The American School Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics states that counselors and counselor trainees must be competent providers of multicultural counseling, able to practice effectively with clients whose identities differ from their own. Pre-service school counselors receive very little training around immigration status and how to work with clients who migrate from different countries and cultures. School counselors, counselor educators and pre-service counselors are also asked to seek out current, relevant research to provide a basis for the interventions and treatment offered to clients.

Recent literature in school counseling has identified educational gaps among individuals who identify as, or are identified as, ethnic minorities. Higher rates of high school dropout and lower rates of postsecondary education matriculation have been found in immigrant samples as
compared to nonimmigrant samples. However, existing articles are limited by: (a) sample sizes, (b) access to secondary student data, and (c) limited school counselor interventions. Additionally, school counselors and counselor educators have not researched these differences in immigration and graduation or postsecondary aspirations.

To address this gap three research questions were explored. The first question asked what was the relationship between certain resiliency skills and immigrant status of middle school students. Results indicated a small but significant relationship between immigrant status and the skills of wellbeing and understanding the importance of education. The second research question queried as to whether a relationship exists between immigrant student contact with a school counselor and college as a post-secondary plan in high school. The results indicated a significant but small negative relationship between immigrant students meeting with a school counselor on career and college planning and college as a postsecondary plan. The third research question inquired as to whether a relationship exists between immigrant status and utilization of a school counselor for career and college planning in high school. The results indicated a small but significant positive relationship between immigrant status and utilization of a school counselor for career and college planning.

The primary implication that emerged from the aforementioned research was that school counselors should be especially in tuned to the needs of immigrant students as their skills and needs may differ from native born students. Additionally, students who immigrate should be given an opportunity to meet individually with their school counselor for both wellbeing and career and college related topics.
The Relationship Between Immigrant Status and Secondary and Postsecondary Attainment in Secondary Students

by

Samantha L. Haviland

A DISSERTATION

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Oregon State University

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APPROVED:

_____________________________________________________________________

Major Professor, representing Counseling

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Dean of the College of Education

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Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

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Samantha L Haviland, Author
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CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

Dr. Cass Dykeman assisted with methodology and research design, in addition to editing and refinement of this manuscript. Dr. Chung Pham provided assistance with data cleaning and data analyses.
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SCHOOL COUNSELOR RELATIONSHIP AND IMMIGRANT STUDENT OUTCOMES

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CHAPTER 1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate scholarly work using the manuscript style dissertation format as outlined by Oregon State University’s Graduate School and Counseling Academic Unit. Chapter 1 includes a literature review and a rationale connecting the two journal-formatted manuscripts is provided. Chapters 2 and 3 contain research manuscripts that aim to assist progress in research relevant to school counseling. Specifically, these studies explore resiliency skills and postsecondary aspirations of immigrant students.

Both studies utilize an archival data format obtained from three systems maintained by a large urban school district (Mann, 2003). De-identified data were obtained on student identifier information, resiliency skills, and postsecondary aspirations. Chapter 2 presents a research study comparing six resiliency skills (stress, well-being, importance of education, relationships, motivation, and academic self-efficacy) of immigrant students to their nonimmigrant counterparts. Chapter 3 presents a research study comparing the postsecondary aspirations of immigrant students who met with a school counselor on college and career topics versus immigrant students who met with a school counselor for other reasons. Chapter 4 offers conclusions and implications that emerged from the two manuscripts and how these studies relate to each other.

Importance to the Profession of School Counseling

Licensed school counselors (LSC) play a significant role in helping all students achieve their academic, career, and personal/social potential. This includes immigrant students who often “fall between the cracks” explaining the need to support resiliency and postsecondary educational goals. This perspective is supported by the American School Counseling Association
Code of Ethics (n.d.), “Professional school counselors are concerned with the educational, academic, career, personal and social needs and encourage the maximum development of every student” (p. 1). Similarly, the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) contend that the challenge for today’s counselor is responding to the multicultural and social justice issues of culturally diverse student groups (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). This study also supports the foundation objectives of the American School Counselors Association (ASCA), which supports “projects to enhance personal, career and academic development of all students” (American School Counselor Association, n.d.). The American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics (2014), the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC; Ratts et al., 2016), and the American School Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics (n.d.) require that school counselors and counselors in training are able to effectively work with diverse populations and acquire education, consultation, and training to improve knowledge and skills in working with these populations (American School Counseling Association, n.d.). In order to fulfill this mission, school counselors must seek out current, relevant research on effective interventions to satisfy their social justice advocacy on behalf of all students.

The American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics (n.d.) urges school counselors, counselors in training, and school counselor educators to “strive through personal initiative to stay abreast of current research and to maintain professional competence” (p. 5) in culturally competent school counseling practice. The school counseling and education literature lags behind in publishing peer-reviewed articles that discuss the unique needs of immigrant secondary students. Some related research can be found in journals like the *Journal of Development Economics, Economics of Education Review, Child Development* and the *Journal*
of Vocational Behavior. This research, however, explains the gaps in education attainment for immigrant students while not exploring more in detail the reasons behind their experience.

Some noteworthy research for school counselors includes a few articles within the *Professional School Counseling* journal. These articles explore recommendations for school counselors on creating a family-school-community partnership (Dotson-Blake, 2010; Suarez-Orozco, Onaga, & Lardemelle, 2010), specifically engaging the family and community in order to maximize interventions for immigrant students. Implications for school counselors include the use of parent outreach utilizing bilingual staff, staff development workshops on the needs of immigrant students, and individual or academic counseling for immigrant students.

A second study explores concerns of newly arrived immigrant students (Williams & Butler, 2003). Williams and Butler (2003) explore the specific concerns that immigrant students experience including but not limited to English language acquisition, post-traumatic stress disorder, inadequate social support networks, different learning styles, and a lack of social acceptance. Recommendations from this study include professional development for school counselors on how to assess newly arrived students’ needs, access to newcomer school programs that address immigrant students’ needs specifically, and an emphasis on the social and emotional needs of these students.

While these studies explore some of the challenges and unique needs of immigrant students and their families, school counselor specific interventions and postsecondary aspirations have not yet been explored. To date there is no literature exploring the resiliency skills of immigrant students or interventions for secondary immigrant students for increasing postsecondary aspirations.
Current State of Scientific Knowledge

Disparities in educational attainment and wages for immigrant and diverse populations have been well-documented in recent literature. Articles have focused on disparities in high school completion, dropout rates, and adult wages resulting in immigrant families living in poverty (Barro & Lee, 2012; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; Camarota, 2015; Chiswick & DeBurman, 2004; Hupfeld, 2007; Ryan & Sieben, 2012; Wolfe & Haveman, 2002).

Fuligni (1997) explored familial influence on adolescents from immigrant families. It was discovered that students from a first or second generation immigrant family tended to place a higher value on studying and doing well in school. “These students believed their parents placed a high value on academic success, had great expectations for their performance in school, and held high hopes for their eventual education attainment” (Fuligni, 1997, p. 358). This attitude translated into adolescents from immigrant families demonstrating higher grades than their peers from native families. Fuligni identified motivation and effort that immigrant students must exhibit in order to overcome the various challenges that immigrant students experience as well as family influence.

Family plays a significant role elsewhere in related research. Fuligni and Witkos (2004) further discussed the postsecondary attainment of immigrant students, both first and second generation, in comparison to their U. S. born peers. One of the differences discussed in this study was the sense of obligation that adolescents from immigrant families felt as compared to their U.S. born peers. Students from East Asian, Filipino, and Latin American backgrounds all reported a stronger sense of familial duty than those from European backgrounds (2004). Familial duty may include supporting the family financially, living at home, and assisting with child care in the home. Interestingly, history of immigration and a sense of familial duty had no
negative impact on students from immigrant families pursuing and performing in college at comparative levels of their U. S. born peers (Fuligni & Witkos, 2004). It was found, however, that youth from families with less parental education and family income achieved lower rates of postsecondary enrollment and persistence.

One of the earlier studies in school counseling for immigrant students explored how schools may create a culturally competent environment for diverse students, in part by engaging families in this work. Simcox, Nuijens, & Lee (2006) described a 4-level model including (a) working individually with students, (b) increased services for parents and families, (c) interventions for educators and staff, and (d) increased community involvement. This model for collaboration is shared by a number of other researchers (Dotson-Blake, 2010; Suarez-Orozco, Onaga, Lardemelle, 2010; Williams & Butler, 2003) as a best practice for engaging immigrant students and families in their education.

Another study explored theory and research behind healthy acculturation and how school counselors create acculturation pathways for increased academic success (Park-Taylor, Walsh, & Ventura, 2007). Park-Taylor et al. (2007) first explored the acculturative stress and the negative impact it may play on immigrant students and what role this may have on developmental stages in a student’s lifespan. Immigrant student resiliency is described as essential to the academic and psychological health and one way school counselors may be able to positively intervene. School counselors should develop programs utilizing a strengths-based approach for increasing protective factors in immigrant students (Park-Taylor et al., 2007).

Many of the existing studies on the topic of school counseling for immigrant students have included such limitations as small participant groups, nonrandom or convenience sampling, or theory based explorations (Dotson-Blake, 2010; Park-Taylor et al., 2007; Suarez-Orozco,
Onaga, & Lardemelle, 2010; Simcox et al., 2006; Williams & Butler, 2003). Additionally, many surveys were administered in English only, thus limiting participation of those with lower English reading skills. The studies also included students who have graduated from high school, thus eliminating students who have dropout out. This dissertation aimed to build upon this existing literature by using a large sample of data characterized by racial and ethnic diversity in which immigrant and nonimmigrant students could be considered distinct groups and independent variables such as resiliency and self-reported aspirations can be explored.

**Description of Research Manuscripts**

The first manuscript in this dissertation explored resiliency skills in a sample of Denver Public Schools secondary students who were identified as immigrant students compared to their nonimmigrant counterparts. This study fills a gap in the literature by examining the school counseling implications of identified resiliency skills using a researched resiliency skills survey from ScholarCentric. The target journal for this study was *Professional School Counseling*, as this journal is the peer-reviewed journal published by the American School Counselor Association.

The six research questions explored were as follows: (RQ #1) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and confidence?; (RQ #2) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and stress?; (RQ #3) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and intrinsic motivation?; (RQ #4) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and connections?; (RQ #5) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and well-being?; and (RQ #6) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and beliefs about the importance of education? These questions were addressed using a point-
biverial correlation between the dichotomous variables of immigrant status (Yes/No) and the continuous variables of (a) confidence, (b) stress, (c) motivation, (d) connections, (e) well-being, and (f) importance of education.

The second manuscript in this dissertation examined the relationship between self-reported postsecondary aspirations and those who received career counseling from a school counselor within a sample of Denver Public Schools immigrant secondary students. This study fills a gap in literature by examining the school counseling implications for career and college counseling interventions for immigrant students and their postsecondary aspirations. The target journal for this study was the American School Counselor Association’s peer reviewed journal, *Professional School Counseling*.

