IU-MIENH WOMEN VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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A Project

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Division of Social Work
Abstract

of

IU-MIENH WOMEN VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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The focus of this research is to understand the views and perceptions of the Iu-Mienh or Mienh women in regards to domestic violence. In an attempt to gain a better understanding about the issue, a set of data was collected from a group of women in the Iu-Mienh community. Statistics reveal that one in four women faces domestic abuse. It was found that higher rates of intimacy violence are found among minority ethnic groups. In addition, this research found that 55% of the participants had witnessed domestic violence at least once. The combination of legal fees, distrust toward authority, fear of retaliation, and lack of English skill are the factors that prevent these women from seeking intervention. Women who are educated and younger with English speaking skills are more likely to call authorities if domestic violence occurs than who those do not speak English. These women also perceive the spousal abuse rate in the Iu-Mienh community as high and have a strong negative view toward their community leaders.

Serge Lee, Ph.D.

Date
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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Background

The Iu-Mienh is an ethnic minority group whose people share a similar lifestyle with other neighboring hill-tribe people in the hilly climate among the Southeast Asian nations (Lewis & Lewis, 2002). At the end of the Vietnam War and after the Pathet Lao took over Laos in 1975, as many as 30,000 of them were sponsored and began to resettle in the United States (US). During the war, a significant number of Iu-Mienh males assisted the US military campaign against the communist forces in Laos. As a result of their participation in the Vietnam War with the Americans and other Laotian groups against communist force, they faced a similar persecution as that of other groups at the conclusion of the war. Hence, a large concentration of them moved from Laos to refugee camps throughout Thailand. After their short stay in Thailand, many came to the US (Schuldberg, 2004). According to the Iu-Mienh community leaders’ estimates, there are close to 60,000 Iu-Mienhs in the US. Historically, the Iu-Mienh people had never been recognized by the international community as having a country. Schuldberg observes that one of the challenges they encountered after arriving in the US is domestic violence against the females of their group.

Women in every culture are known to be subjected to domestic abuse physically, emotionally, and psychologically perhaps due to the perception that women are a physically vulnerable gender (Buchanan, 2008) and are overpowered by their opposite
sex counterparts. It appears that females often have to face abusive relationships from a very young age. One of four girls in the United States will experience sexual assault before she turns 18 (American Bar Association [ABA], 2009). According to research, a high percentage of the abusers are the family members or someone that is well known to the victim.

Domestic Violence (DV) does not discriminate against race, ethnicity, or gender. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2005) reports that researchers found that up to 71% women in almost every part of the world have experienced some form of domestic or spousal assaults. While women in mainstream cultures increasingly confront their familial violent affairs with external interventions, a small community of female voices often remain unheard. Females in minority communities often have to confront household hostility with multiple barriers such as cultural differences and language challenges. WHO reports that even in developing nations like Thailand and Brazil, as many as 20% of women never informed anyone regarding the physical violence they encountered.

Research shows that domestic violence among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) groups exists along with heterosexual women. In fact, the rate of abusive relationships within the lesbian population seems to be higher than that of gay and heterosexual couples (Brown & Groscup, 2009). It is also documented that almost half of the spousal abuse among the same-sex couples need medical attention. This shows that the severity of the abuse within this group is not less than what traditional couples experienced.
Furthermore, Brown and Groscup (2009) argued that oftentimes gay and lesbian victims could not find services available in the community to alleviate spousal abuse problems. Most social service agencies were not equipped to handle same-sex couples. Another reason LGBT couples lack services is that they are afraid to report due to anti-same-sex pressure in the community.

Twenty states in the union either deny or have laws that not apply to gays and lesbians partners. Brown and Groscup’s (2009) study also indicates that LGBT couples are more likely to be discriminated against when it comes to protection and services. For example, law enforcement officers tend to not arrest gay perpetrators because gay victims do not seem to need protection equal to that of women (Brown & Groscup, 2009). Unfortunately, other researchers reveal that bisexual women not only often avoid seeking help from the general community, but also have a hard time obtaining services among the LGBT community. This indicates that women within this community face double challenges when dealing with familial abuse (Turell & Herman, 2008).

Other scholars warned that further spousal violence research and empirical data is needed relating to the LGBT community. Perhaps many individuals still consider being LGBT as taboo. This could be a reason influencing the academic community with regard to the effort lacking or unwillingness to do investigations on domestic abuse within LGBT couples (McKenry, Serovich, & Mason, 2006).

Another population facing many instances of DV is that living in poverty. In central Asia, at least five nations have agreed to the United Nation (UN) human rights
conventions. One of the resolutions is about providing protection for women who are battling domestic violence. Lehner (2009) indicated that violence against women is among the countless issues that lack attention and effort from governments to comply with the agreement. Some scholars argue that most, if not all, of these social institutions have to deal with the instability of their political systems; therefore, they cannot provide basic protection for its citizens and continue to violate the UN resolutions. It is well known that children and women in this part of the world are being greatly oppressed, especially those living in poverty. In addition, culture seems to play a big role in dealing DV. For example, Asian women often must obey their husbands and their fathers-in-law.

Women in ethnic minority communities are found to be facing double the drawbacks when dealing with familial violence and racism issues. Oftentimes, Asian women would not able to obtain services from a provider who is culturally sensitive. Furthermore, the women’s needs are frequently overlooked by the social service and law enforcement institutions. Unlike the mainstream population, Asian wives or common spouses have very limited resources—economic, social, or emotional support (Belur, 2008). Often researchers found that women of a minority community faced barriers. But the DV prevalence among women within the mainstream or White community was not much different.

Bauer, Rodriguez, and Perez-Stable (2000) revealed that intimate partner abuse prevalent within the white and black communities is no different than that in the Asian communities. Fifty-one percent of women who participated in Bauer’s study reported to
receive at least one instance of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse. Among African-American women, being socioeconomically disadvantaged is the significant indicator of domestic abuse. Buchanan (2008) asserted that due to a considerable prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the African-American community, a GPS monitoring device should be used with offenders.

Furthermore, women in the Hispanic community encounter similar situations in with regard to domestic, spousal, or intimate partner violence. Numerous researchers reported that Mexican women, like the Southeast Asian population, have to confront the abuse daily with many other issues such immigration status, language barriers, and economic hardship (Staudt, 2007; Villarreal, 2007). Existing data indicate that women around the world have experienced domestic violence. Women in small communities, such as that of the Iu-Mienh, do not seem to be any exception.

For over 30 years now, Iu-Mienh women in the United States are believed to have been facing domestic violence similar to any other community in general. Historically, there has been no known research completed with regard to an abusive relationship within this population. Although Iu-Mienh people have seen some significant improvements in their living conditions in the United States compared to 30 years ago, they are still facing American acculturation and language problems. The Mienh are also not well known to the mainstream community. On numerous occasions they appeared in the local media due to a very horrible domestic violence act in a family. Local authorities are aware of this group of immigrants and their challenges, but it seems the community is
too small for a solution, or attention or intervention from local government. One brutal spousal killing hit quite close to home of this researcher when an uncle shot his wife to death and turned the gun on himself in the summer of 2007. The troubled relationship in this case had been known to the Mienh community long before the final violent occurred. There were a few incidents in which the aunt was beaten and threatened with physical harm. But according to the local authority, no previous report was made with regard to this family. It is known in the community that incidents like this happened often.

**Purpose**

This research intended to discover the reasons that keep Iu-Mienh women from acquiring external assistance regarding the violence they encounter with their spouses. This researcher also pursued the understanding of the resiliency of such females in the community. In addition, the study sought to compare the lifestyle of the Iu-Mienh females who migrated to the United States as adults with that of those who grew up in the States. It was the belief of this researcher that the finding of this study would serve as a beginning to breaking the silence of domestic violence in the Iu-Mienh community and will provide a significant awareness to the larger community for future intervention.

**Theoretical framework**

Upon examining domestic violence issues in the community, one has to take a closer look at the evolution of its culture, language, socioeconomic status, migration, social adaptation, and surrounding ecosystems, because they provide a whole picture assessment related to the issues. Ecological Perspective (Greene, 2008) will help explore
the concept of the domestic abuse issues among the Iu-Mienh families. Ecological perspective normally focuses on assessing and understanding how an individual or a family comes into a situation by analyzing the pattern of social behaviors and the environmental influences (Greene, 2008). There are few cultural and psychological factors that may have contributed to the challenges of domestic violence in this community. For example, previous experiences of distrust from authorities in Thailand and Laos may have discouraged females in this minority group from seeking help in the US, especially when most of the authority agents were male. Another example is that many women in this community are more likely to depend on their husbands due to multiple barriers such as transportation, language skills, and fear of unfamiliar surrounding lifestyles.

In addition, applying a person-environment component of this framework can further provide advanced knowledge and results. This can be done by comparing data collected from both Iu-Mienh females who came to the US as adults and from those who grew up in the US. The environmental domain was one of the main factors focused on here because the lifestyle in the US is completely different from that in Thailand or Laos.

