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## The Hmong Community: Acculturation and Utilization of Domestic Violence Services

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The Hmong Community: Acculturation and Utilization of  
Domestic Violence Services

by

Hlee Moua, B.S.W.

MSW Clinical Research Paper

Presented to the Faculty of the  
School of Social Work  
St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas  
St. Paul, MN  
in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Social Work

Committee Members

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Sr. Stephanie Spandl, MSW, LICSW  
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The Clinical Research is a graduation requirement for MSW students at St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas School of Social Work in St. Paul, MN and is conducted within a nine-month time frame to demonstrate facility with basic social research methods. Students must independently conceptualize a research problem, formulate a research design that is approved by a research committee and the university Institutional Review Board, implement the project, and publicly present the finding of the study. This project is neither a Master's thesis nor a dissertation.

## **Abstract**

This study examined the cultural beliefs surrounding domestic violence of those in the Hmong community and the role of acculturation and how these affect the utilization of domestic violence services. Domestic violence is an issue in many communities but often hidden or not spoken of in the Hmong community. Some of the overarching themes that have been identified to play a role in domestic violence in the Hmong community include various cultural norms, such as patriarchal values, traditional gender roles, and the value of family, with the addition of acculturation difficulties. A mixed method study was facilitated using the General Ethnicity Questionnaire (GEQ) (Tsai, 2001) to evaluate acculturation along with additional survey questions regarding perceived level of acculturation, beliefs about domestic violence in the Hmong community, values that the Hmong community holds, and beliefs about what women experiencing domestic violence should do. Although the role of acculturation was not found to be statistically significant, the findings indicate that domestic violence is a prevalent issue in the Hmong community in which needs to be better researched and addressed. The results suggest that regardless of acculturation, there is openness to utilizing domestic violence services. Implications for clinical social work practice and future research are discussed.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported me through this academic journey: my great “AS1 Radicals” cohort and peers, professors and staff members, supervisors and colleagues, along with family and friends. It has been a crazy and amazing year. I could not have done it without you all cheering me on and giving me much needed words of encouragement. Thank you all so much.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my research committee members, Dr. Pa Der Vang, Sr. Stephanie Spandl, and Nina Lee, for taking the time out of their busy schedules to guide me through this clinical research process, along with offering ideas and providing feedback.

Additionally, I would like to thank all of the participants who took the time to complete the survey and make a contribution to this study.

Last but not least, I would like to give special thanks to my family and loved ones. To my parents, thank you for all your love, encouragement, and support. I could not have achieved this without your persistent push for me to pursue higher education and success. To my dear sister, thank you for being understanding and taking on all the household and daughter responsibilities while I was busy trying to manage classes, internship, work, research, and homework. Throughout all of that, you were still able to make me smile at the end of each day, thank you so much. And finally, to my better half, thank you for being supportive every step of the way and for so much more. It has been an amazing journey and I am grateful for the wonderful people in my life.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Brief History of Hmong People .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Hmong Culture and Values .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chronic Adjustment Disorders .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Domestic Violence in the Hmong Community .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Patriarchal Hmong Society .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Underreporting in Minority Groups.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The Impact of Acculturation .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Gap in the Research .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Conceptual Framework.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Ecological Systems Theory .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Research Design.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Data Collection Instrument .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Sampling Method and Data Collection.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Protection of Human Subjects.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Data Analysis .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Strengths and Limitations.....</b>	<b>16</b>

<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Descriptive Statistics.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Demographics .....	17
GEQ Scores.....	19
<b>Inferential Statistics.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Chi-Squares .....	20
<b>Themes.....</b>	<b>25</b>
The Value of Family .....	25
Gender Roles and Inequality .....	26
Patriarchal Values and Women Have No Voice .....	26
Domestic Violence: Problem Not Discussed .....	27
Education and Hmong Advocates .....	28
<b>Discussion.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Relevance with Literature.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Strengths and Limitations.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Implications for Clinical Social Work Practice .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Implications for Social Work Research.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendix A: Consent Form .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix B: Survey .....</b>	<b>41</b>

## **Introduction**

The Hmong are a group of Southeast Asians that first arrived in the United States as refugees after the Vietnam War in 1975. According to the 2010 Census, there are more than 260,000 Hmong Americans in the United States (Hmong American Partnership, 2010). The largest populations of Hmong people are located in California (91,224), Minnesota (66,181), Wisconsin (49,240), North Carolina (10,864), and Michigan (5,924) (Hmong American Partnership, 2010). As noted above, there is a large Hmong community settled in Minnesota. The Twin Cities is home to most of the Hmong population in Minnesota, with about 53,000 residing in Hennepin and Ramsey counties (Census: Minnesota Hmong Population, 2011).

Every group of people has their own cultural norms and beliefs, community support systems, and ways of responding to community issues. The focus of this research paper will be on the issue of domestic violence in the Hmong community, in relation to cultural beliefs and acculturation. Domestic violence is a rarely discussed issue because of the private nature and collectivist culture of the Hmong people. Domestic violence is something that happens within the family, and which many families try to keep hidden. But even when it is exposed, it can be difficult for outsiders to step in to end the domestic violence. It can be particularly uncomfortable to be in the position to say something to the family, specifically the perpetrator. Often times social ranking in the Hmong community also plays a role in whether it is appropriate or not to step in, because domestic violence is considered a family's issue to resolve. Therefore, who is that of an outsider has the right to come in and say what is right or wrong for the family. When the domestic violence escalates to the point where outside help is needed, the Hmong community relies

on the clan system. There are 18 clans in the Hmong community, referred to as the Hmong 18 Council, which consist of the 18 different last names of the Hmong people. Many people in the Hmong community bring various family and community issues to the Hmong 18 Council to resolve, instead of or before going to government authorities or reaching for help outside of the Hmong community (Donnelly, 1989, as cited in Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Instances of domestic violence in general are underreported but even more so in minority groups, such as the Hmong community, which makes it all the more significant to do more research about this issue.

Domestic violence can be defined as “a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner” (The United States Department of Justice, 2012). Domestic violence includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, and psychological abuse. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2010), “1 in 4 women have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner.” Men can and do experience domestic violence as well, but because women disproportionately experience it at a higher rate, the focus of this research will look at women’s experience as the victim of domestic violence. The Hmong community as a whole will also be examined as their cultural beliefs regarding power, gender roles, and social expectations play a big part in understanding domestic violence in the Hmong community. The purpose of this research is to understand the cultural beliefs in the Hmong community and the impact of acculturation and how these affect the utilization of domestic violence services. Understanding the cultural beliefs and the impact of



acculturation will help social workers be more culturally competent, better understand the needs of the Hmong community, and enable them to provide better services.

