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Parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents

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Parenting Attitudes and Practices of Immigrant Vietnamese Parents

by

Thu N. Nguyen

A Research Report Presented to
the Faculty of the College of Social Work
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of the Requirements for the Degree
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Abstract

Many immigrant Vietnamese families in the United States (U.S.) face conflicts between the traditional lifestyle in Vietnam versus the model lifestyle in the U.S. However, there has been little research on parent-child relationships for the Vietnamese population in the U.S. Hence, this study was designed in order to gather qualitative information on the parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents. This study was based on individual audio tape-recorded face-to-face interviews with ten Vietnamese parents using semi-structured interview questions and a self-report, paper-and-pencil survey. Ten parents expressed their parenting attitudes and practices in six areas, including cultural values, social adjustment, academic adjustment, cultural adjustment, parenting concerns, and parental values. The findings of this exploratory study showed that immigrant Vietnamese parenting was different from mainstream American parenting. Ten Vietnamese parents stated that in order to educate and rear their children in the U.S., they needed to combine both Vietnamese and American cultures. These parents have learned to understand American values and apply them to their parenting attitudes and practices while still retaining their own traditional values. The outcome of this study is very important for professionals who work with Vietnamese families to better understand Vietnamese parenting attitudes and practices and to become more effective in providing services to them.

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Parenting Attitudes and Practices of Immigrant Vietnamese Parents

Chapter 1: Introduction

According to Futoro, Biswas, Chung, Murase, and Ross-Sheriff (1992), Asian Americans are the fastest-growing minority group in the United States (U.S.) today. In 1960 there were 877,935 Asians in the U.S. However, in 1990, the number of Asian Americans increased rapidly to 6,908,638. Asians today comprise nearly 3% of the total American population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991). The term "Asian American" refers to people living in the U.S. who are of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Asian Indian, and Southeast Asian descent. These people came to the U.S. for reasons, such as political freedom, economic advancement, personal aspirations, or family pressure. According to Mirkin (1990), the total Southeast Asian refugee population in 1984 was 711,001, and "half of the five major ethnic groups of Vietnamese, Chinese Vietnamese, Cambodians, Hmong, and Lao have settled in the Western States and a third have become residents of California" (p. 332). In addition, most Vietnamese people came to the U.S. because of political problems. "We came to America not for material gain but for freedom" (Freeman, 1989, p. 393). There are two major Vietnamese groups recognized in the U.S.: The first group, which came to the U.S. from 1975 to 1977, had higher levels of education, literacy and social economic status than those who came from 1978 to the present (Mirkin, 1990).

In recent years several studies have been conducted to evaluate adjustment problems as they are perceived by the Southeast Asian refugees. The findings showed that the extreme cultural and value differences between Southeast Asians and their host country are the causes of external stresses for family members. "Family members usually experience different acculturation rates, and this inevitably leads to transitional conflict" (Mirkin, 1990, p. 334).

For example, Vietnamese elders often find adapting to American culture difficult. Furthermore, due to Vietnamese traditional culture, husbands often go to work, and wives stay at home to take care of the children. Consequently, after coming to the U.S., many women may remain confined at home with the children and become increasingly isolated from American society. On the other hand, the husbands go to work, and they may adapt more to the new language and values than their wives do. Moreover, the children may have better English skills than their parents, and this situation may lead to conflicts between parents and children in which the authority of the parents is undermined (Freeman, 1989). In addition, other factors that influence refugee adjustments are an individual's occupational and educational background, life experiences, values, expectations, and the varying receptions in America at different times and places (Haines, 1985).

In Vietnam, the men held jobs that enabled them to maintain a middle-class standard of living for their families. In the United States, many Vietnamese men faced unemployment or had low-paying unstable jobs that did not usually enable them to support a family. Compounding the men's economic problems has been a widespread sense of powerlessness and alienation from the institutions of the dominant American society. (Ng, 1998, p. 149)

According to Gorman (1998), "an important area of inquiry regarding Asian immigrants is family dynamics, particularly the parenting of immigrant youth" (p. 73). Some research indicates that Vietnamese parents have had much difficulty in rearing their children since they came to the United States. Vietnamese families have some problems relating to the differences between the traditional lifestyle in Vietnam versus the modern lifestyle in the United States. For example, in Vietnam children have to obey their parents without question.

However, living in the U.S., the Vietnamese parents lose their power due to their English language barriers and their limited knowledge about the American systems. In addition, due to their adaptation to American culture, children become free to do things without their parents' permission. These problems involve "the conflict between traditional culture represented by parents, and American culture, represented by schools, peers, and the media with refugee children caught in the middle" (Freeman, 1989, p. 13). As a result, both Vietnamese parents and children often feel uncomfortable about the conflicts between parental authority and the freedom of the children when living in the U.S.: The Vietnamese parents who sacrifice greatly for their children feel that their children are abandoning them. The children who perform well distance themselves from their parents because their parents reject their social behavior (Freeman, 1989).

Research has also indicated that Vietnamese parenting differs qualitatively from mainstream American parenting (Henkin & Nguyen, 1981). For example, in the Vietnamese culture, parents often have much power over their children, and children depend on their parents in many ways. Since Vietnamese parents think that their children cannot understand life better than they do, the parents often make decisions for their children, control their behavior, and ask them to adopt their lifestyle. However, in the American culture, children are taught at an early age to become independent. They are expected to do something at school and at home by themselves. Therefore, American children often have more freedom to make their own decisions than Vietnamese children do.

According to Freeman (1989), Vietnamese children have an obligation to obey and respect their parents, teachers, and older people. They have been taught the ethical precept "King, Teacher, Father" (p. 39). It means that children should show respect and obedience

first to their king, then to their teacher, and last to their parents. In the Vietnamese school system, when the teacher comes to class, students have to stand up and wait until the teacher tells them to sit down. In contrast, some American children who do not show respect for their teachers "lean over, put their feet up, and do not pay attention" (p. 77). Thus, respect is one of the fundamental principles that guide behavior of Vietnamese children. However, due to their adaptation to the American culture, Vietnamese children have more freedom and are less obedient to their parents. This factor also leads to conflicts between the children and their parents.

In addition, Vietnamese parents also have different rules when disciplining their children. One proverb that expresses the love and harsh discipline of Vietnamese parents is "*yeu thi cho roi cho vot, ghet thi cho ngot cho bui.*" In English, it is translated as the following: "when we love our children, we give them a beating; when we hate our children, we give them sweet words." Another proverb that supports the above proverb is, "*ca khong an muoi ca uon, con cai cha me tram duong con hu.*" In English, it means "fish will be rotten without salt; children will always be rotten if they have disobeyed their parents." Therefore, for Vietnamese parents, the harsh discipline and beating does not constitute abuse of a child, but instead, it shows the love, care, and concern of parents for their children. As a result, most Vietnamese children always love and respect their parents because they know that their parents love them and just want to help them to become good people. However, this discipline is not approved in the American culture in which the Child Protective Law is very strict on parents who hurt or harm their children. Therefore, the most difficult problems for the Vietnamese families, when they live in the U.S., are the American law and the American

way to educate children. Some Vietnamese parents think that child protective laws prevent them from rearing their children successfully (Freeman, 1989)

According to Bratti (1991), the high rates of parental stress and high levels of parent-child conflict are common characteristics in abusive families. Therefore, in order to prevent some serious problems, such as child abuse, divorce, depression, and mental illness that may happen in the Vietnamese families, there is a need to understand Vietnamese immigrants and their experiences with adaptation and integration into the American society. In addition, it is necessary to consider these experiences within the context of family dynamics, especially in parenting. While some research has been conducted on parent-child relationships for European Americans and Chinese, there is little research on the parent-child relationship for Vietnamese populations living in the U.S. Hence, this research study will explore the parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents. The findings in this study may help professionals who work with Vietnamese families to understand Vietnamese parenting and to become more effective in providing services to them. This study may also become a source of information for some agencies to provide more accurate and appropriate program services to the Vietnamese populations.

A semi-structured interview which consists of twelve open-ended questions has been designed to gain information on parents' cultural values, parenting attitudes, and parenting practices. In addition, this interview is designed to utilize the Vietnamese language used by the participants to express these beliefs. There will be ten parents who will participate in this study. Some of them are parents of students in the Oak Grove School District, and others are people who live outside the Oak Grove School District.

Research Questions

This exploratory study will provide descriptive data on the parenting by immigrant Vietnamese parents and will examine the following research questions:

- 1) How do Vietnamese parents discipline their children while in the U.S.?
- 2) How do Vietnamese parenting practices in the U.S. compare to those in Vietnam?
- 3) What are the perceptions of American parenting among Vietnamese parents?
- 4) What are the strains on Vietnamese parent-child relationships in the U.S.?; and
- 5) What are the most important factors that parents can help their children achieve in order to be successful in this country?

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 will present a review of the literature review and theoretical framework. In the literature review, salient issues relating to parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents in the U.S. will be discussed. The theoretical framework used for this study, Family Structure Theory and Ecosystem Framework, will determine the relationship between immigrant Vietnamese parents and their adolescents within the cultural context. In Chapter 3, methodology will outline the study design, study sample, study site, measures, operationalization of concepts, data collection techniques, analysis of data, limitations of study, and human subjects. Chapter 4 will present an overview of the qualitative findings. Chapter 5 will discuss major themes in the context of the literature review. Finally, Chapter 6 will provide a brief summary and conclusion of the main findings concerning parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents and some suggestions for further research studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Vietnamese family is traditionally patriarchal and authoritarian in which the father is the head of the household and has the right to make all of the important decisions for everyone in his family (Pham, 1994). A study by Jamieson (1993) found that women in their families are supposed to “be submissive, supportive, and compliant toward their husbands,” and the husbands are supposed to “teach and control their wives” (p. 18). This power also applies to Vietnamese children. From their childhood, Vietnamese children are not allowed to argue with their parents. They must have their parents’ permission to do everything they want (Pham, 1994). Filial piety, which is highly valued by the Vietnamese, underscores the importance of children showing respect and love toward their parents. They try to “please their parents all the time and in every way, to increase their comfort, to accede to all their wishes, to fulfill their aspirations, to lighten their burden of work and of worry, and to comply with their wishes in all matters” (Jamieson, 1993, p. 16).

Consequently, Vietnamese children often depend on their parents for career selections, marriages, and living places. They often conduct their lives to fit their parents’ wishes so that their parents will “be proud and satisfied with their behaviors” (Henkin & Nguyen, 1981, p. 27). This outlook is a contradiction in America, where individualism is emphasized. American children are taught to be independent and responsible for what they do. Their ideas, personal perspectives, and decision making are also respected and considered by their parents, teachers, and older people (Henkin & Nguyen, 1981). “Unlike most Western children, children growing up in traditional Vietnamese families learned dependence and nurturance, not independence. They learned the importance of hierarchy, not equality. They learn the rewards of submission to those of senior status, not

assertiveness" (Jamieson, 1993, p. 17). Therefore, Vietnamese children are more likely to depend on their parents than American children.

