

Perception of Early Marriage and Future Educational Goals Attainment for Hmong Female Adolescents.

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the  
Master of Science Degree  
With a Major in Guidance and Counseling: K-12

Approved: 2 Semester Credits

  
Investigation Advisor

The Graduate College  
University of WI- Stout  
May 2000

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### ABSTRACT

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Perception of Early Marriage and Future Educational Goals for Hmong Female Adolescents.  
(Title)

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(Graduate Major)	(Research Advisor)	(Month/Year)	(No. of Pages)

American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual  
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

The main purpose of this study is to examine the correlational study on perception of early marriage and future educational goals for Hmong female adolescents. The participants were a convenience sample consisting of 40 respondents drawn from St. Paul, MN, Eau Claire and Menomonie, WI. The respondents range from age 14 to 19 years old. A fifty-two item questionnaire regarding perception of early marriage and future educational goals that includes demographic questions, opinion type questions regarding early marriage and future educational goals using a Likert Scale response, and rankings. A significant difference was found when there is a positive perception of early marriage and lower educational goals for the respondents. This research also found that even though respondents' parents may not be educated the respondents still have high educational goals. No significant difference was found for educational goals for married and single female

respondents. The study also further show that married respondents without children will have higher educational goals when compare to married respondents with children. Included in the research paper are counseling implications and future research recommendations.

### Acknowledgements

I want to express my appreciation to my thesis advisor Dr. Judy Rommel for all her patience, time, and dedication for directing me through this research study. I want to thank Tou Lor for his support and patience throughout my graduate program. For my children Sadie and Kenji, you both are my motivation and dedication to succeed in whatever I do. Lastly, I want to thank the many families and friends who supported me, all of your guidance and words of wisdom has made a difference in my life.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

In 1998, the median age at first marriage was 26.7 for men and 25.0 for women (U.S. Bureau of the Census). Maintaining a marriage is not easy in a society where one out of every two marriages will end in divorce. Early marriage is followed by early divorce for many, so it is not surprising that teenage marriages are likely to fail. The probability of divorce early in the marriage was nearly four times as high for couples married while still under twenty years old than for couples who were twenty-five years or older at the time of marriage (Levine & Hennessy, 1990).

There have been several studies done on early marriage and family formation in minority groups but few with the Hmong population. The Hmong have now become America's third largest and fastest growing minority group (Cowart & Cowart, 1993). In 1999, there were approximately 110,000 Hmong Americans living in Wisconsin and Minnesota (Vang, 1999). In most communities across the nation a majority of Hmong adults are unemployed and most Hmong households have incomes below the poverty level (Hutchinson, 1997). The Hmong population has faced many difficulties as a result of living in the United States such as language barriers, conflicts in values and social norms, and cultural changes. The traditional value placed on marriage and the significant clan linkages resulting from it, are still very important in Hmong life (Trueba, Jacobs, & Kirton, 1990). Hutchinson and McNall (1994) found that more than half of teenaged Hmong girls in high school will be married and have their first child before their senior year. Early marriage is still a common practice and is often kept a secret until the girl turns 18 years old. When these female adolescents becomes pregnant, they are seen by the schools as single teen mothers.

Due to the high occurrence of early marriage among Hmong students in the United States' educational setting, it is important for counselors to understand the Hmong population, especially the practice of early marriage. As counselors, we need to study the factors related to early marriage and find ways to help these students achieve successfully because there is a great likelihood that they will be in our educational system. We need to examine the factors that affect early marriage in this population and find prevention programs. If they are already married, we need to determine what kind of help we can provide to assist them so that they can achieve or maintain an education and go onto higher education, since education is related to income. This study will determine if perception of early marriage is related to future educational goals.

Therefore, the knowledge gained from this study will help us as counselors to improve counseling strategies, programs, and intervention in helping these students achieve successfully in attaining an education and to become productive citizens. It will help us to provide appropriate and useful support for both married and non-married Hmong students.

What is the relationship between perception of early marriage and future educational goals for Hmong adolescent females? A review of literature shows that there is evidence of negative developmental consequences for both the teen parents and their children such as reduced educational attainment, greater financial hardship, and less stable marriage patterns (Thornberry, Smith, 1997). Studies have also shown adolescents with high educational expectations are significantly less likely than others to become pregnant (Witwer, 1993). However, due to the strong family support and high expectations, Hmong girls who marry, and in many instances, have young children while in school, still graduate (Hutchinson, 1997). Hmong girls who married by their senior year of high school did not have different educational aspirations than their non-married peers, but they did have lower educational expectations (Hutchinson & McNall, 1994.) In addition,



motherhood at the age of fourteen and fifteen means an end to academic aspiration, regardless of motivation or achievement due to gender role assigned to Hmong girls (Walker-Moffat, 1995).

Therefore, this study will have the following research hypotheses:

1. When there is a positive perception of early marriage, there will be lower educational attainment goals for Hmong female adolescents.
2. There is a difference in educational goal attainments for single and married Hmong female adolescents.
3. Hmong female adolescents will have higher educational goals if one of their parents have a college degree.
4. Married Hmong female adolescents without children will have higher educational goals than married Hmong female adolescents with children.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of correlation between perception of early marriage as measured by The Perception of Marriage Survey and Future Educational Goal Attainment as measured by perception of early marriage and level of education desired for Hmong female adolescents.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will review the literature available concerning the general relationship between perception of early marriage and level of educational attainment or goals. Prior to the examination of current research information regarding the relationship of the variables, the literature review will briefly cover the operational definition of early marriage; general and ethnic issues related to early marriage; and information regarding the factors relating to early marriage. To understand factors related to early marriage it is important to consider the Hmong's marital traditions and family unit. Lastly, the literature on the effects of early marriage have on education will be included.

#### Definition of Early Marriage

A marriage is a legally recognized union between a man and a woman in which they are united sexually; cooperate economically, and may have children through birth or adoption ( Strong, DeVault, & Sayad, 1998). Throughout the literature reviews, early marriage is either one or both of the married couple being under the age of 18 years old or in high school (Hutchinson & McNall, 1994, Lindsay, 1985, Walker-Moffat, 1995).

#### Issues and Difference Related to Early Marriages.

According to Erickson's identity vs. role diffusion, the years of puberty (12 years old to 18 years old) may be a time for confusion because adolescents are trying new roles as they transition into adulthood (Strong & DeVault, 1992). To make a successful transition, they need to have a sense of self. As with every marriage, there will be stresses and strains but because adolescents

have not establish their individuality, education, and career they are more prone to the problems of marriage. Teti, Lamb, & Elster (1987) suggest that the high marital instability in teen marriages may be a result of multiple stresses from marriage, parenthood, and adolescent stage. Lindsay (1985) found that young couples, married or not, face many difficulties including financial hardship, communication problems, three generational living, sexual adjustment, and transitioning into parenthood before the couples have a chance to strengthen their relationship with each other. Premarital births are related to subsequent marital dissolution (Teachman, 1992).

Financial hardship comes with the ability to support themselves, especially if a child is involved and to live without financial assistance from their parents or the government (Higginson, 1998). Living in a three generational situation may be the final result because of other responsibilities.

Marriage or living with a partner brings many changes into an adolescent's life such as communication, arguments, and financial issues (Lindsey, 1985). There is also a loss of individual freedom because for a marriage to work both partners have to be fully committed. It is likely that couples who marry as adolescents have had less experience in developing the maturity and social cognitive skills required to maintain a stable marital union than couples who marry as adults (Teti, et al., 1987). Developing these skills as married adolescents may be restricted by the coincidence of socioeconomic and role transitions.