The other theoretical framework that may also be partially emphasized in this research is the Feminist Theory. This model stresses the male dominated playing field, which can cause inequality and limited access of resources (Comstock, 2005). The framework also indicates that what brings a group of people or females into a situation is not just happening by coincidence. This, in fact, means Iu-Mienh women have been
through relationship violence not because of an accident but due to some sort of external or internal influences. One of the ways to overcome a problem based on this theory is through raising awareness and taking actions to change social conditions. This researcher plans to utilize the above perspective and theory to identify the perception and resilience of this community.

Although the Ecological Framework seems to have great ideas and remarkable principles, it is important to keep in mind that its implementation may not work as one thought. The interventions for eastern social challenges may require more than just a set of western paradigms due to the nature of cultural diversity. Also, applying one ideology may cause more harm than good. For example, if a female individual were to call the police when her husband threatens to hurt her for the first time, the family might suffer more from the legal system than they would by resolving their relationship. The younger generations who grew up in the States may have different ways of dealing with these challenges due to the consciousness they gained within the US social environment that stimulates changes from their predecessor toward equality.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women in biblical times

Perhaps the challenges women face around the world are the reflection of human culture and history with the absence of human rights. The unequal treatment women receive today has been linked to the cultural norm back to the beginning of known mankind. For most portions of the Western Asian continent, or the Middle East nations, women still have very limited freedom under the control of men or husbands. According to B.A. Robbinson (2006), female individuals in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other nations in that vicinity are not allow to leave their homes, make decisions, bear witness in a trail, or become visible in the public event, and they must cover their faces when stepping outside the house.

The vast majority of the Middle Eastern nations continue to observe the above tradition of treating women as inferior and as property. It is conceivable that the people have deep connections with the history indicated in the Old Testament of the Bible. The first book of the Bible records that the first man was created then a woman was created from the man’s rib. It also states that the woman was for the man, to help him and be his companion (Biblica, n.d., Genesis 2).

The book of Genesis also pointed out that men in those days commonly seized many women to become their wives, especially those men who held official power. But, on the other hand, women were not allowed to become priests, as it is true in many
churches today. King Solomon, for example, possessed as many as 300 wives. On the opposite side, if a woman slept with a man other than her own husband, she would have been stoned to death. A famous story of Abraham, a well-known father figure in the Bible, slept with one of his maids for the purpose of having a child. The narrative specified that Abraham’s wife, Sarah, ordered a female maidservant to have sex with her husband because she wanted a baby (Biblica, n.d., Genesis 16). According to this account, the poor maid female individual was raped and used for creating offspring.

Another chapter in the same book showed that a father, Lot, allowed many men to rape his two virgin daughters to protect his male guests (Biblica, n.d., Genesis 19). The book of Judges also indicated that a father permitted his daughter and a concubine to be raped to death (Biblica, n.d., Judges 19). This clearly signified that women or girls were treated as nothing other than pieces of property. It may be a speculation to say that all women in the biblical time received that kind of substandard treatment. However, countless reports and narratives from the Old Testament proposed that women at the time were undoubtedly oppressed, controlled, and abused by mostly men.

The book of Exodus documented that women were considered powerless; therefore, they were no political threat. For example, King Pharaoh at once ordered to kill all male children born to Hebrew families because he was afraid that one of the newborn children would become a threat to his throne (Biblica, n.d., Exodus 1:1-16). Men were in power over women at all times. There was no indication of any Queen or high-level female official in the Bible except Deborah who was described to be both a Judge of
Israel and an army leader (Biblica, n.d., Judges 4 and 5). No women were allowed to be priests.

The same manuscript witnessed notorious acts against women in Chapters 20 and 21 (Biblica, n.d.). They detailed that women were abused by their father, slave owner, and husband. Children were taken away from their mothers. Women were bought and sold by male owners as they pleased. Slave owners commanded male servants to rape girls so they would bear children for their masters.

The book of Numbers described that a son in the family would inherit the family possessions. But a daughter would receive nothing (Biblica, n.d., Numbers 27). The rule at the time was that if a woman had sex before marriage, her punishment was death. There was no such rule applied to men. In addition, the book of Deuteronomy required that if a virgin woman had been raped, she must marry the rapist (Biblica, n.d., Deuteronomy 22). Only men could grant divorces to women. The profound cultural norm was totally violent and abusive to women.

Today, most of people may think we do not live the life as it was displayed in the Old Testament. However, through a careful examination on those biblical experiences, one would find that what happened over 2,000 years ago is still very much existent in the present time. For instance, men are still in power and control women. In some part of the world, men are still allowed to have more than one wife as King David and Solomon, who had countless of wives. In addition, history hinted that women were property. Such
treatment still appears to be accurate to modern researchers. According to experts, DV crimes against women will continue to affect women and vulnerable children.

*Prevalence of domestic violence*

According to the American Bar Association (2009), in the general population, one in every four women are raped and/or physically assaulted by their spouses, cohabiting partners, or dating partners at some time before they turn 60 years old. Approximately 1.3 million women are physically assaulted by an intimate partner every year in the United States. Recent data show that 33% of females were murdered by their intimate partners. Forty-nine percent of the 3.5 million violent crimes were committed against spouses. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2009) reports nearly 85% of domestic violence victims are women. On the other hand, 83% of the murderers are male spouses and 75% are dating partners. The American Bar Association (ABA) (2009) indicates that in the year 2002, women in the United States out of all persons have an 81% chance to be killed by their spouse.

The research continues to claim that Native American women are twice as likely to be victims of rape and sexual assault than those of other ethnic groups. Unlike other communities, the offenders within this population seem to be mostly strangers. Only 25% of the violent crimes are committed by intimate partners or family members.

Within the African American community, according to ABA (2009), women victimized by intimate partners is significantly more prevalent than in any other race. Black females experienced intimate partner violence at a rate of 35%, which is higher
than that of white women (21%), and up to 22 times higher than the rate for women of other communities. As the statistics tell of unimagined rates of domestic abuses, other scholars argue that violent crimes against women in the Black community are under reported. This is also true with the Hispanic community.

Seventy-seven percent of all Hispanics in the state of Texas indicate that they have either a family member or a friend that has experienced a form of domestic violence. This constitutes that about 5.2 million Hispanic Texans are disturbed by the outbreak of domestic violent crimes. The America Bar Association’s (2009) report also indicates that the Hispanic population is large enough to make a difference politically, and they are more likely to vote for politicians who would support the effort of helping DV victims. The rate of intimate partner abuse in this community is 21%.

The Hispanic community appears to share the same challenges as other immigrant communities. According to Bloom, Wagman, Hernandez, Yragui, Hernandez-Valdovinos, Dahlstrom et al. (2009), Latinas often avoid service resources because they fear legal issues, distrust authority, and have language and cultural barriers. Furthermore, Saez-Betacourt, Lam, and Nguyen (2008) found that Latino immigrants are often not familiar with laws and regulations in the US. The researchers indicate that most of the offenders tend to have a consciousness to do the right thing. However, they frequently get caught in the middle of spousal conflict, which leads to incarceration and a criminal record. Many of the offenders could then no longer obtain a decent employment, which in turn can create poverty issues. It is not an excuse to hurt any person with an act of
violence. But the above researchers agree that if the immigrants had a better understanding about the laws and penal codes, they would have altered much conflict and reduced DV in the Hispanic community. Thus, the researchers recommend there be efforts to outreach to the community and raise awareness of legal and cultural issues pertaining to intimate partner violence. The authors further suggest that prevention is the key to overcoming DV because if one woman is prevented from suffering violence, one individual, usually a man, will not have to face a criminal record.

According to the ABA (2009), Asian and Pacific Islander (API) women reportedly experienced the lowest domestic assault by their spouses, at the rate of 12.8%. In addition, 27% reported to experience emotional abuse from their cohabitating spouses. However, among the South Asians women, nearly 41% reported they had been physically and/or sexually abused in some way by their male partners in their lifetime. The population also has a history of mistrusting the authorities due to a threat of deportation and other barriers that prevent them from reporting domestic abuse crimes.

The ABA (2009) further details that teens and elderly individuals are also victims of DV. Approximately one in five female high school students reported being physically and/or sexually assaulted by a dating partner. Some scholars point out that the crime could be a factor that correlated to high school dropouts. Furthermore, as many as 80% of teens report knowing someone involved in a violent relationship.

Elderly are not exempted from DV. According to the American Bar Association’s (2009) estimation, approximately 2 million Americans aged 65 and over have been
injured, abused, or maltreated by some individuals they knew and depended on for protection.

LGBT are not to be left out either. Kelly and Warshafsky (1987) found in their study that a 47% of spousal abuse is reported among LGBT community. The crime rate within the lesbian community is much higher than that among gay members. The belief is that spousal violence among the bisexual and transgender communities exists parallel to women in the general population. However, further data collection and empirical research are needed.

Researchers have found violence against females in the general population to be so prevalent, has no boundaries and is without discrimination of age, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, social setting and cultural norm (Schlumpf, 2008; World Health Organization [WHO], 2006). In fact, Kipps (2005), based on collected data, warns that one out of four girls will face physical assault before she turns 18. The abusers are often the men in the family or well known individuals to the victims (Jean, 2005). As many as 20% of women reported to have experienced assaults while dating (Schlumpf, 2008). WHO (2006) conducted research in regard to domestic violence in 10 nations on diverse continents and interviewed 24,000 women from big cities and small rural towns. They discovered that 20% of the women suffered physical injuries from the result of partner abuse. The research also stated that those individual women who experienced abuse have a 50% higher chance than non-abused women to developing other chronic problems. Such problems include physical and mental illnesses, being suicidal and
altering decision making. It continued to uncover that 12% of those women reported to be beaten by their spouses while they were pregnant. One very important point the study found was that 20% of the females never told anyone about their abusive relationships prior to the WHO (2006) interview.

