

# Cultural Orientation of Hmong Young Adults

Jeanne L. Tsai

**SUMMARY.** Most studies of Hmong Americans focus on the cultural adjustment of refugees who arrived in the United States immediately after the Vietnam War. Few studies have examined the cultural adjustment of the children of these refugees, who have been raised primarily in the United States. This study explored whether American-born [ABH] and overseas-born [OBH] Hmong young adults differed in levels, models, and meanings of cultural orientation. Fourteen ABH and 32 OBH college students were asked what “being Hmong” and “being American” meant to them and complete were asked to the General Ethnicity Questionnaire (American and Hmong versions). Both groups reported being more oriented to American culture than Hmong culture. Despite similarities in mean levels of orientation to Hmong and American cultures and in the meanings of “being Hmong” and “being American,” ABH and OBH differed in their underlying models of cultural orientation. For ABH, “being Hmong” and “being American” were unrelated constructs, whereas for OBH, they were negatively correlated constructs. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-342-9678. E-mail address: <getinfo@haworthpressinc.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2001 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Although estimates vary, demographers approximate that between 90,000 to 120,000 Hmong currently live in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998; Taylor, 10/25/98), residing primarily in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California (Southeast Asian Resource Action Center, 1998). Most studies of Hmong and other Southeast Asian groups have focused on the cultural adjustment and mental health of the refugee groups that first arrived in the United States at the close of the Vietnam War, approximately two and a half decades ago (Chung & Lin, 1994; Nicholson, 1997; Ta, Westermeyer, & Neider, 1996; Westermeyer & Her, 1996; Westermeyer, Schaberg, & Nugent, 1995; Ying, Akutsu, Zhang, & Huang, 1997). Significantly fewer studies have examined the cultural adjustment of the children of these refugee groups, many of whom have spent the majority of their lives in the United States. The present study attempts to fill this gap by examining cultural orientation processes in a sample of Hmong young adults living in the Midwest.

### ***Hmong in the United States***

Unlike other Asian groups (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos), Hmong did not voluntarily immigrate to the United States with the goal of economic advancement. Most Hmong arrived in the United States as political refugees in the mid-1970s at the close of the Vietnam War. During the War, Hmong males of all ages were "hired" by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to fight against the Communist North Vietnamese. Although the Hmong fought to protect their homeland, they also received assurances from the CIA that should their efforts fail, they would receive U.S. support as compensation for their military service. In 1975, Hmong military were forced by Communist Vietnamese troops to retreat from Laos. As a result, the United States airlifted Hmong military officers and their families and brought them to the United States. However, these comprised only a small percentage of Hmong who were driven from their homes. Thousands of Hmong were forced to flee to refugee camps in Thailand and lived there for years before finally being allowed to immigrate to the United States and other countries (e.g., France, Australia, Canada) (for a more comprehensive history of the Hmong, please see Chan [1994] or Fadiman [1997]).

In the United States, Hmong were originally dispersed throughout the country to curb the impact their arrival had on any one community. However,

in an effort to reunite with their family members and to be near other Hmong, many refugees engaged in secondary migrations, and communities with large numbers of Hmong soon emerged. Up until 1997, the largest group of Hmong lived in Fresno, California. Since 1997, however, an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 Hmong have left Fresno because of poor employment opportunities, rising crime rates, poor schools, and few social services. Most have moved to Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, where Hmong have better employment opportunities (Taylor, 1998). As a result of this recent migration, Minneapolis-St. Paul has become the new "Hmong capital" of the United States, housing approximately 60,000-75,000 Hmong (Ronningen, 1999; Taylor, 1998).

