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**WHERE THEY ARE NOW: THE SECOND FOLLOW-UP
STUDY OF THE 1992 COLLEGE-BOUND
HMONG GRADUATES**

By


Youa Xiong

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
with a Major in

Guidance & Counseling

Approved: 2 Semester Credits


Investigation Advisor

The Graduate College
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ABSTRACT

<u>Xiong</u> (Writer) (Last Name)	<u>Youa</u> (First)		<u></u> (Initial)
<u>Where They Are Now: The Second Follow-up Study of the 1992</u> (Title)			
<u>College-Bound Hmong Graduates</u>			
<u>Guidance & Counseling</u> (Graduate Major)	<u>Jill Stanton</u> (Research Advisor)	<u>May, 1998</u> (Month/Year)	<u>54</u> (No. of Pages)
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Attaining an education can lead to the independence of the Hmong people. A large number of Hmong young men and women from the Wausau area have gone on to college after high school to acquire a degree in a career that will insure a better life for their children's future. This study is the second follow-up study of a 1992 Hmong senior college-bound graduating class. Twenty-one of the thirty-two students surveyed indicated that they planned to go to college right after high school. The purpose of this study was to determine whether these individuals have graduated from college or what other direction they may have taken and why. The study looked at whether the students switched majors, pursued a second major, completed their bachelor's degree, pursued a second undergraduate degree, pursued a master's degree, are working in the field they went to school for, where their degree has taken them geographically, and what has impacted their decisions.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Every year high schools turn out more college-bound students. Each year more Hmong students graduate from high school and look forward to getting away from home, to having independence, and to making something of themselves. The chance to go to college and become educators, law enforcers, counselors, attorneys, architects, doctors, engineers, and so forth is the key to acquiring self sufficiency without needing to rely on public assistance. For many of these Hmong individuals, they are the first in their families to complete high school and have the opportunity to pursue a college career.

Many of these students come from homes where their parents have little or no knowledge of the English language. Although many Hmong families have lived in the United States for many years, there are still individuals who only speak the Hmong language and are not ready to let go of the past. Living in two worlds has caused cultural conflicts between parents who grew up in Laos and their children who are growing up in the United States. Children experience tremendous pressure to carry on the Hmong culture and at the same time to assimilate into the American culture (Hunter, 1994).

After four thousand years of unsuccessful rebellion against Chinese domination, the Hmong migrated into the mountains of Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam during the 1800's. The Hmong lived pastorally without much involvement in Laotian social and political struggles until the 1940's and 1950's when a few Hmong men became educated and served in administrative positions in the Laotian government (Fass, 1991).

The Hmong saw that education was the key to becoming integrated with the mainstream Laotian culture, but all social and political progress ended when over 100,000 Hmong men were recruited by the United States Central

Intelligence Agency (CIA) to fight against the communist Lao forces in the Secret War in 1962. Except for military training, all educational opportunities for the Hmong ceased to exist for the next ten years (Fass, 1991).

The CIA provided the Hmong men and young boys weapons and necessary supplies to fight the war. The Hmong men and boys assisted with rescue missions. They helped gather information about the enemy's location and military plans for the CIA. Many Hmong soldiers died during air strikes and by land mines. The death count among Hmong soldiers was more than the death count of American soldiers during the Vietnam War (Pieper, 1996).

With no prospect of winning, the United States abandoned the war effort in 1975 and left the Hmong to face retribution from the communist forces who sought to exterminate the Hmong for aiding the American effort. While fleeing Laos and hiding in the jungle to keep from being captured and killed by the communist forces, many parents felt compelled to overdose their young children with opium to keep them silent. Many children died on their journey to Thailand. Children who did not die of opium overdose drowned on their parents back as they swam across the Mekong River (Pieper, 1996).

Eventually, over 150,000 Hmong made their way into refugee camps in Thailand, but many perished in the attempt to escape the slaughter occurring in Laos. There are still many Hmong living in the refugee camps in Thailand. Today there are over 150,000 Hmong living in the United States with the majority living in California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin (Fass, 1991).

A generation grew up in Laos without any formal education. Adjusting to their new home in the United States proved difficult for the Hmong due to their lack of education. They did not have the skills to find well paying jobs, and they were thrown into a society where they were often misunderstood. The different cultural backgrounds between the Hmong and the Americans made it hard for

the Hmong to be accepted. Many Americans were also unaware of the assistance the Hmong gave in the war. The Hmong were often mistaken as Chinese, Vietnamese, or Laotians. Many people in the U.S. disliked them because they perceived the Hmong as the enemy and very little, if any, education was given to the U.S. Americans to help them understand how much help the Hmong provided to them during the war (Yang, 1995).

Although the war has been over for more than 20 years, and the Hmong people are adjusting to their new environment, many Hmong people continue to find it difficult to understand why the war took place and the roles that the Hmong people played. Currently, many Hmong still feel that there was a good chance that the war could have been won had it not ended when it did. Many people fail to understand that they would have eventually lost the war due to the limited support they received from the United States. There are still many gaps in the war story (Sayaovong, 1997).

In April of 1996, William Colby, former CIA Director, spoke to Hmong students at Georgetown University to help clarify events of the war. Students at Georgetown wanted to know what the Americans were doing in Laos and what caused them to turn to the Hmong people for help. According to Sayaovong, the United States and three other countries (the Soviet, China, and North Vietnam) had military forces stationed in Laos since before 1962.

Laos was heading toward becoming a communist country and the United States did not want communism to spread throughout the Southeast Asian countries as it had spread in Vietnam. This led to the Geneva Accords which were signed in 1962. The purpose of the Accords was to prevent war in Laos by having all four countries pull out their military forces. However, the North Vietnamese breached the Accords by refusing to pull out their forces in Laos. The United States did not want to breach the Accords by returning its forces, for

fear of China and the Soviet Union doing the same which would lead to an unwanted confrontation in Laos, so they turned to the Hmong people for help. The United States recruited Hmong soldiers who wanted to defend their homeland to fight the war without directly becoming involved. The United States provided weapons and supplies to the Hmong recruiters and trained them to sabotage the communist forces from spreading in Laos.

However, Colby was only able to shed some light on the subject to the small group of students who attended the speech that one time. Colby died three weeks later of a ruptured aneurysm. Those who did not have the opportunity to attend Colby's speech will have to find answers to their questions from someone or somewhere else (Sayaovong, 1997).

Regardless of how the war touched the Hmong people, the Hmong are a hard working group of people who want to be educated, have good jobs, be happy, and have healthy families. With such a small percentage of the Hmong population educated, parents are more determined than ever to have their children go to college. They believe that getting an education will enable their children to have a better life in the U.S. compared to life in Laos. In addition, the education will not only help them survive economically, it will help them to become enculturated more easily (Vang, 1986).

So far, "the level of formal education for the Hmong who resettled in the United States is low" (Tokarz, 1992, p. ii). Although there is a big difference between the two cultures, the Hmong children are striving to succeed in school. The dropout rate among Hmong students is low, however, sixty to seventy percent of the Hmong students who complete high school do not go on to college (Tokarz, 1992).

According to the Wausau Hmong Association, there were 4,368 Hmong people in Wausau, WI in March of 1998. Approximately 25% of the Asian

families in Marathon County rely on public assistance as an income source. Many families are on public assistance because they are unable to understand the English language and therefore have difficulty finding employment. Many Hmong people also lack the necessary skills to find high paying jobs that will provide good benefits. The majority of Hmong families have many children because they value children. Therefore, medical assistance is the only way they are able to afford to keep their children healthy with regular medical care.