Adolescent marriage is associated not only with a higher rate of dissolution of first marriages by with subsequent marriages as well. Teti, et al. found that blacks and white males who married as adolescents appeared to have experienced similarly high levels of marital disruption. Adolescent marriages are more likely to end in divorce than are marriages that take place when

couples are in their twenties or older for both whites and African Americans because younger partners are less likely to be emotionally mature (Strong, et al., 1998).

Early marriage is also related to development of self-concept. For Hmong girls who married early there is no concept of self-identity to be developed, there is only the transfer of ones identity to a new family. For example, a Hmong girl goes from becoming a daughter to a daughter-in-law (Walker-Moffat, 1995).

More than likely, the living arrangement for a Hmong married couple would be with the husband's family. The wife, regardless of age, is expected to take on multiple roles such as daughter-in-law (taking care of parent and siblings in law), wife (responsibilities towards husband and chores around the house), student (high school education or college education), mother (if there is a child involved), and employee. These many roles can cause a role overload and be straining for these married adolescents.

#### Factors Related to Early Marriage in the Hmong Population and Other Ethnic Groups.

Factors related to early marriage in the Hmong culture include marital patterns and traditions. It is also very important to consider the family unit and gender roles of the Hmong population. Factors that effect other minority groups will also be discussed.

#### Marital patterns and traditions in the Hmong population

In Laos, Hmong married as young as 12 years old. Hmong men typically married between the ages of 18 and 30 and Hmong women married between the age of 14 to 18. The age for Hmong women who married is almost ten years earlier than the average American female. In the United States, some Hmong families still practice the tradition of young marriages and early childbirth

(Potter & Whiren, 1982). The marriage is conducted in a Hmong ceremony and therefore it is not recognized by American law.

There are strict marriage and wedding traditions that both the groom's and bride's family must follow when a marriage occurs. The following are some of the eighteen unwritten laws in Laos that are still practice by the Hmong population (Vang, 1992). Since these laws have been in existence for many centuries, today they are still practice by many Hmong people in the United States. Eight of the unwritten laws include that the minimum age of marriage be between 14 to 18 years or older and any time the child is under the age of 18, parents or guardian have to give consent and approval. There is a great likelihood that marriage will occur between a male and a female when there is evidence that they have had direct sexual intercourse. Evidence could be the two couples, secretly going out on a date, getting caught making out together, or the female is pregnant. Pregnancy outside of marriage is seen as a disgrace by the Hmong culture thus forcing the teenage female to marry to save face for herself and her family regardless if she wants to or not.

A form of marital practice by the Hmong can be very conflictual with the mainstreaming norms and values of the western culture, but it is still in existence both in Laos and in the United States. This form of marital practice is call "zig pojniam", or capture theory (kidnapping), a legal principle for Hmong marriage (Vang, 1992). This occurs when the groom takes the bride to his family. It is not seen as kidnapping because more than likely, the bride knows about the marriage but it is a form of saving face for the bride's parents. This may sometimes occur if the groom knows that the bride's parents do not like him for a son-in-law. After taking the bride to the groom's family, the groom's family has to report to the bride's parents/guardian within 24 to 48 hours to arrange for a wedding. Usually the wedding will take place three days after the bride is taken to the groom's house.

In Hmong cultural norms, the wife has little say in her marriage. A good wife is one who is submissive, patient, and tries to meet all the needs of her husband and his family members. Parents and clan leaders have authority on the bride and groom's marriage matters (Vang, 1992). Rights and duties of wife and husband are to maintain their marriage for a lifetime. The wife is under a duty to submit and obey such reasonable governance of the husband. The husband has the right to go out under some reasonable circumstances but the wife has no legal right to go out for social activities without the husband's permission.

The underlying reasons why the Hmong population practice bride pricing is to assure that the marriage will be forever (Vang, 1992). The practice may have mixed implications because some women felt it insured them a certain value but on the other hand some women dislike being viewed as a property owned by the husband. The custom of bride pricing may cause feelings of hopelessness in that the women have no choice regarding what happens in their lives. The bride price also has implications for divorce, it is considered in view of possibly losing this large payment. Divorce is rare in the Hmong culture but if a divorce should be considered, mediations or negotiations will take place between the husband's and the wife's family members. The family members and clan leaders of the husband and wife usually try to resolve marital disagreements before resorting to divorce.

### Gender roles of Hmong women

The Hmong people are a patriarchal society with very traditional gender roles. Traditionally, Hmong men have served as the head of the family, responsible for the financial support of their wives and children. Women were the caretakers, responsible for supervising the children and the home. Wives raise their daughters to become caretakers of the home. Most often,

girls are parentified to help parents with siblings. With greater emphasis on domestic roles for women, women are less likely to be encouraged to increase their education or develop a career (Keysar & Kosmin, 1995). These traditional patterns are starting to fade away for the Hmongs who have been in the United States for many years.

According to Walker-Moffat (1995), Hmong girls who continue to study beyond puberty are exceptional because traditionally in Laos, girls do not attend school past the six grade. There are almost no educated Hmong women to act as role models in Laos. Most role models for teenage Hmong girls are women who are married and producing families.

For many Hmong girls, a tension exists between the sense of traditional cultural identities and the wish to become educated. This tension arises because Hmong girls are considered as an adult as soon as they marry, often as young as age 13 to 15 years old. They skip adolescence, going from childhood to adulthood with the birth of their first child (Walker-Moffat, 1995). A study conducted by Yang (1990) found that 85 percent of surveyed single college Hmong students ages 19-26 agree that the most important reasons for the Hmong women getting married at very young ages were because they have friends who were doing it and didn't want to feel left out. Another 85 percent indicated pregnancy before marriage as the reason for marriage and 39 percent said it could be one or more of the following; escaping from family problems or just don't want to continue into higher education, falling in love to young, and men prefer younger women. Lee (1997), who interviewed Hmong women in higher education also found similar factors affecting early marriage such as a way to escape parental control and that Hmong men would not find older Hmong women attractive.

### Factors of early family formation for other ethnic groups

Individuals may be influenced by the socially prescribed norms for such transition such as marriage and child bearing. Hispanics and Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians) place a high value on marriage and family (East, 1998). A study conducted by Shtarkshall (1987) focused on twenty groups of young women age eighteen of low socioeconomic status and low educational achievement, most of whom came from families whose origin was in the Middle Eastern Islamic countries found that they cast themselves in the roles of mothers. Those fifty percent described themselves, even within such a short period, as being in the process of creating a family.

East (1998) found a high perceived likelihood of non-marital birth was associated with low income for Hispanics and whites, with mothers' low educational attainment for Blacks, and with history of receipt of AFDC for Southeast Asians.

Thornberry and Smith (1997) identified early risk factors for early family formation from a sample of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade males from a public school in Rochester, New York. The study found significant correlations between race or ethnicity and teenage fatherhood in this sample. Males who have low scores on achievement test and whose parents didn't expect them to attend college are more likely to be teenage fathers. Males growing up in low income families have a higher rate of teenage fatherhood than those from middle class families. Having sexual intercourse before age 16 has a significant and sizable impact on the likelihood of becoming a teen father.

### Early Marriage and Its Effect On Education

When the "normal" life cycle (finish high school, get a job, go to college, find a partner, get married, then have children) for adolescents gets disrupted other parts of the cycle such as



education may be postponed or neglected (Teti et al., 1987). Levels of education seem to affect both marital adjustment and divorce. Education may provide us additional resources, such as income, insight, or status that contribute to our ability to carry out our marital roles. It is important to consider the effects of early marriage on educational attainment because education is a predictor of income and occupation. For both black and white women, age at first marriage increases with higher levels of educational attainment (Dobson & Houseknecht, 1998). For women, it appears that leaving home for marriage, as opposed to independent living, is a stronger bar to completing college than to entering college or graduating from high school (White & Lacy, 1997).