Most of the existing research on Hmong groups focuses on the difficulties many Hmong refugees encountered during their settlement in the United States. These difficulties have been attributed to several sources. First, life in the United States is drastically different from that in Laos. In Laos, Hmong practiced slash and burn agriculture, lived with extended family members, and held religious beliefs and ceremonies that often involved animal sacrifice. In the United States, Hmong have had to find other means of subsistence. They often are not able to live with extended family members, and many Hmong have had to restrict their performance of traditional ceremonies because of complaints by surrounding non-Hmong communities (Chan, 1994). Second, many Hmong arrived in the United States with severe cases of post-traumatic stress disorder and other forms of mental distress due to the losses they suffered in the Vietnam War (Nicholson, 1997; Ta et al., 1996). Third, many Hmong hold strong cultural proscriptions against mixing with and assimilating to majority cultures in order to preserve their cultural traditions. In fact, Ying et al. (1997) found that in a large community sample of Southeast Asian refugees, Hmong were significantly more culturally traditional than the other Southeast Asians examined (Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians, and Chinese Vietnamese). However, Hmong adherence to cultural traditions and resistance to cultural assimilation may also hinder their adjustment to American life (Fadiman, 1997).

### *Cultural Orientation Among Hmong Young Adults*

But what about the children of the first generation of Hmong refugees, many of whom are currently in their early- to mid-twenties and have lived the majority of their lives in the United States? What is their cultural orientation? Have they retained their Hmong heritage, adopted the traditions and customs of mainstream American culture, or both? Do American-born Hmong have different cultural orientations than those who were born overseas? Remarkably little research has focused on this generation of Hmong. Therefore, this study had two main goals: (1) to examine cultural orientation in a sample of

Hmong young adults who have spent the majority of their lives in the United States, and (2) to identify variation within this sample of Hmong young adults. Four exploratory questions regarding the cultural orientation of Hmong young adults were addressed: (1) Are Hmong young adults more oriented to American culture than to Hmong culture? (2) Do American-born (ABH) and overseas-born Hmong (OBH) differ in their mean levels of orientation to Hmong and American cultures? (3) Do models of cultural orientation vary by place of birth? and (4) Are the meanings attached to "being Hmong" and "being American" different for ABH and OBH? Given the dearth of literature on cultural orientation in Hmong young adults, no directional hypotheses were posed a priori.

*Are Hmong Young Adults More Oriented to American Culture Than to Hmong Culture?* Hmong young adults may be more oriented to American culture than to Hmong culture because they have been raised primarily in the United States. For the most part, their exposure to Hmong culture is limited to home environments, whereas their exposure to American culture spans school, work, and other non-home environments. On the other hand, if these Hmong young adults are influenced by Hmong proscriptions against cultural assimilation, they may be more strongly oriented to Hmong culture than to American culture, like the first generation of Hmong refugees (Ying et al., 1997).

*Do American-Born (ABH) and Overseas-Born Hmong (OBH) Differ in Their Mean Levels of Orientation to Hmong and American Cultures?* It is possible that ABH and OBH vary in their orientation to Hmong and American cultures, with ABH being more oriented to American culture than OBH, and OBH being more oriented to Hmong culture than ABH. However, as both groups in this sample of Hmong young adults have spent the majority of their lives in the United States, it is also possible that they will not differ in their orientations to either culture.

*Do Models of Cultural Orientation Vary by Place of Birth?* In a previous paper (Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000), my colleagues and I proposed and found that American-born and overseas born Chinese American college students differed in their models of cultural orientation. For American-born Chinese, "being American" and "being Chinese" are highly contextualized concepts and, therefore, develop independently. Because they are born into American culture *and* into a Chinese home environment, their conceptions of "being Chinese" and "being American" develop simultaneously in different contexts. That is, their conception of "being Chinese" develops in Chinese contexts, and their conception of "being American" develops in American contexts. As a result, their models of cultural orientation are bidimensional or not correlated with each other.

