

**Background Information**

- Even though I was born in Thailand and speak Hmong as my first language, I mispronounce words, do not understand some phrases, and do not know Hmong history extensively.
- An inability to speak and/or comprehend Hmong well keeps some classmates from using the language when older generation Hmong are around.
- Wisconsin has the third largest Hmong population in the United States (US Census Bureau, 2008).

**Literature Review**

- Little research has been conducted on the Hmong population and/or the Hmong college student experience in general because Hmong are often grouped under Asian which does not accurately reflect the Hmong experience (Huang, 1994).
- Degree to which immigrant youth are able to maintain ethnic identity while adapting to the majority culture is often cited as critical to self-esteem, psychological well-being, successful adjustment to new society, and academic success (Bosher, 1995).

**Research Procedure**

- Surveyed 228 Hmong students during fall 2010; 69 participants (54 female and 15 male)
- Collected data from participants on demographics and asked them to describe their identity practices and beliefs.

**Survey Findings**

- **Research Question 1**: What does being Hmong mean to Hmong students?
  - Majority of participants described themselves in terms of lifestyle as bicultural.
  - For most part accept U.S. society yet know and accept traditions and culture
  - Can move from traditional society to U.S. society with ease
- **Research Question 2**: How strongly do students identify with elements of their cultural heritage?
  - Participants indicate they are more fluent in speaking than reading and writing Hmong.
  - Participants have little or no knowledge of historical facts, but display a positive attitude towards their cultural heritage.
- **Research Question 3**: What personal practices are upheld?
  - Participants are open and accepting of dating and marrying outside of the Hmong culture.
- **Research Question 4**: Does gender, age, country of birth, or English language ability play a role in those experiences?
  - Regardless of birth place, (Laos, Thailand, or the United States) most participants displayed an interest and pride in the culture to include history, religion, language, reading, and writing skills even though they may not be very informed or proficient.
  - Age and gender did not appear to play a role in participants’ connection to the Hmong culture.

**Implications**

- The definition of being Hmong varies greatly amongst individuals suggesting a different understanding of Hmong culture rather than a common accepted identity.
  - This influences the degree to which cultural traditions are practiced and/or observed.
  - It is unclear what role a college education plays in a student’s understanding of identity and culture.
  - The cultural and linguistic background of a student influences how a student engages academically and socially.
  - Additional research on Hmong cultural identity is recommended.

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**Works Cited**


**For Further Information Please Contact:**

- [E-mail](mailto:wonderka@uwec.edu)
- [Phone](tel:262-788-8530)

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