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Examination of Shamans as Cultural Leaders in the Hmong American Communities

by
Phoua Vang

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Bethel University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

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Abstract

Leadership in the world today is under crisis because many individuals serving as positional leaders lack effective leadership capacities. Many organizations choose leaders based on individuals' academic performance and personality traits; however, those same organizations often experience failures due to the ineffective leadership skills of key personnel charged with managing the organizations (Helsel et al., 2020). The purpose of this study was to investigate Hmong Shamans' leadership using a qualitative phenomenological research methodology. A semi-structured interview format was used to collect data from eight Hmong Shamans in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Participants were asked to discuss the qualities and behaviors that define them as good leaders and their perspectives about the positional, permission, production, people development, and pinnacle roles they play in their communities. Participants further shared insights into the factors they want to share with their community members to help them better understand Shamans' leadership roles in the community and the support or resources they need from their followers and/or community members in order to be successful in their leadership roles. Two interviews were conducted in Hmong, and six interviews were conducted in both English and Hmong. The results suggest that Shamans possessed 18 characteristics of qualities and behaviors: trust, honesty, integrity, respect, empowerment, compassion, communication, self-awareness, empathy, team relationship building, vision, values, resourcefulness, dedication, open-mindedness, positive attitude, influence, and inspiration.

Keywords: Shaman, Hmong, leadership

I am dedicating this dissertation to my family and especially my Shaman friends. My family has never left my side. First and foremost, to my wonderful husband whose is always by my side. Thank you so much for the love and support. Without your support, I do not think I would have gotten this far in my journey. Secondly, my three daughters and my two sons have always been there when your mom needs you the most, especially house chores. Especially, I want to thank my three daughters, Charanda, Katrina, and Anna. Thank you for taking on the role at home, supporting your younger siblings with school work, house chores, and always has dinner ready.

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Last but not least, I am dedicating this dissertation to my Master and all my Shaman friends. Thank you to my Master for always guiding me in the right direction and teaching me what I need to learn and my Shaman friends to contribute to this research topic. Without your support my dissertation would not be completed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States is becoming increasingly multi-linguistic due to a rise in the number of immigrants and refugees from other countries who have settled in large populations within states such as California, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin (Helsel et al., 2020). New immigrants have emigrated from their own countries to the United States in search of education, economic advancement, escape from war, and many other reasons (Lor, 2018). In the 1970s, at the end of the Vietnam War, the Hmong ethnic group emigrated from Laos to the United States as refugees because they provided military support to the United States in Northern Laos (Fang & Stewart, 2018; Helsel et al., 2020).

For thousands of years, the Hmong people have lived in the mountains in small farming communities throughout southern China. Between the 1790 and 1860, many Hmong emigrated out of China to Laos, Northern Vietnam, and Thailand to escape the oppressive Qing Dynasty (Lee & Pfeifer, 2015). The Hmong's journey to the United States began in 1961 when they were recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to help fight against the spread of communism during the Vietnam War (Minnesota Historical Society, 2015). Their involvement became a part of a secret war in Lao and, by 1963, more than 19,000 men were enlisted in the CIA-sponsored Special Guerilla Units (Minnesota Historical Society, 2015). Thousands of Hmong became refugees in their own homeland when the Americans evacuated the Hmong military forces and family members from Long Cheng Air Base in Laos in 1975 (Minnesota Historical Society, 2015). After siding with the Americans, thousands of Hmong were evacuated or escaped on their own to Thailand, where non-governmental organizations had established refugee camps (Minnesota Historical Society, 2015). From these refugee camps, the majority of the Hmong refugees remained in Thailand or were resettled to other countries, including the

United States. There are an estimated 12 million Hmong people around the world. Being allies with the United States during the Vietnam War (Vang, 2016), the first 100,000 Hmong to settle in the United States came from China. The Hmong culture as a whole, along with the Hmong community, has grown over time and is now a powerful ethnic group in America. The group has significant influence in the towns and practices their culture in the cities.