The family responsibilities of Hmong youths drastically reduce the opportunity for them to afford college or pursue a career of their choice. The Hmong culture instills a sense of responsibility and loyalty to the family of origin and to the extended family. Not only are they responsible for themselves, they are responsible for their parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and others who have a family connection. The burden of these extra responsibilities make it difficult sometimes for a person to focus on academic studies. However, because the majority of the Hmong parents did not have the chance to get an education, they view it as a priority for their children (Otto, 1993).

In 1992, Tokarz conducted a survey of 32 Wausau seniors from Wausau East High School and Wausau West High School in Wausau, Wisconsin. The survey was used to determine whether these students had plans to further their education after high school. Tokarz's survey indicated that 21 of the surveyed students planned to continue their education. In 1994, Sharon Hunter conducted a follow-up study of the same students, and discovered that 17 students actually went on to college.

The Hmong people strongly feel that in order for them to thrive in the United States, they need to be highly educated, however; although many Hmong high school graduates go to college, few actually stay long enough to receive a

degree. There are several factors that contribute to the low number of Hmong college graduates. According to a follow-up survey done by Hunter (1994), eighty-eight percent of the seventeen college-bound students she surveyed said that they were in college because their families expected it of them. They also stated that an education would allow them to "...get a good job, to have a better future, to help the family, to be the first in their family to go to college, and not to disappoint their family" (Hunter, 1994, p. 40).

Another reason for the low number of Hmong college students was the financial status of the family. The majority of Hmong families are from low social economic status, so they are not able to assist their children with educational expenses, i.e., tuition. A major source of funding is financial aid consisting of grants, scholarships, and loans. Work study, off campus jobs, savings, and parents are other sources of financial aide (Hunter, 1994).

A third contributing factor was grade point average. To be successful in college, the student must have "...self-commitment and self-preparation" (P. Vang, 1991, p. 54). To remain in school and do well, the student must maintain "...a balance between their social calendar and homework calendar" (P. Vang, 1991, p. 54). Students who are unable to maintain a 2.0 grade point average are suspended from school.

Fifty percent of the students in Hunter's survey stated that time management was a problem. Many students who were accustomed to structured home responsibilities found independence overwhelming. Living away from home forced students to take care of themselves in terms of selecting classes, budgeting, and making new friends. Most students became isolated and lonely when they were not able to adjust to college life (Hunter, 1994).

The fourth factor was that students from low social economic status are not receiving the proper support and encouragement they need. They have

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fewer life experiences, yet their families have high expectations of them. In comparison, students from higher socio-economic status are more experienced, received more encouragement, have greater expectations of themselves, and they have the family support needed to adjust to college life (Vang, 1993).

According to Pobzeb Vang (1991), parents with little or no educational background are not able to help their children prepare for college early. They are not fully able to assist their children in identifying clear objectives to work towards achievement in college. It was generally found that students who were well-rounded and did well in secondary education assimilated better into the institution of their choice.

Statement of the problem

The purpose of this research was to do a follow-up study of the 32 Hmong students to determine whether they eventually went to college, graduated from college, and whether their college education has helped them with their careers. The students were contacted by the researcher by telephone in the spring of 1998. This was the same group of students who were involved in the original 1992 study to survey students' plans for future education. In 1994, there was a follow-up study on this same group. These students all graduated from high schools in the Wausau area.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine if the students transferred to another educational institution.
2. To determine how many times the students switched majors.
3. To determine if the students pursued a second major.

4. To determine if the college students completed their bachelor's degree.
5. To determine if the students pursued a second undergraduate degree.
6. To determine if the graduates pursued a master's degree.
7. To determine if the graduates are working in their field of studies.
8. To determine where the students' degree has taken them geographically.
9. To determine reasons behind their successes or failures.

Definition of terms

Clan- a large family belonging to a common ancestor.

Hmong- a hill tribe people who are from Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand.

Mekong River- a river that separate Laos and Thailand.

Refugee camp- camps in Thailand where the Hmong and other refugees were temporarily placed before leaving for the United States.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

This review of literature will discuss the following: cultural beliefs, cultural conflicts, higher education, role models, and employment of the Hmong people.

Cultural belief

The Hmong are a hard working, self-sufficient group of people from the highlands of Laos, where only the prosperous could afford an education. Because their livelihood was subsistence farming, they were not able to afford formal education for themselves and their children. In the two decades that the Hmong have resided in the United States, the percentages of students completing any type of college degree is still very low.

Hmong individuals who are fluent in the spoken and written English language are big assets to their families and the community. They act as the cultural bridge for traditional family members. They are important because they can assist in filling out "job applications, hospital registration, welfare forms, relative meetings, sickness and death," and so forth (Vang, 1992, p. 1).

Hmong families rely on other Hmong families more than people outside the Hmong culture. The main emphasis of the culture is to take care of the family which is very extended in nature. Relatives tend to live in close proximity, which enables them to provide support when there is a crisis.

Parents expect their children to succeed in school because they see their children's success as their own success. "Hmong adults see the school system as a place where their children can learn English and develop skills to cope in an unfamiliar environment" (Hunter, 1994, p. 11). The general areas of study that Hmong students most often pursue are: law, medicine, technology, and

education. In Vang's 1991 update of the economic development of the Hmong, he stated that about 70% of Hmong students were studying social science, liberal arts, and other majors, while 30% were studying natural science, mathematics, and technology. From his study he

recommended that about 70 percent of the Hmong American students study natural science, mathametic, engineering, and technology. This is because modern technologies shape the foundations of social engineering, world politics, world economics, world trade, and world societies in the global systems in the century toward our future and our children's future. Social science is to make peace. Medical science is to save human lives. Agricultural science is to produce food (P. Vang, 1991, p. 79).

Challenges for Hmong children born in the United States

Whether or not the Hmong do well in the United States depends on the extent to which their children adapt to living in both the Hmong and American cultures. In order for the children to be most helpful to their families and reduce tension between the two generations, they need to improve communication with each other. If the parents do not understand English, then the children need to communicate in Hmong.

Unfortunately, the need to understand and speak both languages is a struggle for both generations. These younger people often spend more than 40 hours a week being exposed to the American culture and language. Furthermore, when these children return home, they continue to speak only English. As this occurs over time, the generation gap widens, creating greater tension.

Children who grow up in this environment do not have a good grasp of the

Hmong language. One Hmong parent stated:

My children do not understand Hmong very much. When I tell them a story, they listen, but when I ask them if they know what I say they shake their head. When I go to the store and need help my children do not know how to explain what I need to the people who work there. They cannot help me (F. Xiong, personal communication, June 20, 1997).

According to Oua Xiong, who graduated from UW-Eau Claire in 1995 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and who is currently pursuing his Masters Degree in Environmental and Public Health, living in two cultures is the biggest challenge he faces as a Hmong person living in the United States:

Sometimes the cultures do not compliment each other and cause problems such as marital practices, concept of time, and planning practices (Hmong people do things at last minute notices while Americans tend to plan ahead). The whole educational process is very difficult at times as well. What I mean is my parents wanted me to go on to higher education, but they also expected me to carry out all the responsibilities of being the oldest son in the family. I often have to put my education as a second priority when it should undoubtedly be first (personal communication, April 15, 1998).