Many researchers concluded that the earlier the marriage and the earlier the women bear children, the lower her formal educational achievement. Astone and Upchurch (1994) found that becoming a wife or mother increases early departure from secondary school. They also concluded that this effect is constant for individual women, across race, and over time. A study done by Gromdstaff (1988) regarding educational attainment of women age thirty in Canada, found that of women who gave birth before they were twenty-five years of age, less than ten percent went to a university and less than five percent received a degree; seventy percent of all women who married prior to age twenty completed only elementary or high school; and fifty percent did not receive a secondary school diploma. If they had a child as an adolescent only seventy-seven had completed high school and only four percent had been enrolled a university.

In 1988, Pieri (2000) did a longitudinal study of five first generation born Hmong students (two females and three males). The purpose of this study was to track their educational success as they graduate in the year 2000. The article indicated that two of the female student were married and had dropped out of high school to work to support their family and two of the male have either dropped out or are considering other alternative programs. Only one of the five will graduate on

time with the class of 2000. In the St. Paul School District, Hmong students have graduated as valedictorians and three quarters of St. Paul's freshmen do graduate on time, the same percentage as the district's Caucasian students (Pieri, 2000). According to Fue Hue, associate director of St. Paul's Hmong American Partnership, the most successful Hmong are those who are 1<sup>st</sup> generation immigrants because they can remember the hardships of living in Laos. Their experience in Laos contributes to their motivation to take advantage of the educational opportunities offer in the United States (Pieri, et al.).

Reasons why Hmong females, 17 to 19 years old, do not continue onto higher education are: more than a half of the girls (fifty-three percent) felt that if they wait to marry after eighteen years old they fear being call "old maid" because most Hmong women married between the age of 16-18; sixteen percent of the girls felt that Hmong men are not inclined to marry educated women; thirty seven percent stated that traditionally the girl's place was in the home to serve their husband and family (Yang, 1990). Lee (1997) concluded that the biggest obstacles to Hmong women's pursuit of higher education are early marriage and childbearing. One of her informants reported that her husband's family did not help her with childcare because they believe that women should not go to college. Marriage and childbearing are competing for a woman's time, drawing her away from non-domestic roles.

A Hmong wife or mother, regardless of age, must maintain many multiple roles in order to be considered a good daughter-in-law and that includes maintaining both Hmong roles and the mainstreaming roles. School attendance for young Hmong mothers requires tremendous scarifies or trade-offs on the part of their families to maintain cultural continuity in the home, support successive childbirths, and accommodate changes in the traditional gender division of labor. More than often most Hmong are not willing to make these sacrifices or trade-offs, especially when

schools do not accommodate the demands of motherhood. Walker-Moffat (1995) found that when young mothers drop out, they tend to have more children when they are still of school age.

Helen Ylonen, a counselor at Johnson High School in St. Paul, MN, found that today even the most uneducated Hmong values education. Therefore, the in-laws are allowing their daughter-in-laws to stay in school (Pieri, et al., 2000). Teachman and Paasch (1998) research study on family and educational aspiration found that there is a sizable proportion of variation in educational aspirations that can be tied to the common family environment remains unexplained. They concluded that it would be challenging to identify the components of the common family environment that are related to the development of educational aspirations.

Young women who have formed a family while still in school are at higher risk of leaving school early than similar women who are single and childless (Astone, et al., 1994). Grindstaff's (1988) data show that working in nonprofessional occupations is associated with early childbearing and marriage, especially adolescent marriage. Even after periods of 30 to 40 years, males who married as adolescents did not catch up educationally, financially, or occupationally, with their same-aged, same race peers who married as adults (Teti, et al., 1987).

### Chapter III

## METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe the subjects included in this study and how the sample was drawn. In addition, it will also describe the instruments used to collect the information and cover the methods chosen for data collection. The sample will be of a Midwestern population, which includes 40 Hmong female adolescents.

### Description of the Subjects

The subjects included in the study were Hmong adolescent students from Menomonie, WI, Eau Claire, WI, and St. Paul, MN. The ages of the adolescents ranged from 14-19. The total number of participants in this study was 40.

### Sample Selection

The subjects in the study were part of a convenience non-random sample. Since the researcher has a close connection and access to the Hmong communities in the Menomonie, Eau Claire, and St. Paul areas, many participants were selected nonrandomly. The purpose of the study was explained to parents of the adolescents and consent forms were given to parents to provide consent in allowing their children to participate in the study. The participants in the study were contacted in person and given the survey. Respondents either took the surveys in my presence or if the researcher knew the respondent, the researcher allowed them to take it home. Research instruments were collected at a later time from those homes.

### Data Collection

The researcher conducted the surveys in the homes of the participants and at public places. The participants were given all the time they needed to complete the surveys. The surveys were collected immediately after completion. Some surveys were given to participants to take home to get signatures from parents or guardians. The participants were told to not write their names on surveys. Prior to starting the survey the participants were reminded of confidentiality issues concerning the involvement of their participation in this study. The adolescents were provided with information regarding the purpose of the study. The researcher also asked the participants if they had any questions or comments before the start of the surveys.

### Research Design and Instrumentation

Since the researcher could not find a suitable questionnaire measuring the relationship of perception of early marriage and future educational goal attainment, the researcher developed her own questionnaire (See Appendix A). The biographical section asks Hmong female adolescents to indicate their age, grade, birth order, cumulative grade point average, marital status, and parents' highest level of education. The questionnaire also included Likert-type statements concerning students' perception towards early marriage and future educational goals. There were two ranking questions regarding reasons for continuing into higher education and reasons why Hmong adolescent female married at an early age. A likert scale obtained from Xiong (1999) also measured the participants' perception of obstacles to their future education career. Charts and tables were tabulated from the responses based on questionnaires and analyzed from the results.

The instrument consisted of 52 questions (Appendix A). The surveys consisted of opinion type questions, ranking scale from strongly agree to least agree, and a five point Likert Scale

(strongly agree to strongly disagree). Questions 1-10 were demographics, 11-18 were perceptions and opinions of educational goals, 19-35 were attitudes and opinions toward early marriage, and 36-47 were perceptions of obstacles toward future career options, and 48-52 were perception of obstacles toward career options for married Hmong adolescents.

### Data Analysis

Since the researcher developed her own questionnaire, the questionnaire's reliability will be determined by means of the split-half reliability coefficient. The data collected was analyzed to determine if there is a relationship between the perception of early marriage and future educational goal attainment. SPSS was used for data analysis. The types of statistical analysis used are ranking, means, Pearson's Correlations, t-test, and cross tabulations.

## Chapter IV

### RESULTS

This chapter presents the analyzed data and results of a correlational study on perception of early marriage and future educational goal attainment of Hmong female adolescents in the Menomonie, Eau Claire, WI and St. Paul, MN areas. This was a convenience sample, so questionnaires were either given directly to participants or given to participants to take home if a parent was not present to sign consent forms. The return rate of the surveys were very good. All forty respondents returned their questionnaires.

There were 40 participants in this study. The age of the respondents were divided into six categories. Ages consisted of 14,15,16,17,18, and 19 years old. The mean age for respondents is 16.8. Thirty-five percent of the respondents (n=14) were under the age of 16 years old and fifty-five percent of the respondents (n=26) were at least 17 years or older (Table 4.1).