Vietnamese children also feel that they owe their parents a moral debt that cannot be paid. Because their parents spend their entire lives rearing and educating them, Vietnamese children have an obligation to obey, respect, and honor their parents (Freeman, 1989).

In addition, they have an obligation to take care of their parents when they get older.

Pham (1994) found that in Vietnam society, children had to take care of their parents in their old age. Otherwise, their relatives and friends would hold them in contempt for neglecting their parents. However, according to Freeman (1989), unlike the Vietnamese children, "the American children do not think very much about their parents" (p. 387). For example, when American children reach the age of 18, they have a right to leave their parents and live independently. Consequently, many young American people live apart from their families, either at college or in their own apartments, at the age of 18. Moreover, when their parents are old, some American adult children do not take care of their parents as Vietnamese children do. Instead, they send their parents to a nursing home (Freeman, 1989). According to Mezey, Lynaugh, and Cartier (1989), "The National Nursing Home Survey (NNHS) conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics reports that an estimated 19,100 nursing homes in the United States, in 1985, provided more than 1,624,100 beds" (p. 23). In American society, 63 percent of senior citizens live with their families, and 31.8 percent are residing in nursing homes (Johnson & Grant, 1985). Therefore, it may be assumed that child-parent relationships are stronger in the Vietnamese family than the American one. However, this might rather be a reflection of a stronger sense of duty within the Vietnamese culture.

Traditionally, a Vietnamese family consists of two or three generations living under the same roof. To the Vietnamese, the extended family is very strong. "All members of the extended family, whether or not living in the same house, may be expected to render mutual assistance as well as share with and care for each other" (Henkin & Nguyen, 1981, p. 27): Many Vietnamese parents often sacrifice their entire lives for their children. They always want their children to have a good education. Hein (1995) found that many Vietnamese parents place high expectations on their children's education. Hence, even though they are very poor, they always work hard in order to earn money for their children to go to school. If the parents cannot support their children's education, their extended families, friends, relatives, or neighbors will help them. Vietnamese parents "are willing to sacrifice their own socioeconomic standing in exchange for giving the next generation a better chance" (Chan, 1991, p. 181). Because the family is the strongest motivation in their lives, Vietnamese children also think and behave not only for himself, but also for their families as well (Henkin & Nguyen, 1989). Thus, all of the things that Vietnamese children try to achieve successfully are to bring honor to their families and relatives. This situation is unlike American children who view their individual achievement as their own, not their family's (Jamieson, 1993).

Some research also indicated that due to differences between Vietnamese and American cultures, many conflicts have occurred within the immigrant Vietnamese families. "Despite the comparatively greater family organization among the Vietnamese, intergenerational conflict is still a problem. Traditional family values are a particular source of conflict (Nguyen & William, 1989)" (Hein, 1995, p. 127). According to Freeman (1989), Vietnamese children change their behavior when they live in the American society. Because

they do not have a connection with their country, the traditional teachings and customs in Vietnam do not affect them. In addition, Vietnamese children are more likely to adapt to the mainstream culture than their parents do. In seeing the freedom of their peers, Vietnamese children tend to imitate them. In contrast, many Vietnamese parents have difficulty adjusting to the American culture due to their language barriers and their old age (Haines, 1997). Moreover, the loss of their country, villages, relatives, friends, and social status, together with the loss of respect and obedience from their children, make many Vietnamese parents suffer from physical, psychological, and mental problems (Montero, 1979). A study by Freeman (1989) has pointed out,

People also complain about the difficulties they have with the English language and their difficulties in getting jobs They frequently complain about the stress of living in America, running all the time, with no time to relax physically and mentally. There is too much to do in learning how to survive and not enough time to do it.
(p. 399)

In addition, many Vietnamese parents feel that educating and rearing children in America is difficult compared to doing so in Vietnam (Haines, 1997). The problem is that Vietnamese parents emphasize control of the children while Americans emphasize their children's freedom (Freeman, 1989). Thus, Vietnamese parents have more power over their children's lives than American parents do (Chang, 1995). For example, American children have freedom to do whatever they want. They are also encouraged to share their ideas and feelings with their parents. In contrast, Vietnamese children often cannot share their ideas with their parents. Instead, they have to listen to their parents' ideas and follow their parents' suggestions. Children seldom participate in conversation between their parents and their

friends, or stay close when their parents entertain visitors (Henkin & Nguyen, 1989). In order to adapt to the American culture, immigrant Vietnamese children want to have more freedom to talk and share their ideas with their parents, as well as with other people, and become more independent. This situation often leads to conflicts between children and their parents. According to Freeman (1989), one immigrant Vietnamese father stated that Vietnamese children become less obedient to their parents when living in the U.S. Instead, they often argue with them.

Some Vietnamese parents are afraid that if their children have too much freedom in this country, they may do many bad things. Because children are inexperienced, they may make mistakes in their lives. However in Vietnam, until marriage, boys and girls have to live with their parents who often limit their dating (Hein, 1995). The marriage is also arranged by the parents of both sides of the family. However, individuals in the U.S. have greater freedom and opportunity to meet each other. Around the age of 14, boys and girls go on dates to the movies, dances, and parties. American parents seldom play a role in selecting dates for their children, and children have the freedom to choose their partners. This situation is not acceptable to Vietnamese families because Vietnamese parents are afraid that their children may get in trouble, e.g., running away and becoming a gang member. Hence, many Vietnamese parents believe that the best way to prevent children from making mistakes or having trouble is for parents to strictly control their children. "Both boys and girls need to be controlled. If boys have lots of freedom, if they are let loose, that is not good. They will do anything they want, not pay respect to their parents, lie to them, and fool around while pretending to take money for school" (Freeman, 1989, p. 363). However, in the United

States, they cannot control their children as they wish because American law limits their rights on their children.

Due to their concern for their children, some Vietnamese parents try to control them as much as they can. They do not understand that their children need to adapt to the mainstream culture in order to fit in with their American peers and American lifestyles. As a result, children feel that their parents are too strict. They withdraw into themselves and become foreigners inside their family (Black, 1984). They also gradually get more involved in their peers' activities, which may not be good, such as gangs, drugs, and alcohol.

According to Ho (1987), foreign-born parents tend to experience a great degree of cultural conflict with their American-born children. Thus, due to their limitation in speaking English, parents may not understand what their children say. Children may also not understand what their parents' expectations of them are due to their limitation in speaking and understanding Vietnamese languages. Some Vietnamese parents still hold onto what they have learned in Vietnam, and they want their children to be educated so that they can maintain their traditional culture (Freeman, 1989). However, Vietnamese children in America quickly adapt to what they learn from school, and they seem to ignore their own traditional culture (Jamieson, 1993). One study also pointed out that some Vietnamese children are more sensitive to the differences between their native culture and the American culture. These children need to learn to juggle the expectations of both cultures into their lives. If they have not achieved a sense of peace in their adaptation, they may be in a disruptive psychological situation, feeling depressed and confused (Ambert, 1997). Therefore, parents should assist their children in learning how to connect both cultures into their lives.

Another thing that leads to difficulties for Vietnamese parents in rearing their children is the American law. Freeman (1989) has written that the Vietnamese have plenty of unruly children because of American law, which is different from Vietnamese law. He felt that there are many Vietnamese teenagers who came to America and who have become "not good people" because of American law (p. 387). According to some Vietnamese parents, the laws of the U.S. make it difficult to educate and rear children. In Vietnam, if children disobey their parents, parents can use physical punishment to discipline them. Traditionally, Vietnamese parents use physical punishment more freely in child rearing than most Americans. Most Vietnamese believe that this discipline can prevent the children from doing bad things (Freeman, 1989). However, in American society Vietnamese parents do not have the right to use this discipline on their children because it may constitute child abuse according to California law. In addition, when children turn 18 years old in America, they have the freedom to leave their parents' home. This situation is different from traditional Vietnamese culture where children have to live with their parents until they get married (Hein, 1995). Therefore, it is difficult for parents to discipline their children in the U.S. where their power is limited. For example, if they control their children's behavior or reject their children's wishes, the children can run away from them and may get in trouble.

In America, sometimes there are no relatives or extended families to help children and parents as in Vietnam. A study by Freeman (1989) pointed out that Vietnamese families often live in different locations in the U. S., and they do not have many opportunities to see each other. Whereas in Vietnam, "all members of the household live together under the authority of the father and all contribute to the income of the family. Everyone should work for the welfare of the family" (Chang, 1995, p. 3). If children disobey their parents, the

parents can expel them from the house. Then, children do not have a place to live because the community wants them to go back to their family. Through the intervention of their relatives, friends, and community, children can return to their family, but they must promise their parents that they will not repeat the offending behavior. Therefore, the community, including extended families, relatives, friends, and neighbors, is very strong in Vietnam. It empowers Vietnamese parents to educate and rear their children more effectively. "In Vietnam, in a village, from one end to another, everybody knows each other. Even in the city where I lived, we knew each other and visited one another. If I was sick, my friends visited me, and I did the same for them" (Freeman, 1989, p. 426).

Immigrant Vietnamese people not only lack support from their relatives and friends, but also lack support from social services programs. For example, unlike Americans who often seek help from many social services or counseling programs when they have problems, the Vietnamese family often keeps its problems secret. Many Vietnamese families feel that it is shameful to discuss family problems with anyone outside the family. Hence, Vietnamese people rarely seek help from social services or mental health agencies. This attitude prevents many Vietnamese people from obtaining needed services. Therefore, Vietnamese parents do not have much social support while rearing their children in the U.S. As a result, many conflicts have occurred within the immigrant Vietnamese families due to the differences between the two cultures, Vietnamese and American. Some studies have emphasized the relationships between parents and adolescents of other groups, such as Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and European. However, there has not been much research focusing on the relationships between Vietnamese parents and their children living in the United States. Therefore, this study will fill the gap in research on immigrant Vietnamese parenting.

Family Structure Theory

Parent-child relationships can be examined through Bowen's theory, which focus on the family system's structural dynamics and its cultural context. According to Ho (1987), the Vietnamese family is deeply "immersed in a family system that does not stress individuality. The immense power of the family—parents, grandfathers, ancestors, and extended kin—in shaping one's destiny is taken for granted and accepted as an implicit part of life" (p. 41). By looking at the interactions between immigrant Vietnamese parents and their children within their cultural context, we can see how cultural values and traditions affect immigrant Vietnamese families and how the family members adapt to their new environment in order to fit into society.

Family Structure Theory is very useful in working with recent immigrant families. In order to understand Asian families, we need to look at the central concept in Bowen's theory, "the concept that links the intergenerational and here-and-now perspectives" (Ho, 1987, p. 41). This concept identifies the "differentiation" that relates to the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergenerational processes within the family. In terms of the intrapersonal process, differentiation of an individual refers to the relationship between goal-directed activities and the emotions or feeling-directed activities. The person who adapts well to his or her environment is flexible, thoughtful, and autonomous when confronted with stress. Whereas, the people who do not adapt well to stress often suffer from disruptive and confusing feelings (Ho, 1987). Thus, by applying this process to immigrant Vietnamese families, we can see that many Vietnamese parents suffer from depression due to the loss of their country, relatives, and friends in Vietnam. In addition, they are faced with many difficulties due to their lack of knowledge about American systems, their language

barriers, and their physical limitations (Freeman, 1989). As a result, the inability to plan ahead, a sense of powerlessness over an individual's life, and poor housing can make Vietnamese parents suffer from chronic stress, and therefore, they are not able to handle their disruptive emotional feelings. This situation can prevent parents from rearing their children successfully (Ambert, 1997). However, some Vietnamese parents who have "more interaction with Americans would become similar to Americans in a variety of ways" (Haines, 1989, p. 44). Thus, these parents understand more about the American culture and adjust better to this society.