Expectation of sons and the effects of being a college student

The Hmong are a patriarchal society. Sons are valued, because they will remain with the parents throughout their lives and carry on the lineage, while daughters will marry and take their resources to their husbands' families. Females do not experience as much pressure to succeed as males do, even if they decide to pursue higher education. Therefore, they are given less encouragement.

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People with an education are respected and appreciated in the Hmong culture. Male college graduates are highly regarded as potential leaders in their extended families. They have responsibilities that encompass their extended families in addition to their obligations to their nuclear family (Otto, 1993).

The pressure to do well academically and economically causes tremendous stress for men when they graduate from college. Finding a high paying job in the graduate's chosen field is not always a guarantee. Due to family responsibilities, many students are geographically restricted to where their families reside and are not able to search for jobs elsewhere other than the local area. Therefore, they are sometimes forced to accept job positions unrelated to their field of study. Some students view this as a failure (Otto, 1993).

According to Neng Xiong, who graduated from UW-Platteville in 1994 with a degree in Industrial Engineering:

The Hmong culture is very complex and there are many things that you have to know. You have to behave according to your age, you have to carry on the tradition and carry on the family values. You have to be the man of the house, you have a responsibility to take care of your family. Besides that you have to help out with your relatives. There are all kinds of things that you have to do (personal communication, June 24, 1997).

Xiong said that these responsibilities did create stress for him because in the Hmong culture people function as a group, not as individuals. It was difficult for him to have to function in both settings.

Expectations of daughters and effects of being a college student

Traditionally, Hmong females were not given the opportunity to be formally educated. According to Fai Xiong, there are three main reasons parents give for

their lack of motivation to educate their daughters. The first reason was that they were needed to help work on the farm. With the sons in school, there were less people to help with chores, weeding, planting, harvesting, and feeding the live stock. The second reason was that the parents felt that whatever knowledge their daughters acquired would only benefit her future husband's family, so it would be a waste of the family's resources to educate her. When daughters got married, their services to the family ended. The third reason was that parents did not trust their daughters to be away from home for long periods of time. The fear was that she may become pregnant without being married and disgrace the family. A common thought is, "Girls do not go to school because providing for the family is the husband's job. Girls can't learn anyway. What they need to focus on is to be a good wife and take care of their families" (C. Vang, personal conversation, June 14, 1997).

Today, some young women are receiving secondary education, but few are receiving much encouragement to continue. Some families are still holding on to their traditions and beliefs about the role of daughters. Because of those beliefs, some females grow up with low self-esteem. They do not have the confidence to make changes. According to the study conducted by Mao Yang in 1990, there were three major reasons for Hmong women not continuing their education after high school.

The first reason was that many of the women she surveyed expressed low self-image. Their inability to grasp the English language in order to speak confidently had caused them to have concerns about achievement in college. The second reason was due to the structure of the culture. The traditional place for Hmong women was in the home. The third reason was that parents did not want to lose face, so they restricted the actions of their daughters for fear they may do something to shame the family.

Despite some people's belief that one should not place high values on post-secondary education for women, more parents are beginning to support their daughters' decision to seek higher education. One Hmong father stated: "As long as I know that she will be able to support herself, I don't care what people say" (F. Xiong, personal communication, June 20, 1997). Furthermore, acquiring an education can "...provide a license for employment, greater self-confidence, leadership capabilities, and a chance to expand financial and intellectual resources for personal happiness" (Tokarz, 1992, p. 2).

There are many successful and educated Asian American women who do not receive the respect and recognition they deserve. In addition to overcoming the obstacles they encounter in the American society, Hmong women face their own road blocks within the Hmong community. Hmong college women do not receive as much support from the Hmong women who do not continue their education. This was viewed by Rosy Lor, a student at Georgetown University, as a self-inflicted setback (Lor, 1997).

It is thought that Hmong college women do not receive the respect and support from other women in their communities because their education threatens some Hmong men and their roles as community leaders. Due to the fear of Hmong women taking over their roles, Hmong men often oppress women. Hmong men oppress women by "...speaking negatively of women or discrediting their achievements, since men still have a significant influence in Hmong society" (Lor, 1997, p. 22).

Lor also added that because Hmong women socialize with and do things for other women of the same clan more than they would for women from other clans, support from the Hmong women in the community was minimal. Trust was also an issue. Hmong people are encouraged to better their own clans first, therefore, distrust people outside of the clan.

This division of women caused by the clan system may be a primary reason why Hmong women have been unable to display enough solidarity to ignite a Hmong women's rights movement. It also explains why Hmong women can be critical and unsupportive of each other at times (Lor, 1997, p. 22).

According to Mao Lee, who has a bachelor's degree in Hotel/Restaurant Management and a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling K-12 and is an elementary counselor in the Wausau school district, maintaining one's traditional role or adopting a modern identity is a personal decision.

I think tradition is good. It ties people together and helps to identify the various roles. Changes are also good and often times necessary due to relocation or adaptation to new environments. Tradition comes with pride and culture. I think a woman has to decide for herself on the lifestyle she wants (personal communication, June 25, 1997).

May Hang, who has a nursing degree from UW-Eau Claire and is a school nurse in the Wausau district, expressed that many people felt she should have been married before she graduated. This was expressed in their attitudes and their words. Whenever Hang did presentations about health and teaching in the community, the first question that was asked of her was whether or not she was married, rather than what she was presenting. "People would always ask if I had a husband and that to me is saying you should be getting married. That is always the first question, not what is your name or what are you doing, but do you have a husband yet" (personal communication, June 23, 1997).

A degree increases an individual's chance of finding employment, but with it, a person has added responsibilities and higher expected standards. Hang indicated that she did not feel pressure from her family about family responsibilities while she was in school. Her parents knew that the best place for

her was at school where she could concentrate on her studies. They had other children they were relying on at home. Lee stated that she did not have any family responsibilities while in college, because she was not home to take on any. However, she felt that it would have been different if she was home.

Cultural conflicts

When people in a family or system possess beliefs, values, traditions, and family structures of a certain culture, but live in a different society, there will be cultural conflict. The cultural clash can place a strain upon the family and community. Whenever two cultures contradict each other, the transformation process of assimilating into the dominant culture is difficult to adjust to and accept. The degree of difficulty depends on the similarity of the two cultures. For example, somebody from France living in the U.S. will probably assimilate more quickly because the two cultures share a common bond of politic, law, music, education, medicine, etc. In comparison, a Hmong person would have a harder time in being acculturated because in Laos there was no formal education, no crimes, no bills to pay, no politic, and people experience less stress (V. Vang, 1991).

Growing up in the United States has given the younger generation a different outlook on life. While their parents continue to favor traditional values and beliefs, the younger generations quickly adapted the culture, language, and lifestyle into their own (Yang, 1996). A cultural conflict that existed between Oua Xiong and his parents was their belief that the oldest son becomes the parent and act as the disciplinary person to younger siblings.

Growing up in the United States. I have developed different beliefs about how things should be done. I don't always see those things as my responsibility. I am a brother to my siblings. I don't want to be their father

as well. Similarly, I think my father would like me to assume a head role with our clan. I really have no interest in such a political role in our clan. Once again, this might be a result of my growing up here in the States. I think each family should be responsible for their own welfare. I don't want to make a decision for someone else's family because regardless of what happens, I'm not the one to pay the consequence (personal communication, April 15, 1998).

