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University of Wisconsin-Stout
The Graduate College

The accompanying research report was submitted to the Graduate College, University of Wisconsin-Stout, as partial completion of the requirements for the degree, M.S. Ed.S. (Circle one) in Home Economics

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HMONG PARENTS ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION TOWARD HMONG
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN AMERICA

By

Tou K. Vang

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree

in Home Economics

Approved: (2) Semester Credits


Investigation Advisor

The Graduate College
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May, 1998

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ABSTRACT

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Hmong Parents Attitude and Perception Toward Hmong Juvenile
(Title)

Delinquency in Wisconsin

<u>Home Economics</u>	<u>Dr. Judy I Rommel</u>	<u>May, 1998</u>
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APA Style Manual

The purpose of this study was to understand the Hmong parents' attitude and perception toward Hmong juvenile delinquency in the Eau Claire Area Hmong Community. Most Hmong immigrated into the United States recently, but Hmong children have committed crime and become involved with illegal activities in the country at a dramatically high rate. A survey were conducted from many of the Hmong parents, Hmong community leaders, Hmong Mutual Assistance Association and others Hmong professionals working at different organizations in the Eau Claire area to determine attitudes about Hmong juvenile delinquency..

The sample consisted of 45 Hmong parents; their ages ranged from 20 to 60. The majority of the participants in the study were married and

have been in the country for many years. Some of the Hmong parents were illiterate and have at least one to twelve children in each family. There was only a small number of Hmong parents with higher education. Questionnaires were divided into two parts: demographic and attitude questions. T test and correlation were used to make comparisons.

The research instrument was developed by the researcher and divided into two parts: 10 questions were to obtain general information of participants in the United States. No question was specifically asked regarding the participants income level. Sixteen questions inquired Hmong parents whether or not they were faced with juvenile delinquency in the new land. Participants were asked to answer whether they agree or disagree to a statement based on a likert scale; one being strongly disagree, three being does not apply, and five being strongly agree. Data was analyzed by frequency counts, means, t-test and Pearson's correlation coefficients.

One hundred percent of respondents who were selected for the study responded. The rate of return for this study is 100 percent. Most of the hypotheses were accepted. Hypothesis 1, i.e. the length of time spent in the United States has an affect on the level of youth delinquency, is found to be significant; with a significance level of .001. Most respondents agreed that the longer each family has been in the

United States, there is a greater likelihood that children will become delinquent.

For hypothesis two, i.e. the relationship among parents and children contributing to child delinquency. There is a relationship between the level of conflict between parents and children and the perception that children are delinquents; the $r = .3266$, $p = .030$. Most respondents agreed that it is more likely that children will become delinquent when there is conflict between parents and children.

For hypothesis three, the economic condition of a family has a relationship to child delinquency; most respondents did not agree that this is the case. There is no relationship between the amount of money a family made in a year and the level of youth delinquency. It does not matter how much money a family made, children may still become delinquent.

Finally, most respondents do not agree with hypothesis four that abandoning the Hmong traditional culture would prevent children from delinquency, $r = .1486$, $p = .333$. Eighty six percent of the respondents do not agree that abandoning the culture will help curtailing the level of youth delinquency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to my thesis adviser, Dr. Judy I Rommel, and the graduate college, for their time and patience in guidance and direction throughout the completion of this study. I especially thank my son and family for their support and encouragement for the completion of my study.

Most importantly, I am grateful to my wife and my children for their patience and understanding throughout the course of my graduate studies. Without your assistance and financial support, I could not have succeeded as today. May you too achieve your goals.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is a major concern in this society. Generally, we stereotype children running away from home or without the direct supervision of an adult or their parents to be delinquent. However, in this research, the term delinquency will be referred to as "a vast array of illegal activities including violence, theft, and drug-related offence" (Senna & Siegel, 1985). When a youth commits a single act of shoplifting or is a chronic offender arrested many times for serious and violent offenses, the individual is considered a delinquent child according to the definition given by Senna and Siegel (1985).

Statement of Problems

Due to the high rate of Hmong youths that fit into the category of committing illegal activities, this research intends to determine whether there is a specific cause for Hmong juvenile delinquency in Western Wisconsin. If a specific cause is determined, solutions will also be proposed to assist the Hmong communities and Hmong parents in preventing their youths from becoming delinquents. Additionally, possible solutions and ideas may be provided to parents in regaining control of their delinquent children.

Rationale

The rationale of this research is that the longer the Hmong have been in the United States, the higher the rate of Hmong youths who are delinquent. According to NASSP Bulletin, (Cowart & Cowart, 1993, p 41-45), "crime and violence is increasing at an alarming rate within the Asian Communities today. The numbers of robberies, assaults, and hate-related offenses are climbing, as well as unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancies, and school dropouts." This high rate of Hmong youths who are delinquent has increased tensions among Hmong children and their parents. Many Hmong parents are frustrated and parents are suicidal because disciplining their children or child who is delinquent has not been a problem where they originated. Youth delinquency is a relatively new problem that law enforcement and the Hmong communities have been able to solve. As a result of this new issue, this research is intended to find a specific cause for the problem and may provide some advice that will help parents to prevent this problem from becoming so epidemic.

Research Hypothesis

Questionnaires were developed and directed to those Hmong parents who can read and write in English, and interviews were conducted with

individual Hmong parents who couldn't read and write in English. The study consisted of four specific research hypotheses:

1. There is a relationship between the length of time in America and the perception of the level of juvenile delinquency.

2. There is a relationship between the level of conflict of Hmong parents and their children and the perception of the level of juvenile delinquency.

3. There is a relationship between the economic conditions of individual families and the perception of the level of juvenile delinquency.

