Spring 5-4-2009

The Relationship between Hmong American Students and the Model Minority Stereotype

Mai Youa Moua
Macalester College, maiyoua.moua@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/psychology_honors

Part of the Psychology Commons

Recommended Citation

Running Head: HMONG AMERICANS AND THE MODEL MINORITY STEREOTYPE

The Relationship between Hmong American Students

and the Model Minority Stereotype

Mai Youa Moua

Macalester College, St. Paul, MN

Abstract

Research on Hmong Americans is limited even in relation to the most prevalent and excessively studied stereotype affecting Asian Americans: the model minority stereotype. The present studies investigated the relationship between the stereotype and students of Hmong descent. Data from 94 students in the first study indicated that belief in and endorsement of the stereotype is related to psychological well-being and achievement motivation. In Study 2, 98 students completed a 2 (prime) x 2 (fit) experimental study. Study 2 concluded that fit (whether or not a person fits the description of a "model minority") influenced state self-esteem and state shame. There were no significant differences between females and males; however, slight differences existed between 1.5 and second-generation Hmong students.

The Relationship between Hmong American Students

and the Model Minority Stereotype

The model minority stereotype is perhaps the most prevalent stereotype affecting Asian Americans in present day U.S. society. It states that "Asian Americans [as a collective group], through their hard work, intelligence, and emphasis on education and achievement, have been successful in American society" (cited in McGowan & Lindgren, 2006, p. 331). Asian Americans started to be portrayed as "model minorities" in the late 1960s with the publication of two articles that appeared in the *New York Times* and *U.S. News & World Report* (Kawai, 2005; McGowan & Lindgren, 2006) addressing the success stories of Japanese and Chinese Americans, respectively. The articles also compared the two Asian ethnic groups to African Americans, stating that while African Americans were demanding monetary support to build their communities, Japanese and Chinese Americans, despite the discriminations they have endured, were able to rise economically and socially with no outside support. Up to the late 1980s, published articles have been grouping Asian Americans as "America's Super Minority" and "A Model Minority" (Chang, 1987). Additionally, articles in *The New Republic* and *Fortune* helped with the grounding of the model minority stereotype by reporting that Asian Americans are not only attending college at a high rate but doing so with higher SAT math scores and more science awards than Whites (McGowan & Lindgren, 2006). After the 1980s, the media generalized all Asian American groups as "model minorities" (Li, 2005).

The model minority stereotype has been broadly explored in relation to Asian Americans as one entity, but not so much in relation to specific ethnic groups. One of the more recent Asian groups to arrive in the United States is the Hmong, who have been here for just over 30 years. Because of their short history in the U.S., it is problematic to expect them to be "model

minorities". However, like other Asian groups, the Hmong are positioned under this stereotype.
As a result, the present studies will explore the model minority stereotype and how it relates to
Hmong Americans.[1]

Model Minority Stereotype

There are four aspects of the model minority stereotype (McGowan & Lindgren, 2006).
Asian Americans are: [1] extremely hard working, perhaps more than Whites; [2] highly
intelligent and educated, especially in the fields of math and science; [3] economically successful
in comparison to other minority groups; and [4] highly adaptive to American life because of their
presence in the suburbs and their higher rate of interracial marriage with Whites. In other words,
according to the model minority stereotype, Asian Americans "conform to the norms of society,
do well in school and careers, [and] are hard working and self-sufficient… [they are also] a
model for all groups, especially other minority groups" (Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998, p.
100). In addition, they have overcome all racial barriers to achieve success (Lee & Kumashiro,
2005).

Asian Americans, when lumped together and compared to the total U.S. population, do
indeed seem to be "model minorities". For example, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, Asian
Americans are more educated, with the number of Asian Americans earning at least a bachelor's
degree almost double that of the total population (44% to 24%, respectively). In the work force,
nearly 45% of Asian Americans compared to a lower 34% of all U.S. workers are employed in
management, professional, and related occupations. Accordingly, Asian American men and
women who worked full-time had a higher median earning ($40,650 and $31,049, respectively)
than all full-time working men and women ($37,057 and $27,194, respectively). Similarly, and
as expected, the median annual income of Asian American families is $59,324, more than $9,000

higher than the median annual income of $50,046 for all families. From looking at these statistics, Asian Americans are academically and economically successful.

However, the overgeneralization of Asians Americans is a misleading and false representation (Li, 2005) especially by grouping third- or fourth-generation Chinese and Japanese with more recent refugees and immigrants (cited in McGowan & Lindgren, 2006). The stereotype is also invalid and inaccurate because the statistics used to determine success among Asian Americans are flawed (Li, 2005). For example, these data failed to consider the fact that the household income of Asian American families are above average because of the large number of family members living in the same house. In addition, even positive stereotypes such as the model minority stereotype can be a threat to academic performance (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). Lastly, there are vast differences among different Asian American ethnic groups that are overlooked by the stereotype. Even the 2000 U.S. Census stated that the Asian American population is not homogenous. This indicates that Asian Americans are neither equally advantaged nor similarly successful academically and economically (Kao, 1995).

Hmong Americans as Perceived "Model Minority"

While groups such as South Asians tend to be more prepared to succeed, groups such as Southeast Asian, tend to have comparatively lower academic and economic status. In particular, Southeast Asian Americans seem be inappropriately labeled as "model minorities" (Wong et al., 1998). These groups of Asian Americans include Vietnamese Americans, Hmong Americans, Cambodian Americans, and Lao Americans. As other "model minorities", they are viewed as hardworking and high achievers (Ngo, 2006). On the other hand, they are also separated from this circle as high school dropouts, gangsters, and welfare dependents. Among Southeast Asian

American groups, Hmong Americans are perhaps the most distanced from being "model minorities".

The Hmong, an ethnic minority with history tracing back to China, have been residents of Laos since the 18th century (Ngo & Lee, 2007). They first arrived in the U.S. from Laos about 30 years ago as the least educated Southeast Asian and Vietnam War refugees. The group has been considered the most "culturally distant" to ever enter the U.S. because of its preliterate, rural, patriarchal, and traditional culture (cited in Ngo & Lee, 2007). Hmong culture has been deemed as premodern in comparison to mainstream American culture, which is viewed as a modern society. These cultural differences have been used as an explanation for Hmong American's social and economic problems in the U.S. (Lee, 2004).

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Hmong Americans have the lowest levels of education attainment among Southeast Asian groups. Approximately 96% of Hmong Americans, the most of any Southeast Asian group, spoke a language other than English at home, with 57% speaking English less than very well. The low language proficiency of Hmong Americans is probably correlated with their high proportion of people with less than a high school degree of 60%, more than any other Asian American group. Consequently, a low proportion of only 7.5% of Hmong Americans have at least a Bachelor's degree. In addition, there is also a high rate of Hmong American middle and high school dropouts (Lee & Kumashiro, 2005) and an underrepresentation of Hmong students and faculty members at institutions of higher education (Suzuki, 2002). When looking at academic attainment and achievement, Hmong Americans are least well-off compared to other Asian American groups. These low levels of academic attainment and achievement do not match those described for "model minorities".

Similarly, Hmong Americans have the lowest economic status among Southeast Asian groups. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, with the exception of Laotian Americans, Hmong Americans have the lowest percentage of people in management, professional and related occupations (17%) and the highest proportion of people in production, transportation, and material moving occupations (42%). Following the trend, Hmong American full-time men and women workers have the lowest median earning of $25,187 and $20,237, respectively. The median annual income for Hmong American families was also the lowest for any Asian American group at $32,384. Correspondingly, Hmong Americans have the highest poverty rate of 38% with more than 50% of those individuals being under the age of 18 (cited in Lee & Kumashiro, 2005). Lastly, the group with the lowest homeownership rate is Hmong Americans with a rate of 39%. With a few exceptions, Hmong Americans are not only the least well-off economically among Southeast Asian Americans but also among all Asian Americans. The economic statistics of Hmong Americans do not qualify them as "model minorities".