In terms of interpersonal activities, the differentiation refers to the person who maintains "a solid, nonnegotiable self in relationships within and outside the family and [takes] comfortable 'I' positions" (Ho, 1987, p. 41). He or she neither depends on others nor seeks approval, love, or peace from them. This differentiated person can leave his or her family to create his or her own life without feeling disloyal. This kind of persona may not apply to immigrant Vietnamese people who are traditionally very tied to each member in the Vietnamese family. "The individual in traditional Asian/Pacific culture is protected securely in a wide network of kinship. He or she is clearly reminded that other social relationships or friendships should be secondary to the needs of the family and other kin relationships" (Ho, 1987, p. 26). Therefore, in order to assess family structure and function of an immigrant Vietnamese family, we should give special consideration to the cultural values that affect that family. Moreover, in terms of family relationships, the differentiation refers to the family's ability to adapt well to their environment. People in the family accept the changes and differences in their members and allow them to become independent (Ho, 1987). According to (Haines, 1989), if Vietnamese parents adapt well to the American culture, they

better understand their children and are more likely to adapt their parenting practices to their children's personalities, in turn the children become more independent.

In addition, the intergenerational family can be seen through the relationship between parents and children in which "parental emotions help to shape and define what the child become" (Ho, 1987, p. 42). This situation can closely apply to immigrant Vietnamese parents of American-born children. Thus, due to the differences between the two cultures, Vietnamese and American children need help from their parents in order to reduce the confusion between both cultures' expectations. However, some Vietnamese parents cannot help their children due to their limited knowledge about the American systems. As a result, Vietnamese children feel conflict between the expectations of their parents and of the American society. Therefore, Vietnamese parents should help their children find a connection between the past and the present culture so that the children can adapt well to the American culture while still maintaining their own traditional culture.

According to Gorman (1998), in order to understand the relationship between Vietnamese children and parents, it is necessary to understand the three styles of parenting that have been identified in the U.S.: (1) authoritative, (2) authoritarian, and (3) permissive. According to Baumrind (1968), parents who are authoritative offer warmth and respect to their children. They often explain to their children the reasons for their demands. In addition, when the parents set up rules and consequences, they follow through with them. This authoritative style is one that "correlates the most with good adjustment, both in children and adolescents, on all dimensions of development (Steinberg et al., 1992)" (Ambert, 1997, p. 44). On the other hand, parents who are authoritarian are particularly controlling of their children. These parents often use physical punishment in disciplining

their children. However, the parents who use this style are often inconsistent in following through with their rules. "This type of discipline is not as effective because children resent it and can take advantage of its inconsistencies" (Ambert, 1997, p. 44). Finally, the last parenting style is permissive. Permissive parenting involves "a very low level of control, lack of supervision or monitoring, and little parental involvement in making maturity demands on children or adolescents" (Ambert, 1997, p. 45). This type of discipline is not effective because the lack of parenting control or supervision may lead children to exercise more freedom and become more involved in negative situations. Compared to the authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting may have more negative consequences than authoritarianism, especially in times of cultural and social instability (Ambert, 1997).

Among Americans, authoritative parenting has been correlated with successful child and adolescent outcomes for Americans (Gorman, 1998). In contrast, the authoritarian parenting style is not effective in North America and some other countries. However, this parenting style seems to be effective in Vietnamese families. For example, most Vietnamese children often try their best in their studies because of their parents' expectations. The strict discipline of Vietnamese parents helps children to pay more attention to their education and to prevent them from participating in some unnecessary activities, such as going to movies, playing games, or attending dances. Therefore, Vietnamese families are traditionally authoritarian and patriarchal.

Ecosystem Framework

The parent-child relationships can also be examined through an Ecosystem Framework. According to Ho (1987), the ecosystem perspective is selected as the theoretical framework that helps us to understand ethnic minority families. The term ecosystem is

defined as “the science concerned with the adaptive fit of organisms and their environments and with the means by which they achieve a dynamic equilibrium and mutuality” (p. 19). By focusing on adaptive and maladaptive transactions between people and their environment, we can identify the difficulties that the family faces when dealing with culture shock, role conflicts, and resource deficits (Ho, 1987). Then, as cultural brokers, we intervene with efforts to help the family members make positive changes. Ho (1987) felt that working with more acculturated or motivated family members might bring about significant changes within the family.

Moreover, the ecological and developmental perspectives also help us understand child-parent relationships. According to Ambert (1997), “The parent-child relationship and child development are examined within a perspective that links the biological organism, behavior, and personality with the multiplicity of the contextual variables, including time that surrounds an individual. These variables interact with each other to influence relationships and determine development” (p. 1). In addition, Longres (1995) found that the ecological perspective places the family in the broader context of extended families, friends, neighbors, and community. By looking at the family within many systems, such as church, social services, friends, neighbors, and relatives, we can see how these systems affect the child-parent relationships and how the conflicts can be solved effectively through these systems. According to Hein (1995), if the family has support from their relatives, friends, and extended families, they may handle their problems more effectively and adjust better to their new environments. Therefore, the extended families, friends, neighbors, and social services are very important in empowering immigrant Vietnamese parents’ strengths in successfully rearing their children.

By applying both the Family Structure Theory and the Ecosystem Framework to immigrant Vietnamese families, the researcher can understand how Vietnamese and American cultures affect parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents of adolescents. In addition, understanding the cultural factors that affect immigrant Vietnamese families can help professionals to understand better Vietnamese parents and to be more effective in providing services to them.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Study Design

An exploratory research design was used to study the parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents of adolescents. The data were collected using two instruments that included an individual audio taped-recorded face-to-face interviews using semi-structured interview questions and a self-report, paper-and-pencil survey. Ten immigrant Vietnamese parents were interviewed individually for approximately 60 to 90 minutes in their homes or a mutually agreed upon location. The respondents were also asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) before they started the audio-taped interviews (see Appendix B). During the interviews, the researcher took observational notes on each respondent.

Study Sample

Ten immigrant Vietnamese parents, five fathers and five mothers, participated in this study. These participants were parents of Vietnamese immigrant adolescents, ages 12 to 20. According to Gorman (1998), there has been an increase in the proportion of ethnic minorities in the United States. For example, "In New York alone, the percentage of immigrants in the young adult population has increased from 11.4% in 1970 to 32% in 1990" (p. 73). Asian Americans are the fastest growing minority group. "By September 30, 1983, the United States had received a total of 678,057 refugees from Indochina Vietnamese refugees accounted for about two-thirds of all Indochinese refugees in the United States" (Haines, 1985, p. 201). According to Ho (1987), there are three types of Asian American families in the United States: (1) Recently arrived immigrant families who often try to adjust to their new environment; (2) Immigrant-American families, who are "characterized by

foreign-born parents and their American-born children, and the great degree of cultural conflict between them;" and (3) Immigrant-descendant families who consist of "second, third and fourth generation American-born parents and their children" (p. 35). In this study, the Vietnamese parents were between 42 to 50 years of age. The duration of time that they spent in the United States was from 4 to 23 years. Eight (80%) of them had been living in the United States for more than 15 years. These people were employed in some fields, such as social work, education, engineering, and electronics. There were two administrators, one teacher, one community liaison, one manufactory manager, three assemblers, one business person, and one who was not working (on SSI). Eight families had an income of over \$35,000 and the two newly immigrant families had an income of less than \$15,000. All of them were married, three were Buddhists and seven were Catholic. Nine of the ten had education beyond high school. The total number of children for all 10 parents in this study was 33, seventeen sons and sixteen daughters. Fifteen of the children were born in Vietnam and immigrated to the United States. In addition, these children attended both public and private high school and college, and they resided at home.

Study Site

Recruitment of immigrant Vietnamese parents was based on convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Some respondents were the parents of students in the Oak Grove School District, while others lived outside of this district. There were four Vietnamese parents of students in Oak Grove School District participating in this study. This district recently consists of 17 elementary schools varying from around 400 to 650 students for each school and three intermediate schools ranging from 800 to 950 students for each school. There are about 58% of students who belonged to a racial and ethnic minority

background, including African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics (Brochure). In addition, Oak Grove School District has bilingual programs to provide effective learning services to bilingual students and their parents, especially Vietnamese and Spanish speakers. Almost all people living in Oak Grove School District have higher education and hold jobs, e.g., administrators, teachers, and managers. Most of them were in middle class with high level of income.

Measures

A demographic questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were used in this exploratory study. For the qualitative portion, the semi-structured guide was used to gather information on the Vietnamese parents' cultural values, parenting attitudes, and parenting practices. Through open-ended questions, the interview addressed six main areas: cultural values, social adjustment, academic adjustment, cultural adjustment, parenting concerns, and parental rules. For "cultural values," the Vietnamese parents were asked to identify the traditional Vietnamese values that they felt were essential for their children to learn. In addition, the Vietnamese parents also shared their perspectives on their adolescent children's "social adjustment." These questions focused on the difficulties or conflicts, between parents and their children, regarding friends and social activities. "Academic adjustment" and "cultural adjustment" questions were also used to identify the different values, that parents and their children had, which contributed to interpersonal conflicts. In addition, Vietnamese parents were also asked to identify "parental concerns" through their feelings about American parenting practices and how it was difficult for them to rear their children while living in the U.S. Moreover, "parental rules" were also discussed in order to identify the rules or wishes that Vietnamese parents had for their children.

For the quantitative portion, survey questions were used to obtain demographic information on the participants. The Vietnamese parents were asked to fill out eleven questions related to age, occupation, religion, education, marital status, and income. This information was used to help the researcher gain a better understanding of the immigrant Vietnamese parents' attitudes and practices.

Both the "Survey Questions" and the "Semi-Structured Interview Questions" were translated into Vietnamese. The researcher used "double translation" for this study (Marin & Marin, 1991, p. 90), in which two bilingual individuals participated independently in the translation process. First, the bilingual researcher started by translating the original English version into Vietnamese. Once the Vietnamese language version was completed, the researcher asked the second translator to use it to produce a new English version of the instrument. Once this was done, the researcher had two versions of the instrument, one version in the English language and one in the Vietnamese language. Comparisons were made between the two English language versions in order to identify the differences between the two of them. Then, the researcher consulted with the second translator in order to reach an agreement on appropriate word choice. Therefore, by using double translation in this study, the researcher produced a more linguistically accurate version of the instrument.

Operationalization of Concepts

The following is a list of major terms and concepts used in this study.