4. There is a relationship between the traditional practice of each family and the perception of the level of juvenile delinquency.

Definition of terms

Hmong: The largest minority in Laos, or some people referred to as the highland Lao, or sometimes people refer to as "freeman".

Hmong juvenile delinquency: Hmong youth who commit crimes, or violate the laws.

Hmong parents: First generation Hmong parents in the United States.

Assumption and Limitations

This research is conducted with Hmong clan leaders in the Eau Claire area. Questionnaires were mailed to those Hmong who can read and write in English and agreed to participate in the study. The majority of Hmong who participated in the survey were different Hmong clan leaders in the Eau Claire community and were in one way or the other associated with the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Inc. Many were parents and officials in specific school districts.

A limitation of this study is that the questionnaire was written in the English language and mailed out to individual Hmong who are working at different organizations and Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Inc. (HMAA) in Eau Claire. This also included self addressed stamped envelopes for ease in returning the questionnaire. Another limitation that this paper could have is that since the questionnaires were mailed out in English and to employees of HMAA and schools, the vast majority of Hmong families were left out. As a result, the respondents were a selected group that could understand written English and was willing to participate. Interviews were conducted with individual parents who could not read, write and speak English.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

Since the Hmong have been in the United States for a relatively short period of time, it is very hard to determine whether youth delinquency has been a problem in past Hmong societies. Furthermore, there is a need to understand their life styles in the past that may be suitable or can contribute to this high and alarming rate of Hmong youth delinquency.

According to literature regarding migration from one country to the next, there has not been much record on Hmong people. In The Hmong: History of A People, the author wrote that the Hmong's life style in China in the old days was mostly farming, although they were freedom loving people who did not want to be controlled by other groups (Quincy, 1988). Hamilton Merritt also stated in her book, Tragic Mountains that "The Hmong have a 4000 year-old culture which treasures concepts of honor, commitment, loyalty and freedom" (Hamilton-Merritt, 1993, p.3). In these different literatures, there was no indication of youth delinquency, rather they reflected on the strength of family traditions, the farming system, and crafty fighters. Because the Hmong did not have a written language until the early 1960's and there has not been any social scientist to observe and record youth delinquency within the Hmong culture, this may be why there is no recorded problem of delinquency in the Hmong past history. This

does not totally imply that there was no youth delinquency within Hmong's past history.

The second stage in Hmong history which took place between the Second World War to the end of the Vietnam war in the country of Laos also did not indicate youth delinquency. As stated in the book The Hmong in America: Providing Ethnic-Sensitive Health, Education, and Human Services, in the Hmong culture, the family takes precedence in every situation. An individual's importance is never emphasized over the family. As McInnis stated, "Family is the most important influence in the lives of Hmong people. The needs and concerns of the family are of greater importance than those of the individual. To be Hmong is to preserve its dignity and well-being" (McInnis, 1990). In the book Changing Lives of Hmong Refugees Women, the author stated that roles of Hmong children evolved around family chores and they learned good behaviors (Donnelly, 1994).

In the book People of the Golden Triangle, (Pau and Lewis, 1984) the author explained that Hmong have a strong family structural system in which the oldest male member of the family is making all the decisions. He has the ultimate authority in the family and settles all disputes within the family. The author also stated:

"Respect for ages is cardinal importance: children respect their parents; younger siblings respect older siblings; nieces and nephews respect aunts and uncles (124)."

According to the book A Minority Enters The Nation State, "the household (in the Hmong language tsev) forms the basic social and economic unit of Hmong society. It is normally built around a man, his wife or wives, and their children, but it often includes other relatives as well, such as the man's widowed mother, the widow and children of his deceased brother, or the wife or wives of his married son(s) and their children as long as the son(s) and daughters-in-law, have not yet established separate households, (Ovesen, 1995, p.23).

In addition to this strong family relationship, the author also stated that father and son's relationship in a Hmong family is of both family and spiritual value. He stated, "The father's welfare in the after world depends largely on the sumptuousness of the funeral ceremony given for him by his sons, and a son's welfare in turn is thought to depend on the respect he bestows on his parents while they are alive and on the treatment he receives from his deceased ancestors (Lewis and Lewis, 124.)

Judy Lewis stated in the book Minority Culture of Laos that Hmong get married early compared to western standards. A person's age is not a big yard stick for measuring his or her level of maturity. It is the behavior of an individual that Hmong people observe. In Hmong tradition, children

learn to take on responsibility as soon as they are able, and they quickly become involved in the social and economic activities of the family. It was not unusual to see a seven-year old girl taking care of her younger brother or sister, or a ten-year old boy working in the fields alongside his parents. Social maturity came early in Hmong villages (Lewis, 1992.) Today, many of the Hmong parents are facing problems in America society. Disciplining children in a proper Hmong way can get parents thrown into jail. These issues are not just about discipline, but the majority of Hmong parents had little or no education and as the Hmong parents enter into the United States, English language is a major problem for them. (Chan, 1994).

For the few who were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to attend the little formal schooling available, they were highly respected and supported by their families. In the Handbook for Teaching Hmong - Speaking Students, Bliatout stated, "those children selected to go to school would be expected to devote the majority of their time to excelling scholastically. Students were treated with respect and were given many special privileges within their families" (1988, p.20). Other members of the family would share the family responsibilities and economic burden. As for those who were not selected to go to school, they were closely monitored and well reared. As Bliatout put it, "The children who did not go to school remained close to their parents. They continued to follow their parents to and from the fields, hunting, fishing, and gardening" (p.20). These

children's responsibilities would increase as they grew older. According to Bliatout,

"as they grew to be between ten and twelve, the children would take on a few more responsibilities. Boys would help with such things as the heavy field work and feeding and caring for the animals. Girls would begin cooking simple meals, help with the vegetable garden and do needlework" (p.20).