Statistical data state that of all Asian American groups, Hmong Americans are perhaps the most distant from the "model minority". However, as an Asian American ethnicity, Hmong Americans are not unaffected by the model minority stereotype. Like other Asian American groups, Hmong Americans are just as likely to be labeled by the outsider as "model minorities". With limited research on the relationship between Hmong Americans and the stereotype, the current research will address some of the questions and issues that face Hmong Americans as perceived "model minorities". The studies will explore how self-concept is related to perception and internalization of the model minority stereotype. They will investigate the issues of psychological well-being and achievement motivation depending on belief in and endorsement

of the stereotype, as well as examine self-evaluation depending on individuals' relativity to the "model minority".

<div align="center">Study 1</div>

The model minority stereotype covers areas from assimilation and work ethic to economic and academic success. Most of these themes relate to achievement motivation, a concept that entails the need to strive to do better, to accomplish difficult tasks, to excel, to overcome obstacles and succeed, and to challenge and exceed others, all of which are accomplished rapidly and independently (McAdams, 2006). According to the model minority stereotype, Asian Americans could be characterized as individuals with high achievement motivation. However, by belonging to a group that is not stereotypically "model minorities", where do Hmong American students fall in the achievement motivation spectrum? In addition, how will being labeled as model minorities affect them psychologically? Study 1 addresses these questions by measuring the achievement motivation and psychological well-being of Hmong American students. In addition, to understand more of the relationships between the model minority stereotype and Hmong American students, Study 1 addresses students' perception of the stereotype.

<u>Achievement Motivation of Hmong Americans</u>

As a result of their status as a student, the achievement of Hmong American students is referred to in terms of academic success. Although recent research has highlighted the success of Hmong American students with increasing enrollment in higher education, this work neglects the fact that Hmong American students are faced with many academic and social difficulties (Ngo, 2006; McNall, Dunnigan, & Mortimer, 1994; Lee & Kumashiro, 2005; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Similar to Asian Americans, underachieving Hmong American students are overlooked by

school policymakers and teachers because of the popular image of "model minorities"; and therefore, fail to receive educational resources and institutional support (Yang, 2004; Suzuki, 2002; Yeh, 2002; Li, 2005). From her in-depth study of 1.5 and second-generation Hmong American students, Lee (2004) discovered that some students skip class to avoid feeling inadequacy and embarrassment because they are unable to comprehend classroom material. Lee also found that even among Hmong Americans, second-generation students do not perform as well academically and are not as motivated as 1.5 generation students. In addition, Hmong American college students may feel uncomfortable and alienated on college campuses because the school culture does not reflect their own (Ngo, 2006; Yang 2004). Hmong American students often receive little assistance in their pursuit for higher education because of their parents' limited English and lack of knowledge about educational institutions. As a result, Hmong American students are frequently left to figure out ways of attaining higher education on their own.

As immigrants, Hmong American students have higher expectations to fulfill family obligations compared to their U.S. born peers (Tseng, 2004). The minimal English their parents have requires Hmong American students to act as interpreters and guides for their parents (Ngo, 2006; Lee, 2004). Hmong American female students, specifically, are confronted with the cultural practice of early marriage and child bearing along with household chores. Hmong American men, on the other hand, are challenged by their obligation to help with the cultural maintenance of their family. Hmong American youths, instead of focusing their time and energy on education, usually have to choose between their educations and their family responsibilities (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Lee, 2004). These family and cultural expectations are significant barriers to Hmong American students' persistence in education attainment and achievement.

Despite the fact that Hmong American students have to confront many academic and social obstacles, they have a high respect and enthusiasm for education (Yang, 2004; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Both 1.5 and second-generation Hmong students reported that education is the path to success in America because education leads to good jobs (Lee, 2007; Lee, 1994). As a result, these students hope to pursue higher education (Rumbaut, 2005). This positive attitude for education might have been established from Hmong Americans' collectivist values as other immigrant families' emphasis on family interdependence (Tseng, 2004). Hmong American students believe that their family's success depends on their future (Suzuki, 2002); and if they fail to succeed in school or meet certain expectations, it hinders the entire family (McNall et al., 1994; cited in Ngo, 2006). Failure to live up to the model minority stereotype makes them feel as if they have inherent problems (Toupin & Son, 1991). Similar to other Asian Americans, Hmong American students' fear of academic failure will affect their achievement behavior (Eaton & Dembo, 1997).

Psychological Well-Being of Hmong Americans

Not only are Asian Americans overlooked in academics, they are also neglected in their psychological needs. Due to generalizations such as the model minority stereotype which labels them as being free of problems and being able to tackle problems independently, Asian Americans have been assumed to be non-seekers for psychological help (Suzuki, 2002). Similarly, teachers and schools have often been prevented from recognizing underachieving Asian American students' psychological and emotional concerns because of the admired image of "model minorities" (Li, 2005).

However, multiple researchers have concluded that Asian Americans are in fact, faced with several social and psychological needs. For example, Asian American students may

experience high levels of stress and alienation (Yeh, 2002). In addition, Asian Americans in general tend to express lower self-esteem and well-being (Spencer-Rodgers, Peng, Wang, & Hou, 2004) as well as lower levels of happiness and satisfaction (Oishi & Diener, 2001). In addition, negative attitudes and emotions have been associated with "model minorities" (Maddux, Galinsky, Cuddy, & Polifroni, 2008). Similarly, the parentification, in which children take charge of parental responsibilities because of their superior English skills, of Asian American children in immigrant families may trigger great stress in these children which can lead to depression (Qin, Way, & Mukherjee, 2008).

Although there has been scholarly work done on well-being of Asian Americans, there is very little research on the psychological well-being of Hmong American students. Most of the research on Hmong Americans and psychological well-being relates to middle age and older members with reference to their refugee experience. For example, a high number of Southeast Asian participants, including the Hmong, were found to have some degree of deep depression (Nicholson, 1997; Kroll, Habenicht, Mackenzie & Yang, 1989). From the research related to Hmong American students, students who fail to do well academically are likely to feel depressed and embarrassed (McNall et al., 1994). Contrary to the generalizations derived from the model minority stereotype, stating that Asian Americans face no problems, Hmong Americans do experience some need for assistance in psychological disturbance.

<u>The Present Study</u>

From looking at the academic, economic, social, and psychological problems facing Hmong Americans, it can be concluded that they are not "model minorities". They have low levels of educational attainment and achievement, are not economically well-off, are socially isolated, and display some degree of psychological ill-being. Despite these problems, Hmong

American students show great respect for education and work hard to fulfill family expectations of achieving success. Unlike with academic achievement, very little has been done on the psychological well-being of Hmong American students. In addition, even with the many research studies on the model minority stereotype, there is a gap in the literature on how it influences Hmong American students and how they perceive the stereotype.

As a result, Study 1 examines the relationship between the model minority stereotype and Hmong American students. The study addresses the students' perception of the model minority stereotype, particularly their belief in and endorsement of the stereotype. The relationship between belief in and endorsement of the stereotype and Hmong American students' motivation to achieve as well as their psychological well-being is also explored. Because of their respect for education and belief that education is the key to success, Hmong American students' belief in and endorsement of the stereotype should relate to higher achievement motivation. This relationship is possible because the characteristics of the model minority stereotype indicate academic and economic success, which is what Hmong American students strive for. However, the students' belief in and endorsement of the stereotype should relate to low levels of psychological well-being because of the pressures to live up to the stereotype. Additionally, there should be a difference between sexes in the independent and dependent variables because of the traditional sex-roles in the Hmong culture. Lastly, there should be difference between 1.5 generation and second-generation Hmong students in achievement motivation because as found by Lee (1994; 2004; 2007), second-generation students do not perform as well academically and are not as motivated as 1.5 generation students.

Method

Participants

A snowball sample of 94 Hmong American undergraduate and graduate students from colleges and universities across the United States participated in the study. A total of 65 participants self-identified as female while 29 self-identified as male. Sixty-one of the participants were second-generation Hmong American and 31 were 1.5 generation Hmong American.