Shamans in Hmong Culture

The Hmong people have a robust history since 1975, and have remained true to their spiritual culture led by Shamans and Shamans' influence on healthcare. According to Fang and Stewart (2018), approximately 70% of Hmong still practice traditional animist, ancestor worship, and Shamanism in the United States. The administration of the group is highly respected, and many of the Hmong people believe in the healing processes of their Shaman leaders. The culture of the Hmong under the leadership of Shamanism is well known in the family for their knowledge of spirit calling to heal and protect an individual or the family. Shamans are the leaders among the clan group who heal the people by the use of spirits (Lor, 2018). Shamans (Siv Yis) perform rituals to determine the cause of the illness, and many Hmong people go to Shamans for treatment as opposed to using Western medicine due to their mistrust in Western physicians (Fang & Stewart, 2018; Gerdener, 2012).

Shamans, through the use of spirituals and traditional herbs, treat most illness and they have been successful in helping many patients regain their health. Fang and Stewart (2018) stated that:

Hmong animist tradition believes that all natural things have spirits, and that these spirits can influence a person's health. There are ancestral spirits, spirits in nature, and house spirits. The Hmong practice ancestor worship and pay respect to their

ancestors in the form of an offering, seeking protection and blessing for their family. The Shamans maintain the communication between the living and the spiritual world. (p. 1577)

The leadership approach of the Shamans is unique, with a focus on providing guidance to others (Lor, 2018). Leaders who led their community successfully in the past can exert great influence upon today's leaders (Borja, 2017). New Hmong Shaman leaders should rely upon the leadership examples of leaders who have been successful in their cultures, religions, and activities as they tackle the greatest challenges in their own communities. Some of the challenges Hmong people face are feelings of guilt and inferiority due to their cultural practices in the United States while also assimilating into the American culture (Moua, 2013). Those cultural assimilation challenges have resulted in many young Hmong people refraining from learning the Shaman tradition, which prevents the important cultural traditions of Shamanism from being passed on to future generations.

Introduction to the Problem

A leader is one of the most vital elements needed to help an organization or a group achieve success in meeting the intended visions or goals (Brown, 2016; Robinson et al., 2017). Every individual has a unique personality, values, and beliefs, and hence possesses different styles of leadership. A great leader who possesses cultural competence is someone who accepts and is aware of cultural differences among groups and recognizes that cultural groups have diverse ways of leading, communicating, behaving, and knowing how to solve problems (Xiong et al., 2016). Within the Hmong community, the cultural competence of Shaman leaders is vital in helping Shamans to reach Hmong people across several generations who have assimilated and acculturated in different degrees in the United States.

As Shamans enact leadership in the Hmong community, they serve as healers, display their power to help others by guiding them, and find solutions to individuals' problems through their religious and cultural duties (Helsel et al., 2020). Shamans also hold different levels of leadership in their communities that are congruent with Maxwell's (2011) levels of leadership: Hmong people may trust and follow Shamans because of their *positions*, by trusting them and giving them *permission* to lead, due to their ability to *produce* results, by their ability to generate and reproduce new leaders through *people development*, and through their ability to reach *pinnacle* levels of success by growing themselves and others as leaders.

The purpose of this dissertation is to highlight the different leadership styles and challenges Shamans experience in today's society through analyzing the administration of Shamans through the lens of Maxwell's (2011) levels of leadership. The study of the history of past leadership styles is the key to focusing on developing better leaders in the future. This dissertation will focus on the leadership role played by Shamans, known and respected healers in their communities with the Hmong inhabitants in the United States (Pinzon-Perez et al., 2005). Shamans' experiences are the main focus of the study, which will reveal the strengths and the failures in Shamans' cultural leadership (Helsel et al., 2020).

Statement of the Problem

According to Xiong, Vang, and Vang (2018), leadership plays an important role in the success of an organization or a community. Community leaders need to practice leadership qualities that can lead to prosperity and unity among the people of the community. Ideally, leaders will unify all people in the community and society, although the challenges are numerous (Vang, 2016). Unity among the people of a society can be harmonized through effective leadership, which is targeted to save its people from danger (Helsel et al., 2020). Leadership is

very critical within communities and is often most respected when the leaders display virtues and trustworthy practices.