These various literature did not explore youth delinquency for the period after the second world war to the end of the Vietnam War. They depicted, rather, the responsibilities of Hmong youths and strong family ties as typical of Hmong culture and tradition.

After the Hmong have resettled in the United States and many families became Americanized, some Hmong youths lost their self-identity. Many parents believe that this Americanization contributed to Hmong youth delinquency. Many started to get their children to learn their culture and tradition. The idea of introducing Hmong children to their own traditional culture is expected to accomplish two things. First, by being occupied with something else, the children will have less time to fool around, and the second thing is that knowing their own culture will improve their self-esteems and encourage good behavior. As stated in the Hmong Times (Feb, 1995) a group of Hmong children responded to learning Hmong culture by saying, "Before we came here to learn about Hmong

culture and the Hmong language, we just go out and play. We now come here to learn to be good, and we love it" (p.5). Many Hmong believe that knowing one's own culture and tradition does prompt one to behave in an appropriate and acceptable manner. As stated in the Hmong Times, "Many Hmong still long for the good old days when crime was nearly non-existent. And they credit those days to the Hmong culture (P. 5)". An unidentified Hmong person was quoted saying, "those days, we only had 12 laws, yet our culture managed to make our society crime free. These days, there are thousands laws, but the present culture makes rooms for people to violate the laws, (Hmong Times, October, 1995, p. 6).

According to many Hmong boys and girls, Hmong parents expected too much of them. Because their parent's up-bringing was strictly disciplined and evolved around helping their parents and accomplishing family chores, they are pressuring their young children in the United States to do the same. This expectation and pressure backfired, and many children turn to gang members in seeking for new families and support. As this gang member in the book A Free People stated, "Being the oldest ain't easy, my mom wanted me to do everything, but I couldn't," (Hess, 1994, p.131).

According to the book A Free People, "many Hmong youths who have problems at home don't know what to do because their parents can't understand where they are coming from," (Hess, 1994, P.131). Sometimes

the teenagers just want to be with someone they can count on and understand them and make them feel wanted. Often hanging out with the people who make the children feel wanted is not always the way out. Many turned to gangs and committed crimes. From the perspective of many teenagers, if they are with a group of teenagers, they are labeled bad by Hmong elders.

In the article "Caught Between Cultures", Dan Hess (1994) labeled this straying group of Hmong teens as "rebels." Rebels are in revolt against their Hmong identity. They tend to reject everything that strikes them as Hmong, and they are trying to grasp everything which is American in their view. This self rejection and strive to be more Americanized too quickly may be the reason many teenagers are in trouble with the law. Many think that they are in America, and since they're now Americans, they have the freedom to do anything, even though some of the things that they do are against our society norms.

Conclusion:

Different literatures did not reveal youth delinquency a problem that is inherent to the Hmong and its rich culture. As different authors, i.e. Bliatout, McInnis, and Lewis stated, individual responsibility was taught and transferred to children of both sexes at early ages, and family importance took precedent over individuality in Hmong tradition. Hmong

youth delinquency seemed to be a recent phenomena among the Hmong, particularly after they have been to the United States. As different testimonials indicated, children in America is the opposite of Hmong tradition. Children become rebellious because their parents expected them to do everything and children today take the "self" precedent over the family. Children want parents to understand them and console them rather than they learn from their elders and conform to the culture and tradition (A Free People, 1994, p 131).. This youth delinquency problem seems to be a problem that dawned upon the Hmong out of their resettlement into urban America where individualism is stressed over the family; nuclear family is the functional way of life rather than two or three different generations dwelling under one roof taking order and direction from the oldest male member of the family. This new way of life defies all traditional culture and values that different problems, i.e. youth delinquency and a high divorce rate soon followed.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the subjects under study and how they were selected for this study. In addition, the instruments being used to collect information is discussed at length as to their content, validity and reliability. Data collection and analysis procedures are also presented.

Description of Subjects

The subjects for this study were a selected sample of Hmong parents from the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Inc., Hmong teachers and para-professionals in the Eau Claire School Districts, and Hmong parents in the Eau Claire area. The parents in the sample were comprised mostly of clan leaders and respected individual in the Hmong community. Interviews were conducted with individual parents who couldn't read, write and speak English. For other subjects who are working in different institutions, questionnaires with self-addressed stamp envelopes were mailed directly to each individual.

Sample Selection

The selected respondents or subjects surveyed are those who are either employed at the different organizations and have had children of

teenage ages. These individuals were selected based on their knowledge and involvement or parents who have had children considered delinquent for their views of the issues. Questionnaires were given to individuals who can understand written English for their information. For others who do not read or write, interviews were conducted by the data collector to collect their information and feeling regarding the issues.

Instrument

Questionnaires were used for this study. Some of these statements were: I think Hmong juvenile delinquency is increasing; I have a hard time controlling my children; full time working parents are more likely to face children running away from home; I believe the longer we are in America the more trouble I have with my children, and the more children I have, the more problems I will face with juvenile delinquency. These questions were developed to reflect the hypothesis of the research. They were designed to measure the reasons, feelings and attitudes toward the changing of Hmong lives in this country and the increase of Hmong juvenile delinquency. Reliability of the study was based on the fact that data were collected from selected individuals who are directly or indirectly involved or have had contacts with children of teenage ages. Their feelings and perceptions toward youth delinquent are representative of most Hmong who were born and raised in Laos and came to the United States after the Vietnam War.

