Exploring the Relationship Between Trauma, Motivation, Current Stress, and Immigrant Elementary Students

by

Jayme Branagh Landon

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University

November 22, 2021
Exploring the Relationship Between Trauma, Motivation, Current Stress, and Immigrant Elementary Students

by

Jayme Branagh Landon

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
2021

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Keena Cowsert, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Dr. Summer Perhay Kuba, Ph.D., Ed.S., MSW, Committee Member
Abstract

The current study explored the relationship between past trauma of immigrant students and motivation in a group of public-school elementary students in Washington state. Additionally, this study explored how stress affects academic motivation. It was hypothesized that past trauma would significantly affect immigrant student motivation and that current stress would moderate motivation in school. Only students with past trauma experience and who qualify as an immigrant, were included in this study. Participants completed The Cameron Complex Trauma Interview (CCTI), Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), and The Perceived Stress Scale for Children (PSS-C). While motivation has been studied, the factors that influence motivation, such as trauma, immigrant status, and ongoing stress from a sociocultural framework, are understudied. Furthermore, research on motivation as it relates to immigrant students has mainly focused on teachers’ perceptions of student motivation, missing an opportunity to examine the impact of sociocultural learning. In addition, current research on trauma has not fully engaged immigrant students at the elementary level. The current study addressed this gap in the literature by examining the relationship between trauma and academic motivation and addressing current stress of immigrant elementary students. This study used a diverse immigrant third through fifth-grade elementary student population in a Pacific Northwest school district.

*Keywords*: trauma, immigrant student, motivation, stress
Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to the students who immigrate to the United States with experiences beyond their elementary years. I recognize their identity as more than what is visible as a student in the classroom.
Acknowledgements

There are several individuals who supported me through this process. Thank you to my friends for listening to me day after day and for their unyielding support and encouragement. Thank you to my parents and to my children, Kolby and Elysa for giving me the time to work. I appreciate your care and understanding for the bigger picture. To my colleague, Yarelie, without you, I would have lost my way several times. I thank you for your outreach, your friendship, and your willingness to help when I needed direction. And to my husband, Jacob, for your understanding and willingness to sacrifice for a dream I had. Thank you.
Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................. 3
Dedication .................................................................................................................. 4
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................. 5
List of Tables .......................................................................................................... 10
List of Figures ........................................................................................................ 11
List of Abbreviations .............................................................................................. 12

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .......................................................................... 13
  Overview ................................................................................................................ 13
  Background ........................................................................................................... 13
    Historical Overview ............................................................................................ 15
    Theoretical Background ...................................................................................... 21
  Problem Statement ............................................................................................... 21
  Purpose Statement ............................................................................................... 23
  Significance of the Study ...................................................................................... 23
  Research Questions ............................................................................................. 25
  Definitions ........................................................................................................... 25

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................. 28
  Overview .............................................................................................................. 28
  Theoretical Framework ........................................................................................ 28
  Related Literature ............................................................................................... 31
    Trauma ............................................................................................................... 31
    Trauma and Immigrant Students .................................................................... 35
List of Tables

Table

1. Descriptive Statistics for Trauma Scores, Stress, and Motivation………………………………73
2. Correlations for Trauma and Motivation……………………………………………………………77
3. Correlations for Trauma and Stress ………………………………………………………………77
4. Correlations for Motivation and Stress……………………………………………………………77
List of Figures

Figures

1. Scatterplot for Trauma and Stress.................................................................74
2. Scatterplot for Stress and Motivation.........................................................75
3. Scatterplot for Trauma and Motivation.........................................................76
List of Abbreviations

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
American Psychological Association (APA)
Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5)
English Learners/English as a Second Language (EL/ESL)
Grade Point Average (GPA)
International Review Board (IRB)
Potentially traumatic Experiences (PTEs)
Post Traumatic Disorder (PTSD)
Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS)
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
The National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC)
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)
Traumatic Event (TE)
Trauma - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This study explored how immigrant elementary students’ academic motivation (MSLQ) is related to their experiences with past trauma (CCTI). In addition, current stress (PSS-C) was explored as a possible moderator for student motivation. A convenience sample of public-school elementary students was studied within the defined boundaries of immigrant students who were enrolled in grades three through five. This chapter provides background information on the topic, problem and purpose statements, significance of this study, research questions, hypotheses, and definitions of the key terms of the study.

Background

Trauma affects children in every country and every city (Chu, 2011). Trauma in children does not discriminate based on race, ethnic group, social ranking, economic status, or education level. Trauma touches entire communities and even though crosses all boundaries, it affects children of color and children living in poverty at a much higher rate (Chu, 2011). More than two-thirds of children will report at least one traumatic event by the time they turn 16 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2021; National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2021[NCTSN], 2021). An event is considered traumatic if it is “extremely upsetting, at least temporarily overwhelms the individual’s internal resource, and produces lasting psychological symptoms” (Briere & Scott, 2015, p. 10). Traumatic events could be national disasters, acts of terrorism, witnessing violence and war, the life of refugees, or unexpected; or violent loss of a loved one (Briere & Scott, 2015). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5) defines trauma and stress-related disorders as exposure to a stressful or traumatic event based on:
exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence based on one (or more) of the following ways: 1. Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others. 2. Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend. In cases of actual or threatened death of a family member or friend the event(s) must have been violent or accidental. 3. Experiencing repeat or extreme exposure to adverse details of the traumatic event. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 271)

Exposure to trauma is a likely occurrence for numerous refugee and immigrant children and their families as they move through the migration and acculturation process (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Over 44.9 million immigrants came to the United States in 2019 (Department of Homeland Security, 2019). In addition, 17.8 million children 18 and under lived with at least one immigrant parent in the U. S. (Batalova et al., 2021). These children accounted for over 25% of children under the age of 18, which had increased by 19% from 2000. Additionally, 88% of all children born in the United States had one foreign-born parent, which classified them as second-generation immigrants (Batalova et al., 2021). The number of children with immigrant parents increased by 30%, from 13.1 million to 17 million. Moreover, this number increased five percent to 17.8 million between 2010 and 2019 (Batalova et al., 2021).

The number of immigrant and refugee students continues to increase in the United States. Although no specific data for future immigrant populations, the projected numbers indicate support for appropriate services for this unique student group. Forecasted numbers that 81 million Americans will include people born in the United States to immigrant parents and 78 million will be new immigrants (Budiman, 2020).
Overall, these statistics show an increase in the immigrant population over the last decade and the continued trajectory over time. This increase in population along with the statistics, which showcase an increase in reported childhood trauma, highlights the timely need to address the unique mental health and academic needs of immigrant students (Schmidt et al, 2019).

**Historical Overview**

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) research study (Felitti et al., 1998) highlighted the prevalence and impact of potential traumatic experiences (PTE) in childhood. This study provided a list of many early childhood adversities, beyond child abuse and neglect, that occurred prior to age of 18, and presented a deeper understanding of early experiences’ impact on health. The ACEs and multiple proceedings studies showed that traumatic events in childhood and adolescence increased the risk of disease and health impairments as an adult (Campbell et al., 2016; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Waehrer et al., 2020).

Over the past 25 years, the field of trauma-informed practice has integrated a diverse set of theories and techniques in the treatment of childhood trauma (Chu, 2011). Trauma theorists and clinicians began to acknowledge the complexity of childhood trauma and cognitive behavioral therapy has been modified to include trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy [TF-CBT] (Pleines, 2019). The latter is an extensively used evidence-based practice for children exposed to trauma (Pleines, 2019). The TF-CBT model is theoretically based on cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and incorporates establishment of a safe caregiver and has been utilized in school settings (Cohen et al., 2017). TF-CBT techniques are more effective in creating sustainable change when focused on the both the school environment and individual behavior (Trickett & Birman, 1989). Group cognitive behavioral interventions are effective at managing
and addressing PTSD and complex trauma symptoms (Beehler et al., 2012). TF-CBT’s use of safe relationships, such as a parental figure, follows the principles of attachment theory (Pleines, 2019). However, few studies have explored school-based CBT interventions with immigrant children and even fewer have reported the effectiveness of CBT interventions with this population. An additional deficit of TF-CBT for immigrant students is the inability to fully support families who do not have strong family connections or experience intergenerational trauma (Pleines, 2019).

Sensorimotor therapy is the second therapy that has adapted and received widespread application, as public schools began using the techniques for students struggling with stress and trauma (Kalimullin et al., 2016). Sensorimotor Psychotherapy can reduce an individual’s dysregulated autonomic arousal patterns take over their ability to cognitively connect (Ogden et al., 2006). By learning to develop an awareness of the body’s physical and emotional responses, sensorimotor psychotherapy teaches clients to regulate trauma and stress responses (Ogden et al., 2006; Fisher, 2011). The ability to track triggering sensory cues leads to future cognitive reasoning (Ogden et al., 2006). Techniques for children include practicing sensorimotor self-regulation strategies, such as identifying body temperatures and body sensations when responding to stress memories (Copeland, 2016). Environments, such as schools and communities aimed at facilitating self-regulation development; provide connection to children and adolescents in a multimodal and sociocultural manner (Kalimullin et al., 2016). In addition to building supportive relationships, schools utilize these strategies when working with children and adolescents with trauma, anxiety, and attention deficit disorder (ADHD) (Copeland, 2016; Jennings, 2019).
One of the contemporary approaches to trauma, the Polyvagal theory, emphasizes how the parasympathetic and sympathetic systems work together and underscore the relationship between neurobiological states and emotions as well as social-emotional engagement (Porges, 2011). This theory suggests a child’s nervous system automatically scans the environment to detect danger or threat (Nicholson et al., 2018). A child’s perception of their surroundings influences whether their autonomic nervous system responds with the survival response (Nicholson et al., 2018; Davis, 2020). Children affected by trauma can get stuck in survival response, such as being on high alert or being immobilized (Schwartz, 2016).

Like TF-CFT, the Polyvagal theory explains that people, especially children, must maintain a sense of safety to ensure balance and homeostasis (Porges, 2011). When a child feels physically and emotionally safe and protected, they can positively engage with others (Beauchaine et al., 2007). Social engagement systems can be implemented when a child’s neurobiological state is not in a state of survival. Social engagement, using facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, to express positive behaviors toward others and learn new information occurs during a regulated state of balance (Nicholson et al., 2018; Davis, 2020).

**Immigrant Students and Trauma**

Complex and ongoing trauma and stress, in addition to acculturation, create varied experiences for immigrant and refugee students. Every school has a group of incoming newcomers (Adelman & Taylor, 2015). Many of whom may have immigrated from another country. Families leave their home country for a variety of reasons, such as work, educational opportunities, political asylum, and in the hope for a better quality of life (Adelman & Taylor, 2015). During migration, children’s experiences vary greatly. An immigrant child is at risk for numerous “…psychological and behavioral problems including anxiety disorders, depression,
posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, conduct and eating disorders Beehler, 2012, p. 155). Post-migration, students with immigrant status face challenges in school and their new neighborhoods as they undergo acculturation and adjustment to a new culture and new communities (Guarnaccia & Lopez 1998). Immigrant groups are at an increased risk of experiencing complex trauma and depression given that the migration process exposes many children to violence at all stages (Guarnaccia & Lopez 1998). A Los Angeles study of immigrant students found the levels of violence exposure high as participants reported 80% witnessed a violent event and 49% of those experienced victimization in the past year (Jaycox et al., 2002). In addition to immigrant participants’ reports of exposure, refugees experience multiple traumas while fleeing persecution and war, in the process of resettlement in their new home (Birman et al., 2005). In past experiences, immigrants needed to be on high alert, to respond to survival situations (Birman et al., 2005). Immigrant students often remain in a state of arousal and survival even after the trauma exposure(s) (Schmidt et al., 2019). Trauma memories elicit trauma triggers for immigrant students which, in turn, affects their ability to self-regulate, focus on a task, and feel secure in their environment (Brunzell, 2016).

**Immigrant Students and Academic Motivation**

A key factor that has been associated to achievement in learning is the motivation of learners (Deci & Moller, 2005). Gardner (1985) describes this as “...the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language and favorable attitudes towards learning the language” (p. 10) when describing a students’ academic motivation. Initial research described significant relationships between academic success and student engagement, self-confidence, and intrinsic motivation to learn, consistently substantiating the impact of motivation on academic achievement across all age groups (Deci & Moller, 2005). In addition, students who face
difficulties in maintaining or initiating academic motivation show lower academic performance and less desirable school behaviors (Kusurkar et al., 2013; Isik et al., 2018). The underperformance of immigrant and ethnic minority students in academia began gaining attention across multiple educational disciplines in all age groups (Isik et al., 2018). There are no significant performance differences between ethnic majority and minority students as they enroll in education at the elementary level (Osborne, 2001). As these two groups move through their academic journey the performance gap begins to widen (Osborne, 2001).

Eccles et al. (1996) presented a collaborative person-centered environmental perspective to understanding the educational process and suggested that the academic climate, is closely tied to a student’s learning process and motivation to achieve in school. Within this framework, academic motivation and therefore, achievement, have been conceptualized as a unidimensional construct in which the ability of individuals is indirectly measured by standardized tests and GPA (Rumberger & Larson, 1998). These measurements do not fully employ an individual’s motivational processes (Rumberger & Larson, 1998). Academic and achievement motivation has recently been characterized as multidimensional, which includes individual differences in learning goals and orientations toward learning (Wilkins & Kuperminc, 2010). Motivation for learning is not simply explained by grades earned while taking a test of memorized course material (Wilkins & Kuperminc, 2010). A multidimensional lens of motivation may further explain the educational experiences of immigrant and minority students, especially those with past trauma. Although immigrant and minority youth groups may lag their peers, they are highly motivated to achieve results (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). Academic motivation may be increased by utilizing individual and cultural differences to support students in expressing their knowledge and understanding Zacarian et al., 2017). Minority and immigrant students increase
academic focus and positive classroom behavior when collaborative and inclusive strength-based classroom practices are implemented (Zacarian et al., 2017).

The social-cognitive view postulates that academic self-regulation involves motivation and social-cognitive thinking and is characterized by an individual learners’ thoughts, and self-perceptions of behaviors used to reach learning objectives (Zimmerman, 2000). Self-regulated learners utilize self-reactive insights to motivate their learning endeavors to achieve success (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). In terms of academic motivation and self-regulation, learning is valuable when self-regulated learners are motivated because they perceive the tasks associated with learning as valuable (Rowell & Hong, 2013). They are highly self-sufficient; and persistent upon encountering difficult tasks (Rowell & Hong, 2013). Immigrant students who have experienced a traumatic event (TE) may face difficulties self-regulating (Schmidt et al., 2019). In addition, immigrant students’ motivation is affected by the perceived value of their culture and community in their classroom learning (Schmidt et al., 2019).