The research question examined in this study was: What is the relationship between immigrant student contact with a school counselor and college as a postsecondary plan? This question was addressed using a 2x2 chi-square analyses to examine the relationship between these categorical variables: (a) college and career counseling contact with a school counselor (Yes/No), and (b) college as a postsecondary plan (Yes/No).

**Thematic Link Between Studies**

The thematic link between these two studies is that they both explore issues related to immigrant students enrolled in secondary schools. The roles of resiliency and postsecondary aspirations have been tied to high school graduation.

**Glossary of Specialized Terms**

**ASCA** - An abbreviation referring to the American School Counselor Association, a professional organization that advocates for licensed school counselors.

**GPA** - An abbreviation referring to a student’s grade point average.
**LSC**- An abbreviation referring to licensed school counselors.

**MSJCC**- An abbreviation referring to the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies.

**Organization**

The manuscripts that follow utilized de-identified archival data (Mann, 2003). Data gathered included dropout prevention and college matriculation support. Permission from the Denver Public Schools district was obtained for purposes of these studies.

Chapter 2 begins with a review of current research pertaining to resiliency. This review includes (a) importance of graduation rates, (b) graduation rate trends, (c) barriers to graduation for immigrant students, (d) the definition of resiliency, and (e) the relationship between resiliency and graduation rates. Following the literature review, a research study comparing the six resiliency skills identified between immigrant and nonimmigrant secondary students is introduced.

Chapter 3 opens with a review of current research pertaining to postsecondary education attainment. This review includes (a) trends in education attainment rates, (b) education attainment and socioeconomic status, (c) immigration status compared to education attainment, and (d) school counselor impact on postsecondary aspirations. An overview of the research study on the correlation between career and college counseling from school counselors and the postsecondary aspirations of immigrant students is then discussed.

Chapter 4 presents general conclusions that emerged from the two manuscripts. Also discussed are connections between the two studies. Implications for future practice are discussed.
CHAPTER 2
A RESEARCH MANUSCRIPT
THE RELATIONSHIP OF RESILIENCY AND IMMIGRANT STATUS IN SECONDARY STUDENTS
The Relationship of Resiliency and Immigrant Status In Secondary Students

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The research contained in this manuscript was conducted under the approval of the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (Study ID 6946). The manuscript was prepared as part of first author’s dissertation.

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Abstract

Resiliency skills were compared between immigrant secondary students and non-immigrant students from a large urban school district in the Western U.S. The levels of six resiliency skill levels were compared for immigrant students to non-immigrant students while enrolled in secondary school. Results showed that immigrant students show lower resiliency skills than their nonimmigrant counterparts. These findings suggest that school counselor interventions may be useful to increase resiliency skills among immigrant students.

Keywords: resiliency skills, school counselor, immigrant students
The Relationship of Resiliency and Immigrant Status in Secondary Students

High school graduation rate has long been a concern in the United States. Since the launch of Sputnik, American education has been focused on student educational attainment as evidenced by the passage of the National Defense Education Act of 1958. The continued focus on graduation rates is best represented by Michelle Obama’s Reach Higher initiative (Walsh, 2014). Unfortunately, little is known about the educational attainment rates of a burgeoning immigrant student population. As such, research extending known attainment predictors to this population is warranted.

Noncognitive factors, the skills, strategies, attitudes, and behaviors, have been described as critical to a student’s academic performance (Farrington et al., 2012). The strongest known noncognitive predictor of educational attainment in the general student population is resiliency (Close & Solberg, 2008; Farrington et al., 2012). Unfortunately, little quantitative research has been done regarding immigrant students and resiliency. Since so little has been published, educators are left in the dark regarding how to best leverage interventions in resiliency with this subpopulation (Solberg, Davis, & McLemore, 2010). Hence, the purpose of the present study is to fill this void in the literature.

The literature on graduation rates, resiliency, and immigrant status can be grouped into five areas: (a) importance of graduation rates, (b) graduation rate trends, (c) barriers to graduation for immigrant students, (d) definition of resiliency, and (e) the relationship between resiliency and graduation rates. After a review of these five areas, the research questions will be presented.

There exists a robust literature on the importance of graduation rates to the health of a society. The skill level of the future workforce is related to the U.S. economy (Barro & Lee,
2012). As high-need jobs require high school diplomas and postsecondary education, an individual’s educational attainment can predict a significant amount in their perceived success in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). An individual’s high school graduation status and overall education level impact their wage earnings throughout their lifetime (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). The lack of education attainment is reportedly related to differences in income as well as other indicators of well-being including adult and child health, criminal behavior, and even familial relationships (Wolfe & Haveman, 2002). Consequently educational attainment is the easiest way to close the socioeconomic status gaps in the United States, decrease criminal behavior, and increase family connection, which makes it a major social justice issue for educational professionals (Wolfe & Haveman, 2002). Understanding graduation rate trends is imperative.

Graduation rates amongst the general population point to several trends. Causing the most alarm are the differences in graduation rates that persist between students of minority and majority status as this gap often results in major differences in wages and, therefore, results in equity issues for students throughout their lives. Most markedly, Hispanics and African Americans lag behind non-Hispanic individuals in educational attainment (Chiswick & DeBurman, 2004) causing a perpetual cycle of inequity among ethnicities. Gaps among minority students have historically persisted throughout time (Wolfe & Haveman, 2002). Students from differing origins also experience marked differences in educational attainment.

Correlations between immigrant status and graduation rates and education attainment have been shown in a number of studies (Chiswick & DeBurman, 2004; Ryan & Sieben 2012). Those who are foreign-born show greater disparities in K-20 educational attainment (Ryan & Sieben, 2012). The age of a child when they immigrate has also been shown to have a pivotal
impact on educational attainment. Students who immigrate between the ages of 5 to 19 show fewer years of education completion than those who immigrate at an earlier age. Those who immigrate between the ages of 13 and 19 experience the greatest disadvantages, particularly among Hispanics (Chiswick & DeBurman, 2004).

Increasing graduation rates among diverse groups of students is further complicated by the fact that data collection surrounding just how many students in the United States are immigrants is difficult as many are undocumented (Passel & Cohn, 2011). The Pew Hispanic Center estimated that in 2010 more than one million of the 74 million children under the age of 18 in the United States had undocumented status (Passel & Cohn, 2011; Stepler & Brown, 2015). Immigrant and diverse students are at a higher risk of dropping out, however little is known regarding why.

The number of immigrant students is increasing in the United States, but little research has been done on the specific barriers to educational attainment that these students might face. Hupfeld’s (2007) research on immigrant student graduation rates suggests that language barriers play a significant role in these disparities as well as other risk factors that are associated with the immigrant status. Students of immigrant families experience increased risk factors including limited English ability, low socioeconomic status, transience, parentification, and disengagement (Hupfeld, 2007). Hupfeld suggested that many noncognitive skills, in addition to cognitive skills, are important for immigrant students overcoming the barriers associated with immigration. School counselors may work to build student noncognitive skills in order to increase graduation rates for immigrant students.

The development of noncognitive factors has been shown to impact positively on academic achievement and graduation rates (Farrington et al., 2012). According to Farrington et
Resiliency skill building is one intervention that can be used to introduce noncognitive factors into the school setting. Resiliency is defined as a student’s ability to change by learning skills that help individuals deal with emotions, resolve problems, make positive decisions, develop healthy relationships, and motivate themselves to achieve goals (Beland, 2007). Adaptive and resiliency characteristics and skills such as self-efficacy, goal-oriented behaviors, optimism, internal expectations, problem solving skills, and coping strategies for dealing with personal stress have been shown to increase the likelihood of academic success for all students; such skills may also be helpful to immigrant students overcoming barriers. Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison (2006) found that students who dropped out cited a lack of engagement, a lack of motivation, academic reasons, or personal reasons; most, however, reported feeling they could have succeeded if they had tried harder. Resiliency skill building looks at giving students the skills needed to overcome.

Many successful resiliency building school programs looking to help students overcome barriers have sought to build confidence in students’ academic skills, build problem-solving skills, explore the importance of education and college, and build relationships within the school building that the student feels are supportive and welcoming (Close & Solberg, 2007; MacIver, Balfanz, & Byers, 2009; Solberg et al., 1998). These programs show positive results in increasing attendance and grades and reducing dropouts; however, few focus on cultural factors and unique barriers experienced by immigrant students.

While the efficacy of resiliency skill building has been researched, the outcomes have not been analyzed systematically to understand their greater implications, particularly for immigrant
students. This article will assess, explore, and consolidate findings on resiliency and examine how resiliency skills may differ for immigrant students.

To address these gaps, six research questions were explored. These six were: (RQ #1) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and confidence?; (RQ #2) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and stress?; (RQ #3) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and intrinsic motivation?; (RQ #4) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and connections?; (RQ #5) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and well-being?; and (RQ #6) What is the relationship between immigrant status for high school students and beliefs about the importance of education? Next, the methods used to answer these research questions will be detailed.

**Method**

**Design.** The study employed a cross-sectional observational design where all measurements from students were taken at the same point in time (Mann, 2003). The variables examined were a self-reported resiliency characteristics survey versus documentation status of high school students.

Before accessing the raw data, an *a priori* power analysis for a point-biserial correlation ($r_{pb}$) was completed by employing G*Power 3.1.9.2 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). The specific effect size power analysis was drawn from Arbona et al. (2010). The input parameters were: (a) test family = $t$ test; (b) statistical test = correlation: point biserial model; (c) type of power analysis = *a priori*: compute required sample size given $\alpha$, power and effect size; (d) tails(s) = two, (e) $|r| = 0.24$; (f) power (1-$\beta$ err probability) = 0.95; and (g) $\alpha = .05$. The G*Power output noted a sample size of 215 and an actual power of 0.95.
Participants. Extant data were obtained from students enrolled in the 8th grade in an urban school district located in the Western U.S. The data were collected during the 2010-11 school year for the period October 15, 2010, to January 30, 2011, in order to include the entire 8th-grade student population. Analyses were limited to students who completed the ScholarCentric Resiliency survey. The sample of 3,170 students ranged in age from 13 to 14; 1,591 students identified as male, and 1,579 students identified as female. The participant sample was racially and ethnically diverse, with 79.6% of participants identifying as non-White and 20.4% participants as non-Hispanic White. Of those identifying as non-White, 14.2% identified as Black or African American, 57.2% identified as Hispanic or Latino/a, 3.4% identified as Asian American, 0.3% identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 3.6% identified as multiple races, and 0.9% identified as Native American.

In the Student Information Database, student data were collected on race and ethnicity. Data on resiliency skills was collected by ScholarCentric based on a 108-question self-report survey. The data were returned in subsections including classroom confidence, meaningful motivation, academic stress, importance of college, connection with school staff, and physical symptoms or well-being.