There is a general belief that the longer the Hmong have been to the United States, the more likely their children will become delinquent because they abandon their traditional culture and values. They embraced the mainstream's culture thus losing their own identity. As children become more Americanized and individualized, parents quickly label them as delinquent. Most parents then perceive children hanging out with friends as delinquent or joining gangs.

Data Collection

Questionnaires were mailed to those Hmong who could read, write and speak English. For those who couldn't read, write nor speak English an interview was conducted with the individual to obtain his or her feeling and perception toward the issue. Questionnaires were sent out in May of 1997, and the information or questionnaires were back by three to four weeks after ward.

Data Analysis

Charts and tables are tabulated from the responses based on the questionnaires and analyzed from the results. Also the results are tabulated to obtain the correlation and variance values to determine the significance of questions to each hypothesis.

Limitations

The limitations of the method of collecting data in this research is that the subjects are not randomly sampled for the study. There might be some biases in that a designated person or a selected group of people may be over represented while others may be under represented in the study. Another limitation is that the questionnaires were in English and without a good understanding of the language, subjects may not answer questionnaires correctly. The time span of the collection process may also pose a problem because data collected, i.e. number of respondents of 45, may not be sufficient for analysis purpose, or there might be bias in answering some of the questions by some individuals.

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the analyzed data and results of the study from the Eau Claire Area Hmong Community. Data for this survey were collected in two different ways. Questionnaires were mailed to individual Hmong who could read and write in English and are working in the Eau Claire area. These were individuals working for the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association (HMAA) or the Eau Claire Area Public Schools. A self addressed-stamp envelope was provided with each questionnaire. The second method was direct interview. Interviews were conducted by the data collector for respondents who have more difficulty with the English language. There were forty-five participants in this study, and male and female participants were similar in number among the participants, 23 males and 22 females. Their ages ranged from 20 to 60 years old. The majority were married, and only a few of them were either separated or divorced. Many of the participants have been in the United States for more than ten years and are fully employed. The vast majority of Hmong parents in this study had no formal education, and only a small number were college graduates. (Table 4.1)

As anticipated, the rate of return for the survey was very good. One hundred percent of participants in this survey returned their questionnaires. There was variation in responses to the different questionnaires based on each participant's length of time spent in the United States. Each participant was asked to mark their agreement and disagreement for sixteen statements on a Likert Scales of one to five,

Table 4.1
Demographic Data for Hmong Adults

Demographic Variable	N=45	Frequency	Percent
<u>Hmong Volunteer</u>		45	percent
<u>Age</u>			
20-30		10	22.2
31-40		18	40.0
41-50		10	22.2
51-60		7	15.6
<u>Gender</u>			
Males		23	51.1
Females		22	48.9
<u>Marital Status</u>			
Married		41	91.1
Separate, Divorced, Widowed		4	8.9
<u>Country were born</u>			
Laos		45	100
Thailand		0	00
U.S.A		0	00

Year in the U.S.

0-5	4	8.9
6-10	11	24.4
11-15	3	3.7
16-20	27	60.0

Level of Education

Non-Elementary	9	20.0
Some high school	8	17.8
High school graduate	5	11.1
Vocational	9	20.0
Some college	8	17.8
College graduate	3	6.7
Graduate college	3	6.7

one being strong on disagreement and five being strong on agreement. (Table 4.2) Four statements were crucial in this study. These four statements were directly intended to measure the participants feeling and perceptions toward child delinquency. These were intended to measure whether participants felt the longer they have been in the United States, the more likely their children will become delinquent, the more strictly an individual is in retaining his/her traditional culture, whether economic condition of an individual family is related to child delinquency, and whether generational conflicts among parents and children lead to juvenile delinquency.

Participants were separated into two groups. The first group was comprised of those who have been in the United States from zero to ten years, and the second group were people who have been to the United States for over ten years. In general, most participants agreed that they feel juvenile delinquency in the Hmong community is on the rise. The mean for the first group was 4.5714 and 4.2 for the second group. Although their answers to this question were similar for all participants, they disagreed on other issues raised in the hypotheses.

Research Hypothesis 1.

There is a relationship between the length of time in America and the perception of the level of juvenile delinquency.

The purpose of the first hypothesis was to find out whether the length of time in America and the perception of the level of Hmong juvenile delinquency are related.

Table 4.2

Hmong Parents Attitudes and Perceptions

Statement	N=45	Mean
Not enough time to spend with children	43	2.834
Hard time controlling children in America	45	2.956
Hmong juvenile delinquency increase	44	4.318
My children disobey me	42	2.571
Parents with no education face with juvenile delinquency more than parents with education	45	3.222
Hmong children who commit crime should return to Laos	45	2.756
Foster care for Hmong children is very important	45	3.711
Working parents are more to face with children runaway from home	45	3.044
Prevent my children from crime is to be close with him/her	45	4.178
Children used to runaway from home when he/she goes to school	45	2.644

Good income will keep children from crime	44	2.523
Give up Hmong culture is the only way of keeping my children away from juvenile delinquency	45	2.267
Clothes children wear affect their behavior	45	3.886
I feel that I have conflict with my children	44	2.773
The longer we are in America the more trouble I have with my children	45	2.733
The more children I have the more problems I will face with juvenile delinquency	44	3.886

1 = Disagree Strongly

3 = Undecided or Doesn't Apply

5 = Agree Strongly

Likert scale responses were analyzed between the two groups of Hmong parents with the mean score, and t-value. Three questions are related to this hypothesis and showed significant differences in the mean score.