- Vietnamese parents of adolescents: refers to the Vietnamese parents who were born in Vietnam and have children between the ages of 12 and 20.
- Immigrants: The people who left their country and now live in the United States.

- Parenting attitudes: The behavioral and disciplinary styles Vietnamese parents value and think about in their expectations for their children.
- Parenting practices: The ways Vietnamese parents set up their rules, discipline, and educational and cultural goals for their children.
- Culture: According to Tousignant and Al-Isaa (1997), culture is “those parts of the environment that are human-made” (p. 3) including beliefs, values, and norms that are shared by the group.
- Minority: Minority refers to “a group of political and economic individuals who are relatively powerless, receive unequal treatment, and regard themselves as objects of discrimination” (Ho, 1989, p. 7).
- Ethnicity: The concept of ethnicity refers to “a social-psychological sense of belongingness in which members of a group share a unique social and cultural heritage” (Tousignant & Al-Isaa, 1997, p. 3).
- Acculturation: refers to minority people living in the United States who adapt to their new culture, but still maintain their own culture. Acculturation can occur in four ways:

Assimilation is the relinquishing of one’s own ethnic identity and adopting that of the dominant society Integration is the incorporation of part of the other culture but maintaining one’s own cultural identity The third option is separation, when the ethnic group withdraws from the larger society.

Separation may take the form of segregation when it is imposed by the dominant group. Finally, marginalization is when the group or individual loses contact with its own culture as well as with that of the culture of the

majority, and is usually characterized by alienation and loss of identity.

(Tousignant & Al-Issa, 1997, p. 5)

Data Collection Techniques

The immigrant Vietnamese parents were interviewed individually for approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Before starting the interview, the Vietnamese parents were asked to read and sign the Vietnamese version of the informed consent form that indicated their agreement to participate in this study. Once this was done, the researcher asked the participants to fill out the pencil-and-paper survey questions in order to obtain demographic information. All interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and were audio tape-recorded. Each participant was assigned a code number that identified the cassette tape, the survey questionnaire, and the notes taken during the interview of that participant. After the interview, all of the information that was collected from the survey questionnaires, the cassette tapes, and the observational notes were translated into English and were analyzed thematically. The individual interview was conducted at each participant's house, a school office, or at a mutually convenient location between November 1998 and February 1999.

Analysis of Data

After the data were collected from each participant, the researcher analyzed the transcribed narratives from the participants in order to generate topical themes. According to Gorman (1998), "Themes were formed from either the explicit wording of the [participants'] responses or conceptual similarity" (p. 75). In this study, the researcher reviewed all of the information that was collected from the interviews to find out the common themes that the participants revealed throughout the interview. Thus, several themes were analyzed within

six areas, including cultural values, social adjustment, academic adjustment, cultural adjustment, parenting concerns, and parental rules.

Limitations of Study

Some limitations were found in this study. One limitation was that with only ten Vietnamese parents participating in this study, the findings did not represent a large sample and could not be generalized. Thus, this study might lead to biased findings. Therefore, the need for conducting further research, interviewing larger numbers of immigrant Vietnamese people, should be emphasized. Another limitation was that since Vietnamese parents often feel shame when sharing their own family problems, they did not fully express their negative feelings toward their children, or toward conflicts that they had with them, regarding their parenting attitudes and practices.

Human Subjects

After receiving a Human Subject Approval Letter from San Jose State University (see Appendix D), the researcher started to interview ten immigrant Vietnamese parents. In order to protect the confidentiality of the study participants, all names and identifying information were kept confidential. Each participant was given a unique code number. Code numbers identified the cassette tapes, the survey questionnaires, and any notes taken during the interview. The data collected from each interview were kept confidential, and only summary data were reported in this study. In addition, all forms used in this study were kept in a locked cabinet that was accessible only to the researcher. The results of this study were published, but there was no information that could identify the participants in this research study.

Summary

This exploratory study focused on the Vietnamese parents' attitudes and practices while rearing immigrant children in the United States. Through tape-recorded face-to-face interviews with ten immigrant Vietnamese parents using the semi-structured interview questions, the researcher gathered qualitative information on Vietnamese parenting in the United States. The survey questionnaire also helped the researcher to obtain better understanding of Vietnamese parents' attitudes and practices. The Vietnamese parents were interviewed individually for approximately 60 to 90 minutes each. During the interview, the researcher took observational notes on each respondent. After each interview, all of the information that was collected from the survey questionnaire, the cassette tapes, and the observational notes were analyzed in order to generate common themes that relate to Vietnamese parenting.

Chapter 4: Results

This qualitative study emphasized the parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents of adolescents. Ten Vietnamese parents, five fathers and five mothers, participated in this study. These parents were interviewed for approximately 60 to 90 minutes in their homes. All interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and were audio tape-recorded. After the interview, all of the information was translated into English. The results addressed seven areas of inquiry: (1) Cultural Values; (2) Social Adjustment; (3) Academic Adjustment; (4) Cultural Adjustment, (5) Parenting Concerns; (6) Parental Values; and (7) Research Perspectives.

Cultural Values

Almost all of the Vietnamese immigrant parents wanted to teach some Vietnamese traditional values to their children. The family values, such as filial piety, respecting elders, and favoring the younger siblings were emphasized. Eight parents stated that they did not use their power to push their children to follow their decisions like in Vietnam. Instead, they often spent more time close to their children. They shared their feelings and thoughts with their children and showed their love to them. They also listened to their children. Two parents had a schedule to meet their children once per week. Others often talked to their children whenever it was convenient to do so. Through communication, these parents shared their concerns and thoughts to their children. One father answered the following question:

INT: Which Vietnamese cultural values or traditions are most important to you?

RESPONDENT: The most important thing that I wanted my children to keep was the family unit in which everyone loves and cares for each other. For us, we often try our best to help our children. We sacrifice our lives for our children, and it is our responsibility to help our children have happy and successful lives. Therefore, the main thing is that parents should care of their children. Through communication with our children, we often share our feelings and concern with them. We also share our

own experiences with their children and teach some traditional moral lessons to them in order to help them understand some Vietnamese traditional values and learn from them. We often recited some stories talking about filial piety, friendship, and empathy to our children. By doing that we help our children learn how to be nice to friends, siblings, and others around them, how to respect and obey their parents and elders, and how to have empathy for the poor and disabled persons.

One parent also shared that when his family had guests coming to his house, he taught the children how to be respectful and polite to these guests. In addition, most parents stated that children were taught to care for their family rather than themselves. Some proverbs, such as "*kinh tren nhuong duoi*" and "*chi nga em nang*," which mean "respect the aged, yield the younger" and "older sister fall, younger sister lift up" were also taught to their children so that children could learn some duties to their parents and siblings. Three parents also said that parents should be a role model to their children. Parents should show respect to the elders, especially their own parents. Thus, their children learned from them to respect elders. One mother said that her 17-year-old daughter took care of her when she was sick. Her daughter did the same thing that she did for her mother in her sickness. Therefore, in order to discipline their children effectively, parents must become role models for their children to follow.

Most Vietnamese parents also wanted their children to keep their own language by sending their children to some Vietnamese classes. Four parents complained that American education did not emphasize many moral lessons, merely academic ones. This factor sometimes made parents feel difficult while instilling Vietnamese traditional values in their children. Thus, Vietnamese children who were born in the United States often did not understand much Vietnamese culture and were not willing to learn about it because they saw it was different from American culture. For example, one mother shared that her 16-year-old daughter could not understand why she had to take care of her parents in their old age and

work to support her younger siblings when she became an adult. However, this situation was one of the Vietnamese family values that a Vietnamese older child had to do. She also realized that her children desired more personal pleasures and self-entertainment rather than the honor and happiness of their family. Therefore, many Vietnamese parents stated that the family unit was very important, and they wanted their children to keep it. One father stated:

To keep the family unit, we often show love and care to our children. I think once children experience our love, they will love and care of us. Our children often share their feelings with us because they believe that we are willing to listen to their ideas. We often listen to our children and explain to them our expectation and concerns. I think the communication between children and parents very important. I realize that many problems are solved effectively if our children and us have time to sit down and talk to each other.

Many Vietnamese parents shared that they had to adapt to American culture while still keeping their own traditional culture. They also gave evidence that their children held both Vietnamese and American values. Some parents stated that their children seemed to be more willing to keep the Vietnamese culture when they reached the ages of 17, 18, and 20. For example, they understood that their families were more important than their friends, and they got along well with their parents. "When my children were fourteen and fifteen years old, we often had big fights. My children did not agree with what I said. However, right now, they are sixteen and seventeen; they listen to me and understand better to what I share with them. We get along well now." She also shared that she did not push them to follow her decisions, but gave them her advice and let them make their own decisions. For example, her children could choose the school that they wanted to study and the career that they liked. However, some Vietnamese parents still pushed their children to pursue higher education in order to have better lives. Therefore, most Vietnamese parents seemed to limit their children's leisure activities so that their children could have more time to study.

Almost of all the Vietnamese parents stated that they used both Vietnamese and American culture in their parenting attitudes and practices. However, most of them felt that it was difficult for them to combine both cultures in their families. One mother stated, "we do not have a standard to follow. In Vietnam, every child kept the same traditional values, so our children did. However, in here, it is different because each Vietnamese family adapts to American culture differently." This was sometimes the result of conflicts between parents and their children. Their children became confused because they did not know what they should follow. One father shared that, "we do not want to discuss with our children about what is right or wrong related to both cultures. Instead, we ask our children to respect us by following some Vietnamese traditional values, which are very useful for our children to keep. In addition, we respected our children's freedom and let them make their own decisions in some cases." Thus, both parents and children could talk to each other and find the best way for both of them so that they could keep a warm, loving, and peaceful atmosphere in their family.

Social Adjustment

Almost all of the Vietnamese parents stated that their children's friends had a great influence on their children's academic performance and behavior. They wanted their children to make friends with good people. "I really care about our children's friends even though I know that I cannot control or monitor their activities. I think friends are very important to our children." In Vietnam, there are some proverbs that Vietnamese parents often used to teach their children how to choose friends, such as "*Gan muc thi den, gan den thi sang*" or "*lua ban ma choi*," meaning that "near ink is black, near light is bright" or "choose friends to play." Therefore, Vietnamese parents often asked their children to choose

good friends to help each other to improve their learning as well as behavior. Some Vietnamese parents also created some chances so that their children could play with children of their good friends. They believed that children might become good people if they lived in a good environment. In addition, nine Vietnamese parents encouraged their children to bring friends to their house so that they had a chance to know their children's friends. They believed that it was better for their children to have in-house activities rather than going outside where they did not know what their children were doing with their friends. However, one parent said that he let his children invite some good friends to his house because of his family's safety and security. "I am willing to let my children's friends come to my house, but they must be good people. I want to keep my home safe and I do not want my children to be influenced by them." Two parents often held some parties for their children at home so that the children's friends can come to their house.

Most Vietnamese parents often reminded their children to get away from some undesirable friends who were involved in gangs, disrespectful, had poor academic performance or negative behaviors. There were some conflicts related to children's activities and friends. One parent answered the following question:

INT: Has there been conflict between you and your children about their social activities or friends?