## **Literature Review**

### **Brief History of Hmong People**

In understanding acculturation among Hmong people, it is essential to be aware of Hmong people's history and their immigration and refugee experiences coming to the United States. The origins of Hmong people can be traced back to China, but through time, many have migrated to Southeast Asia, in particular, the mountains of Laos (Cerhan, 1990). They were recruited and trained by the Central Intelligence Agency to participate in the Vietnam War but were not given protection when the United States troops withdrew (Cobb, 2010). As Cobb (2010) noted, because of their involvement in the war, Hmong people quickly became targets to be killed by the new communist rule in Laos. Hmong people experienced and witnessed a lot of violence, not only from the war but suffered from consequences after the war as well. The United States eventually stepped in and provided refuge to Hmong people. Hmong people brought their language, customs, beliefs, and practices with them to the United States (Cobb, 2010). Due to these extremely traumatizing historical events, culture shock, and issues with adjusting to change, acculturation is a huge concern in the Hmong community as it affects many aspects of life and daily living, including issues related domestic violence. Domestic violence affects many communities, but cultural beliefs play a role in how communities respond to domestic violence.

## **Hmong Culture and Values**

The family and the clan are the most valuable things to Hmong people (Cerhan, 1990). The clan is made up of extended families, with the same last names, to provide material, economic, and emotional support (Cerhan, 1990; Cobb, 2010). When a woman marries a man, she marries into his clan, takes his last name and is now considered part of her husband's clan. Any issues or concerns, including marital conflict and domestic violence, are brought to the husband's clan leaders before actions or interventions take place. The clan leaders are often made up of the eldest males in the families, who have the most power in the family within the patriarchal system (Cerhan, 1990; Cobb, 2010). In resolving marital conflict, solutions are often aimed at keeping families together, with good intentions (Colon, 2007; Tatman, 2004). But in cases of domestic violence, women do not receive much support from their original family because they are now part of the husband's clan. In presenting domestic violence issues to the husband's clan, the solution is often to keep working at improving the marriage, typically with no consequences regarding the violence (Vezner, 2013). With not many other options but to follow the clan leader's advice, the issue of domestic violence is never really resolved. Hmong people are a highly independent group of people who rely greatly on their clan system and want very much to be free from being controlled by other groups of people (Cerhan, 1990). Independence and collectivism are valued, which can make it difficult to seek and use conventional American services, in particular, domestic violence services.

## **Chronic Adjustment Disorders**

Moving across the world to a different country, society, and lifestyle is not a simple matter and difficulties regarding change and adjustment are to be anticipated.

Mental illness in the Hmong community has been attributed to traumatic war-related events and difficulties with acculturation (Cerhan, 1990; Uba, 1994, & Westermeyer, 1988, as cited in Tatman, 2004). Westermeyer (1988) found that the rate of mental health diagnosis for Hmong people (43%) were double that of Western populations (12 to 20%) (as cited in Tatman, 2004). Some of the common mental health diagnoses among Hmong people were posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic acculturation syndrome, and depression (Cerhan, 1990; Westermeyer, 1988, as cited in Tatman, 2004). Given the history of Hmong people and their experiences and journey to the United States, these mental illnesses are not unexpected because they went through particularly traumatic events and changes. But Westermeyer (1988) found that PTSD is not the primary diagnosis among many Hmong people, it is actually chronic adjustment disorder due to the struggle with acculturation (as cited in Tatman, 2004). The lifestyle of Hmong people in Laos was completely different from what the United States has to offer. One of the biggest struggles with acculturation involved the “scattering policy” from 1974 to 1980. The policy set a cap on how many extended family members were allowed to immigrate to the United States and that cap was set to eight (Westermeyer, 1987, as cited in Cerhan, 1990; Tatman, 2004). The policy was also enacted to “scatter Hmong refugees evenly throughout urban and rural areas of the United States in an attempt to encourage more rapid acculturation” (Miyares, 1998, as cited in Tatman, 2004, p. 224). The policy did not have a positive effect on Hmong refugees as it only made the assimilation more difficult. As mentioned above, family and the extended families and clan are all very important aspects of Hmong culture and identity. Hmong people rely on their familial network for all kinds of support and not having that sense of community and support took a toll on

how one experienced America. It only made it more difficult to become acculturated, making it more critical for Hmong people to stick together. Because Hmong people have had such difficulty adapting to American life, culture, and norms, they have been more reluctant to utilize services and resources, particularly domestic violence services.

### **Domestic Violence in the Hmong Community**

Domestic violence is a rarely talked-about phenomenon among Asian groups due to various cultural factors (Nguyen, 2005). For example, the family's name and reputation are very important to the majority of Asians; therefore things that bring honor and glory to the family are highly valued, whereas shameful issues are hidden (Nguyen, 2005). "In Asian cultures, the individual represents the family; the concepts of guilt and shame assume a different meaning than in American culture, where the individual is taught to be independent, competitive, and self-supporting" (Nguyen, 2005, p. 5).

Multicultural Advocates Inc. (2008) states "the Hmong culture places great importance on family, clan and promoting the good of the group above the needs of the individual" (p. 1). In consulting with the elders or clan leaders, the interventions or solutions that are given are generally based on maintaining the family or clan (Colon, 2007; Tatman, 2004). These "traditional Asian values of close family ties, harmony, and order may not discourage physical and verbal abuse in the privacy of one's home; these values may only support the minimization and hiding of such problem" (Ho, 1990, as cited in Nguyen, 2005). Hmong people also view self-disclosure and emotional expression as signs of weakness (Voigt, 1984, as cited in Tatman, 2004), therefore, may also affect the utilization of domestic violence services.

Domestic violence, despite the fact that it is a shameful issue, is very prevalent in Asian groups. Although the majority of Asians emphasize the importance of the family and marriage, domestic violence still occurs even though it is a factor that harms the family and marriage. Research has found that two out of five Southeast Asian women have experienced domestic violence, a rate that is disproportionately higher than the reported rates of other racial and ethnic groups in the United States (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983, as cited in Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008; Raj, Silverman, McCleary-Sills, & Lui, 2005, as cited in Wong et al., 2011). Many researchers have found that domestic violence among Asians has been associated with the patriarchal society and traditional gender roles to which Asian Americans conform (as cited in Nguyen, 2005). Yllo (1984) and Baron and Straus (1987) also found that rates of violence against women are highly correlated with patriarchal societies (as cited in Nguyen, 2005). Patriarchy is a part of many Asian cultures and societies, including Hmong, in which there is male dominance and privilege that attributes to the inferiority of females in these societies. Therefore, higher rates of domestic violence are not surprising, because women are not valued or as worthy as men.