Causes of cultural conflict among Hmong parents and their children

The Hmong family structure was based around a hierarchy in which older people have much more power. Children respected elders and parents. Parents had discretion on how and when to discipline their children. They did not have to fear being jailed if they spanked their children.

Since resettling in the United States, Hmong elders feel they are no longer able to control their children. The children can go to school and quickly adapt to their new environment, while most parents cannot. The "...lack of language, knowledge, and skills contributes to the lack of understanding of the culture, the law, and the way of life" (V. Vang, 1991, p. 3). This results in more resistance to adaptation and acceptance. A role-reversal also occurs when parents have to rely on their children to fill out forms, pay bills, and interpret the English language (Dufresne, 1992).

Xiong believed that cultural clashes are one of the biggest contributors to cultural conflicts. He stated that parents are from the old country and they wish for life to remain the old way. However, not all of the traditional beliefs and values appeal to today's children. Traditionally, girls stay home and prepare themselves to raise a family. It is not so in the United States.

Here our Hmong girls learn through school and American friends that girls

have just as much rights as boys and should be given the same opportunities to live out their dreams. When Hmong girls try to be outgoing, parents usually are upset because they are not being responsible as good Hmong girls should be. This is just one example. There are many others such as differences in parenting practices. American believe that parents are responsible for their children until the legal age of 18, while Hmong parents believe adulthood is defined by maturity often at a very young ages (11-14). Clearly, differences in cultural beliefs continues to be a problem for many families (personal communication, April 15, 1998).

Consequences of cultural conflicts between parents and children

A survey of how cultural conflict affected the relationship between parents and their children from Eau Claire County and Dunn County concluded that Hmong children no longer respect their elders. Vang, the author of the survey, also added:

Parents feel they no longer have legal rights and authority to monitor and manage their children according to Hmong tradition and culture. Some parents have been sent to court and penalized because they used Hmong traditional discipline methods with their children. For these reasons, some parents seem resistant and/or are opposed to change and adopting American culture because they fear losing the cultural identity of their homeland (V. Vang, 1991, p. ii).

Parents are frustrated and powerless when it comes to disobedient children. Children who were born in Laos and had some exposure to that society had more respect, listened to their elders, and accepted their parents' wishes. Hmong American children have used their knowledge of the American

judicial system and culture as a weapon against their parents. The parents felt that they were fighting a losing battle. When they administered discipline to their children, the law saw it as child abuse. However, when their children broke the law and the parents did not discipline their children, they were labeled as incompetent parents (V. Vang, 1991). It has become a "catch 22" situation.

Gang involvement is another consequence that results from cultural conflict. Although the Hmong parents are loving and want the best for their children, they are still using the same disciplinary actions they did in Laos. Many feel strongly that what their children are doing is wrong and that they should listen to their parents without question. What children lack at home they make up for in the friends they have outside the family. Adolescents get involved with gangs because gangs give them a sense of family (Yang, 1995). Gang membership has no age limit. Elementary age children have been found to be affiliated with gangs.

Some parents, whether educated or not, have changed their parenting styles as they adjust to their new environment. These parents understood that their children's opinions mattered and were willing to accommodate their children in order to have a functional family (Hughes, 1990). Unfortunately, these parents are not considered role models. Older parents are sometimes reluctant to learn new parenting styles.

Higher education

Education is difficult for students whose parents are not educated or parents who do not have the time to help their children with their assignments. An enormous number of children from first generation Hmong American parents are at least one grade level behind in their skills than the national average when they enter school (Dufresne, 1992). Otto, 1993, studied possible reasons for

this delay. The first reason for the delay was that Hmong children spend the first four to five years at home where the parents spoke Hmong. Whether the child was born in the United States made no difference. The child at that critical stage in life was more exposed to the Hmong culture. The second factor was that by the time some kids entered the U.S., they were too old to be placed in kindergarten or first grade. Schools often enrolled children according to chronological age. With no education background, the children found it difficult to achieve good grades. The more grade levels missed, the more difficult it was for them to catch up.

The older a child was, the higher the grade level the child was placed into and the more challenging course work became. Older students who did not have the opportunity to begin their education from the elementary school level found it extraordinary difficult learning English. They were placed in an alternative classroom where they received more student-teacher contact. The later students entered school, the less chance the students would be mainstreamed, but when they were mainstreamed, they performed below their peers (Dufresne, 1992).

Consequences in college

According to Otto (1993), there were Hmong students who did not perform well in high school, but were permitted to graduate with their peers. Because colleges were required to recruit minorities, Hmong students who did not do well on the ACT or SAT tests were admitted to the applied universities. College dropout rates occurred when these students found it difficult to meet the learning institution's required academic standards.

Before the requirement for minorities was passed, University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menomonie, WI, had an enrollment number of nine Asian students in 1976. Afterward, UW-Stout had an enrollment of 208 Asian students

in 1992 (Otto, 1993). The author of this study did not know how many students were Hmong. Since 1992, the percentage of Asian students attending UW-Stout has increased yearly.

When educational institutions admit students without adequate preparation, those students do not perform well academically. Most Hmong students enter college with the intention to do their best. They attend classes, review their notes on a daily basis, and read their text repeatedly. However, because of their limited skills, they had to spend twice the time studying than their classmates. They often came across terms that were unrecognizable, stopped to consult their dictionary, and then memorized the information. Consequently, they did not test well because they were unable to answer a question if it was worded differently than in their notes (Starks-Martin, 1996). Many of the courses taught in college consist of lectures and objective tests. While some students do better with this type of teaching style, others do not. Lee stated that she was not a textbook learner. She commented, "I learn best from hands-on experiences. I am a visual learner" (personal communication, June 25, 1997).

Minority students encounter additional problems when they are in a white dominant institution. The problems they face are "...discrimination and exclusion, religious discrimination, low social economic status, language barriers, and cultural alienation" (Vang, 1993, p. 4).

Xiong (1998) stated that he did not recall a time when he felt discriminated against, but he did say that there are Hmong students who were not as fortunate as he. Trying to fit or belong in any place unfamiliar is difficult. However, Xiong stated that his experience at UW-Eau Claire was a very positive one.

Success of the Hmong people

Regardless of the Hmong's slow rise in the education area, the Hmong have come a long way. At a Hmong Annual Conference in 1991, Vang shared with his audience the achievements of the Hmong since they have resettled in the United States.

There are about 3,129 Hmong American students who are currently enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States. From 1972 to 1990, there were about 16 Hmongs who received doctoral degrees. There are currently 22 doctoral candidates in graduate schools and professional studies. There are about 50 individuals who have completed M.A. and M.S. degrees from 1984 to 1990. And there are about 30 persons who are enrolled in the M.A. and M.S. programs. From 1981 to 1990, there were nearly 600 Hmongs who received B.A. and B.S. degrees in colleges and universities in the United States (P. Vang, 1991, p. 78).

Xiong (1998) stated that the number of businesses owned by Hmong people and Hmong professionals have increased dramatically since the Hmong people first came to the United States and will continue to grow. He was confident that the majority of the Hmong people will do well economically. However, he did comment that there will be those who will not be able to provide a decent living for themselves.