One of the challenges encountered by Shamans in the Hmong community is the misinterpretation of the meaning of Shamans as leaders. This dissertation aims to understand the leadership challenges experienced by Shamans. The story of the Hmong and their life in the United States has been documented through research; however, what is often missing from the existing research are the “voices” of Shamans. Shamans are known as historical healers and interpreters of the spiritual world, but how can they also be known as knowledgeable leaders in the Hmong community? It is this question that gave inspiration to this study, the main purpose of which is to understand the cultural leadership that Shamans have maintained in the United States.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the views of Shamans regarding their leadership roles within the Hmong community. Hmong people have always used Shaman healing as the main source to cure an ill or sick person. Through the study of the Hmong ethnic group in the United States, a lot of information can be learned that can shape leadership today (Moua, 2019). Culture is the way of life of people: it includes aspects such as leadership strategies, economics, social life, and religious beliefs. The study of the people’s way of life is aimed at finding the best aspects of leadership that have helped the community remain intact despite assimilation and acculturation with other communities in the United States.

Research Questions

RQ1: What qualities and behaviors do Shamans possess that define them as good leaders?

RQ2: What are Shamans' perspectives about the five roles of leadership that Shamans may play in the Hmong community?

RQ3: What are important factors that Shamans may want to share with community members in order for them to better understand Shamans' leadership roles in the community?

RQ4: What support or resources do Shamans need from their followers and/or community members in order to be successful in their leadership roles?

Research Questions: Hmong Translation

RQ1: Ib tug txiv neeb los sis niam neeb tus yam ntswv yuav coj li cas thiaj li yuav qhia tau tias nws yuav yog ib tug thawj coj zoo?

RQ2: Koj pab qhia txog koj txoj kev xav ntawm tsib ntsiab lus hais txog txoj kev ua ib tug thawj coj uas koj pom tau tias cov txiv neeb niam neeb tau ua rau hauv peb Hmoob lub zej zog?

1. Txoj hauj lwm (Positional) – tso siab txoj hauj lwm qhiav cov thwj tim
2. Tso cai (Permission) – tsim kev sib raug zoo nrog lwm tus neeg los txhim kho lawm lub neej
3. Tsim ib yam khoom (Production) – koom tes nrog zej zog kom ua tiav lub hom phiaj
4. Tib neeg lub hom phiaj (People Development) – saib xyuas lwm tus kom loj hlob, muaj tswv yim zoo kom ncav cuag nws tus kheej thiab zej zos lub hom phiaj thiab
5. Qhov siab tshaj plaws (The Pinnacle) – tsa cov thawj coj tshiab los daws cov kev cov nyom uas cuam tshuam rau lub zej zog

RQ3: Thov qhia tej yam koj xav tias tseem ceeb yuav tau qhia rau pej xeem kom lawv thiaj li paub txog txoj kev ua ib tug thawj coj ntawm cov txiv neeb niam neeb.

RQ4: Cov niam neeb txiv neeb yuav xav tau txoj kev pab los sis txoj kev txhawb li cas los ntawm lawv cov thwj tim thiab pej xeem es lawv thiaj li yuav ua tau ib tug zoo thawj coj?

Significance of the Study

There are numerous advantages of researching Hmong Shaman who have emigrated to the United States while trying to maintain their unique language and culture despite interactions with Americans for over three decades. The factors that have held the community together for that period can help in defining the leadership qualities that can be emulated within the Hmong society today (Vang, 2016). The Hmong leaders appear to be very strict and have maintained their cultural activities for many years (Xiong, Vang, & Vang, 2018). This study of the Hmong culture and Shaman leadership practices will provide insights for Shaman leaders in the future.

According to Moua (2019), an analysis of Maxwell's five primary levels of leadership may assist in creating new successful leaders who will have the desired qualities needed by organizations, and in providing direction for the country (Vang, 2016). The study will also assist in enhancing the roles of Shaman leaders within the American Hmong community by identifying the leadership qualities of the Shamans that can be attributed to their success and some factors which may lead to failures. The leadership qualities of current successful Shamans can be emulated by the future Shamans while the qualities that lead to failures can be avoided (Xiong, Vang, & Vang, 2018). The study of the Shamans' leadership can reveal a lot about mythical beliefs used to cure illnesses, which is especially important because there is currently a gap of research on such beliefs. Furthermore, this dissertation is significant in that it will greatly contribute to the limited literature written on behalf of the Hmong people. This study will foster an understanding of the difficulties and struggles of Hmong Shamans as spiritual leaders within the Hmong Community.