**Immigrant Students and Stress**

Immigrant newcomers present unique needs while adjusting to school and neighborhood (Adelman & Taylor, 2015). Refugee and immigrant students face barriers that include communication and translation needs, financial burdens, cultural customs, and family roles, differing school and family rules, and other acculturation issues that affect their educational experience (Zacarian et al., 2017).

Immigrant families experience ongoing stress as they struggle to meet their basic needs of housing, employment, health care, within the norms and laws of a new culture (Westermeyer & Wahmanholm, 1996). Many immigrant and refugee students experience copious stressors and disruptions related to the ongoing issues of acculturation and adjustment, in addition to recurring
trauma, which makes it difficult to process past events due to coping demands in the present (Beehler et al., 2012).

**Theoretical Background**

According to Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of cognitive development, culture has a substantial impact on a child’s development and social interactions with adults and peers facilitate a child’s potential for learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Sociocultural theory interprets human development as a social process through collaborative dialogues, in the context of cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies (McLaughlin et al., 2018). Vygotsky (1978) strongly believed in the central role played by the community as to “make meaning” through self-generated action and interactions (Pumariega & Joshi, 2010). In this framework, a student’s development is not static and a key component to understanding how trauma and culture shape a student’s identity and help them acquire their perspectives during the process. (Pumariega & Joshi, 2010).

**Problem Statement**

The interest in trauma-informed education has recently increased in the field of research. This is paralleled with support for immigrant students with an increased focus on researchers highlighting the connection between immigrant student behavior and trauma in the classroom (Gándara & Ee, 2018). There is a strong need to explore and further define the needs of immigrant students who encounter trauma. This includes an immigrant student’s motivation and their unique perspective on what motivates their learning. Immigrant students’ academic motivation is complicated by traumatic life experiences, acculturation, and other stressors which may be elevated by culturally uninformed education practices (Alonso-Tapia & Pardo, 2006). Boekaerts et al. (2006) advocate for including a multiple goal perspective to explain student
achievement. This supports other educational research around motivation, taking immigrants’ multiple perspectives and definitions of academic achievement. Alonso-Tapia & Simón (2012) specifically mention the importance of cultural values as a key component to students’ motivation and learning. In addition to factoring in, cultural norms, values, and beliefs as a part of each student’s learning experience, further research is needed to expand knowledge about specific trauma, motivational, and ongoing stress variables faced by elementary students. Immigrant students at the elementary school level may have complex trauma and ongoing trauma and have a unique reaction to current stress and what motivates them. Current research has not addressed students of this age group therefore, educators may not fully understand the extent to which stress can affect immigrant students. Without a students’ perspective, it is equally difficult for an educator to appreciate students’ level of motivation to set academic or achievement goals. Additionally, educators currently applying trauma-informed practices in the classroom may inadvertently trigger trauma reactions by not understanding the relationship between immigrants, trauma, and motivation (Jaycox et al., 2002).

While student motivation has been studied, factors that influence young minority students’ motivation have been greatly understudied. In addition, research on student motivation as it relates to immigrants has focused on the teacher’s perceptions of student motivation (Lai, 2011; Lazarides et al., 2018; Téllez & Manthey, 2015). This study aimed to directly invite students to assess motivation. Furthermore, this study recognized previous traumatic events and current stress as possible factors that may influence and indirectly affects students’ academic motivation.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between trauma (predictor variable) and motivation (outcome variable) when moderated by current stress in a sample of Pacific Northwest Washington third through fifth-grade immigrant students enrolled in two public elementary schools. Past trauma was the independent variable and was defined by students’ scores on the Cameron Complex Trauma Interview (CCTI), which will reflect trauma history (King et al., 2017). The dependent variable was motivation, defined by the student’s level of interest regarding academic success (DiPerna & Elliot, 1999). This was reflected by their (Motivated Strategies for Learning Questions (MSLQ) score. The moderator variable was current stress, as defined by students’ scores on the Perceived Stress Scale for Children (PSS-C). The first goal was to explore the relationship between immigrant student trauma and academic motivation. The second goal was to involve expanding the research on current stress, and how it indirectly affects academic motivation for immigrant students with a history of trauma.

Significance of the Study

This study aimed to add to the current literature on the connection between past trauma in immigrant students, academic motivation, and current stress in a sample of elementary students. Previous studies on immigrant students with trauma have established a clear association between immigrant student academic struggle and loss of overall motivation (Castro-Olivo et al., 2016; Matthews et al., 2014; Isik et al., 2008; Tuan, 2012). Numerous researchers have identified the association between exposure to trauma, multiple stressors, and non-native children and adolescent students’ future ability to regulate their mood (Roeser et al., 1999; Langley et al., 2015; Suliman et al., 2009). Students who have experienced trauma or have a higher ACE score are more likely to have social, emotional, and cognitive impairment, engage in high-risk
behaviors, and disability (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Additionally, previous research has shown, students with higher ACE scores have a higher likelihood of experiencing aggressive behavior in school, attendance problems, depression, inattention, anxiety, withdrawal, peer conflict, higher drop-out rate, delayed language, and impaired cognitive development (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Lansford et al., 2002; D'Andrea et al., 2012).

Toppelberg and Collins (2010) found immigrant and English Language (EL) students’ second language acquisition was linked to the incorporation and identification of the family’s social values and inclusion of cultural norms. Researchers point to this social constructivism as crucial for academic success as a measure of social and economic health and as a reflection of future school sustainability, high graduation rates, and post-secondary education opportunity (Toppelberg & Collins, 2010). Using social learning theory constructs, such as teacher as the community facilitator, culturally responsive practice, and inclusive dialogues, trauma responses can be mitigated and motivation boosted in immigrant students (Castro-Olivo et al., 2016; Renninger & Hidi, 2016; Murayama & Elliot, 2009; Newton-Moses, 2018; Schmidt et al., 2019). Insights into the relationship between motivation and trauma when moderated by stress, in the study sample, is absent from the research. Therefore, exploring this relationship adds to the current literature on immigrant trauma. This study and future research may provide insight about effective trauma-informed practice for immigrant students at the elementary level.

**Research Questions**

Given the purpose of the current study, the primary research questions were:

**RQ1**: Is there a significant relationship between stress, motivation, and trauma for third-fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students?
RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between trauma as shown by the CCTI and student motivation, as measured by MSLQ for third- fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students?

Definitions


2. Cameron Complex Trauma Interview (CCTI)- a pictorial-based assessment tool to measure trauma history in children ages five to 11. Participants rate experiences in nine areas of traumatic exposure over 10 questions.

3. Generational Immigrant – “…refers to the place of birth of an individual or an individual’s parents. The first generation refers to those who are foreign born. The second generation refers to those with at least one foreign-born parent” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021, para. 6).

4. Immigrant- “…anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth. Including non-citizen U.S. nationals, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants, humanitarian migrants (such and unauthorized migrants” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021, para. 3).

5. Immigrant Student- a student who is (a) age three to 21; (b) not born in any state (c) has not been attending school in the U. S. for more than three full school years (Title 20 USC §7011 Education, 2021).

6. Motivation- refers to “the reasons underlying behavior” (Guay et al., 2010, p. 712).

7. Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)- a 44- item instrument used to measure the types of learning strategies and academic motivation. Participants rate
themselves on a 7-point scale where 1= not at all true of me to 7=very true of me. There are 15 summative scales. Motivation subscales include 12 questions, from value component: intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, and expectancy component: control of learning beliefs.


9. *Perceived Stress Scale for Children (PSS-C)*- a 14-item screening tool that requests participants to indicate their perceptions of stress. Each question is answered with four options ranging from never, a little, sometimes, and a lot. The tool was designed to efficiently assess children’s perception of stress (White, 2014).

10. *Refugee*- an individual who “demonstrated that they were persecuted or fear persecution due to race, nationality, opinion, or membership in a particular social group and is unable or unwilling to return to return to their country” (U.S Department of Education, 2021).

11. *Stress*- A response by the brain and body to any demand (National Institute of Mental Health, 2021). Any type of challenge can be stressful. A stressor can be one-time, short-term, repeated, or long-term.

12. *Trauma*- an event that is a frightening and causes a threat to a child or a child’s sense of safety. This includes witnessing a traumatic experience of a loved one, that threatens their sense of perceived safety (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2021).

13. *Trauma-informed*- a systematic practice or approach to better serve students or clients with possible trauma history. The practices include acknowledging the prevalence of trauma, recognizing the impact of these experiences on all individuals, utilizing trauma-
sensitive practices and policies, and avoiding practices that may retraumatize the individual (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2021).
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter intends to provide information and background research that builds on the significance of immigrant students with trauma and the relationship to motivation. In addition, the relationship between current stress on academic motivation will be discussed. The biological and physiological effects of traumatic events can complicate immigrant students’ acculturation process and educational experience in the public school system. With a better understanding of the variables associated with immigrant students’ academic motivation, schools and communities may be able to better develop appropriate support. This chapter will first explore the theoretical framework of immigrant student learning, trauma, and motivation. Subsequently, information on how trauma-informed practices with immigrant students relate to current research academic motivation and the relationship motivation has to immigrant student success will be explored. Finally, immigrant students’ current stress, at the elementary level, and the ways of addressing some of the gaps in current literature will be discussed.

Theoretical Framework

To gain a better understanding of the relationship between cognitive development, motivation, and culture, Vygotsky (1978) proposed a theory of sociocultural learning. Vygotsky’s theoretical framework explains that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition, which is dependent on the level of engagement of social interaction. Vygotsky (1978) states “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (p. 105).
Within the social context, the act of learning, according to Vygotsky, occurs when “student-student and expert-student collaboration on real world problems or tasks that build on each person’s language, skills, and experience shaped by each individual's culture” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 102). Vygotsky (1962) investigated how a person’s social environment influenced how they learned. He suggested that construction of knowledge occurs through the social and cultural exchanges students have with their classmates, friends, and educators. He also developed the idea of zone of proximal development, explaining the process as the distance between what a learner can do as a part of normal or typical development and problem-solving without help and what they can do with the guidance and support from a knowledgeable expert (Pumariega & Joshi, 2010). Vygotsky (1978) viewed identity as a complex interchange between sociocultural contexts, our actions, and the purpose behind the actions. Social learning constructivists postulate that we learn through a cultural perspective through interaction with others, using our cultural tools, prior knowledge, learned norms, and culture-shaped attitudes (Scribner, 1997; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wertsch, 1994).

Culture shapes learning beginning with childhood expectations and developmental milestones through parenting and childrearing practices (Pumariega & Joshi, 2010). Pachter and Dworkin (1997) reported significant differences between parents from American ethnic and immigrant groups in personal and social milestones for individuals aged nine to 25 years. Additional studies found aspects of highly culture-bound differences in early childhood psychological development (Pumariega & Joshi, 2010). Significant evidence shows that the Western concepts of individuation are critical to psychological health and are associated to culture-bound significance (Pumariega & Joshi, 2010). American culture encourages children as infants, to show independent behaviors whereas, mothers in the Korean culture expect
dependency from infants (Choi, 1995). In addition, American culture focuses on the individual, the nuclear family unit and uses guidance from health care providers, whereas Korean culture is ritualistic, and family is therefore guided by societal rules, folklore, and extended family over individual need or expert advice (Choi, 1995).

As students venture into school, social norms, family culture, and community values encounter challenges through the discovery of differences (Rothbaum et al., 2004). In addition, these values are taught alongside individual emotional regulation, and peer engagement (Rothbaum et al., 2004). Evidence shows culture is a significant factor in these educational skills. There is widespread understanding that cultural beliefs and values are conveyed verbally and non-verbally to the child by the family, reinforced in the neighborhood and other cultural communities (Adelman & Taylor, 2015; Pumariega & Joshi, 2010; Schmidt, 2019). Farver et al. (2008) found cultural differences were significant in children’s social interaction, play complexity, adult-child interactions, and home versus school play. Results indicated the interactions children maintained relative to their specific culture, provided adaptive functions to their social (Farver et al., 2008). In another study, interviewers asked students from grades second, fourth, and fifth from Brahman, Tamang, and the United States, if they would want others to know their feelings (Cole et al., 2003). Researchers found cultural patterns among the three groups of children. Tamang youth assessed challenging scenarios with emotions of shame, United States children; endorsed anger and used problem-solving actions and Brahman children; did not communicate negative emotions (Cole et al., 2003).

Sociocultural learning theory places learning in the context of interactions and collaborations (Gibbons, 2003). Learning occurs through the development of social mediation. Children learn through their social interactions with each other. Discussion-based
classrooms, where the educator equally includes all students thereby allowing individuals to feel like their contributions are valued, can increase an individual student motivation (Gibbons, 2003).

Immigrants and English as a second language (ESL) students find intrinsic motivation for learning through personal connections, social interactions, and relationships (Newton-Moses, 2018). All aspects of a child’s development must be taken into consideration, making culture and cultural community relevant to the impact of trauma and trauma triggers (Saakvitne et al., 2010). As children learn through their social interactions, immigrant and refugee students who are new to the culture may find traditional learning less motivating if they are not included or the content is irrelevant. As immigrant students with past trauma strive to heal, interpersonal relationships shape their adaptation and motivation. People exposed to traumatic events use their strengths and coping mechanisms to motivate themselves by leveraging the relational and community resources (Saakvitne et al., 2010).

**Related Literature**

**Trauma**

Childhood trauma research has increased as the impact of exposure on children has been shown to severely harm individuals future emotional, physical, social, and spiritual well-being (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2021). In addition to the impact on adult health, childhood trauma has been shown to be a predictor of psychiatric disorders in adulthood (Heim et al., 2010; Campbell et al., 2016). Traumatic events in childhood “have shown a dose-response effect relationship with psychiatric symptoms in adulthood, such that persons who experienced more severe childhood trauma and multiple forms of childhood trauma are at an increased risk for more severe symptoms” (Lowe et al., 2016, p. 213). Dose-response
relationships or exposure-response relationship in the case of trauma, explain how the change in levels of exposure to trauma or a stressor has a direct impact on symptoms and the level to which this exposure is unhealthy and detrimental to mental health in adulthood (Moffett et al., 2015).