RESPONDENT: Yes, sometimes we have some disagreements. For example, we often limit our children to go out. We do not want our children go out too late because of their safety and health. If they want to go out they must let us know where they are going, how long it will take and the reasons why they have to go. However, sometimes our children did not come home on time, so we were not satisfied with them. In addition, when our children made friends that we knew they were not good people, we asked them to get away those friends. However, our children did not listen to our advice. Sometimes, our opinions do not fit with our children's ideas. For example, our children brought girlfriends or boyfriends to our house. Through the interactions with them, gradually we found out they were not good. We talked to our children, but they did not agree. However, I think to solve conflicts, we need to

explain to our children the reasons we want them to choose a good boyfriend or girlfriend. In addition, we have to listen to them and together to find the best way to solve the problems.

Three Vietnamese parents stated that sometimes they monitored their children's activities by driving their children to their places. Other parents also limited their children's television watching and phone calling. They believed that television and phone calls could make their children get involved in some negative behaviors. They also established contact with the parents of some of their children's friends to know more about their children. Some parents also limited their children's leisure activities on weekends because they wanted their children to spend more time with family. However, almost all parents realized that they did not use their power over their children. Instead, they more often explained to their children and listened to their children. Because Vietnamese parents thought that children could not have as much experience as their parents it was their responsibility to pay attention on their children's activities in order to make sure that their children had interactions with some good friends.

Five parents believed that if children had a good education at home when they were young, they would become good people when they grow up. These parents said that they trusted their children, and they believed that their children were not involved in negative activities. In addition, they respected their children's private lives and gave more freedom to their children when they reached the ages of 17 and 18. One parent shared that "In America, almost all of the Vietnamese parents had to work long hours and they did not have much time to spend with their children. Therefore, children who went home after school often did not have parents to talk with. As a result, they were often close to their friends. Friends are very important to teenagers." Therefore, parents of adolescents often pay close attention to their

children's friends and their activities in order to prevent them from gang activities, drug abuse, and substance abuse.

Almost all of the Vietnamese parents were willing to let their children make friends from different ethnic backgrounds. Their children's friends consisted of Vietnamese, Chinese, Black, and American. Vietnamese parents did not have specific concerns about the ethnicity of their children's friends. However, they often set dating limits for their adolescents. These parents explained to their daughters the limitations of their relationship with their boyfriends in which they must know that "boyfriends [were] to have fun together and to help each other improve their studies." By doing so they hoped that they might prevent their children from having sexual intercourse before they married. Some parents did not want children to date when they were still in high school. They often permitted their adolescent sons to go out at night but not their daughters. However, they had to explain to their daughters that they might be raped by strangers.

Academic Adjustment

Many Vietnamese parents had high expectations of their children's academic performance. They often pushed their children to study hard when they were very young. They checked their children's studies through school reports every month. One father stated, "If our children have bad results, we will let them know that we are unhappy. However, if our children do well, we will give them rewards and show our love and happiness to them. We follow our children's studies carefully." Some parents stated that they never complained when children got low grades. Instead, they found out the reasons their children could not do well and tried to help them as best they could. One father stated the following:

INT: What are your concerns about your children's academic performance?

RESPONDENT: We often see their report of school. Especially, when they were young, we follow their reports every month. When they become older, we still follow their study, but we do not push them much. We often help our children in reading and math. If they needed tutoring for other subjects that we can not help with due to our English limitations, we are willing to let our children go to private tutor or the tutoring program to improve their studies. Sometimes, we ask the older child to help the younger. With the help of us, our children often did well when they were young. However, when our children grow older, they do not get along with us, but better with their friends. As a result, their studies gradually slip.

Nine parents also gave rewards if their children did well at school. One parent set goals for her children. Depending on the child, she set different goals. However, another Vietnamese mother expected her children to get all "As" in their studies. If they got "Bs," she would ask their teachers to find ways to help her children. Other parents did not push much, but they hoped that their children could get at least a bachelor's degree. Two parents wanted their children to get their master's or doctoral degrees. For Vietnamese parents, they always tried to help their children to achieve well in school. They were willing to sacrifice their money, energy, and time to help their children. Most Vietnamese parents did not want their children to go to work early, but rather to pay attention to their studies. Some parents only let their children work at summer jobs so that their children could get some extra money for themselves. One mother talked to her 16-year-old son,

If you want to study engineering, I will support you. I will provide housing, food, and you can get a student loan. If you did not have me, you would have to go to work in order to pay for your rent, food, and things that could add up to around \$1,000 per month. But if you live with me, you do not have to worry about these things. Thus, you can concentrate on your studies.

One parent also shared that he did not care much about his children's studies because he believed in his children. He stated that "if children learned how to value themselves, they would care for their studies." Most Vietnamese children knew their parents' expectations

and they tried to live up to that. However, some parents did not want to push too much pressure on their children. They just wanted their children to try their best.

All of the parents did not want their children to leave them at age 18. They were willing to support their children until they finished their education and found good jobs. However, three parents stated that they did not prevent their children from leaving if they decided to move out of their house. They respected their children's freedom. One father stated that if his children decided to move out, he would be against it as long as possible until he could not longer change their decision. Almost all of the parents said that their children loved to stay home and did not want to leave. Therefore, the love and care for each other between children and parents and between siblings were very important to help children be successful in their lives.

Cultural Adjustment

All of the Vietnamese parents stated that their children spoke Vietnamese language at home. However, sometimes they had to combine both English and Vietnamese languages in order to help their children to understand better. They realized that their children understood better in English than in Vietnamese. Two Vietnamese parents said that when their children talked to them, they used Vietnamese and when they talked to their siblings, they used English. Most Vietnamese parents preferred their children to speak Vietnamese at home. They often helped their children to learn Vietnamese at home. Seven parents let their children attend Vietnamese classes. These parents encouraged their children to learn both languages because they believed that "learning both languages [was] very important for their children to succeed in future." One mother stated, "I want my children to know both languages and never forget the Vietnamese language." Seven parents stated that their

children knew how to speak, read, and write in the Vietnamese language but not fluently. They often helped their children to practice by using Vietnamese with them, letting their children write some notes to them in Vietnamese, and asking their children to take messages in Vietnamese. They also let their children participate in some activities of the Vietnamese community so that their children could improve their Vietnamese language. Two parents also encouraged their children to learn more than two languages. However, one mother said that she did not want to push her children to learn Vietnamese because she wanted her children focusing on learning English.

Most Vietnamese parents agreed that their children's values sometimes differed from theirs. One Vietnamese parent answered question related to this topic as follows:

INT: In what ways do your children's values differ from yours?

RESPONDENT: For example, my children wanted to have a job that they could earn a lot of money in their future, but I do not. I prefer to have a moral life than a wealthy life. "*tinh than thi cao hon vat chat*" ["spirit is more important than material"]. If I have to sacrifice some physical things in order to have some spiritual values, I will do it. My children often think about their own benefits rather than those of their families. For example, my 17-year-old son wanted to buy a sports car for himself. He did not want to buy a larger car for his family. I had to make him understand that I wanted him to buy a larger car so that it could drive all the family members and that sometimes I could use it for something else. Finally, my son listened to me to buy a larger car. Sometimes, we have some disagreements, but I tell my children that I have more experience than them. Most of time, my children listened to my advice. However, they are often very confident in themselves. They believe that they can handle their lives well. Therefore, my children and I sometimes had conflicts with each other and we had to be patient when explaining things to our children.

Some parents stated that they often spent time talking with their children and made their children trust them so that children could share their feelings or problems with them. One father stated that "parents should not make their children afraid of them because children will hide their problems and find someone else to help them. It is not good if they seek some

bad people to help them.” One parent also complained that children who were born in Vietnam and immigrated to the U.S. at ages 7 to 10 had their values different from their parents. He estimated the difference at about 50%. These children could apply values from both the Vietnamese and American cultures. However, if the children were born in the U.S. their values differed from their parents up to about 80%. Therefore, Vietnamese parents needed to learn and adapt to American values. In addition, they also taught their children to learn about Vietnamese values. By doing that, both parents and children could understand better each other.

Some parents also stated that their children requested more freedom when they grew up. Even though they respected their children's freedom, in some cases they had to limit their children's activities. For example, some parents did not allow their daughters to go out late at night and did not let them to sleep over at their friends' house. These parents had to make their children understand that they cared for their safety. One parent also realized that Vietnamese children living in the U.S. often had more freedom and they preferred their friends than their families. This situation was very different from children in Vietnam. She stated that her children did not understand the Vietnamese culture and that they neither sacrificed nor were sensitive to their parents' feelings as she was to her parents. One mother stated, “For me, I often do whatever my mom said to me because I did not want her to be sad. But my children, sometimes they follow my advice, sometimes they do not. However, they never argue with me.” Two parents were concerned about how to help their children to be more sensitive to the poor and be willing to help them. They also taught their children to learn how to take care of themselves and their siblings. To help them learn effectively, these

parents were an example for their children to learn how to care for their younger siblings and elders.

Parenting Concerns

Most Vietnamese parents stated that their parenting differed from American parenting. One father stated,

Actually, I think American parents may have some concerns to their children as Vietnamese parents, meaning that both Vietnamese and American parents always want their children to do good things in their lives. Both parents may apply some rules to their children. However, sometimes, American parents used different measures from Vietnamese parents even though they had the same purpose. As I know, some American parents give money to their children if they do some house chores, such as washing dishes, leaning house, and cutting grass. If their children did not do their house chores, they would take out the money. For me, I do not want to use this measure because I think that using money to force children to do things is not the best way. I think a good thing is family sentiment that we give to our children. The family values are important for their lives. This is nobler than money or material. Therefore, I always show my deep love and care to my children. If they realize that it is not good and unsafe for them to do things, they will correct their mistakes.

Almost all of the Vietnamese parents disagreed with the American tradition of letting their children move out at age 18. To Vietnamese parents, they felt that at age 18, children were not mature enough in order to take care of themselves without the support of adults. Therefore, they wanted their children to live with them until they felt that their children were mature enough to live away from them. One father stated, "adolescents do not have much experience in live. If they do not have someone's support, they will become involved in some dangerous situations. For me, whenever children go to school, parents should support them physically and emotionally." Therefore, it was clear that Vietnamese parents often tried to protect their adolescents carefully whereas American parents encouraged their children to become independent.

One Vietnamese parent stated that the ways they discipline their children differ from both American and Vietnamese parents:

INT: Do you feel your parenting is different from mainstream American parenting?

RESPONDENT: Not only different from America but also from Vietnam. First, we married in America. Second, we have opportunities to learn American parenting. Vietnamese parents teach their children family values. American parents teach their children to be independent. We are opposites: One teaches common spirit, the other teaches independent spirit. For us, we use both "spirits." If we push our children to follow the Vietnamese culture only, they will rebel. Moreover, it will be difficult for them to succeed in this country. Therefore, we teach our children the common spirit while respecting our children's independence. Thus, our children are taught to take responsibility for their lives. In addition, we help them both with physical and emotional support. By combining both cultures, we create a happy and satisfied atmosphere for our children and ourselves.