Role models

When Hang was asked to share her views of how she has contributed in the area of role modeling, she expressed that she felt people in the community should see themselves as role models and not just those with a degree. She saw herself as a role model, but not for everyone because she felt that different people have different experiences and have something of their own to contribute.

Mothers can be wonderful role models.

You have to look at what your definition of success is. Traditionally, we think that success for a Hmong woman is knowing how to cook, knowing how to clean a house, bearing children, especially boys. That's their definition of success, but it's changing with us going to school. Our definitions are a little different from our parents (personal communication, June 23, 1997).

Possessing an education puts added pressure and responsibility on an individual as a role model when they have to juggle a career and a family. Hang further stated:

It's kind of scary because like I said to my husband, I feel like I'm living under a microscope. I had people say to me 'Oh, here you have a degree and you're acting like a child,' it's the weekend and I'm out here in the swimming pool with my son I should be able to wear a swimsuit. As Hmong, we tend to put more pressure on people and they feel like they have to be at a certain standard all the time (personal communication, June 23, 1997).

Hang is also involved in a small women's organization. There are a lot of women's issues that they would like to explore and tackle, especially domestic abuse, but they do not have the support and the person power. For the past two years they have focused their efforts on non-threatening topics such as scholarships for Hmong college females through fund raising.

As for Neng Xiong, he expressed that it is hard to be a good role model in his family because he lives so far from them. As a role model he provides advice for the younger generation such as how to choose a learning institution, how to succeed in school, and how to go about choosing a career.

I believe that I can be a model for the young people because when I came

to the U.S. I started in ninth grade and I made it through high school and made it through college. I think that if they put themselves in my situation and knowing that I started in high school and I made it. If they try hard in high school they will make it through as well (personal communication, June, 24, 1997).

Xiong's success was not easy to attain because he was already 18 years old when he came to the U.S. At that time, 18 was the cut off point for admittance to high school. He was afraid that the school would not allow him to enroll. However, because Xiong was very competent in English and grammar, he was allowed to go to high school.

Employment

A well paying job that enables people to be self-sufficient is the result of a well chosen field of study during the college years. College graduates usually expect to find employment in their major, as well as a sizably larger paycheck. The hard work and sweat one endures going to school is a small price to pay for a life time of greater satisfaction.

Hang shared that she did not have a difficult time finding a job in her area of interest because she passed the board test required of all nursing students upon graduation. She does plan to continue her education, but at the moment feels that she needs to gain some hands-on experience in order to compete with other graduate classmates.

Being out for a while gives me a leverage and would probably allow me to compete better with some of the graduate students. Nursing is not like counseling where you have a certain principle that you kind of carry on. Nursing is more complex and if you do something wrong it involves people's lives (personal communication, June 24, 1997).

When Lee was asked how well college had prepared her as a school counselor, she agreed that she was prepared to do her job. However, Lee stressed that schools can provide only so much information and knowledge necessary to be successful in the job. Lee felt that the majority of the learning process was done on the job. She stated that part of the preparation was "to learn as you experience different situations" (personal communication, June 25, 1997).

Advantages of an education

A degree can serve a person economically by allowing the person to find a well paying job, by being independent personally, and by contributing to the work force. Education can lead to increased confidence and self-esteem for many people who are shy or not assertive. To have confidence can lead to a job that can help build self-confidence and a strong sense of oneself (Lowe, 1989). Hang was also asked to describe the advantages of having an education.

Career wise it helped me to attain a very good position. For my degree, if you don't have a degree you could never get a job. You couldn't even get an entry level position. My degree has opened a lot of doors for me. Personally, it has benefited my family, not only my husband and my baby, but both families. Economically we are more stable also. Socially, you are seen from the community at large as, '...a productive citizen'. Community wise, I think that the more bilingual people we have in any position the better we are. Hopefully tear down the different stereotypes (personal communication, June 24, 1997).

Lee stated that her education has helped her grow both professionally and personally. She also added "I am a wiser person due to education" (personal communication, June 25, 1997).

Annual earnings for an entry level school nurse position range from thirty thousand to thirty-five thousand. In the field of school counseling the entry level is between twenty-eight thousand to thirty thousand a year. In the Industrial Engineering field the beginning salary ranges from twenty-seven thousand to thirty-one thousand a year. The average starting salary for a Bachelor's degree holder in the Health and Medical field is twenty-four thousand as a Dental Case Manager or a Dental Coordinator.

Job dissatisfaction

Students who major in programs where a master's degree and/or a doctoral degree is required, but do not obtain them, often find themselves working in jobs unrelated to their major. This increases the likelihood of job dissatisfaction. The time and money invested in school did not pay off. According to Otto's (1993) study, the reason for job dissatisfaction and unemployment is the Hmong student's lack of oral, reading, and writing skills. Otto concluded that many UW-Stout Hmong students received higher grades than they earned. Some professors inflated the grades of minority students without realizing the injustice of this practice. When they graduate and begin their employment search, they find that they did not meet the employers' criteria. Neng Xiong shared his views on grade inflation:

It depends. Sometimes you have to know your subjects well enough and sometimes you have to be good to impress the professor, otherwise, if they have a feeling that you are not doing the job or you are not good enough they may hesitate to give you a better grade. I had a project that I did very well on. From that point onward, I had a feeling that the professor gave me more respect toward what I did. As a result I got a better grade. I don't know if my skills improved or if I proved to the

professor that I knew what I was doing (personal communication, June 24, 1997).

As stated earlier, Lee has a bachelor's degree in Hotel/Restuarant Management. Lee worked as an assistant manager at a Wendy's fast food restaurant in Minnesota for a period of time, but did not feel that the time and service she gave was worth the salary she received. Lee also added that it was difficult to have guests over because she had to leave them at home while she put in long hour shifts. Lee returned to school to attain her masters in Guidance and Counseling. Lee has found her current career very rewarding.

Many Hmong people feel that in order to prosper in the United States, they need to have an education. Many students view this as added pressure and stress. When they fail to find employment in their area of interest, students often feel that they have let their families down (Otto, 1993).

One reason that contributed to job discrimination among Asian American women according to Woo (1989), was the encouragement for them to choose majors less prestigious. The number one concentration college Asian women prepared for was to become a teacher. The next concentration was as a registered nurse. Many foreign-born Asian women who have four or more years of college found themselves in clerical occupations because they found that clerical work was easy to obtain compared to other occupations (Woo, 1989).

Job satisfaction

Companies like Wausau Insurance and some school districts sometimes offer their employees great opportunities to go back to school without the need for them to quit their jobs. According to Hang, the school she works for has a reimbursement plan for its staff if they choose to further their education. Few employers offer opportunities like that. In addition, working in the school district

allows the staff summer vacations. Hang plans to return to school when her career and family have grown a little bit more.

Neng Xiong strongly feels that if he did not have his degree, he would not be able to be employed with the company he works for and be in the position he is in now. Xiong does have his daily stress and pressure from work when he has to deal with disgruntled customers and meet demands for project deadlines, but overall he finds his job rewarding. Furthermore, he has a good relationship with his co-workers, as well as his supervisors.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine where the 1992 college-bound Hmong graduates, from the Wausau Area Schools, are in terms of that pursuit. The researcher was interested in collecting information from them in regard to: college attendance, college retention, college transfers, college majors, double majors, Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees, employment, geography, and reasons for success and failure.