The majority of the respondents (n=35) were in high school. Forty-seven percent of respondents (n=19) were either in 12<sup>th</sup> grade or had completed 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The rest of the respondents' last grades completed ranged from 7<sup>th</sup> grade through 11<sup>th</sup> grades (Table 4.1). The majority of the respondents (n=29) reported a cumulative grade point average of 3.1 and above.

Respondents were asked to indicate their marital status. A little more than half (52.5 %) were single, while forty percent were legally or culturally married, and five percent were divorce (Table 4.2). The mode age at marriage for respondents who are married is 16 years old. Of the fifteen respondents who were married, twelve of the married respondents married at age of 16 or younger (Table 4.3). The oldest age when married for the respondents (n=3) was 17 years old. Age of spouse when the respondents married ranged anywhere from 15 years old to 32 years old (Table 4.3).

Table 4.1

## Age and Grades of Respondents

Female Hmong Adolescents (N=40)	Frequency n=	Percent %
Age of Respondents		
14	5	12.5
15	3	7.5
16	6	15
17	12	30
18	10	25
19	4	10
Last Grade Completed By Respondents		
7 <sup>th</sup>	1	2.5
8 <sup>th</sup>	4	10
9 <sup>th</sup>	5	12.5
10 <sup>th</sup>	11	27.5
11 <sup>th</sup>	8	20
12 <sup>th</sup>	11	27.5



Table 4.2

## Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status N=40	Frequency N=	Percent %
Single	21	52.5
Married	16	40
Divorce	2	5
No Response	1	2.5

Table 4.3

## Age of Respondents and Respondent's Spouses When Married.

Age of Respondents When Married	Frequency N=	Percent %
14	2	13.3
15	2	13.3
16	8	53.3
17	3	20
Age of Respondents' Spouse When Married.		
15	1	7.1
16	1	7.1
17	2	14.3
18	2	14.3
19	2	14.3
21	1	7.1
22	2	14.3
23	2	14.3
32	1	7.1

Twelve of the respondents have children. At the time of this survey, eight of the respondents had their first child already, two of the respondents were expecting their first child, one of the respondents has two children, and one respondent has three children.

Sixty percent of the respondents (n=24) were born in the United States. The countries the remaining sixteen respondents were born in are Canada, France, Laos, and Thailand (Table 4.5). The mean years lived in the United States is 10 years for the sixteen respondents. Of the sixteen respondents who were born outside of the United States, eight have lived in the United States for more than 11 years and 8 have lived in the United States for less than 10 years (Table 4.4).

All of the respondents have siblings. The mean number of sibling for the respondents is 6.5. Forty percent of the respondents (n=16) are either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> born in their family. Twenty-two percent of respondents (n=9) are 3<sup>rd</sup> born, 17.5 percent of respondents (n=9) are 4<sup>th</sup> born, 12 percent of respondents (n=7) are 5<sup>th</sup> born, and 7.5 percent respondents (n=3) are 6<sup>th</sup> born.

Sixty percent (n=24) of the respondents' mothers do not have a high school diploma, 27 percent of the respondents' (n=11) mothers have a high school diploma, and only 7.5 percent (n=3) of the respondents' mothers have a bachelors degree (Table 4.6). For highest education completed by the respondents' father, only 25 percent of respondents' fathers have no education while 27.5 percent of respondents' fathers have a high school diploma. Forty percent of the respondents' fathers have some type of higher education degree (2-4 year degree and master's degree).

Respondents were asked to check one of the following regarding their career goals: definite, considering several options, or none/no idea (Appendix 1). Forty-two percent of the respondents (n=17) have definite career goals, 45 percent of the respondents (n=18) are considering options (Table 4.7). Only 12.5 percent of respondent (n=4) have no idea or gave no response. The respondents' plans after high school consist of 2.5 percent of the respondents (n=1) plan to work in

an apprenticeship, 20 percent of respondents ( $n=8$ ) plans to go to a technical college, 42.5 percent of respondents ( $n=17$ ) plans to attend a 4-year college, 5 percent of respondents ( $n=22$ ) will go straight to work (Table 4.7).

Item 13 asked participants to rank order reasons for continuing into higher education, with number 1 being the greatest reason to number 7 being the least reason. The respondents' responses to what the greatest reason to continue into higher education is knowledge with a mean of  $x=2.429$  and  $s.d.=1.260$ , followed by self-satisfaction with  $x=2.857$  and  $s.d.=1.260$  (Table 4.8). The least reason for respondents to continue into higher education is status ( $x=5.464$ ,  $s.d.=1.478$ ).

Items 14-17, asked respondents the importance of finishing high school and continuing on into higher education (Appendix 1). A five point Likert scale, consisting of not important=1 to very important=5, was use to measure the following responses. A  $x=4.667$  and  $s.d.=.662$  is found regarding the statement "It is important to continue into higher education if married or when married. The statement "It is important to graduate from high school" has a  $x=4.923$  and  $s.d.=.354$  (Table 4.9). The lowest mean score is item 17, "Importance of continuing after a 4 year degree" with a  $x=4.026$  and a  $s.d.=1.224$ .

Item 19, asked participants to rank order reasons why they think or believe Hmong women marry before the age of 18 (Appendix 1), with the greatest reason ranked one and the least reason ranked seven. Table 4.10 shows the greatest reason why respondents think that Hmong female adolescents married before the age of 18 is to escape parental control ( $x=3.0$ ,  $s.d.=1.816$ ). The last ranked item was "Hmong men only marry young Hmong women with a  $x=5.658$  and  $s.d.=1.744$  (Table 4.10). Thirty-five percent of the respondents think that the best time to get married is after higher education while ten percent of the respondents think the best time to get marry is after high school (Table 4.11).

Table 4.4

## Country of Respondents' Birth Place

Country of Birth	Frequency N=	Percent %
Canada	1	2.5
France	2	5
Laos	6	15
Thailand	7	17.5
United States	24	60

Table 4.5

## Years Respondents' Lived in the United States

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Years lived in the U.S.	Frequency N=	Percent %
1	1	2.5
5	2	5
10	1	2.5
11	4	10
12	2	5
13	1	2.5
14	2	5
17	1	2.5
18	1	2.5

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Table 4.6

## Highest Education Level Completed by Respondents' Parents

Highest Education Level Completed by Respondents' Mothers	Frequency N=	Percent %
None	21	52.5
Elementary	3	7.5
High School	11	27.5
4-year Degree	3	7.5
No Response	2	5
Highest Education Level Completed by Respondents' Fathers		
None	10	25
High School	11	27.5
2-Year Degree	4	10
4-Year Degree	6	15
Master's Degree	6	15
No Response	3	7.5

Table 4.7

## Career Goals and Career Plans of Respondents

Career Goals	Frequency N=	Percent %
Definite-I know what I want to do	17	42.5
Considering Options/Career Possibilities	18	45
None-No Ideas	4	10
No Response	3	7.5
Careers Plans after High School		
Apprenticeship (On Job Training)	1	2.5
Attend Technical College	8	20
Attend 4 Year College	17	42.5
Work	2	5
Don't Know	1	2
Multiple Responses	11	27.5



Table 4.8

## Respondents' Reasons for Continuing in to Higher Education.

Reasons	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Knowledge	2.429	1.260	1
Self-satisfaction	2.857	1.779	2
Financial Stability	3.321	1.827	3
Role Model for Siblings	3.893	1.397	4
Wealth	4.643	4.810	5
Pressure from Parents	5.393	2.114	6
Status	5.464	1.478	7

Ranking Scale: 1=greatest reason to 7=least reason

Table 4.9

## Importance of Education for Respondents.

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Importance of continuing on into higher education if married or when married.	4.667	.662
Importance of graduating from high school	4.923	.354
Importance of graduating from 2-4 year college	4.462	.969
Importance of continuing after a 4 year degree	4.026	1.224

Likert Scale: 1=not important to 5=very important

Table 4.10

Reasons Why Respondents Think Hmong Women Married Before the Age of 18.