Procedure

The questionnaire was constructed through the online survey creator and data collector, Survey Monkey, which ensured data and participant privacy. Numerous Hmong student organizations throughout the U.S. were contacted through email and asked to forward an invitation with the survey link to their members to complete a questionnaire about Hmong American students. These student organizations were also asked to share names and contact information of other Hmong student organizations that they were in contact with. A separate invitation was sent to these additional groups. Additional students were also recruited from the social networking site Facebook.

Before beginning the survey, respondents were asked to agree to participate. After they agreed, they were presented with and requested to respond to items from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Major Depression Inventory, the Satisfaction with Life Scale, and the Ray Achievement Motivation scale. In the next section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to answer questions regarding their belief and endorsement of the model minority stereotype. Respondents were then presented with several demographic and background questions including sex, place of birth, and racial/ethnic identity. Lastly, participants were allotted space for

questions and comments related to the study and encouraged to contact the researchers should any issues come up after completion of the survey. Participants also had the opportunity to request the results of the study or a copy of the research paper.

One hundred thirty-four students started the survey. Twenty-six participants were dropped because they did not complete the survey, 13 were discounted because they did not self-identify as Hmong or Hmong Americans, and four were dropped because they were no longer in school. With 94 valid participants, 70% of surveys were legitimate.[2]

Measures

Psychological well-being was measured using three different measures: the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and the Major Depression Inventory (MDI). RSE measured global self-worth, SWLS accessed the extent to which an individual is satisfied with his or her life, and MDI evaluated individuals' depressive symptoms. Instead of using a scale that measures the holistic concept of psychological well-being, such as Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being (RSPW) (Seifert, 2005), the three individual measures of different facets of psychological well-being was used. Not only are the individual scales shorter in comparison to RSPW, which consisted of a maximum of 84 items and six facets, these scales allowed for a more narrow concentration on the broader concept of psychological well-being.

Self-Esteem. Self-esteem was measured with the ten-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). Half of the statements were reversed coded. Examples of the items included "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself", "I feel I do not have much to be proud of", and "I take a positive attitude towards myself." The items were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale

with 0 indicating strong disagreement and 3 indicating strong agreement, such that higher numbers indicated higher levels of self-esteem. The RSE was reliable ($\alpha = .81$).

Depression. Depression, another facet of well-being, was measured using the brief, newly developed, self-report inventory, Major Depression Inventory (Cuijpers, Dekker, Noteboom, Smits, & Peen, 2007). The inventory is a 12-item (consisting of two sub-items) self-report questionnaire for depression derived from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders system that allows clinicians to assess the presence of a depressive disorder. Four of the items were converged into two items; each of the new items comprised two of the original items. The total number of items decreased to ten. Example items included questions such as "Have you felt low in spirits or sad?", "Have you felt that life wasn't worth living?", and "Have you had trouble sleeping at night?" The items were rated on a six-point scale from 0, *at no time,* to 5, *all the time*, with higher numbers representing deeper depression. The MDI was reliable with $\alpha = .90$.

Life Satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Life Scale, a five-item inventory was used to evaluate how individuals judge their life in terms of their own values (Pavot & Diener, 1993). The five statements ("In most ways my life is close to my ideal", "The conditions of my life are excellent", "I am satisfied with my life", "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life", and "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing") were rated from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 7 indicating strong agreement. Higher numbers indicated higher levels of life satisfaction. The SWLS was reliable with $\alpha = .88$.

Achievement Motivation. Aside from psychological well-being, achievement motivation was assessed with a 14-item short version of the Ray Achievement Motivation scale (Ray, 1979). Half of the items were reversed coded. Example questions included "Is being comfortable more

important to you than getting ahead?", "Do you get restless and annoyed when you feel you are wasting time?", and "Are you inclined to take life as it comes without much planning?" All 14 questions were responded to on a scale of 1 (No), 2 (?), and 3 (Yes), with higher scores indicating higher motivation to achieve. The scale was not reliable in this study ($\alpha = .59$); however, the scale has previously been tested to be highly reliable among seven different groups of English speakers.

Perception of Model Minority Stereotype. Lastly, belief and endorsement of the model minority stereotype were assessed indirectly with a 16-item scale. The first 15 items were developed based on the different characteristics of the model minority stereotype. The scale was divided into three subscales: five of the items focused on Asians/Asian Americans, five on Hmong/Hmong Americans, and five on the individual. According to the stereotype, "model minorities" are extremely hard working, highly intelligent and educated, economically successful, highly adaptive to American life (McGowan & Lindgren, 2006), and is a model for all groups (Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998). Parallel to the different features of the model minority stereotype, the belief in the stereotype applied to Asians/Asian Americans subscale included statements such as "Asians/Asian Americans are extremely hard working" and "Asians/Asian Americans are highly intelligent and educated." The belief in the stereotype applied to Hmong/Hmong Americans subscale included items such as "Hmong/Hmong Americans are highly adaptive to American life" and "Hmong/Hmong Americans are economically successful." Finally, the endorsement of the stereotype subscale included statements like "You attempt to be a model for members of all groups" and "You attempt to be economically successful." Statements were rated on a five-point scale with 1 being *not at all true* and 5 representing *very true* depending on the extent to which they believe the statement is true. Therefore, higher scores

indicated more belief or endorsement of the model minority stereotype. The three subscales,

belief in the stereotype applied to Asians/Asian Americans (α = .76), belief in the stereotype

applied to Hmong/Hmong Americans (α = .79), and endorsement of the stereotype (α = .87),

were all reliable.

<div align="center">Results</div>

There were no significant differences between the mean scores of females and males for

all dependent variables (see Table 1). There were differences in the scores of 1.5 and second-

generation students, however, only for major depression and endorsement of the model minority

stereotype; there were no differences between the two generations for all the other dependent

variables (see Table 2). Participants scored higher on endorsement of the stereotype (M = 3.81,

SD = .89) than on belief in the stereotype applied to Asians/Asian Americans (M = 3.12, SD

= .60) and lowest on belief in the stereotype applied to Hmong/Hmong Americans (M = 2.87, SD

= .68). They also scored moderately high on self-esteem (M = 2.90, SD = .41), low on depression

(M = 1.45, SD = .91), high on life satisfaction (M = 4.77, SD = 1.38), and high on achievement

motivation (M = 2.40, SD = .31).

Multiple regression was used to analyze the relationship between perception of the model

minority stereotype and achievement motivation as well as the relationship between perception

of the model minority stereotype and psychological well-being. There were three predictors:

belief of the model minority stereotype applied to Asians/Asian Americans, belief of the

stereotype applied to Hmong/Hmong Americans, and endorsement of the stereotype. However,

with a significantly high correlation (r = .68, p < .01) between the two predictors that measured

the beliefs in the stereotype, only belief of the stereotype applied to Asians/Asian Americans was

considered in the analysis to avoid multicollearity. This broader scale was used because the

stereotype encompasses all groups of Asians/Asian Americans. In total, there were two predictors. There were also two outcome variables: psychological well-being (self-esteem, major depression, and satisfaction with life) and achievement motivation.

The regression coefficients between the independent variable of belief in the stereotype and the dependent variables of self-esteem, major depression, satisfaction with life, and achievement motivation are presented in Table 3. The table also shows the regression coefficients of endorsement of the stereotype and the three facets of psychological well-being and achievement motivation. The results indicated that belief in the stereotype related to psychological well-being; more belief related to higher levels of well-being. Endorsement of the stereotype, on the other hand, related to achievement motivation; stronger endorsement related to higher motivation to achieve.

Discussion

The general hypothesis that belief in and endorsement of the model minority stereotype related to psychological well-being and achievement motivation was supported. As expected, stronger endorsement of the stereotype related to higher achievement motivation. Contrary to the hypothesis, however, the direction of relationship between belief in the stereotype and psychological well-being was opposite than expected; more belief in the stereotype related to higher psychological well-being instead of the expected lower psychological well-being. In other words, a stronger belief in the stereotype was associated with higher self-esteem, lower levels of major depression, and more life satisfaction.