The research shows there is no an easy way to overcome DV. One of the recommendations from WHO (2006) is to promote gender equality on the macro level. Women’s and human rights also need to be persuaded. It encourages citizens to join social, political, religious actions and other leaders in voicing out against violence against women. It also advocates for the health community to play a role in minimizing domestic violence.

Familial abuse against women not only does not single out any particular race, ethnicity, or gender, but it also does not matter where it is. Anitha (2008) observes that a study was done in the United Kingdom (UK) to examine the experiences of a group of Asian women who responded to domestic violence. She implicates that the women faced so many obstacles such as immigration status, not seeking help patterns, marital status, language and cultural issues, and discrimination. The author reflects that husbands or men often used the above barriers against their wives or female spouses to gain power and control. Other research in the region of Great Britain described that forced marriage is one of the main acts that results in rape and physical assault. The study points out that most of the female individuals were South Asian women (Valios, 2008). Bhuyan (2008) found similar results, in a study in Seattle, Washington, that immigrant women battered
by domestic violence often faced deportation threats and were ineligible for public benefits.

Moreover, Kyu and Kanai (2005) confirm that women in Myanmar, an isolated and undemocratic nation previously known as Burma, faced a tremendous problem with domestic violence. Women were not allowed to voice opinions, a dictatorship rules over election results, and basic human rights are not observed. The study reports that three out of four women experienced abuse in that region. The data, again, validate that DV is more likely to occur with a woman who lives in poverty and where human rights are oppressed.

Despite some intervention efforts, women’s lives are still in a very dangerous situation. Jean (2005) indicates that even though the rate of women being assaulted or murdered by their partners has been lessening in the past few years, the battle is far from over. The statistics show that 4 million women will be abused by their husbands or partners every year. At least 1,200 females are murdered annually in the United States. When compared to other deaths such as car accidents or heart disease, death from human assault is still relatively small. But none of these lives deserves to be taken unwillingly by someone who is intentionally hurting them.

Millner (2008) argues that one important reason women have to face violence is because religious leaders fail to protect them. Pastors, Bishops, and other leaders often try to mediate an abusive relationship between the couple so they can reconcile their differences peacefully without having to break the family apart or contact the protective
authority. This kind of practice allows the troubled relationship to continue to exist and the perpetrator has more chances to commit assault. Millner (2008) acknowledges that in situations like the above, it is not easy to make a call, but all clergies are mandated reporters.

Schlumpf (2008) agrees with the Feminist Theory that domestic abuse does not happen overnight. She continues to explain that an abusive experience can exist without physical evidence. An oppression that makes one feel like she has no freedom is a feature of abuse. Another example is one being denied or blocked from accessing resources. Emotional insult can also lead to a decrease in major health well being and lead to things such as suicide and stress. Schlumpf indicates that leaders in the Christian community consider abuse sinful. Some actually hope that declaring violent relationships a sin can help people stay away from doing it. Recognizing God and having a spiritual relationship with Him is one of the suggestions for healing abused victims.

Another community that has been reported to suffer from DV is the disabled group. Violence against women with disabilities seems to be a double-edged sword. Brodwin and Siu (2007) uncover that disabled females are more vulnerable and have less resistance to abuse than women without disabilities. They tend to have long lasting suffering. In severe cases, the abuse will interfere with their education obtainment, therefore, leading to financial shortcomings. The scholars advise that educators and professionals should look for any signs among students who are suspected to have experienced an intimidating relationship.
One may wonder why DV is so prevalent and what causes it. Research with families in Bangladesh examines the causes of domestic violence. London (2006) detects that those men who lack education can contribute to the high risk of abusing their wives. On the other hand, men with higher education tend to have lower rates of violence toward their spouses than those of men with minimal schooling. The report also indicates that women with an income higher than their husbands’ are a target for a troubled relationship because men have a tendency of not letting go of their financial control. The other factor London mentions is that men who had witnessed an abusive act from their fathers toward their mothers have a higher risk of harming their wives.

Another study shows that violence against women is due to men’s sexual desire. One element of men’s sexual want is that they force women to have sex without a protective device. Other obvious examples include rape. The same investigation concludes that one in three assaults and 25% of murders in London, UK were domestic violence (Kipps, 2005). However, women are often blamed for their appearances and the way they dress which draw men.

Oyunbileg, Sumberzul, Udval, Wang, and Janes (2009) assert in their research that 37.7% of respondents admitted they suffered some type of domestic violence. The research also points out that some of the major risk factors for violence against women included having only a primary education, inadequate income, a rented house in poor condition, and an unemployed common spouse. She recommends that assisting people to gain employment will decrease DV rate.
On the other hand, Dalton (2009) believes that DV and substance abuse are often interrelated. A group of agency directors claims (as cited in Dalton, 2009) while they are providing services or interventions for the victim of DV, in most cases they have to treat alcohol and other drug abuse as well. He also mentions that both victim and perpetrator could have substance usage problems.

Violent behavior against females not only occurs at home but also takes place at work. Mostly, it happens when a woman has a new relationship with a co-worker or a person at work. The new intimacy invokes jealousy and causes a dispute to arise. The research also indicates that domestic hostility affects women’s performance at work. The recommendation is that an employer offer a program called Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Under the EAP, employees who experiences relationship issues can get counseling or mediation from a licensed professional before the domestic abuse breaks out. This program aims to cut the cost of counterproductive employee performance and help employees alleviate painful violence of their spouses (Bowman & Paul, 2005). Even though it takes a male and a female to have an affair outside a relationship, the woman is usually the one being hurt.

Nelson (2004) argues that domestic violence costs Americans $5.8 billion each year. She reports that 50% of female homicides in the US are due to domestic dispute violence. She blames medical doctors for failing to recognize and intervene. Like the clergy, doctors’ barriers for reporting are fear that reporting could cause more risk to the client and not enough evidence to make a call. Other barriers include doctors not wanting
to get involved, not having enough time to spend with the client, or a lack of training and client reluctant to disclose.

Women's International Network News (WINN) (2000) reports that Japanese women receive unprecedented domestic violence due to Japanese men traditionally believing that their wives are no more than a mother and a wife. Japan has a strong male-oriented societal norm. It is difficult for the men to give up their power. A Japanese Women’s Association tried to break this traditional norm by forming an association and lobbying for change at the legislation level, which would make such an act a punishable crime. The group also calls for more refugee services for domestically abused Japanese women. Moreover, the Association demands more accurate reports and documentation on the records of the perpetrators. The WINN also reports that since the Women’s Association action began, the number of perpetrators being arrested increased 50%.

Pho and Mulvey (2003) found that Southeast Asian women, including Iu-Mienh, experience domestic violence in the US for a number of reasons. The number one barrier is lack of English language skills. The authors point out that there were times perpetrators and children of the victims were used as interpreters. It is clearly spelled out by these authors that practitioners or any agency workers should not use victim’s children as translators to translate the domestic abuse affair. Pho and Mulvey warn that kids should never hear or translate something for mom to prosecute dad due to sexual violence.

The other common reason is that Asian immigrant women tend to lack community and personal emotional supports. Each ethnic group is usually too small and
has a lack of resources to form a mutual support group. Their limited English often prevents them from entering mainstream communities for support. Abusive relationships in small ethnic groups are usually unknown to outsiders until the violence becomes a brutality appearing on the local media. Then it is too late to intervene. Their cultural differences are not only believed to be a private family matter, but also an obstacle that makes them feel unwelcome with the larger groups. According to some cases, the immigrants experience prejudice and discrimination from not only the mainstream English-speaking group, but also from the larger minority groups. Moreover, the report links that early immigrants, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans have no connection with the newly arrived groups, such as Mienh, Hmong, and Laotian due to language differences. In some incidents, one takes advantage of another over monetary issues among these immigrants (Pho & Mulvey, 2003).

Schuldberg (2005) asserted in her dissertation that not only the Iu-Mienh people lack financial resources, but also lack support from the local community. One commonality Southeast Asian women have when dealing with domestic violence is that they try to avoid talking about their abusive partner for fear that the relationship will get worse and the family values will be destroyed. Schuldberg’s research goes on to point out that Iu-Mienh women are concerned they might face legal issues, which require a large amount of resources they cannot afford. It appears they lack understanding of the legal system in the US. For example, some fear deportation if they disclosed their private
matter. This is an important point that this research will take a closer look at because the Iu-Mienh women who came to the US may have the same experience.