Five parents also shared that even though they respected the freedom of their children, they still limited some aspects of their lives in order to maintain some Vietnamese values. Their children agreed with them. These parents also realized that physical punishment was not good to discipline their children in the United States. As a result, they never used this measure to discipline their children. Instead, they often explained some things to their children to help them understand clearly their problems. "Living in America, physical punishment is not accepted. Some parents who have little education often use physical punishment to discipline their children. Even though they love their children, they really do not know how to discipline them." In addition, some parents stated that, in Vietnam, they often asked their children to accept and abide by their decisions. In America, they were more open to their children. One parent stated that when their children were young, they talked with them about some simple topics, such as food, clothes, and studying. When they grew up, they talked with them about their loved ones, their career, and their plans in the future. This parent mentioned that "we must be the teacher of our children in

any subject that they want to know. We must be friends of our children so they can share their feelings with us.”

Another parent stated that American parents did not face as many problems when disciplining their children as Vietnamese parents because their children were born and grew up in the same system as themselves. Five parents realized that American society emphasizes intellectual growth. Vietnamese society values intelligence and ethics. These parents often emphasized moral development. They also believed that if their children had moral values, they were confident that their children would succeed and thus they did not have to worry much for them in the future. These parents also emphasized that American parents gave their children too much freedom. For example, American children could do what they want without asking their parents' permission, but Vietnamese children had to tell their parents what they wanted to do before they did it. In addition, one father mentioned that Vietnamese parents place a higher value on their children's studies than American parents.

One parent felt that American values fit American people but not the Vietnamese people. Therefore, Vietnamese could not imitate all American values because they do not apply to them. “Each country has its own culture.” This parent also stated, “*nuoc gieng khong the xam pham nuoc song*,” [“well-water cannot invade river-water”]. Therefore, most of the Vietnamese parents agreed that they wanted their children to learn the best things of both Vietnamese and American cultures. Some parents worried that their children would forget their own traditional culture. However, half of the Vietnamese parents believed that their children would keep Vietnamese traditions when they grew up.

Due to differences between both cultures, almost all of the Vietnamese parents stated that it was very difficult for them to raise their children in the U.S. One parent stated that he did not worry about their children's physical needs. The most important thing that they worried about was their children's spirit. They wanted their children to live in good environments. However, these parents realized that American society did not give their children as good an environment as in Vietnam. One father expressed it as follows:

In Vietnam, everyone knows each other when they live in the same village. Therefore, if children do something bad, people in this community will let their parents know. In addition, parents have much power over their children, they can discipline their children without violating the laws. However, in America, children can do what they want and parents sometimes cannot control their children's activities. As a result, children may get involved in some dangerous situations, such as gang violence, drug abuse, or negative activities. Therefore, living in America, we must pay close attention our children's behaviors and remind them of morals and ethics.

Some Vietnamese parents stated that they often had to listen to their children's ideas. If their children's ideas were right, they had to follow them. One parent experienced that if parents did not listen to their children, they would be dissatisfied and they might run away from their family. Therefore, the communication between Vietnamese parents and their children was very important to solve the conflicts between them. One parent stated, "it is difficult to educate our children because there are two generations, two cultures. But through communication with our children, we can understand better each other." However, some parents felt that because of their work, they did not have much time for their children. This prevented them from understanding better their children. These parents often spent more time on their children over weekends. They also emphasized that both parents needed to communicate well with each other in order to find the best way to discipline their children. One father shared that he faced much difficulty when raising their children for the first three

years. The reason was because he kept his own traditional parenting skills. Gradually, he learned some American parenting through some books and applied them to his parenting. Right now, his children are very well behaved.

Parental Rules

Most of the Vietnamese parents had some rules in their families that they would like their children to follow. For example, when children wanted to go out with their friends, they had to be home not later than midnight. One parent attended meetings every week so that their children and parents had opportunities to share their ideas or concerns with each other. Some parents also limited their children's time of watching television so they had more time to do their homework. Other parent stated the following:

INT: What kinds of rules do you set for your children?

RESPONDENT: I have some rules to discipline our children. However, depending on their ages, we use different measures. When they are young, they follow the rules strictly. However, when they reached to ages 15, 16, and 17, they have their own private lives. They spend more time with their friends than their families. For me, the rules, such as limited television, do not apply anymore. Therefore, we have to communicate with them in order to understand better our children and get along well with them. We have to be close to them, share our concerns, love to them, and let them know we always support and help them when they have problems.

Some parents stated that sometimes their children disagreed with them. In this case, parents had to be patient with their children and try to find out the reasons why they disagree. Three parents also emphasized that they disciplined their children not only by their words but also their lives. These parents stated that they must be role models for their children to follow. One parent shared that if he wanted his children to go home after school, he had to go home after he finished his work. This father also stated that his family kept Vietnamese traditional culture in that they often had dinner together at 6 p.m. If someone in his family had some important things to do at this time, he or she must let each member know.

Some parents also used rewards or punishments with their children. If their children broke a rule they would take some privileges from their children. If they did well on their studies, they would give their children some rewards. One mother stated that she had to teach her children when they were very young. If her children did something wrong, she would take care of it immediately. She stated,

The important thing was that we have to appreciate our children if they do some good things. We have to teach them with our love and respect. We told our children that if we had love, we could do many things. Then, we taught our children to help poor people and save their good possessions for their younger siblings. We try to teach them in a peaceful atmosphere. In some cases, we have to control our temper and show respect to our children. We need to treat them nicely if we want someone treated the same. In addition, we have to adapt to American society in order to accept our children's freedom and independence.

Four Vietnamese mothers said that they did not force their children to follow the rules strictly, but sometimes, they were flexible about their expectations. One mother stated that she ignored her children's minor mistakes if she felt that it was not a serious matter. Another mother told her 19-year-old son that it was all right if he could not pass his test and asked him not to put too much pressure on himself. In addition, one mother shared that even though she did not want her 16-year-old daughter to wear dark lipstick, she did not prevent her because she did not want her daughter to be different from her friends.

Almost all of the Vietnamese parents agreed that they should not use physical punishment to discipline their children because it was not useful. Instead, they should explain to their children in order for them to understand what is good and what is bad. Two fathers stated that if their children still disagreed with them, they would let their children to do what they wanted. However, if the result was bad, their children had to promise them not to do it again. Some Vietnamese parents took away their children's privileges, such as limiting them on their leisure time, their parties, their clothes or shoes, and their television.

viewing if they did not listen to them. However, most Vietnamese parents recognized that by using communication with their children, many problems were solved effectively.

“Communication is the best method to help both parents and children understand each other.”

Therefore, Vietnamese parents should guide the ways of their children as well as respect their children’s ideas and freedom.

Research Perspectives

Many Vietnamese parents saw that their experiences in parenting were similar with some Vietnamese families that they knew. They felt that people who lived a long time in the U.S. and had opportunities to learn about American parenting might have different experiences than with those who just came to the U.S. within the last three or four years. Eight Vietnamese parents who have lived here for more than ten years stated that they still maintained both cultures, Vietnamese and American. One father stated that some Vietnamese parents who were newcomers might follow exactly Vietnamese traditional culture. However, these parents had to change their traditional parenting in order to fit into American culture. Otherwise, there would be large conflicts between them and their children. One Vietnamese stated the following:

INT: Do you think your experiences are typical of immigrant Vietnamese parents?

RESPONDENT: Yes. Many parents have had the same experiences. Vietnamese parents living in the U.S. have to learn American cultures in order to understand better their children. If Vietnamese children adapt American culture, I feel neglected. To know both languages is very useful. It is very good if Vietnamese families to keep the best things of both cultures. Vietnamese adolescents will mature early if they learn how to be independent at a young age as American children. However, if Vietnamese children also have support from their families, they will reach their goals. Americans keep independent spirit, and Vietnamese keep common spirit. For me, if I have to choose one of them, I prefer to keep Vietnamese traditional culture rather than American culture. Vietnamese children when they grew up, they will return to their own culture. If parents do not prepare their children to learn about Vietnamese culture, their children will be lost.

Eight Vietnamese parents agreed that most of Vietnamese parents living in the U.S. had the same concerns regarding their children. For example, these parents are more adapted to American culture and combined both cultures while disciplining their children. They often showed their love and care toward their children. They tried to help their children learn the Vietnamese language. They also taught them Vietnamese culture, such as how to be honest, polite, and respect people around them. Some mothers stated that they were fortunate in having opportunities to learn about American culture. These parents recognized that some of their Vietnamese friends lack communication with their children. Therefore, even though they were wealthy, their children did not have good behavior at home. Some children were confused because at school, in particular, teachers' expectations were different than their parents' expectations. Therefore, it was difficult for them to educate and rear their children if parents did not understand American culture. One mother also stated that "Even though we live here for one hundred years, we still are Vietnamese who have different values than American. We have to keep our own culture, not give it up."

To answer the question: "What factors are most important to help their children to make a successful adjustment for the Vietnamese immigrant teenagers?" Most Vietnamese parents agreed that the family unit is very important to help their children to become successful. The support of parents for their children and the hard studying of children could help them to succeed in their future. In addition, American society provides many opportunities for teenagers to develop their abilities and skills. One father mentioned that,

Probably, the main point is how to help children to value themselves and recognize that they are someone or something special. If children respect themselves, they will try their best to protect their values. Otherwise, children who do not recognize their values do not care about themselves and easily destroy their lives. Children who

value themselves will try to learn good things from others. In addition, if they know they are better than others, they will be proud of themselves.

Another mother also stated that besides the family education, parents as role models were also very important to help children succeed in their future. Communication was also very important. Parents should help children share their feelings or problems with them. Parents also helped their children understand both Vietnamese and American cultures. Therefore, with love and care from their parents, the children will feel more confident to achieve their goals and lead successful lives.

Summary

Ten immigrant Vietnamese parents were interviewed in order to articulate their parenting attitudes and practices with their adolescents. These parents wanted their children to learn both Vietnamese and American values. Due to the differences between both cultures, it was difficult for these parents to educate and rear their children in the U.S. To adapt to American culture, these parents did not use their power to control their children. Instead, they communicated and showed their concern for their children. They listened to their children's ideas and were willing to help them through problems. In addition, most parents stated that they had high expectations of their children's education. However, they did not apply too much pressure on them; rather, they set different goals for each child. Even though they often limited their children's leisure activities, it proved that these parents concerned and cared for their children. The findings in this study are very important for practitioners to learn about parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents so that they can understand and work effectively with Vietnamese families.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The findings of this exploratory study are noteworthy. Ten Vietnamese parents expressed their parenting attitudes and practices in six areas, including cultural values, social adjustment, academic adjustment, cultural adjustment, parenting concerns, and parental values. This inquiry suggests numerous implications for future studies.