Definition of Terms

Buffalo horns (khua): a tool used by Shaman to determine where the soul has gone (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Buffalo Horns (Khua)



Follower (thawj tim): anyone who seeks another Shaman as their master.

Leadership: refers to the act of an executive giving guidance, directing, and influencing the behavior of workers to accomplish goals or tasks (Olaniyan, 2017).

Rattle (txiab neeb): a tool used by Shaman to gather the spirit and hold everything together (i.e., individual soul or family souls) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Rattle (Txiab Neeb)



Shaman (Siv Yis): a person who acts as intermediaries between the natural and supernatural worlds searching for lost souls and cure illness (Moua & Vang, 2016; Pinzon-Perez et al., 2005)

(see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Shaman (Siv Yis)



Shaman's Veil (Thiv Hauv): a black or red veil use to cover Shaman's face before going into a trance so that they can communicate with the spirit world (Helsel et al., 2004) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Shaman's Veil (Thiv Hauv)



Soul calling (ua neeb): a ritual, performed by Shaman, which aims to restore the lost soul (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Soul Calling (Ua Neeb)



Wooden bench (rooj neeb): in the real world the wooden bench is just a bench; in the spiritual world the wooden bench is the flying horse which transports the Shaman to the spiritual world (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Wooden Bench (Rooj Neeb)



Summary

This chapter presented the history of the Hmong culture and the leadership role of the Shaman. As the Hmong population continues to grow in the United States, researchers increasingly recognize the importance of the Hmong culture as leaders in the community. Shamans are spiritual leaders who heal sick people. This study will investigate the role of Shamans and how they can be knowledgeable leaders to lead the community. This chapter described the significance of the study, the definition of terms that will be used in this study, and the structure of this study.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to this research study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature by highlighting leadership by Shamans as leaders in the Hmong community, culture and leadership challenges, and Maxwell's (2011) leadership levels. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, including the theoretical framework that describes this study. Chapter 3 will also discuss the role of the researcher, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 will present the data analysis and results of the study. Chapter 5 will present the findings and conclusions of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This dissertation study explored the views of Shamans regarding their leadership roles within the Hmong community. Although research has been conducted on Shamans as historical and spiritual healers, there are no studies about Shamans as community leaders. The first section of this chapter focuses on how leadership is defined. The rest of this chapter discusses the history of the Hmong, current literature, and research on the Shaman as spiritual leaders, Maxwell's (2011) five levels of leadership, Kise's (2013) intentional leader lenses, and other leadership methods.

Definition of Leadership

Leadership refers to the act giving guidance, directing, and influencing the behavior of others to accomplish a particular goal of the organization. Leadership can also be defined as the ability to influence other people in an organization towards completing a task (Olaniyan, 2017). Persuading other people in an organization to enthusiastically meet the objectives of the organization is also referred to as a leadership (Maxwell, 2019). Leadership requires qualities such as intelligence and highly mature behavior, and it is an interpersonal process that occurs between the leader and others through the guidance provided to them while accomplishing set goals. Leadership must involve two or more people for it to take place and there is no best leadership method; instead, the leadership demands are contextual.

Leadership is often described in terms of the relationships built between leaders and team members. As Green (2013) stated, the "effectiveness of leaders is determined by the extent to which they understand their beliefs and values, and the beliefs and values of their followers (p. 60). Effective leaders will work at supporting their team with professional development opportunities, are knowledgeable about how to motivate others, can communicate effectively, and can develop a special trusting relationship between the team. Also, effective leaders utilize

skills in an effort to best address strategies that will improve communities. Rodd (2006) stated that

Becoming a leader is much more than simply accepting a particular role or position. It is about personal values, beliefs, and qualities. Leaders are effective because of who they are on the inside—in the qualities that make them up as people. Leaders need self-awareness—that is, they need to understand their person strengths and weakness. (p. 51)

Great leaders continually step back, look at the big picture, and know how to balance change. They find resources to fill the void, know what to do to improve, and communicate with the team. Leaders understand why certain things are working and why other things are insufficient.