The finding that stronger endorsement of the stereotype was associated with higher achievement motivation is in accordance with the research that Hmong American students have high respect and enthusiasm for education (Yang, 2004; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tseng, 2004) and

believe that education allows success in the U.S. (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Lee, 1994). Because the

model minority stereotype portrays Asian Americans as highly educated, endorsement of the

stereotype means that Hmong American students may attempt to live up to the stereotype and

may show higher achievement motivation. This finding was also expected because the

participants are undergraduate and graduate students, thus, suggesting their high academic

success. The limited population of college and university students might have caused a skew in

the data. If participants with lower education attainment, such as high school dropouts or high

school graduates, were examined, this relationship may differ.

Belief in the model minority stereotype, on the other hand, was related to higher levels of

psychological well-being, which is inconsistent with previous research. According to previous

research, failure to live up to the model minority stereotype caused students to feel that they have

inherent problems (Toupin & Sun, 1991). Similarly, Asian Americans, often times, are not given

assistance for psychological needs because they are assumed to have no use for it; this form of

behavior towards Asian Americans will have a detrimental effect on them (Yang, 2004; Suzuki,

2002; Yeh, 2002). Consequently, the pressure to be successful could eventually lead to lower

levels of psychological well-being. A possible explanation for this contradictory finding may be

that participants showed a stronger endorsement in the stereotype than an actual belief in it.

Because they are working towards success in America, they are implicitly fulfilling the

stereotype. Hence, there is a possibility that the stereotype might be of less direct influence on

the students. Additionally, it is also possible for the stereotype to work as an inspiration for these

students to strive to be "model minorities". Even though the participants mostly came from low-

income backgrounds, they are all working towards their attainment of higher education.

The results indicated that there was no difference between males and females in their perception of the stereotype and the dependent variables of psychological well-being and achievement motivation even though there were a larger number of female participants. The disproportional sample may be because Hmong girls and young women are more willing and motivated to pursue higher education than Hmong boys and young men (Lee, 2007). Also, the participants were all undergraduate and graduate students, thus, high achievers; this may be why there is no difference between sex and generation because females and males are on a similar social level.

There were some differences between 1.5 and second-generation Hmong American students, though not the expected difference in achievement motivation. Students of the 1.5 generation show deeper levels of depression compared to second-generation students while second-generation Hmong students indicated a stronger endorsement of the stereotype compared to 1.5 generation students. A possible explanation for the generational differences is that 1.5 generation students might identify more with the traditional Hmong culture, which have been termed as the most distant from American culture, and as a result, feel more depressed because they face more experiences that counter their values. On the other hand, second-generation students, who would be more assimilated into American culture, might be more inclined to have a stronger endorsement of the stereotype because the model minority stereotype was created in the U.S. for Asian Americans. 1.5 generation students may not have as strong of a connection with the stereotype.

Study 2

Study 1 focused on the regression between the independent variables of belief in and endorsement of the model minority stereotype and the dependent variable of psychological well-

being and achievement motivation of Hmong American college students. Study 2 also explores

the relationship between the stereotype and Hmong American students, this time attempting to

narrow down the relationship. Instead of looking at multiple aspects of psychological well-being,

Study 2 concentrates on self-esteem since it is the central aspect of mental health (Heatherton,

Kleck, Hebl, & Hull, 2000). High self-esteem has also been suggested as therapy for not only

social problems but also psychological problems (Leary, 1999). In addition to self-esteem, the

present study focuses on shame, a feeling that is likely to develop when Hmong American

students fail to do well academically (McNall et al., 1994). The present study also attempts to

determine causality; it centers on how the model minority stereotype influences Hmong

American students.

Self-Esteem

As discussed in the previous sections, self-esteem has not been looked at in close relation

to Asian Americans and Hmong Americans. However, the construct of self-esteem has been one

of psychology's most explored, therefore demonstrating its significance (Brown, Dutton, & Cook,

2001). Researchers have distinguished between two forms of self-esteem: trait self-esteem and

state self-esteem. Study 1 explored trait self-esteem, which refers to an individual's general

evaluation of his or her worth in his or her relationships with other people (Leary, 1999). Study 2

focuses on state self-esteem, the average feeling about the self across several unique social

situations (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). In other words, instead of just acting as an important

measurement of psychological well-being, self-esteem can also be used as a tool for self-

evaluation.

Shame

Similarly, shame is also a tool to measure self-evaluation. Shame has been studied sufficiently among Asian cultures. Shame is "the awareness of inadequacy or failure to achieve a wished-for self-image" (Creighton, 1990, p. 285). It is a central concept in Asian culture (Creighton, 1990); Asian culture in general is integrated more by shame than other emotions, especially guilt (You, 1997). In contextual and interdependent societies such as Asian communities, people are usually influenced and connected to their surroundings (Bedford, 2004). In other words, self-concept of an individual in the Asian community will most likely be influenced by social relationships. For example, in shamed-based cultures, such as Asian cultures, good behavior is generated by outside criticism or approval. Accordingly, shame is developed from external influence.

Shame has been divided into two main concepts: public shame and internal shame (You, 1997; Creighton, 1990). Public shame is related to the fear of losing face in front of others while internal shame is connected to situations in which individuals have caused damage to a group or person within their reach. For example, not being able to live up to rules and expectations set by a community could generate internal shame (Creighton, 1990). The higher the rules and expectations, the more shameful an individual feels if he or she is incompatible with the desired status (You, 1997). One expectation that affects shame is filial piety, the concept that individuals should repay the grace they received from others. The inability to fulfill this expectation can bring shame to the individual. With the many cultural similarities between Hmong culture and other Asian cultures, the Hmong culture can be assumed to be a shame-culture, where shame is highly integrated into the culture.

<u>The Present Study</u>

Because stereotypes judge individuals in their abilities and in other disciplines, these persons' knowledge of a certain stereotype in a particular situation might influence the feelings they have about themselves (Heatherton, et, 2000). Knowledge about the model minority stereotype might affect how individuals evaluate themselves. As a result, Study 2 explores self-evaluation through state shame and state self-esteem to account for any momentary variations in situations that may affect how an individual evaluates him or herself.[3] In addition to knowledge of a stereotype, individuals' status in relation to the stereotype may also influence how they evaluate themselves. Having knowledge about the model minority stereotype and being able to fit the stereotype may lead an individual to rate him or herself more positively. The reasoning for this hypothesis is that since an individual is able to live up to set rules or expectations, being able to fulfill that position will generate more positive self-evaluation (higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of shame). On the other hand, knowledge about the stereotype but failure to live up to it may cause someone to rate him or herself less positively (lower level of self-esteem and higher levels of shame). Lastly, lack of knowledge about the stereotype may lead individuals to evaluate themselves differently from those that have a comparison point no matter if the participant fits or does not fit the stereotype.

<div align="center">Method</div>

Participants

The participants included a snowball sample of 98 enrolled college students and recent college graduates of Hmong descent. They came from public and private institutions of higher education across the United States, most of which are located in the state of Minnesota. Overall, 66 participants self-identified as female and 32 as male. There were a total of 39 1.5-generation

and 59 second-generation students. Most participants, 76, completed the experimental study online while the remaining 22 completed the study in person. Conditions 1 and 4 each had a total of 26 participants while there were a total of 23 students in conditions 2 and 3.

Procedure

An invitation to participate in a study exploring self-evaluation of Hmong students was sent to several Hmong college and university student organizations throughout the state of Minnesota. Leaders of the organizations were asked to forward the invitation to their members. An email was also sent to Admission Possible, a college access program based in the Twin Cities, asking the alumni coordinator to forward the invitation to their current Hmong college students. Those interested in the study were asked to contact the main researcher to either complete the study online or in person.