Respondents who have been in the United States from zero to ten years tend to agree more with the statement, "The longer we are in America the more trouble I have with my children." The mean for the first group was 3.8 compared to 2.2 for the latter. (Table 4.3). The latter group was less likely to perceive that length of time in the country has anything to do with child delinquency. The t-value was 3.83 and the probability was .001. (Table 4.3)

The second relevant statement was "working parents are more likely to face with children running away from home." Parents who have been to the United States the shortest time, i.e. less than ten years, feel that parents who are involved with working for a living have less time to spend with their children, thus the children become delinquent. The mean for this statement for the first group is at 3.6 and 2.8 for the latter. The t-value was 2.4 and the probability was .031. (Table 4.3). These two groups of respondents were not similar in their responses. The respondents who have been here the longer did not think that families with working parents have more children being delinquent. The first group of respondents seemed to agree that was the case.

Another statement that these two groups seemed to disagree on is that "prevent my children from crime is to be close to him/her." The mean score

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The second relevant statement was "working parents are more likely to face with children running away from home." Parents who have been to the United States the shortest time, i.e. less than ten years, feel that parents who are involved with working for a living have less time to spend with their children, thus the children become delinquent. The mean for this statement for the first group is at 3.6 and 2.8 for the latter. The t-value was 2.4 and the probability was .031. (Table 4.3). These two groups of respondents were not similar in their responses. The respondents who have been here the longer did not think that families with working parents have more children being delinquent. The first group of respondents seemed to agree that was the case.

Another statement that these two groups seemed to disagree on is that "prevent my children from crime is to be close to him/her." The mean score

for these two groups are 3.7 and 4.4 respectively. The first group of Hmong parents who have been in the country less than ten years tended to view that children should be under the parents' control. Their parents way of life and experiences in a strictly controlled environment brought them up to be responsible children and later successful and respected individual in the community. They feel strictly obedient to parents and closely following or observing the Hmong culture and tradition are successful ingredients for raising children. They try to instill these concepts and ideas to their children in America, but this spells disaster because children are educated in school systems that do not emphasize sacrifice the importance of the family over the individual. Rather, the individual as the center of attention as this proverb goes, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease". Children learn a different way of life from schools, but are preached and expected to follow the Hmong traditional way of life which lead to generational conflicts between older and younger generations. The second group who have been to the United States over ten years see things differently. They don't agree that strictly controlled or being close to their children would prevent children from becoming delinquent. They feel children need support and encouragement in what ever they do and when ever necessary; this would prevent them from getting involved in crime. The t-value for this question was -2.00 and the probability was .057. There is no significance in the t-value and the probability. It doesn't matter how close one tries to be with children, they will find a way to

distance themselves from the parents and be closed to those who they feel can understand them.

Table 4.3

Different Mean for Year in the U.S, Increasing delinquency, trouble with Hmong Children in the U.S.

Categories	Year in the U.S.		t-value	p-probability
	N=15 0-10	N=30 11-20		
Not enough time with children	2.000	3.2667	-2.91	.007
Hard time controlling children in the U.S.	2.400	3.2333	-1.72	.096
Increasing Hmong juvenile delinquency	4.5714	4.2000	1.56	.126
Children disobey me	2.0000	2.8000	-2.18	.037
Hmong parents with no education face more juvenile delinquency	2.9333	3.3657	-.99	.326
Hmong kids who commit crimes return to Laos	4.0000	2.1333	4.58	.000***
Foster care important	3.9333	3.6000	.75	.455
Working parents more children runaway	3.6000	2.7667	2.24	.031*

Prevent child from crime be closed with he/she	3.6657	4.4333	-2.00	.057*
Children runaway when they went to school	2.2000	2.8657	-1.51	.138
Give up Hmong culture keep from delinquency	2.7333	2.0333	1.67	.103
Clothes children wear affect behavior	4.3333	3.6552	1.47	.148
Feel I have conflict with my children	2.3571	2.9667	-1.46	.153
Longer in U.S. more trouble with children	3.8000	2.2000	3.83	.001***
More children more problems I face with juvenile delinquency	4.3333	3.6552	1.63	.114

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p<.001

Research Hypothesis 2.

There is a relationship between the level of conflict of Hmong parents and children and the perception of the level of child delinquency.

The purpose of the second hypothesis was to find out whether there is a relationship between the level of conflict of Hmong parents and children and the perception of the level of child delinquency. There is a significant relationship between the perception of the level of Hmong juvenile delinquency and the level of conflict. Pearson correlation relationship between the questions of perception of increasing delinquency and conflict with Hmong children was $r=.3266$, ($p=.030$). A significant relationship was found. However, no significant relationship was found between the Hmong parents' conflict with children and trouble with children in the United States ($r=.2539$, $p=.096$) (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

Relationship between the perception of Hmong juvenile delinquency and the level of conflict with children, trouble with children, income, and Hmong culture.

Variable	Pearson Correlation r	Significance level p
Increasing delinquency x Conflict wit children	r=.3266	p=.030*
Conflict with children x Trouble with children in the U.S.	r=.2539	p=.096
Increasing delinquency x Income	r=-.0745	p=.635
Hmong juvenile delinquency increasing x Give up Hmong culture is keeping Hmong juvenile delinquency	r=.1486	p=.336

*p<.05

**p<.01

**p<.001

Research Hypothesis 3.

There is a relationship between the economic conditions of individual families and the perception of the level of juvenile delinquency.

The purpose of the third hypothesis was to find out whether economic conditions are the source of Hmong juvenile delinquency in the Eau Claire Area Hmong Community. This hypothesis is analyzed by comparing family income to the statement "Hmong juvenile delinquency is increasing." No significance was found from the results.

Although most people tend to think that youth delinquency is a result of poverty, the respondents of this study did not agree with the idea. The majority of the respondents are employed at different locations, and they disagree that income does have any relation to the level of youth delinquency. On the question, "a good income tends to keep children from crime," 31.1 percent of the respondents disagree, and only 6.7 agrees with the statement. The Pearson correlation of the results are as followed: $r=.0745$ and $p=.635$. There is no significance or no relationship exists between the two statements. (Table 4.4).