### **The Patriarchal Hmong Society**

As mentioned above, the Hmong community observed a patriarchal society in their traditional homeland of Laos (Cerhan, 1990; Cobb, 2010; Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008). “Domestic violence and abuse of women in Hmong families is sometimes the accepted norm... Men made the rules and women kept their place” (Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008, p. 1). Issues of sexism against women and girls start at birth when traditional gender roles are prescribed. It is believed that men are born with more power

than women and reinforced through parenting that girls are weaker than boys. Men are taught to demand obedience from women and women are taught to be subservient and obey men. Because of these patriarchal values, there is a general lack of respect for women and lack of support for daughters, as they will marry out of the clan (Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008). As mentioned previously, when a woman marries a man, she takes his last name and marries into his family and clan. Once married, she is considered part of her husband's family, not part of her family of origin any longer. Any marital conflicts or concerns must be brought up to the husband's family and clan leaders. As a community, few men and women believe that a husband is at fault for battering his wife because it is believed that if the wife is being disobedient, she should be punished. This creates low self-esteem for Hmong women, in which they often times blame themselves and believe they deserve to be punished and abused (Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008). "Marriage is valued above physical and emotional safety in an abusive relationship," as a divorced woman would not have a social status in the Hmong community because she is not associated with a man (Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008, p. 1). Again, because of patriarchal societal influences and traditional gender roles, men hold the power and social status in relationships. If a woman leaves her husband she will not only lose her social status, but also lose face for her family, and risk abandonment from her family and relatives (Colon, 2007). There is also the fear of losing the children. Men are often times the breadwinner of the family, more educated, and able to advocate for themselves and have the support of their family. Women often do not have as much support and are led to believe that their husband will take their children away from them. There is very little support or resources in the Hmong community for Hmong women

who want to leave an abusive relationship, along with a lot of stigmas attached to leaving an abusive relationship.

### **Underreporting in Minority Groups**

Experts say that domestic violence is not necessarily more prevalent among minority or immigrant groups than among white Americans in general (Anderson & Aviles, 2006; Crary, 2002; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008; Nguyen, 2005). But that may be attributed to the fact that minority and immigrant groups are often more reluctant to report cases of domestic violence because of stereotypical association to communities of color, fear and mistrust of the authorities or previous negative experiences with the authorities, and language and cultural barriers such as the lack of support and feelings of shame (Crary, 2002; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Nguyen, 2005). Domestic violence has historically been seen as a “minority” issue, in which victims are regularly portrayed as poor women of color (Anderson & Aviles, 2006). Those stereotypes impact the minority women’s willingness to report because reporting violence may be an opportunity for the public or authorities to reinforce negative stereotypes for communities of color (Martinson, 2001, as cited in Anderson & Aviles, 2006). Individuals from minority groups often have to examine their actions carefully because what they do may affect the way others perceive the entire group, as minority cases often get blown out of proportion, suggesting that everyone in that minority group are the same.

Other issues affecting minority and immigrant women’s unwillingness to report domestic violence is their fear of and negative experiences with the police. In instances where language is a barrier, the victim may even be believed to be the aggressor and sent

to jail because the perpetrator was able to tell a better story and turn the authorities against the actual victim (Crary, 2002). Lack of support and shame are common themes among minority groups and may be experienced differently for the different groups. As mentioned previously, Asian groups in particular hide shameful issues such as domestic violence because it would bring dishonor to the family name, in which it is more important to “save face,” and there is not any support for the victim within the community because the value of family and marriage is more important (Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008; Nguyen, 2005; Wong et al., 2011).

### **The Impact of Acculturation**

Acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological change and adaptation that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members (Berry, 2005). Acculturation can happen at a group level and an individual level. The group level “involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices” and the individual level involves changes in one’s behaviors (Berry, 2005, p. 698). There are discrepant rates of acculturation between different generations but studies have shown that younger generations of Hmong are making progress towards acculturation to Western society (Tang & O’Brien, 1990; Tatman, 2001; as cited in Tatman 2004). But due to this discrepancy, there may be increased familial stress, intrapersonal conflict with identity, and increased interpersonal or family problems between the generations (Cerhan, 1990; as cited Tatman, 2004). “An individual may see the benefits of acculturating to the customs, values, and ideals of the dominant culture but may feel internal and familial pressure to remain loyal to his or her culture” (Tatman, 2004, p. 230). The issue with acculturation is how it impacts the cultural norms



of keeping traditional gender roles and the generational hierarchy. The opportunities available for both men and women in the United States, such as education and employment, presents a new challenge in keeping the status quo of men at the higher end of the hierarchy and women at the bottom. These opportunities allow Hmong women to be more independent. Married or unmarried, this newfound independence can cause conflict within the family, in which in a marriage, sometimes lead to domestic violence. The change is extremely unsettling to the older generation, whereas it may be more desired by the younger generation, but in all, it causes a lot of conflict and disagreement. These are factors that prohibit women from leaving their abusive relationships. The concern of this research is in understanding how acculturation affects the utilization of domestic violence services versus not getting the needed interventions to stop and prevent further violence.

### **Gap in the Research**

As the available literature identified the barriers minority ethnic groups and Asian groups face in dealing with domestic violence issues, there is still limited research specifically on the Hmong community. The Hmong community is a unique subgroup, as are all subgroups, which calls for more independent research focus to better understand the issues and needs specific to the Hmong community. Patriarchal societies and various cultural norms along with acculturation difficulties have been identified as some of the overarching themes that play a role in domestic violence in the Hmong community. This current research will aim to answer the research question: How does the level of acculturation affect a Hmong individual's views on utilizing domestic violence services?

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Ecological Systems Theory**

In understanding the impact of acculturation on the Hmong community and its relation to the utilization of domestic violence services, the ecological systems theory will be used to frame this study. The ecological systems theory examines the relationship between a person and the environment they are in, utilizing the person-in-environment perspective. “This perspective underscores ‘the interdependence of individuals within their families, other social networks, communities and larger environments’” (Northern & Kurland, 2001, p. 49, as cited in Lesser & Pope, 2010, p. 2). Ecological systems theory allows for the understanding of components and dynamics in client systems to interpret problems and develop interventions that will enhance the relationship between the individual and their environment (Brandell, 2011). Ecological systems theory integrates the idea of micro, mezzo, and macro level issues that affect individual systems.

Ecological systems theory will help social workers understand the interrelatedness of an individual and their Hmong culture in relation to the struggles with acculturation and Western interventions. The larger mezzo and macro systems definitely have an influence on the micro system of the individual. The mezzo system consists of extended family members, clan leaders, and community members that have a say in the micro system. The macro system is the U.S. government system, which includes the impact of laws and policies on the micro system. The micro system includes the individual and their immediate or close family members and the personal issues or conflicts. It is important for social workers to understand the decision to use domestic violence services

is not solely dependent on an individual's choice, but to assess how the larger systems influence the individual.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study addressed the question, "How does the level of acculturation affect a Hmong individual's views on utilizing domestic violence services?" A mixed method incorporating an online survey with quantitative and qualitative questions was used to analyze the research question (see Appendix B). The survey was created and administered through Qualtrics, an online survey software. A link to the survey was sent to people via email, social media websites, and popular online Hmong discussion forums. Participants were asked to forward the link to their friends, family, and colleagues, creating a snowball effect as a method of obtaining a larger sample. The survey was used to gain a better understanding of individuals from the Hmong community and their thoughts in regards to acculturation and the utilization of domestic violence services.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

The survey used in this study incorporated an acculturation tool, the General Ethnicity Questionnaire (GEQ, abridged version) by Tsai (2001), to measure the participants' level of acculturation, along with the researchers own set of questions. Tsai (2001) created the GEQ when she was doing graduate work at the University of California, Berkeley. Tsai (2001) was interested in measuring cultural orientation and found limitations in many of existing acculturation inventories, so the GEQ was created. There were two versions of the GEQ. The original version included a question regarding the meaning of "culture," along with 75 multiple-choice questions regarding the use of

language, social affiliation, engagement in cultural practices, and cultural identification (Tsai, 2001). The abridged version of the GEQ included a likert scale with 37 items from the original 75 and an additional question asking if the participant is bilingual (Tsai, 2001). The GEQ is able to sample multiple domains of experience, is adaptable to be used with different cultures, and has been shown to be reliable and valid with certain samples (Tsai, 2001). But some limitations are that it does not include all domains of experience, its psychometric properties are known only for specific groups, and it measures behavior and practices rather than values and attitudes (Tsai, 2001).