For overseas-born Chinese, however, "being Chinese" and "being American" are dependent constructs. Because they are born into a Chinese context,

their conception of “being Chinese,” which is essentially their way of functioning in the world, develops first. When they migrate to the United States, however, they must adopt a different way of functioning. In order to be more American, they must be less Chinese. Their conceptions of “being American” develop relative to their pre-existing conceptions of “being Chinese.” Thus, their models of cultural orientation are unidimensional, or negatively correlated with each other. The present study explored whether these findings generalized to American-born and overseas-born Hmong young adults, especially those who have spent the majority of their lives in the United States.

*Are the Meanings Attached to “Being Hmong” and “Being American” Different for ABH and OBH?* Existing cultural orientation inventories often assume that the meanings of or associations with being a member of a particular cultural group are similar for individuals within that group. However, as individuals within a cultural group may vary in their exposure to and experiences in that culture, it is possible that the meanings of being a member of a cultural group may differ within cultural groups as well. For example, for ABH, “being Hmong” may be associated more with specific cultural traditions and expectations, whereas for OBH, “being Hmong” may be associated more with the refugee experience. On the other hand, because most young Hmong have spent the majority of their lives in the United States, there may be few differences in what “being American” and “being Hmong” mean for these two groups. Thus, the present study explored what meanings young Hmong adults attached to “being Hmong” and “being American,” and whether they differed for ABH and OBH.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

Forty-six bilingual Hmong (14 American born, 32 overseas born) college students at a large Midwestern university were recruited from the General Psychology subject pool and campus student organizations to participate in a larger study. Chi-square statistics revealed no differences between ABH and OBH in sex, major, and employment status. Univariate analyses of variance revealed no group differences in age, years in college, grade point average, and language proficiency in English and Hmong. However, there were significant group differences in time spent in the United States ( $F [1, 45] = 7.28, p < .01$ ). Overseas-born Hmong spent significantly less time in the United States than did American-born Hmong, although both groups spent the majority of their lives in the United States. On the average, overseas-born Hmong came to the United States when they were 2.79 years of age ( $SD = 2.12$ , Range = 9.6 months to 7 years of age). (Please see Table 1 for specific demographic information.)

TABLE 1. Demographics of American-Born and Overseas-Born Hmong Sample

	Means (SD)/Percentages Within Groups	
	American-Born	Overseas-Born
Age (years)	19.21 (1.12)	20.28 (1.95)
Sex--Female	57.1%	62.5%
Place of birth		
United States	100%	
Laos		46.9%
Thailand		53.1%
Citizen Status		
U.S. Citizen	100%	34.4%
Permanent Resident		53.1%
Unknown		12.5%
Time Lived in the United States (years)	19.21 (1.12)	17.23 (2.63)
Years in College	1.93 (1.14)	2.41 (1.29)
Grade Point Average	2.88 (.88)	2.74 (.40)
Major		
Social Sciences/Humanities	14.29%	18.75%
Physical Sciences/Engineering	21.43%	25.00%
Life Sciences/Medicine	21.43%	15.63%
Business	21.43%	9.38%
Environmental Sciences		3.13%
Undeclared/Other	14.29%	21.88%
Unknown	7.14%	6.25%
Employment Status--Working	57.1%	71.9%
Proficiency in English <sup>a</sup>		
Speak	4.64 (.50)	4.27 (.87)
Understand	4.64 (.63)	4.39 (.82)
Write	4.64 (.63)	4.39 (.82)
Proficiency in Hmong <sup>a</sup>		
Speak	4.00 (.68)	3.81 (.70)
Understand	4.50 (.65)	4.17 (.71)
Write	1.93 (1.21)	1.93 (1.51)

Note. <sup>a</sup> On a scale from 1 = not at all proficient to 5 = extremely proficient.

### *Procedure*

Study participants arrived at the laboratory and were greeted by a female bilingual Hmong interviewer. Previous studies have found that study participants provide more complete and accurate responses when they are interviewed by experimenters of similar cultural backgrounds than of cultural

backgrounds different from their own (Waid & Orne, 1981; Murphy, Alpert, Moes, & Somes, 1986). Participants completed a basic demographic information questionnaire in which they were asked their age, place of birth, ethnicity, grade point average, major, citizen status, language proficiency, and employment status.