Measures

De-identified data were obtained from the ScholarCentric Resiliency survey data as well as student information. Original data were collected from students enrolled in the 8th grade and then followed through high school to graduation. Data collected from student records included age, race, and ethnicity (i.e., Hispanic or non-Hispanic); Data self-reported on the Resiliency survey included classroom confidence, intrinsic motivation, academic stress, importance of
college, connection with school staff and physical symptoms or well-being. The survey that students completed online during classes included 108 questions with scaled responses.

**Immigrant status.** Immigrant status was self-reported data collected during student registration. Students identified as having a birth country other than the United States were identified as immigrant students and were reported in a “yes” or “no” format.

**Importance of Education.** Importance of Education referred to the degree that students perceive education and college as being valuable to their future success. There are two factors to Importance of Education. These factors are school importance and college importance. This self-report scale of 10 questions employed a 5-point, partially-anchored Likert scale. The anchors were 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree”. The self-report questionnaire asked about the student’s beliefs about the importance of high school and college. Thus, scores can range from 10 to 50. The internal reliability of this scale was 0.915 (Gillis & Sidivy, 2008).

**Confidence.** Academic self-efficacy (presented as confidence) refers to a student’s perceived competence in performing a variety of academic tasks. Academic self-efficacy was broken down into the subscales of social, classroom, and test-taking self-efficacy. This self-report questionnaire of 22 questions employs a 5-point, partially-anchored Likert scale. The anchors are 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree.” The self-report questionnaire asked about the student’s social and academic confidence. Thus, scores can range from 22 to 110. The internal reliability of this scale is 0.884 (Gillis & Sidivy, 2008). Solberg et al. (1998) reported strong face validity through interviews with high school teachers to modify items for use with high school students.

**Connections.** Social connections refer to perceived availability of social support. Social connections were broken down into the subscales of perceived support from teachers, family,
and peers. This self-report scale of 16 questions employed a 5-point, partially-anchored Likert scale. The anchors were 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree” and the scale asked about the student’s relationships with family members, teachers, and friends. Scores can range from 16 to 80. The internal reliability of this scale was 0.838 (Gillis & Sidivy, 2008). Solberg et al. (1998) reported strong face validity through interviews with high school teachers to modify items for use with high school students.

**Stress.** Stress refers to the degree of difficulty students experience in performing academic tasks and handling levels of psychological and emotional distress. Stress/distress was broken down into the subscales academic, social, and financial. This self-report scale of 22 questions employed a 5-point, partially-anchored Likert scale. The anchors are 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree” and the scale asked about the student’s academic stress, social stress, and financial stress. Scores can range from 22 to 110. The internal reliability of this scale was 0.935 (Gillis & Sidivy, 2008). Solberg et al. (1998) reported strong face validity through interviews with high school teachers to modify items for use with high school students.

**Well-being.** Well-being refers to a student’s health and well-being management. Well-being was broken down into agitation, sleep problems, eating problems, physical symptoms, and feeling down. This self-report scale of 23 questions employed a 5-point, partially-anchored Likert scale. The anchors were 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree” and the scale asked about how often the student experienced specific health-related behaviors in the last week. Scores can range from 23 to 115. The internal reliability of this scale was 0.941 (Gillis & Sidivy, 2008). Solberg et al. (1998) reported strong face validity through interviews with high school teachers to modify items for use with high school students.
Intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the degree to which a student is self-determined. Intrinsic motivation was broken down into the subscales of whether a student attends school because it is perceived as meaningful or enjoyable. This self-report scale of 15 questions employed a 5-point, partially-anchored Likert scale. The anchors were 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree” and the scale asked about the student’s reasons for going to school. Thus, scores can range from 15 to 75. The internal reliability of this scale was 0.815 (Gillis & Sidivy, 2008). Solberg et al. (1998) reported strong face validity through interviews with high school teachers to modify items for use with high school students.

Data Analysis

Prior to the statistical analysis, a missing data examination for each variable was conducted. The following missing rates were encountered: immigration (0%), confidence (3.2%), stress (7.4%), motivation (12%), connections (3%), well-being (10.7%), and importance of education (2%). These values were replaced using SPSS’ multiple imputation procedure (IBM Corporation, 2012).

A skewness analysis for each variable was also conducted. The following skewness rates were found: immigration (2.1), confidence (0.85), stress (1.0), motivation (0.61), connections (0.94), well-being (0.77), and importance of education (2.3). For items whose skewness exceeded 0.80, a Log10 transformation of the raw data was performed (Osborne, 2002, 2010).

For each of the six research questions a point-biserial correlation was conducted. The point-biserial correlation is the proper statistic when there is one dichotomous variable and one continuous variable (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2003). In the case of this study, the dichotomous variable was immigrant status (Yes/No); the continuous variables were: confidence
(RQ #1), stress (RQ #2), motivation (RQ #3), connections (RQ #4), well-being (RQ #5), and importance (RQ #6).

**Results**

There were 3,170 8th grade student responses studied. Overall, 2,735 students (86.3%) were born in the United States and 435 (13.7%) were immigrant students. The first research question examined the relationship between immigrant status and confidence. The point-biserial correlation test produced a coefficient that showed almost no linear correlation association between immigrant status and confidence, \( r_{pb}(1, N = 3070) = .018, p = .320 \) (see Table 1). The second research question explored the relationship between immigrant status and stress. The point-biserial correlation test produced a coefficient that showed almost no linear correlation association between immigrant status and stress, \( r_{pb}(1, N = 2936) = 0.016, p = .40 \) (see Table 1). The third research question investigated the relationship between immigrant status and motivation. The point-biserial correlation test produced a coefficient that showed almost no linear correlation association between immigrant status and motivation, \( r_{pb}(1, N = 2791) = .010, p = 0.60 \) (see Table 1). The fourth research question considered the relationship between immigrant status and connections. The point-biserial correlation test produced a coefficient that shows almost no linear correlation between immigrant status and connections, \( r_{pb}(1, N = 3001) = 0.031, p = 0.094 \) (see Table 1). The fifth research question studied the relationship between immigrant status and well-being. The point-biserial correlation test produced a coefficient that shows almost no linear correlation between immigrant status and well-being, \( r_{pb}(1, N = 2830) = 0.043, p = 0.015 \) (see Table 1). The sixth research question regarded the relationship between immigrant status and the importance of education. The point-biserial correlation test produced a
minimal association between immigrant status and understanding the importance of education, \[ r_{pb}(1, N = 3170) = 0.036, p = 0.047 \] (see Table 1).

**Discussion**

Overall, the results produced different outcomes with regard to resiliency factors and immigrant students. On one hand, a small, yet statistically significant relationship was found between student immigrant status and both well-being and understanding the importance of education. On the other hand, the other resiliency factors and immigrant students were found to be unrelated. Possible reasons for these results will be addressed by each resiliency factor.

In terms of student immigrant status and well-being (RQ #5), there are three possible reasons that this result was encountered. However, before addressing these possibilities it should be noted that the result was statistically significant and the difference between immigrant and U.S. born students in well-being was very small. According to the measure, the well-being category includes feelings of agitation, feeling blue, and problems with eating, sleeping or physical health (Solberg et al., 2010). The results of this survey were consistent with previous research that immigrant students experience a lower level of well-being (De Haan & MacDermid, 1998; Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004; Marin & Brown, 2008; Patel & Kull, 2011).

Some previous research explained that students who have recently immigrated were experiencing grief from the loss of leaving their country of origin (Patel & Kull, 2011). The loss of a social structure as well as the need for adapting to a new environment may lead to symptoms in students of depression or agitation, which were detected in the ScholarCentric measures (Solberg et al., 2010). It is interesting to note that in previous research this agitation was less detected by school staff in immigrant students than their native born peers. This lack of detection
may lead to a lack of active support, especially in students who do not actively seek help. A perceived lack of support from school staff may lead to decreased well-being in students.

Fredriksen and Rhodes (2004) found that middle school students who perceived increased teacher support reported decreases in symptoms of depression. This explanation further describes why immigrant students may experience decreased well-being. If immigrant students do not feel supported by or are unable to relate to school staff because of language barriers they may experience increased symptoms of depression and/or agitation. Further complicating this lack of well-being may be a lack of knowledge about supports available to students in a school, such as school counselors.

A third explanation for the difference in well-being for immigrant students compared to nonimmigrant students could be explained by identity development. De Hann and MacDermid (1998) found that middle school students were more likely to report lower levels of depression and loneliness if they possessed higher levels of identity development. Identity development consists of a student’s confidence in their religious beliefs, relationships with other students, family and friends, knowledge in their career goals and confidence in their ethnic background. Immigrant students may experience a lack of confidence in their identity development as a result of a new environment and a marked difference in their ability to relate to new peers.

In terms of the small relationship found between understanding the importance of education and immigrant status there may be two possible explanations. Previous research in the U.S. suggested that immigrant parents place a greater importance on academic success of their children as they believe education is the most significant way for a child to improve outcomes (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Golan & Petersen, 2002; Louie, 2001). Contrary to previous
research, this study found very little difference for immigrant status in terms of understanding the importance of education. One plausible explanation for this finding involves technology.

One explanation for finding only a slight relationship between immigrant status and understanding the importance of education may come from the support and information found through wide access to the internet and mediums like social media. Wohn, Ellison, Khan, Fewins-Bliss, and Gray (2013) found that students, regardless of first generation status, reported fairly high expectations of succeeding in college. Interestingly, Wohn et al. discovered that first generations students were utilizing Facebook Friends who were currently in or graduated from college as a type of support and this access increased participants’ expectations of their success in college. It is hypothesized that witnessing positive examples of individuals from similar backgrounds—socioeconomically, racially, and otherwise—may play a positive role and increase college going self-efficacy (Wohn et al., 2013). As social media plays a bigger role in student life, this access may decrease barriers that first generation or immigrant students might face.

The first research question explored the relationship between immigrant status and confidence. The confidence measure employed examined social, classroom, and test-taking confidence. The results showed no difference in confidence for immigrant students compared with their U.S. born counterparts. This result is consistent with previous research showing that immigrant student confidence and academic performance are as good as or better than their nonimmigrant counterparts (Areepattamannil & Freeman, 2008; Hansen & Kucera, 2003; Schleicher, 2006; Worswick, 2004). There are two potential explanations for this finding.

One explanation for immigrant student confidence may come from their support structures. Research on immigrant confidence remains scarce; however, a few articles suggest
that many immigrant students experience a family environment that is supportive of academic achievement (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004). Fuligni and Hardway (2004) found immigrant parents believed that education was a primary way to better their child’s life and therefore instilled this belief in their children. This supportive environment at home may impact a student’s confidence in their academics and support them in taking more rigorous coursework.