The questions developed by the researcher of this current study focused on the participant's demographics and cultural values and beliefs. The questions in the survey revolved around the participant's perceived level of acculturation, beliefs about domestic violence in the Hmong community, values that the Hmong community holds, and beliefs about what women experiencing domestic violence should do. There were a total of 42 questions developed by the researcher, 34 quantitative questions with the use of likert scales and 8 qualitative (open-ended) questions.

### **Sampling Method and Data Collection**

The population for this study consisted of Hmong women and men over the age of 18 years old. As mentioned above, participants were recruited through email, social media websites, and popular online Hmong discussion forums, with a link to the survey provided. Utilizing the snowball sampling method, participants were asked to forward the link to friends, family, and colleagues. The researcher personally sent an invitation to participate with the link to the survey to over 40 people. The survey was active for a

period of just over one month. In all, there were 84 surveys started, but only 62 were completed to be included in this study.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

This research study was designed to protect all participants. To protect each human subject, a proposal was submitted to the researcher's MSW Clinical Research Committee. Upon the committee's approval, an application was sent to the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB evaluated and approved the content and procedures of this research to ensure that there were no risks to human subjects that will participate in this study. At the beginning of the survey, a consent form was provided that clearly defined the purpose of this research (see Appendix A). The procedures were outlined, which involved reading the consent form, agreeing to participate, and answering the survey questions, with the option of stopping at any time. Risks and benefits were addressed, in which there were minimal risks and no direct benefits for participating. An explanation of confidentiality and anonymity during the research process and the voluntary nature of the research were also provided. The contact information of the researcher and the researcher's faculty advisor were provided. Participants were then asked to make the informed consent and select the option of whether or not they agreed to participate in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data. Quantitative data is used to describe a type of information that can be counted or expressed numerically (Monette, Sullivan, & DeJong, 2010). Descriptive statistics include frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and dispersion, and can be

visually represented in charts, graphs, and tables. This procedure was used to examine the distribution of the participants' demographic information and GEQ score. The researcher scored all participants' GEQ score, according to Tsai (2001), taking the average of the respondents' total score, in which higher average values reflected greater acculturation to American culture. Inferential statistics, including chi-squares and cross tabulations were used to examine the relationships between GEQ scores and variables including age and questions regarding the respondents' beliefs about Hmong culture and domestic violence against women, resources available to Hmong women, and options for Hmong women experiencing domestic violence.

Content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Content analysis is a detailed examination and interpretation of a particular body of material to identify patterns and themes (Berg, 2009). The researcher went through and read all open-ended question responses and analyzed them for codes, reoccurring words or phrases became codes. A code is to appear at a minimum of three times in order to develop a theme (Berg, 2009). After the coding was completed, the researcher went through and counted the number of times a code appeared and came up with the themes for the findings of this research study.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

There are strengths and limitations to this method of data analysis. Based on the mixed methods design, the survey had both quantitative and qualitative features to obtain more in depth information. The survey was hosted online, which allowed for more accessibility from a wide range of people, thus increasing participation. It also allowed people to share the survey, which also helped increase participation. The online survey

also allowed for participants to be anonymous. One major limitation of this method is that because it was hosted online, there was a huge population missing from the sample that was not as familiar with technology, in particular older Hmong women and men. Along with that idea, many older Hmong women and men cannot read English so they would not have been able to complete the survey even if they were able to access it online. They would have been likely to have different GEQ scores or level of acculturation, thus different responses to the survey questions regarding the main research question. Another limitation is the use of the GEQ tool because it does not necessarily cover all aspects of acculturation. The researcher was also the only person analyzing the data, which could decrease the reliability of the study.

### **Findings**

The researcher initially sent out the survey to over 40 people and using the snowball method, asked for the survey to be passed along to others. Eighty-four surveys were opened or partially completed. To be included in the study, the participant had to fully complete the GEQ section of the survey so that a GEQ score could be calculated to compare with the questions relating to domestic violence. Only 62 participants completed the GEQ section of the survey to be included in this study.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

#### **Demographics**

Participants were asked a number of questions regarding their demographics. Variables included gender, age, marital status, highest degree or level of schooling completed, country of origin (where they were born), and country they were raised in (see Table 1). Of the 62 surveys completed, 72% (n=45) of the respondents were female and

27% (n=17) were male. The age of the participants ranged from 18 years old to 43 years old, with an average (mean) age of 29 years old. Fifty-two percent (n=32) of the respondents reported being single/never been married, 47% (n=29) reported being married, and 2% (n=1) reported being divorced. Thirty-nine percent (n=24) of the participants reported having a bachelor's degree, 18% (n=11) master's degree, 16% (n=10) associate degree, 15% (n=9) some college credit, 10% (6) high school diploma or GED, and 3% (n=2) doctorate degree. Forty-eight percent (n=30) of the respondents reported that they were born in the United States, 36% (n=22) were born in Thailand, 15% (n=9) were born in Laos, and 2% (n=1) were born in France. Ninety-two percent (n=57) of the respondents reported that they were raised in the United States, 5% (n=3) were raised in Laos, and 3% (n=2) were raised in Thailand.



Table 1

*Demographics of Survey Participants*

		n= 62 (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	17 (27%)
	Female	45 (73%)
<b>Age</b>		
	18-20	2 (3%)
	21-25	18 (29%)
	26-30	20 (32%)
	31-35	13 (21%)
	36-40	8 (13%)
	41-45	1 (2%)
<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Married	29 (47%)
	Divorced	1 (2%)
	Single/Never married	32 (52%)
<b>Highest Degree or Level of Schooling Completed</b>		
	High school diploma/GED	6 (10%)
	Some college credit	9 (15%)
	Associate degree	10 (16%)
	Bachelor's degree	24 (39%)
	Master's degree	11 (18%)
	Doctorate degree	2 (3%)
<b>Country of Origin</b>		
	United States	30 (48%)
	Thailand	22 (36%)
	Laos	9 (15%)
	France	1 (2%)
<b>Country Raised</b>		
	United States	57 (92%)
	Thailand	2 (2%)
	Laos	3 (5%)

**GEQ Scores**

The GEQ was used to measure the acculturation of participants (see Table 2).

GEQ scores of participants were calculated by averaging their total score on the questionnaire. A high GEQ score means high acculturation and a low GEQ score means

low acculturation. The participants' scores ranged from 57 to 133, with an averaged (mean) score of 102 and a standard deviation of 12.