	Mean	SD	Ranked
Escape parental control.	3.0	1.816	1
Pregnancy	3.474	2.076	2
Strict Parents	3.579	1.518	3
Love	3.605	2.261	4
Force by parents	3.737	1.589	5
Arranged marriage	4.947	1.643	6
Hmong men only marry young Hmong women	5.658	1.744	7

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 Ranking Scale: 1=greatest reason to 7=least reason

Table 4.11

Respondents' Perception of When the Best Age to get Married.

	Frequency	Percent %
After higher education	4	10
After high school	14	35
After higher education	9	22
Don't Know	7	17.5
During high school	4	10
Never	2	5.0

Items 20-35 asked respondents to answer the statements relating to marriage (Appendix 1) using a six point Likert scale consisting of responses of strongly disagree equaling 1 to strongly agree equaling 6. Table 4.12 shows that respondents do agree that Hmong women are getting married too young ( $x=5.250$ ,  $s.d.=.954$ ). Most of the respondents know someone who is married and under the age of 18 years old ( $x=5.775$ ,  $s.d.=.480$ ). A mean of 2.675 and  $s.d.$  of 1.526 was found for the statement "I feel pressure to get married". There is an even split among the respondents with the item "Marriage can change someone for the better" ( $x=3.225$ ,  $s.d.=1.230$ ). Eighty percent of the respondents somewhat disagree to strongly disagree that Hmong adolescents married before the age of 18 they will have more friends ( $x=2.475$ ,  $s.d.=1.086$ ). Seventy-five percent of the respondents somewhat disagree to strongly disagree that when adolescent married young they will have more money ( $x=2.800$ ,  $s.d.=1.137$ ). Seventy-two percent of the respondents somewhat agree to strongly agree that when Hmong adolescents married young they will have to work more hours ( $x=4.275$ ,  $s.d.=1.432$ ). Eighty-two percent of respondents somewhat disagree to strongly disagree that when married Hmong adolescents married young, they will have more free time ( $x=2.250$ ,  $s.d.=1.316$ ). Seventy-eight percent of respondents somewhat agree to strongly agree that when Hmong adolescents married young they will have more arguments ( $x=4.308$ ,  $s.d.=1.360$ ). Eighty-two percent of respondents somewhat agree to strongly agree that when Hmong adolescents married young, there will be more marital stresses ( $x=4.744$ ,  $s.d.=1.117$ ).

Items 36-47 of the survey sought to identify perceptions of obstacles that can affect respondents' future educational or career goals (Appendix 1). A five point Likert response scale was used to gather the data. The scale responses ranged from always an obstacle equaling five to Table 4.12

## Respondents' Perceptions of Marriage

	Mean $\bar{x}$ =	Standard Deviation
Hmong women are getting married too young	5.250	.954
I know some one who is married and under the age of 18	5.775	.480
I feel pressure to get married	2.675	1.526
Marriage can change a person for the better	3.225	1.230
Have more friends	2.475	1.086
Have fewer friends	3.975	1.250
Have different friends	4.250	.149
Have more money	2.800	1.137
Have to work more hours	4.275	1.432
Have more free time	2.250	1.316
Do better in school	2.949	1.450
Would not need an education	1.949	1.099
Live with husband's family	4.359	1.267
Have more arguments	4.308	1.360
Have financial problems	4.605	1.242
Have more marital stresses	4.744	1.117

Likert Scale: 1=Strongly Agree to 6=Strongly Disagree

Table 4.13

## Perception of Obstacles to Respondents' Future Career Options

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Lack of Money	3.158	1.242
Poor study habits/skills	2.632	1.149
Lack of direction/goals	2.605	1.462
Demands of job	2.595	1.301
Lack of motivation	2.526	1.156
Lack of ability	2.500	1.268
Lack of parental support	2.486	1.446
Lack of certain courses needed	2.405	1.235
Too much social life	2.395	1.285
Lack of interest in college	2.395	1.405
Lack of self confidence	2.342	1.097
Influence of friends	2.289	1.160

Likert Scale: 1=Not an Obstacle to 5=Always an Obstacle

one not an obstacle. The biggest obstacles these students perceived toward higher education are a lack of money with a  $x=3.158$  and  $s.d.=1.242$  (Table 4.13). The lowest obstacles are influence of friends with  $x=2.289$  and  $s.d.=1.160$ .

Items 48-52 are perceptions of obstacles for married respondents, a five point Likert scale was used with not an obstacle as one point and always an obstacle score as five (Appendix A). The biggest obstacle for married respondents is a lack of emotional support from in-laws with  $x=2.800$  and  $s.d.=1.612$ . The lowest obstacles for married respondents are lack of financial support from spouse with  $x=2.133$  and  $s.d.=1.407$  (Table 4.14).

The second half of this chapter will address the five research hypotheses:

1. When there is a positive perception of early marriage, there will be lower educational attainment goals for Hmong adolescent females.
2. There is a difference in educational goal attainment for single Hmong and married Hmong adolescent.
3. Hmong female adolescents will have higher educational goals if one of their parents have a college degree.
4. Married Hmong female adolescents without children will have higher educational goals than married Hmong female adolescents with a child.

**Research Hypothesis 1:** When there is a positive perception of early marriage there will be lower educational goals for Hmong female adolescents. The purpose of this hypothesis was to find if Hmong female adolescents' perceptions of early marriage are related to their future educational goals. Pearson's correlation was used to measure the relationship between perception of early



marriage and educational goals. A Pearson correlation matrix was done with items 20, 21, 22, and 23 with 14, 15, 16, and 17 (Appendix 1). Items 20-23 are Likert Scale statements with response scale of strongly agree (6), agree (5), somewhat agree (4), somewhat disagree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). Items 14-17 are also Likert Scale statements with response scale of not important (1) to very important (5).

A significant relationship was found between the importance of graduating from a 2-4 year college and the agreement that Hmong women are getting married too young  $r=.3072$  and  $p=.057^*$  (Table 4.15). The significant relationship means that when Hmong female adolescents marry young there is less of an expectation for the Hmong female adolescents to go to 2-4 year college. There was also a significant relationship between item 22 "I feel pressure to get married" and item 15 "Importance of graduating from high school"  $r=-.2885$  and  $p=.075^{**}$  (Table 4.15). The pressure to get married is related to graduating from high school for the respondents no significant relationship was found for item 15 (How important is for you to graduate from high school?) and item 21 (I know someone who is married and under the age of 18), a  $r=.0472$  and  $p=.776$ . I partially accept that when there is a positive perception of early marriage for Hmong female adolescents, there will be lower educational goals.