A second consideration that was not explored is the link between confidence and academic self-concept and academic achievement. Cokley and Patel (2007) discovered that academic self-concept was positively related to grade point average. While the current study did not control for grade point average, it has been found that students who experience success in one area of school, math for example, experience increased self-concept (Cokley, 2007). Cokley discovered that academic confidence can be found to both cause and affect academic achievement. If immigrant students are experiencing the same level success in their education as their nonimmigrant peers, this may result in the comparable confidence as found in this research.

The second question in this study regarded the relationship between stress and immigrant status. Stress for this study was described as the academic, social, and financial stress a student is experiencing. While no relationship was found in this study, contrary to previous research, there may be two explanations.

The first explanation for finding no relationship between immigrant status and stress may be that students have found support for academic and emotional stress through positive relationships with school staff. Vedder, Boekaers and Seegers (2005) discovered that immigrant students perceived more academic support from their teachers than their native born peers. Native born students identified more academic support from their parents as influential (Vedder
et al., 2005). Immigrant students may be reaching out to their teachers and school staff to find the support they need for academic stress.

The second explanation for this finding may come from the overall low income of student participants in this study. While financial stress was one of three aspects in this measure, there was little difference in percentage of students receiving public assistance for immigrant (87%) and nonimmigrant (88%) students. While this study did not separate specific factors in this measure, it may be that all students are experiencing a similar amount of financial stress and therefore the overall measure of stress did not identify any differences between the populations.

The third question in this study explored the relationship between motivation and immigrant status. Motivation for this study was described as school being meaningful and enjoyable. Contrary to existing research (Areepattamannil & Freeman, 2008; Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Tseng, 2004), no relationship was found between motivation and immigrant status in this study. There is at least one possible explanation for this discrepancy from other research.

Previous research has shown that immigrant parents place a high value on educational pursuits for increased income potential so they can support the family, which may impact student motivation. (Tseng, 2004). Tseng discovered that immigrant students feel an obligation to their families to provide support and repayment (2004). The current study had an almost equal number of immigrant (87%) and nonimmigrant students (88%) identified as receiving free and reduced lunch, or living in poverty. Poverty in general may result in parental influence and student feelings of obligation to assist the family that immigrant students have felt in previous studies. Personal relationships or connections could play a more important role and have been shown to
impact academic motivation and even engagement in negative behaviors such as drug use and violence in other research (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997).

The fourth question in this study explored the relationship between connections and immigrant status. Connections included feeling support by teachers, peers, and families. The current study confirmed previous research when it found no relationship between connections and immigrant status. There are two possible explanations for this result.

The first possible explanation may reflect the same concepts of self-identity mentioned previously. Previous research discovered that while immigrant and native students may find support from different relationships, both reported feeling supported (Vedder et al., 2005). This connection, whether from parents, teachers, or peers, is important for immigrant student resiliency as they experience new environments. Patel and Kull (2011) discovered that students in early stages of immigration experience elevated psychological symptoms as they adapted to a new environment and culture. Further, Pisani et al. (2012) discovered that students with positive connections were more likely to seek help from peers and teachers during times of grief. If immigrant students have strong connections, as this study suggests, they may be more likely to show resilience during this stressful time.

Another possible explanation for finding no relationship between connections and immigrant status may be due to the present study’s definition of immigrant status. Immigrant status was determined as a student born outside of the U.S., however the definition did not distinguish between recent or past immigration. Students may have immigrated to the U.S. shortly after birth, which may help them to create positive connections with their peers. Additionally, this study did not separate the different types of connection. It is suggested that
immigrant students experience support from different people than their native born peers (Vedder et al., 2005). This may be an important distinction in future research.

There were three limitations with this study that should be noted. First, while the sample size was large, the sampling method was not randomized because archival data was used from an existing database. The sample, therefore, cannot be generalized to all immigrant students in the Western U.S.

The second limitation regards statistical power. The sample size was so large that it was overpowered. Overpowered results are obtained when the sample size is so large it is able to detect even the smallest difference in samples. This leads to statistically significant results that may not be clinically significant (Hochster, 2008).

Third, while immigrant status was included as an independent variable, no other aspects were included such as country of origin or age of immigration. Chiswick and DeBurman (2004) showed the age of a child’s immigration correlated with educational completion, which may further explain the correlation of immigration status and resiliency skills. Additionally, Patel and Kull (2011) found that students who have recently immigrated experience increased psychological distress, which reflects different findings than the current study. Future research should look at differentiating by country of origin or age of immigration.

The findings of the current study may have implications for licensed school counselors and school counselor educators. School counselors and counselor trainees are ethically required to be competent providers of multicultural counseling. Practitioners are required to practice effectively with clients whose identities differ from their own (American School Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics, n.d.). School counselors must be purposeful in discovering the unique needs of each of their students with specific attention paid to immigrant, first-generation,
or socioeconomic needs. The American School Counselor Association’s national model prepares counselors to address the whole child through a program focused on the whole child (2012). This comprehensive program aims to meet the needs of students in academic, personal social, and career and college counseling.

The results of this study set a foundation for future research in the arena of school counseling and school culture development. Such research may help to provide insights into best practices for school counselors, parent engagement, and dropout prevention. Future research should continue to explore the various needs of this special population in order to focus on closing the achievement gap. Three directions for future research are discussed.

The first area for future research would be to “dig deeper” into the specific needs of these students. The measure utilized in this study has subcategories that may provide more insight into the needs of immigrant students. Stress, for example, includes academic, social, and financial stresses students are experiencing. It may be that immigrant students experience decreased skills in one specific subcategory of resiliency that may provide needed insight into supporting this population.

The second area for future research would be to delve into resiliency skills for students from varying countries of origin. Students from Europe are likely to have different experiences than students from Vietnam, which may provide additional insight for schools and school counselors looking to define best practices.

A third area for future research may focus on first generation and socioeconomic needs of immigrant students. Researchers in the literature review pointed out that many immigrant families move because their highly educated parents may be looking for greater occupational opportunity (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). Refugee populations may be an area for focus for future
research as trauma challenges may lead to different resiliency skills and therefore require different interventions.

In summary, the findings from this research suggest that the relationship between immigrant status and resiliency is complex and much is still not known. In particular, the relationship between immigrant status and the various resiliency skills varied. Immigrant students were found to have a stronger understanding of the importance of education and a lower sense of wellbeing. Given the importance of well-being to academic and personal outcomes, further research on the relationship of well-being and immigrant status is warranted.
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doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2013.01.004


doi:10.1111/j.0008-4085.2004.003_1.x
Table 1

*Correlations Between Resiliency Variables and Immigration Status*

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<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
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<td>-0.057*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.079*</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Well-being</td>
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<td>0.474*</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>-0.218*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Importance of Education</td>
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<td>-0.088*</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.248*</td>
<td>-0.064*</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigration Status</td>
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<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>0.043*</td>
<td>0.036</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

*Note.* All correlations were analyzed using a Pearson’s *r* except for correlations involving immigration status where a point-biserial was employed (*r*<sub>pb</sub)). *p < .05
CHAPTER 3

A RESEARCH MANUSCRIPT

SCHOOL COUNSELOR RELATIONSHIP AND IMMIGRANT STUDENT OUTCOMES
School Counselor Relationship and Immigrant Student Outcomes

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Abstract

Postsecondary aspirations were compared for immigrant students who met with their school counselor to those who did not meet with a school counselor in a large urban school district in the Western U.S. The rates of planned, self-reported college matriculation were compared for students who met with a school counselor for any reason to those who did not meet with a school counselor while enrolled in secondary school. Results showed that immigrant students who met with a school counselor reported higher college matriculation plans than those who did not. These findings suggest that school counselor interventions to increase postsecondary aspirations among immigrant students may be useful.

*Keywords:* postsecondary, school counselor, immigrant students
School Counselor Relationship for Immigrant Student Outcomes

Johari’s Window (Luft & Ingham, 1955) best describes school counselors’ relationship to the issue of immigrant students and the transition to college. Specifically, the window where neither the self nor others know the information. This “blindness” is not new. According to Reed (1947), the postsecondary matriculation rate has been a concern in the United States since the early 1900s, with the first wave of career counseling starting just before World War I. With few educators focused on career education and the first inklings of guidance in 1910, it was a slow progress to the focused effort it is today. With the launch of Sputnik and the passage of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, nation-wide education began focusing on student educational attainment. The continued focus on this attainment is currently evident by a large number of state and federal education initiatives. Unfortunately, little is known about the educational attainment rates of a rapidly increasing immigrant student population.

The poverty rate among immigrants in the United States was an alarming 6.4% higher than nonimmigrants (Camarota, 2015) and hit a record high of 41.3 million individuals in 2013, representing 13.1% of residents (legal and undocumented) in the U.S. As such, research extending known attainment predictors to immigrant student population is merited.

There exists a robust literature on the importance of postsecondary training to the overall health of an individual and family. As higher paying jobs require postsecondary education an individual’s educational attainment can significantly impact their lifestyle in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). According to Wolfe and Haveman (2002), an individual’s overall education level impacts wage earnings throughout their lifetime as well as other indicators of well-being, including adult and child health, criminal behavior, and even familial relationships. Increasing postsecondary education attainment consequently is the easiest way to
move families off human services, close the wage gap, and increase family engagement, making it a major social justice issue for educational professionals. Such consequences make understanding postsecondary education attainment trends imperative.

An immense pool of literature points to specific trends in educational attainment rates seen across the United States. A significant concern is the gap that perseveres between students of minority and majority status in postsecondary education achievement (Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004). This gap creates persistent variances in wages and, therefore, causes lifelong equity issues for individuals. Most markedly, immigrants, Hispanics, and African Americans lag behind non-Hispanic individuals in educational attainment (Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004; Camarota, 2015). This lag causes a perpetual cycle of inequity among these groups. Trends show that students from diverse origins experience a difference in educational attainment with only 2.5% of immigrant students graduating from postsecondary education (Camarota, 2015).

Immigrant status is related to education attainment and socioeconomic status in a number of studies (Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004; Camarota, 2015; Ryan & Sieben, 2012). The U.S. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services identifies the federal poverty level at just over $24,000 for a family of four. Those who are foreign-born show greater disparities in postsecondary educational attainment and, therefore, an increase in poverty rates according to the U.S. Census (Ryan & Siebens, 2012). According to the Center for Immigrant Studies, 47% of immigrants and their U.S. born children live in poverty. In terms of socioeconomic status, it should be noted that, “... immigrants make significant progress the longer they reside in the United States but even established immigrants still lag well behind natives” (Center for Immigrant Studies, 2015, p. 12). Indeed, immigrant income is lower than native resident income at almost every age (Camarota, 2015).
A body of research has also shown that the age of an immigrant child at the time of immigration has a critical impact on their long-term educational attainment. According to Chiswick and DebBurman (2004), students who immigrate between the ages of 5 to 19 show fewer years of education completion than those who immigrate at an earlier age. Those who immigrate at an older age show higher dropout rates in secondary school, higher poverty rates, and lower postsecondary attainment. Further complicating postsecondary attainment is the financial burden of out-of-state tuition for immigrants, documented and undocumented, for postsecondary options. The Pew Hispanic Center estimated that in 2010 more than one million of the 74 million children under the age of 18 in the United States had undocumented status (Passel & Cohn, 2011; Stepler & Brown, 2015). The challenges immigrant students face may keep them from furthering their education and qualifying for jobs with a livable wage. Predictors shown to have a relationship in postsecondary enrollment include (a) race/ethnicity, (b) socioeconomic status, (c) first generation status, and (d) number of applications completed (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011). While immigrant students face many of these barriers when transitioning to postsecondary education, school counselors can support immigrant students in their postsecondary education enrollment challenges.