Table 2

<i>GEQ Scores</i>	
n= 62 (%)	
GEQ Scores	
51-60	1 (2%)
61-70	0 (0%)
71-80	2 (3%)
81-90	5 (8%)
91-100	18 (29%)
101-110	23 (37%)
111-120	10 (16%)
121-130	2 (3%)
131-140	1 (2%)

Note: GEQ (General Ethnicity Questionnaire).

## Inferential Statistics

### Chi-Squares

Cross tabulations were used to determine associations between GEQ scores and age of the participants (see Table 3).

Table 3

<i>GEQ Scores and Age</i>		<i>n=62</i>					
Age	18-20 (n=2)	21-25 (n=18)	26-30 (n=20)	31-35 (n=13)	36-40 (n=8)	41-45 (n=1)	
GEQ Scores							
51-60 (n=1)	0	1	0	0	0	0	
61-70 (n=0)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
71-80 (n=2)	0	1	0	1	0	0	
81-90 (n=5)	0	1	1	2	1	0	
91-100 (n=18)	0	6	7	2	3	0	
101-110 (n=23)	2	5	9	4	3	0	
111-120 (n=10)	0	3	2	3	1	1	
121-130 (n=2)	0	1	0	1	0	0	
131-140 (n=1)	0	0	1	0	0	0	

Pearson Chi-Square = .245 > .05

Note: GEQ (General Ethnicity Questionnaire).

The cross tabulation (Table 3) demonstrates that in the sample, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 21-25 with the majority of GEQ scores over 90. Across all ages, the participants' GEQ scores were across the board (low and high), with the majority having a GEQ score of 90-100. With a p-value of .245, which is greater than .05, indicates that there is no significant association between age and GEQ scores. The data shows that we cannot make a strong comparison between low acculturated respondents and high acculturated respondents because there are very few in the low acculturation category.

Cross tabulations were also used to determine associations between GEQ scores and particular survey questions (variables), including questions regarding the respondents' beliefs about Hmong culture and domestic violence against women, resources available to Hmong women, and options for Hmong women experiencing domestic violence (see Table 4).

In response to the likert scale question, "the Hmong culture plays a big role in domestic violence against women," with five answer options of strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, or strongly agree, 65% (n=42) of the participants answered that they strongly agree (n=21) or agree (n=21), 16% (n=10) chose neither agree nor disagree, and 16% (n=10) chose disagree (n=9) or strongly disagree (n=1), out of 62 participants.

In response to the likert question, "there are many resources available to Hmong women who experience domestic violence," with the same five answer options above, 48% (n=29) of the participants answered that they disagree (n=15) or strongly disagree

(n=14), 28% (n=17) chose agree (n=11) or strongly agree (n=6), and 25% (n=15) chose neither agree nor disagree, out of 61 participants.

In response to the likert question, “the best thing for a woman who is experiencing domestic violence is to seek help from her family or the Hmong 18-clan system,” with the same five answer options above, 52% (n=32) of the participants answered that they strongly disagree (n=19) or disagree (n=13), 25% (n=15) chose neither agree nor disagree, and 23% chose (n=14) agree (n=9) or strongly agree (n=5), out of 61 participants.

In response to the likert question, “the best thing for a woman who is experiencing domestic violence is to seek help from outside domestic violence resources, such as domestic violence shelters and legal advocates and services,” with the same five answer options above, 77% (n=47) of the participants answered that they agree (n=28) or strongly agree (n=19), 18% (n=11) chose neither agree nor disagree, and 5% (n=3) chose disagree, out of 61 participants.

Table 4

*GEQ Scores and Responses Cross Tabulations*

Hmong culture plays a role in domestic violence	n=62				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
GEQ Scores					
51-60 (n=1)	0	0	0	1	0
61-70 (n=0)	0	0	0	0	0
71-80 (n=2)	0	0	1	0	1
81-90 (n=5)	0	1	0	1	3
91-100 (n=18)	0	3	1	9	5
101-110 (n=23)	1	4	6	5	7
111-120 (n=10)	0	1	1	3	5
121-130 (n=2)	0	0	0	2	0
131-140 (n=1)	0	0	1	0	0
Total	1	9	10	21	21
Pearson Chi-Square = .386 > .05					

There are resources available to Hmong women n=61

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
GEQ Scores					
51-60 (n=1)	0	0	1	0	0
61-70 (n=0)	0	0	0	0	0
71-80 (n=2)	1	0	0	0	1
81-90 (n=5)	3	0	1	1	0
91-100 (n=18)	2	6	5	2	3
101-110 (n=23)	6	6	4	4	2
111-120 (n=10)	2	2	3	3	0
121-130 (n=2)	0	0	1	1	0
131-140 (n=1)	0	1	0	0	0
Total	14	15	15	11	6
Pearson Chi-Square = .428 > .05					

Best to seek help from family/clan n=61

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
GEQ Scores					
51-60 (n=1)	0	0	1	0	0
61-70 (n=0)	0	0	0	0	0
71-80 (n=2)	1	1	0	0	0
81-90 (n=5)	3	0	2	0	0
91-100 (n=18)	3	6	7	0	2
101-110 (n=23)	8	3	5	5	1
111-120 (n=10)	4	3	0	1	2
121-130 (n=2)	0	0	0	2	0
131-140 (n=1)	0	0	0	1	0
Total	19	13	15	9	5
Pearson Chi-Square = .236 > .05					

Best to seek help from outside domestic violence resources n=62

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
GEQ Scores					
51-60 (n=1)	0	0	1	0	0
61-70 (n=0)	0	0	0	0	0
71-80 (n=2)	0	0	0	1	1
81-90 (n=5)	0	0	0	3	2
91-100 (n=18)	0	3	6	4	5
101-110 (n=23)	0	0	2	15	5
111-120 (n=10)	0	0	2	2	6
121-130 (n=2)	0	0	0	2	0
131-140 (n=1)	0	0	0	1	0
Total	0	3	11	28	19
Pearson Chi-Square = .472 > .05					

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Note: GEQ (General Ethnicity Questionnaire).

The cross tabulation (Table 4) demonstrates that most people scored high on the GEQ and also believed that Hmong culture does play a role in domestic violence against women. The data is skewed to those scoring high on the GEQ because there were only two who scored low on the GEQ. With a p-value of .386, which is greater than .05, indicates that there is no significant association between GEQ scores and the belief that Hmong culture plays a role domestic violence against women.

In response to the belief that there are enough resources available to Hmong women, the cross tabulation (Table 4) shows that most of the respondents are in the high GEQ score category which means most of the data is skewed to the high acculturation category. This category does not show a pattern in their responses to whether or not they feel there are resources available to Hmong women. With a p-value of .428, which is greater than .05, indicates that there is no significant association between GEQ scores and the belief that there are enough resources available to Hmong women.