The war-related syndrome called posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is another element that might have been linked to domestic violence among these Asian families. O’Toole, Catts, Outram Pierse, and Cockburny (2009) reported that PTSD continues to have a major effect on soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War 35 years later. But the authors failed to acknowledge that PTSD is also distressing the life of refugees over three decades after the war. However, Kashdan, Morina, and Priebe (2008) confirmed that refugees from a war-torn nation do suffer from PTSD and that it leads to many other disorders such as sleeping problems, anxiety disorder, depression, and DV. Due to war-afflicted experiences, many women believe that verbal and some degree of physical abuses are just normal life occurrences. The authors further revealed that small violent transactions can escalate to life or death situations, especially when dealing with PTSD individuals. For example, Pho and Mulvey (2003) discovered that a Mienh man suffered PTSD from the Vietnam War, murdered his family members in Massachusetts then committed suicide. The above researchers have found that promoting educational awareness regarding domestic violence among these immigrants through video film productions is helpful, but the movie has to be in their own language.

Domestic violence is considered to be one of the greatest threats of women’s lives (Khan & Hussin, 2008). One in every three assaults that women receive is found to be within marital disputes (Kipps, 2005). There is not a simple intervention or prevention. It
is also an international issue, as WHO (2009) has indicated. Some developed nations may have more advanced intervention programs than others, as well as equality and liberty for women. Women’s lives among some ethnic minority groups also seem to evolve faster than others.

Guoping, Yalin, Yuping, Momartin, and Ming (2010) discerned that DV is the third common reason for suicidal acts in China and other Asian nations. They also discovered that one of the primary reasons that lead perpetrators to commit DV is negative life events prior to DV action. These life events include a lack of social support and a negative attitude toward equality for women. The research further stressed that cultural norms are another important element that contributes to DV.

When discussing familial violence, it is very common for researchers and others to automatically assume that men are the perpetrators. Nevertheless, a study, conducted by Steinmetz and Haj-Yahia (2006), found that men are not always the abusers. But due to the fact that women are the ordinary victims in DV, men have a hard time proving to authority and the court system that their wives are the abusers. The authors reminded that service providers should not prejudge that men are always at fault. There were a handful of cases in which women held their husbands responsible for the crime they did not commit. It also seems that men are often too embarrassed to claim they were abused by their female spouses.

Another study stated that Palestinian physicians often approved of physical abuse toward women. These doctors claimed the violence was a form of discipline from the
head of the household figure, usually men (Haj-Yahia, 2010). This appears to be a cultural misconception of DV. It is a reminder, once again, that when examining intimacy violence, one must consider cultural beliefs in the assessment. Haj-Yahia mentions that Palestinian health practitioners often do not notice or are unwilling to report or refer DV cases to authority for services.

Recently, a few Asian nations began to see the importance of addressing domestic violence against women. A movement in China that organized a group called Non-Governmental Organizing for Gender Equality in China has been globally recognized (Milwertz & Bu, 2007). Women in Taiwan also gathered up support to overcome domestic abuse by pushing for a change in legislation (Chao, 2005).

Iu-Mienh people have many centuries of history as far back as other Asian ethnicities and nationalities. Since they have never had their own country, the Iu-Mienh people are usually pressured to fit in with other people in each nation to which they migrated. Otherwise, they would face discrimination, prejudice, harassment, and authoritarian oppression from the mainstream population (Forsyth, 2007). For example, not many people know there is an estimated 3 million Iu-Mienhs living in China because, until recently, the government only allowed these people to identify themselves as Chinese. Moreover, Iu-Mienh people who currently live in Thailand are being forced to change their first and last name to a mainstream Thai name. Otherwise, the government will stamp their ethnic Mienh-Thai’s identification as aliens and exclude them from admittance in universities or being employed by the government. One way to escape
governmental oppression is to isolate themselves in the hills of mountains (Jonsson, 2004). Iu-Mienhs living in the US are a minority among minorities. Some theses and dissertations have been written about the people, but no one really paid much attention to them. Hammond (2003) and Jean (2005) do agree that there are very limited educational resources for this particular community. Thus, to develop a better understanding with the Iu-Mienh women, this research examines existing research findings in regard to females in general. Then it seeks to learn from studies previously completed by other researchers with similar populations such as Southeast Asian women or other small ethnic groups.

The Hmong ethnic group perhaps shares its culture and challenges the most with the Iu-Mienh people, particularly young girls. An organization called “The Hmong Youth Task Force” (Saewyc, Solsvig, & Edinburgh, 2008) states that young Hmong females are often forced by their parents to abide by a part of their traditional culture, caring for their younger siblings. This practice causes many young Hmong girls to run away from home. The researchers with the agency also found that while the girls seek refuge with another family, they often face violent, unwanted sex. In addition, they are more likely to be blamed for the abuse because they defied their parents.

Lori Hammond (2003) indicates that Iu-Mienh people are extremely respectful to their elders. They consider their elders as wise and having valuable experiences. Some may even believe that certain elderly people are gods and can prophesize. The comingling of adapting new cultures in the US and the belief of their own traditions can create confusion. This is especially true among the middle-aged Iu-Mienh women
because they came to the US with their own culture. Traditionally, they have to respect their husbands as a hierarchical person in the household. An Iu-Mienh family will always select a man to be the head of the household unless there is no male in the house.

The Iu-Mienh women have to face multiple oppressions. Jonsson (2004) noticed that this minority group is being labeled as a “dirty” people. They are subjected to Thai official controls to live in only certain geographical areas—mountains. On the other hand, the officials seek to profit from the Iu-Mienh women by promoting tourism and allowing tourists to visit their unique villages and view their colorful custom outfits. The ethnic clothing and religious equipment are often being sold to museums and other collectors. Jonsson also agrees that the ethnic minority Iu-Mienh can no longer keep their own heritage due to authorities’ and officials’ implementation of rules which force the people to modernize and learn to speak only Thai, especially young people. Many Iu-Mienh girls migrated to the city in hopes of escaping oppression and the stereotypes they received. Often the young females are being lured to labor as prostitute workers.

It is unfortunate to learn all the troublesome experiences still afflicting women’s and children’s lives around the world, especially the ethnic minority people around the world still being harassed by governmental regulations, oppressions, and pressure. Iu-Mienh women are among the inescapable individuals who have to experience not only domestic violence, but are also subject to other warfare from the dominant society. Intervention does not seem to be feasible for this community at the moment. The aforementioned studies and research have provided a great broad view of history and
development of women with diverse contexts and cultures in combating domestic violence. They still fall short of information, findings, or interventions that specifically address the Iu-Mienh women’s needs. It is the hope of this researcher to use the existing information and combine it with the new data to be collected in this study to at least provide some fundamental reasons that trigger violence in this particular small community. This study also conducted a survey with residents in the Iu-Mienh community to seek wisdom and resiliency to overcome abuse toward its female individuals.

Programs and services for survivors of domestic violence

There are countless government and non-government agencies throughout the US whose mission it is to provide support and services for domestic violence survivors so they can recover their lives. Another part of their commission includes offering resources and information for communities to intervene and prevent DV from happening. In the past few years, these agencies were targeted to be shutdown and reduce their services due the economic recession and governmental budget crisis. Researchers Macy, Giattina, Parish, and Crosby (2010) validated that locating funding to sustain DV intervention services has been a challenge for any agency. It seems that oftentimes people do not see DV as an important priority that requires immediate intervention. However, many agencies are still committed to continue the needed services. WEAVE in the Sacramento area, for example, provides a safe place for women to escape violence. While survivors are in a safe refuge, WEAVE offers counseling and other assistance so the women can
reclaim their lives again (WEAVE, Inc., 2010). There are other places like WEAVE in almost every major city. The question is whether there is a place that offers support for the Iu-Mienh women with their cultural competency and language. Unfortunately, this researcher could not locate any agency equipped with Mienh cultural services.

Nevertheless, the Iu-Mienh women should be encouraged to seek support with the existing agencies because it is better than nothing. Some of the support does not require much cultural sensitivity, such as emergency housing and clothing resources.

The Iu-Mienh community in each city appears to be too small and not able to supply enough resources to operate its own agency or services. United Iu-Mienh Community, Inc. (UIMC), for example, is having difficulty locating funding to sustain its social services to the Iu-Mienh population. The UIMC is a non-profit agency whose goal is to thrive with social services for the Iu-Mienh culture and be staffed with Iu-Mienh workers. Despite many efforts, the UIMC is not yet able to run as a full-service agency. It has been operating by volunteers for over 10 years in the South Sacramento area. Currently, the UIMC has no specific program addressing the DV.

Another grass-roots agency called Asian Pacific Community Counseling (APCC), provides a variety of counseling within the Asian community in the Sacramento region. One of the focuses of the agency is to provide services that stress cultural competency. However, it has no specific program designated for domestic violence survivors. During this study, the researcher found that APCC has no Mienh staff. The organization also does not seem to be well known to the Iu-Mienhs. As Jean Schuldberg (2005) stated in
her dissertation, the Iu-Mienh is one of the minority ethnic groups that has the least access to social services.