Early childhood is a vulnerable time to experience trauma. The early stage in development increases the impact trauma on children’s future development (Levers, 2012). Blaustein and Kinniburgh (2019) describe a student’s belief system after trauma to include the feeling the world is a dangerous place, wherein they need to be on alert. Traumatic experiences create strong physical and emotional reactions that often last long after the trauma exposure has ended (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2019). Children may feel fear, helplessness, terror, and physiological reactions such as heart pounding, loss of bladder control, or vomiting (National Traumatic Stress Network [NTSN], 2021). Children unable to protect themselves or who did not receive protection from others may also feel overwhelmed by intense physical and emotional trauma responses (NTSN, 2021).

A biological basis for trauma responses has been demonstrated through the conceptualization of the dysregulated states of the autonomic nervous system (Siegel, 2019). The triggered trauma memories keep a child at a hyperarousal state. Levine (1997) further explains, to minimize any further exposure to trauma triggers the lower brain and midbrain activations should be stabilized. The typical biological and psychological response to a high stress situation is handled by our autonomic nervous system (Nicholson et al., 2018). The autonomic nervous system, which controls functions such as breathing, body temperature, and sleep, is composed of the sympathetic (SNS) and the parasympathetic nervous systems (PNS) (Nicholson et al., 2018). SNS activates the fight-flight-or-freeze response to regain homeostasis and recover balance (Uhernik, 2017). Prolonged exposure to stress and trauma, prolonging the activation of the SNS
and high levels of arousal (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2019; Nicholson et al., 2018; Uhernik, 2017). Furthermore, prolonged activation of the sympathetic nervous system, the easier its activation (Nicholson et al., 2018). Exposure to trauma and stress also stimulates the activation of the PNS, which leads to reactions in the body that control digestion, tears, and urination (Nicholson et al., 2018).

McLaughlin et al. (2018) conducted a study indicating children exposed to trauma and early fear conditioning were correlated with reduced amygdala and hippocampal volume. Participants consisted of 94 children between the ages six and 18 years who were enlisted from prevention programs, after-school programs, and general community programs located in Seattle Washington. Participants were assessed in the areas of PTSD, anxiety, depression, and externalizing symptoms using self-report and parent-report inventories. Neural structure assessments were also administered to participants through brain imaging scans to measure cortical thickness and amygdala and hippocampus volume (McLaughlin et al., 2018). Two groups included students with previous trauma exposure and students who served as the control group. Both groups completed a fear conditioning task and then reported the extent to which they feared, liked, and found the stimulus unpleasant after each of the three phases. The participating students with trauma exposure had reduced amygdala and hippocampus volume, which was related to inhibited ability to identify threat during the conditioning task. Furthermore, these participants showed an absence of threat-safety discrimination during early trials of fear conditioning (McLaughlin et al., 2018). TE students have a changed sense of threat and safety (McLaughlin et al., 2018).

Levine and Kline (2007) suggest trauma is experienced in the nervous system and that if a child’s physiological survival systems are activated by threat, they will exhibit a defensive
response. This defense behavior can be triggered by surrounding sounds, smells, visuals, touches (Byron, 2017). This hyperarousal state and continued inability to process contextual safety information may contribute to psychopathology leading to a constant state of fear, even when in seemingly safe conditions (Lambert, 2017). The rapid processing of environmental threats can involve a vulnerability to anger (Lambert, 2017). “Children with trauma histories identify anger with less perceptual information and classify a wider range of emotions as anger than children who have never experienced trauma” (Lambert, 2017, p. 29). Trauma-exposed children also exhibit feelings of threat when processing social information (Shackman & Pollack, 2014). Students may overact to a peer conflict or be quick to anger when a teacher provides feedback in the classroom, by arguing, crying, running away, destroying property, or appearing dismissive (Jennings, 2019). Additionally, environmental triggers in the classroom, such as tone of voice, noise level, and seating can influence similar reactions (Jennings, 2019).

Trauma is often associated with attachment and connection to others, not only violence or physical harm (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2019). Uhernik (2017), describes the process of establishing a feeling of safety in relationships as the process of establishing stabilization between the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex. Levine (1997) further explains, to minimize any further exposure to trauma triggers the lower brain and midbrain activations should be stabilized. Positive and trusting relationships between adults and students help calm the sympathetic nervous systems’ hyperarousal and reconnect and rebalance the automatic nervous system (Steele & Malchiodi, 2012). Current bottom-to-top thinking follows Levine’s concept that trauma is experienced through a person’s biological responses to threat, such as the instinctual and primal reactions from the brainstem at the bottom of the brain (Grabbe & Miller-Karas, 2018). By addressing the “bottom” needs first, emotional regulation and neural
connections are increased, thereby increasing memory integration and cognitive function (Levine, 1997; Uhernik, 2017). With stabilization in place, “top” brain (prefrontal cortex) skills are accessed (Steele & Malchiodi, 2012; Grabbe & Miller-Karas, 2018).

In a study by Callaghan and Tottenham (2016) evidence suggests that early life adversities, such as trauma events, accelerate the development of neural networks, hyperarousal connections, such as the amygdala-prefrontal cortex. Children who have been exposed to trauma struggle with memory recall for context information due to atypical hippocampal-prefrontal cortex connectivity by trauma triggers (Lambert, 2017). This hyperarousal, inability to access the prefrontal cortex, and quick to feel anger, and maybe exhibited in the form of misbehavior in the classroom (Schmidt et al., 2019). Immigrant students with past trauma often present as tired, unresponsive, angry, unintelligent, disruptive, or confused (Schmidt et al., 2019; Schock et al., 2016; Zacarian et al., 2017).

Consequences of ACEs can be significant to academic achievement (Brunzell et al., 2016).

Individuals who experienced ACEs are 2.5 times more likely than those who did not report ACEs to experience problems in school, such as lower achievement assessments, being at risk for language delays and difficulties, being suspended or expelled more often than their peers who have not experienced trauma, being designated to special education, failing a grade, and dropping out of mainstream education.” (Brunzell et al., 2016, p. 220)

**Trauma and Immigrant Students**

It is estimated more than 127,000 children were refugees in the United States in 2016 (Murphey, 2016). Refugees and asylum seekers arrive at the US with an estimated post-traumatic
stress disorder (PTSD) rate of 30.6% and have already faced multiple stressful life events in their country. (Murphey, 2016; Schock et al., 2016). During migration, 29% of foreign-born adolescents and 34% of their parent or guardian have at least one traumatic experience (Murphey, 2016). Immigrant and refugee trauma may include traumatic events such as, interruption in schooling, housing and/or food instability, discrimination due to race, color language, or religion, lack of medical and physical care, poor mental health, physical health, separation from parents or family, war, or political turmoil in their home country (Murphey, 2016). Amongst those who were exposed to trauma, 9% of adolescents and 21% of their parents were at risk for PTSD (Perreira & Ornelas, 2013). Poverty in combination with surreptitious entry into the United States may further increase PTSD and future PTSD symptoms (Perreira & Ornelas, 2013). During the migration process, children’s exposure to trauma can vary on many different levels. Adelman and Taylor (2015) highlight differences in mobility during migration, the hardships of refugees, and detainment for some migrating families. Some families stay together, while others must travel separately. The post-migration process can bring about just as many opportunities for hardship and exposure to trauma. Post-migration refers to “the settlement experiences of children; the process of navigating life in a new country; and coming to the realization of the changes in family economic situations, dynamics, and social roles” (Adelman & Taylor, 2015, p.328). Furthermore, immigrant students’ exposure to trauma has the potential to create a path for symptoms of toxic stress “a type of stress caused by strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity” (Murphey, 2016, p.30).

Marchante-Hoffman (2018) surveyed 152 foreign-born children, ranging in age eight to 17 and 143 parents, measuring exposure to potentially traumatic events, PTE, and stressors. The study sought to examine pre- and post-migration exposure and assess the relationship between
the exposure of TE and physical or somatic health problems. Marchante-Hoffman (2018) looked at key risk factors of related stressors, such as acculturation, as moderators to the trauma relationship. Youth participants from a primary care clinic in an underserved community and parents completed questionnaires measuring their child’s exposure alongside parental depression. Results from the study revealed in this sample of foreign-born Latino youth, rates of PTEs were high (72%) (overall) pre-, during, and post-migration. Specifically, rates of exposure to community violence (witnessed or learned about) (48.77%) and natural disasters (24.6%). Participants reported experiencing a loved one’s death (36%), witnessing a physical attack (23%), and witnessing or hearing about a friend or loved one’s death or violence (22%). Study findings indicated PTEs were associated with more somatic symptoms, and acculturative stress was a significant moderator of PTEs and somatic symptoms (Marchante-Hoffman, 2018).

Liang et al. (2020) examined the extent in patterns between childhood trauma and negative outcomes, including learning and socio-behavioral outcomes. The researchers specifically explored the trauma of migrant children in China and internalizing and externalizing behaviors. The researchers collected data from 15,890 participants out of 16,682 students. Migrant children came from China to Beijing and completed both child behavior checklist and traumatic experience history screenings. Participants reported the most common traumatic events (TE) to be witnessing violence outside of their home (24.24%), an experience with domestic violence (13.98%). Experiences that were less common among participants comprised disasters (2.61%), earthquakes (2.71%) and one or more sexual harassment encounter (5.18%). Researchers categorized TEs based on the degree of exposure to the event (Liang et al., 2020). Researchers reported low trauma exposure (60.4% of participants), meaning participants had a low probability of TE; vicarious, or secondhand, trauma exposure (23.9% of participants),
meaning participants had a moderate probability of exposure to a traumatic event; and multiple trauma exposure (5.3% of participants), meaning participants had moderate or high probabilities of traumatic exposure (Liang et al., 2020).

Participants in the Liang et al. (2020) study showed significant differences in physical symptoms such as aggressive and delinquent behavior, withdrawal, and somatic complaints depending on their TE type. The study indicated children exposed to more severe traumatic events showed higher scores for internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Liang et al., 2020). In the case of immigrant students, trauma can have immediate impact on their educational process and their relationship to the new school system and learning has changed (Zacarian et al., 2017). Furthermore, ACEs are linked to low grade school performance and behavioral issues in the classroom making it more troubling for immigrant students in the education system (Balfanz et al., 2014).

**Trauma-Informed Practice with Immigrants**

While youth can possess resilience and strength, experiencing repeated and prolonged traumatic exposure and multiple trauma events leads to higher rates PTSD but also anxiety, depression, and health concerns such as, heart disease (Miller et al., 2019). Educators and communities responsible for immigrants or refugee youth are charged with the responsibility of tending to children and youth who may have been exposed to trauma (Miller et al., 2019). Implementing trauma-informed practice is recommended in the case of immigrant and refugee families; however, it is challenging to implement when practices are unclear, and the framework relies on general groups of trauma survivors (Miller et al., 2019).

A significant number of students arrive at the United States as immigrants and refugees, showing signs or symptoms of trauma, which are attributed to their EL status (Schmidt et al.,
Students are labeled as less cognitively capable, aggressive, or emotionally withdrawn (Schmidt et al., 2019). The stress of learning a new language and coping with an unfamiliar culture, ongoing racism, possible discrimination, and violence, open students up for learning struggles and emotional and behavioral problems (Adelman & Taylor, 2015). McDonald’s (2000) prior research on student support in the classroom has explored the importance of a teacher understanding “that traumatized individuals may have difficulties beginning new things or taking risks; they may fear being punished, humiliated, or rejected for making mistakes” (p. 691). The study further highlighted the past trauma of immigrant students, and the possibility to heal through connections. An immigrant student may connect school and learning to trust. “The common feelings of shame, accountability, and blame that follow a traumatic event can often intercede with a student’s relationship with learning” (Schmidt et al., 2019, p. 415). This research draws attention to the enduring stress these children face as they become accustomed to a new culture and school system and not only indicates the impact on the students; but their families; and educators who try to support them (Miller et al., 2019).

Trauma exposure often affects or removes secure attachments to parents or guardians (Briere, & Scott, 2015). This detachment during development is exceedingly damaging to the well-being of a child (Briere & Scott, 2015). Understanding the importance of establishing safety for trauma-affected clients has been a common theme among researchers when applying interventions (Briere & Scott, 2015; Levers, 2012; Steele & Malchiodi, 2012). The safety and security of relationships with trauma-impacted clients forms the foundation to begin healing. (Carello & Butler, 2015; Steele & Malchiodi, 2012; Uhernik, 2017). Current research emphasizes empathetic responses to students will past trauma and discourages placing a negative or inadequate perspective on students when they exhibit behaviors that are typically considered
disruptive and problematic in the classroom and the general school setting (Thomas et al., 2019). Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provides schools with trauma-responsive resources in the form of strategies for teachers to build community with an understanding that students are complicated individuals. OSPI compassion strategies “include anything from implementing social-emotional curricula, weaving mindfulness activities into everyday teaching and learning, creating a contract with a student that provides empowerment of choice - choice of activity, of consequence, or of exercise” (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2021, compassionate schools, para. 2). The goal of these strategies is promoting a culture of learning and compassion while maintaining clear expectations for everyone (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2021).

The focus of this educational resource changes the teacher perspective to shift their perceptions of students’ unfavorable behaviors (for example, avoidance, refusal, aggression, eloping, silence) from naturally oppositional or negative to the perception of each student as an individual with experiences that affect their behaviors. Schools using a theoretical trauma framework aim to increase the likelihood of teachers developing connections with all students, including students with past trauma (Cavanaugh, 2016). This is especially critical for immigrant students who are less likely to possess the English language skills that are needed to communicate, more likely to venture into school with an experience of a traumatic event, and more likely to be a minority race and culture, upon their entry into the new classroom environment (Schmidt et al., 2019). Brunzell et al. (2016) focused on two assertions in their research on trauma-informed education: “(a) repairing regulatory abilities and addressing the dysregulated stress response; and (b) repairing disrupted attachment capacities through the nurturing of strong student-teacher relationships” (p. 220). The classroom environment effectively supports students with past trauma, especially ESL students only after the basics of
safety, security and relationships have begun to be established (Patrick et al., 2011; Medley, 2012). Community building in the classroom and creating safe environments will aid in high-risk language learner’s ability to feel included and participate (Fritzgerald, 2020). Teachers express their learning through connections from their background knowledge (Fritzgerald, 2020). This expression occurs when students feel regulated and safe and are provided multiple means to respond to learning (Fritzgerald, 2020).

Wilbur (2016) describes common challenges for EL students who come to school with past trauma experience as “irregular attendance, what seemed to be flashbacks, cognitive issues, and problems interacting with others” (p. 2), to be addressed and improved by implementing a culture of inclusivity. Wilbur (2016) suggests that classroom curriculum and academic goals must be associated with the real-world circumstances that students experience. Although not all immigrants who have experienced trauma are the same, connections with a student, it increases the opportunities for immigrants to share their previous experiences, thereby preventing further stress and trauma responses (Wilbur, 2016).

Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2020) conducted a study to further explain immigrant students’ unique needs and how the challenges of these youth can be alleviated by promoting inclusion in a new educational system. Researchers specifically looked at teachers’ background and prior cultural knowledge as well as their basic understanding of Black immigrant students and how those perspectives affect classroom lessons aimed to the academic success of immigrant students. Participants included 25 teachers who self-identified as follows: 13 White, five African Americans, three Hispanics, two Asian, and two biracial. Participant youth included 20 Black immigrants from Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Jamaica, Bahama, Haiti, and Trinidad, who arrived at the U.S. as children.
Qualitative data was gathered from focus group interviews. The study’s findings supported previous research that immigrant students face unique challenges in their way to achievement to success in school. Researchers found that the greatest benefit for students comprised of support from parents and family, which facilitated in their success in a new school system (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). Students reported the ability to adjust to school based on support. Students mentioned mentoring from school counselors and support from parents, community support, and educational resources, provided additional support (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020).

Researchers reported teachers understood the importance of students’ cultural backgrounds but were not provided with the training to include or promote cultural backgrounds in meaningful classroom discussions (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). In addition, qualitative results indicated teachers did not feel prepared to use the best pedagogical strategies when teaching immigrant youth, to address the life experiences of these youth, and utilize instructional strategies to motivate their learning needs (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). Student participants reported that their teachers lacked the cultural knowledge to motivate academic need and social inclusion in the classroom consistent with the theoretical framework of this study, which students learn through social interactions and dialogue. Teachers lead this dialogue and set the tone for the classroom environment. Trauma-informed practice for immigrant students should include social and psychological safety in the classroom (Langley et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings 2009; Schmidt et al., 2019; Steele & Malchiodi, 2012). Immigrants not only bring the connection between trauma, culture, and family but also ongoing events and experiences into the classroom (Droz’dek, 2015). Therefore, focus should be on safety and techniques that do not trigger or re-expose language learners to past trauma (Miller et al., 2019).
Motivation

Motivation is a foundational prerequisite for learning (Gottfried & Gottfried, 2009). Empirical evidence has shown that motivation is a strong predictor of school achievement and overall school success (Hodis et al., 2011; Stroet et al., 2016; Spinath et al., 2006; Steinmayr & Spinath, 2009; Wigfield & Cambria, 2010), school dropout and persistence in learning over time (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). Recent evidence-based attention has been given to the factors that influence academic motivation in ethnic minority students (Isik et al., 2018). Research has supported the idea that minority students have a higher level of extrinsic motivation whereas the ethnic majority group students displayed intrinsic motivation at higher levels (Martin, 2012).

The concept of motivation has characteristically been categorized into two forms: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the result of an interest in the subject or the activity the student engaged (Isik et al., 2008). The student is rewarded by the pleasure in learning or the activity itself. For example, an elementary student with high intrinsic motivation would be motivated by participating in a classroom science experiment. The intrinsically motivated student is motivated by engaging and collaborating with others and thus, gaining academic information through dialogue. Extrinsic motivation is the result of an external reward or punishment as a key factor that influences a student’s wishes to learn or engage in the activity (Isik et al., 2008). A student in the same classroom in the same science experiment as described previously, but with high extrinsic motivation is motivated by praise for a job well done. The students are motivated to continue to work and engage upon the receipt of praise from their teacher, peer, or parent. This same student may be motivated by good grades or by fear of receiving a bad grade.
As stated before, motivation is categorized into motivation that is internally regulated through intrinsic interest by valuing the given task, in contrast to motivation, which is externally regulated through feelings of reward, pressure, or consequence (Stroet et al., 2016). The types of motivation are derived from both the social and cognitive psychology fields of theory. In social psychology, Harmer (1991) described the two major types of motivation as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and closely connected them to students’ effort, desire and, positive attitudes toward learning. Gottfried and Gottfried, (2009) define academic motivation as “enjoyment of school learning characterized by a mastery orientation; curiosity; persistence; task-endogeny; and the learning of challenging, difficult, and novel tasks” (p. 525).

Social motivational theorists believe students’ academic motivation to achieve goals and tasks is strongly influenced by social and interpersonal interactions (Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998). The notion that students’ academic motivation interacts and is highly linked to social motivation, supports the ideas surrounding social constructivist views. “Academic motivation and achievement represent socially derived constructs that cannot be studied without the context of culture” (Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998, p. 161).

In social constructivist theory, the importance of promoting internal regulation of internal motivation in students is emphasized in two main ways (Greeno et al., 1996). First, students should regard their learning as their responsibility instead of the responsibility of someone else. This concept follows the notion that students can internally regulate their motivation (Greeno et al., 1996). Second, learning occurs through the act of constructing knowledge. Academic motivation, therefore, extends beyond a student’s individual goals and interests. It encompasses the surrounding concerns of the culture and social network (teachers, peers, friends, or family). Students align their goals and fulfill achievements in school as a direct relationship to their
alignment with the classroom and neighborhood motivational and behavioral norms (Greeno et al., 1996). Successful students pursue academic goals and social goals valued by others in their circle of support (Wentzel, 1989).

Stroet et al. (2016) conducted a study evaluating the constructs that comprise internally regulated motivation. The study included examining how performance-avoidance can negatively affect students’ intrinsic motivation and academic achievement. Performance avoidance describes “the avoidance of situations where students fear that others will notice their shortcomings” (Stroet et al., 2006, p. 2). In total, 489 students, who attended participated from classroom types classified as ‘social constructivist’, ‘traditional’, ‘combined’, or ‘unknown’. A questionnaire was administered to all students, who were currently enrolled at a Dutch secondary school that assessed the areas of math and proficiency in native language. Participants answered based on their general level of motivation by the range a between completely disagree and completely agree. Data indicated meaningful differences for intrinsic motivation indicating students’ levels of intrinsic motivation were higher for student attending social constructivist and were the lower for students attending in combined schools (Stroet et al., 2016).

**Motivation and Immigrant Students**

Overrepresentation of minority students and nonnatives such as immigrants and refugees in lower track and special education programs has attracted the attention of a larger audience (Isik et al., 2018). Ethnic minority students are more likely to drop out of high school-Native (25.8%) Asian (14.88%) Black (24.7%), White (13.7%) and are underrepresented in higher education - American Indian or Alaska Native (30.8%), Asian (71.3%) Black (35.3%) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (36.4%) and White (55%) (American Council of Education,
In addition, minority students have lower test scores, are two and a half times likely to fail exams, and have late or missing work (Stevens et al., 2011; Swail, 2003; Woolf et al., 2011).

Recent evidence-based attention has been directed to ethnic minority students and the factors that influence their academic motivation (Isik et al., 2018). which may address the underrepresentation in higher education and lower performance in schools. Motivation has been shown to affect academic performance and to have positive associations between minority students’ academic performance and learning (Isik et al., 2018). Academic motivation is tied to interest and engagement. Engagement and interest provide a student with the motivation to learn (Murayama & Elliot, 2009). Motivation is derived from an individual’s interest in the task or in the value of the content. For students, motivation is critical to sustain students’ engagement in learning and student-driven goal setting (Renninger & Hidi, 2016). Educational reforms from a social constructivist framework have been aiming to put meaningful engagement for all students at the forefront (Lea et al., 2003; Oostdam et al., 2006).

Research has supported the idea that minority students have a higher level of extrinsic motivation while the ethnic majority group students displayed intrinsic motivation at higher levels (Martin, 2012). Correlational and experimental research studies with non-minority students have established that motivation, intrinsic interests, and task orientation are boosted if students believe there is a direct link between their current schoolwork and their goals (Lens et al., 2001; Husman, & Shell, 2008). Additionally, the impact of motivation through internal regulation fosters better study skills and learning habits, improving school performance (Lens et al., 2001).

One key study aimed to further explain the academic challenges of immigrant and refugee students. Suárez-Orozco et al., (2009) conducted the Longitudinal Immigration Students
Adaption study (LISA) designed to identify projected immigrant academic success. This five-year mixed methods study included eighth and ninth grade students who immigrated from China, Haiti, Mexico, Central America, and the Dominican Republic. Students and parents were interviewed throughout the study. Student interviews were administered using Likert, fill-in-the blank and open-ended questions. Results indicated 25% of student participants were high achievers during the entire five years of the study (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). Results also indicated improvement in the performance of 11% of the student participants. This was defined as students who overcame the initial stress of being a newcomer through community support and mentors (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). The academic performance of the remaining 64% of participants declined. Researchers indicated participants whose performance declined were more likely to attend schools with common issues associated with poorly funded or low-quality schools (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). These schools did not provide adequate access to English language support, instructional support, social interaction or involvement, or connection between family and school. The long-term outcome for this group of participants was a drop in grade point average (GPA) or withdrawal from school to work full-time to help support their family financially (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009).

The negative impact of current life stressors, such as discrimination and racial profiling, can be counteracted by experiences perceived positively at school and positive attitude (Yahirun et al., 2015). Identification with a student’s ethnic group within a social setting can serve as the buffer for these stressors and negative experiences. Ethnic identity represents “the extent to which adolescents feel close to their ethnic background and believe that their ethnicity is an integral part of their larger identity” (Yahirun et al., 2015, p. 132). Several studies have shown that ethnic identification with their ethnic background is correlated with a higher level of
motivation for academic success in adolescents (Baolin Qin, 2009; Chavous et al., 2003; Yahirun et al., 2015; Newton Moses, 2018). Chavous et al. (2003) for example, reported a link between greater enrollment in college to stronger ethnic identity and higher motivation.

Empirical backing for motivation as a key influence to support immigrant academic success was provided by Yahirun et al. (2015). In this study, researchers evaluated educational values and beliefs that were identified as academically motivating to 557 Latino adolescents. Participants comprised 318 Latino youth in Latino Los Angeles community, contrasted with 239 participants from an emerging Latino North Carolina community. Students’ academic motivations: importance, intrinsic value of education, future value, and usefulness, were surveyed. Social acceptance was measured by daily self-reports on school experiences, such as getting along with adults at school.

Researchers found academic motivation was higher among the emerging population of immigrant youth, despite the occurrence of discrimination. Researchers determined there was a significant negative association between the perceived likelihood of discrimination and academic motivation [bs −.03 to −.04] (Yahirun et al., 2015). Additionally, greater academic motivation was associated with positive school climate, encouragement by educational staff, positive experiences at school, and positive ethnic encounter of any kind. Results indicated without discriminating experiences, academic motivation would have been even higher for students in North Carolina. When social acceptance variables were factored in, the perceived likelihood of discrimination substantially decreased for foreign-born status coefficients. The high academic motivations of North Carolinian youth reflected those positive school experiences.

Researchers noted that even though the youth had experienced discrimination in multiple settings, the positive experiences and encouragement, countered the negative experiences and
created a reportedly positive school culture (Yahirun et al., 2015). These results support previous research on student motivation which highlights that social acceptance, measured based on school climate, affects academic achievement. This study also provides support for the relationship between increasing academic motivations through social connections and endorsing immigrant students’ strong academic values and beliefs (Nanda et al., 2020).

Newton Moses (2018) highlighted the association between immigrants’ ethnic identification, social connections, and academic motivation. This phenomenological study sought to analyze the perception of Black Caribbean immigrant graduates early socialization experiences and how these perceptions influenced their motivation to succeed academically. Qualitative data was collected from 15 semi-structured, personal interviews. The results revealed that how cultural awareness, early peer interactions, intrinsic motivation, academic readiness, family support, the grit mindset and community resources molded these Caribbean immigrant students desire to build academic success. The consensus among participants was strong self-confidence despite hardships and discrimination. Results also indicated that extrinsic motivators such as high school academic success or college GPA did not increase participants’ intrinsic motivation. Participants reported motivation as a function of social influences such as family, community, and educator. Participants elaborated to state that multiple teachers guided them through their academic journey, while their community contributed to their individual feelings of skill and extended family provided accountability and support (Newton Moses, 2018).

Students tend to assign their failure to reasons pertaining to effort, task-associated difficulties, or teachers’ instruction (Rowell & Hong, 2013). Low achievers attribute success to chance or the difficulty of the task and often believe they have little control over their success (Rowell & Hong, 2013). Reinforcing the feeling of community and ethnic identity and
supporting students feel a sense of accomplishment, along with helping students to understand their efforts directly lead to achievement, rather than chance, will improve students’ performance (Dweck, 2002).

Accordingly, Phalet et al. (2006) found achievement motivation in Turkish youth, which connects family allegiance and high academic expectations of achievement. Furthermore, cross-cultural correlational models show the strong connections between performance and family-related support of achievement for each family member (Phalet et al., 2004). These findings demonstrate cross-cultural support for the collectivist achievement perspective in Asian cultures, as noticeably distinct from the individualistic achievement motivation in Western cultures (Geva & Wiener, 2014). The findings also show closely bonded minority families with future motivated thinking can support their children’s future success despite limited opportunities (Phalet et al., 2004). Phalet et al. (2004) describe the complex polarity between minority parents’ educational expectations for their children and the cultural disjointedness with the school system by specifying, “…family investment may effectively support school achievement in spite of cultural discontinuity, when shared cultural values and beliefs within minority families and communities elevate the future benefits of schooling” (p. 72). Cultural congruence and cooperative learning in the classroom along with educational practices that align with immigrant and refugee students shared cultural values, promote motivation and sustained achievement (Phalet et al., 2004).

In alignment with the sociocultural theory, to improve academic motivation, school counselors and teachers may help facilitate relational engagement and connections with peers and staff (Deci & Ryan, 2000) by creating opportunities for conversations, promoting cooperative teamwork, and providing multiple ways for peers to participate and interact with their classmates in a variety of academic and social activities (Rowell & Hong, 2013) Peer-to-
peer support programs are often successful in providing services such as tutoring and mentoring in a friendly and non-intimidating format (McCombs & Miller, 2007; Wentzel, 2002). Peer programs build key relationships to address immigrant students’ motivational beliefs. Before addressing the perception of the importance of task completion, perseverance, and advancement, educators should determine how immigrant students perceive their schooling to identify students’ motivational beliefs (Rowell & Hong, 2013).