Subjects

The subjects for this follow-up study were the same 32 individuals that Tokarz surveyed in 1992. The students were Hmong high school seniors from Wausau East and Wausau West High Schools. All 32 students were from low income families. Twenty-one students from this group were involved in a state program called Early Identification Program (EIP). Their participation in the program provided them with the opportunity to visit various educational institutions as well as do career exploration.

Instrument

In 1992, Tokarz administered the American College Testing (ACT) Survey of Post-Secondary Plans to her subjects to determine what their plans were after they graduated from high school. Tokarz also developed 10 additional questions relevant to the study. The surveys were scored by the national standardized testing company.

Because the ACT survey did not ask questions relevant toward Hunter's objectives, Hunter did not use the ACT survey. A descriptive survey was

developed to conduct the second follow-up study of the 1992 college-bound graduating class and was administered in the 1994 study. Several ACT surveys were examined for the third study, however, the materials were inappropriate for the current research study. A descriptive survey was also designed to address issues about life after college. The survey utilized several questions from Hunter's 1994 follow-up study (see appendix for revised survey). The objectives that the survey was developed to address are listed below:

1. To determine if the students transferred to another educational institution.
2. To determine how times the students switched majors.
3. To determine if the students pursued a second major.
4. To determine if the college students completed their bachelor's degree.
5. To determine if the students pursued a second undergraduate degree.
6. To determine if the graduates pursued a master's degree.
7. To determine if the graduates are working in their fields of study.
8. To determine where the students' degree has taken them geographically.
9. To determine reasons behind their successes or failures.

There are two parts to the survey. One part was for the individuals who furthered their education after high school. The other section was for the individuals who did not continue their education.

Procedure

The survey was administered over the telephone to insure the return of surveys and to be able to solicit complete responses. The subjects were

informed of the purpose of the survey. Confidentiality was also discussed. Students who could not be reached by telephone were mailed a survey. They were given an allotted amount of time to complete the surveys and return the surveys in the self-addressed stamped envelopes enclosed. The individuals were identifiable by the researcher, but data was used as a group, not individually.

With the help of Sharon Hunter, Ker Yang from the Wausau Hmong Association, Moua Vang, and the researcher's parents, twenty-two people were located. Twenty-one of the students were contacted by telephone and eight people were mailed a survey because the researcher could not find a telephone number. One survey was returned completed and seven envelopes were returned unopened and with no forwarding addresses. Parents and relatives of the seven people were contacted, but they were not able to shed any light on how they could be reached. The same attempt was made for parents and relatives of the remaining three, but with no results. One individual had married and had moved out of the state. Her parents have had no contact with her since and did not know her address or phone number. This is not uncommon since Hmong women who marry become a member of their husband's clan.

Limitations

One limitation to this study was that there was no guarantee of the researcher locating all 32 people. It has been six years since the first study was conducted and four since the second study. The possibility that the addresses and telephone numbers of the participants are still accurate is slim. During the course of the years, people may have gotten married, and/or moved away without leaving a forwarding address.

The findings of this research should not be generalized to the rest of the

Hmong population due the small population surveyed. In addition, the researcher was not able to survey all of the original 32 participants. There is the possibility that the students who cannot be reached have graduated from college and have found better employment elsewhere. Another possibility is that there may be students still in school who cannot be found for the study.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Introduction

In 1992, 32 Hmong high school seniors from Wausau East and Wausau West in Wausau, WI were surveyed by Tokarz to determine what their college plans were after graduation. In 1994, Hunter conducted a follow-up study of the same students to determine which students actually attended college and which did not. This study will determine who has graduated, who has not, and what they are currently doing. The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To determine if the students transferred to another educational institution.
2. To determine how many times the students switched majors.
3. To determine if the students pursued a second major.
4. To determine if the college students completed their bachelor's degree.
5. To determine if the students pursued a second undergraduate degree.
6. To determine if the graduates pursued a master's degree.
7. To determine if the graduates are working in their fields of study.
8. To determine where the students' degree has taken them geographically.
9. To determine reasons behind their successes or failures.

College attendance

Out of the 32 students surveyed in 1992, 21 students indicated that they were continuing their education. When Hunter conducted her survey in 1994, she found that 17 of the 21 students who planned on continuing their education

did pursue higher education. Of the 32 original students, 22 were found and surveyed in this study. Of the 22 individuals surveyed, 73% or 16 students (10 males, 6 females) did attend college after high school and 27% or 6 students (5 males and 1 female) did not. As of 1998, of the 16 surveyed who went on to college, 25% or 4 students (2 males and 2 females) were still pursuing their education. One female graduated from Toccoa Falls College with her Bachelor's degree in Missiology in December, 1996. One of the original 17 students who had indicated that they were in college in Hunter's study was not found for this study. The educational institutions were technical colleges and four years universities.

College retention

There were four reasons why 11 of the 16 participants left school without graduating. Five of the 11 who dropped out of college stated that they had financial problems, 3 had family responsibilities, 2 had financial difficulties and family responsibilities, and 1 was just not prepared for college. The surveys revealed that college retention ranged from a month to three years. All 11 participants expressed that they would like to return to college in the near future.

College transfer

Two (1 male and 1 female) of the 16 students who did continue their education after high school transferred from four year institutions to North Central Technical College in Wausau, WI. The female will graduate in May, 1998, and the male is not sure when he will be eligible for graduation.

Of the 4 students still in college, 2 remained at the school where they started. The female graduated in May of 1996 from UW-Stevens Point with a BA in Communication. The male is expecting to graduate with a BS in

Kinesiology from UW-Milwaukee in May, 1998. The female student who graduated from Toccoa Falls College did not transfer either.

College majors

The majors the participants declared in 1992 were Accounting, Biology, Civil Engineering, Communication, Computer Science, Education, Marketing, Nursing, Police Science, and Missiology, Printing, and Urban Studies. Two people were undeclared. Thirteen percent (2) of the students had their majors selected for them by school advisors. Seventy-five percent (12) stated that they chose their major because they had an interest in the career. One male from the group commented that he was discouraged by his professor from majoring in Marketing, his first choice. The professor informed him that few Hmong students were accepted into the program because they failed to pass the entrance exam. The young man did pass the exam, but decided to go into Machinery.

Reasons for students switching majors were consistent with Hunter's 1994 findings. The participants changed majors because of "lack of interest, withdrawal from college and re-enrollment at a technical school, and program availability" (Hunter, 1994, p. 40). Of the 14 who declared a major, 8% (1) changed majors twice and 21% (3) changed once. The two females who graduated with a bachelor's degree were the only students who did not switch majors.

Financial aids availability

The 1992 survey indicated that 85% (17) of the participants reported that they plan to attend college and pay for their tuition with grants and scholarships. Hunter's 1994 follow-up study reported that 94.1% (16) of the students had received sufficient financial aids support for college. Ninety-four percent (15) of

the respondents in this study reported that financial aid was important to the continuation of their education. One person stated that financial aid was not a factor in his decision to attend college. Thirty-one percent (5) of the 16 participant who actually continued stated that without financial aid they would not have been able to continue their education.

The main sources of financial support received by 81% (13) of the students consisted of grants, loans, off campus employment, work study, scholarships, and savings. Of the 13, 23% (3) stated that they received help from their parents in addition to other financial aid.

Hunter's survey indicated that the students did not quit school due to their inability to afford college, but because of low grades and marriage. For this 1998 survey, 46% (5) of the 11 respondents dropped out of school, and did not return due to financial problems. Nineteen percent (3) of the 16 students who continued their education after high school said that they struggled to pay for each semester of college they were there.