Participants that completed the study in person were run individually. The experimenter first asked them to sign an experimental consent form. Once the consent form was signed, participants filled out a short demographics survey asking for information including ethnic/racial identity and sex. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions based on a 2 (prime or no prime) x 2 (fit or not fit) experimental design. In the first and second condition, participants were primed with a short description of the model minority stereotype to ensure that they were familiar with it. As a cover story, the instructions asked participants to proof-read the short description of Asian Americans for a research paper that the researcher was doing for her Asian Studies Major.

Then participants in the first condition continued on to read a story about a Hmong American character who was stereotypically a "model minority" while participants in the second condition read about a Hmong American who was not a stereotypical "model minority". To

ensure participants the importance of reading the stories, they were told that they were reading about the life of an individual with which they would be asked to compare their ideal lives in the later part of the study. Participants in the third and fourth conditions, on the other hand, were not primed with the stereotype. These participants only read the two stories; participants in the third condition read about a "model minority" and participants in the fourth condition read about a character that cannot easily be described as a "model minority". The stories read by the participants were written in the first person and participants were asked to read the story as if they were the characters in the story.

After reading the stories, participants answered a series of questions from the character's point of view. The questions consisted of items from the State Self-Esteem Scale and items adjusted from the Experience of Shame Scale. Participants were also asked to answer a few follow-up questions regarding their first encounter of the model minority stereotype and how they viewed and responded to it. An example included "Do you/would you like to be referred to as a member of the "model minority? Please give an explanation for your response". Additionally, participants also responded to a scale consisting of questions regarding individuals' belief in the model minority stereotype for Asian Americans; the scale was also used in Study 1. Once all questions were answered, participants also had the chance to leave comments and request results of the study. Lastly, participants were debriefed and encouraged to contact the researchers if any problems should arise as a result of the experiment.

Participants who completed the study online completed it through the data collector site Survey Monkey. Four different surveys were created, one for each condition, which followed the same format as the in-person study. Since it was done online, instructions that were given by the experimenter in the lab situations, were included in writing. As a result, the online versions of

the study included more written instructions compared to those done in lab situations. Participants were again randomly assigned to a condition and received the link to the survey of their condition through email to complete the study. Instead of signing the consent form, participants were asked to agree to participate in the study by clicking NEXT after reading the consent form.

Measures

State Self-Esteem. Self-evaluation was measured with two scales. The first scale was the State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES), which measured state self-esteem because of its sensitivity to manipulation designs that temporarily affect self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). The scale consisted of 20 items rated on a 5-point scale from 1, *not at all,* to 5, *extremely,* with higher scores indicating higher state self-esteem. The items were categorized into five areas (academic, performance, social, appearance, and general self-esteem) with four items in each category. For the purposes of the study, questions relating to appearance were discarded because of their irrelevance; thus reducing the number of items to 16. Eleven of those items were reversed coded. Example items included "I feel confident about my abilities" and "I feel that I have less scholastic ability right now than others." The SSES was reliable with $\alpha = .71$.

State Shame. The Experience of Shame Scale (ESS) was also used to measure self-evaluation (Andrews, Qian, & Valentine, 2002). The ESS, a 25-item questionnaire assessed four different categories (shame of personal habits, manner with others, sort of people (you are), and personal ability), three areas of behavioral shame (shame about doing something wrong, saying something stupid, and failure in competitive situations), and bodily shame (feeling ashamed of (your) body or any part of it). For the purposes of the study, the questions in the ESS were modified to measure state shame. In addition, questions relating to bodily shame were discarded

because of their irrelevance to the purposes of the study; thus reducing the number of items to 21.

Each item was rated on a 4-point scale from 1, *not at all,* to 4, *very much,* with higher scores

relating to more feelings of state shame. Example items included "Do you feel ashamed when

you do something wrong?" and "Do you worry about what other people think of you when you

say something stupid". With α = .92, the adjusted Experience of Shame Scale was reliable.

<center>Results</center>

Independent samples t-tests suggest there were no significant differences between the

means of participants who completed the study in person and those who finished it online for

state self-esteem, state shame, and belief in the model minority stereotype (Table 4). There were

also no significant differences between females and males (Table 5) as well as between 1.5 and

second-generation students (Table 6) for state self-esteem, state shame, and belief in the

stereotype. Participants in general scored relatively high on state self-esteem (M = 3.78, SD

= .61), relatively low on state shame (M = 1.79, SD = .47), and moderately high on belief in the

model minority stereotype (M = 3.13, SD = .60). Before completion of the experiment, 69 out of

95 (73%) of the participants had heard of the term "the model minority stereotype" while all

participants have had knowledge of how Asian Americans are stereotyped (according to the

model minority stereotype but have no knowledge of the stereotype name).

With a significant correlation between scores on the State Self-Esteem Scale and the

adjusted Experience of Shame Scale (r = -.46, p < .01), multivariate analysis of variance

(MANOVA) was used to analyze the data. A MANOVA on participants' state self-esteem and

state shame scores did not produce the anticipated significant interaction effect (Wilks' Lambda

= .96, F (3,90) = 1.29, p = n.s.). The analysis also did not produce a significant main effect of

prime (Wilks' Lambda = .98, F (3, 90) = .54, p = n.s.). The results indicate that prime and fit did

not interact to affect the levels of state self-esteem and state shame of participants. Prime alone also did not affect participants' level of state self-esteem and state shame. However, there was a significant main effect of fit (Wilks' Lambda = .83, F (3, 90) = 6.49, p = .001). Fit had an effect on the overall level of participants' state self-esteem and state shame. A subsequent ANOVA indicated that participants in the fit condition scored significantly higher on state self-esteem (M = 4.01) than participants in the unfit condition (M = 3.52), F (1, 92) = 18.29, p = .00. There was also a significant difference in scores for state shame between individuals in the fit condition and those in the unfit condition; those that fit the condition scored lower (M = 1.68) than students that did not fit the stereotype (M = 1.92), F (1, 92) = 6.54, p = .01. Individuals who fit the stereotype indicated higher self-esteem and less shame while those who did not fit the stereotype displayed lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of shame.

Discussion

A concern with the study was a possible difference between mood of the stories and approval of the actions of the two characters by society which might have influenced the results. For example, a story that generates a more positive mood might produce higher levels of self-esteem compared to the same story that generates a more negative mood. Accordingly, the two stories were tested for differences in mood and approval of the characters' actions by mainstream society. Ten individuals, blind to the purpose of the study, were asked to rate the two stories on overall mood and on how society would react to the actions of the characters. The ratings show no significant differences between mood of the story about the "model minority" character (M = 4.40, SD = .70) and the story of the character that does not fit the model minority stereotype (M = 4.00, SD = .94), t (18) = 1.08, p = n.s. There was, however, a significant difference between society's approval for the fitting character (M = 4.40, SD = .84) and the unfitting character (M =

3.5, $SD = .71$), $t(18) = 2.59$, $p = .02$. Although both stories generated similar moods, society would show more approval of the actions of the individual that fits the model minority stereotype compared to the actions of the character that did not fit the stereotype.

The hypothesis that the interaction of prime and fit will affect self-evaluation (state self-esteem and state shame) was not supported. Being primed with the model minority stereotype and fitting the stereotype at the same time did not affect participants' levels of state self-esteem and state shame. Similarly, not being primed and not fitting the stereotype simultaneously did not affect participant's levels of state self-esteem and state shame. Although priming did not influence the state self-esteem and state shame of participants, whether or not a participant fit the model minority stereotype affected his or her levels of state self-esteem and state shame. Individuals matching the description of the "model minority" had higher levels of self-esteem and were less shameful. On the other hand, those that were not "model minorities" had lower self-esteem levels and possessed a higher level of shame. In other words, those that fit the stereotype had a more positive evaluation of themselves compared to those that did not fit the stereotype.