Research Hypothesis 4.

There is a relationship between the traditional practice of each family and the perception of the level of juvenile delinquency.

The fourth hypothesis was to determine if a relationship exists between the traditional Hmong practices and the perception of the level of juvenile delinquency in the Eau Claire Hmong community. The question raised was whether respondents perceive the level of youth delinquency is on the rise, and if they feel abandoning the Hmong traditional culture would keep children from becoming delinquent. Forty two percent of the respondents disagreed strongly to the statement, while only 8.9 percent agreed with the statement. No significant relationship is found. ($r=.1486$, $p=.333$). (Table 4.4).

Summary

The subject from this study were collected from the Hmong community in the Eau Claire Area. There were forty-five participant in this study, and there were half of male and female. Sixteen questions asked about attitudes, and nine questions were general demographic information. Questionnaires were mailed to individual Hmong parents who could read, write in English and working at different organizations in the Eau Claire Area. Hmong parents who could not read and write in English were scheduled for interview at their home. Hmong parents had between one child and up to twelve children. The

majority of the Hmong parents are living in the country for sixteen to twenty years. All of the Hmong parents are either facing problems with their own children juvenile delinquency or have contact with the community issue regarding to the Hmong youth problems.

Although the general perception was that the length of time in the United States, the economic status, and the process of assimilating into the majority culture all contributed to Hmong youth delinquency, the respondents in this study agreed to some extent with these statements. When the respondents are divided into two groups based on their length of time in the United States, their perception toward assimilation into the majority culture differs. The group that has been to the United States the shorter time, i.e. from zero to ten years tended to agree with the first statement that the longer they have been to the country, the more likely their children will become disobedient and delinquent. The second group who has been to the United States from ten years and more don't perceive length of time to be a problem contributing to child delinquency.

The mean response for the first group was 3.8 compared to 2.2 for the latter in answering to the statement; the t-value is 3.83 and the p value is at .001.

Very often most people believe that poverty is the source of family conflicts and the hardship that caused children to become delinquent. In this study, most respondents are employed and economically self-sufficient, but they did not agree that their incomes have anything to do with their youth

becoming delinquent. Thirty one percent of respondent disagreed that a good income would keep their children away from delinquency and only 6.7 percent agreed with the statement.

Most respondents tended to agree that their traditional culture played a rather significant role in preventing children from becoming delinquent, or they either did not see the traditional culture to have a relationship with youth delinquency. Forty two percent of the respondents did not agree that abandoning the Hmong traditional culture would keep their children from becoming delinquent while only 8.9 percent agreed with the statement. No relationship was found for this statement. ($r=.1486$ and $p=.333$).

The analysis found there is a relationship for the statement that family conflicts lead to youth delinquency. The scores are: $r=.3266$ and $p=.030$.

Respondents in this study agreed that generational conflicts or conflicts among parents and children lead to delinquency. Under this statement, there is no different in the length of time of respondents in the United States. Every respondents believed that when there is conflict, there is youth delinquency. On economic situation and cultural observation, most respondents also expressed very much the same feelings. They did not agree that better economic condition would prevent their children from becoming delinquent, and they also did not believe that abandoning the Hmong traditional culture would curtail the problem either. There is no difference in response for length of time in the United States among the respondents for these statements. The

main difference for the two groups is the question of Americanization. One group believed that the longer the group has been to the United States, the more likely children will become delinquent, while the group that has been the country the longer did not perceive the problem to be so.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusion, and Implications

Introduction:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the value of Hmong parents' attitude and perception toward Hmong juvenile delinquency in the Eau Claire Hmong community. The sample consisted of 45 respondents, most of whom were married, except a few of them were either divorced or separated. Their ages ranged from 20 to 60 years old, and the majority of them has been in the United States for more than sixteen years. Most respondents are employed at the Eau Claire Area School District or at the Hmong Mutual Association, Inc. and some of them are either self employed or retired. Sixteen different questions were asked of the Hmong parents regarding juvenile delinquency in the Eau Claire Hmong community.

Summary

Forty-five parents responded. The rate of return for this study is 100 percent. Most of the hypotheses were accepted. Hypothesis 1, i.e. the length of time spent in the United States has an affect on the level of youth delinquency, is found to be significant. Most respondents agreed that the longer each family has been in the United States, there is a greater likelihood that children will become delinquent.

For hypothesis two, i.e. there is a relationship between the level of conflict between parents and children and the perception that children are delinquent, the correlation was $r=.3266$, $p=.030$. Most respondents agreed that there is a greater likelihood that where there is conflict between parents and children, there is more likelihood that children will become delinquent.

For hypothesis three, the economic condition of a family has a relationship to child delinquency, most respondents did not agree that this is the case. There is no significant relationship between the amount of money a family made in a year and the level of youth delinquency. It does not matter how much money a family made, children may still become delinquent.

Finally, most respondents do not agree with the hypothesis that the traditional practice of the culture contributes to youth delinquency. The correlation was $r=.1486$, $p=.333$. Eighty six percent of the respondents do not agree that abandoning the culture will help curtailing the level of youth delinquency.

Conclusions:

Generally, most people feel that the longer a family has been in this country, the more Americanized they will become. As the trend of the 1930's and 40's, people would just blend in and become the melting pot and survive in the United States as they migrated from oversea. Once the family is blended in, conflicts among the older and younger generations would just

cease. As the family blended in and was able to work and accumulate wealth to support the family, conflicts within the family would decrease. Children would grow up and become Americanized. The traditional culture would eventually be abandoned and blend in with the majority society. Everyone would be accepted and children would become socially acceptable and not rebellious.