In response to the statement that the best thing for a woman experiencing domestic violence is to seek help from her family or the Hmong 18-clan system, the cross tabulation (Table 4) shows that most of the respondents are in the high GEQ score category. That means most of the data is skewed to the high acculturation category, in which a majority strongly disagreed or neither agree nor disagree with the statement. With a p-value of .236, which is greater than .05, indicates that there is no significant association between GEQ scores and the belief that the best thing for a woman who is experiencing domestic violence is to seek help from her family or the Hmong 18-clan system.

In response to the statement that the best thing for a woman who is experiencing domestic violence is to seek help from outside domestic violence services, such as domestic violence shelters and legal advocates and services, the cross tabulation (Table 4) shows that most of the respondents are in the high GEQ score category. That means most of the data is skewed to the high acculturation category, in which the majority of participants agreed with the statement. With a p-value of .472, which is greater than .05, indicates that there is no significant association between GEQ scores and the belief that the best thing for a woman who is experiencing domestic violence is to seek help from outside domestic violence services, such as domestic violence shelters and legal advocates and services.

### **Themes**

Qualitative questions were asked to gain more insight from participants. The open-ended questions inquired about participants' acculturation and if they felt proud of the Hmong culture, their beliefs regarding the role Hmong culture plays in domestic violence against women, seeking help from family/clan, seeking help from outside domestic violence services, domestic violence in the Hmong community, how domestic violence services could be improved specifically for Hmong women, and what changes need to occur to make use of domestic violence services.

#### **The Value of Family**

The value of family was the dominant theme that emerged from the question, "what about the Hmong culture makes you proud?" along with few subthemes relating to language and food. Some responses included: "*Hmong culture's values of family and interdependence are aspects of Hmong culture that makes me proud,*" "*I am proud of the*

*strong family values and how it's reinforced that we are connected to each other, which results in a strong, close-knit community,” “I am most proud of the Hmong culture because of our strong family support system,” and “Strong sense of family and collectivism.”*

#### Gender Roles and Inequality

Gender roles and inequality was the dominant theme that emerged from the question, “what about the Hmong culture does NOT make you proud?” along with the subtheme of polygamy or men being able to marry more than one wife. Some responses included: *“I am not proud of the fact that the value of Hmong women is still less than Hmong men, even though Hmong women have made great strides and accomplishments matching to that of men,” “Men are portrayed most important,” “The lack of participation and decision-making women have in the culture and everyday life,” “A son is more important than a daughter,” “There is still existence of gender role expectations that I, as a woman, do not abide by or agree to,” “Boys do not have as much pressure to be a husband versus girls who are expected to be good wives,” and “Lack of women rights.”*

#### Patriarchal Values and Women Have No Voice

Patriarchal values/male dominance and women have no voice were two very dominant themes that emerged from the question, “what role, if any, do you believe the Hmong culture plays in domestic violence against women?” Some responses included: *“Men have the power and women have no voice, the man’s family pays for the bride therefore she belongs to them and can do as they wish,” “Women are treated as objects versus as a person. Many women are still not viewed as equal to men and they still have*



*no voice;” “The culture sees men as being very powerful and since they are the head of the household, whatever the men says goes and the women’s voices are not heard;”*  
*“Culturally, women are viewed as being submissive and should always uphold the rights and say of men. Hmong women typically do not have a voice or opinion in matters;”*  
*“Hmong culture has oppressive practices that limit women’s rights and their voice. Our traditions tell women they must be patient. It blames women when marriages don’t work out. This along with numerous other practices force women to stay in relationships that are abusive and unhealthy;”* and *“Hmong culture is a patriarchal culture that hinders opportunities for females from the second they were born.”*

#### Domestic Violence: Problem Not Discussed

The theme that domestic violence is a problem that is not discussed enough was the dominant theme that emerged from the question, “what are your beliefs about domestic violence in the Hmong community?” along with the subtheme of lack of education. Some responses included: *“It exists and needs to be discussed openly;”*  
*“Domestic violence in the Hmong community has existed for a very long time and has not been fully addressed;”* *“There is a lot of cases in the Hmong community but this subject is hush hush and no one talks or even want to get involved to help victims in these situations;”* and *“It’s a very sensitive issue that Hmong people, especially the men, do not want to talk about it as they know they are guilty of. Men have a lot of pride in themselves and they do not want to change for the better or they are in denial that there is such a problem. Furthermore, it is easier to blame the victims instead of correcting themselves. The women, who are the majority of the victims, are too scared to come out and voice themselves because they are afraid of getting a bad name or label and they don’t want to*

*be divorced or be a single mom. They don't have enough resources available to them nor do they have the education to know that it's not right for them to be abused."*

#### Education and Hmong Advocates

Providing education and Hmong-speaking/bilingual advocates were two dominant themes that emerged from the question, "how could domestic violence services be improved to help Hmong women who are experiencing domestic violence?" along with the subthemes of empowering women and cultural competency. Some responses included: *"More facilities with Hmong workers, promoting, and just letting everyone know that there is a place for help," "More education for Hmong people," "Have more services that are bilingual to bridge the language barrier," and "DV services would be beneficial to help Hmong women to max if there are bilingual advocates available to assist victims, educate the community on what healthy relationships looks like... educate both males and females on DV in the Hmong community."*

#### **Discussion**

The question this research study aimed to answer was how does the level of acculturation affect a Hmong individual's views on utilizing domestic violence services? The acculturation level, using the GEQ score of the participants, ranged from 57 to 133. Although there were no statistically significant association between GEQ score and age, and no statistically significant relationship between GEQ score and responses to questions regarding the respondents' beliefs about Hmong culture and domestic violence against women, resources available to Hmong women, and options for Hmong women experiencing domestic violence, the findings suggest that there is some concern about domestic violence in the Hmong community, and more research is needed to fully

understand the scope of the issue. The majority of the respondents, 65% (n=42) believed that Hmong culture does play a role in domestic violence against women. Despite the beliefs of having strong family values, 52% (n=32) of the respondents believed that it would not be best to get domestic violence help from family or the Hmong 18-clan system and 77% (n=47) believed that seeking outside domestic violence services is an acceptable alternative. The results of this study suggest that regardless of level of acculturation, there is openness to utilizing domestic violence services. But there are mixed responses regarding what services are available to Hmong women who are experiencing domestic violence. It seems unclear to participants, about whether there are resources available specifically to serve Hmong women with domestic violence issues.

The themes that were identified from the qualitative research data included patriarchal values, gender roles and inequality, women have no voice, the value of family, domestic violence is a problem not discussed and the need for education and Hmong-speaking or bilingual advocates. These themes also indicate that domestic violence in the Hmong community is an area of concern in which needs to be addressed more. In terms of service utilization and making services more helpful, the respondents stated the need for more education for the community and more Hmong-speaking or bilingual advocates making service delivery more effective.