Hmong-American History 1975 to Current

The history of Hmong people's emigration to the United States is similar to many ethnic groups. Shortly after the United States pulled out of Laos during the Vietnam War, Hmong refugees fled through the jungles of Laos and crossed the Mekong River into Thailand to escape political persecution. Hmong refugees sought asylum and were granted permission to resettle in the United States, France, Australia, French Guyana, and Canada (Lee & Pfeifer, 2015).

Like many immigrant groups, Hmong people had a hard time assimilating to American culture. Their intent was to make a new life in the United States while preserving their cultural life in a new location (Chiang et al., 2015). Many Hmong people learned that the American way of life was very different from their cultural customs back home; for instance, in Laos, the Hmong people were able to farm, hunt, build homes, and perform Shaman rituals openly under no rules or law. In America there are many rules and laws to follow, which it makes it hard for

the Hmong people to do what they want freely. For example, there are incongruities between the American legal system and Hmong cultural traditions featuring ritual animal sacrifices, marriage at a young age, hunting illegally in someone else's land, and using herbal medicine.

The first group of Hmong arrived in the United States in December 1975 as refugees (Borja, 2017). They had come from the refugee camp in Thailand due to the Vietnam War, which uprooted them from their former land. Hmong travelled to the United States as a result of the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 (1975), but only around 3,500 people were given asylum. Later, 11,000 Hmong people were allowed into the United States in 1976 (Xiong et al., 2016). and, by 1978, the number of Hmong people in the United States had reached 30,000.

The Refugee Act of 1980 (1980) influenced more settlement of Hmong people in the United States. Hmong people settled in all of the states, but the majority in California and Minnesota because they are allowed to practice spiritual services at local hospitals (Borja, 2017). According to the 2010 Census, there were 260,073 people of Hmong origin in all 50 of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (Lee & Pfeifer, 2015; Xiong, 2013). The population of the Hmong in California is 91,224, while Minnesota has 66,181 Hmong people. Wisconsin had 49,240 Hmong people, and the total population increased to 186,310 in 2000. The majority of Hmong people are young children who are below the age of 10 years (Xiong et al., 2016).). The Hmong lived as communities in the different areas they settled, and the largest population was Saint Paul, Minnesota, which had 29,662 people. Other cities include Fresno, with 24,328 Hmong people. Sacramento has 16,676 Hmong people, Milwaukee has 10,245 Hmong people, and Minneapolis has 7,412 Hmong people. The Hmong have increased in number and have become one of the recognized ethnic groups living in the United States.

Since their immigration to the United States, Hmong leaders have struggled with the difference in how the American way of life and laws prevent the Hmong from performing and maintaining their spiritual Shaman practice. The struggle for the maintenance of their leadership has also persisted because Shamans act as the religious leaders and decision makers among their clan (Xiong et al., 2016). Changes in the leadership have occurred upon immigration to the United States, such as the appointment of some Hmong people to different posts in the government and in various organizations in the country. For example, Choua Lee was the first Hmong person to serve in public office as a member of the school board in Saint Paul in 1995. Lorong Lor was chosen as a councilman for the city of Eau Claire, Wisconsin in 1996. In 2002, Mee Moua, together with Cy Tha, became members of the senate in Minnesota. Kazoua Kong-Thao served as chair of the Saint Paul School Board of Education in 2003, and all these leaders contributed to the influence of the Hmong community in the United States. There were many other people of the tribe who were also selected for specific posts within the government.

The leadership provided by General Vang Pao, a Laotian general who commanded a secret army of Hmong soldiers and served as the chief of the secret army financed by the Central Intelligence Agency (Martin, 2011), was enjoyed by all the people in the Hmong community until he was challenged by the federal court in the United States and arrested. General Vang Pao and eight other Hmong elders were accused of planning to overthrow the government of Laos and purchase firearms illegally. Later in 2009, all the charges against Vang Pao and the eight Hmong elders were dismissed (Xiong et al., 2016). Vang Pao, the father of the Hmong people, has influenced many Hmong in the United States and abroad, and led to the reconciliation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) with the United States. Later in 2009, Vang Pao announced his willingness to return to Lao, where he insisted on the urgent need for

reconciliation with the Lao PDR. He also advocated for the unification of the Hmong community.