This study about the Hmong painted a different picture. Hmong problems, as reflected in this survey, are different from the popular belief and trend of former immigrants.

The longer the time a family has been to the United States, the more likely children from that family will become delinquent according to this study. This means that children from more Americanized family among Hmong people will be more likely to become delinquent. Many Hmong elders and parents feel that there is too much freedom in this country and some of the children misuse freedom in in-appropriate ways. The answers given to these questions reflected this general feeling of most Hmong people.

As for generational conflict, there is also a strong relationship that either the older generation or the younger generation of Hmong people do not fit in. One of the groups cannot fit in, and this seemed to be the problem that initiated the conflict between the two groups. According to the study, the parents see or feel that their children are too Americanized and do not

cease. As the family blended in and was able to work and accumulate wealth to support the family, conflicts within the family would decrease. Children would grow up and become Americanized. The traditional culture would eventually be abandoned and blend in with the majority society. Everyone would be accepted and children would become socially acceptable and not rebellious.

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As for generational conflict, there is also a strong relationship that either the older generation or the younger generation of Hmong people do not fit in. One of the groups cannot fit in, and this seemed to be the problem that initiated the conflict between the two groups. According to the study, the parents see or feel that their children are too Americanized and do not

maintain the traditional culture. This is the source of the conflict, and as the conflict arises, more children are becoming delinquent as a result.

The economic condition of a family did not seem to be a problem or at least is not perceived to have any relationship to children becoming delinquent among Hmong people. It doesn't matter how much money the parents made, the children would still run away from home. This tends to correlate with the previous answer that being too Americanized is the problem contributing to children becoming delinquent.

Finally, most of the respondent did not agree that giving up Hmong culture will help in keeping Hmong children from becoming delinquent. To the contrary, most parents feel that if their children are more traditional, youth delinquency may not be too epidemic. Most feel that children are becoming too Americanized too fast, and this backfired. Parents are not sensible fast enough to accept their children as they change everyday trying to fit in and blend with the majority society. Most of what their children do to fit in then is perceived as bad; this in turn lead to conflict and as a result delinquency, thus, followed.

Implications

The results of this survey confirmed what most Hmong people believe; that youth delinquency is a result of becoming too Americanized too fast in a too short of a time. This transition from the traditional Hmong culture to the

American culture resulted in generational conflict between parents and children. The parents tend to be more cautious in changing or quickly adopting the American way of life. When their children change or go with the flow, for example, have their hair cut in certain style or dress up in baggy pants so that they fit in with their peers at schools, parents quickly come to the conclusion that their children are beginning to act inappropriately. They are then ostracized and rejected by the older generation. This miscommunication lessens the understanding between the two groups, and running away may be a way that young children see as the solution to avoiding the conflict at home.

Most respondents felt that retaining the traditional Hmong culture may help prevent youth delinquency. They answered that abandoning the culture would not help in curtailing youth delinquency.

The only hypothesis that the result of the survey did not support is the relationship of economic condition to youth delinquency. It does not matter how much one family made to support the family, children will still run away from home. Living standard does not seem to have much affect on youth delinquency.

This study illustrated that youth delinquency may be a result of generational conflict, a conflict of one generation moving away from the traditional culture and value too fast while the older generation is creeping behind trying to retain or cling on to their way of life in the old country where

they were born and brought up. The generational gap needs to be closed off to eliminate the conflict that will lead to better communication between the younger and older generation. When there is good communication, there will be less conflict, and youth delinquency will eventually be reduced by itself.

The finding of this study pointed out some significant issues. Pearson correlation was found to be significant for the statement that most respondents feel they do not spend enough time with their children. The longer an individual has been to the United States, the more trouble there is with children is also significant. Children disobeying me is also found to be significant. The correlation is also significant for the statement that working parents face more children running away. There was strong agreement that Hmong children who commit crimes, should return to Laos. These different findings can be summarized into one simple explanation. The longer the family has been to the United States and has to work to support the family, the more likely Hmong parents are going to work outside the home, thus less attention then would be focused on the children. As children get less attention from parents, they look elsewhere to get the attention that they dearly look for, and that attention may be from someone we as a society may not accept.

This explanation is supported by the fact that if children are occupied with other activities, i.e. learning Hmong traditional culture, or joining Scout groups, they are less likely to join a gang. When they are not involved in

anything, they are more likely to run away. As parents become more occupied with their employment, they have to pay less attention to their children. When their children start to stray, parents start to lecture or discipline children the way they were brought up, and this widens the gap between children and parents. As the gap becomes so wide, children are then bonded with their like kinds and that is the point where many of the Hmong parents cannot bring them back to the acceptable behavior.

Hmong parents need to reevaluate their roles as breadwinner, as communities leaders (Hmong community) as professional child rearer, and as parents. Most Hmong parents are doing so many things at the same time in our community to maintain our close bond as Hmong people. They are celebrated with relatives and friends most of the time in addition to their jobs. Most of weekends are reserved for different celebrations, and this leaves little or no time for the children. Most of the Hmong were brought up with little or no supervision at all, and many are assuming that their children will grow up to be responsible people even though they are left to roam around the way they were brought up. This is a big mistake that most parents make. Beside balancing their times between jobs and community roles, parents needs to change their approach in dealing with their children the way children are reared and taught in school and in the post industrialized era. When children make a mistake, they should not be yelled at or shunned. These tactics might have worked for them in the agrarian world, but they may not be effective

today. Children are not punished and whipped at schools the way parents were in the old world; they are not yelled at when making mistake in the classrooms. Children are talked to now instead of being talked at. If parents continue to utilize their way of teaching Hmong children based on their own experience, they would lose more children to gangsters who seized the opportunity to lure our young immature minds of our children. Hmong parents needs to cut back their community roles and spend more times with our children. This will help alleviate our gang problem. Parents needs to balance these different roles and stay close to their children. This may be the best abatement program that would prevent or divert their children from home or joining gang.