**Research Hypothesis 2:** There will be a difference in educational goal attainment for single and married Hmong female adolescent. A t-test was done between question 2 and questions 14, 15, 16, 17 to measure the difference in educational goal attainment for single Hmong and married Hmong adolescent (Appendix 1). The t-test found no significant difference between single and married Hmong adolescent females for the statement "how important is it for you to graduate from high school?", single Hmong female adolescents had a  $x=4.82$  and T-value of 1.38 while married Hmong female adolescent had a  $x=4.50$  (Table 4.16). Item 14; "If married or will get married, how

important is it for you to continue on into higher education”; found that single Hmong female adolescent’s response have a  $x=4.82$  and  $x=4.50$  for married Hmong female adolescents with a value of 1.38. For item 16, “How important is it for you to graduate from a 2-4 college?” there was a  $x=4.64$  for single and  $x=4.31$  for married with a t-value of .95. The most difference was item 17, “how important is it for you to continue after a 4-year degree” for Hmong single adolescents, a  $x=4.27$  and  $x=3.81$  for married Hmong female adolescents and a t-value of 1.18. For all items in Table 4.16, there is a higher mean for single Hmong female adolescents when compared to married Hmong female adolescents. The mean values for each statement was very close to each other causing me to reject Hypothesis 2.

**Research Hypothesis 3:** Hmong adolescent females will high higher educational goals if one of their parents have a college degree. A cross tabulation (Table 4.17) was done between the items 9-10 and 14-17. For mothers who have less then a high school education, a cross tabulation found that there are sixteen respondents who plans to attend either a 2 or 4 year college compare to seven respondents who’s mothers have a college degree. Fathers who have less than a high school education have thirteen respondents who are planning to attend 2-4 year college compare to nine respondents who’s father have more than a college degree. I rejected this hypothesis because there are more respondents who plan to go to a 2-4 year college who have parents with less than a high school education.

**Research Hypothesis 4:** Married Hmong female adolescent without children will have higher educational goals than married Hmong female adolescents with children. A t-test was conducted between items 2-3 and items 15-18 (Appendix 1). For item 15, married Hmong female adolescents without children have a mean of 5.0 and Hmong married female adolescents with

Table 4.14

## Obstacles for Respondents Who Are Married

	Means	Standard Deviation
Lack of emotional support from in-laws	2.800	1.612
Too many family responsibilities-no time for education	2.533	1.302
Lack of emotional support from spouse	2.467	1.407
Lack of household support from spouse	2.267	1.335
Lack of financial support from spouse	2.133	1.407

Likert Scale= 1=Not an Obstacle to 5=Always an Obstacle

Table 4.15

## Hmong Female Adolescents' Perception of Early Marriage and Future Educational Goals.

	r=	p=
Hmong women are getting married too young X Importance of graduating from high school	-.0238	.885
Hmong women are getting married too young X Importance of graduating from a 2-4 year college	.3072	.057*
Hmong women are getting married too young X Importance of continuing beyond a 4 year degree	.2638	.105
I know someone who is under 18 years of age and is married X Importance of graduating from high school	.0472	.776
I know someone who is under 18 years of age and is married X Importance of graduating from 2-4 year college	.1767	.282
I know some who is under 18 years of age and is married X Importance of continuing beyond a 4 year degree	-.1672	.309
I feel pressure to get married X Importance of graduating from high school.	-.2885	.075**
I feel pressure to get married X Importance of graduating from a 2-4 year college.	-.1231	.455
I feel pressure to get married X Importance of continuing of continuing beyond a 4-year degree.	-.1206	.465
Marriage can change a person for the better X Importance of graduating from high school.	.2799	.084**
Marriage can change a person for the better X Importance of graduating from a 2-4 year college.	.1493	.364
Marriage can change a person for the better X Importance of continuing beyond a 4-year degree.	.0651	.694

\*p&lt;.05

\*\*p&lt;.01

Table 4.16

Educational Goal Attainment for Single and Married Adolescents.

	Single	Married	t-value	Probability	Degrees of Freedom
Importance of continuing into higher education if married or will get marry.	4.82	4.50	1.38	.180	23
Importance of graduating form high school.	5.00	4.81	1.38	1.88	15
Importance of graduating from a 2-4 year degree.	4.64	4.31	.95	.355	21
Importance of continuing beyond a 4 year degree.	4.27	3.84	1.18	.246	36

Table 4.17

### Respondents' Plans for After High School and Highest Education Level Completed by Parents

Education Level completed by mother and father	Mother with No Education	Father with No Education	Mother with High School	Father with High School	Mother with 2-year Degree	Father with 2-year Degree	Mother with 4-year Degree	Father with 4-year Degree	Father with Master's Degree
Apprenticeship / on Job Training			1						1
Attend Technical College	6	6	1	1					
Attend 4-year college	7		2	6	5	2	2	5	2
Work	1	1	1	1					
Don't Know	1			1					
Multiple Responses	6	3	1	2	3	2	1	1	3

Table 4.18

Married Hmong Female Adolescent With and Without Children and Educational Goals.

	Married Without Children	Married with Children	t- value	Degree of Freedom	Probability
The importance of continuing into married or will get married.	5.0	4.20	2.75	9	.022
Importance of graduating from high school.	5.0	4.70	1.41	9	.193
Importance of graduating from a 2-4 year college.	5.0	3.9	2.4	9	.040
Importance of continuing beyond a 4-year degree.	4.5	3.4	1.79	14	.096

children have a mean of 4.20 (Table 4.18). For item 17, "Importance of graduating from a 2-4 year college", married Hmong adolescents without children have a mean of 5.0 and married with children have a mean of 3.9 and a t-value of .040\*\* (Table 4.18). There is a difference for the group Hmong female adolescents without children because they have a higher response on continuing higher education. I partially accept this research hypothesis because there is a difference between the two groups when it relates to pursuing higher education.

### Summary

The population of this study was a convenience sample gathered from St. Paul, Minnesota, Eau Claire and Menomonie, Wisconsin. The population that was studied was Hmong female adolescents. There were forty participants in this study. The survey consisted of fifty-two questions that include demographic questions, Likert Scales, and rankings. The majority of respondents (n=35) were in high school. The majority of the respondents (n=29) reported a cumulative grade point average of 3.1 and above. A little more than half (52.5 percent) of the respondents were single and forty percent of the respondents were married. Forty-two percent of the respondents (n=17) have definite career goals while forty-five percent were considering options. The highest mean for reasons why the respondents think would be a good reason to continue into higher education is knowledge ( $\bar{x}=2.429$ ,  $s.d.=1.260$ ). The highest mean for items 14-17 (Appendix 1), is item 15 "How important is it for you to graduate from high school?" ( $\bar{x}=4.923$ ,  $s.d=.354$ ).

Item 19, asked respondents to rank in order the greatest reason to the least reason why they think Hmong female adolescents married young. The highest mean response is to escape parental control. Thirty-five percent of the respondents think that the best time to get married is after higher education. Items 36-47 (Appendix 1) of the survey sought to identify perceptions of obstacles that



can affect respondents' future educational or career goals. The highest perceived obstacles perceived by the respondents were a lack of money ( $x=3.158$ ,  $s.d.=1.242$ ). For obstacles that affect married respondents were a lack of emotional support from in-laws ( $x=2.800$ ,  $s.d.=1.612$ ).

Hypothesis 1: When there is a positive perception of early marriage there will be lower educational goals for Hmong female adolescents. This hypothesis was partially accepted. A significant relationship was found with items 20 and 16 (Appendix 1) using Pearson's Correlation Matrix. A positive view of early marriage can normalize the reasons to not attending a 2-4 year college.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a difference in educational goals for single and married Hmong female adolescents was rejected because the mean values for items 14, 15, 16, 17 were very similar for both the single and married Hmong female adolescents. Graduating from high school were important for both group (married  $x=4.81$  and single  $x=5.0$ ). The only slight difference is the single respondents have a mean of 4.27 and married respondents have a mean of 3.84 for importance of continuing beyond a 4-year degree.