Cultural Values

Ten parents showed concern related to the cultural values of their children. Some felt that their children adapted well to American culture and seemed to ignore the traditional Vietnamese culture. However, they believed that some traditional values were very important for their children to keep. As a result, they tried to teach these values to their children. These parents did not seem to be consciously rearing their children to be Vietnamese. Rather, they realized that they needed to combine both Vietnamese and American values while educating and rearing their children in the U.S. All of the Vietnamese parents showed some degree of understanding the acculturation process. These parents seemed to lose their ties to some traditional values. One study in the literature review found that Vietnamese parents often made all of the important decisions for their children (Chang, 1995). However, the findings in this study showed that the ten immigrant Vietnamese parents did not use their power over their children like many parents in Vietnam. Instead, they gave their advice and ideas to their children and let them make their own decisions. These parents also allowed their children to become independent, and they respected their children's freedom when they became adults. Moreover, in order to help their children grow into happy, self-respecting adults, these parents tried to be patient, understanding, and loving parents. Some of them adapted well to the American culture and

understood that their children might not care for them in old age as many children do in Vietnam. Therefore, these parents were more flexible in their expectations of their children. They hoped their children would keep some parts of the Vietnamese values that are valuable to them. In addition, they let their children adapt to some American values. By doing that, they hoped that their children could succeed in the future.

Social Adjustment

Most of the Vietnamese parents were very concerned with their children's social activities and friends. They wanted their children to make friends with good people so that they could help each other improve their academic performance. Living in America, these parents worried that their children might get involved in maladaptive activities, such as gangs, drugs, and alcohol. Therefore, they often tried to limit their children's activities, such as watching television, attending birthday parties, or going dancing. However, everything they did clearly reflected their concerns and care rather than control over their children. Ten parents in this study showed that they often paid special attention to their children's activities in order to make sure that their children had interactions with some good friends. They also tried to teach their children about morals and ethics in order to help their children become productive people of society. Thus, it was clear that these parents did not try to dominate their children through their parenting attitudes and practices, but rather to help their children adjust better in life.

Academic Adjustment

According to Chan (1991) and Hein (1995), Vietnamese parents often dedicated their lives to helping their children attain a good education. Similarly, the findings in this study showed that almost all of the Vietnamese parents had high expectations of their children's

academic achievement. These parents stated that they always tried as best as they could to help their children improve their studies. Due to their English limitations, Vietnamese parents let their children get help from private tutors or the tutoring program. Thus, these parents seemed to indirectly influence their children's academic performance. This might differ from Vietnamese traditional parenting where parents became involved in and directly influence their children's academic performance. These parents stated that they did not push their children to study hard like in Vietnam. They realized that there were many opportunities for their children to reach higher education in the U.S. They believed that their children could meet their goals with their physical and emotional support. Therefore, even though they had high expectations of their children's academic achievement, they were not over controlling. Rather, they tried their best to support their children in achieving their goals.

Cultural Adjustment

All of the Vietnamese parents wanted their children to learn and keep their own language by helping their children to practice Vietnamese at home as well as sending them to some Vietnamese classes. However, these parents realized that their children understood English better than Vietnamese. In addition, they realized that their children's values sometimes differed from theirs. Some research indicated that due to differences between Vietnamese and American cultures, many conflicts have occurred within the immigrant families (Freeman, 1989; Hein, 1995). Similarly, ten parents in this study shared that they had many conflicts with their children due to different values. However, in order to solve their conflicts, these parents had to combine both cultures in their parenting. They had to learn some American values and helped their children learn their traditional values. By

doing that, they helped their children as well as themselves adapt better to American society while still maintaining some traditional values.

Parenting Concerns

Almost all of the Vietnamese parents stated that their parenting differed from mainstream parenting. Vietnamese parents taught family values to their children whereas American parents taught the value of independence to their children. Most parents realized that their involvement in their children's lives was necessary to help their children succeed in the future. They realized that their teen children were not mature enough to handle their lives without their support. As a result, they often paid close attention to their children's activities. It clearly appeared that the ways that these parents use to discipline their children resulted from their desires to help their children succeed in their lives. Therefore, even though some research indicated that Vietnamese parenting style was "authoritarian," these parents showed a slightly different style in that their disciplines stemmed from their love and concerns for their children rather than empowerment of their authority. Due to the differences of both cultures, these parents felt that it was difficult for them to rear their children in the U.S. However, they always tried their best to help their children lead successful lives.

Parental Rules

All of the Vietnamese parents set clear rules for their children to follow. These parents used both direct and indirect ways to discipline their children. When their children were young, they followed the rules strictly. However, when their children became older, these parents seemed to be flexible in their expectations of their children. When their children made mistakes, these parents often explained morals to their children. They sometimes ignored their children's mistakes if they believed these mistakes were just minor

things. This notion reflected that in their parenting, these parents often guided their children in the right way rather than dominating or controlling them. Some studies reported in the literature review found that Vietnamese parents did not allowed their children to argue with them; rather, they were expected to listen and follow their decisions (Chang, 1995; Freeman, 1989; Pham, 1994). However, eight parents in this study showed that they did not push their children to follow their decisions, but gave them their advice and ideas to help their children make correct decisions. These parents felt that communication with their children was very important to solve problems. Therefore, behind the rules that these parents set up for their children through parenting attitudes and practices were the concerns and cares for their children.

Major Themes

Several important themes were found in this study. First, these parents showed very strong concerns about their children's activities and friends. They tried to help their children to adjust better to the American society. Clearly, Vietnamese parents wanted their children to keep some Vietnamese traditional values. Through communication with their children in a subtle way, these parents indirectly conveyed their expectations and concerns to their children in order to help them understand their obligations to people around them, especially the family members. These parents also realized that the family values were very important for their children to keep. By showing their love and caring for their children, they wanted their children to understand that their family is important to them, and that every member must bring honor and pride to the family unit.

The second theme was that these parents had high expectations for their children's scholastic attainment. They realized that friends had a great effect on their children. In order

to help their children succeed in their academic performance, these parents tried to keep their children away from negative influences. They paid special attention to their children's activities. In addition, they were willing to support their children both physically and emotionally. These parents had clear expectations for what their children should do. However, they did not want to apply too much pressure on their children because they believed that their children would fulfill their wishes when they became adults.

Finally, Vietnamese parents applied both Vietnamese and American values to their parenting attitudes and practices. Thus, it was clear that Vietnamese parents did not use their power over their children as described in Baumrind's research on authoritarian parenting. Instead, these parents were often close to their children. They shared their concerns and feelings with their children. They showed love, caring, and trust to their children so that their children could share their feelings and problems with the parents. This demonstrated very clearly that these parents were not highly restrictive of their children as authoritarian parents. However, they were not treating their children equally as some American parents. For example, even though they respected their children's freedom, they still limited their children's leisure activities in order to keep some Vietnamese traditional values. Therefore, these parents selected both Vietnamese and American values in their parenting attitudes and practices.

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

The qualitative findings from this exploratory study suggest that parenting styles of immigrant Vietnamese are different from mainstream American parenting. The motivation that pushed Vietnamese parents to use strict discipline reflected the love and caring of these parents on their children's well-being. Vietnamese traditional culture emphasizes the value that everyone helps each other to bring honor to their family. Therefore, Vietnamese parents believed that it is their responsibility to educate and rear their children to become productive people in society. These parents had high expectations of their children's academic achievement. They conveyed their messages to their children in both indirect and direct ways so that their children could understand their expectations. Thus, due to differences in philosophies, these parents expressed their independence from the traditional concepts of authoritarian parenting as described by Baumrind's (1968) research. It would be important to conduct additional studies with larger samples to determine the relevance of applying authoritarian concepts to Vietnamese parenting style.

Five fathers and five mothers participated in this study. It was surprising that both fathers and mothers in this study had presented similar concerns for their children. They also used similar rules for their children. The five fathers did not use their patriarchal authority over their children or wives as described in literature. Instead, they realized that everyone in the family must work together to solve problems. All participants in this study understood that they must be united with their spouses in order to determine clear rules for their children. However, some mothers stated that they still see their husbands as the head of their household. Therefore, it was clear that these parents had changed their parenting style in order to fit into American society. Because almost all of the parents participating in this

study had been living in the U.S. for more than 15 years, their parenting attitudes and practices had combined both Vietnamese and American parenting. Therefore, the need for research to study immigrant Vietnamese newcomers should be emphasized in order to clarify who may still apply authoritarian parenting.

This exploratory study reported that both Vietnamese and American cultures influence parenting among immigrant Vietnamese parents. The findings supported the notion that Vietnamese immigrant parents have learned to understand American values and apply them to their parenting attitudes and practices while still retaining their own traditional values. Therefore, both Vietnamese and American cultures had a great effect on parenting among Vietnamese immigrant parents. Further, the outcome of this study supports the necessity for practitioners to learn to be respectful of cultural differences when working with Vietnamese parents living in the U.S.

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Appendix A

CÁC CÂU HỎI KHẢO SÁT

- 1) Ông/bà bao nhiêu tuổi? _____ tuổi
- 2) Nghề nghiệp của ông /bà là gì? _____
- 3) Ông/bà sống ở Hoa Kỳ được bao lâu? _____ năm
- 4) Ông/bà có bao nhiêu con cái? _____
- 5) Con cái của ông/bà bao nhiêu tuổi? Chúng thuộc phái nào?
Con trai ____ Tuổi ____ ____ Con gái ____ Tuổi ____ ____
- 6) Tình trạng gia đình của ông/bà như thế nào?
a) có gia đình b) góa c) ly dị d) ly thân
- 7) Ông/bà theo tôn giáo nào?
a) Công giáo b) Phật giáo c) Tin Lành d) Đạo khác (xin nói rõ) _____
- 8) Trình độ học vấn của ông/bà là gì?
a) không đi học b) lớp 1-6 c) lớp 7-12 d) trên lớp 12
- 9) Ngôn ngữ nào ông/bà nói nhiều nhất tại nhà?
a) tiếng Việt Nam b) tiếng Anh c) tiếng khác (xin nói rõ) _____
- 10) Khả năng nói tiếng Anh của ông/bà như thế nào?
a) trôi chảy b) ít nhiều khó khăn
c) rất nhiều khó khăn d) không biết tí nào
- 11) Lợi tức của gia đình ông/bà là bao nhiêu?
a) \$14,999 hay dưới
b) Từ \$15,000 đến \$34,999
c) \$35,000 hay trên

Survey Questions

- 1) How old are you? _____ years
- 2) What is your occupation? _____
- 3) How long have you been in the U.S.? _____ years
- 4) How many children do you have? _____
- 5) How old are your children? What sex are they?
Males ___ Ages ___ ___ ___ Females ___ Ages ___ ___ ___
- 6) What is your marital status?
a) Married b) Widowed c) Divorced d) Separated
- 7) What is your religion?
a) Catholic b) Buddhist c) Protestant d) Other (specify) _____
- 8) What is your level of education?
a) None b) 1st-6th grades c) 7th-12th grades d) Above 12th grade
- 9) What language do you speak most at home?
a) Vietnamese b) English c) Other (specify) _____
- 10) How well do you speak English?
a) fluently b) with some difficulty
c) with much difficulty d) not at all
- 11) What is your family income?
a) \$14,999 or less
b) \$15,000 to \$34,999
c) \$35,000 or more

Appendix B

CÁC CÂU HỎI TRONG BUỔI PHÒNG VẤN

Giá trị văn hóa:

- 1) Những giá trị văn hóa hay truyền thống nào của Việt Nam mà rất quan trọng đối với ông/bà?
- 2) Ông/bà có cố gắng để dạy những cái này đến với con cái của ông/bà không? Nếu có, bằng cách nào?