**Stress**

Stress is a natural response to events that an individual feels are demanding or labor-intensive (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2021). Everyone experiences stress (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2021) which can be a function of survival (Uhnerik, 2017; Levers, 2012). Stress can affect your health physically, mentally, and spiritually (Schupp, 2015). Stress has been documented to have an impact on health outcomes, especially for those who migrate during childhood or adolescence (Arévalo et al., 2015). Carrion et al. (2007) theorized chronic exposure to stress during childhood would decrease hippocampal volume. Participants included children between the ages seven to 13 with a history of multiple traumatic experiences. In the study, an episode of trauma exposure was defined by Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V) criterion A1, “the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others” (American Psychological Association, 2013). The included TEs were witnessing violence, physical and/or sexual abuse/neglect, emotional abuse, and loss. Researchers administered the CAPS-CA to assess criteria for PTSD. MRI data was collected to examine changes in hippocampal volumes and participants’ PTSD symptoms (Carrion et al., 2007). Spearman
correlations indicated that the acuteness of PTSD symptoms (traumatic event exposure) was significantly negatively correlated with change in hippocampal volume. This significant result supports an association between stress, trauma, and brain changes which begin early in a child’s life (Carrion et al., 2007).

**Stress and Immigrant Students**

The challenges of cultural adaption, resettlement in a new community, and disruption of their education system often result in high levels of stress to an already vulnerable immigrant population (Wickham, 2016). In addition to the stress of adapting to the U.S. school system, many immigrants, and migrant children, particularly those with no English language skills and little history of education, face discrimination and experience stereotyping (Wickham, 2016). Immigrant families and their children must fight against prejudice based on their status, ethnicity, religion, food, traditions, and clothing (American Psychological Association, 2013; Society for Research in Children Development, 2018; Rosen, 2020).

Psychiatrists specializing in trauma and English learners, recognize immigrant and refugee children as a complex group with past and current experiences of poor health, mistrust, hyper arousal, trouble focusing, complex stress disorders (Schmidt et al., 2019). Complexity of past trauma along with current stress affect immigrant and migrant students’ cognitive, emotional, and social development, thereby suggesting a strong need for the educational environment set up to address their different backgrounds, cultural characteristics, motivations. Experiences of post-migration discrimination, poverty, and discord intensify the risk of triggering an immigrant’s migration trauma, whereas social support and family bonds mitigate this risk (Perreira, & Ornelas, 2013).
Wickham (2016) explored the relationship between stressor in the family: separation, acculturative conflict, and other occurrences, which impact academic achievement for immigrant adolescents. Participants were recent immigrants to the United States arrived from 64 native countries before entering high school. Quantitative online, self-report questionnaires, achievement data from official school records, and qualitative data through follow-up interviews were collected. The predictor data collected included achievement, student-reported and teacher-reported externalizing symptoms, family stressor and life events, which included being separated from their families (Wickham, 2016). The 66 interviewed participants described stressful experiences surrounding the acculturation process as well as migration separation and other migration stress. Researchers describe several subthemes which “…underscore the complexity of each family stressor, the emotional toll for newcomer youth, and the unique ways that newcomers are effected by nuanced and overlapping family stressors” (Wickham, 2016, p.175).

Family stressors manifest in a variety of ways for immigrants. Stressors may begin from the moment that families first begin to discuss moving through the migration process. This gets more complicated during the post-migration period, with additional stressors (Adelman & Taylor, 2015). The migrating process includes how children will reach their new home. Families must decide to travel by car, plane, or by boat or whether children would travel with parents or another family member, whether they would be smuggled into the country, and whether they go through additional adversities, such as detention, assault, or lack of food (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). Post-migration refers to the “settlement experiences of children; the process of navigating life in a new country and the realization of changes in family economic situations, dynamics, and social roles” (Adelman & Taylor, 2015, p.323).

To further support stress as a moderator for trauma resiliency and the subsequent impact on motivation, Suliman et al. (2009) hypothesized that trauma exposure would be correlated to
an increase of symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Participants included 1,140 tenth grade South African adolescents with past childhood abuse who were asked to compare TE with everyday stressful life occurrences. Participants were administered The Life Events Questionnaire assessing stressful life events (Suliman et al., 2009). The adolescents also completed The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, a self-report inventory on childhood abuse and neglect and The Trauma Checklist and The Child PTSD Checklist (Suliman et al., 2009). Suliman et al. (2009) reported that the adolescents with more than one past traumatic event reported more PTSD and depression symptoms compared to adolescents who had one traumatic experience. A cumulative effect was shown through post hoc tests (Suliman et al., 2009). Consequently, an increase in the number of trauma events was associated with an increase in depression and PTSD symptoms \[F (1,912) = 81.74, P > .001\]. This supports the idea that that recurrent trauma increases the risk of psychiatric disease (Suliman et al., 2009). This study further shows support for the impacts of preexisting trauma on children and adolescents exposed to new stress or trauma. New stressors may create a cumulative effect and responses are generated by complex trauma. This is substantiated by the findings of the study conducted by Schock et al. (2016) that highlighted the concept that PTSD symptoms increased directly after a new trauma or stressful life event occurred.

The impact of current or new stress on pre-existing trauma in refugees or immigrants presents itself in multiple forms of stress in the life of a student. The pressure of coping with a second or third language and a new culture, racism, discrimination, school, and community discord makes immigrant students vulnerable to learning struggles and emotional and behavioral problems (Adelman & Taylor, 2015). Additional attributing factors to immigrant stress include intergenerational conflict as children respond to parental and family norms. Stress increases as
youth begin to identify with peer culture at school (Baolian Qin, 2009). Immigrant students face ongoing and evolving stress as “…they traverse multiple cultural worlds and the often-conflicted expectations they face in daily life. Many are torn between the attachment to their parents’ culture, and aspirations to join the American mainstream culture” (Baolian Qin, 2009, p. 37).

In addition to migration stressors, the acculturation process is stressful for immigrant students. Motivation and aspirations for upward mobility may be linked to value from education or school achievement. Positive attitude for academics leads to higher levels of motivation and learning in ethnic minority students (Andriessen et al., 2006). Additionally, family support and attitudes are reflected in the experiences of immigrant students’ parents and grandparents, with schools, cultural and religious values, and the reasons for leaving their native countries (Andriessen et al., 2006). When parents expressed interest in helping their children, students were more likely to show success. When parents reported negative experiences, students’ motivation was negatively affected (Alonso-Tapia & Simón, 2012). “Immigrant parents and other family members bring varying understanding and attitudes about schooling and about how to interact with school staff” (Adelman & Taylor, 2015, p.328). These variations in past experiences lead to varied home involvement and engagement with the school and the new culture. Furthermore, if the students learn to adapt and cope in the new culture and neighborhood faster than their parents, they may have to take on additional roles and adult jobs in their families, such as language translators, adds to stress and role friction. (Adelman & Taylor, 2015).

Immigrant students’ stress is intensified by family members’ inability to understand and relate to the new school system (Baolin Qin, 2009). A family’s attitude and ability to interact with school staff can greatly affect a student’s ability to learn and cope with their new environment (Adelman & Taylor, 2015). While it is often easier for students to adapt faster, they
may find themselves playing the roles of mediator or translator during interactions between school representatives and parent.

Carreon et al. (2005) found that a migrant parent’s attitude toward the new school had a significant impact on home involvement and engagement. This may be reflected through a parent’s experience with school, the strength of their cultural values and religious convictions, and the reasons they left their home country (Carreon et al., 2005). Correspondingly, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2009) determined that academic outcomes were significantly mediated by supportive relationships in which immigrant youth. This is due in part, to parents’ experience in school, cultural values, religious beliefs, and the reasons they left their native countries. The burden passed on to a child or immigrant youth to connect their family to a new school culture can add new stressors and role conflict in an already stressful time. For undocumented immigrant families, stress is increased and often exponential (Capps et al., 2007).

According to the American Immigration Council (2014), almost half of unauthorized immigrants live with children under the age of 18. Putting children in the middle of raids and other immigration enforcement activities, which separate them from their family, comprise traumatic actions, which can cause “…immediate safety, economic security, well-being, and long-term development” (American Immigration Council, 2014, p.1). These stressors directly impact immigrant student motivation and school success (Perreira, & Ornelas, 2013).

In addition to migration stressors, the acculturation process stresses immigrant students (Perreira, & Ornelas, 2013). To counteract the current stress experienced by an immigrant student, teachers and educators can help create a secure and stable classroom culture for a safe and brave place against disorder, uncertainty, and chaos, establishing routine and predictability and diminishing the traumatic effects (Şeker & Aslan, 2015). Some researchers have addressed
the stress response of minority students by examining the regulatory processes and teacher-student relationships. Brunzell et al. (2016) addressed the dysregulated stress response and interrupted attachment of minority students by analyzing student-teacher relationships. The study examined teachers with high percentages of EL minority and low SES students and investigated in what way teachers utilized prior knowledge of regulation in the classroom. Their research supported evidence for improving a minority student’s regulatory abilities and increasing a teachers’ prior knowledge of management skills. Furthermore, this study shows the importance of current stressor identification with minority students and educator support. The challenges of learning can be addressed by simply asking students what works for them and what factors help them engage a relationship and increase regulatory skills (Brunzell et al., 2016).

Managing stress is a coping strategy students begin to learn at the upper elementary age (Humphrey, 1993). Students at this age begin to practice identifying their emotions and strategies to cope when they feel dysregulated or stressed (Kizkapan et al., 2018). Self-regulation is a fundamental principle of social cognitive theory (Pintrich, 2005). Students who use self-regulation strategies are self-aware of their thoughts and emotions and the ability to reach individual goals by controlling their own learning (Zimmerman, 2000). It is uncertain how immigrant students perceive current level of stress that affects motivation in school, especially when past trauma is a variable. The sociocultural theory provides a framework for the current study to assess the relationship between past trauma of immigrant students and motivation in school as well as how current stress moderates this association. In the application of academic motivation to immigrant students with trauma experiences, it is expected the independent variable of trauma will influence the dependent variable of academic motivation, given biological trauma response principles and the sociocultural theory supports collaborative and
cooperative dialogue as key factors to learning. In addition, it is expected immigrant students’ current stress is a moderating variable for students’ motivation in the classroom.

**Summary**

The continued increasing number of immigrant families paired with the troubling statistics related to trauma and academic and social successes of immigrant and migrant students have amplified the need for more research regarding academic success support at an early age (Andriessen et al., 2006; Hart, 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009; Adelman & Taylor, 2015). Some researchers have begun to focus on motivation as a key factor in immigrant student academic success in relation to immigrant culture by recognizing ethnic identities, and the cultural awareness of educators (Newton Moses, 2018; Perreira, & Ornelas, 2013; Chavous et. al., 2003). While schools provide an excellent setting for intervention services in the case of immigrant youth, to date few studies have been conducted on past trauma exposure in elementary immigrant students, especially from their unique perspective. Schools are vital settings for the support and intervention where trauma-informed educators can provide on-site access (Adelman & Taylor 1999; Huang et al., 2005; Zacarian et al., 2017). Mandatory attendance provides access to observations of large groups of students and behavior across a variety of settings. In terms of immigrant and ESL students, public schools are educationally connected to provide “intervention in a safe, familiar setting, with natural access to families” (Beehler et al, 2012, p. 164). Collaborating with students and teachers is an effective strategy to address student stress and trauma processing and thereby, developing more comprehensive and more beneficial trauma-focused supports.

This study examined the relationship between immigrant student trauma, academic motivation, and current stress at the elementary school level. This age has not yet been fully
researched in the literature, especially from a student’s perspective. Therefore, the current study along with review of previous research begins to fill this gap. As the research literature suggests, current stress is complex and nuanced, it is important to provide insight from younger students of immigrant status (Zacarian et al., 2017).

Vygotsky’s (1962) social learning theory of the learning process will provide the theoretical framework on which this study is built. Gibbons (2003) helps to conceptualize this framework of learning through the context of social and cultural interactions and collaborations at school. Understanding trauma, social learning, and cultural communication in education and how academic motivation can be directly affected by current stress, may foster academic and overall student success.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The intent of this study was to explore the possible relationship between past trauma of immigrant elementary students and academic motivation when moderated by current stress. From a sociocultural theory perspective, ethnic and culture identity affects academic motivation (Gibbons, 2003; Schmidt et al., 2019; Vygotsky, 1978). Understanding an immigrant students’ motivation and perceived stress level will better support and inform educators, especially when working with trauma-impacted immigrant students. For this correlational research project, a purposeful convenience sample of students was studied within the defined bounds of the immigrant student population at the elementary level. This chapter presents details of the study’s research design, research questions, null hypotheses, participants and setting, instrumentation and procedures, and data analysis.

Research Design

This nonexperimental, quantitative study utilized a correlational research design to study relationships among variables within a sample of elementary immigrant students (Heppner, 2004). A correlational design was used to structure three research questions. Correlational research refers to studies in which the purpose is to determine the direction and the strength of relationships between variables using correlational statistics (Jackson, 2016). A relationship is determined when changes in one variable are predictable by changes in another variable (Rovai et al., 2013; Knight & Tetrault, 2017). Correlational studies are often used in education and the social science studies as independent variable(s) being investigated are often not manipulated (Curtis et al., 2016). In the current study, the independent variable of trauma was not manipulated.
A correlational research design was used by Zetino et al. (2020) in their study on ACEs, resilience, and emotional problems of Latinx immigrant youth. Researchers used a correlational design to determine conditional effects, which indicated a buffering effect between ACEs and emotional problems and was non-significant at high levels of resilience (Zetino et al., 2020). The current study will utilize Pearson product-moment correlation to determine if a relationship exists between immigrant trauma and motivation and if there is a relationship between immigrant trauma, motivation, and stress (Warner, 2013). In this study, past trauma was defined by a score on the CCTI, which measures exposure to traumatic events. Motivation was defined by a score on the motivation subscales of the MSLQ, which assess intrinsic, extrinsic, task value, and control of learning beliefs. Current stress was defined by a score on the PSS-C, which measures students’ beliefs about feelings of stress during the current week of the administration of the survey.

Correlational research is interested in the possible relationships between two or more variables in the same population or between the same variables in two populations (Jackson, 2016). In education, a considerable part of research is exploring the relationship among variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). This design was used by Cleary et al. (2018), who sought to assess trauma experiences among immigrant Latino youth who had experienced continuous trauma exposures during different stages of their migration. In this study, trauma exposure was measured by CCTI as the independent variable. Motivation, was measured by a score on the MSLQ and current stress, was measured by a score on the PSS-C, were the dependent variables. Correlational research results can be used to determine relationships and prevalence among variables, and to propose events from current knowledge (Curtis et al., 2016). In the current
study, findings may help support future educational planning and support for immigrant students with trauma in the public-school setting.

**Research Questions**

Given the purpose of the current study, the primary research questions were:

**RQ1:** Is there a significant relationship between stress, motivation, and trauma for third-fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students?