Family and school support

Emotional support from the families contributed to the well-being of the students and their success in college. The majority of the parents of these college students were not able to support them financially. However, they received moral support and encouragement to do their best. Of the 16 students who went to college, 75% (12) stated that they received emotional support from their families. One person from this group stated that his parents did not encourage him to go to college, but his brothers and sisters did. Twenty-five percent (4) stated that they did not receive any kind of family support. Two of the respondents were living with their uncles. Their parents are still in Laos.

Family support is essential to a student's academic success, but 44% (7)

stated that they also found encouragement from academic counselors and program advisors important, however, 56% (9) reported that they did not receive any type of guidance from high school staff or college advisors. One of the students commented that he enrolled in college on his own and took the classes he was interested in without any assistance from anyone, because he did not know that there were advisors who could help.

Without the guidance of an advisor or a counselor, students experience difficulties in selecting the right courses for their majors. Concentrations have requirements that students need to fulfill before they are allowed to take higher level courses. Students who are not aware of such requirements and do not register for the necessary classes at the right time find themselves with courses and credits that do not go towards graduation.

Double majors

No respondent had a double major.

Completion of Bachelor's Degree

Some students take four to five years to complete an undergraduate program, while others take longer depending on how often they change majors, whether they transfer to a different school, how many credits they take each semester, and how well they perform academically. It took four and one half years for the females who graduated with their bachelor's degrees to achieve their programs, while it will have taken the male who is expecting to graduate May, 1998 six years. He spent two years exploring other fields.

Pursuit of a second undergraduate degree

No respondent is pursuing a second undergraduate degree.

Pursuit of a Master's Degree

Of the 16 participants who went to college after high school, one female student, the researcher of this paper, graduated from UW-Stevens Point, and went on to pursue a graduate degree in the Guidance and Counseling K-12 program. This person will graduate in May, 1998 and plans do her internship during the 1998-99 school year. She will have taken three years to complete her masters program and become certified to work in the schools as a guidance counselor. The young woman does not plan to pursue further education after graduation.

Employment

No participant is working in the career they went to school for or in the majors they declared in 1992. Three of the 5 students who continued their education will graduate in May of 1998, and hope to find employment in their area of interest. Without an education it becomes very difficult to acquire a well paying job that will allow for creativity.

Of the 16 respondents , 50% (8) reported that their salary per year was less than \$20,000. Four of the participants are still in school and only working part-time. The salary of 38% (6) of the participants was between \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year, 1 was greater than \$50,000, and 1 was not employed at the moment.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction among the respondents varied. The participants were asked to rate their level of job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5. One indicated least satisfaction and 5 indicated most satisfaction. Twenty percent (3) of the respondents rated their job satisfaction at 2, 20% (3) rated their job satisfaction

at 3, 33% (5) rated a satisfaction level of 4, and 27% (4) rated their job satisfaction at 5.

A family of their own

Of the 16 respondents, 69% (11) were married. Eighty-two percent (9) of the married students have one or more children. One participant will have her first child in July, 1998.

Education level of the spouse

The education level of the respondents' spouses ranged from still attending high school to possessing a master's degree. Those with a spouse who are educated and more economically successful also tend to be more stable.

The respondents were asked to indicate their spouses' educational level. Twenty-seven percent (3) of the spouses had a high school education, 18% (2) had a bachelor's degree, and 9% (1) had a master's degree. Forty-five percent (5) of the students who are married chose "other" for their spouse's educational level. Sixty percent (3) of the spouses had more than one year of technical or college education, but less than the required graduation requirement. Twenty percent (1) will graduate with a bachelor's degree in May of 1998 and 20% (1) will graduate from high school in June of 1999.

Geography

At this time the three students who will graduate in May have plans to return to the Wausau area to seek employment and be near friends and families. Of the 11 who did not return to college, one moved to Minnesota to find employment. The remaining 10 are still in the Wausau area. Because the

Hmong culture values family, and place great emphasis on family responsibility, it is difficult for individuals to leave the community and family to search for personal development.

Reasons for successes and failures

Students felt that they were not successful academically because they had family responsibilities, financial difficulties, were married, and/or were unprepared for college. Students who continued their education reported that they succeeded in college because they received family support. They were given guidance by their program advisors and other staff while in school. The students also stated that financial aid was another reason for the continuation of their education.

Findings for participants who did not go to college

Twenty-two of the original 32 respondents were located and re-surveyed. Twenty-seven percent (5 males and 1 female) of the 22 did not enroll in college during the 1992-93 school year. Sixty-seven percent (4) of the group are currently married and have two or more children. All of the participants are employed and their salaries ranged from less than \$20,000 to \$50,000 a year. Sixty-seven percent (4) reported salaries less than \$20,000, 1 between \$20,000 to \$30,000, and 1 between \$40,000 to \$50,000.

The respondents were asked to rate their job satisfaction level on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 with five being the most favorable and one being the least favorable. Fifty percent (3) rated their job satisfaction level at 3. The other 50% reported a job satisfaction level of 4. The number of job changes since 1992 ranged from zero to three times per person. Eighty-three percent (5) stated that they would like to leave their current employer if they could find better

employment.

The participants were asked to share one reason for not going on to college immediately after high school. There are 6 respondents who have not attended any type of college or technical school since high school. One male stated that he did not go to college because he did not want to and did not feel that an education would necessarily lead to a well-paying job. Thirty-three percent (2) shared that they were married at the time and had family responsibilities while 17% (1) said family responsibilities, even though not married, prevented him from attending college.

The respondents were asked whether college was an option at this time and all 6 responded that college was not. One of the respondents said that if he did go to college now he would not know what to major in. Another person expressed that his English skills were low and did not feel that he would have done well in school. High school had been a big challenge.

Of the four respondents who are married, two of the spouses had a high school education, while one had a technical college degree and one had a master's degree.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Introduction

Since graduating in 1992, 32 students left high school behind to explore the outside world. Seventeen students sought further education in either technical colleges, 2 year colleges, or a 4 year universities. Sixteen students decided to find employment and become productive citizens. This study was conducted to verify whether the college students have graduated and if they were employed in the career they went to school for. The following objectives were taken into consideration when the survey was administered.

1. To determine if the students transferred to another educational institution.
2. To determine how many times the students switched majors.
3. To determine if the students pursued a second major.
4. To determine if the college students completed their bachelor's degree.
5. To determine if the students pursued a second undergraduate degree.
6. To determine if the graduates pursued a master's degree.
7. To determine if the graduates are working in their field of studies.
8. To determine where the students' degrees has taken them geographically.
9. To determine reasons behind their successes or failures.

Summary of research findings

Twenty-two of the original 32 1992 high school graduates were found and surveyed. Of the 22 respondents, 16 students continued their education and 6

found employment. The majors declared in the fall of 1992 were clear indications that the students would find well-paying jobs once they had completed their studies. Eleven students dropped out of college at various times between 1992 and 1995 due to financial problems and family responsibilities at home. Five students continued their college education. Two of the five dropped out of the 4 year universities and enrolled at a technical college while the other three students continued at their educational institutions.

In 1996, two students completed their undergraduate work. One student is currently in the process of completing her graduate study in May and the other student is working. Two more students are in the process of finishing their technical and undergraduate programs this May. Although 16 of the 22 respondents went to college, 5 students actually forged ahead to attain a college degree.