Research Hypothesis 3: Hmong adolescent females will have higher educational goals if one of their parents have a college degree. A cross tabulation was used with items 9 and 10 with 12 (Appendix 1). This hypothesis was rejected because there are as many respondents who have parents with no education who plans to attend a 2-4 year college as parents with a college degree.

Research Hypothesis 4: Married Hmong female adolescents without children will have higher educational goals than married Hmong female adolescent with children. A t-test found that the means for married Hmong female adolescents without children were higher than the means for married Hmong female adolescents with children. Hmong female adolescents without children

have a higher mean of 5.0 when compare to the mean of married Hmong female adolescents without children have a mean of 3.9 and a probability of .040.

## Chapter V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION

This final chapter contains a review of a correlational study on perception of early marriage and future educational goals for Hmong female adolescents. The chapter summarizes the statement of the problem and data analysis. The conclusions are based on findings, limitations, counseling implications, and recommendations for future research.

#### Summary

The population of this study is a convenience sample from St. Paul, MN, Eau Claire and Menomonie, Wisconsin. The study was focused on Hmong female adolescents and their perception of early marriage and future educational goals. The mean age for the respondents is 16.8 years old. At the time the surveys were given, thirty-five of the respondents were in high school. Fifty-two percent of the respondents were single, while forty percent of the respondents were married. Sixty percent of the respondents (n=24) were born in the United States.

Due to the high occurrence of early marriage among Hmong adolescents in the United States, it is crucial for counselors in the educational setting to understand the Hmong population and their practice of early marriage. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of correlation between perception of early marriage as measured by The Perception of Early Marriage and Future Educational Goals Survey developed by the researcher. The research hypotheses of this study are:

- 1) When there is a positive perception of early marriage there will be lower educational goals for Hmong female adolescents.

- 2) There is a difference in educational goal attainment for single Hmong and married Hmong female adolescents.
- 3) Hmong female adolescents will have higher educational goals if one of their parents have a college degree.
- 4) Married Hmong female adolescents without children will have higher educational goals than married Hmong female adolescents with child(ren).

Hypothesis 1: When there is a positive perception of early marriage there will be lower educational goals for Hmong female adolescents. The first hypothesis was partially accepted. A Pearson Correlation Matrix between items 20, 21, 22, 23 with 15, 16, 17 (Appendix 1) found that there was a significant difference with only items 20 “Hmong women are getting married too young” and 16 “How important is it for you to graduate from a 2- year college?” ( $r=.3072$  and  $p=.057^*$ ). A study by Yang (1990) found similar results such as that 85 percent of surveyed single college Hmong students ages 19-26 agree that the most important reasons for why Hmong women are getting married early is because their friends were getting married early and they did not want to feel left out. Since the practice of early marriage is so deeply embedded in the Hmong culture, the perception of early marriage may be normalized and accepted by the respondents. If married or when married, the expectation of continuing on with a 2-4 year degree may lessen because there are many other important issues that are involved when forming a family.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a difference in educational goals for single and married Hmong female adolescents. This hypothesis was rejected because the mean values of single and married Hmong female adolescents were very similar. A t-test was used to compare items 2 with 14, 15, 16,

17. Both married and single Hmong female adolescents thought that it was important to continue on with higher education if married or when married (Table 4.16). Graduating from high school was also important for both groups. The only small difference is the mean for married to continue beyond a 4 year degree is  $x=3.84$  compare to single with a  $x=4.27$ . Supporting research study that agree with the rejection of this hypothesis include the author Hutchinson (1997), found that due to strong family support, young Hmong girls who married and in many instances have children still graduate from high school. Hmong girls who married by their senior year of high school did not have different educational aspirations than their non-married peers, but they did have lower educational expectations (Hutchinson, et al., 1994).

Research Hypothesis 3: Hmong adolescent females will have higher educational goals if one of their parents have a college degree. I am rejecting this hypothesis because more respondents whose parents have less than a high school diploma are planning to attend college. A cross tabulation ( Table 4.17) was use for item 12 and 9 and 10. Mothers who have less than a high school diploma have more numbers of respondents ( $n=16$ ) who plans to attend college when compare to mothers who have a college degree with less respondents ( $n=7$ ). Fathers with less than a high school education have more respondents ( $n=13$ ) who plans to attend a 2-4 year college when compared to nine respondents who's fathers have a college degree. An explanation of this could be that parents who have experienced hardship from working in low pay jobs because they lack an education in the United States have learned to place a high value on education so their children will not have to go through the same experiences. Parents want their children to take advantage of the free education offered in the United States because before coming to the United States, attaining an education was only available to individuals who could afford it.

Hypothesis 4: Married Hmong female adolescents without children will have higher educational goals than married Hmong female adolescents with children. A t-test was used to compare items 2,3 with 14,15,16,17 (Appendix 1). This hypothesis was accepted because married Hmong female adolescents without children have a higher mean for all items 14,15,16,17 (Table 4.18). For item 16 “importance of graduating from a 2-4 year college”, the mean for married Hmong female adolescents is  $x=5.0$  while married Hmong female adolescents without children have a  $x=3.9$  with  $p=.040$ . Related research found that the biggest obstacles for Hmong women’s pursuit of higher education are early marriage and childbearing (Lee, 1991). Astone’s (1994) research study also agrees that women who have formed a family while still in school are a higher risk of leaving school early than similar women who are single and childless.

### Limitations

There are many limitations to this study. A limitation is this is a convenience sample. Forty respondents are not enough to generalize the result of this study of Hmong female adolescents’ perceptions of early marriage and educational goals. The researcher’s fifty-two question survey that includes Likert Scales and rankings may have been too long for respondents to fill out. One of the questions weren’t too clear or the wordings were not simplified enough that adolescents with limited English comprehension would understand such as item 13. A few of the respondents with limited English ask the researcher about the meanings of the reasons that the respondents had to rank. One very important limitation was that some of the respondents might have not been honest in reporting their marital status because they are under age and afraid that there might be some legalities involved since they are not legally married.

### Counseling Implications

As a counselor, one should always be open-minded towards other cultures. A very important point to keep in mind is that when a married Hmong female adolescent discloses to a counselor that she is married, she is breaking her silence and risks getting in trouble with her parents and the legal system. The reason why it seems like she is taking a risk is because she may be under age and her husband may be over the age of eighteen years old.

When planning career goals and academic counseling with Hmong female adolescents, all post secondary options should be revealed to students. It is normal for adolescents to be unsure about college being an option for them once they finish high school. There are many programs that can help minority students. To name a few, Hmong female adolescents can become familiar with college through programs such as Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), Minority Encouragement Program (MEP), Upward Bound, and summer college camps and programs. PSEO is a free program that is offered in most or all high schools for juniors and seniors who are in the upper 20 percent to 50 percent of their senior class. Each state may vary on which 2-4 year college participates in post secondary enrollment options programs. Juniors and seniors who qualify for PSEO are usually dual enrolled in both high school and college. Juniors and seniors have the opportunity to earn free college credits and have it count toward their high school graduation credits. All students should be aware of programs similar to Post Secondary Enrollment Options because this is a very valuable opportunity.

Minority Encouragement Programs (MEP) and Upward Bound tracks and follows students as they go through high school. The goals of the program are to prepare and support students to attend college when they finish high school through teaching study and testing skills, taking students to college fairs and campus visits. Summer college camps serve as a great opportunity

for Hmong female adolescents to have a chance to explore the independence of being away from home and to see what college life is like.

