Influence of Parental Involvement on Hmong Children’s Academic Performance

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Purpose of Study
- Examine what predicts home and school-based parental involvement and which types of parental involvement are more likely to influence Hmong children’s academic competence and performance.

Literature Review
- The extant literature suggests parental involvement factors:
  - English fluency where better English is more involved (Coll et al., 2002; Kim, 2002).
  - Family structure where two-parent family is more involved (Asakawa, 2010).
  - Family size; larger family is more involved (Park et al., 2011).
  - Parents with younger children are more involved (Dearing et al., 2002; Asakawa, 2010).
- The influence of parental involvement on Hmong children’s academic performance is inconclusive. Some studies showed an improvement of homework habits and achievement (Epstein, 1990, 2011; Ho & Wills, 1996; Lareau, 1989; Wolfendale, 1992), while other studies found the opposite (Madigan, 1994; Muller, 1993).

Methods
- Participants: In a sample of 523 students, 332 students who provided complete information on the variables included in the present study comprised the final sample for the analysis. The final sample included 30% grade 3, 30% grade 4, and 40% grade 5 students.
- Procedure: A consent form was sent home and returned signed by parents. School set up a date with the PI and his research assistants to upload and test the survey on the school computers. During the survey administration, students were directed to take the survey in the computer lab where they completed the survey within 30 minutes.
- Analysis Plan: Structural equation modeling was used in order to demonstrate that a specific interrelationship among variables is possible (Maruyama, 1998). Although the model suggests that causal pathways are possible, conclusions are only correlational. The analysis was run in R (R Core Team, 2016) using the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012). The final model was chosen based on the model fit guidelines from Hu and Bentler (1999).

Results
- The model fit guidelines from Hu and Bentler (1999) were used to determine the model fit:
  - Model Fit: CFI = .967, RMSEA = .051, SRMR = .088
  - Significant Correlation
  - Non-Significant Correlation

Measures
- Dependent variables – Ordered Categories:
  - Academic Performance
    - Very behind
    - Somewhat behind
    - A little behind
    - Current with coursework
    - Ahead of most classmates
  - PI - School
    - Never
    - 1-2 times per week
    - 3-4 times per week
    - Every day
  - Talk About School
  - Watch Homework
  - Homework Help
  - Practice Skills
  - Read With You
- Independent variables
  - Boy
  - Age
  - Born in
  - Hmong
  - # of Siblings
  - Intact Family
  - Temperament
  - Parents Go Out
  - Language at Home - Hmong
  - Language at Home - Mix
  - Language with Parents - Hmong
  - Language with Parents - Mix

Discussion
- As expected, younger children, the number of children at home, the child’s temperament, language comfort, and being Hmong accounted for both home-based (R² = 7.2%) and school-based (R² = 17.2%) parental involvement.
- Contrary to the literature, we found that home-based parental involvement plays a minimal role in their children’s academic competence and performance. It was surprising that school-based involvement significantly accounted for both academic competence (R² = 22.2%) and academic performance (R² = 5.3%).
- This study builds on the evidence that parental involvement at school is crucial to children’s cognitive development (Epstein, 1990, 2011), especially for immigrant parents living in urban areas (Coll et al., 2002). Thus the success of Hmong children’s academic performance is influenced by parental involvement at school.

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