Participants were then asked the following two-questions by the interviewer: (1) What does “being Hmong” mean to you? and (2) What does “being American” mean to you? Participants’ responses were videotaped. After completing procedures related to another study, participants then completed the General Ethnicity Questionnaire, a measure of cultural orientation (see below). All instruments and instructions were delivered in English. Students were paid \$25 for their participation.

## *Measures*

*General Ethnicity Questionnaire (GEQ).* To measure cultural orientation, participants completed the General Ethnicity Questionnaire-American version (abridged) (GEQ-A) (Tsai et al., 2000) and the General Ethnicity Questionnaire-Hmong version (GEQ-H) developed for this study. The GEQ-H and GEQ-A allow independent assessment of orientation to Hmong and American cultures, respectively, and were originally developed for use with different cultural groups to assess cultural orientation in various life domains (e.g., social affiliation, language, attitudes). Participants use a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = “very much” to 5 = “not at all” to rate 25 items pertaining to their social affiliation, activities, attitudes, exposure, and food (“I go to places where people are Hmong”). Participants use a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = “very much” to 5 = “not at all” to rate 13 items pertaining to their language use and proficiency (e.g., “How much do you speak Hmong with friends?”). The same items were used for the GEQ-H and the GEQ-A; however, the reference culture differed. For example, on the GEQ-H, participants rated how strongly they agreed with the statement “I engage in Hmong forms of recreation.” A similar item appeared on the GEQ-A: “I engage in American forms of recreation.” The reliability and validity measures of the GEQ-H in this study were comparable to those reported in Tsai et al. (in press) in their use of the instrument with Chinese American samples. Cronbach’s standardized item-alpha for the Hmong sample was .88 for the GEQ-H and .81 for the GEQ-A. To assess the concurrent validity of the GEQ-H and GEQ-A for the Hmong sample, the relationship between years in the United States and average orientation score was examined. As in Tsai et al. (in press), the longer Hmong had lived in the United States, the more oriented they were to American culture ( $r = .30, p < .05$ ). The number of years spent in the United States was *not* significantly correlated with orientation to Hmong culture.

### *Coding of Open-Ended Responses*

Participants' responses to the interview questions were transcribed. Two female research assistants (one European American, one Chinese) coded the transcripts after extensive training in the coding system developed for this study. Responses were coded for content using 19 content codes<sup>1</sup>: (1) label/category, (2) physical characteristics, (3) social affiliation, (4) values/beliefs, (5) language, (6) political/economic ideology, (7) cultural exposure/understanding, (8) geographic origin, (9) minority status, (10) reference to self, (11) food, (12) personality/traits/expressions, (13) activities, (14) customs/traditional behavior, (15) group history, (16) family heritage, (17) ethnic pride, (18) citizenship, and (19) miscellaneous/other. These codes were based on domains represented in existing inventories of cultural orientation (Mendoza, 1989; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987; Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, & de los Angeles Aranalde, 1978; Tsai et al., 2000) as well as on the types of responses provided by the participants. Table 2 provides a detailed description of each of the 19 content codes.

Participants' responses received multiple codes, depending on the response; however, individual parts of participants' responses could only receive one code. For example, one participant responded:

Being Hmong to me means that . . . would say its more like . . . a family where like everyone supports everyone and also like . . . you're related to everyone . . . And we hold family very, very high. And I'm just proud to be Hmong.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, this participant used four content codes to describe "being Hmong": (a) customs/traditional behavior ("a family where like everyone supports everyone"), (b) social affiliation ("you're related to everyone"), (c) values/beliefs ("we hold family very, very high"), and (d) ethnic pride ("I'm just proud to be Hmong"). In response to the question "What does being American mean to you?" another participant responded:

I think being American means that I live in America and I am a citizen of America and . . . it's a category of people . . . it's a category of where you live.