   In terms of intervention methods, researchers have some suggestions and ideas, but they appear to be easier to say than to do. Giustina (2008) implicates that the community should embrace educational and awareness campaigns against DV. Community members are responsible for the protection and support of victims and their children, including safe residential housing that offers recovery programs. Law enforcement, service providers, and citizens must be united to coordinate the effort of handling the perpetrator. It appears that most Americans have access to freedom, resources, and supports, more than any one else around the world. But according to the above researchers, DV in the US is still very prevalent. It is difficult to imagine how challenging it is to deal with the violence elsewhere in which people, especially women, have no freedom or access to very limited resources and have culturally internalized that DV is not a crime.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Research design

This research has an exploratory design. According to Rubin and Babbie (2008), this study design seeks to further obtain comprehensible data from a circumstance or venue with limited information available. There is no known existed data within the Iu-Mienh community regarding domestic violence. Furthermore, the outcome of this research may or may not be compatible to the collected statistics with other communities. The researcher also seeks to explore a broad view or perception of domestic violence. This wide range of variables perhaps will help researcher have a deeper understanding within the topic.

Instrumentation

There are 24 questions on the questionnaire (see Appendix A) and each question had multiple answers. The participants had free choice to answer the questions according to their experiences. Questions 1-5 basically focused on background information about the participants. The next section, questions 6-13, explored the Mienh’s literacy and other language proficiency. It included writing, speaking, and reading capabilities. Question 14 solicited whether they had any history of disputes with their spouses. Those that had no spouse could skip the question. Questions 15 and 16 looked at their opinions of what to do if they were hurt or threatened to not tell about their violent relationship. Question 17 specifically inquired about the reasons that kept them away from asking for intervention.
services. The concentration was to examine the barriers among the Iu-Mienh women. Survey questions 18 and 19 assessed their familial and communal support. Questions 20 and 21 measured the awareness and the definition of DV among these participants. Assessment number 22 asked them to rate the current prevalence of DV according to their knowledge. Question 23 sought information regarding their coping skills when dealing with DV. The last question surveyed their views and perceptions of their community leaders. It specifically gave the women an opportunity to express their viewpoints toward their male counterparts because all known Iu-Mienh leaders are men at this point.

Data collection procedure

Participants in this research consisted of Iu-Mienh women only, (N=31). All participants were allowed to refer her friends to this study. They have various backgrounds in term of marital status, education, birthplace, or language differences. The participants were mainly recruited through the Iu-Mienh organizations such as churches, social services agencies, community religious functions, and personal connections. They were individually informed by the researcher about potential risks, benefits, and their voluntarily participation of the survey. Each subject was required to sign a written consent form before answering the survey questions (see Appendix B). There was no need to translate the questionnaire to the Mienh. In addition to the self-administering questionnaires, the researcher did some face-to-face interviews to complete the survey because some of the participants did not read either Mienh or English. Upon completing
the survey, each person received a $10 incentive gift certificate for Wal-Mart stores. The learning experience focused on the participants’ geographical and linguistic skills, education, experiences, and cultural myths of help seeking and coping strategies related to domestic disputes.

After the number of satisfactory surveys was reached, the researcher entered the collected data into the SPSS software program, provided by CSUS, for analysis. Professor Serge Lee provided guidance for the data analysis process on SPSS.

**Human subject protection**

The Human Subject Protection application was completed along with the questionnaires for the survey and the consent form. The application for this research was reviewed by the Division of Social Work and approved by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects of California State University, Sacramento. No helper was needed for this project. The data collection process began December 15, 2009. The procedure was concluded February 28, 2010. The project adviser was consulted and was aware of every step of the development of this research. All data collected from the participants has been contained in a secured location. To ensure participants’ confidentiality, the questionnaires and the consent forms are separated. The physical or raw data accumulated will be destroyed upon completion of this research project. The Human Subject approval number is 09-10-065.
Statistical analysis

Quantitative data analysis was used in this study. The researcher conducted examinations on the raw data that were collected to reduce any kind of error possible. The collected information was entered into SPSS provided by the CSUS. The analysis from the SPSS system was thoroughly checked for any significant finding or error. All results are recorded in this paper, including tables and percentage figures. The project adviser was consulted for data analyzing and examining. Cross-tabulation of Pearson Chi-square was applied to locate any significant variable. For example, the researcher wanted to discover how much difference the Iu-Mienh women who grew up in the US rate a question compared to the ones who came here as married adults. In addition, education was another important factor that could change Iu-Mienh women’s perceptions of help-seeking determination when it comes to domestic abuse issues. The analysis also included examining the frequency of the responses from participants.

All collected data were analyzed under nominal level of measurement. This means the values were discrete in categories. Each answer within a question was numbered or coded. For example, the possible answers to the question, “What would you do if you were physically hurt by your husband/partner?” The answers were: A) leave him, B) do nothing, C) call the police, and D) seek outside help. “A” was numbered as “1”, “B” was numbered as “2,” etc. One question asked participants to rate the current domestic abuse in the Iu-Mienh community. The researcher used a scale from 1 to 5. Five is considered to be a very high rate indicating that the abuse is still going on. Other
significant areas this research measured are reasons these women avoid seeking help from local services providers, their skills of coping with DV, and how these women perceive their community leaders.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Background of participants

Data used for this chapter came from 31 Iu-Mienh adult women, (N=31) who are residents in Sacramento County, California. The survey was administered between December 15, 2009 and February 28, 2010. Several variables were examined in order to better comprehend the participants’ perceptions regarding domestic violence. The variables included their refugee migration, marital status, self-experience of DV, education, trust, coping skills, and barriers they may have.

A key variable to examine domestic violence is the cultural background of the individual. In most situations, examining the person’s place of birth is the most appropriate place to begin. For this reason, Table 1 reports the participants’ places of birth. As reported by the participants, 22 (71%) said they were born in Laos, 7 (22.6%) were born in Thailand, and the remaining 2 (6.5%) were born in the US.

Table 1.
The participants’ birth places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of birth</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Being exposed to America’s mainstream culture and acculturating to the Western way is another key variable that may enable researchers to explain factors attributed to
domestic violence. For this sample group, of those who said they came to the US as refugees, 16 (51.6%) reported they arrived when they were older than 19, followed by 10 (32.4%) who reported they came to the US between the ages of 1 and 10, three (9.7%) arrived between the ages of 11 and 18, and two (6.5%) indicated that the question did not apply to them because they were born in the US (see Table 2).

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age the participant entered the US</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10 Years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-18 Years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 and up</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not apply</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the women who participated in the research project, 16 (51.6%) said they were married, five (16.1%) were living with their common spouses, five (16.1%) were divorced, three (9.7%) were single, and two (6.5%) were widows (see Table 3).

According to this data, the divorce rate in the Mienh community seems to be very low. In addition, some of those who considered themselves married may not have legal marriage papers because they were married before came to the US. The significant association between marital status and other living arrangements will be further discussed later in this chapter.
Table 3.

The participant’s current marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with a common spouse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce/separate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 illustrates that 13 (41.9%) claimed to be married in the US, seven (22.6%) wedded in Thailand, and seven (22.6%) took their traditional marriage vows in their homeland, Laos. The other four (12.9%) chose not to apply because they were not married or married elsewhere. Nevertheless, cross tabulation results show that where the women marry has no significant association with their viewpoints on DV. However, it is worth noticing that the vast majority of them are married in the US. This might be due to the fact that these immigrants are settled and no longer have to migrate.

Table 4.

Country of participants’ marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not apply</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education is another important piece of information that likely has an impact on people’s behaviors and opinions. The diverse schooling backgrounds of the participants are displayed in Table 5. Among the Mienh women participants, 16 (51.6%) did not completed any level of school, six (19.4%) finished 12th grade, four (12.9%) obtained a Bachelors Degree, another four (12.9%) achieved a Master’s Degree, and one (3.2%) stopped at the sixth grade. The number of women who did not have any education at all is alarmingly high. Researcher Jean Schuldberg (2005), hinted that Mienh people traditionally have very little access to the educational arena due to their refugee migration, cultural barriers, and lack of resources. This research found some similar factors that affect the women’s education, which is an interesting element to be examined. At the same time, it is a remarkable achievement that over 25% of them were able to secure college degrees despite all the challenges.

Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ educational background</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No schooling at all</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished 1st - 6th grade</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished high school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post college graduate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is quite certain to this researcher that the ability to speak English is a major element that would enable Mienh women in the US to deal with DV. That is why this
study looked at participants’ English speaking skills. As shown in Table 6, nine (29%) of the sample group did not speak English at all, an equal number of them indicated they spoke very well, eight (25.8%) spoke only somewhat or a little bit, and five (16.1) spoke well. This confirms that some of the women never attended school but were able to speak some English. Table 5 shows that 16 of them did not have any schooling, yet only nine did not lack verbal English experience. Further findings of this experience will be analyzed in the next section with the cross tabulation tests.

Table 6.

Participants’ English speaking skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do not speak at all</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak somewhat</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak well</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak very well</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another issue that may change the outcome of Mienh women’s viewpoints regarding DV is their Mienh literacy. It appears that the Mienh written language is not well utilized in its community. However, the effectiveness of the Mienh literacy should not be underestimated. The majority or 18 (58.1%) participants considered themselves not literate in their own language, and 13 (41.9%) claimed to be able to communicate through reading and writing in Mienh (see Table 7). Currently, the literacy may not seem to have any significant relation with DV. But if more people are literate with the written
language, it could become an effective tool that embraces cultural competency and reduces barriers of communication.

Table 7.

