**#3: SR 812-76: Chapter 3**

**(Revised version)**

**by**

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**Introduction**

This study emphasizes the importance of raising awareness among leaders, elders, and deacons from members of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention about immigration trauma and posttraumatic growth. The leaders, including elders and deacons from members of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, are showing signs of immigration trauma. This is an important issue that should be addressed with care and support. 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.

The study delves into various topics, such as the transformation of Myanmar's socio-political landscape throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It explores how these changes have impacted cross-border migration as individuals sought to escape economic and sociopolitical discrimination.

Many individuals from Myanmar seek refuge in developed Western, European, and Asian nations to escape economic and social hardship. The complex nature of crossing borders makes these individuals vulnerable to human trafficking as they attempt to break free from poverty and discrimination in pursuit of a better life. This often leads to unofficial migration to neighboring countries such as India, Thailand, and Malaysia and resettlement as refugees in countries like Australia, Canada, Europe, Japan, South Korea, and the United States. A strong connection exists between cross-border migrants and immigrants striving to overcome poverty and discrimination. This section outlines the objectives of the study, the issue and its background, the research's context and significance, the hypotheses to be examined, and the assumptions related to this type of research.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem is immigration trauma through post-traumatic growth among leaders, including elders and deacons from members of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

Inconsistent church attendance, inadequate financial giving, and being prone to conflict may indicate a failure among leaders to overcome immigration trauma through posttraumatic growth in Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, to overcome immigration trauma through posttraumatic growth (Sternberg et al., 2016; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study is to examine immigration trauma through post-traumatic growth among leaders, including elders and deacons from members of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

**Significance**

The significance of this study is to expand knowledge on whether improved relationships and transformational spiritual growth relate to overcoming symptoms of immigration trauma that affect leadership qualifications. If more leaders, including elders and deacons, were overcoming immigration trauma through posttraumatic growth, then firm spiritual health and constructive relationship and reconciliation in diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention would increase.

This study will contribute to the gap in research on overcoming immigration trauma by identifying posttraumatic growth among leaders, including elders and deacons from members of the diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and other multiethnic protestant churches.

**Background of the Problem**

There have been four distinct waves of immigration from Myanmar to the United States since the early 2000s. These include (1) nonimmigrant students, (2) diversity lottery visa recipients, (3) asylum seekers, and (4) refugees. Most immigrants are from ethnic groups such as Chin, Kachin, Karen, etc.

Resettling people from Myanmar to the United States involved crossing borders into India, Thailand, and Malaysia, facilitated through various means, including non-immigrant status, immigration, asylum-seeking, and refugee status. The decision to resettle was driven by various motivations, such as pursuing higher education, seeking employment, reuniting with family, escaping religious persecution, fleeing ethnic discrimination, and seeking relief from extreme poverty in search of better opportunities for liberty and happiness.

The fundamental cause of immigration trauma came from significant ethnicity from the mainstreams, regions, and representative cities from the eight constituent ethnic nationalities, the tension between Burman and Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Rakhine, Shan, and others. The immigration trauma begins with ethnicity and sociopolitical prejudice, socioeconomic and poverty as a result of cross-border migrants to other countries.

The Chin, Kachin, Karen, and other Christian communities have established over four hundred churches, each catering to specific ethnolinguistic groups, in various parts of the United States over the last two decades. These diaspora Myanmar churches bring rich faith traditions, ethnic identities, languages, and cultural practices. However, conflicts can arise due to the intersection of church, politics, and society, leading to divisions within the Chin, Karen, Kachin, and other church groups. Consequently, the leaders and members of these diaspora Myanmar churches often lack a thorough understanding of their beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, key stressors, and relationships. It is unknown whether the elders and deacons of these churches, particularly those within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, are experiencing posttraumatic growth while coping with the trauma of immigration.