Priming might not have influenced how participants responded to the State Self-esteem Scale and the adjusted Experience of Shame Scale because of the preexisting idea and internalization of how Asian Americans are perceived by the out-group as hard working, intelligent and educated, especially in the math and sciences, economically successful compared to other minority groups, and highly adaptive to American life. Since 73% of the participants have already heard of the stereotype and all of them have had some idea of how Asian Americans are stereotyped (in accordance with the model minority stereotype), priming might not have made any differences. Similarly, Hmong American students' great respect for education

(Yang, 2004; Ngo & Lee, 2007) and hard work to fulfill family expectations of achieving success (Tseng, 2004) indicate that they are well informed about the ideas encompassed by the model minority stereotype. As a result, priming might not have changed the outcome because of Hmong American students' internalization of the stereotype.

According to the results, whether or not reading about an individual who fits the description of a "model minority" influenced their state shame and state self-esteem. As concluded by You (1997) and Creighton (1990), the inability to live up to rules and expectations set by society can generate shame within an individual. As a result, the finding that participants who do not fit the model minority stereotype will feel more shame is expected, as well as the result that participants will feel less shame if they have reached the societal expectation. Similarly, according to the sociometer theory, acceptance by others boosts self-esteem (Leary, 1999). On the other hand, negative implications for relational evaluation such as failure and rejection can be detrimental to self-esteem. Similarly, as found in the study by Heatherton and Polivy (1991), failure leads in a decrease in self-esteem. Consequently, it can also be expected that participants who do not match the descriptions of the "model minority" will report a lower self-esteem level compared to those that can be described by the model minority stereotype. The result that fitting and not fitting the description of the "model minority" has the possibility to influence self-evaluation can be expected and explained.

The argument that societal expectations affect levels of self-esteem and shame can further be supported by the ratings of the story. Although both stories did not differ in mood, the approval ratings of society differed. There was more approval for the "model minority" character than for the character that did not match the descriptions of the "model minority". As discussed earlier, societal expectations generate a different level of self-esteem and shame. Those that met

the expectations showed higher self-esteem and less shame while individuals that did not meet the expectations displayed lower self-esteem and more shame. As a result, self-evaluation of Hmong Americans is affected by whether or not they fit the model minority stereotype, especially when they, as Asian Americans, are expected to be "model minorities".

General Discussion

Overall, participants in both studies had a positive perception of the stereotype even when the results of the studies indicated the complexity of model minority stereotype. The results from Study 1 indicated a relationship between the model minority stereotype and psychological well-being and motivation achievement of Hmong American students. Belief in and endorsement of the stereotype was found to be related to psychological well-being and motivation to achieve. Stronger endorsement related to higher motivation to achieve while more belief in the stereotype correlated with higher levels of well-being. Study 2 found that the model minority stereotype has a more direct relationship with self-evaluation among Hmong American students. Individuals matching the description of the "model minority" had a higher level of state self-esteem and a lower level of shame. Similarly, those who cannot be described by the stereotype scored lower on self-esteem and higher on shame. In addition, a simple survey of the stories used for the experiment also indicated that society showed a higher approval of the "model minority" character compared to the character that is not a "model minority". This conclusion suggests that Hmong American students who are expected to be successful, intelligent, economically well off, and highly adaptive will have lower self-evaluations if they do not achieve those goals set for them. Likewise, Hmong American students who match the stereotype, thus meeting the expectations, will have a higher level of self-evaluation.

Although the model minority stereotype is overall a positive stereotype and although positive perceptions of it is related to psychological well-being and achievement motivation, it can have negative consequences on those labeled by it especially if they deviate from the "model minority". The stereotype can be "destructive" and even act as a threat to those who do not fit the descriptions of "model minorities" (Li, 2005), such as Hmong Americans. If these individuals fail to succeed, they have themselves to blame because according to the stereotype, they are supposed to have the proper work ethic that allows them to be successful. As a result, just because Asian Americans are assumed to be "model minorities" who require no outside assistance, they should not be neglected in any sector, especially in the often overlooked fields of psychological and emotional needs and education.

Despite the significant results for Study 1 and those for Study 2, there are several limitations to the two studies. A main limitation that might have influenced the results, as mentioned before, is the population studied. College undergraduates and graduate students already display a high level of education achievement, and therefore, are more likely to become successful. Whereas, if the population was to include all Hmong American students, such as those with only high school diplomas or even school dropouts whose academic success level is lower, there would be more diversity in the group and therefore, affect the outcomes of the study. Furthermore, the fact that only the positive aspects of the stereotype are highlighted in Study 1 might have biased the data to be more positive. As a result, stressing the negative consequences of the stereotype may lead to a more diverse set of results as seen in Study 2 when participants who fail to fit the stereotype viewed themselves more negatively. Another limitation, specific to Study 2, is the efficacy of mental representations of oneself as being either an individual who fits or does not fit the "model minority" image.

For future studies, a more diverse Hmong American student population should be used to be more representative of the student body and all aspects of the stereotype, including positive and negative, should be emphasized to capture the full spectrum of reactions to and influence of the stereotype. To address the efficacy of mental representations, future studies should include manipulation checks to confirm whether or not participants do internalize the representations. Other considerations for future studies include looking at actual achievement, such as GPA scores, to determine whether achievement motivation is related to actual achievement. Lastly, an important factor that should be explored further is the relationship between the claims of the stereotype and the values of Hmong culture because there seems to be some overlap between the two. For example, while the stereotype states that Asian Americans are hard workers, many in the Hmong culture do work hard in order to fulfill family expectations. By addressing the connection between the model minority stereotype and the Hmong culture, researchers can determine whether results such as those found in these two studies are an effect of the stereotype or an effect of the culture. In order to better understand the relationship between the model minority stereotype and Hmong Americans, more research studies are required.

As presented in this research, Hmong Americans as a group are not typical "model minorities". The short history of Hmong in the U.S. and their distant culture suggest that they deviate from the stereotypical Asian American community. However, as Asian Americans, they are subjected to a stereotype derived from the success stories of the Chinese and Japanese communities. Because of their status, including a lower socioeconomic and educational standing in American society as well as the ambiguous results of how the stereotype relate to Hmong Americans from the two studies, the term "model minority" should be applied cautiously when using it to label Hmong Americans. While some might fit the stereotype, it is inappropriate to

label all members of the Hmong American community according to the model minority

stereotype.

References

Andrews, B., Qian, M., Valentine, J. D. (2002). Predicting depressive symptoms with a new

measure of shame: The experience of shame scale. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology,*

41, 29-42.

Bedford, O. A. (2004). The individual experience of guilt and shame in Chinese culture. *Culture*

Psychology, 10(1), 29-52.

Brown, J. D., Dutton, K. A., & Cook, K. E. (2001). From the top down: Self-esteem and self-

evaluation. *Cognition and Emotion, 15*(5), 615-631.

Chang, C. (1987). Streets of gold: The myth of the model minority. Retrieved September 10,

2008, from http://depts.washington.edu/college/mce/Myth1.pdf

Chang, D. F. & Demyan, A. (2007). Teacher's stereotypes of Asian, Black, and White Students.

School Psychology Quarterly, 22(2), 91-114.

Cheryan, S. & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2000). When positive stereotypes threaten intellectual

performance: The psychological hazards of the "Model Minority" status. *Psychological*

Science, 11(5), 339-402.

Corrigan, P. W., Watson, A. C., & Barr, L. (2006). The self-stigma of mental illness:

implications for self-esteem and self-efficacy. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology,*

25(9), 875-884.

Creighton, M. R. (1990). Revisiting shame and guilt cultures: A forty-year pilgrimage. *Ethos,*

18(3), 279-307.

Cuijpers, P., Dekker, J., Noteboom, A., Smits, N., & Peen, J. (2007). Sensitivity and specificity

of the Major Depression Inventory in outpatients. *BMC Psychiatry, 7*(39).

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49*(1), 71-75.

Eaton, M. J. & Dembo, M. H. (1997). Differences in the motivational beliefs of Asian American and non-Asian students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*(3), 433-440.