Participants’ Mienh literacy skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Views/perceptions regarding domestic violence and the test of statistics

The views and perceptions in this section were collected from a total of 31 women. They were asked what they would do if they were physically hurt by their husband or common spouse. Their opinions are indicated in Table 8. Ten (32.3%) would call the police, eight (25.8%) would do nothing, five (16.1%) would runaway from the perpetrator, four (12.9%) would call a friend, and another four (12.9%) would try to resolve the problem in the Iu-Mienh community first. Their perceptions to this question seem to have solid significant associations with the age when they came to the US ($\chi^2=28.436, \text{df}=12, p < .005$) (see Table 9); the place of their marriage ($\chi^2=22.756, \text{df}=12, p < .030$) (see Table 10); their English speaking skills ($\chi^2=23.448, \text{df}=12, p < .024$) (see Table 11); and their Mienh literacy ($\chi^2=11.903, \text{df}=4, p < .018$) (see Table 12). The cross tabulation analysis points out that participants who came to the US at the age 19 or above tended to stay with an abusive spouse. The result from the test of statistics also shows that those women who got married in Laos and Thailand were more likely to let...
their partner abuse them. At the same time, those who got married in the US would seek intervention. Cross tabulation data analysis continues to hint that speaking English allowed the women to stay out of an abusive relationship. Contrarily, those who did not speak English had a higher chance of staying with an abusive partner. In addition, becoming literate in Mienh also helps Mienh women to get out DV because this group would call the police when DV happens.

Table 8.

*What Iu-Mienh women should do if she is physically hurt by her husband or spouse?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do nothing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaway</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call a friend</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call the police</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve the problem in the Iu-Mienh comm. first</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.

*Chi-square test for the age of participant entering the US and DV*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>28.436a</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>36.947</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>6.238</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10.

*Chi-square test between the place of marriage and DV*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>22.756&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>28.228</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>7.511</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11.

*Chi-square test between English speaking skill and DV*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>23.448&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>32.027</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>8.806</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.

*Chi-square test result between Mienh literacy and DV*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>11.903&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>14.900</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>11.140</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the indications that prompt the beginning of DV is when a husband or a common spouse disallowed the other spouse to talk about an abusive relationship.

Participants were asked if this is the case, what they would do. Their responses appear to have mix views and perceptions. As presented in Table 13, 15 (48.4%) of the participants
would seek outside help, seven (22.6%) did not specify their views, six (19.4%) would
tolerate the kind of act, and three (9.7%) would only argue with the perpetrator. An
analysis from the cross tabulation test exhibits that participant’s English speaking
background is a factor that has a strong significant association to these views and
perceptions ($\chi^2 = 22.504$, df=9, $p < .007$), see Table 14. This viewpoint is similar to the
previous one on Table 8, the women who do not speak English indicated that they would
not seek help, but all of those who are educated and highly literate in English would not
tolerate the kind of rule from their spouse.

Table 13.

*Disallowed talking about an abusive relationship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do nothing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue with him</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek outside help</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14.

*Association between English speaking skill & talking about an abusive relationship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>$22.504^a$</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>27.049</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>3.998</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the key purpose in conducting this research project is not only to provide a short narrative regarding key variables that may attributed to domestic violence in the Mienh community here in Sacramento but also generalizing the findings to the Mienh Americans in general. As a result, several Chi-square tests of independence were used to examine the relationship between these variables. Table 16 used to examine two possible key factors, the relationship between highest schooling years completed and possible behaviors by Mienh women that may perpetuated the violence. Among the sixteen uneducated women, as indicated on Table 15, six (37.5%) replied they would do nothing when their husbands prevented them from talking about an abusive relationship, five (31.2%) undecided, three (18.7%) said they would argue about an abusive situation, and 2 (12.5%) would seek help. On the other hand, all six Mienh women with higher education, all four with a Bachelors Degree, and three out of four with a Master’s Degree would seek help from outside family. The result, in Table 16, indicates a strong association between highest schooling years and what Mienh women should do in order to avoid domestic violence ($\chi^2 = 24.726$, df=12, $p < .016$). These factors make a strong indication that education could be used as a method to combat DV in this community. Hence, if these women were educated, they are more likely to seek intervention if DV should occur. At the same time, uneducated women are tend to allow abuse in their life.
Table 15.

*Crosstab between schooling years completed and staying with an abusive relationship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of schooling completed?</th>
<th>Iu-Mienh men prevented his wife from talking about an abusive relationship</th>
<th>Argue with him</th>
<th>Seek outside help</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No schooling at all</td>
<td>Do nothing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished 1st - 6th grade</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished high school</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post college graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16.

*Chi-square test for a significant association*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>24.726a</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>30.068</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Assoc</td>
<td>4.074</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another variable that worth to examine is the reasons that prevent Iu-Mienh women from seeking help when DV presents. These women are alike other immigrants who settled in the US and in searching for the “American dream” with hopes and ambitions. But one challenge they all have to face is the difficulty of learning English. As stated above, large number of them cannot communicate in mainstream English. This alone is one of the profound reasons why these immigrant women allow violent to afflict them everyday. The barrier often blocks Iu-Mienh women from welcoming intervention.
In a sense, lack of English speaking skill could further allow DV to cause physical, emotional, psychological distresses and death in many cases. Table 17 points out some other explanations that Iu-Mienh women allow themselves to live in abusive relationships with their intimate partner. There are 14 (45.2%) participants agreed to all the reasons, seven (22.6%) admitted that unable to speak English is the reason, three (9.7%) stated that they fear to have their husband jailed, and two (6.5%) chose on each other three reasons—money issue, distrust authority and afraid he will become more abusive.

Table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear costs too much money</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrust outside services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid they will put him in jail</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t speak English</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid it will cause retaliation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result from the Chi-Square examination does not show any significant association between the participants’ background experiences and the point of views in Table 17, ($\chi^2 = 23.634$, df = 24, $p > .483$), see Table 18. But it is clear that all of the aspects listed in Table 17 represent fears and intimidations toward these women.

Moreover, participating in this research already seemed to be a challenge for them.

Although this research is unable to list all possible rationale that these Iu-Mienh women
face, the information they supplied is perhaps crucial for the community leaders and the local service providers to consider. These fear and intimidation perceptions are similar to those Pho and Mulvey (2003) have discovered in their research.

Table 18.

*Chi-square result for significant association*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>23.634a</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>27.372</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>4.643</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other important feedback provided by these participants is that the majority of them did not feel comfortable discuss domestic violence with anyone, not even their own family members. Perhaps talking about a violent relationship can be a threat to their safety or further worsen their personal affection with their spouses. Among these 31 participants, as illustrated in Table 19, 15 (48.4%) expressed they felt uncomfortable to share DV issue, 11 (35.5%) said to felt a little courage to disclose, and only five (16.1%) conveyed they felt free to discuss DV matter with others. It was interesting to find out what made these five participants different from the rest. Further analysis was performed accordingly, but no significant association was found among participants’ background information and their DV disclosure comfort levels ($\chi^2 = 7.478$, df = 8, $p > .486$) (see Table 20). This kind of feeling of uneasy openness was also true with the general population, which was discussed in the literature review. Most of women tended to
consider DV as a personal matter and attempted to solve the problem themselves. In addition, many women worried about their reputation or family image; therefore, they tried to avoid the problem to become public. In other cases, threatening and controlling from the perpetrator were the involved factors.

Table 19.

*Participant’s comfort level of DV disclosure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not comfortable at all</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat comfortable</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very comfortable</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20.

*Chi-square result between background information and comfort level of DV disclosure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>$7.478^a$</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>8.815</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the survey, Iu-Mienh women would not easily turn to a local social service provider, an Iu-Mienh leader, or even a law enforcement agency for help if they encountered domestic violence. This research further discovered that these people would instead consider their parents and friends as their first priority refuge. A very small percentage of them would give a local social services agency a chance to hear their
concern. It is important to notice that these women also considered their spiritual support to be more reliable than authority. More participants would rather look up to churches or spiritual leaders for help than a social service agency or authority. This conveys that their trust level with the community-based organizations and law enforcement is very low.

In response to coping skills, the Iu-Mienh women made it clear they were not better than anyone else, but the same as the mainstream American women victims who were more likely to continue to live with the violent relationship due to fear and shame. Among the sample group, 24 (77.4%) articulated that their DV coping skills were as good as any American women, and sadly 7 (22.6%) specified that they have no ability to cope at all (see Table 21). No significant association found among participant’s variables ($\chi^2 = 2.478, \text{df} = 3, p > .479$) (see Table 22).

Table 21.

*Mienh women’s coping skill over DV*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mienh women have no coping skill at all</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just as American women, they live with fears and shames</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statistics show that one in four women in the US faces some kind of physical abuse. When asked if they ever witnessed spousal violence (Table 23), 17 (54.8%) participants in this research replied that they witnessed DV at least once, 13 (41.9%) reported never having witnessed, and 1 (3.2%) did not recall. This indicates that the rate of DV in the Iu-Mienh community is much higher than that of the general population. This finding corresponds to the existing study that found that minority women suffer intimate partner abuse more often than mainstream women. The number of participants who witnessed and have not witnessed are very close. However, a Chi-square test did not confirm any significant association between their background variables and their responses ($\chi^2 = 24.129$, df = 18, $p > .151$) (see Table 24 for more details).
Table 23.