Vang Pao is recognized as a great leader among the Hmong Americans as he brought a sense of unity to the group and led with great courage (Xiong et al., 2016). Despite challenges in leadership due to entry into a new land, Vang Pao gave people hope for prosperity and sustenance for their dreams. He opposed the violations of human rights on the Hmong people through diplomatic measures against the government of Lao in 2003. Vang Pao's leadership, bravery, and focus on ensuring the prosperity of the Hmong people were commendable. Pao said that love, peace, and unity among all the members of the United States are essential, and there is no place for discrimination (Vang, 2011).

Spiritual Shaman Leaders in Hmong Society

In the Hmong culture, not everyone qualifies to become a spiritual Shaman leader. There is a strong chance for an individual within the family to become a Shaman if their family history contains Shamans. Being chosen is the first step for a person to become a spiritual Shaman. The chosen one will experience unusual illness and doctors will not be able to diagnose the illness. The ill person seeks help from another spiritual Shaman, who will perform a spiritual healing process to determine why the person is sick. If the sick person's illness is due to a lost soul, then the Shaman will bring the lost soul back. Besides healing the illness, the spiritual Shaman communicates with the spiritual world and the ancestors to determine if the ill person is chosen to hold a Shaman title.

Once the Shaman has determined that the ill person has qhua neeb, the person can start searching for a master. Once the master has been determined, the master might be able to help with external details such as performing a ritual service to determine if the person truly is the

chosen one. The master will help the follower (thawj tim) with selecting the right tools, setting up the altar, and walking the follower through the process. The master will not provide training or education to the student: the master will only walk the student through the process. Learning the healing process will be provided by the spirits.

Shamans are the religious leaders among the Hmong ethnic group who are responsible for healing the people by the use of spiritual means. Shamans are chosen for the Shaman role by the spiritual world (usually passed down by ancestors), are selected by the family to perform Shaman ritual calling and ceremony, and are traditional healers who can diagnose and treat spiritual illness (Plotnioff et al., 2002). Shamans receive all knowledge of the healing process provided by the spiritual dimension, identify the spiritual causes of illness, communicate with the spiritual world, and restore wandering souls to the body (Plotnioff et al., 2002).

There are different beliefs regarding healing methods in different cultures. When one method does not help, people often seek the help of other methods. Some of the ways of healing a body and spirits are through Western medicine, herbal medications, meditation, or worshipping in a church. The Shamans' role as religious leaders is performing soul calling rituals which aim to restore sick people. The healing tradition of the Hmong relies on belief in spirits (ua neeb), and the Shaman is considered the master of the senses who could communicate and connect the living to the spirit world. The Hmong people believe that human beings host many souls, and if one of the souls separates from the body, the result is an illness or death (Borja, 2017). Shamans' role in the healing of the sickness is by restoring the separated soul; thus, the rituals are referred to as soul calling seen. Shamans have a very straightforward way of restoring order in the body through calling back the separated soul.

Another ritual used by the Shamans to restore life is by use of a string that is tied on a part of the body (i.e., hand, feet, or around the neck), which will act as a protective shield against evil spirits (see Figure 7). It is believed that the person with such a string will not be attacked by the evil spirits which are responsible for causing sicknesses.

Figure 7

String Tying



According to (Xiong et al., 2016) strings signify that the souls in one's body are held intact and cannot separate from the body. Another ritual done by the Shamans is the trance in which they go to another world through a wooden bench (rooj neeb) acting as transportation horse (Moua, 2019). The buffalo horns (khua) or a rattle (txiab neeb) are dropped to the ground to determine the direction in which the soul followed. While performing this ritual, a Shaman wears either Hmong clothes or black pants and black shirt, and a red or black head cloth (thiv hauv) on the head that blocks real-life and protects him/her from evil spirits. Figures 8 and 9

show a Shaman performing a ritual wearing the required clothes and the red head cloth over his head.