### **Relevance with Literature**

The findings of this research have a lot of similarities with the reviewed literature. First, patriarchal values and gender roles and inequality emerged from the research data and literature, in that it does play a role in domestic violence against women (Cerhan, 1990; Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008; Nguyen, 2005). Although the literature did not

state anything specific about women not having a voice, it was a dominant theme related to patriarchal values in the research data. In relation to patriarchal values and traditional gender roles, Hmong girls were often brought up to not challenge authority and men and to keep quiet. The men made the rules and women were to be subservient and keep their place (Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008). These patriarchal values and traditional gender roles definitely impact women and their self-esteem and ability to stand up for themselves. Another perspective is the idea of blaming the victim, the belief that the woman must have done something wrong for her husband to abuse her. Whether the victim herself believes it or the community is blaming her, it affects her self-esteem and self-worth in which is why there is the sense that Hmong women do not have a voice.

Second, both the literature and research data spoke about cultural values, beliefs, and norms, with an emphasis on the value of family (Cerhan, 1990; Multicultural Advocates Inc., 2008; Nguyen, 2005; Wong et al., 2011). The value of family was something to be proud of and an important aspect of Hmong culture, but it was also something that hindered women's ability to get the help needed or get out of abusive relationships. Family is such an important part of Hmong culture as evident in the literature and data, many participants were proud of that aspect. Family connections are so important that it is difficult to risk disrupting the equilibrium in the family. The issues of shame and losing face as mentioned earlier are two reasons why the value of family hinders a Hmong woman's ability to leave an abusive relationship. The family typically encourages the woman to stay in hopes that change will occur, because they do not want other family dynamics to change. But inevitably, the cycle of abuse continues and if the woman is unable to get help, it simply becomes an accepted part of her life. Also, being

divorced is something that is frowned upon in the Hmong culture. Once a Hmong woman is deemed as a divorcee, her chance of remarriage decreases. As important as family is, it also often ties women down without many choices to make.

Third, domestic violence being an issue that is not discussed or hidden was also found in both the research data and literature, due to issues related to lack of support for women and shame in the family (Crary, 2002; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Nguyen, 2005). Since it is a hidden issue, it is not common to hear Hmong women talking about it. Again, it is something that typically takes place in the privacy of one's home, so it is not often seen as a public or community issue. Along with that, there are beliefs that it is not other people's business what is going on in one's own home, especially regarding domestic issues. With all the other cultural factors previously mentioned, Hmong women tend to learn to endure the violence, in result keeping the issue hidden.

However, there were some discrepancies between the literature and the interview data. The literature did not discuss the issue of education, except for the language factor as a barrier, but which the participants did believe to be a huge factor in the utilization of services. The participants emphasized the need to educate the community about domestic violence and its effect on everyone involved as well as education about protection, rights, and services. Hmong women did not see the role of education as a way for them to become informed about the available resources. Just providing the education would give Hmong women so much empowerment because it is the lack of education that keeps them in unhealthy and abusive relationships. The literature also indicates that a person's level of acculturation to a new culture, in this case American culture, may influence their beliefs about their own culture, in this case Hmong culture. In conducting this research,

the researcher hoped to see if participants' level of acculturation or GEQ score influenced their responses. Although there was a range of participants' GEQ scores (57-133), the majority of scores were between 90-120, which is not as big of a range. The majority of participants were also younger, under the age of 35 years old, educated at a bachelor's degree level, and born or raised in the United States, so one would assume that they were more acculturated than not. It would have been interesting to see more participants with lower GEQ scores, less acculturated, and what their responses would have been like.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

There are strengths and limitations to the findings in this research that should be considered. One strength was that the survey had quantitative and qualitative features that allowed participants the option to provide more insight about the topic. Another strength is that the researcher is Hmong, allowing an insider's perspective and has previous experience working in a domestic violence agency and has also been exposed to instances of domestic violence throughout her life, in her family and in the community, so all of these factors helped carry on the research. But one limitation is also that because of those same reasons; along with the researcher's own level of acculturation, the research direction and survey questions might be biased, therefore decreasing validity. Another limitation included the sample and missing populations, such as older adults and those who have not acculturated as well to American culture. An interesting consideration is that all of the respondents had at least a high school education, and many with a college education. Another consideration is that only one participant identified their marital status as "divorced," and all others were married or single and never been married. The results would look different with a larger variety of participants. The use of the GEQ tool was

also a limitation because there were no further instruction about what a particular score meant, just that the higher the score, the more acculturated the person is with the identified culture.

### **Implications for Clinical Social Work Practice**

The purpose of this research was to better understand the cultural beliefs in the Hmong community and the role of acculturation and how these affect the utilization of domestic violence services. Understanding the cultural beliefs and the impact of acculturation will help clinical social workers be more culturally competent, better understand the needs of the Hmong community, and enable them to provide better services. Using the ecological systems theory, it is essential for clinical social workers, or any professionals working with the Hmong community, to understand how the person-in-environment perspective affects their Hmong clients. Because Hmong people are often enmeshed in their families, it is important to consider what roles they have in their families and extended community, as well as other influences play a role in their day-to-day life. It is also critical to consider how they are or are not fitting into their environment and other struggles they may have with managing different, Hmong and American, cultures. Every client is different and has a different starting point, so assumptions should not be made. Clients should be the experts at their lives, but having the basic background knowledge and considering the client in their environment strengthens relationships and service delivery.

### **Implications for Social Work Research**

The findings of this research project and available literature disclose a lot about the barriers the Hmong community, and Asian groups in general, face in receiving

domestic violence services. The Hmong community and culture is very unique from other communities and cultures. As there hasn't been much research done on the Hmong community, there is a need to learn more about the Hmong culture to understand how that affects social issues today, such as domestic violence. And there is also a higher need at this time, because of the increasing number of immigrants or Hmong families, specifically in the Twin Cities, MN. More empirical evidence is needed to understand the specific issues of what the barriers are for the Hmong community to receiving domestic violence services so that social workers can be more culturally competent and provide the appropriate services that will help the Hmong community advance instead of staying as a patriarchal society. Research specific to interviewing Hmong women who have experienced domestic violence and their beliefs would be one aspect to examine. Another aspect is interviewing Hmong men and what their beliefs around domestic violence are. Surveying or interviewing those in the Hmong community about what specific resources would be helpful is something to consider doing research around. As more empirical evidence is provided, there will be more initiatives to address the issues of domestic violence in the Hmong community, interventions to prevent it, and services tailored to meet cultural needs.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the cultural beliefs in the Hmong community and the impact of acculturation and how these affect the utilization of domestic violence services. Although the role of acculturation was not found to be statistically significant, the findings indicate that domestic violence is a prevalent issue in the Hmong community in which needs to be better researched and addressed. The results suggest that regardless of



acculturation, there is openness to utilizing domestic violence services. But more education of services available is needed. In understanding the cultural beliefs and the role of acculturation, social workers will be able to provide better services and increase the utilization of services by the Hmong population.

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## **Appendix A: Consent Form**

### **The Hmong Community: Acculturation and Utilization of Domestic Violence Services**

#### **INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

##### **Introduction:**

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating the Hmong community and the impact of acculturation on the utilization of domestic violence services. This study is being conducted by Hlee Moua, a graduate student at St. Catherine University/ University of St. Thomas under the supervision of Dr. Pa Der Vang, P.h.D., LICSW, a faculty member in the Department of Master of Social Work. You were selected as a possible participant in this research because you meet the criteria of being Hmong and 18 years of age or older. Please read this form before you agree to be in the study.

##### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this research is to understand the cultural beliefs in the Hmong community and the impact of acculturation and how it affects the utilization of domestic violence services. Understanding the impact of acculturation will help social workers be more culturally competent, understand what the needs of the Hmong community are, and enable them to provide better services.

Approximately 40 people are expected to participate in this research.

##### **Procedures:**

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to confirm that you are Hmong and 18 years of age or older. You will have read this consent form and if you decide to continue on with the survey, you will have consented to be a part of this research study. You will be asked if you understand the purpose of this study. Then you will begin the survey by answering a few demographic questions, then questions regarding your acculturation level using the General Ethnicity Questionnaire (Tsai, 2001), then questions regarding domestic violence and the use of services. This study will take approximately 30 minutes over one session.

##### **Risks and Benefits of being in the study:**

The study has minimal risks. There may be a risk that questions related to domestic violence and cultural beliefs may cause personal or emotional issues to arise, as it is a sensitive topic. The likelihood of that risk is minimal because the questions will not be focused on personal experiences of domestic violence but thoughts about those who experience domestic violence. These questions may cause a little discomfort and that is reasonable to expect. But you have the choice to stop participating whenever you feel like it, and there will be a list of resources available at the end of the survey if needed.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research. But you will be contributing to the understanding of the cultural beliefs in the Hmong community and the impact of acculturation and how it affects the utilization of domestic violence services. Understanding the impact of acculturation will also help social workers be more

culturally competent, understand what the needs of the Hmong community are, and enable them to provide better services.

**Confidentiality:**

This survey will be an anonymous survey. Results will be kept confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only group data will be presented.

I will keep the research results in a locked file on my computer and only my advisor and research committee and I will have access to the records while I work on this project. I will finish analyzing the data by May 2013. I will then destroy all original reports.

**Voluntary nature of the study:**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with St. Catherine University or University of St. Thomas in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time without affecting these relationships.

**Contacts and questions:**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Hlee Moua at moua0486@stthomas.edu. You may ask questions now, or if you have any additional questions later, the faculty advisor, Dr. Pa Der Vang, pdvang@stkate.edu, will be happy to answer them. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739.

**Statement of Consent:**

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. If you select that you "Agree" to participate in this survey, it indicates that you have read this information and your questions have been answered. Even after agreeing to participate, please know that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

## Appendix B: Survey

Please select whether you agree or disagree to participate in this survey.

Disagree (1)

Agree (2)

Please answer the following statements to continue.

	True	False
I am Hmong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am of 18 years or older.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The purpose of this study is to understand the cultural beliefs in the Hmong community and the impact of acculturation and how it affects the utilization of domestic violence services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your age?

---

What is your marital status?

- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Separated
- Single/Never been married



What is your employment status?

- Employed Full-Time
- Employed Part-Time
- Self-Employed
- Unemployed
- A Homemaker
- A Student
- In the Military
- Retired
- Unable to work

What is the highest degree or level of schooling you have completed?

- Never attended school
- Elementary school (Grades K-8)
- Some high school (Grades 9-11)
- High school graduate (Grade 12 or GED)
- Some college credit
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate degree

In what country were you born?

---

In what country were you raised?

---

Please use the following scale to indicate how much you agree with the following statements (Tsai, 2001).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I was raised in a way that was American.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I was growing up, I was exposed to American culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Now, I am exposed to American culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compared to how much I negatively criticize other cultures, I criticize American culture less.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am embarrassed/ashamed of American culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of American culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
American culture has had a positive impact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

on my life.					
I believe that my children should read, write, and speak English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a strong belief that my children should have American names only.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I go to places where people are American.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am familiar with American cultural practices and customs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I relate to my partner or spouse in a way that is American.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I admire people who are American.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would prefer to live in an American community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I listen to American music.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I perform American dance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I engage in American forms of recreation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I celebrate American holidays.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

At home, I eat American food.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At restaurants, I eat American food.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I was a child, my friends were American.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Now, my friends are American.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish to be accepted by Americans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The people I date are American.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I am American.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use the following scale to answer the following questions (Tsai, 2001).

	Very Much	Much	Somewhat	A Little	Not at All
How much do you speak English at home?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you speak English at school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you speak English at work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you speak English at prayer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you speak English with friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you view, read, or listen to English on TV?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you view, read, or listen to English in film?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much do you view, read, or listen to English on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

the radio?					
How much do you view, read, or listen to English in literature?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How fluently do you speak English?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How fluently do you read English?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How fluently do you write English?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How fluently do you understand English?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use the following scale to indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe I have mostly acculturated to the American culture or lifestyle.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe I am still very traditional in following traditional Hmong culture and beliefs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domestic violence is an issue in the Hmong community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women are usually the victims in domestic violence incidents in the Hmong community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Hmong culture plays a big role in domestic violence against women.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain what role, if any, you believe the Hmong culture plays in domestic violence against women:

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Please use the following scale to indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Women are valued more than men in the Hmong culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Men are valued more than women in the Hmong culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of Hmong culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not proud of the Hmong culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please briefly explain what about the Hmong culture MAKES you proud:

---

Please briefly explain what about the Hmong culture does NOT make you proud:

---

Please use the following scale to indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Marriage and keeping the family together is a very important part of Hmong culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is okay to be divorced in the Hmong culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domestic violence issues should be kept a family secret.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domestic violence issues should be reported to the police.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domestic violence issues should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>be taken to elders in the family or family leaders, including the 18-clan leaders, to resolve.</p>					
<p>Women who experience domestic violence must have done something to deserve it.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>No one deserves to experience domestic violence or abuse.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>If a woman is experiencing domestic violence, she should get help right away.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>If a woman is experiencing domestic violence, she should work harder to be a better wife.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>If a woman is experiencing domestic</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>violence, she should leave the home right away.</p>					
<p>If a woman is experiencing domestic violence, she should seek shelter in a relative's home.</p>	○	○	○	○	○
<p>If a woman is experiencing domestic violence, she should seek shelter in a domestic violence shelter</p>	○	○	○	○	○
<p>There are many resources available to Hmong women who experience domestic violence.</p>	○	○	○	○	○
<p>The best thing for a woman who is experiencing domestic violence is to seek help from her family or the Hmong 18-</p>	○	○	○	○	○

<p>clan system.</p> <p>The best thing for a woman who is experiencing domestic violence is to seek help from outside domestic violence resources, such as domestic violence shelters and legal advocates and services.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Please explain why or why isn't it best to seek help from family or the Hmong 18-clan system?

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Please explain why or why isn't it best to seek help from outside domestic violence resources?

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What are your beliefs about domestic violence in the Hmong community?

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Do you believe there are sufficient resources for Hmong women experiencing domestic violence?

Yes

No

How could domestic violence services be improved to help Hmong women who are experiencing domestic violence?

---

What needs to happen or change to help the Hmong community make use of domestic violence services?

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please leave any further comments below.

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