To effectively tackle the issues related to immigration trauma, it is vital for the welfare of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and elsewhere to have individuals, both men and women, who meet the biblical criteria serving as elders and deacons. There is uncertainty about whether the present deacons and elders satisfy these standards, and this uncertainty gives rise to questions about their immigration trauma and posttraumatic growth statuses.

The imperative for diaspora Myanmar churches in the diaspora is to have exemplary deacons and elders who have navigated the challenges of immigration, embraced post-traumatic growth, actively engaged in ministry and mental health support, and are committed to building up the church and bringing glory to God.

**Research Questions**

What is the relationship, if any, exists between immigration trauma and post-traumatic growth among diaspora Myanmar church leaders, including elders and deacons within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention?

**Hypotheses**

No statistically significant relationship exists 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.

A statistically significant relationship exists between immigration trauma and post-traumatic growth among leaders, including elders and deacons from members of diaspora Myanmar churches within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

**Research Methodology, Design, and Rationale**

This study will employ a quantitative correlational methodology to test hypotheses derived from the research question using statistical analysis. The Pearson’s r bivariate correlation will be used to explore the potential relationship between immigration trauma and post-traumatic growth among diaspora Myanmar church leaders, including elders and deacons, as measured by the immigration stressors survey. Additionally, the research will assess immigration trauma and post-traumatic growth using Tedeschi's five-factor model survey.

This study examines the relationship between stress factors experienced by immigrants and Tedeschi's five-factor model. In her study, Sternberg researched challenges such as 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 examines the relationship between immigration stressors and Tedeschi's five-factor model among leaders, including deacons and elders, from members of diaspora Myanmar churches, especially Chin, Karen, Kachin, and others. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) used a quantitative research method to find connections between two or more variables. Then, they used the results to confirm or change existing theories or practices. The study looked at three research questions using a correlational research approach. Correlational research helps to show how two or more variables are related without proving cause and effect (Salkind, 2017). Demographic factors include age, gender, ethnicity, education, employment, marital status, immigration status (refugee, asylee, F-1, diversity immigrant visa, entry year), years of service, and household income. The primary focus of the study is to determine how immigration trauma affects leaders' core stressors and attitudes toward spiritual health and wellness. The study aims to assist leaders in growing in Jesus Christ, making disciples, and bringing positive social change.

**Research Procedures**

The researcher sought and obtained permission from the executive minister to contact the gatekeepers of active Myanmar diaspora church leaders, including elders and deacons within the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. Then, provide a detailed description of the methods used to reach participants and collect demographic data. Additionally, please explain the process for informing participants about the study and obtaining their consent, referring to the letter, form, and relevant sources.

**Population and Sampling**

The target population for this study will be the seven active members according to their annual contribution as diaspora Myanmar churches to be 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 (with a min. of .05 alpha value or 95% confidence interval with a power of 90% min) 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, following 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 et al., 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*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 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). 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' identities will remain confidential throughout the study, and their names will not be disclosed. The study's instruments will undergo review and approval by the IRB. Once consent forms to participate in the study are received, participants will receive a thank-you email or a letter. 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 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 with a link to access PTGI. They will complete the survey via the 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. 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.

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 based 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 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, you 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 robust framework for the quantitative analysis of demographic variations about the stress of immigration encompasses five key domains: 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 may relate to the diverse influences on personal strength, new possibilities, improved relationships, spiritual growth, and appreciation for life in faith integration and post-traumatic 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 (Ephesians 4:11-13, elders, who are born again, called by Jesus Christ and given spiritual gifts, such as missionaries or apostles, evangelists, pastors, prophets, and teachers, are responsible for building up the body of Jesus Christ, which is the church and Acts 6:1-7, the church selects spirit-filled deacons both male and female) from 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.

The research design elements and rationale have been detailed. The research and data analysis will be sequenced. The research approach will cover research procedures, population and sample selection, instrumentation, data collection, data preparation, data analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical procedures. 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 following chapter will present and explain the research findings obtained through data analysis.

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