Sự thích ứng về xã hội:

- 1) Ông/bà nghĩ gì về bạn bè của con cái ông/bà?
- 2) Ông/bà có đụng chạm với con cái về các sinh hoạt xã hội hay về các bạn bè của chúng không?

Sự thích ứng trong việc học hành:

- 1) Ông/bà quan tâm gì về thành quả học vấn của con cái ông/bà?
- 2) Những đụng chạm mà liên quan đến thành quả học vấn của con cái thì được giải quyết như thế nào?

Sự thích ứng về văn hóa:

- 1) Ngôn ngữ nào ông/bà dùng với con cái của ông/bà?
- 2) Trong đường lối nào mà các giá trị của con cái ông/bà thì khác với của ông bà?

Sự quan tâm về việc dạy dỗ con cái:

- 1) Ông/bà có nghĩ rằng việc dạy dỗ con cái của ông/bà thì khác với việc dạy dỗ của cha mẹ Mỹ không? Nếu có, như thế nào?
- 2) Ông bà có khó khăn trong việc giáo dục và nuôi nấng con cái của ông/bà tại nước Mỹ không? Tại sao có/tại sao không?

Điều lệ giáo dục con cái:

- 1) Ông/bà giáo dục con cái bằng cách nào?
- 2) Cái gì xảy ra nếu con cái của ông bà không đồng ý với những điều lệ hay mong muốn của ông/bà?

Kết thúc/Phỏng vấn nghiên cứu:

- 1) Ông/bà có nghĩ rằng kinh nghiệm của ông/bà là tiêu biểu cho các cha mẹ di dân Việt Nam không?
- 2) Những nhân tố nào là quan trọng nhất cho sự thích ứng thành công của thanh thiếu niên di dân Việt Nam?

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Cultural Values:

- 1) Which Vietnamese cultural values or traditions are most important to you?
- 2) Do you try to teach these to your children? If so, how?

Social Adjustment:

- 1) What do you think about your children's friends?
- 2) Has there been conflict between you and your children about their social activities or friends?

Academic Adjustment:

- 1) What are your concerns about your children's academic performance?
- 2) How are conflicts regarding your children's academic performance resolved?

Cultural Adjustment:

- 1) What language(s) do you use with your children?
- 2) In what ways do your children's values differ from yours?

Parenting Concerns:

- 1) Do you feel your parenting is different from mainstream American parenting? If so, how?
- 2) Has it been difficult for you to educate and raise your children in the U.S.? Why/why not?

Parental rules:

- 1) How do you discipline your children?
- 2) What happens if your children disagree with your rules or wishes?

Closing/Research Perspectives:

- 1) Do you think your experiences are typical of immigrant Vietnamese parents?
- 2) What factors are most important for the successful adjustment of Vietnamese immigrant teenagers?

Appendix C

San Jose State University
College of Social Work

Field Agency's Approval of Research Project Prospectus

Instructions: This form must be completed by all students participating in University-related research projects, including S.W. 298 projects. The form should be completed and submitted to the student's S.W. 298 instructor or faculty sponsor. All students are expected to advise their agencies of the content of their research projects as well as plans related to their proposed methodology, data collection, and data analysis activities. Completion of this form does not remove the obligations of students to complete other college, university, or agency research review and approval procedures/policies.

If significant changes are made in the project a new form must be completed and submitted. All S.W. 298 students must complete and submit this form prior to commencing their actual research work with data collection or clients; and in any event before the end of their first semester of study.

The field instructor's (F.I.) or other agency representative's signature certifies that the student has discussed and shared their plans with the agency, and that the agency is not in opposition to the project. The S.W. 298 instructor and/or other college officials should be contacted if there are any concerns, questions, or objections.

Student's Name: THU N. NGUYEN Agency Name: OAK GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

F.I.'s Name: CARLOS AGUILA F.I.'s Telephone # (408) 994-9372 pager

SJSU Instructor's Name: DR. JOE MERIGHI Semester(s): FALL 1998

Proposed Topic: Parenting attitudes and practices of immigrant Vietnamese parents.

Brief Description of Project - Timelines, Sample/Subjects, and Methodology:

This exploratory study will be based on interviews with eight Vietnamese parents, ages 30 to 70, using semi-structured interview questions and a self-report, paper-and-pencil survey. Participants will complete individual audio tape recorded, face-to-face interviews lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The interview questions will help gather information on the parents' cultural values, parenting attitudes, and parenting practices.

Student's Signature: *Thunghuyen* Date 10/20/98

F.I./Agency Rep.'s Signature: *Carlos Aguilas* Date 10/23/98

298 Instructor/College Rep.'s Signature: *Joseph Merighi* Date 10/20/98

Appendix D



San José State
UNIVERSITY

**Office of the Academic
Vice President**

**Associate Vice President
Graduate Studies and Research**

One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0025
Voice: 408-924-2480
Fax: 408-924-2477
E-mail: gstudies@walhoo.sjsu.edu
<http://www.sjsu.edu>

TO: Thu N. Nguyen
223 Summerfield Dr..
Milpitas, CA 95035

FROM: Nabil Ibrahim, *N. Ibrahim*
Acting AVP, Graduate Studies & Research

DATE: November 19, 1998

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

"Parenting Attitudes and Practices of Immigrant
Vietnamese Parents"

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the anonymity of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to any and all data that may be collected from the subjects. The Board's approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Nabil Ibrahim, Ph.D., immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma and release of potentially damaging personal information.

Please also be advised that all subjects need to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate, or withdrawal will not affect any services the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

If you have any questions, please contact me at
(408) 924-2480.

The California State University:
Chancellor's Office
Bakersfield, Chico, Dominguez Hills,
Fresno, Fullerton, Hayward, Humboldt,
Long Beach, Los Angeles, Maritime Academy,
Monterey Bay, Northridge, Pomona,
Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego,
San Francisco, San José, San Luis Obispo,
San Marcos, Sonoma, Stanislaus

Appendix F



San José State
UNIVERSITY

College of Social Work
Office of the Dean

One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0124
Voice: 408-924-5800
Fax: 408-924-5892
E-mail: pjhalley@email.sjsu.edu
http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/
SocialWork

MSW & BSW Programs

Departments:

African American Studies
Mexican American Studies
Urban & Regional Planning

Giấy đồng ý tham gia cuộc thảo luận

Người thảo luận: Thu Nguyễn

Tựa đề của bản dự thảo: Thái độ và cách giáo dục con cái của cha mẹ Việt Nam định cư trong nước Mỹ.

Tôi thì được hỏi để tham gia cuộc thảo luận về thái độ và cách giáo dục con cái của cha mẹ Việt Nam định cư trong nước Mỹ. Tôi sẽ được hỏi để trả lời những câu hỏi phỏng vấn bởi Thu Nguyễn, một sinh viên cao học tại trường công tác xã hội thuộc viện đại học San Jose. Cuộc nói chuyện này thì được thu âm băng và nó sẽ kéo dài khoảng một giờ hay một giờ rưỡi.

Tôi hiểu rằng tôi sẽ không bị nguy hiểm hay khó khăn cũng không hưởng lợi ích gì khi tham gia vào cuộc thảo luận này.

Tôi hiểu rằng kết quả của việc thảo luận này có thể phát hành những không có những tin tức nào có thể nhận diện được tôi. Tất cả những tin tức có được từ tôi sẽ giữ lại một cách kín đáo. Tôi cũng hiểu rằng sự tham gia của tôi là tình nguyện và tôi có thể ngưng lúc nào tôi muốn mà không gặp khó khăn nào từ trường đại học San Jose hay từ những tổ chức khác.

Thắc mắc về cuộc thảo luận có thể liên lạc với Thu Nguyễn tại số 408-956-1848. Khiếu nại về cuộc thảo luận có thể liên lạc với tiến sĩ Joe Merighi tại số 408-924-5839. Ngoài ra nếu có thắc mắc hoặc khiếu nại về cuộc thảo luận, về quyền của người tham gia, hay trong trường hợp cuộc thảo luận gây ra sự thương tổn có thể liên lạc với tiến sĩ Nabil Ibrahim, là phụ tá hoạt động của phó chủ tịch Học vụ đặc trách Ban Cao Học và Khảo cứu tại số 408-924-2480.

Tôi đã nhận một bản sao của tờ giấy đồng ý này. Tôi hiểu rằng chữ ký của tôi chỉ rõ sự đồng ý của tôi để tham gia cuộc thảo luận này sau khi tôi đã đọc và hiểu những điều đã ghi trên đây. Tôi cũng hiểu rằng chữ ký của người thảo luận chỉ rõ sự đồng ý của cô ta để tôi tham gia cuộc thảo luận này và chúng nhận rằng tôi thì hiểu rõ những tin tức liên quan đến quyền lợi của tôi.

Chữ ký của người tham gia

Ngày, tháng, năm

Chữ ký của người thảo luận

Ngày, tháng, năm



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http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/
SocialWork

MSW & BSW Programs

Departments:

- African American Studies
- Mexican American Studies
- Urban & Regional Planning

Agreement to Participate in Research

Responsible Investigator: Thu Nguyen

Title of Protocol: Parenting Attitudes and Practices of Immigrant Vietnamese Parents

I have been asked to participate in a qualitative research study investigating the parenting attitudes and practices of Vietnamese parents in the United States. I will be asked to answer some interview questions by Thu Nguyen, a graduate student in the College of Social Work at San Jose State University. This interview will audio-taped, and it will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes to complete.

I understand that there are no anticipated risks or benefits associated with participation in this study. Further, no compensation will be offered.

I understand that the results of the study may be published, but that no information that can identify me will be included. All information obtained from me will remain confidential. I also understand that my participation is completely voluntary and I may terminate participation at any time without prejudice to my relations with SJSU or other participating institutions.

Questions about the research can be directed to Thu Nguyen at 408-956-1848. Complaints about the research may be presented to Joe Merighi, Ph.D, at 408-924-5839. Questions or complaints about the research, subject's rights, or research-related injury may be addressed to Nabil Ibrahim, Ph.D., Acting Associate Academic Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, at 408-924-2480.

I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form. I understand that my signature indicates my agreement to participate in this study after having read and understood the information provided. I also understand that the signature of a researcher on this document indicates agreement to include me in this study and attestation that I understand clearly all information related to my rights.

Subject's signature

Date

Investigator's signature

Date

The California State University:
Chancellor's Office
Bakersfield, Chico, Dominguez Hills,
Fresno, Fullerton, Hayward, Humboldt,
Long Beach, Los Angeles, Maritime Academy,
Monterey Bay, Northridge, Pomona,
Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego,
San Francisco, San Jose, San Luis Obispo,
San Marcos, Sonoma, Stanislaus