Gray-Little, B., Williams, V. S. L., & Hancock, T. D. (1997). An item response theory analysis of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. *The Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc., 23*(5), 443-451.

Guerrero, A. P. S., Hishinuma, E. S., Andrade, N. N., Nishimura, S. T. & Cunanan, V. L. (2006). Correlations among socioeconomic and family factors and academic, behavioral, and emotional difficulties in Filipino adolescents in Hawaii. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 52*(4), 343-359.

Heatherton, T.F., & Polivy, J. (1991). Development and validation of a scale for measuring state self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*, 895-910.

Heatherton, T. F., Kleck, R. E., Hebl, M. R., Hull, J. G. (2000). The Social Psychology of Stigma. New York: The Guilford Press.

Kao, G. (1995). Asian Americans as model minorities? A look at their academic performance. *American Journal of Education, 103*(2), 121-159.

Kawai, Y. (2005). Stereotyping Asian Americans: The dialectic of the model minority and the yellow peril. *The Howard Journal of Communications, 16,* 109-130.

Kroll, J., Habenicht, M., Mackenzie, T., & Yang, M. (1989). Depression and posttraumatic stress disorder in Southeast Asian refugees. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *146*(12), 1592-1597.

Leary, M. R. (1999). Making sense of self-esteem. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*,

32-35.

Lee, S. J. (1994). Behind the model-minority stereotype: Voices of high- and low-achieving

Asian American Students. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 25* (4), 413-429.

Lee, S. J. (2004). More than "Model Minorities" or "delinquents": A look at Hmong American

high school students. In Lee D. Baker (Ed.), *Life in America: Identity and Everyday*

Experience (p. 181-196). Malden, MN: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Lee, S. J. (2007). The Truth and myth of the model minority: The case of Hmong Americans. In

Susan J. Palk & Herbert J. Walberg (Eds.), *Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Strategies*

for Educating Latino, Black and Asian Students (171-184). New York: Springer US.

Lee, S. J. & Kumashiro, K. K. (2005). A report on the status of Asian Americans and Pacific

Islanders in education: Beyond the "Model Minority" stereotype. *National Education*

Association. Washington, DC.

Li, G. (2005). Other people's success: Impact of the "model minority" myth on underachieving

Asian students in North America. *Journal of Educational Policy, 2*(1), 69-86.

Maddux, W. W., Galinsky, A. D., Cuddy, A. J. C., & Polifroni, M. (2008). When Being a Model

Minority is good…and bad: Realistic threat explains negativity towards Asian Americans.

Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34, 74-89.

McAdams, D. P., (2006). The Person: A New Introduction to Personality Psychology. Danvers,

MA: John Wile & Sons, Inc.

McGrowan, M. O. & Lindgren, J. (2006). Testing the "Model Minority Myth". *Northwestern*

University Law Review, 100(1), 331-378.

McNall, M., Dunnigan, T., Mortimer. J. T. (1994). The educational achievement of the St. Paul Hmong. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 25*(1), 44-65.

Ngo, B. (2006). Learning from the margins: the education of Southeast and South Asian Americans in context. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 9* (1), 51-65.

Ngo. B. & Lee, S. J. (2007). Complication the image of Model Minority success: A review of Southeast Asian American Education. *Review of Educational Research, 77,* 415-452.

Nicholson, B. L. (1997). The influence of pre-emigration and postemigration stressors on mental health: A study of Southeast Asian refugees. *Social Work Research, 21*(1), 19-33.

Oishi, S. & Diener, E. (2001). Goals, culture, and subjective well-being. *The Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc. 27*(2), 1674-1682.

Oyserman, D & Sakamoto, I. (1997). Being Asian American: identity, cultural constructs, and stereotype perception. *Journal of Applied Behavior Science, 33*(4), 435-453.

Pavot, W. & E. Diener. (1993). Review of the Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Psychological Assessment, 5*(2), 164-172.

Qin, D. B., Way, N., Mukherjee, P. (2008). The other side of the model minority story: The familial and peer challenges faced by Chinese American Adolescents. *Youth and Society, 39*(4), 480-506.

Ray, J. J. (1979). A quick measure of achievement motivation – validated in Australia and reliable in Britain and South Africa. *Australian Psychologists, 14*(3), 337-344.

Robins, R. W., Hendin, H. M., & Trzesniewski. (2001). Measuring global self-esteem: Construct validation of a Single-Item Measure and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. *The Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc., 27*(2), 151-161.

Rosenberg, M. (1979). *Conceiving the Self.* New York: Basic Books.

Rumbaut, R. G. (2005). Children of immigrants and their achievement. *Addressing the Achievement Gap: Findings and Application,* 23-59.

Seifert, Tricia. (2005). Assessment of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being. Retrieved September 23, 2008, from http://liberalarts.wabash.edu/cila/home.cfm?news_id=3570

Spencer-Rodgers, J., Peng, K., Wang, L., & Hou Y. (2004). Dialectical self-esteem and east-west differences in psychological well-being. *The Society for Personality and Social Psychological, Inc., 30*(11), 1416-1432.

Suzuki, B. H. (2002). Revisiting the Model Minority Stereotype: Implications for student affairs practice and higher education. *New Directions for Student Services, 97*, 21-32.

Tseng, V. (2004). Family interdependence and academic adjustment in college: Youth from Immigrant and U.S.-born families. *Child Development, 75*(3), 966-983.

Toupin, E. S. W. A. & Son, L. (1991). Preliminary findings on Asian Americans: "The Model Minority" in a small private east coast college. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 22*, 403-429.

U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000). *Census 2000 Special Reports: We the People: Asians in the United States*. Bureau of the Census: Washington, DC.

Wong, P., Lai, C. F., Nagasawa, R., & Lin, T. (1998). Asian Americans as a model minority: Self-perceptions and perceptions by other racial groups. *Sociological Perspectives, 41*(1), 95-118.

Yang, K. (2004). Southeast Asian American children: Not the "Model Minority." *The Future of Children, 14*(2), 127-133.

Yeh, T. L. (2002). Asian American college students who are educationally at risk. *New Directions for Student Services, 97*, 61-71.

You, Y. G. (1997). Shame and guilt mechanisms in East Asian culture. *The Journal of Pastoral Care, 51*(1), 57-64.

Appendix A

Study 1: Perception of the Model Minority Stereotype Scale

Using a scale from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true), please rate the extent to which you believe the statements below are true.

1. Asians/Asian Americans are extremely hard working.
2. Asians/Asian Americans are highly intelligent and educated.
3. Asians/Asian Americans are economically successful.
4. Asians/Asian Americans are highly adaptive to American life.
5. Asians/Asian Americans are models for all groups, especially other minority groups.
6. Hmong/Hmong Americans are extremely hard working.
7. Hmong/Hmong Americans are highly intelligent and educated.
8. Hmong/Hmong Americans are economically successful.
9. Hmong/Hmong Americans are highly adaptive to American life.
10. Hmong/Hmong Americans are models for groups, especially other minority groups.
11. You attempt to be extremely hard working.
12. You attempt to be highly intelligent and educated.
13. You attempt to be economically successful.
14. You attempt to be highly adaptive to American life.
15. You attempt to be a model for members of all groups, especially members of other minority groups.

Note: Items 1-5 measure belief in the stereotype applied to Asians/Asian Americans; items 6-10 measure belief in the stereotype applied to Hmong/Hmong Americans; items 11-15 measure endorsement of the stereotype.

Appendix B

Study 1 & 2: Demographics Survey

Please provide some information about your background. This information will only be used for data analysis, not to identify individual respondents. Please fill in the answer or select the most appropriate response.

