and via e-mail. The informed consent form will acknowledge participant rights and the research process. The research will be founded on evidence and unbiased methods of inquiry to satisfy verification standards best (Holton & Walsh, 2016; Urquhart et al., 2010).

The feasible correlational research study will have reasonable time limits and a budget with minimal ethical issues. Participants’ test results will remain confidential. Study participants will receive individualized survey results upon completion of the inventories. Data will be stored on a flash drive used only for the study and secured in a safe at the researcher's home when not in use. Data will be maintained on a flash drive and Google Drive for at least three years and then deleted.

**Participant Consent**

The research will concentrate on leaders, including elders and deacons of diaspora Myanmar churches, specifically within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. The surveys will be utilized to gather data for correlational analysis while minimizing any risks to the participants. Respondents to the survey will not remain anonymous to enable accurate data correlation. Strict confidentiality will be upheld throughout the study, and the participants' identities will not be revealed. Conducting correlational research on the relationships between independent and dependent variables offers an ethical advantage as it does not subject participants to potentially harmful treatments.

The research will comply with all relevant federal, state, and local laws regarding safeguarding human subjects. We will uphold epistemic objectivity throughout the process to mitigate any perception of bias while conducting the research. Data will be collected through surveys to gather information for correlational analysis, with minimal risk to participants. To ensure proper correlation of data from each survey, participants will not anonymously complete the surveys at their respective places of worship. Participants' confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study, and their identities will not be disclosed. The instruments utilized in the study will be subject to review and approval by the IRB.

Once consent forms to participate in the study are received, participants will receive a thank-you email. Data will be collected through face-to-face interviews, in-person surveys, and email questionnaires, and the email or printed will include instructions on how to complete the questionnaires. Completed survey data will be stored on a flash drive and hard copy for three years. The information will be retrieved and exported to WINKS SDA 7.0 for analysis. WINKS SDA 7.0 is a software package used for statistical analysis. Survey responses of participants will be kept confidential.

**Bias Acknowledgment and Mitigation**

The research explores the relationship between immigration trauma and post-traumatic growth among leaders, elders, and deacons of Myanmar churches in the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. The church's formation has brought about tensions and biases, leading to unconscious discrimination within the congregation, which comprises eight different ethnic nationalities speaking 135 dialects. This bias is observed in both Christians and non-Christians. Authentic conversion to faith in Jesus Christ can transform individuals' lives and contribute to positive social change in their public spheres.

The researcher recognized that there is bias in experiencing ethnic nationalities and immigration trauma among leaders, elders, and deacons, which was measured by the SOIS, and the existence of posttraumatic growth, measured by the PTGI, as indicated in previous studies (Sternberg et al., 2016; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2018; Berger, 2015). The goal is to transcend cultural and linguistic differences among different ethnic groups to spread the message of Jesus Christ, foster spiritual growth, and enhance relationships. This mission is reflected in the Lord's Prayer: “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). The analysis and interpretation of this research and data will be contingent on the responses and perspectives provided by the participants.

Mitigating biases involves proactively identifying, acknowledging, and reducing biases that might be present within an organization or society. These biases could materialize in various ways, including unconscious biases related to race, gender, age, or socioeconomic status. This research should be self-aware, neutral, and able to recognize implicit biases. Keep an open mind when interacting with others and make fewer assumptions. Enhancing the design and calibration and conducting regular maintenance and checks on research instruments are recommended to improve the measurement system's accuracy, precision, and consistency.

**Summary and Conclusion**

A framework for the quantitative study on demographics variation about the five domains of the stress of immigration are limited English proficiency, lack of legal immigrant status, disadvantages in the workplace, yearning for family and home country, and cultural dissonance with the U.S. (Sternberg et al., 2016). The integration of faith and public life might relate to the diversity of influencing personal strength, new possibilities, improved relationships, spiritual growth, and appreciation for life in faith integration and posttraumatic growth toward constructive social change (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2018; Berger, 2015).

This study will correlate demographic immigration trauma and posttraumatic growth by using the stress of immigration survey and Tesdeshi’s five-factor model on posttraumatic growth among leaders (elders including missionaries, evangelists, pastors, prophets, teachers, lay leaders such as trustees, and deacons including male and female) of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. Tedeschi mainly focuses on disruption and event centrality, cognitive processing, and perceptions regarding self-disclosure in posttraumatic growth and development (Kanako et al., 2021). Thus, post-traumatic spiritual growth is based on personal strength, new opportunities, improved relationships, and an appreciation of life. This contributes to constructive social change.

Research design elements and rationale were detailed. Research and data analysis will be sequenced. Research procedures, population and sample selection, instrumentation, data collection, data preparation, data analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical procedures will conclude the research approach. The instruments for the study were selected carefully to ensure alignment with the research question. The instruments were also selected to ensure the validity and reliability of the quantitative research (Heale & Twycross, 2015). The next chapter illustrates and explains the research findings based on data analysis.

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