This participant used three content codes to describe "being American": (a) label/category ("it's a category of people . . . category of where you live"), (b) geographic origin ("I live in America"), and (c) citizenship ("a citizen of America"). Inter-rater reliability was .96 (SD = .04, Range = .88 to 1.00), as determined by the mean Cohen's Kappa coefficient across the 19 content codes. Discrepancies in coding were resolved by arbitration and consensus between the two coders.



TABLE 2. Coding System for Open-Ended Responses

Participants' responses were divided into their component parts. Each component part received only one of the following content codes.

<i>Content Code</i>	<i>Example</i>
1. Label/Category:	"It's kind of a classification" "A category"
2. Physical Characteristics:	"Race" "Caucasian" "White" "Having light skin"
3. Social Affiliation:	"Being surrounded by the Hmong community" "Being part of their country"
4. Values/Beliefs/Attitudes:	"My values, beliefs" "How parents view kids should be" "ideas"
5. Language:	"We speak our language" "speak the language"
6. Political/Economic Ideology:	"Opportunity" "Place where you can have great success" "Have equal rights"
7. Cultural Exposure/Understanding:	"Way I was raised" "Understand the culture"
8. Geographic Origin:	"Come from certain areas" "From the mountaintops of Laos"
9. Minority Status:	"Part of a minority culture" "Different from Americans"
10. Reference to Self:	"Who I am" "What I am"
11. Food:	"Eat Hmong [food]" "American food"
12. Personality/Traits/Expressions:	"Close-minded" "Caring" "Being able to express yourself freely"
13. Activities:	"Culture activities" "Festivals"
14. Customs/Traditional Behavior:	"Tradition" "Follow a certain rule" "Can do what you want"
15. Group History:	"You have a history of migration" "Melting pot"
16. Family Heritage:	"Roots of your family"
17. Ethnic Pride:	"It's an automatic feeling you're just proud of who you are"
18. Citizenship:	"Nationality" "Having citizenship"
19. Other:	"Hmong means stranger"

## *DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS*

### *Question 1: Are Hmong Young Adults More Oriented to American Culture Than to Hmong Culture?*

Paired sample t-tests conducted on the entire sample and then on each group (ABH and OBH) revealed that Hmong young adults were more ori-

ented to American culture than to Hmong culture (All: GEQ-H = 3.34 [.48], GEQ-A = 3.85 [.33],  $t[44] = -4.83, p < .001$ ; ABH:  $t[12] = -4.36, p < .001$ ; OBH:  $t[30] = -3.71, p = .001$  [ABH and OBH means are presented below]).

***Question 2: Do American-Born and Overseas-Born Hmong Differ in Their Mean Levels of Orientation to Hmong and American Cultures?***

Univariate analyses of variance on mean GEQ-A and GEQ-H scores were conducted. Analyses revealed no significant group differences in mean GEQ-A (ABH = 3.92 [.34], OBH = 3.80 [.37]) or GEQ-H scores (ABH = 3.43 [.21], OBH = 3.30 [.55]).

***Question 3: Do Models of Cultural Orientation Vary By Place of Birth?***

Pearson correlation coefficients for mean scores on the GEQ-A and the GEQ-H were calculated for each Hmong group. For American-born Hmong, mean scores on the GEQ-A and GEQ-H were not significantly correlated with each other, supporting a bidimensional model of cultural orientation ( $r = -.10, p = .74$ ). For overseas-born Hmong, mean scores on the GEQ-A and GEQ-H were significantly correlated with each other ( $r = -.60, p < .001$ ), supporting a unidimensional model of cultural orientation. That is, for overseas-born Hmong, the more "Hmong" they reported being, the less "American" they reported being.<sup>3</sup> Thus, consistent with previous findings (Tsai et al., in press), ABH and OBH differed in their underlying models of cultural orientation.