1. What is your gender? _____

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is the college/university that you are currently attending? _____

4. What year are you in your college academic career?
    a. First-year (Freshman)
    b. Second-year (Sophomore)
    c. Third-year (Junior)
    d. Fourth-year (Senior)
    e. Graduate student (specify year in program) _____

5. What is your college/university major or area of academic focus? _____

6. Where were you born?
    a. In the United States
    b. Outside of the United States (please specify) _____

7.   If you were born outside of the United States, how long have you been in the United States?
    a. Year(s) _____
    b. Month(s) _____

8. How would you racially/ethnically identify yourself? (Circle all that apply.)
    a. American
    b. Asian
    c. Asian American
    d. Hmong
    e. Hmong American
    f. Other (please specify) _____

9. Where was your father born?
    a. In the United States
    b. Outside of the United States (please specify) _____

10. What is your father's highest level of education?
    a. Some high school or less

b. Completed high school
c. Some college
d. Completed Bachelors Degree
e. Completed Masters Degree
f. Completed Doctoral-level Degree

11. Where was your mother born?
    a. In the United States
    b. Outside of the United States (please specify) _____

12. What is your mother's highest level of education?
    a. Some high school or less
    b. Completed high school
    c. Some college
    d. Completed Bachelors Degree
    e. Completed Masters Degree
    f. Completed Doctoral-level Degree

13. What is your family's combined annual income?
    a. Less than $20,000
    b. Between $20,000 and $40,000
    c. Between $40,000 and $60,000
    d. Between $60,000 and $80,000
    e. Between $80,000 and $100,000
    f. Between $100,000 and $200,000
    g. More than $200,000

Appendix C

Study 2: Stimuli Used for Priming

Please quickly proofread the following description of Asian Americans that the researcher is using for her Asian Studies Capstone. Feel free to make any corrections or comments.

The model minority stereotype states that Asian Americans are: [1] extremely hard working, perhaps more than Whites; [2] highly intelligent and educated, especially in the fields of math and science; [3] economically successful in comparison to other minority groups; and [4] highly adaptive to American life because of their presence in the suburbs and their higher rate of interracial marriage with Whites. In other words, Asian Americans conform to the norms of society, do well in school and careers, are hard working and self-sufficient, are a model for all groups, especially other minority groups, and have overcome all racial barriers to achieve success.

Appendix D

Study 2: Stories

Story 1: Character complies with the model minority stereotype

I am the oldest of four in a Hmong refugee family that settled in the United States hoping to achieve the American dream. After graduating in the top ten percent of my high school class, I graduated cum laude from a four year public university in accounting and later continued to finish my masters. Throughout my academic career, friends and classmates often came to me for homework help. Currently, I am the assistant market manager of a software company, a role that occupies much of my time. Usually I work overtime to make sure projects are completed with quality and on schedule. My life, however, does not revolve entirely around my career; I am also happily married with two loving kids. For several years now, I have lived in a suburb of St. Paul to allow my children to grow up in a quiet neighborhood. I am trying my best to keep my family happy and at the same time make my life meaningful.

Story 2: Character does not comply with the model minority stereotype

I am the oldest of four in a Hmong refugee family that settled in the United States hoping to achieve the American dream. After graduating with average grades from high school, I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Throughout school, I had a hard time grasping the subjects I studied, particularly the math and sciences. Because I wasn't strong in academics, I decided to do something different. As a Marine, I am dedicated to my work and loyal to my country. I spend a lot of my time away from home as a result. My life, however, does not revolve entirely around my career; I am also happily married with two loving kids. For years now, I have lived on the east side of St. Paul to allow my children to grow up in a typical city atmosphere. I am trying my best to keep my family happy and at the same time make my life meaningful.

Appendix E

Study 2: Follow-up Questions

1. Using a scale from 1 (Not at all true) to 5 (Very true), please rate the extent to which you believe the statements below are true.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All True	Rarely True	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Very True

    1) Asians/Asian Americans are extremely hard working.
    2) Asians/Asian Americans are highly intelligent and educated.
    3) Asians/Asian Americans are economically successful.
    4) Asians/Asian Americans are highly adaptive to American life.
    5) Asians/Asian Americans are models for all groups, especially other minority groups.

2. When was the first time you heard about the "model minority" stereotype?

3. Using a scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always), choose the answer that best represents your opinion on the following question and explain the reasoning for the way you responded. Do you/ would you like to be referred to as a member of the "model minority"?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	A Little	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always

Please give an explanation for your response.

4. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to address them below.

Appendix F

Study 2: Manipulation Check

After reading each story, please respond to the following questions for both stories.

1. How would you rate the overall mood of the story?

1	2	3	4	5
Negative		Neutral		Positive

2. How do you think society would feel about the actions of the character?

1	2	3	4	5
Disapprove of the actions of the character		Would show no interest		Support the actions of the character

Notes

1. The terms Hmong and Hmong Americans are used interchangeably throughout the paper
    to refer to any persons of Hmong descent living in the United States during the time the
    studies were implemented.

2. The total number of possible participants is unknown because of the snowball method of
    collecting data.

3. In Study 2, the terms self-esteem and shame refers to state self-esteem and state shame,
    respectively.

Table 1. *Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables by Sex*

Dependent Variable	Sex	M	SD	F
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale				1.43
	Female	2.24	.43	
	Male	2.33	.37	
Major Depression Inventory				.50
	Female	1.48	.92	
	Male	1.37	.88	
Satisfaction with Life Scale				.33
	Female	4.74	1.41	
	Male	4.86	1.31	
Ray's Achievement Motivation Scale				1.70
	Female	2.41	.33	
	Male	2.38	.25	
Belief in Model Minority Stereotype				.15
	Female	3.13	.57	
	Male	3.10	.66	
Endorsement of Model Minority Stereotype				1.80
	Female	3.76	.91	
	Male	3.92	.84	

Table 2. *Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables by Generation*

Dependent Variable	Generation	M	SD	F
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale				.07
	1.5	2.29	.38	
	Second	2.26	.43	
Major Depression Inventory				5.08*
	1.5	1.64	1.10	
	Second	1.37	.80	
Satisfaction with Life Scale				2.30
	1.5	4.85	1.50	
	Second	4.73	1.33	
Ray's Achievement Motivation Scale				.96
	1.5	2.44	.33	
	Second	2.39	.29	
Belief in Model Minority Stereotype				1.36
	1.5	3.16	.72	
	Second	3.10	.54	
Endorsement of Model Minority Stereotype				4.42*
	1.5	3.64	1.11	
	Second	3.92	.75	

*$p < .05$

Table 3. *Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Self-Esteem, Major Depression, Satisfaction with Life, and Achievement Motivation*

		Self-Esteem	Major Depression	Satisfaction with Life	Achievement Motivation
Constant	b	1.24	3.44	2.70	1.87
Belief in Model Minority	b	.25**	-.46**	.74**	.00
Stereotype	β	.37	-.30	.32	.00
Endorsement of Model Minority	b	.06	-.15	-.06	.14**
Stereotype	β	.13	-.14	-.04	.40
Adjusted R^2		.18**	.13**	.07**	.14**

**p < .01

Table 4. *Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables by Method*

Dependent Variable	Method	M	SD	F
State Self-Esteem				.11
	In Person	3.99	.63	
	Online	3.72	.59	
State Shame				1.64
	In Person	1.77	.43	
	Online	1.80	.48	
Belief in Model Minority Stereotype				
	In Person	3.15	.48	1.02
	Online	3.12	.63	

Table 5. *Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables by Sex*

Dependent Variable	Sex	M	SD	F
State Self-Esteem				.31
	Female	3.81	.59	
	Male	3.72	.64	
State Shame				.00
	Female	1.78	.47	
	Male	1.81	.48	
Belief in Model Minority Stereotype				
	Female	3.17	.56	.53
	Male	3.03	.66	

Table 6. *Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables by Generation*

Dependent Variable	Generation	M	SD	F
State Self-Esteem				.00
	1.5	3.84	.60	
	Second	3.74	.62	
State Shame				.39
	1.5	1.78	.45	
	Second	1.80	.48	
Belief in Model Minority Stereotype				
	1.5	3.10	.55	.59
	Second	3.14	.64	