*Witnessing a spousal violent relationship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't remember</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24.

*Result of Chi-square between witnessing DV and demographic information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>24.129a</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>26.217</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>2.380</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating current DV in the Mienh community is another interesting variable. The rating result (see Table 25) indicates that 11 (35.3%) participants thought DV occurs very often, nine (29.0%) rated the occurrence often, five (16.1%) answered that DV happens every day, four (12.9%) reported it happening once in a while, and only two (6.5%) perceived it as not a lot. The sum of participants from three variables, often, more-often and a lot, make up 80.6% (N=25) of these women who believe that spousal abuse happens very frequently. However, after examining several independent variables by applying the Pearson Chi-square method, there is no association that causes these kinds of ratings among the participants. This is perhaps due to the fact that responses are spread
quite evenly among all variables. For example, those participants who came to the US as adults rated no differently than those who came at a young age ($\chi^2=9.991$, df=16, $p > .617$), see Table 26.

Table 25.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating current spousal abuse in the Iu-Mienh community</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not a lot</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once in a while</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More often</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, the level of education or English speaking skills does not affect their rating either ($\chi^2=12.986$, df=16, $p > .674$) (see Table 27). It is clear that DV impacts everyone regardless of education, language, or marital status. This result was similar to the data found in the literature evaluation; DV does not discriminate. This researcher
wonders how these women survive because the crime takes place so often and the
resources to overcome the problem are so limited.

Table 27.

*Chi-square result for significant association between birthplace and DV rating*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>12.986a</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>12.473</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>.650</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last variable discerned by this research is the views and perceptions of the Iu-
Mienh women toward their community leaders. The result of the survey demonstrates in
Table 28 that 51.6% (N=16) of them believed their leaders were not very sensitive about
women when dealing with DV. The result continues to exhibit that almost 42% (N=13) of
them identified their leaders as people that did not care much about Iu-Mienh women’s
concerns. Only 3.2% (N=1) of participants voiced that their leaders were advocating for
women’s equality. Another 3.2% (N=1) had no comment. Views from these women
really point out that Mienh leaders were not reliable and need a lot of improvement in
order to earn trust from their opposite sex citizens.
Table 28.

*Approval of Mienh leaders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approval of Leaders</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders don't care much at all</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders sensitive to DV problem little bit</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders advocate for women's rights</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, participants with a certain marital status seemed to have a significant association with this negative rating of their leaders ($\chi^2=20.480, \text{df}=12, p < .059$) (see Table 30). Due to the small sample size, $p = .059$ is considered to meet the standard of significant association. Table 29 provides cross tabulation analysis between variables of participants’ marital status and the approval of their leaders. When comparing this disapproval between married and divorced participants, 62.5% (10 out of 16) within the married people and 20% (1 out of 5) from the divorced group rated their leaders as somewhat sensitive to the DV problem. On the other hand, 31% within the married group and 80% from the divorced camp said they totally disapproved of their leaders. Hence, the divorced Iu-Mienh women tended to feel more bitter toward their leaders than those who were staying married.
Table 29.

*Cross tabulation analysis for approval of Mienh leaders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Mienh leaders</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't care at all</td>
<td>Somewhat sensitive</td>
<td>Advocate for women</td>
<td>No comment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With common spouse</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce/separate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30.

*Result of Chi-square test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>20.480a</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>12.593</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>.744</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are similarities and differences in the views and perceptions toward DV between the Iu-Mienh women and the general population. But it is certain that the Iu-Mienh women have a strong perception that DV is alive and well in their community and their leaders could not care less about this problem. Furthermore, low English speaking skills among Iu-Mienh women is a factor signalling that these women are still keeping their culture well because most of them had been in the US for over 25 years and still do not speak English.
Summary

Overall, the findings reveal that DV has been a distress for Iu-Mienh women with different backgrounds and experiences. Without a realistic intervention, the lives of these people will remain afflicted with disruption from spousal violence. Further research is needed to identify intervention and prevention methods. Even though this is only a small snapshot and the first research within the Iu-Mienh culture, the views and perceptions of these women have certainly assisted this researcher to reach a new level of understanding. In a sense, the voices of these 31 women are profoundly important for the Iu-Mienh community.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY

*Literature review findings*

The literature review provided the researcher astounding information regarding the domestic violence against women. The secondary findings lead this researcher to view spousal abuse not only as an unacceptable crime, but also an eminent threat to women’s health. The data also arouse the researcher to want to become part of some kind of action that could reduce the violence and promote equality for women. It sounds exacerbated, but the literature indicates that domestic violence will strike one in four females without discrimination. This kind of preventable crime appears to occur more commonly among minority groups and sub-cultures. It is also more prevalent in underdeveloped nations where women’s rights are still clearly oppressed and controlled by men. Moreover, many studies have found reasons leading to violence against females include, but are not limited to, power/control, lack of education, sex desire, culture/belief, economic hardship, exploitation, and fear. Research points out that the women who deal with language differences and have experienced betrayal from authorities are more likely to not seek help when confronted with domestic abuse. Another important element that often creates an abusive relationship is the untreated PTSD from war fields. Iu-Mienh families are among the Southeast Asian minority ethnic groups who still suffer from the Vietnam War trauma residue. In addition, there are limited resources available for them.
The literature review also allowed the researcher to comprehend that minority women have experienced government harassment and labeling, especially those who reside in Laos and Thailand. Many of the younger females attempted to improve themselves and escape from poverty by fleeing to cities, but they often experienced rape and exploitation. In addition, the stigmatization of being an unclean ethnic group prevents them from obtaining education and employment opportunities. Such barriers block minority women from accessing resources and power. On the other hand, women who have higher education or more income than their husbands can also pose a challenge for domestic violence because these accomplishments threaten men’s eagle-pride. Most cultures still have a belief that men should earn higher pay and have more power than women. Besides women often being discriminated for employment, they are frequently oppressed with painful spousal crimes.

Furthermore, among the findings, there are a few positive developments that promote women’s rights and awareness of reducing violence against women in some developing countries such as China and Thailand. Many grass-roots organizations are formed for family and local support. My-Sister House in Sacramento, for example, is supported by the community and individuals to provide a safe house for women battling violence from their spouses. Some pursue a larger scale of change through legislative actions. California lawmakers are currently trying to pass a piece of legislature to fund programs that combat crimes against women.
**Findings within this project**

This research also concludes that there are three major factors that influence Iu-Mienh women’s views and perception regarding DV: education, the age when they entered the US, and ability to speak English. Those women who did not get a chance to attend school indicated that they not only perceived DV as when a woman is being abused by her spouse, but they also would not do anything or seek help when abuse arises. They viewed the situation perhaps because they see a wife being hurt is too common so that it becomes a normal practice and is no longer significant enough to consider it a crime or violence. But for a wife to hurt her husband is not allowed because she has been told to respect her husband all her life. The uneducated women were also the ones who came to the US at the age of 18 or older and had very limited English proficiency. On the other hand, Iu-Mienh who were born and grew up in the US would call police and seek other help when DV occurs. The above three elements are basically linked to one another. They did not have any education because they came to the US at above 18 years old and had no time for school. Some attended adult school, but did not go very far due to their lack of basic education making it hard to progress. Therefore, the adults could not read, write, or speak English.

There are several points this research discovered to be similar between the Iu-Mienh women’s perceptions and the data other researchers found among other women. They did not want to disclose the abuse due to fear of retaliation and shame. A very high percentage of them implied they were not comfortable discussing domestic dispute even
with their own siblings or parents because, like many other women, they considered it a personal relationship issue. This could be due to a cultural norm. The Iu-Mienh women tended to do whatever it took to make their marriages work. Otherwise, it would be shameful for them to fail their vows. Disclosing the DV may further damage her family. This is, of course, a strength or resiliency that keeps their divorce rate low (16.1%).

A very interesting point the women made is that one in two of them have witnessed a DV. The incident was assumed to be experienced with their spouses. In addition, they believed that DV happens in the Iu-Mienh community very often. This leads this researcher to predict that the prevalence of DV among this ethnic group is higher than that in the mainstream community. At the same time, the crime was assumed to be extremely under reported because DV among the Iu-Mienh is considered one of the taboo issues.

The other important view that the Iu-Mienh participants had was that they did not have confidence in their community leaders at all. Currently, all the well known Iu-Mienh leaders are men. And they are usually the ones who often tried to mediate spousal conflicts. This hints that sexism could be a reason that leads these women to have their opinion of the leaders. This also shows that the Iu-Mienh community has a lot of work to do in order to earn confidence and trust from their women.

Implications

One of the important social work implications discovered in this research is that social workers are to be sensitive to cultural backgrounds of all ethnic groups, whose
domestic violence causes can be different from the mainstream group’s. The other imperative role the social workers must practice is the responsibility to synthesize that domestic violence creates harmfulness to women physically, emotionally, and psychologically. These negative factors prevent women, in most cases, from full-potential development. According to a theoretical framework, the pain and suffering female individuals experienced is sufficient enough to affect society as a whole. In another words, the quality of life in any community will improve if abusive actions against women cease. It may require social workers to pay additional attention and efforts within the minority communities to really understand their cultural and social implications.