***Question 4: Are the Meanings Attached to "Being Hmong" and "Being American" Different for ABH and OBH?***

Pearson chi-square analyses were conducted on the frequency with which each of the content codes was used in the open-ended responses provided by each group. Analyses revealed that there were no significant differences in the content of American-born and overseas-born Hmong descriptions of "being Hmong" or "being American." Please see Tables 3 and 4 for the breakdown of responses. To describe "being Hmong," the most common codes used by both groups were customs/traditional behavior (e.g., "Hmong tradition"), group history (e.g., "you have a history of migration"), and label/category (e.g., "It's a kind of classification"). For both groups, the most common codes used to describe "being American" were customs/traditional behavior (e.g., "can do anything you want"), geographic origin (e.g., "live in America"), and political/economic ideology (e.g., "have equal rights"). In summary, the bulk of the findings suggest that American-born and overseas-

TABLE 3. "Being Hmong": Percentage of Responses for Each Code

	Percentage of Responses Within Groups	
	American-Born (n = 14)	Overseas-Born (n = 32)
1. Label/Category	28.6	40.0
2. Physical Characteristics	14.3	23.3
3. Social Affiliation	14.3	13.3
4. Values/Beliefs/Attitudes	28.6	20.0
5. Language	28.6	23.3
6. Political/Economic Ideology	---	---
7. Cultural Exposure/Understanding	28.6	26.7
8. Geographic Origin	7.1	30.0
9. Minority Status	28.6	30.0
10. Reference to Self	14.3	23.3
11. Food	7.1	6.7
12. Personality/Traits/Expressions	7.1	6.7
13. Activities	7.1	10.0
14. Customs/Traditional Behavior	42.9	33.3
15. Group History	28.6	33.3
16. Family Heritage	21.4	20.0
17. Ethnic Pride	14.3	23.3
18. Citizenship	---	6.7
19. Other	21.4	13.3

born Hmong do not differ in the meanings they attach to "being Hmong" and "being American."

### *DISCUSSION*

This exploratory study is the first step in understanding the cultural orientation of today's Hmong young adults. This sample of Hmong young adults was more oriented to American culture than to Hmong culture. This finding is not surprising, as this sample of Hmong young adults was educated primarily in the American school system and is currently attending college. What is perhaps more interesting is that despite their greater orientation to American

TABLE 4. "Being American": Percentage of Responses Within Specific Hmong Group for Each Content Code

	Percentage of Responses Within Group	
	American-Born (n = 14)	Overseas-Born (n = 32)
1. Label/Category	7.1	6.5
2. Physical Characteristics	7.1	6.5
3. Social Affiliation	---	3.2
4. Values/Beliefs	7.1	6.5
5. Language	7.1	12.9
6. Political/Economic Ideology	21.4	32.3
7. Cultural Exposure/Understanding	14.3	32.3
8. Geographic Origin	35.7	51.6
9. Minority Status	14.3	16.1
10. Reference to Self	7.1	---
11. Food	7.1	3.2
12. Personality/Traits/Expressions	7.1	3.2
13. Activities	---	---
14. Customs/Traditional Behavior	57.1	71.0
15. Group History	7.1	6.5
16. Family Heritage	---	---
17. Ethnic Pride	---	---
18. Citizenship	14.3	6.5
19. Other	7.1	3.2

culture, they retain a moderate level of orientation to Hmong culture. This may be because most of the Hmong sample continued to live at home with their parents. Future research should include samples of Hmong who live away from their parents or live in communities in which Hmong have a smaller presence to examine how orientation to Hmong culture is influenced by these factors.

ABH and OBH did not differ in their levels of orientation to either culture, suggesting that differences in place of birth and the length of time spent in the United States did not influence degrees of orientation to American and Hmong cultures. Future research should include overseas-born Hmong who migrated to

the United States at later ages to examine whether over time, these individuals become more oriented to American culture than to Hmong culture.