Six students did not continue their education after high school. Similar to the 11 students who dropped out of college, they were faced with financial problems and family responsibilities. Unlike the 11 respondents they do not intend to go to college.

Implications and recommendations

1. Financial aid appeared to be important to the continuation of the 1992 Wausau graduates' education.
2. Marriage and family responsibilities are some of the factors that contributed to the Hmong students not finishing school.
3. Some students feel they do not necessarily have to have a college degree to be financially successful.
4. Strong academic advising and individual counseling are necessary while in college.

5. It would appear that more and more Hmong females have made significant progress in education.
6. Students should consider seeking out advisors and discuss goals and interests to declare the most appropriate major for them.
7. College students should try to have more face to face contacts with advisors to set goals.
8. Some students would benefit from taking study skills courses to learn how to study, take tests, and write papers.
9. Students need to think about their goals, financial status, and the amount of time they want to commit towards education before applying to college.
10. Students may want to consider, but should not be limited to enrolling in 2 year campuses or technical colleges to determine if college is for them.
11. Students appear to be more successful when parents and relatives give more emotional support and encouragement to go to college.
12. Students would benefit from having college advisors reach out to new incoming students and help them enroll in appropriate courses towards graduation.
13. Mentor programs would benefit incoming freshmen.
14. High school students need to utilize their guidance counselors for career counseling.

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Appendix

April 10, 1998

Dear

If you think back to 1992 and 1994, you participated in two surveys conducted by Marcia Tokarz and Sharon Hunter. They were both pursuing their graduate work at UW-Stout in the Guidance and Counseling program. You, along with the other Hmong high school seniors from Wausau West and Wausau East answered questions about your plans after high school.

It has been more than four years now and I would like to know what you are doing. I am currently pursuing my Master's degree in the Guidance and Counseling program at UW-Stout. I am conducting another follow-up study from Marcia's and Sharon's earlier studies. I was one of the students who graduated in 1992, therefore, participated in the studies as well. As I stated earlier, I am conducting the third study and I would very much appreciate your assistance in sharing your college experience with me. I am also interested in hearing if you have graduated and whether you are working or have continued your education. I am aware that several of the students decided not to attend college right after high school. I would very much like to hear from you and hear what you have been doing since we attended high school together.

Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. There are two parts to this survey. If you did continue your education during the 1992-93 school year, please complete part 1. If you decided not to attend college, please complete part 2 of the survey. I would appreciate it if you could return the survey in the enclosed envelope to me by April 24. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at work at 715-232-1409 during the day or home at 715-235-0282 in the evenings.

I hope to hear from you soon. Thank you for your time and help.

Sincerely,

Youa Xiong

Introductory comments for survey being conducted verbally:

I am Youa Xiong and a graduate student at UW-Stout in the Guidance and Counseling program. I am writing my paper and have decided to do the second follow-up study of the 1992 Hmong high school college-bound seniors from Wausau West and Wausau East that Marcia Tokarz conducted. I was one of the students surveyed and I am very interested in hearing how your college experience went. In addition, I am interested in learning if you have continued your education or if you are working. If you did not go on to college after high school, I would like to know what you are doing now.

Consent for Participation

I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and I may discontinue my participation at anytime. I understand that any information about me that is collected during this study will be kept confidential. By signing below, I understand the purpose of the study.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Please write your name, address, and phone number:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

By completing this survey, you give the researcher permission to use your information in the study.

PART 1

Complete this section if you did go to college after high school.

1. Did you go to college after you graduated from high school in 1992?

YES

NO

2. Which college did you attend? _____

3. What major did you declare the fall of the 1992 semester?

4. How did you select your major? _____

5. What was your grade point average after your first semester in college? _____

6. Did you switch majors? YES NO

7. If yes, how many times and why? _____

8. What major did you declare? _____

9. What made you decide to choose the new major(s)? _____

10. Did you attend college every semester? YES NO
11. If you circled NO, what semester or semesters did you miss?

12. What was your reason for not returning to college? _____

13. Did you pursue a second major during your college career? YES NO
14. If you did, what did you declare and why? _____

15. How did you select the second major? _____

16. Have you completed your Bachelor's degree? YES NO
17. If you answered yes, when did you graduate? _____
18. What college did you graduate from? _____
19. What program did you study? _____
20. How long did it take you to complete your program? _____
21. How did you pay for college? Please circle all that apply.
Grants Loans Parents' help Work Study
Off campus job Savings Scholarships
22. Did you have enough money to pay for each semester of college?
YES NO
23. If you answered NO to question 16, when will you graduate? _____
24. Will you graduate in the program you declared in question 3? YES NO
25. Was financial aid important to the continuation of your education?
YES NO
26. Did you receive emotional support from your family? YES NO

27. Did you receive assistance at college from other people outside of your family to keep you in college? YES NO
28. If yes, who and what was the person's position? _____
29. If you have graduated, what are you doing? _____
30. If you are pursuing a second Bachelor's degree, what it is and why?

31. If you are pursuing a Master's degree, what it is and why? _____
32. How are you financing your education? _____
33. If you did not pursue further education, are you working in your field of study? YES NO
34. Where has your degree taken you geographically? _____
35. What is your salary per year?
- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| _____ Less than 20,000 | _____ 20,000 to 30,000 |
| _____ 30,000 to 40,000 | _____ 40,000 to 50,000 |
| _____ Greater than 50,000 | |
36. How satisfied are you with your job?
- Least Satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Most Satisfied
37. Are you currently married? YES NO
38. How many children do you have? _____
39. If you are married, what is your spouse's educational level?
- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| _____ High School | |
| _____ Technical College | |
| _____ Bachelor's Degree | |
| _____ Master's Degree | |
| _____ Other, Specify _____ | |
40. Please comment on anything else that you feel have helped and/or hindered your pursuit of higher education that was not mentioned in the above questions. _____
- _____
- _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

By completing this survey, you give your consent for the researcher to use your information in the study.

PART 2

Complete this section if you did not go to college right after high school.

1. Did you graduate from high school? YES NO
2. Are you currently married? YES NO
3. If yes, when did you get married? month/year _____
4. How many children do you have? _____
5. Are you currently working? YES NO
6. Where are you working? _____
7. What is your salary per year?
____ Less than 20,000 ____ 20,000 to 30,000
____ 30,000 to 40,000 ____ 40,000 to 50,000
____ Greater than 50,000
8. How long have you worked there? _____
9. How satisfied are you with your job?
Least Satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Most Satisfied
10. How many times have you changed jobs since 1992? _____
11. What was the reason for not going to college immediately after high school? _____

12. Did you attend college or technical school at sometime after you completed high school? YES NO
13. When? _____ Where? _____
14. What major did you declare? _____
15. Are you in college now? YES NO
16. When? _____ Where? _____
17. If you have not taken any classes since high school, is college an option now? YES NO
18. If yes, where would you like to go? _____

19. What would you like to major in? _____

20. How will you finance college? _____

21. If you are married, what is your spouse's educational level?

- _____ High School
- _____ Technical College
- _____ Bachelor's Degree
- _____ Master's Degree
- _____ Other, specify _____

22. Please comment on anything else that you feel have helped and/or hindered your pursuit of higher education that was not mentioned in the above questions. _____

Thank you for your help.

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