This study proposes that individual citizens, professionals, communities, and legislative members make further efforts to promote awareness of the causes and effects of domestic violence against women. The endeavor can be done by gathering individual support from community members to seek funding for providing education throughout the different ethnic communities. For example, providing Mienh and English literacy classes and promoting existing services to the Iu-Mienh through their churches and community gathering places could make it easier for them to locate help when they need it. Social workers must remember not to use any children to interpret for their parents regarding domestic violence incidents. It is wise for practitioners and service providers to consult a trusted community leader prior to conveying any service to an Iu-Mienh client, especially anything that deals with sexual violence or conflict. This outreach could also
be a channel of communication to help people have a better understanding about issues in
the community so that they can make better choices.

Suggestions for future research

It is important for future researchers to find out what other additional barriers
block Iu-Mienh women from pursuing education. Perhaps more outreach and advocacy
are needed for more educational programs for these women, especially the older adults.
Moreover, continuing research regarding the domestic violence issue is needed in the Iu-
Mienh community. There is very little information or literature available. Future research
should include a larger Iu-Mienh population, perhaps extend the sample of participants to
overseas such as Iu-Mienh in China, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. Each of these
countries has more Iu-Mienh than the US. Another factor that needs further study is the
fact that Mienh women distrust their community leaders. It would be helpful to discover
the reasons and opinions that would allow the leaders to regain the women’s trust. In
addition, it might be a good idea to include views and perceptions from the Iu-Mienh
men.

Limitations

It was difficult for a male researcher to discuss this very sensitive topic with the
Iu-Mienh women due to the fact that DV is sort of a taboo issue to this community.
Locating participants was also difficult because Iu-Mienh women are known to be
reserved and reluctant to voice their opinions. In addition, many of them do not read or
write, even in their own language. Time also was a constraint due to the researcher
having a full-time job and a field placement obligation during both semesters. Since this research only targeted about 30 Iu-Mienh women, the outcome may not represent the whole Iu-Mienh community. Furthermore, this study only targeted Iu-Mienh women in the Sacramento area. This could limit to the opinion of those who live in a more diverse community such as the Bay Area.

Final comment

Domestic violence exists in all communities regardless of social status, ethnic culture, geography, or spiritual belief. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all mankind to respect one another’s rights, dignity, and well being to alleviate the statistic. No one deserves to be treated with any kind of violence, just harmony and peace. It is the honor of this researcher to be able to conduct this study. It has been an eye-opening learning experience. Thanks to all the survey participants and the University Professor, Serge Lee, for making this project possible.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

This survey questionnaire is being administered by a graduate student, Sunny Chinn, at the California State University at Sacramento (CSUS) Division of Social Work. Please select your answer as you see it fits with your personal and cultural experience. Circle or check your selection. The word Mienh and Iu-Mienh are used interchangeable.

1. Where were you born?
   A. Laos
   B. Thailand
   C. USA
   D. Burma

2. If you were born outside the US, how old were you when you came to America?
   A. 1-10 years
   B. 11-18
   C. 19 and up.

3. What is your current marital status?
   A. Married
   B. Live with a common spouse
   C. Divorce/separate
   D. Single
   E. Widow

4. If you are married, where was your marriage occurred?
   A. Laos
   B. Thailand
   C. USA
   D. Other nation
   E. Not apply

5. Were you married or lived with a common spouse before you came to the US? (Skip this question if it does not apply to you).
   ____Yes    ____No    ____Not apply
6. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?
   A. No schooling at all
   B. Finished grade 1st – 6th
   C. Finished grade 7th - 11th
   D. High school graduate
   E. College graduate
   F. Post college graduate

7. Do you know how to read or write in Mienh?
   ____ Yes    ____ No

8. If yes, how well do you read Mienh?
   ___ 1. Not well at all
   ___ 2. Somewhat well
   ___ 3. Very well

9. How well do you understand English?
   A. I do not understand it at all
   B. I somewhat understand it
   C. I understand it well
   D. I understand it very well

10. How well do you speak English?
    A. I do not speak well at all
    B. I somewhat speak it well
    C. I speak English well
    D. I speak English very well

11. How well do you read English?
    A. I do not read English at all
    B. I read some what well little
    C. I read very well

12. How well do you write English?
    A. I do not write at all
    B. I write a little
    C. I write well
    D. I write very well

13. Do you read or write any other language?
___Yes  ___No  
If yes, what language?______________

14. As long as you remember, had you and your husband ever disagreed on things? 
___Yes  ___No  ___Don’t remember

15. What do you think Iu-Mienh women should do if she is physically hurt by her 
husband? Would you say…
   A. Do nothing
   B. Runaway
   C. Call a friend
   D. Call the police
   E. Try to solve the problem in the Iu-Mienh community first before calling 
      authority

16. What do you think Iu-Mienh women should do if her husband prevented her from 
talking about the abusive relationship? Would you say…
   A. Do nothing
   B. Do what he says
   C. Argue with him
   D. Seek outside help
   E. Other _____ Specify___________________

17. What do you think is the one major reason Iu-Mienh women do not seek help 
outside their own culture when it comes to domestic violence? Would you say…
   A. It costs too much money
   B. Don’t trust other services such as the police
   C. Afraid they will put him in jail
   D. Don’t speak English and police asks too much
   E. Afraid it will cause him hitting her more
   F. All of the above
   G. Others_____ please explain___________________

18. How comfortable do you think Iu-Mienh women have when telling their family 
members such as parents, siblings, and relatives regarding an ongoing domestic 
violence relationship? Would you say…
   A. Not comfortable at all
   B. Somewhat comfortable
   C. Very comfortable

19. Suppose that one of your friends is being a victim of domestic violence, where 
would you suggest that she goes get help? 
   A. Police
20. In your own opinion, what should be considered to be a domestic or spousal abuse?
   A. Only when the wife hurts her husband
   B. Only when the husband hurts his wife
   C. Only when the husband shows abusive attitudes toward his wife
   D. Only when the wife shows abusive attitudes toward her husband
   E. All of the above
   F. Two or more of the above categories

21. Have you ever witnessed a spousal violent relationship in the Iu-Mienh community and you wanted to report it to authority but someone stops you?
   ____ Yes      ____ No      ____ Don’t remember

22. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = not a lot to 5 = a lot), what would you say about the rate of spousal abuse, especially Iu-Mienh men abusing their wives?

   1  2  3  4  5

23. What do you say about Iu-Mienh women who had been victims of spousal abuse? Would you say….
   A. Iu-Mienh women have no coping skills at all
   B. Iu-Mienh women have better coping skills than American women
   C. Just as American women, they live with the abusive relationship due to fear and shame
   D. Decline to comment

24. In your opinion, how helpful or sensitive Iu-Mienh leaders are when it comes to Iu-Mienh men hurting their wives? Would you say….
   A. These leaders don’t care much at all
   B. These leaders are somewhat sensitive to the problem
   C. These leaders strongly advocate for women rights
   D. I have no idea
APPENDIX B

Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research project which will be conducted by Sunny Chinn, a graduate student at California State University, Sacramento, Division of Social Work. The study will investigate factors related to Iu-Mienh Women Views and Perceptions Regarding Domestic Violence. Human Subject approval #: 09-10-065.

You will be interviewed and asked to complete several questions about your personal and cultural experiences regarding domestic violence. You will also be asked about your experience coming to the United States and your schooling. The questionnaires may require up to 30 minutes of your time. There will be no inducement for your participation in this research project.

I want to inform you that if you agree to participate in the research project, some of the questions asked in the research project could make you feel uncomfortable or upset because you may be reminded of your past experiences. Overall, the nature of the questionnaire may appear to be very personal. After reading this consent of participation letter, you are free to decline your participation. In case you are agreed to participate, while answering the questions and feel discomfort about a particular question, you are free to decline answering that question. At the same time, you are free to stop your participation in the study at any time. After participating in the study, in case you experience any psychological discomfort or have further questions about the research project, you may call me at any time. For professional help, please contact Sacramento State Department of Social Work at (916)278-2663. You may also contact Women Escaping a Violent Environment (WEAVE) 24 hours at (916) 920-2952.

In additions, I want to inform you that your participation in this research project may result in you gaining additional insight to the resiliency of domestic violence. I appreciate your participation very much. Information share by you will be used to develop future intervention program to help the Iu-Mienh community.

Finally, to preserve the confidentiality matters, I want to assure you that your name, home address or other personal information will not be used in this research. The answers you gave will be kept in a locked file container. After the raw data are entered into a statistical software program, the survey packet will be shredded.

Upon your completion of the survey or interview, you will be compensated a $10 gift certificate to shop at Wal-Mart. Your answers to any of the questions do not reflect this gift incentive.
For further question about my researcher project you may contact me at (916) 393-2912, email to sunnyework@yahoo.com, or my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Serge Lee at (916) 278-5820, or email to him at leesc@csus.edu. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in the research.

_______________________________  ________________________
Signature of Participant    Date
REFERENCES


London, S. (2006). Bangladeshi men whose father abused their mother are more likely to be violent toward their own wife. *International Family Planning Perspectives, 32*(1), 55-56.