**RQ2:** Is there a significant relationship between trauma as shown by the CCTI and student motivation, as measured by MSLQ for third- fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students?

**Hypotheses**

**H₀₁:** There will be no statistically significant correlation between stress, motivation, and trauma scores for third- fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students.

**H₁₁:** Current stress, as measured by PSS-C will indirectly affect the relationship between trauma and motivation in third- fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students through mediation.

**H₀₂:** There will be no statistically significant correlation between trauma as shown by CCTI scores and student motivation, as measured by MSLQ scores for third-fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students.

**H₁₂:** Trauma, as shown by CCTI scores, will correlate to motivation as shown by MSLQ scores for third- fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students.

**Participants and Setting**

Participants for this study were selected from a convenience sample of immigrant students recruited through the school registration process from two elementary schools located in a large suburban school district in Pacific Northwest Washington. The
participating school district is the second-largest district in the state with 31,000 students in 2019. Elementary School #1 student enrollment includes Hispanic/Latino 16.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native 0.0% Asian 36.4%, Black/African American 2.9%, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander 0.2%, White 31.6% and two or more races 10.6%. Elementary School #2 includes Hispanic/Latino 4.1%, Other Pacific Islander, 0.0% American Indian/Alaskan Native 0.5%, Asian 65.4% Black/African American 0.9%, White 24.1% and two or more races 4.9%. This district was chosen for the current study recruitment site due to the number of English Learners (EL) and immigrant families.

The population for this study was a sample of 60 students grades 3 through five. All students currently enrolled in the schools were invited to participate. It was required that students or their parent or guardians self-identified as a newcomer, immigrant (1st or 2nd generation), or refugee. Participation in the study was voluntary and parent, or guardian permission as well as child assent was required. All permission forms and communication were translated into the family’s home language by a professional translator.

The data set came from convenience sampling, a type of sampling in research that is often used in psychology, education, and the social sciences and refers to a sampling that is not selected randomly from the population (Jackson, 2016). The participants were readily available and maximized in number by using this method (Warner, 2013).

**Instrumentation**

This project implemented a quantitative survey research design. Participants’ child(ren) completed online surveys at the school sites. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, Covid-19 public school restrictions were being implemented, such as social distancing and masking. This model changed from a fully remote learning model to a hybrid (in-person and remote) model of
classroom learning in a short time span. The learning model changed multiple times during the school year due to the school district’s Covid-19 protocols. In addition, Covid-19 impacted student attendance as well as the school and classroom schedules. Due to the learning model changes, students have maintained access to internet and computers at home and school.

To provide equal access for students who wished to participate and to provide an opportunity for participants to utilize accessible technology, online surveys were used to collect participant responses. Online surveys maximized the number of participants and responses as well as increased access for multi-cultural and multi-lingual participants (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). Due to the pandemic, students participated in a remote learning model during the 2020-2021 school year and students were provided computers, internet access, and training on multiple internet platforms All participants completed surveys online at the school site due to 100% in-person learning model. The use of survey research data is appropriate to explore the relationship between variables and the effects of variables within a specific population (Heppner et al., 2016). This research study sought to better understand the relationship between trauma, immigrant status, academic motivation, and how current stress effects this relationship. Survey research methods sought to provide clarification for future research with the goal of developing and testing new interventions. Permission was granted for use of all three instruments (See Appendices A, B, C).

The following measures were be administered to quantify the constructs used in the study:

**Cameron Complex Trauma Interview (CCTI)**

Participants’ exposure to trauma was measured using the CCTI (King et al., 2017). The CCTI consists of 10 items measuring nine areas of traumatic exposure and 21 items measuring
trauma symptomatology for children ages five to 11. In part one, participants select experiences in nine areas of traumatic exposure with the following areas including community violence, medical trauma, natural disasters, neglect, war zone/prison, physical abuse, and traumatic loss. In part two, using a 4-point Likert scale, participants rate Cameron’s, the gender-neutral character’s, level of distress, with the following areas, including attachment, affect regulation, dissociation, behavioral regulation, cognition, and self-concept. The scale demonstrates moderate internal consistency as examined by computing Cronbach’s coefficient alpha revealing an $\alpha = .632$, consistent with evidence that trauma exposures are moderately correlated (Frueh et al., 2012). The symptomatology subscale was found to be highly reliable with an $\alpha = .931$. Pearson correlations were performed comparing the trauma history and trauma symptoms sections of the CCTI and PTSD-RI, which yielded a positive and significant correlation with $r = .810$ (King et al., 2017). For the purposes of this study, part one was administered to determine if students had trauma exposure (see Appendix D).

**The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)**

The MSLQ was administered to collect data about participants’ academic motivation. The MSLQ is a self-report questionnaire developed to measure the types of learning strategies and academic motivation (Duncan et al., 2015). It consists of 15 subscales: six within the motivation section and nine within the learning strategy section. The motivation section consists of 31 items that assess students’ goals and value beliefs to succeed in an academic setting. The 15 different scales on the MSLQ were developed to be used together or as separate scales to best fit the need of the researcher (Duncan et al., 2015). For this study, participants were administered the intrinsic goal orientation subscale, the extrinsic goal orientation subscale, task value, and the control of learning beliefs subscales, a total of 14 questions (see Appendix E). The MSLQ is
based on the cognitive view of motivation (Duncan et al., 2015). Research suggests that students who believe they are capable, use more cognitive strategies, show more perseverance, and use a higher level of thinking than students who lack confidence in their performance of a task (Fincham & Cain, 1986; Paris & Oka, 1986). Student motivation or goal of the task is thought to be associated to their value in achieving it (Duncan et al., 2015). Research suggests this motivational component is conceptualized by the students’ reason for completing a task such as learning vs. performance and intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation (Duncan et al., 2015). The MSLQ is a measurement instrument for researchers to examine the nature of student motivation and learning strategy use, and for instructors and students to assess students’ motivation and study skills in class (Duncan et al., 2015).

The MSLQ ‘s social-cognitive theoretical framework lends well with immigrant students and their experiences in new classrooms and changing environments (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005). For this study, the motivation subscales were administered. Subscales include intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, and control of learning beliefs. Participants were asked to answer questions on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all true for me to 7 = very true for me) about school behavior over the past week. A sample question from the intrinsic motivation subscale is, “In a class like this, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things.” A sample question from the extrinsic motivation subscale is, “Getting a good grade in this class is the most satisfying thing for me right now.” A sample question from the control of learning beliefs motivation subscale is, “If I try hard enough, then I will understand the course material.” Overall, the MSLQ has relatively good internal reliability (Gable & Wolfe, 1993). The majority of the Cronbach’s alphas for the individual subscales (9 out of 15) are robust, intrinsic goal orientation α=.74, task value α= .90, and self-
efficacy for learning and performance, $\alpha = .93$ (Pintrich et al., 1993; Duncan et al., 2015). The Cronbach’s alphas for the remainder of the subscales fell below .70.

The Perceived Stress Scale for Children (PSS-C)

The PSS-C instrument is a 14-item screening tool asking participants to indicate their perceptions of stress. This version of the PSS-C was grounded in the literature concerning accessing children’s stress perceptions (White, 2014). The goal of the scale is to provide a short screener for research or clinical use that is easily accessible for children. Each question is answered with four options ranging from never, sometimes, a lot. The tool was designed to assess children’s perception of stress (White, 2014) efficiently and quickly. The 14 questions include a non-scored intro question to teach younger children which of the responses signified “a lot”. Seven questions are in reverse wording and scoring to increase the likelihood of truthful responding (White, 2014). Available in multiple languages, this self-report scale measures the degree to which participants experience psychological stress in the last week. Items were designed to assess feelings of being overwhelmed, feeling out of control of life situations or events at school or at home (White, 2014). A sample question from the survey is, “In the last week, how often did you feel worried about being too busy?” Another sample question is, “In the last week, how often did you feel worried about grades or school?” (see appendix F). Data regarding reliability of all versions of the PSS-C was measured using Cronbach’s alpha and alpha was >.70, considered a minimum measure of internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Cronbach’s alpha of the PSS-C was >.76 studies (Oral, 2017; Özkıdık et al., 2018; White, 2014). The test-retest reliability of the PSS-C met the criterion of >.70 in several studies (Oral, 2017; Özkıdık et al., 2018; White, 2014).

Procedures
Participants were recruited from a convenience sample of third through fifth-grade students who attended one of two elementary schools located in a large suburban school district in Pacific Northwest Washington. After school district and IRB approval (see Appendix G and H) respectively) potential participants were recruited using an email letter sent by school office staff on behalf of the researcher sent to parents or guardians after completion of the school registration process. The potential participant parent received an email message describing the study as an exploration of immigrant students, trauma, and motivation in school and current stress (See Appendix I). ESL teachers and counselors from both schools were consulted in the coordination of participants’ parents and guardians. School administration identified two staff members from each school, who were then trained as survey proctors. Prior to the survey administration, proctors were trained in materials needed, rehearsal of script for survey administration, and given procedures and contact information for support during and after survey administration and guardian communication (See Appendix J). All surveys were translated by professional translators and offered in both English and home languages as part of the proctor script of instructions.

Inclusion criteria for the current study required participants’ parents or guardians to self-report as being an immigrant (1st or 2nd generation) or refugee. This was defined for the purposes of the study, as being born outside of the United States and new to the U.S. school system. Participants will be excluded if they have difficulty participating.

Participants’ parents or guardians interested in participating were directed to complete the informed consent (See Appendix K) attached to a copy of the email recruitment letter (Appendix I). Participants and participant parents and guardians were told that surveys were anonymous and
that no identifying information would be linked to student responses. Participants completed the online surveys at the school site during non-academic time and in a quiet space.

To ensure that families understood the content and procedures, forms were available in two formats (electronic and paper) and in English and native languages. Once informed consent was signed, students were considered participants in the study. Participants and their parents or guardians had the right to discontinue at any time.

**Data Analysis**

As previously mentioned, the dependent variable in the current study was motivation, the independent variable was past trauma, and the moderator was current stress. For this study, the collected data was analyzed using the current version of the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS), a software tool commonly used in educational research to provide a variety of data such as factor analysis, descriptive statistics, frequencies, and bivariate statistics (IBM, 2021).

**Correlational Analysis**

The associations between trauma, motivation, and stress were examined using Pearson $r$ correlation. This measure of regression provided information about the relationship between the variables in the current study. Scores for a correlational analysis typically range from -1.00 to +1.00 (Warner, 2013).

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations may be the most important parts of any research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). For this study, ethical considerations included considerations to the specific population of participants. Ethical considerations for vulnerable populations, such as children, require attention to the possible risk (Andrade, 2020). Participants in this study were immigrant children with
past trauma backgrounds. Due to the vulnerable nature of this sample, several steps were taken to address potential ethical issues. The informed consent required by participants’ parents or guardians (See Appendix K) were offered in families’ home language in paper and electronic formats. Electronic formats of informed consent and online participant surveys had a read aloud option (immersive reader) in participants’ home language. The informed consent included contact information for the researcher who was able to facilitate a translation service. In addition, students completed child assent forms (see Appendix L) prior to survey administration. Child assent forms were also offered in English and in participants’ home language.

Due to the age and immigrant, newcomer or refugee status of the participants proctors administering the online surveys were selected by school administration and trained by the researcher. Proctors were provided with scripts and resources to address technology support, access to a third-party translation service (on-call during survey), and on-site school staff. Survey proctors were able to call a school counselor or ESL teacher to support participants in case of triggers during the survey administration. Survey environment protocols limited stimuli, such as loud noise and distractions, within the small classroom to reduce possible triggers (Rosen, 2020).

This study addresses a deeper understanding of immigrant students with past trauma and how motivation connects academics and culture. In addition, the study explores the impact of current stress on this relationship. By including younger student’s perspectives from a diverse immigrant population this study may add new insights to a growing field of trauma-informed research.
Summary

This study focuses on exploring the relationship between immigrant students with past trauma, motivation, and current stress. Research trends in educational best practices show that there is considerable growth regarding immigrant students (Mcbrien, 2016).

In parallel, trauma-informed school-based interventions derived from evidence-based research are increasing (Cavanaugh, 2016). Schools have begun to recognize the importance the impact of trauma has on students’ ability to cope and to learn. For immigrant students, trauma can be a series of past traumatic experiences and the process of immigration and acculturation as they arrive at their new country (Kaplan et al., 2016; Medley, 2012). It was hypothesized that past trauma will significantly affect the motivation of immigrant students. In addition, it was hypothesized that current stress will moderate motivation in school.

Immigrant elementary students with past trauma experiences and who have parent or guardian permission were included this study. Participants were administered the Cameron Complex Trauma Interview (CCTI), Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), and The Perceived Stress Scale for Children (PSS-C). While motivation has been studied, the factors that influence minority elementary students’ motivation and perceived stress is greatly understudied.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of this quantitative and correlational study. The chapter begins with the descriptive statistics. The results of all inferential statistics, including data screening and assumption testing are presented for each of the null hypotheses. A presentation of Pearson product-moment correlation tests conducted, and a summary of results conclude the chapter.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were obtained on each of the variables. The sample consisted of 60 immigrant (1st or 2nd generation) and newcomer 3rd, 4th, and 5th students from two diverse elementary schools within a large suburban school district located in Pacific Northwest state of Washington. Of the one hundred and one students invited to participate in the study, sixty-one potential participant parents or guardians gave consent. Sixty-one student participants completed the child assent forms and completed all 3 online surveys. One participant was eliminated for indicating zero past trauma experiences on the CCTI survey. Consequently, a total of sixty sets of responses were analyzed. The CCTI measure, is the count of trauma experiences, ranging from 1 to 7 in the analysis sample (M= 2.98, SD = 1.64). The sum of motivation items (14 items from the full MSLQ scale) ranges from 15 to 80 (M = 61.78, SD = 12.01). The measure of stress (PSS-C) ranges from 2 to 28 (M= 13.55, SD = 5.43).
table 1

descriptive statistics for trauma scores, stress, and motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trauma (CCTI)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation (MSLQ)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>61.78</td>
<td>12.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress (PSS-C)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13.55</td>
<td>5.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

results

hypotheses

null hypothesis one

\[ H_0 : \] there will be no statistically significant correlation between stress, motivation, and trauma scores for third- fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students.

assumption testing

since a pearson product-moment correlation was used to test null hypothesis one, data assumption testing was needed. These were the assumptions of no extreme outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution. To test these assumptions, scatterplots were created. The assumptions of outliers, linearity and bivariate normal distribution were analyzed using scatterplots. In a scatterplot, a dot represents a single data point, where X is one variable and Y is the other in the correlation analysis (heppner et al., 2016). With several data points plotted, a visual distribution of the data can be seen. Initial visual examination showed no outliers, otherwise known as extreme scores in the dataset (heppner et al., 2016).

as the scatter plots show, the scatter plot scores are randomly scattered about a horizontal line (see figures 1 and 2). If the points are tightly clustered, trend in the data may be discerned, which indicates a relationship between the two variables. The closer the data points come to forming a straight line when plotted, the stronger the relationship between the two variables. in
contrast, any systematic pattern or clustering of scores is considered a violation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Therefore, the scatterplots show that the assumptions were met.