Limitations:

The limitation to this study and findings is that the survey was conducted or sent out to a selected group of Hmong parents in the Eau Claire area. The samples were not randomly selected. Most respondents are prominent member of different organizations in the area. They may know what the researcher expected to get out of the research; as a result respondents might have answered the questions to please the researcher. Also since the Hmong community is a close and small community, most respondents knew who the researcher is and they might have answered and return their questionnaires for his favor. This is why the rate of return in this

study is 100%. If the research is more randomly selected, the rate of return may not be as good.

For future studies, the sample size needs to be increased and surveys be sent to a randomly selected population. Results from future studies may not get the same result because the time spent in the United States have been longer, and parents may have changed their world view of seeing things from their traditional perspective, thus different results may be given to the same questions given now.

The majority of Hmong parents are illiterate in English. For future survey the researcher should need extra time to spend with the Hmong parents or community to get more people to involve with, and allow parents freely stated their point and feeling toward the condition. The researcher should take extra time with Hmong family more, and understand about historical background to make clearly for the purpose of the research.

It is very important for either the researcher or family to know each others history background, and how close relationship with one another. In fact, problems always in each individual family, but the problems are that many of the Hmong parents do not want to share their issues and concern. In America there are many issues involved with legal systems, and many secret issues that the Hmong parents are afraid could cause trouble for Hmong parents instead of telling the truth. Hmong parents really need to know the

person little bit before they can share what their problems and concern.

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Appendix

Research Questionnaire

I understand that if I answer these questions I am participating in a research project at UW-Stout. I understand that the study is about delinquency and Hmong young people. My answers will be confidential and my name will not be used in the study. I understand that the study is designed to learn more about Hmong people in the state of Wisconsin.

This questionnaire is part of a study to explore more about the Hmong parents' attitudes and perception toward Hmong juvenile delinquency in the state of Wisconsin.

Please answer all the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

Section I-General information

1. Your age: 20-30 yrs _____ 51-60 yrs _____

31-40 yrs _____ 61-70 yrs _____

41-50 yrs _____ 71 or more _____

2. Sex: Male _____ Female _____

3. What is your marital status?

Single _____

Married _____

Separate, Divorced or Widows _____

4. How many children do you have? _____ boys _____ girls _____

5. How old is your first child? _____

6. How old is your last child? _____

7. Put a check mark to indicate in what country you were born.

Laos _____

Thailand _____

USA _____

8. How many years have you been in the United States?

0 to 5 yrs _____

6 to 10 yrs _____

11 to 15 yrs _____

16 to 20 yrs _____

9. What is your highest level of education completed?

None high school _____

Some high school _____

High school graduate _____

Vocational _____

Some college _____

College graduate _____

Graduate College _____

Section II-the following are statements that concern the Hmong parents attitudes and perception toward Hmong juvenile delinquency in Wisconsin. Indicated the extent to which you are agree with the statements below by selecting a number from 1 to 5.

If you strong ly agree with the statement, circle 5.

If you strongly disagree, circle 1.

If you are in moderate agreement or disagreement with a particular statement, please select on the number between 1 and 5. For example, if you agree moderately with the statement, "I do not mind if my discipline", you may select the number 4 to indicate that fact.

If you are undecided about the extent to which you agree or disagree with a statement, enter a 3 in the blank. The following scale will help you keep these distinctions clearly in mind.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree		Undecided		Agree
		Or		
Strongly		Doesn't Apply		Strongly

Consider the statement carefully, but evaluate them as rapidly as you can. There are no right or wrong answer. The best response are your personal opinion.

Please do not leave any statement unanswered.

	Disagree	Undecided	Agree		
	Or				
	Strongly	Doesn't Apply		Strongly	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I don't have enough time to spend with my children.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have a hard time controlling my children in America.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I think Hmong juvenile delinquency is increasing.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My children disobey me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Parents who have little or no education are faced with juvenile delinquency more than parents with higher education.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel that Hmong children who commit crimes should return to Laos.	1	2	3	4	5

7. Foster care for Hmong children who runaway from home is very important. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Full-time working parents are more likely to face children runaway from home. 1 2 3 4 5
9. The only way to prevent my children from involvement with crime is to be closed with him/her. 1 2 3 4 5
10. My child used to runaway from home when he/she goes to school. 1 2 3 4 5
11. A good income will keep my children away from crime. 1 2 3 4 5
12. I believe that giving up my Hmong culture is the only way of keeping my children away from juvenile delinquency. 1 2 3 4 5
13. The clothes my children wear affect their behavior. 1 2 3 4 5
14. I feel that I have conflict with my children. 1 2 3 4 5
15. I believe that the longer we are in American the more trouble I have with my children. 1 2 3 4 5

16. The more children I have the more
problem I will face with juvenile
delinquency.

1 2 3 4 5

3119 Runway Ave
Eau Claire, WI 54703

May 12, 1997

Dear Hmong parents:

I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. I am doing research to fulfill the requirement for my graduate degree in Child and Family Services at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. As a Hmong American, I see that Hmong juvenile delinquency has been increasing everywhere in small town through out the country in the new society today. Therefore, I want like to have your input and opinion in completing this research.

Please take a moment of your busy schedule to answer the attached questions, and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

There is no right or wrong answer, please answer the best of your knowledge and opinion. Thank you for your time and assistance in this research.

Sincerely

Tou K. Vang

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