The American School Counselor Association (2012) has designated three domains within school counselors’ scope of practice. These domains are: (a) academic counseling, (b) personal/social counseling, and (c) career counseling. Within each domain, a school counselor may provide services through varied modalities including (a) individual counseling with a one-on-one setting, (b) group counseling in small group settings with targeted students in groups of 8 to 10, and (c) classroom guidance. Postsecondary advisement issues occur across all three domains.
A growing body of research supports the influence of school counselors in increasing postsecondary plans of diverse students. African-American students are more likely to seek out a school counselor for postsecondary advisement than their white counterparts (Bryan et al., 2011). Hispanic students who met with a school counselor prior to their 10th-grade year were more likely to apply to colleges. Interestingly, however, the U.S. trend shows that diverse students are less likely to have a school counselor, a highly trained school counselor, or counselors with caseloads sufficient for prioritizing college counseling over other non-school counseling related duties (McDonough, 2005; Plank & Jordan, 2001). While school counselor support has been shown to impact on student postsecondary aspirations, many are unable to provide the service. This clarification further defines the role a school counselor should play in increasing postsecondary enrollment.

Bryan et al. (2011) reported that a school counselor offering more individualized, concrete support in the college application process, such as college essay or financial aid form assistance, can positively impacting postsecondary matriculation. Additional research has shown that a school counselor’s postsecondary attainment expectations for African-American students can positively influence postsecondary enrollment (Muhammad, 2008). This pool of research has shown the positive relationship between school counselor interaction and postsecondary enrollment. Further research is needed to explore school counselor intervention and its relationship to immigrant students.

Given the aforementioned gaps in the literature, further research on this topic is needed. Specifically, examination of the following two research questions is needed. The first research question was: What is the relationship between immigrant student contact with a school counselor and college as a post-secondary plan? The second research question was: What is the
relationship between immigrant status and utilization of a school counselor for career and college planning?

Method

Design. The study employed a cross-sectional observational design where all measurements from students were taken at the same point in time. (Mann, 2003) The variables examined include a self-reported plan for after high school graduation versus self-reported meeting with the school counselor for immigrant high school students.

Before accessing the raw data, an *a priori* power analysis for Chi-Square Test of Association was completed by employing G* Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). The effect size for this type of analysis is Cohen’s *w* (Cohen, 1988). The specific effect size was obtained from Graells-Garrido, Lalmas, and Baeza-Yates (2015). The input parameters were: (a) test family = $\chi^2$; (b) statistical test = contingency tables; (c) type of power analysis = *a priori*: compute required sample size given $\alpha$, power and effect size; (d) $w = 0.31$; (e) power (1-$\beta$ err probability) = 0.95; (f) $\alpha = 0.05$; and (g) degrees of freedom ($df$) = 1. The G*Power 3.1 output noted a sample size of 136 and an actual power of 0.95.

Participants. Data were collected from students enrolled in the 12th grade in a large urban school district in the Western U.S. in 2013-14 school year. Analyses were limited to students who completed the Senior Exit survey, and data were obtained for the period May 15, 2014, through June 9, 2014, in order to include the entire graduating 12th grade student population. The sample of 2,407 students ranged in age from 17 to 18. Of the population, 1,116 students identified as male and 1,291 students identified as female. The participant sample was racially and ethnically diverse, with 1,799 students identifying as non-White and 608 students
identified as non-Hispanic White. Of those who identified as non-White, 432 identified as Black or African American, 1,143 identified as Hispanic or Latino/a, 117 identified as Asian American, 3 identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 11 identified as Native American.

In the Student Information Database, student data was collected on GPA, race, ethnicity, age, and immigration status. Data on student reported plan and school counselor intervention was collected in Naviance after a 19-question self-report survey on the reported student postsecondary plan, barriers to postsecondary, and college and career interventions the student participated in.

**Immigrant status.** Immigrant students were identified through the Student Information Database. Immigrant status was identified by families including the date when they enrolled in a large urban school district in the Western U.S. Immigrant status was given to all students enrolled but born in a country outside of the United States. Immigrant status was coded 0 (US Born) or 1 (Immigrant).

**College aspiration status.** Postsecondary plans were collected in one question on the Senior Exit Survey. The question “What are your plans for the fall?” was presented in a drop down menu including the following options: “Join the Military,” “Continuing my education at a technical/vocational college,” “Continuing my education in an apprenticeship program,” “Continuing my education at a two-year or community college,” “Continuing my education at a four-year college or university,” “Working 20+ hours per week,” “Not sure at this time,” or “Other, please list.” This information was used to identify students as either planning to go to college or not planning to go to college. Students who answered that they planned to attend a
“two-year or community college” or a “four-year college or university” were coded as 1 (Yes). Students who answered any of the other options were coded as 0 (No).

Met with a school counselor status. The following question was used to identify students who met with their school counselor for academic, career, or personal/social reasons: “I have met with my School Counselor about (check all that apply).” In the answer, there were 16 options. These options lead to the following response categories: (a) no meeting with a school counselor (coded as None = 1); (b) 12 items that specified that the student met with the school counselor for academic reasons and/or personal/social reasons, but not career and college reasons (coded as Academic/Personal = 2); and (c) 3 items that specified the student met with the school counselor for career and college reasons (coded as Career Only = 3).

Procedures. De-identified data were obtained from the district’s Senior Exit Survey as well as student information. Original data were collected from students enrolled in the 12th grade about to graduate. Data collected from student records included GPA, age, race, immigration date, and ethnicity (i.e., Hispanic or non-Hispanic); data self-reported on the Senior Exit Survey included whether they had a Postsecondary Plan and if they had met with their school counselor.

Data analysis. Prior to the statistical analysis, a missing data examination was conducted and found that 6% of the values were missing for both questions. These values were replaced using SPSS’ multiple imputation procedure (IBM Corporation, 2012). For both research questions, a 2 X 2 contingency table was created and used to conduct a Pearson’s chi-square test (Pearson, 1900). If the chi-square test was significant at $p \leq 0.05$, then a Yule’s Q analysis was conducted to assess the strength of the relationship (Yule, 1912).
Results

There were 2,407 high school graduate student responses studied. Overall, 1,998 students (83%) were born in the United States and 409 (17%) were immigrant students. The percentage of U.S. born and immigrant students that met with a school counselor was almost the same (95.90% to 95.84%).

In terms of the first research question, immigrant status (0 = U.S. Born, 1 = Immigrant) was plotted versus utilization of a school counselor for career and college planning status (0 = No, 1 = Yes) (see Table 1). The chi-square test showed a statistically significant association between immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor for career and college planning, $\chi^2 (1, N = 2407) = 4.35, p = 0.037$. The strength of the association between these two variables was found to be -0.11. Davis (1971) described a correlation of this strength as “a low negative correlation” (p. 49).

To answer the second research question, met with a school counselor status (0 = No, 1 = Yes) was plotted against college aspiration status (0 = No, 1 = Yes) on the horizontal axis (see Table 2). The chi-square test showed a statistically significant association between met with a school counselor status and college aspiration status, $\chi^2 (1, N = 409) = 6.097, p = 0.014$. The strength of the association between these two variables was found to be 0.28. Davis (1971) described a correlation of this strength as “a low positive correlation” (p. 49).

Discussion

There was a statistically significant relationship between student immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor for career and college planning. Immigrant students reported a lower rate of meeting with their school counselor on these topics than their U.S. born
counterparts. The findings also demonstrated a statistical significance in having met with a school counselor and reporting postsecondary aspirations for immigrant students. Immigrant students who met with their school counselor for career and college planning were more likely to report college as an aspiration than their peers who did not. These findings were consistent with previous research indicating immigrant and first generation students were less likely to matriculate to college (Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004; Camarota, 2015; Ryan & Siebens, 2012; Warburton, Burgarin, & Nunez, 2001; Wolfe & Haveman, 2002)

In reference to the first research question, two possible reasons for a negative relationship between immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor for career and college planning should be considered. One possible reason is that many immigrant students are non-English speaking and are required to take additional coursework in English Language Acquisition. Additional content may limit student access to other academic offerings such as college level or career focused coursework. This is consistent with the tendency for first generation and immigrant students to take less rigorous coursework (Warburton et al., 2001). The On-Time Graduation rate for active English Language Learners in a large urban district in the Western United States was 47.3% which was lower than their non-ELL counterparts at 63.9% (2016). This trend is seen in the entire state of Colorado with migrant students graduating at a rate of 63.7% compared to the state average of 77.3% (Colorado Department of Education, 2014). Students eager to graduate but behind in graduation requirements may be less likely to meet with their school counselor on career and college readiness because they are meeting with their counselors for academic concerns.

A second possible explanation comes from previous research suggesting that immigrant students tend to place a high value on the support and encouragement they receive from those
they have close relationships with. Fuligni (1997) discovered that students in this population reported strong support from peers and families that included postsecondary education. In many U.S. schools, school counselor ratios are higher than the recommended average of 250 : 1 (American School Counselor Association, 2015), which may result in decreased access to a school counselor. This is consistent with research that even a slight decrease in first-generation-student to counselor ratio is associated with an increase in highly-qualified students going to college (Pham & Keenan, 2011). American College Test (2004) reported students were equally likely to report the influence of the teachers as their counselors on postsecondary planning. Immigrant students may have sought support from individuals they had stronger relationships with as suggested by previous research (ACT, 2004; Fulgini, 1997).

In reference to the second research question, there are two possible reasons for the positive association between met with a school counselor status and college aspiration status that should be contemplated. The present study only included first generation immigrant students and supports that immigrant students who met with their school counselor for career and college planning reported a significant increase in plans to attend college over their immigrant student counterparts who did not meet with a school counselor for these topics. These findings are consistent with research that students from varying backgrounds are more likely to apply for college if they meet individually with a school counselor for college planning (Bryan et al., 2011; Hurwitz & Howell, 2013; Pham & Keenan, 2011).

One possible explanation is that having the support of a school counselor through career and college counseling increases the likelihood that a student feels compelled to attend college. Pham and Keenen (2011) found that increased access to a school counselor increased four-year college going rates among first generation students. Likewise, Hurwitz and Howell (2013) found
as much as a 10% increase in college-going rates when access to a school counselor was improved. Bryan et al. (2011) found that Asian American and Black students who met with a school counselor were more likely to apply to two or more schools versus none.

