

# First-generation Hmong College Students and Academic Success

## Research Problem

- According to the literature, Hmong first generation students lack awareness, usage, and perception of available academic resources and support systems.
- The majority of Hmong college students perceived a lack of time to study, poor study habits, lack of money, lack of motivation, lack of direction on career goals, and poor time management to be obstacles for them in higher education (Xiong & Lee, 2011).

## Research Question

What are the factors that contribute to academic success for first-generation Hmong college students?

## Hypothesis

Based on the literature and Conflict Theory, we predicted that first-generation Hmong college students not only lack the resources they need but also the knowledge of resources available to them that can help contribute to their academic success.

## Purposes

- To describe the relationship between the struggles first-generation Hmong college students experience and the resources available that can help lead them to be successful.
- To develop a reliable survey instrument that would measure the usage and awareness of academic programs by first-generation Hmong college students.
- That the results from this study would contribute to early intervention and prevention of academic failure of first-generation Hmong college students by increasing awareness of academic resources.

## Literature Review

- **Metha et al. (2011)** determined that not only do first-generation students lack social and financial support but are also experiencing high college dissatisfaction resulting in lower academic performance.
- **Woosley and Shepler (2011)** focused on first-generation college students' retention and graduation rates based on their early integration experiences.
- **Xiong and Lee (2011)** found that Hmong students reported that their social life, family relationships, and employment were challenges they encountered that interfered with their overall success.
- **Mamiseishvili (2010)** examined the that students' employment may only be viewed as negative if the job is disengaging the student from their professional goals and academic studies.
- **Barry et al. (2009)** found that students were unable to disclose stressful life events that occurred while in college to people in their social network resulting in a decrease in both academic success and overall health.
- **The gap the researchers hoped to fill was focusing specifically on Hmong first-generation college students and to contribute to early intervention and prevention of academic failure of first-generation Hmong college students by increasing awareness of academic resources.**

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## Theoretical Framework

### The Conflict Theory

- This theory provides a context of understanding of conflict within groups and/or if resources are distributed equally to resolve the disputed issue

### As applied to this study:

- Conflict Theory would predict that Hmong first-generation college students would experience barriers to success due to competition for limited resources (White & Klein, 2008).

## Method

- Participants
  - First-generation Hmong Stout Student Organization (HSSO) members
- Research Design
  - Non-random pilot study
  - Cross sectional survey research
  - Purposive and Snowball sampling method
- Data Collection Instrument
  - IRB approved survey, informed by literature and theory, implied consent of participants
  - Administered by the researchers with 9 demographic questions, 11 closed ended questions based on a 1-6 Likert Scale, and 2 open ended questions about access to resources
- Procedure
  - Survey's were administered to first-generation Hmong college students at the Memorial Student Center on UW-Stout campus at a HSSO meeting.
  - Implied consent and confidentiality were explained; special attention was given to reduce any possible pressure of completing the survey
- Data Analysis Plan
  - Cleaned & coded surveys
  - Analyzed data using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)
    - Frequencies, mean-comparisons, correlations, and a Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis

## Demographic Variables

GEN=Gender, AGE=Age, FGN=First generation, PIN=Parent's yearly income, SIN=Student's yearly income, FIN=Financial Aid, WHR=Number of hours a week you work, SHR=Number of hours a week you study, GPA=Grade Point Average

## Scale Variables

AOR=Awareness of resources, UOR=Usage of resources, DED=Dedication to graduating from college, PRE=Pressure from family to succeed in college, BAL=Balance personal life with college life, COM=Comfortable on this campus, FIT=Fit in on this campus, FAC=Faculty supports success, CST=Cope well with stressors, PAI=Parental academic involvement, PPI=Parental personal involvement

Table 1: Frequencies

Variables	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	TOTAL
AOR	0.0%	0.0%	00%	12.0%	44.0%	44.0%	100%
UOR	0.0%	0.0%	12.0%	19.0%	50.0%	19.0%	100%
DED	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	100%
PRE	13.0%	0.0%	6.0%	19.0%	31.0%	31.0%	100%
BAL	0.0%	0.0%	12.0%	38.0%	31.0%	19.0%	100%
COM	0.0%	0.0%	12.0%	19.0%	44.0%	25.0%	100%
FIT	0.0%	0.0%	13.0%	25.0%	31.0%	31.0%	100%
FAC	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	19.0%	69.0%	12.0%	100%
CST	0.0%	6.0%	13.0%	50.0%	18.0%	13.0%	100%
PAI	13.0%	25.0%	13.0%	18.0%	6.0%	25.0%	100%
PPI	12.0%	19.0%	12.0%	19.0%	0.0%	38.0%	100%

## Results

- Hypothesis:
  - We predicted that first-generation Hmong college students not only lack the resources they need but also the knowledge of resources available to them that can help contribute to their academic success.
  - We did not find support for our hypothesis with 82% of our participants responding that they had the resources they need (AOR) as well as 64.7% of participants responding that they had the knowledge and used resources available for them (UOR).
  - We found a strong correlation of .817 between their parents calling them to talk about school/academics (PAI) and all other activities not related to school (PPI)
- Reliability Analysis
  - Cronbach's Alpha measures reliability and our survey items measured .430-low because of small sample size



## Implications

- **Practitioners:**
  - Because results indicate that first-generation Hmong college students are aware and using academic resources, our implications for practitioners would be to continue to promote awareness of resources in addition to offering peer advising and mentors for students.
  - Peer advising and mentors can offer students help in other ways such as proper time management and study skills.
- **Future Research:**
  - Because our results indicated that students only worked and studied an average of 0-10 hours a week, the next step in research would be to look specifically at how students who work more than 20 hours a week are succeeding academically with the awareness and usage of academic resources.
  - Qualitative interviews with students regarding specific resources and academic success

## Conclusion

- First-generation Hmong college students who are aware and use academic resources are succeeding academically with an average GPA of 3.1-3.5.
- These students are on their way to succeeding academically with an attainment of a Bachelor's Degree due to usage of academic resources to achieve this success.