Figure 1

*Scatterplot for Trauma and Stress*
Null Hypothesis Two

\( H_{02} \): There will be no statistically significant correlation between trauma as shown by CCTI scores and student motivation, as measured by MSLQ scores for third-fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students.

Assumption Testing

Since a Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test null hypothesis two, certain assumption testing is needed. Person’s correlation requires that the assumptions of no bivariate outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution are met. To test these assumptions, a scatterplot was created. The assumptions of linearity and bivariate normal distribution were analyzed using scatterplots. Visual examination showed no outliers in addition, the scatter plot scores are randomly scattered about a horizontal line (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Therefore, the scatterplots show that the assumptions were met (see Figure 3).
Figure 3

Scatterplot for Trauma and Motivation

Pearson Product Correlation

A Pearson product-moment Correlation was conducted to see if there was a relationship between trauma and motivation, trauma and stress, and motivation and stress in a sample of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade immigrant students. The predictor variable was CCTI scores, and the criterion variables were motivation and stress.

For the trauma scores and the motivation scores the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis at the 95% confidence level where \( r(60) = -0.05, p = .68 \). For the trauma score and the stress scores, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis at the 95% confidence level where \( r(60) = .14, p = .30 \). For the motivation and stress scores where \( r(60) = .20, p = .14 \).

There was no statistical relationship between the predictor variable (CCTI scores) and the criterion variables (MSLQ) and (PSS-C). See Tables 2-4 for Pearson product-moment correlation test results.
### Table 2

**Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test**

Correlations for Trauma and Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trauma</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trauma (CCTI)</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation (MSLQ)</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation -0.054</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3

**Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test**

Correlations for Trauma and Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trauma</th>
<th>Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trauma (CCTI)</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
<td>0.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress (PSS-C)</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 0.136</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4

**Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test**

Correlations for Motivation and Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation (MSLQ)</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
<td>0.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress (PSS-C)</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 0.195</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regression Analysis

If the correlations are significant, regression analysis can be conducted, including interaction terms to test for the potential moderator effect of stress on the relationship between trauma and motivation. Unfortunately, since there is no bivariate relationship of trauma, stress and motivation, regression analysis was not conducted.

Summary

The associations between trauma, motivation, and stress were examined using Pearson $r$ correlation showing none of the pairs of correlations between the three measures were significant at 0.05 level. Based on these statistics, the researcher failed to reject the hypothesis and had to accept that there is no statistically significant correlation between stress, motivation, and trauma scores for third- fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students. There is no statistically significant correlation between trauma as shown by CCTI scores and student motivation, as measured by MSLQ scores and PSS-C scores for third- fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Chapter five will discuss the outcomes of the Pearson product-moment correlations and further highlight the results based on the research questions and null hypotheses. The chapter will also include implications of the current study that will add to research surrounding immigrant elementary students. The limitations of the study and recommendations for future research will also be addressed.

Discussion

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there was a relationship between trauma and motivation and current stress for immigrant students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade as measured by CCTI, MSLQ, and PSS-C scores. This study held significance in investigating the possible relationship between trauma and motivation and current stress for immigrant students by highlighting the research gap and possibly providing insight on the impact of sociocultural learning, and the impact of school-site intervention services for future immigrant youth.

This study implemented a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between past trauma, and motivation and stress in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade immigrant students. In this study, participants’ exposure to trauma was assessed using the CCTI, quantifying nine areas of traumatic exposure (King et al., 2017). This measure was designed for children ages 5 to eleven. To measure motivation, MSLQ subscales were administered. Subscales included intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, and control of learning beliefs (Duncan et al., 2015). To measure current stress, participants completed the PSS-C instrument, a 14-item screening tool asking participants to indicate their perceptions of stress (White, 2014).
To investigate whether a relationship existed between past trauma, motivation, and stress of immigrant 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade immigrant students, the researcher based this study around two research questions:

**RQ1:** Is there a significant relationship between stress, motivation, and trauma for third-fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students?

**RQ2:** Is there a significant relationship between trauma as shown by the CCTI and student motivation, as measured by MSLQ for third-fourth- and fifth-grade immigrant students?

For research question one, the null hypothesis stated that there is no relationship between stress, motivation, and trauma for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade immigrant students. To test this hypothesis, a Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted, and data revealed that there was no significant relationship between the variables. For the trauma scores and the motivation scores, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis at the 95% confidence level where \( r(60) = -0.05, p = 0.68 \). For the motivation and stress scores where \( r(60) = 0.20, p = 14 \).

Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected at the 95% confidence interval. Though the results of the cumulative CCTI, MSLQ, and PSS-C were not statistically significant, the subscales showed some additional information. Additional explorations on subscales of stress and motivation were conducted. The reliabilities of the 4 stress (PSS-C) subscales (stressor, emotional, security, busy) are 0.65, 0.39, 0.56, and 0.49 respectively; and the three subscales of motivation (MSLQ) subscales (intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation and control of learning beliefs) are 0.77, 0.70 and 0.53. The correlations between the subscales were examined, while the sum scale motivation items are not correlated to the sum scale of stress or any of its subscales, the sum of motivation items were significantly correlated, as well as two of its
subscales (extrinsic goal orientation and control of learning beliefs) were significantly correlated to one of the subscales of stress (busy) at 0.31 ($p=0.02$), 0.37 ($p=0.01$), and 0.29 ($p=0.03$) respectively. Additionally, the extrinsic subscale of motivation, was significantly correlated to the sum of stress at 0.29 ($p=0.02$).

For the second research question, the null hypothesis stated that there is no statistically significant correlation between trauma as shown by CCTI scores and student motivation, as measured by MSLQ scores for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade immigrant students. For the trauma score and the motivation scores, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis at the 95% confidence level where $r(60) = .14$, $p=.30$.

Despite the findings of this study, based on the review of the previous literature surrounding immigrant students, motivation is affected by the complex experiences of past trauma as well the current experiences of stress (Schmidt et al., 2019). Additionally, numerous studies have found immigrant and migrant students’ cognitive, emotional, and social development, is impacted by the acculturation process, and show educational environments need to address cultural and family needs (Baolian Qin, 2009; Guarnaccia & Lopez 1998; Schmidt et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2019).

In addition, from a social cognitive perspective, there is a link between immigrant students’ past trauma, and collaborative school staff support and motivation (Pintrich, 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). Prior research shows relationships between school interventions based on cultural-based knowledge and collaborative classrooms positively impact student experience in learning (Pumariega & Joshi, 2010; Saakvitne et al., 2010). The sample in this study was taken from a suburban school district population located in Pacific Northwest state of Washington. The two school sites employ robust ESL programs, which include multiple staff members, a school
equity team, a school district equity team, family engagement liaison, and school counselors who work cooperatively across school teams, students, and families.

Although, this study did not indicate significant results, sixty participants out of sixty-one potential participants indicated at least they had experienced at least one past traumatic event. Expanding the sample to other schools may yield more insight into this vulnerable population. The collaborative nature of the staff of the school paired with the cultural awareness of many of the staff members in the study sites, may be reason to further explore factors that contribute to the cultural needs of trauma-affected immigrant students. Several other studies demonstrate the importance of including cultural backgrounds, utilizing family history, and building relationships when applying school interventions for immigrant students, as well as increasing ESL student participation (Cavanaugh, 2016; Fitzgerald, 2020; Jaycox et al., 2002; Levers, 2012; Steele & Malchiodi, 2012).

**Implications**

This study was conducted to determine whether a relationship existed between trauma, motivation and current stress for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade immigrant students provide several implications within the realm of trauma-informed practice for immigrant students, especially at the elementary school level. With trauma-informed practices a priority for many public schools and the US immigrant population increasing (Batalova et al., 2021), it is essential to understand the factors, such as motivation and perceived stress in the role to immigrant student success. Though the results of this study showed no significant relationship between trauma, motivation, and stress, previous literature presented in this study offers support for future research to further examine the relationship between the types of motivation and types of stress for immigrant elementary students (Boekaerts et al., 2006). Extrinsic goal orientation and control of learning
beliefs were significantly correlated to busy, at 0.31 (P=0.02), 0.37 (P=0.01) and 0.29 (P=0.03) respectively. And, extrinsic subscale of motivation, is significantly correlated to the sum of Stress at 0.29 (P=0.02). As stated previously, this relationship between specific subscales may be due to the sample of immigrant students. Further research including a wider range of immigrant students in other Pacific Northwest states would provide additional data to add the existing gap in literature.

**Limitations**

The limitations of this study included several in terms of both internal and external validity. The first limitation within the internal threat to validity was the small sample size. Although the researcher was able to obtain 60 participants within the suggested limits by Creswell (2013), other elementary schools in the district may represent a wider range of immigrant students. A second limitation is that the research study was conducted during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Potential participants were quarantined during scheduled survey dates and need to be rescheduled for a later date. The stress of the Covid-19 global pandemic and the changes in school schedule, may have impacted some of the participants responses.

A third limitation and threat to internal validity was variation in survey administration time and location. To be flexible and inclusive for as many participants as possible, surveys were administered in small groups during non-academic times. Surveys were administered in school small, shared learning spaces and in the counseling office and not in the library as originally planned.

A threat to external validity and limitation to the study, was due to the sample of students which cannot be generalized to the wider population. This sample, although diverse in country of origin, represent a small region in the Pacific Northwest. Many families from this region, move
to the area due to work contracts. This factor may affect motivation scores as well as scores on perceived stress. It would be worth exploring further this immigrant population to learn more about what factors impact their acculturation process. This small sample may have shown some indicators as reflected in the scores on the significant relationship between motivation and stress subscale ‘busy’ 0.31 ($p=0.02$), 0.37 ($p=0.01$) and 0.29 ($p=0.03$). This may be generalizable representation to the regional population of immigrant student, but not of the wider group throughout the nation.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

In this study, the researcher’s goal was to understand the relationship between immigrant trauma, motivation, and stress in elementary students. Upon examining the findings, the implications, the limitations from this study, as well as reviewing past literature, several recommendations for future research may be made.

1. Consider expansion of all schools in the school district, which includes 29 elementary schools to address generalization (Majid, 2018). There is a gap in the literature reflecting acculturation stress and motivation factors for this population.

2. Expanding research sample to include other regions of the Pacific Northwest. This small, understudied sample may be representative of other areas of the country.

3. Research should be conducted during a school year when students are enrolled in a full year of the in-person learning model rather than a time when disrupted by a global pandemic.

4. Demographic data would be helpful to further understand the impact trauma and stress has on immigrant students at the elementary level. Including data on country of
origin, generation immigrant, and years in the United States may help further identify specific needs when supporting immigrants and educators.

Summary

The first goal of this study was to explore the relationship between immigrant student trauma and academic motivation. The second goal was to involve expanding the research on current stress, and how it may indirectly affect academic motivation for immigrant students with a history of trauma.

This nonexperimental, quantitative study utilized a correlational research design to study relationships among variables within a sample of elementary immigrant students (Heppner, 2004). A Pearson product-moment correlation was utilized to determine if a relationship existed between immigrant trauma and motivation and if there is a relationship between immigrant trauma, motivation, and stress (Warner, 2013). In this study, past trauma was defined by a score on the CCTI, motivation was defined by a score on the motivation subscales of the MSLQ, and current stress was defined by a score on the PSS-C. Trauma exposure as measured by CCTI was the independent variable. Motivation, as measured by a score on the MSLQ and current stress, as measured by a score on the PSS-C, were the dependent variables.

The sample consisted of 60 immigrant (1st or 2nd generation) and newcomer 3rd, 4th, and 5th students from two diverse elementary schools within a large suburban school district located in Pacific Northwest Washington State. Of the one hundred and one students invited to participate in the study, sixty-one potential participant parents or guardians gave consent. Sixty-one student participants completed the child assent forms and completed all 3 online surveys. One participant was eliminated for indicating zero past trauma experiences on the CCTI survey. Consequently, a total of sixty sets of responses were analyzed. The trauma (CCTI) measure,
ranged from 1 to 7 in the analysis sample (M= 2.98, SD = 1.64). The sum of motivation (MSLQ) items ranged from 15 to 80 (M = 61.78, SD = 12.01). The measure of stress (PSS-C) ranged from 2 to 28 (M= 13.55, SD = 5.43).

There remains a need to further investigate the key factors of immigrant students’ motivation. Immigrant students’ academic motivation is complicated by traumatic life experiences, which is often affected by stressors such as the acculturation process (Alonso-Tapia & Pardo, 2006). This study, although did not show significant results, was able to highlight the ongoing importance cultural values has as on students’ motivation and learning (Alonso-Tapia & Simón, 2012). Further research may expand the current knowledge about specific trauma and help to improve immigrant students’ motivation and decrease stress beginning at the elementary school age.
References


https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci5040323


https://doi.org/10.4103/IJPSYM.IJPSYM_504_19


Gibbons, P. (2003), Mediating language learning: Teacher interactions with ESL students in a


Simon & Schuster Macmillan.


https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-200209000-00011.


https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html


educators: Relationship-based approaches that support healing and build resilience in young children. Routledge.


https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12050


https://doi.org/10.1023/B:EDPR.0000012345.71645.d4


http://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-019-00701-7


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2010.08.002

Routledge.


Steele, W. & Malchiodi, C. A. (2012). *Trauma-informed practices with children and*
adolescents. Routledge.


http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2008.05.004

doi:10.1080/014119209203442053

Strengthening and improvement of elementary and secondary school. Subchapter III-Language instruction for English learners and immigrant students Title 20 USC §7011


child-traumatic-stress.


counseling. Routledge.

U.S. Census Bureau (2021). Foreign born frequently asked questions. Retrieved from:
https://www.census.gov/topics/population/foreign-born/about/faq.html


10.1371/journal.pone.0226134.


achievement: An interactionist perspective. *Educational Psychology, 81*, 131-142.


Hi Jayme,

Apologies for the delay in my response. You are welcome to use the CCTI. I'd appreciate seeing your final research.

Tool and manual are attached.