Support groups for both single and married Hmong female adolescents should be available for Hmong female adolescent students. Whoever facilitates this group should be very knowledgeable about Hmong cultures. It is important to include both single and married Hmong female adolescents. The support group should not only be aim at Hmong female adolescents who needs the support but also to include Hmong female adolescents who are socially and academically doing well. Those students who are doing well will serve as peer mentors during the group. Discussion topics can include the following: comparison of cultural and mainstreaming views of marital roles and responsibilities, expectations of maintaining a marriage in the Hmong culture, Hmong cultural values vs. American values, goal setting, educational planning, family issues and stress, cultural conflicts, suggestions and ideas to overcome barriers, etc.

Lastly, individual and group counseling in elementary and middle school can serve as early prevention for deterring early marriage for Hmong female adolescents. Counselors can start providing individual and group counseling regarding goal setting and educational planning for Hmong children as young as in elementary school. Students need to visualize that attaining an education is a possible reality after high school. Schools should have qualified professional staffs (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc) to serve as positive role models or mentors.

### Recommendations for Future Research

A recommendation for future research study would be to do a longitundianal study on the educational outcomes of these Hmong female adolescents. An interesting study would be a correctional study of perception of early marriage and educational goals for Hmong male



adolescents. Another interesting research would include a study on Hmong males' perception of women in higher education.

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## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX 1

### Survey Questionnaire

**PERCEPTIONS OF EARLY MARRIAGE AND FUTURE EDUCATIONAL GOALS SURVEY.**

This questionnaire is part of a study designed to describe how perception of early marriage relates to future educational goals.

**DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE SURVEY**

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

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your marital status?  
\_\_\_\_ Single  
\_\_\_\_ Married (legally or culturally) Age when you married: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age of husband when you married: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have any children?  
\_\_\_\_ No  
\_\_\_\_ Yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Were you born in the United States?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_ No, Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_ (country)  
  
How many years have you been in the U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_ years
5. What was the last grade you completed?  
\_\_\_\_ 8<sup>th</sup> grade      \_\_\_\_ 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
\_\_\_\_ 11<sup>th</sup> grade      \_\_\_\_ 10<sup>th</sup> grade  
\_\_\_\_ 12<sup>th</sup> grade
6. What is your cumulative grade point average?  
\_\_\_\_ Less than 1.5      \_\_\_\_ 2.6-3.0  
\_\_\_\_ 1.6-2.0      \_\_\_\_ 3.1-3.5  
\_\_\_\_ 2.1-2.5      \_\_\_\_ 3.6-4.0
7. How many siblings do you have? \_\_\_\_\_ (brothers and sisters)
8. What birth order are you in you family?  
\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>      \_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup>  
\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup>      \_\_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup>  
\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup>      \_\_\_\_ Other, please list \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is the highest education level completed by your mother?  
\_\_\_\_ None      \_\_\_\_ 2 year degree  
\_\_\_\_ Elementary      \_\_\_\_ 4 year degree  
\_\_\_\_ High School      \_\_\_\_ Master degree +

10. What is the highest education level completed by your father?

- ☐ None                      ☐ 2 year degree  
☐ Elementary              ☐ 4 year degree  
☐ High School              ☐ Master degree +

11. My career goals are:      ☐ definite—I know what I want to do.  
    ☐ considering several options or career possibilities  
    ☐ none—no idea

12. What do you want to do after high school?

- ☐ Apprenticeship (on the job training)  
☐ Attend technical college  
☐ Attend 4 year college  
☐ Work  
☐ Don't Know  
☐ Other, please list

**If you are not continuing into higher education, skip #13, and go to #14.**

13. Rank in order reasons for continuing into higher education. (1= greatest reason, 2=second reason, 3=third reason, 4=fourth reason, 5=fifth reason, 6=sixth reason, 7=least reason)

- ☐ Financial stability  
☐ Role model for siblings  
☐ Pressure from parents  
☐ Wealth  
☐ Self-satisfaction  
☐ Status  
☐ Knowledge

- |  | <i>very<br/>important</i> |   | <i>somewhat<br/>important</i> |   | <i>not<br/>important</i> |
|--|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | 1                         | 2 | 3                             | 4 | 5                        |
| 14. If you are married, or will get married, how important is it for you to continue on into higher education? |                           |   |                               |   |                          |
| 15. How important is it for you to graduate from high school?  | 1                         | 2 | 3                             | 4 | 5                        |
| 16. How important is it for you to graduate from a 2 or 4 year college?  | 1                         | 2 | 3                             | 4 | 5                        |
| 17. How important is it for you to continue after a 4-year degree?   | 1                         | 2 | 3                             | 4 | 5                        |



18. When do you think is the best time to get married?

- ☐ Now                      ☐ Don't know  
☐ After high school      ☐ During higher education  
☐ After higher education   ☐ Never

19. Rank in order reasons why you think or believe Hmong women marry before the age of 18. (1=greatest reason, 2=second reason, 3=third reason, 4=fourth reason, 5=fifth reason, 6=sixth reason, 7=least reason)

- ☐ Arranged marriages  
☐ Love  
☐ Escape parental control  
☐ Pregnancy  
☐ Strict parents  
☐ Force by parents  
☐ Hmong men only marry young Hmong women

Select and circle the response category that best represent your reaction to each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20. Hmong women are getting married too young	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I know someone who is married and under the age of 18	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I feel pressure to get married	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Marriage can change a person for the better	1	2	3	4	5	6

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements when Hmong adolescents marry at age 18 or younger?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>They will:</b>						
24. Have more friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. Have fewer friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Have different friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Have more money	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Have to work more hours	1	2	3	4	5	6

29. Have more free time	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Do better in school	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. Would not need an education	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. Live with husband's family	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. Have more arguments.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. Have financial problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. Have more marital stressors	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Perceptions of obstacles to your future career options. Select and circle the response category that best represents your reaction to each statement. The statements are your perceptions of obstacles to your career future.**

	not an obstacle	minor obstacle	somewhat obstacle	often an obstacle	always an obstacle
36. Poor study habits/skills	1	2	3	4	5
37. Lack of money	1	2	3	4	5
38. Lack of certain courses needed	1	2	3	4	5
39. Lack of self-confidence	1	2	3	4	5
40. Lack motivation	1	2	3	4	5
41. Lack parental support	1	2	3	4	5
42. Demands of job	1	2	3	4	5
43. Lack of direction/goals	1	2	3	4	5
44. Lack of ability	1	2	3	4	5
45. Too much social life	1	2	3	4	5
46. Lack of interest in college	1	2	3	4	5
47. Influence of friends	1	2	3	4	5

**If you are married, please fill out the rest of the survey.**

	Not an obstacle	minor obstacle	somewhat obstacle	often an obstacle	always an obstacle
48. Lack of financial support from spouse	1	2	3	4	5
49. Lack of emotional support from spouse	1	2	3	4	5
50. Lack of emotional support from in-laws	1	2	3	4	5
51. Lack of household support					

from spouse	1	2	3	4	5
52. Too many family responsibilities-					
no time for education	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX 2

### Consent Form

## Human Research Subject Consent Forms

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your daughter has the opportunity to participate in this study which measures the relationship between early marriage and future educational goals. It is strictly voluntary and she may discontinue her participation at any time with out any prejudice. Information collected during this study will be kept confidential.

Before completing the questionnaire, I would like you to read and sign this form if you agreed to have your child participate. If you have any questions about the study, please call me at (715)235-8228, or my advisor Dr. Judy Rommel at (715)232-2394.

**Signature of**

**Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Questions or concerns about participation in the research or subsequent complaints should be addressed first to the researcher or the research advisor and second to Dr. Ted Knous, Chair, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board of the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751, phone (715)232-1126.