Despite similarities in mean levels of orientation to Hmong and American cultures, ABH and OBH did differ in their underlying models of cultural orientation. ABH held bidimensional whereas OBH held unidimensional models of cultural orientation. Although this finding supported previous findings, it is particularly striking given the young age at which the OBH came to the United States. This finding suggests that other factors in addition to those outlined in the introduction and Tsai et al. (2000) may be at play in the development of models of cultural orientation. It is possible that simply knowing that one was born in another country changes one's perception of one's current cultural environment. It is also possible that the home environments of individuals who were born abroad are different from those of individuals who were born in the United States in ways that promote more unidimensional models of cultural orientation. Again, future research should pursue these avenues.

Finally, ABH and OBH did not differ in the meanings they attached to "being American" and "being Hmong." These findings support other study findings that ABH and OBH did not differ in their mean levels of orientation to Hmong and American cultures, as measured by the General Ethnicity Questionnaire. Future studies should include other samples of Hmong with different levels of orientation to Hmong and American cultures to examine whether the meanings they attach to "being Hmong" and "being American" differ. In addition, research should examine the sources of these meanings. For example, it would be interesting to assess whether Hmong young adults learn what "being American" means from their parents or from their teachers in the American school system.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

This study has a number of limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, it is possible that the similarities found in interview responses between the groups were artifacts of the experimental situation. That is, Hmong of both groups may have been very conscious of being evaluated and, therefore, were more concerned with providing the "right" response rather than what they actually felt. We attempted to increase participant comfort by having a Hmong female of a similar age as the interviewer; however, it is possible that this was not effective. Only studies that obtain open-ended responses using other methods (pencil and paper measures, different interviewers) will assess whether this was the case. Second, it is possible that the use of English in the experimental procedures biased participants' responses. Yang and Bond (1980) found that when Chinese-English bilinguals completed instruments assessing their cultural identification in English, they re-

ported greater identification with Chinese culture than when they completed the same instruments in Chinese. Future research should assess cultural orientation using instruments that are administered in spoken Hmong or in written Hmong script. Third, future studies should include measures of psychological adjustment to examine whether cultural orientation is indeed related to health and psychological adjustment in this generation of Hmong. Finally, longitudinal studies are needed to examine how these cultural orientation processes change (or do not change) over time.

### *Clinical Implications*

This study was based on a non-clinical sample of Hmong college-students; therefore, its clinical implications are limited. However, its findings illustrate the tremendous variation within the group called "Hmong." Although Hmong older adults are culturally traditional (Ying et al., 1997), Hmong young adults are more oriented to American than to Hmong culture. In addition, although place of birth does not influence levels of orientation to Hmong and American cultures, it does impact models of cultural orientation. In the therapeutic context, this may influence the meaning particular interventions hold. For example, the suggestion to affiliate more with Hmong in order to learn more about Hmong culture may not threaten an American-born Hmong's cultural orientation, whose notions of "being American" are independent of his engagement in Hmong culture. However, the same suggestion may be very threatening to an overseas-born Hmong whose notions of "being Hmong" are related to "being American." In the latter case, the overseas-born Hmong may feel that the therapist is trying to make him "less American." In sum, future research on Hmong cultural orientation processes and their relations to mental health will help researchers and clinicians determine whether clinical interventions are necessary for this group. If they are, such research will also further the development of interventions that meet the needs of this growing group of Hmong young adults.

### NOTES

1. A 20th code, "media," was dropped from the original coding system because it was not used by any of the participants.

2. Ellipses indicate "filler words" used by participants such as "um," "I don't know," and "you know."

3. In order to ensure that the different correlations for ABH and OBH were not due to differences in sample size, analyses were conducted on a randomly selected group of 14 overseas-born Hmong. These analyses revealed that for this subset of overseas-born Hmong, mean scores on the GEQ-A and GEQ-H were negatively correlated ( $r = -.76$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as was found for the larger sample of 32 overseas-born Hmong.

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