Take care,

Jennifer A. King DSW, LISW
(she, her, hers)
Assistant Professor
Co-Director, Center on Trauma and Adversity

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel
School of Applied Social Sciences
Case Western Reserve University
APPENDIX B: SURVEY PERMISSION (MSLQ)

This is the user manual for the MSLQ. The MSLQ is in the public domain, and so you do not need permission to use the instrument. We do ask that you simply cite it appropriately (Pintrich, P.R., Smith, D.A.F., García, T., & McKeachie, W.J. (1991). A manual for the use of the motivated strategies questionnaire (MSLQ).
APPENDIX C: AUTHOR’S PERMISSION LETTER (PSS-C)

Dr. White,
Thank you so much for your quick response. I am excited to find out more about how stress impacts immigrant students at a young age. Thank you again for your response and your willingness to share resources and knowledge base.

Jayme Branagh Landon

From: White, Barbara <bpwhite@unh.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 5:04 PM
To: Branagh Landon, Jayme <jbranaghlandon@liberty.edu>
Subject: [External] PSS-C

[ EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content. ]

Hi Jayme. Thank you for your interest in my work. I am happy to share and pleased that you are doing important work in this area. I hope that the scale helps you gather useful information. I do hold the copyright so no issues. And thank you for the clear statement of use. All good. I included forms in both pdf and word docs in case you need to make translations. A number of people across the globe have made translations but have not posted them for available use. When you are completed, it would be a welcomed gesture I think if you shared in ResearchGate. But no obligation 😊
I also attached a score key…I have been interested in the ratio score of balanced stress/buffers ...conceptually, kids who have high stress but lots of buffers/modulators would be in pretty good shape I think, as would kids with lower stress perception overall. I worry most about the kids who report high stress and no buffers or affordances with which to deal with them. This seems more important than overall stress levels alone. There is also a score scheme that helps with the revers score items. I hope you find this useful. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out.
Best, Barb

Barbara Prudhomme White, PhD, OTR/L (she, her, hers)
Professor, College of Health and Human Services
Faculty Fellow, Provost’s Office
UNH Accreditation Liaison Officer, NECHE
University of NH,

UNH OT Celebrating 75 years in 2020
DOING. CREATING. INSPIRING

University of New Hampshire
APPENDIX D: TRAUMA (CCTI) SURVEY

Removed to comply with copyright.

APPENDIX E: MOTIVATION (MSLQ) SURVEY

Motivation: What helps you in class?

The following questions ask about your motivation in class. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, just answer as accurately as possible. Use the scale below to answer the questions.
If you think the statement is very true for you, click on the circle 7
if a statement is not at all true for you, click on the circle 1
Or find the number between 1 and 7 that best describes you.

* Required

1. In school, I prefer things in school that are really challenging so I can learn new things. *

   
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

2. If I study in the right way, then I will be able to learn the lessons in class. *

   
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

3. Getting a good grade in school is the most satisfying thing for me right now. *

   
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
4. It is my fault if I don’t learn the lessons at school. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. The most important thing right now is improving my overall grades, so my main concern is getting good grades. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. If I can, I want to get better grades than most of the other students. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. In class, I prefer lessons that get me curious, even if it is difficult to learn. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I’m confident I can understand the most complicated lesson taught by the teacher. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. If I try hard enough, I will understand the lessons in class. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
APPENDIX F: STRESS (PSS-C) SURVEY

Removed to comply with copyright.

APPENDIX G: SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVAL LETTER

Benefits of this research to the School District

Abstract
The current study will explore the relationship between past trauma of immigrant students and motivation in a group of public-school elementary students in Washington state. Additionally, this study will explore how stress affects academic motivation. It is hypothesized that past trauma will significantly affect immigrant student motivation and that current stress will moderate motivation in school. Only students with past trauma experience and who qualify as an immigrant, will be included in this study. Participants

Please attach a project information sheet. This could be a structured abstract, application, or overview. It should include study background, purpose, research design, and methodology.

Are any of the following part of the research study? If yes, please attach copies.

☑️ Surveys
☐ Interview Questions

Do you have the approval of your research study and determination from your organization’s IRB related to the status for human subjects’ research?

☐ Yes (please attach a copy)
☑️ It is pending approval and will be available by: 9/27/21 - 10/12/2021
☐ Not applicable. Please state why it isn’t applicable:

Directions for Submission:

1) Complete this application.
2) Email this application with supporting materials (project information sheet, any applicable surveys or interview questions, and IRB approval) to [email]
3) A confirmation with an approximate timeline on the approval process will be provided after receipt of the application.

Please note we may require a Data Sharing Agreement. Any researcher that will be on a school campus when students are present must receive a background check through our volunteer process.

Specific laws and policies that govern our processes include, but are not limited to:

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA);
- Parent and Student Rights in Administration of Surveys, Analysis or Evaluations;
- Procedure Parent and Student Rights in Administration of Surveys, Analysis or Evaluations;
- Procedure Student Records;
- Cooperative Programs with other Districts, Public Agencies, Private Schools and Daycares;
- Volunteer Information

Office Use Only:

Date Received: 8/12/21
Approval/Denial: APPROVED 9/28/2021
Request for Research Approval
Data, Research, and Accountability Department

The [redacted] School District considers educational research an important endeavor and will partner with agencies and organizations when appropriate. All educational research must be approved by the Data, Research, and Accountability Office. Requests for research in the [redacted] School District are reviewed for:

Relevance:
- Is the proposed research aligned to the district’s vision, mission, and strategic goals?

Rigor:
- Can the research methodology be expected to reveal meaningful findings that will be generalizable to a broad [redacted] audience?
- Does the proposal include: clear research questions, sampling and data collection method and analysis plan?

Burden to district, schools, and study participants:
- What is the impact on instructional time and staff time?
- What specific resources is the researcher requesting of the school district?
- What are the benefits of this study for the district?
- Do we have staff that have the capacity and willingness to support this project?

Compliance to policy and data privacy laws:
- Does the study follow all district, state and federal policies, and laws?

Date of Request: 8/13/20

Name of Researcher(s): Jayme Branagh Landon
Primary Researcher Contact Email: jbranaghlandon@[redacted]
Primary Researcher Contact Phone: [redacted]

Affiliation of Researcher (i.e. university, organization, agency): Liberty University

Title of Study: Exploring the Relationship of Trauma, Motivation, Current Stress, and Immigrant Elementary Stu


Proposed Start Date: 9/27/2021 Proposed End Date: 10/20/2021 end of data collection

Name of Schools/Departments to be Involved: [redacted] Elementary [redacted] Elementary

Review the [redacted] Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals. These can be found in the Strategic Plan under the “About Us” page on the district website. How does this study align with these?

Vision for every student to be future ready requires equitable, inclusive and culturally responsive practices that contribute to the success of all students. This is accomplished by focusing on academic success of all students through the support of students’ well-being, engagement, and equity. The intent of this study is to explore the possible relationship between past trauma of immigrant elementary students and academic motivation when moderated by current stress. The continued increasing number of immigrant families paired with the troubling statistics related to trauma and academic and social What assistance is being request form the school district?

Employee/Staff Time: 4 staff members to train and proctor surveys - total time 4.5 hours
ESL staff and administrator support, counselor, counselor designee support

Student Time: 40 minutes to complete online surveys

Data: Past trauma experiences (as measured by CCTI; Academic motivation (as measured by MSLQ; motivation subscales), Stress (as measured by PSS-C)

Technology: Student laptops: Access to Microsoft Forms

Other Resources: Access to student enrollment from 2 school sites (for recruitment/invitation to participate).
October 13, 2021

Jayme Branagh Landon
Keena Cowser

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY21-22-85 Exploring the Relationship between Trauma, Motivation, Current Stress, and Immigrant Elementary Students

Dear Jayme Branagh Landon, Keena Cowser,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: October 13, 2021. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office
APPENDIX I: EMAIL RECRUITMENT

Dear Families,

Hello fellow community members. My name is Jayme Branagh Landon, and I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree in Community Care and Counseling. The purpose of my research is to explore whether there is a relationship between 1) motivation in school and 2) how stress may affect motivation for immigrant students in elementary school with possible trauma experiences. I am interested in learning about this from the students’ perspective and understanding more about how they feel. I hope to better help educators understand how to support immigrant students at the elementary school level. Therefore, I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade students who are immigrant (1st or 2nd generation), refugee, or newcomers. Your child(ren) is currently eligible to participate in this study.

If you are willing to allow your child to participate, your child will complete 3 online surveys, which may take up to 40 minutes total. All surveys will be anonymous. Identifying information will not be linked to student surveys. Students will be asked about their experiences and possible stressors as an immigrant student. Students will be asked how they feel about their classroom. Students will take the survey at school during a non-academic period.

For your child to participate, please sign the attached parental consent document and return it to your child’s teacher at [School Name] or [School Name] Elementary. The consent document contains additional information about my research.

Sincerely,

Jayme Branagh Landon
Principal Researcher
APPENDIX J: PROCTOR INSTRUCTIONS

Survey Proctor Script

Proctor Training and Onsite Survey Instructions

Before you begin, please confirm students have sign consent forms and store in manila envelope.

- Log on to computers using school district log on (provided to each student)
- Survey Link: https://surveys.form.com/

Proctor Instruction & Script

Read the following to guide students through the survey process:

Today, you are being asked to think about yourself and your past experiences. You’re going to fill out 3 surveys that help researchers learn more about how they can best support students like you. A survey asks you questions, and you choose an answer that best matches your thinking. Today’s survey will ask about your thoughts and feelings both during and outside of school time. Your answers are important, please answer honestly,

If you need any help, or if you have any questions, raise your hand, or communicate with me in the way that is most comfortable for you. I can help you with any words or directions you don’t understand. Remember, you are sharing your own thoughts and feelings, so all answers are correct. Are there any questions?

Answer student questions.

To access the survey, please open your web browser now.

[Proctors, please type the following website address on the screen (if classroom screen is provided, or write it on the board)]:

https://surveys.form.com

Please enter https://surveys.form.com into your address bar and load the page. Or click on the link

Raise your hand if your page does not load and you need help finding the website.

You will see a picture of a puppy. This is the first survey.

Assist any students who need support typing the web address

If you prefer to take the survey in a language different from English, you may select that option in the box in the top right of the page within the dropdown list.

After answering all the questions, click the green button at the bottom of the screen that says, “Submit.”

Then move to the next survey. When you see a final “Thank you” screen, it means you are done.

When you are done, raise your hand. The first survey should take about 10 minutes.
Supporting Students who request/ require Translate or read-aloud:
- Students must access the survey webpage through the EDGE browser
- Right Click anywhere on the page
- Choose ‘Translate’
- Icon will appear in upper right of web address.
- Select Language from drop down menu
And/or
- Choose ‘Read Aloud’
- Students can control the pace, volume, and voice.

Note: Paper copies of translated surveys are also available.

What if a student needs extra support?
When you need translation
Translation services is on call, they will interpret questions and answers with confidentiality Pacific Interpreters:
1-800-272-7442

When a student seems triggered or needs immediate help
Students can take as much time as they need. It is okay for them to take a deep breath. Please contact the following schools’ staff for support.

Staff members available School #1 Counselor: .......................... ESL teacher: ................................
School #2 Counselor: .................................. ESL teachers: ................................

Please allow students 5 minutes after the survey before leaving the survey room if needed. Again, contact building support staff if you have any questions.
APPENDIX K: PARENTAL CONSENT

Parental Consent

Project Title: Exploring the Relationship between Trauma, Motivation, Current Stress, and Immigrant Elementary Students
Principal Researcher: Jayme Branagh Landon, MA. Ed, LMHC, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your child is invited to participate in a research study. Participants are 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade students who are immigrant (1st or 2nd generation), refugee, or newcomers. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your child to take part in this research project.

### What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of this study is to learn more about immigrant students and past trauma in hopes of finding ways to better support immigrant students and their teachers. I am conducting research to look at the relationship between immigrant students, trauma, motivation, and current stress. My goal is to look at students’ perspectives and experience.

### What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I will ask him/her to do the following things:

1. Complete three (3), anonymous, online surveys before school in a designated area, such as the library. The three online surveys will be completed using their school computer. Surveys will take approximately 40 minutes total.

### How could participants or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include aiding incoming immigrant students who experience trauma by informing educators and helping create trauma and culturally informed academic supports for students.

### What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risk you would encounter in everyday life.

### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participants’ responses will be anonymous. Identifying information will not be linked to participant responses.

Liberty University
IRB-FY21-22-85
Approved on 10-13-2021
• Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. Paper copies will be stored in a locked cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted. Paper copies will be shredded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is study participation voluntary?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or School District ( ). If you decide to allow your child to participate, he or she is free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you choose to withdraw your child from the study or he or she chooses to withdraw, please have him or her exit the survey and close their internet browser. Their responses will not be recorded or included in the study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The researcher conducting this study is Jayme Branagh Landon. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at __________________________. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, Keena Cowser, at __________________________.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whom do you contact if you have questions about rights as a research participant?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at <a href="mailto:irb@liberty.edu">irb@liberty.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.
APPENDIX L: CHILD ASSENT

Child Assent to Participate in a Research Study

What is the name of the study and who is doing the study?
The name of the study is Exploring the Relationship between Trauma, Motivation, Current Stress, and Immigrant Elementary Students. The person doing the study is Jayme Branagh Landon.

Why is Jayme Branagh Landon doing this study?
Jayme Branagh Landon wants to know how stress affects students’ desire to learn from an immigrant elementary student’s point of view.

Why am I being asked to be in this study?
You are being asked to be in this study because you are a 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade immigrant (1st or 2nd generation), newcomer, or refugee from [Redacted] or [Redacted] Elementary.

If I decide to be in the study, what will happen and how long will it take?
If you decide to be in this study, you will complete 3 online surveys. This will take a total of about 40 minutes. You will finish the surveys at school using your school computer. You will not miss class time. You will not need special transportation.

Do I have to be in this study?
No, you do not have to be in this study. If you want to be in this study, then tell the researcher. If you don’t want to, it’s OK to say no. The researcher will not be angry. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It’s up to you.

What if I have a question?
You can ask questions any time. You can ask now. You can ask later. You can talk to the researcher. If you do not understand something, please ask the researcher to explain it to you again. You can also talk to your school ESL teacher or your school counselor.

Signing your name below means that you want to be in the study.

Signature of Child Date

Jayme Branagh Landon

Keena Cowsert

Liberty University Institutional Review Board
1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515
irb@liberty.edu

Liberty University
IRB-FY21-22-85
Approved on 10-13-2021