Another possible explanation for a positive relationship between postsecondary aspirations and meeting with a school counselor for career and college planning for immigrant students may be explained by previous research, showing that first and second generation immigrants from specific backgrounds impacted a student’s postsecondary aspirations (Fuligni, 1997). Students with lower family income, parents without postsecondary education, or languages other than English spoken at home had lower grades and were less likely to show aspirations that included school after high school.

Further explanation may come from the association between low income students and perceived financial barriers to postsecondary education. Immigrant families are more likely to live in poverty than nonimmigrant families (Ryan & Siebens, 2012). In 2012, 51% of immigrant households with one or more workers accessed one or more welfare programs, as did 28% of working native households. (Camarota, 2015). Applying for FAFSA and other forms of financial aid can be difficult; however, it is one of the most important steps for low-income students. (Roderick, Nagaoka, Coca, Moeller, 2008) For many first generation or non-native English speaking families, these steps need to be completed with adequate support and guidance (Roderick et al., 2008). A further complication is that some immigrant students may be undocumented, which further limits their college and financial aid access. Meeting with a school counselor may help immigrant students and families understand what college and financing options exist.
While the present study focused on postsecondary aspirations it is interesting to discuss research that goes further in exploring immigrant student postsecondary educational attainment. Fuligni and Witkow (2004) compare the postsecondary attainment of first and second generation immigrant students to their U.S. born peers. History of immigration had no impact on students from immigrant families pursuing and performing in college at comparative levels of their U.S. born peers (Fuligni & Witkos, 2004). It was found, however, that youth from families with less parental education and family income had lower rates of postsecondary enrollment and persistence.

There are four limitations to this study that should be noted. The first limitation is that the population studied came from a single large urban school district. Thus, it is unknown to what extent the results of this study can be generalized to the high school population in general. The second limitation is that this study examined associations between variables. As such, no causal paths between the variables can be posited.

A third limitation is that the data utilized were only collected from students who were graduating, not from students in that class who dropped out or were behind in graduation. The large urban school district used for this study had a dropout rate of 4.5% for the 2014 graduating class. This class also showed higher dropout rates for black and Hispanic students compared to their white or Asian peers. Immigrant students may be at a higher rate of dropout or be off track to graduate more regularly as often times English Language Learners take more than four years to complete graduation requirements.

A final limitation that should be noted is that some immigrant students may have declined to give a country of origin in their registration process. With the political environment surrounding undocumented status, some students are afraid to divulge this information if they
feel it may put them or their family at risk. Since no follow up documentation is required, families are self-reporting this information. Related to this limitation is that while immigrant status was included, country of origin or immigration at various ages were not included. Chiswick and DeBurman (2004) showed educational completion as correlating with the child’s age at time of immigration.

The findings of the current study may have implications for licensed school counselors and school counselor educators. Ethically, school counselors and counselor trainees are required to be competent providers of multicultural counseling and be able to practice effectively with clients whose identities differ from their own (American School Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics, n.d.). School counselors likely need to be more purposeful in meeting with immigrant students about career and college planning. The American School Counselor Association’s national model prepares counselors to address the whole child through a comprehensive program (2012). This comprehensive program aims to meet the needs of students in academic, personal, social, and career and college counseling. Immigrant students may be in need of career and college counseling and are not receiving it.

School counselors looking to implement stronger career and college counseling programs should consider the specific needs of immigrant students. Career and college counseling of immigrant students should include career assessments sensitive to diverse populations and offered in multiple languages. School counselors should also seek out colleges that have engagement programs or significant populations of immigrant students to allow for relationship creation and college persistence.

Leveraging family members and peers in career and college counseling activities may also be impactful for immigrant students. Fuligni (1997) noted that immigrant students who have
family and peer support for achieving a college degree were more likely to matriculate and persist. College visits that include family members may also support immigrant student aspirations, particularly those whose parents did not attend college.

School counselors and school counselors in training are charged with promoting social justice and advocacy of diverse populations (American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics, n.d.). While this article expanded Johari’s Window (Luft & Ingham, 1955), increasing school counselors’ relationship to immigration and the transition to college, more work is needed to identify ways school counselors can best support these students. To fill the gaps in existing literature, research should be conducted to further expand school counselor knowledge of interventions involved using quantitative or qualitative methods.

Implications for Research

These conclusions set a foundation for further research in the arena of postsecondary aspirations and matriculation to college. Such research may help to provide insight into methods for best practices for school counselors and career and college counseling.

This study suggests many avenues for future research. Currently there is very little research regarding immigrant students and postsecondary aspirations. Access to school counselors, culturally competent practices, inclusive state laws, and college access programs differ in each school environment.

Consistency and quality of school counseling practices are important layers that require additional research and attention. Additional training is needed for school counselors on career and college counseling for immigrant students as the population continues to grow in the U.S. There is also need for increased resources for these students in state and college admissions and financial aid policies.
Future research is needed to examine the various needs of immigrant students and compare them to existing practices and resources. Some topics that are as of yet unresolved are sources of the difference between immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor on career and college topics, roles of caseload size on immigrant student postsecondary aspirations, school counseling best practices for career and college counseling for immigrant students, and documentation status’ role on postsecondary aspirations. Other variables worth further investigative research include the potential impact of academic self-efficacy and college self-efficacy on immigrant student postsecondary aspirations. For example, would academic self-efficacy impact immigrant student postsecondary aspirations? Would college self-efficacy impact immigrant student postsecondary aspirations?

Legislation, while not addressed in this research, is another extremely important area that is worthy of future study. Carefully created and implemented legislation regarding immigrant and undocumented student access may impact postsecondary aspirations and college matriculation. The state of Colorado has created the ASCENT legislation, which allows students who have enrolled for three years and graduated from Colorado high schools to gain in-state tuition rates at local universities. While legislation does not address the financial needs of immigrant students many institutions have created policies and scholarships for these students. As of July 2013, 18 states have adopted state laws and policies on access to higher education for immigrants (National Immigration Law Center; 2013). Other states, including Montana, Alabama, and South Carolina have created state laws that ban enrollment of undocumented students, which will create extra challenges for immigrant students and their school counselors (National Immigration Law Center, 2013).
In summary, the findings from this research indicate that school counseling practices in career and college counseling for immigrant students are not standardized and that the unique needs of immigrant students are not fully understood. There is no relationship between immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor, but there is a low negative relationship between immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor on career and college counseling. Further, there is a low positive relationship with postsecondary aspirations and a student having met with a school counselor for career and college counseling for immigrant students. Such relationships indicate that immigrant students who meet with a school counselor for career and college counseling may have increased postsecondary aspirations including college.
References

American College Test. (2004). Crisis at the core: Preparing all students for college and work (Rep.). Iowa City, IA: Author. Retrieved from:
http://www.csun.edu/~rinstitute/Content/policy/Crisis%20at%20the%20Core.pdf


Pearson, K. (1900). On the criterion that a given system of deviations from the probable in the case of a correlated system of variables is such that it can be reasonably supposed to have


http://www.bostonfed.org/economic/conf/conf47/conf47g.pdf

Table 1

Contingency Table For Immigrant Status By Met With A Counselor On Career And College Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigrant Status</th>
<th>Met for Career/College</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>Q</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>4.3524*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(81.01)</td>
<td>(84.29)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>230</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(18.98)</td>
<td>(15.71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate column percentages. * = p ≤ 0.05.
Table 2

*Contingency Table For Met With A Counselor By Postsecondary Aspirations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Met with a School Counselor on Career and College</th>
<th>Postsecondary aspirations</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>$Q$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.0968*</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(53.51)</td>
<td>(40.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(46.49)</td>
<td>(60.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Numbers in parentheses indicate column percentages. *$p \leq 0.05$.*
CHAPTER 4
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the findings of the previous two studies will be discussed and explored and recommendations for future research will be outlined. Specifically, the chapter will contain the following summaries: findings from the first study, limitations of the first study, discussion of the results of the first study, recommendations from the first study, findings from the second study, limitations of the second study, discussion of the results of the second study, and recommendations from the second study.

Findings from First Study

There were 3,170 8th grade student responses studied. Overall, 2,735 students (86.3%) were born in the United States and 435 (13.7%) were immigrant students. The first research question examined the relationship between confidence and immigrant status. The point-biserial correlation test showed almost no linear correlation between confidence and immigrant status, \( r_{pb} (1, N = 3070) = 0.018, p = 0.320 \) (see Chapter 2, Table 1). The second research question explored the relationship between stress and immigrant status. The point-biserial correlation test showed almost no linear correlation association between stress and immigrant status, \( r_{pb} (1, N = 2936) = 0.016, p = 0.40 \) (see Table 1). The third research question investigated the relationship between motivation and immigrant status. The point-biserial correlation test showed almost no linear correlation association between motivation and immigrant status, \( r_{pb} (1, N = 2791) = 0.010, p = 0.60 \) (see Table 1). The fourth research question considered the relationship between connections and immigrant status. The point-biserial correlation test showed almost no linear correlation between connections and immigrant status, \( r_{pb} (1, N = 3001) = 0.031, p = 0.094 \) (see Table 1). The fifth research question studied the relationship between well-being and immigrant
status. The point-biserial correlation test showed almost no linear correlation between well-being and immigrant status, $r_{pb}(1, N = 2830) = 0.043, p = 0.015$ (see Table 1). The sixth research question regarded the relationship between understanding the importance of education and immigrant status. The point-biserial correlation test showed a significant but minimal association between understanding the importance of education and immigrant status, $r_{pb}(1, N = 3170) = 0.036, p = 0.047$ (see Table 1).

**Limitations of First Study**

There were three limitations within this study that should be noted. First, while the sample size was large, the sampling method was not randomized because archival data was used from an existing database. The sample, therefore, should not be generalized to all immigrant students in the state of Colorado.

Second, while immigrant status was included as an independent variable, no other aspects were included such as country of origin or age of immigration. Chiswick and DeBurman (2004) showed that the age when a child immigrated correlated with educational completion which may further explain the correlation of immigration status and resiliency skills.

The third limitation related to statistical power. The sample size was overpowered. Overpowered results are obtained when the sample size is so large it is able to detect even the smallest difference in samples. This leads to statistically significant results that may not be clinically significant (Hochster, 2008).

**Discussion of Results of First Study**

The results produced different outcomes with regard to resiliency factors and immigrant students. On one hand, a small, yet statistically significant relationship between both well-being, understanding the importance of education, and student immigrant status was discovered. On the
other hand, immigrant status and the other resiliency factors were found to be unrelated. Possible explanations for these results will be addressed for each resiliency factor.

