






Design and Validation of a Trauma-Informed Curriculum Model for Enhancing Resilience and Mental Health among Students in Post-Crisis Conditions

Mehdi. Akbarzadeh Sagay¹, Fatemeh. Kangari², Saeedeh. Allahabady², Fatemeh. Riazi³, Nasrin. Mohaddes^{4*}

¹ PhD in Curriculum Planning, Department of Educational Studies and Curriculum Planning, Allameh Amini Campus, Farhangian University, Tabriz, Iran


² PhD Candidate in Curriculum Planning, Department of Educational Studies and Curriculum Planning, Mara.C., Islamic Azad University, Marand, Iran

³ M.A. in Curriculum Planning, Department of Educational Sciences, Ta.C., Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran



⁴ Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Shab.C., Islamic Azad University, Shabestar, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: mohaddes@iau.ac.ir

Editor

Anela Hasanagic
Full Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Islamic Education, University of Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina
anela.hasanagic@unze.ba

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Parvaneh Mohammadkhani
Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Rehabilitation Sciences and Social Health, Tehran, Iran. Email: Pa.mohammadkhani@uswr.ac.ir
Reviewer 2: Mohammadreza Zarbakhsh Bahri
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran. Email: M.Zarbakhsh@Toniau.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Introduction section, the manuscript repeatedly emphasizes the psychological consequences of crises on students; however, the theoretical foundation underlying the proposed trauma-informed curriculum model remains insufficiently articulated. For example, the paragraph beginning with “The concept of trauma-informed education has emerged as one of the most influential paradigms” lacks integration with established theoretical frameworks such as ecological systems theory, trauma theory, or resilience theory. The authors should explicitly explain the conceptual mechanisms through which trauma-informed curricula influence resilience and mental health outcomes.

The literature review is comprehensive in terms of quantity of citations, but it remains largely descriptive rather than analytical. In several paragraphs, studies are sequentially summarized without critically synthesizing their similarities, contradictions, or methodological limitations. For instance, the discussion of resilience studies by Baek, Xu et al., and GÖK et al. does not explain how these studies collectively informed the dimensions selected for the proposed curriculum model. The review would benefit from thematic integration rather than citation accumulation.

The manuscript repeatedly uses the term “post-crisis conditions” without operationally defining what constitutes a crisis context within the study. The sentence “students affected by crises such as pandemics, natural disasters, family instability, or social emergencies” groups together fundamentally different forms of adversity with distinct psychological and educational implications. The authors should clarify whether the proposed curriculum model is intended to be universally applicable across all crisis types or specifically tailored to collective traumatic events.

The rationale for using a mixed-methods exploratory sequential design requires further justification. The manuscript states that qualitative findings informed quantitative validation, yet the transition process between phases is insufficiently explained. Specifically, the authors should describe how interview themes were transformed into measurable questionnaire items, how item wording was generated, and whether any pilot factor analyses were conducted before the final administration.

The manuscript reports excellent model fit indices; however, there is no mention of whether modification indices were consulted or whether correlated error terms were introduced to improve fit. The authors should clarify whether the final model reflects the original theoretical structure or whether post hoc modifications were implemented.

Figure 1 is conceptually valuable, but its visual presentation requires improvement. Several path coefficients and labels are difficult to read due to image resolution and layout density. The figure should be redesigned using higher graphical quality and clearer structural organization so that latent constructs, observed indicators, and directional paths can be interpreted more easily by readers.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The qualitative phase lacks sufficient methodological transparency. Although the manuscript states that “thematic analysis” was conducted, the coding procedures remain vague. The authors should specify whether open coding, axial coding, and selective coding were used, how many coders participated, how disagreements were resolved, and whether intercoder reliability or audit trails were established. Without these details, the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings remains difficult to evaluate.

The sampling strategy in the qualitative phase requires greater detail. The manuscript reports that 18 experts participated until “theoretical saturation was achieved,” but there is no explanation regarding how saturation was assessed. The authors should provide evidence supporting saturation, such as redundancy in themes, cessation of new codes, or saturation matrices. Additionally, participant characteristics such as years of experience, academic rank, and institutional affiliation should be reported in greater detail.

The quantitative sampling method described as “multistage cluster sampling” lacks procedural clarity. The authors should explain how Tehran educational districts were selected, how schools were sampled within districts, and how participants were recruited within schools. Without these details, it is difficult to assess representativeness and potential sampling bias.

The inclusion criterion “active involvement in schools during post-crisis educational conditions” is conceptually ambiguous. The manuscript should define what qualifies as “post-crisis educational conditions” and explain whether participants had direct experience with trauma-affected students. This issue is particularly important because participant expertise directly influences the validity of the model validation process.

The description of the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale is incomplete from a psychometric perspective. While the manuscript mentions “strong psychometric properties,” it does not report reliability coefficients obtained in the current sample. The same issue applies to the General Health Questionnaire. The authors should provide Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability, and preferably McDonald’s omega coefficients for each instrument in the present study sample.

The researcher-developed Trauma-Informed Curriculum Model Questionnaire requires substantially more psychometric documentation. The manuscript states that “content validity” and “face validity” were confirmed, yet no quantitative indicators

such as Content Validity Ratio (CVR) or Content Validity Index (CVI) are reported. Moreover, the total number of items, subscale structure, response format, and sample items are absent, which significantly weakens replicability.

The authors indicate that exploratory factor analysis extracted seven dimensions explaining 68.47% of variance, but the manuscript does not report the extraction method or rotation technique used. It is essential to specify whether principal axis factoring or maximum likelihood extraction was employed and whether rotation was orthogonal or oblique. Given the high correlations among factors, oblique rotation would appear more appropriate.

Table 2 reports only one loading per factor, which is methodologically inadequate for evaluating factor structure. Readers cannot determine how many items loaded onto each factor, whether cross-loadings existed, or whether any items were removed during analysis. The authors should present a complete rotated factor matrix including all questionnaire items and corresponding factor loadings.

The confirmatory factor analysis section is insufficiently detailed. Although fit indices are reported, the manuscript does not provide information regarding convergent validity, discriminant validity, average variance extracted (AVE), or composite reliability for latent constructs. These indices are necessary to establish measurement validity in structural equation modeling studies.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.