In terms of well-being and student immigrant status (i.e., RQ #5), there are three possible reasons that this result was encountered. However, before addressing these possibilities it should be noted that while statistically significant the difference between immigrant and U.S. born students in well-being was very small. This draws into question whether the results are clinically significant as the difference is so small. According to the measure, the well-being category includes feeling blue, feelings of agitation, and problems with sleeping, eating, or physical health (Solberg et al., 2010). The results of this survey were consistent with previous research that immigrant students experienced a lower level of well-being (De Haan & MacDermid, 1998; Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004; Marin & Brown, 2008; Patel & Kull, 2011).

Some previous research explains that students who have recently immigrated experience symptoms of grief from the loss of leaving their country of origin (Patel & Kull, 2011). The loss of a social structure as well as the need for adapting to a new environment may lead to feelings of depression or agitation and result in problems with eating or sleeping as detected in the ScholarCentric measures (Solberg et al., 2010). It is interesting to note that in previous research this agitation was less detectable according to school staff in immigrant students than their native born peers. This lack of detection may lead to a lack of active support, especially in students who do not actively seek help. A perceived lack of support from school staff may lead to decreased well-being in students, as well.

Fredriksen and Rhodes (2004) found that middle school students who perceived increased teacher support reported fewer depressive symptoms. This further explains why immigrant students may experience decreased well-being. If immigrant students are unable to
relate to school staff or do not feel supported because of language barriers, they may experience higher levels of depression and/or agitation. Further complicating this lack of well-being may be a lack of knowledge about support available to students in a school, such as school counselors.

A third reason for the difference in well-being for immigrant students compared to nonimmigrant students could be explained by identity development. De Hann and MacDermid (1998) found that middle school students who possessed stronger identity development were more likely to experience decreased levels of depression and loneliness. Identity development is comprised of a student’s confidence in their religious beliefs, relationships with other students, family and friends, knowledge in their career goals, and confidence in their ethnic background. Immigrant students may struggle with their identity development as a result of a new environment and struggle to relate to new peers or cultures.

There may be two possible explanations for the small but significant relationship found between understanding the importance of education and immigrant status. Previous research in the U.S. suggested that immigrant parents place a greater emphasis on schooling and the academic success of their students as they believe education is the most significant way for a child to improve life (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Golan & Petersen, 2002; Louie, 2001). Contrary to previous research this study found very little difference for immigrant status in terms of understanding the importance of education. One plausible explanation for this finding involves technology.

One explanation for finding only a relationship between understanding the importance of education and immigrant status may come from the support and information found through wide access of internet and platforms such as social media. Wohn et al. (2013) found that students, regardless of first generation status, reported fairly high expectations of succeeding in college.
Interestingly, Wohn et al. discovered that first generation students were utilizing Facebook Friends who were currently in or graduated from college as a type of support and this access increased participants’ expectations of their success in college. It is hypothesized that witnessing positive examples of individuals from similar backgrounds—socioeconomically, racially, and otherwise—may play a positive role and increase college going self-efficacy (Wohn et al., 2013). As social media plays a more significant role in adolescent life, this access may alleviate challenges that first generation or immigrant students might face.

The first research question (RQ#1) explored the relationship between immigrant status and confidence. The confidence measure employed examined social, classroom, and test-taking confidence. The results showed no difference in confidence for immigrant students compared with their U.S. born counterparts. This result is consistent with previous research, which shows that immigrant student confidence and academic performance is as good as or better than their nonimmigrant counterparts (Areepattamannil & Freeman, 2008; Hansen & Kucera, 2003; Schleicher, 2006; Worswick, 2004). There are two potential explanations for this finding.

Research on immigrant confidence remains scarce, however some research suggests that many immigrant students experience a family environment that is supportive of academic achievement (Fuligni & Hardway, 2004). There may be two explanations for this supportive environment that may lead to academic confidence. Previous research found that some immigrant families received high levels of education in their country of origin and have immigrated in order to find greater occupational opportunity for themselves and their children (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003). Additionally, some researchers have found that immigrant parents believe education is an important way to better their student’s life and therefore instill this belief
in their students. This supportive environment at home may impact a student’s confidence in their academics and provide support for taking more challenging coursework.

A second consideration that was not explored in the current study is be the link between academic confidence and academic achievement. Cokley and Patel (2007) discovered that academic self-concept was positively related to grade point average. While the current study did not control for grade point average, it has been found that students who experience success in one area of school, English for example, experience increased self-concept (Cokley, 2007). Cokley discovered that academic confidence can be found to both cause and result in academic achievement. If immigrant students are experiencing levels of success in their education similar to that of their U.S. born peers it may result in the comparable confidence as found in this research.

The second question in this study was regarding the relationship between immigrant status and stress. Stress for this study was described as the academic, social, and financial stress a student is experiencing. Contrary to previous research this study found no relationship. There may be two explanations for this incongruity.

The first explanation for this finding may come from the generally low income of student participants in this study. While financial stress is one of three aspects in this measure, there was little difference in poverty status for immigrant (87%) and nonimmigrant (88%) students as measured by free and reduced lunch status. While this study did not separate specific subcategories in this measure, it may be that all students are experiencing a similar amount of financial stress and therefore the overall measure of stress did not identify any dissimilarities between the populations.
The second explanation for discovering no relationship between stress and immigrant status may be that students have found support for academic and emotional stress through positive relationships with school staff. Vedder et al. (2005) discovered that immigrant students perceived more academic support from their teachers than their native born peers did. Native born students identified more academic support from their parents as influential (Vedder et al., 2005). Immigrant students may be reaching out to their teachers and school staff to find the support they need to cope with their stress.

The third question in this study explored the relationship between immigrant status and motivation. Motivation for this study was described as school being meaningful and enjoyable. Contrary to existing research (Areepattamannil & Freeman, 2008; Fuligni & Hardway, 2004; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Tseng, 2004), no relationship was found between immigrant status and motivation in this study. There is at least one possible explanation for this discrepancy from other research.

Previous research has shown that immigrant parents place a high value on education pursuits for increased future income so they can support the family (Tseng, 2004). Tseng discovered that immigrant students feel a responsibility to their families to provide financial support and repayment. The current study had an almost equal number of immigrant (87%) and nonimmigrant students (88%) as identified as free and reduced lunch, or living in poverty.

Poverty in general may result in the parental influence and student feelings of obligation to assist the family that immigrant students have felt in previous studies. Personal relationships or connections could play a more important role and have shown to impact academic motivation, and even engagement in negative behaviors such as drug use and violence in other research (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997).
The fourth question in this study explored the relationship between immigrant status and connections. Connections included feeling supported by peers, families, and teachers. The current study confirmed previous research when it found no relationship between connections and immigrant status. There are two possible explanations for this result.

The first possible explanation for finding no relationship between immigrant status and connections may be due to the present study’s definition of immigrant status. Immigrant status was determined as a student born outside of the U.S., however study did not differentiate between recent or past immigration. Students may have immigrated to the U.S. in early childhood, which may help them to relate to and create positive connections with their peers. Additionally, this study did not separate the different types of personal connection explored differentiating between peer, teacher and family relationships specifically. It is suggested that immigrant students experience support from different people than their native born peers (Vedder et al., 2005). This may be an important distinction in future research.

Another possible explanation may reflect the same concepts of self-identity mentioned previously. Previous research discovered that while immigrant and native students may find their support from different relationships, both reported feeling supported (Vedder et al., 2005). This support, whether from peers, teachers, or family, is important for immigrant student resiliency as they experience new cultures and environments. Patel and Kull (2011) discovered that students in early stages of immigration experience more detrimental psychological symptoms as they adapt to a new environment and culture. Further, Pisani et al. (2012) discovered that students with positive connections are more likely to seek help from peers and teachers during times of depression and grief. If immigrant students have strong connections, as this study suggests, they may be more likely to show resilience during this stressful time.
Recommendations Based on First Study

The findings of the current study may have implications for school counselor educators, licensed school counselors, and school counselors in training. School counselors are ethically required to be knowledgeable providers of multicultural counseling. Practitioners are required to practice effectively with clients whose identities vary from their own (American School Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics, n.d.). School counselors must be intentional in learning the unique needs of each of their students with specific attention paid to immigrant, first-generation, or socioeconomic needs. The American School Counselor Association’s (2012) national model prepares counselors to address the whole child through a program focused on the whole child. This comprehensive program aims to meet the needs of students in academic, personal, social, and career and college counseling.

The results of this study set ground work for future research in school counseling, dropout prevention, and school culture development. Such research may help to provide insight into best practices for school counseling, parent engagement, and dropout prevention. Future research should continue to explore the varied needs of students in order to focus on closing the achievement gap. Three directions for future research are discussed.

The first area for future research should delve into resiliency skills for students from varying backgrounds and countries of origin. Students from Europe are likely to have different experiences from students of Vietnam, which may provide additional insight for schools and school counselors looking to define best practices. Refugee students may have unique resiliency skills or needs based on trauma they have experienced.

The second area for future research should explore further the specific needs of these students. The measure used in this study has subcategories that may provide more insight into the
unique needs of immigrant students. Connections, for example, includes relationships with family, teachers, and peers. It may be that immigrant students experience different skills in one specific subcategory of resiliency that may provide needed insight into supporting this population.

A third area for future research may focus on socioeconomic and first generation status of immigrant students. Many researchers in the literature review pointed out that some immigrant families move because their highly educated parents may be looking for greater occupational opportunity. These students may have different resiliency skills than their first generation counterparts.

In summary, the findings from this research suggest that the relationship between resiliency skills and immigrant status is multifaceted and much is still not known. In particular, the relationship between immigrant status and resiliency skills varied. Given the importance of well-being to academic and personal outcomes, further research on the relationship of well-being and immigrant status is warranted.

**Findings from Second Study**

A total of 2,407 high school graduates responses were included in the second study’s chi-square analysis. Of those students, 1,998 students (83%) were born in the United States and 409 (17%) were immigrant students. The percentage of U.S. born and immigrant students that met with a school counselor was almost the same (95.90% to 95.84%).

In analysis of the first research question, immigrant status (0 = US Born, 1 = Immigrant) was placed on vertical axis and was compared to utilization of a school counselor for career and college planning status (0 = No, 1 = Yes) on the horizontal axis (see Chapter 3, Table 1). The chi-square test produced a statistically significant association between meeting with a school
counselor for career and college planning and immigrant status, $\chi^2 (1, N = 2407) = 4.35, p = .037$. The strength of the association between these two variables was found to be -.11. Davis (1971) described a correlation of this strength as “a low negative correlation” (p. 49).

In analysis of the second research question, met with a school counselor status (0 = No, 1 = Yes) was placed on vertical axis and was compared to college aspiration status (0 = No, 1 = Yes) on the horizontal axis (see Table 2). The chi-square test produced a statistically significant association between college aspiration status and met with a school counselor status, $\chi^2 (1, N = 409) = 6.097, p = .014$). The strength of the association between these two variables was found to be .28. Davis (1971) described a correlation of this strength as “a low positive correlation” (p. 49).

**Limitations of Second Study**

There were four limitations within this study that should be noted. First, this study employed a convenience sample, specifically, the population from one urban school district in a Western state. Since a nonrandom sampling procedure was used, the results cannot be generalized to all immigrant students in this region or nationwide. Justification for use of a convenience sample comes from the use of existing data available for study.

Second, while immigrant status was included as an independent variable, no other aspects were, such as country of origin or age of immigration. Students in this set could include a variety of country origins and various lengths of time in the United States. Chiswick and DeBurman (2004) show the age of a child’s immigration as correlating with educational completion, which may further explain the correlation of immigration status and resiliency skills.
The third limitation relates to statistical power. The sample size was also overpowered leading to statistically significant results that may not be clinically significant (Coe, 2002; Hochster, 2008).

Lastly, using a chi-square analysis, a nonparametric inferential statistic, only reports the presence or absence of a relationship between the variables. The findings of this may not be generalizable and do not state anything about the presence of a causal relationship between meeting with a school counselor on career and college counseling and immigrant student postsecondary aspirations.

**Discussion of Results of Second Study**

The findings of this study show a statistically significant relationship between meeting with a school counselor for career and college planning and student immigrant status. Immigrant students reported a lower rate of meeting with their school counselor on these topics than their U.S. born counterparts. The findings also demonstrated a statistical significance for immigrant students who met with a school counselor and their postsecondary aspirations. Immigrant students who met with their school counselor for career and college planning were more likely to report college as an aspiration than their peers who did not. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating immigrant and first generation students are less likely to matriculate to college (Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004; Camarota, 2015; Ryan & Siebens, 2012; Warburton et al., 2001; Wolfe & Haveman, 2002)

For the first research question, there are two possible reasons for a negative relationship between immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor for career and college planning that should be considered. One possible reason is that many immigrant students are required to take additional coursework in English Language Acquisition because they come from a non-
English speaking background. This is consistent with Warburton et al. (2001) research findings that first generation and immigrant students tend to take less rigorous coursework in high school. In the large urban school district used for this study, the On-Time Graduation rate for non-ELL students was 63.9%, higher than active English Language Learners at 47.3% (High School Reports, 2016). This trend is consistent with the state of Colorado where migrant students are graduating at a rate of 63.7% compared to the state average of 77.3% (Colorado Department of Education, 2014). Students eager to graduate but behind in graduation requirements may be less likely to meet with their school counselor on career and college readiness because they are meeting with their counselors for academic concerns.

A second possible explanation for this negative relationship comes from previous research suggesting that immigrant students tend to place a high value on the support and encouragement they receive from those they have close relationships with. Previous research discovered that students in this population reported strong support from peers and families that included postsecondary education (Fuligni, 1997). In most U.S. schools, school counselor ratios are higher than the recommended average of 250 (American School Counselor Association, 2012), which may result in decreased access to a school counselor. This is consistent with research that even a slight decrease in first-generation-student to counselor ratio is associated with an increase in highly-qualified students going to college (Pham & Keenan, 2011). ACT (2004) reported students were equally likely to report the influence of teachers as their counselors on postsecondary planning. It is possible that immigrant students in this study sought support from individuals they had stronger relationships with as suggested by previous research. (ACT, 2004; Fulgini, 1997).
There are at least two possible reasons for the positive association between college aspiration status and met with a school counselor status. The present study, which includes only first generation immigrant students, supports that immigrant students reported a significant increase in plans to attend college if they met with their school counselor for career and college planning compared to their immigrant student counterparts who did not meet with a school counselor for these topics. These findings are consistent with research that students from varying backgrounds are more likely to apply for college if they meet individually with a school counselor for college planning (Bryan et al., 2011; Hurwitz & Howell, 2013; Pham & Keenan, 2011).

One possible explanation for a positive relationship between meeting with a school counselor for career and college planning and postsecondary aspirations for immigrant students may be explained in previous research, which showed that first and second generation immigrants with specific backgrounds impacted a student’s postsecondary aspirations (Fuligni, 1997). Students from low income families, first generation students or students who spoke languages other than English at home had lower grades and were less likely to show aspirations that included school after high school.

Another possible explanation is that having the support of a school counselor through career and college counseling will increase the likelihood that a student feels inspired to attend college. Pham and Keenen (2011) found that increases in four-year college going rates could be tied to increased access to a school counselor among first generation students. Likewise, Hurwitz and Howell (2013) found as much as a 10% increase in college-going rates when access to a school counselor was improved. Furthermore, Bryan et al. (2011) found that Asian American and
Black students who met with a school counselor were more likely to apply to two or more schools versus none.

Additional explanation may come from the association between a low familial income and perceived financial barriers to postsecondary education. Ryan and Sieben (2012) found that immigrant families are more likely to live in poverty than non-immigrant families. In 2012, 51% of immigrant households with one or more workers accessed one or more welfare programs. This is higher than the 28% of working native households (Camarota, 2015). It can be challenging to apply for FAFSA and other forms of financial aid, however this is one of the most important steps for low-income students. (Roderick et al., 2008) For many first generation or non-native English speaking families, FAFSA and other financial aid applications are more likely to be completed when there is adequate support and guidance (Roderick et al., 2008). Further confusing this matter is that some immigrant students may be undocumented, which limits their college and financial aid access. Meeting with a school counselor may help immigrant students and families understand what college and financing options exist.

While the present study only included postsecondary aspirations it is interesting to discuss research that goes further in exploring immigrant student postsecondary educational attainment. Fuligni and Witkow (2004) compare the postsecondary attainment of first and second immigrant students to their U.S. born peers. History of immigration had no relationship to students pursuing and performing in college at comparative levels of their U.S. born peers (Fuligni & Witkow 2004). It was found, however, that youth from families with less parental education and family income resulted in lower rates of postsecondary enrollment and persistence.
**Thematic Link Between Studies and Contribution to the Knowledge Base**

The thematic link between these studies is that they both pertain to interventions and impact school counselors can make in closing the achievement gap for immigrant students. Collectively, these studies add new strands to the collective knowledge about immigrant student experiences in secondary school. The first study contributes to knowledge regarding differences between immigrant and nonimmigrant resiliency skills. The second study examined the correlation between student-counselor contact and postsecondary aspirations for immigrant students. Together, they provide a direction for school counselors in working with immigrant students. If we know that individuals who immigrated to the United States have different resiliency skills or different needs, then school counselors can create interventions specific to this population.

**Recommendations Based on Second Study**

The findings of the current study may have implications for licensed school counselors, school counselors in training, and school counselor educators. Ethically, school counselors and school counselor trainees are required to be skilled providers of multicultural counseling and able to practice effectively with clients whose identities differ from their own (American School Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics, n.d.). School counselors need to be more intentional regarding meeting with immigrant students about career and college planning in addition to other services. The American School Counselor Association’s (2012) national model prepares counselors to address the whole child through a comprehensive program. This comprehensive program aims to meet the needs of students in academic, personal, social, and career and college counseling. It may be that immigrant students are in need of greater career and college counseling and are not accessing it on their own.
School counselors should consider the specific needs of immigrant students when looking to implement stronger career and college counseling programs. Career and college counseling of immigrant students should include career assessments sensitive to diverse backgrounds as well as offering assessments in multiple languages. Additionally, school counselors should seek out colleges that have engagement programs or significant populations of immigrant students to allow for relationship creation and increased college persistence.

Leveraging personal relationships including family members and peers in career and college counseling activities may also be impactful for immigrant students. Fuligni (1997) explains that immigrant students who have family and peer support in college matriculation are more likely to enroll and persist. College visits that include family members may also support immigrant student aspirations, particularly first generation students.

School counselors are charged with promoting social justice and advocacy of diverse populations (American School Counselor Association, n.d.). While this article increased school counselors’ knowledge around the issue of immigrant students and the transition to college, more work should be done to identify ways school counselors can best support these students to eliminate the social disparities and further level the playing field. To fill the gaps in existing literature, research should be continued to decrease the unknown using quantitative or qualitative methods.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

These conclusions set a foundation for further research in the field of postsecondary aspirations and matriculation to college for immigrant students. Such research may help to provide insight into methods for best practices for school counselors in culturally competent career and college counseling.
This study suggests many paths for future research. Currently there is very little research regarding immigrant students and postsecondary aspirations. Access to school counselors, school counseling practices that are culturally competent, inclusive state laws, and college access programs all differ in each state and school environment.

Consistency and quality of school counseling practices are important topics that require additional research and attention. Additional training for school counselors on career and college counseling for immigrant students as the population continues to grow in the U.S. and is important for the future success of immigrant students. There is also need for greater resources for these students in state and college admissions and financial aid policies.

Future research is needed to examine the various needs of diverse and immigrant students and compare them to existing practices and resources. Some topics that are as of yet unresolved are sources of the difference between immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor on career and college topics, the role of caseload size on the postsecondary aspirations of immigrant students, school counseling best practices for career and college counseling for immigrant students, and the relationship of a student’s documentation status on postsecondary aspirations. Other variables worth further investigative research include the potential impact of academic self-efficacy and college self-efficacy on diverse and immigrant student postsecondary aspirations. For example, would academic self-efficacy impact immigrant student postsecondary aspirations? Would college self-efficacy impact immigrant student postsecondary aspirations?

Legislation, while not addressed in the current research study, is another extremely important area that is worthy of future exploration. Carefully created and implemented legislation may impact the postsecondary aspirations of immigrant and undocumented students. The state of Colorado has created the ASCENT legislation, which allows in-state tuition rates at
local universities for students who have enrolled for three years and graduated from Colorado high schools. While legislation does not address the financial needs of immigrant students, many institutions have created policies and scholarships for these students. As of July 2013, 18 states include state laws and policies on access to higher education for immigrants (National Immigration Law Center, 2013). Other states, including Montana, Alabama, and South Carolina have created state laws that ban enrollment for undocumented students, which will create extra challenges for immigrant students and their school counselors (National Immigration Law Center, 2013).

In summary, the findings from this research indicate that the unique needs of immigrant students are not fully understood and that school counseling practices in career and college counseling for immigrant students are not standardized. There is no relationship between immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor, but there is a negative relationship between immigrant status and meeting with a school counselor on career and college counseling. Further, there is a positive relationship with postsecondary aspirations and met with a school counselor for career and college counseling for immigrant students. Such relationships indicate that immigrant students who meet with a school counselor for career and college counseling may have increased postsecondary aspirations including college.
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APPENDICES
Appendix A:

Copy of IRB approval documents

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**Determination:** Research, but no human subjects

The above referenced submission was reviewed by the OSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office. The IRB has determined that your project, as submitted, does meet the definition of research but does not involve human subjects under the regulations set forth by the Department of Health and Human Services 45 CFR 46.

OSU IRB review is not required for this study.

Please do not include IRB contact information on any of your study materials.

Note that amendments to this project may impact this determination.

The federal definitions and guidance used to make this determination may be found at the following link: [Human Subject](#)