Figure 8

Shaman Performing a Soul Calling Ritual



Figure 9

Shaman Performing a Soul Calling Ritual



Shamans perform rituals of offering animal sacrifices to the senses through either prepared meals or sacrifices of chickens, pigs, cows, goats, and other animals (Patel, 2016). According to the Hmong culture, the lives of these animals have connections to human souls, so a Shaman protects the human soul by replacing it with the animal soul. The capping of the ritual is done at a communion meal where the attendants of the occasion take part in the animals that are prepared for the meal. The ritual ends life sharing for the animal, which has been sacrificed and becomes a communion for amendment of the lost human soul. Rituals are also conducted by the Shaman, where the soul of the dead person travels back to the place where it lived, which is ultimately, its placenta.

The body of the deceased person is usually washed and appropriately dressed to send it back before reuniting it with the ancestors. It is essential to lament the dead by use of musical instruments, and to honor them with animal sacrifices while guiding the soul verbally to the place where its placenta had been placed (Lee, 2016). Unique clothes have to be put on the dead body to ensure that its soul will be well dressed while guiding the soul back to the place of its origin, provided that the soul would not be wandering around (Patel, 2016). Reincarnation of the soul into a baby was ensured through guiding the soul to the burial of the placenta.

Shaman in American Health Care and Generation Trends

The Hmong people are culturally sensitive people and most seek help from Shamans whenever they were sick. The kind of illness determined the choice they would make to either visit a Shaman or seek care through Western medicine (Lor et al., 2016). Some diseases were attributed to spirits while others were not; thus, each disease among the Hmong had to be decided on who could treat it. According to Lee (2016), diseases like paleness or loss of energy were attributed to spirits and Shamans provided traditional help. In such instances, it was

perceived that one's soul had moved outside of oneself due to sadness, depression, fear, or had been taken away by the angry ancestral spirits or evil spirits (Fang & Stewart, 2018). The treatment was sought through visiting a Shaman where a ritual to return the soul was done and one was returned to full health.

Due to cultural interaction between the Hmong people and Americans who had a different language and culture, resettlement challenged the life they had adopted in rural mountainous regions of China. The Hmong community has attested that Shamanism is respected and has been in use for centuries for the healing of diseases among patients (Fang & Stewart, 2018). Some of the diseases treated by Shamans were not due to spiritual causes, so herbs were used for treatment. In the United States, when such diseases occur, Hmong people prefer to see a Shaman or opt for Western medication as opposed to going to the hospital.

Most of the illnesses among the Hmong community that the Shamans heal include loss of appetite, body aches, anxiety, bad dreams, weakness, and frequent tiredness. According to Fang and Stewart (2018), for bodily injuries such as accidents, gunshots, and broken bones, Shamans could perform some spiritual rituals to heal the injury. The majority of the diseases among the Hmong community were attributed to a wandering soul, evil soul, sad soul, or expiry of the soul, in which case the soul needed to be extended (Lee, 2016). Additional causes of illness among the Hmong people include displeasure of ancestors, change of religion from cultural beliefs to Christianity, and failure to offer sacrifices which could lead to fainting and headaches.

Many Hmong people know of specific herbs for curing some illnesses in society, and most rely on the herbs in cases where the disease was not associated with the spirits. For the four decades that the Hmong people have been in the United States, the transition from their cultural norms has been slow due to language barriers that have existed between them and the American

community (Fang & Stewart, 2018). Increased education and interactions between Hmong people and Americans have led to the disruption of Hmong culture, with many starting to integrate both Western and traditional methods of treatment (Lee, 2016). Nowadays, Hmong people seek assistance from Shamans, Hmong physicians, and Western hospitals.

Other cultural norms have remained within the Hmong community; for instance, Hmong individualistic behavior and competitive aspects have remained (Her-Xiong & Schroepfer, 2018). Still the Hmong community faces challenges maintaining their culture in the United States. The need among Hmong people to visit a Shaman to restore health is greater than the need for Western medication (Lor et al., 2016). Shamans provide a sense of unity among the group and connect them to their culture; thus, they find it difficult to fully adopt the Western culture. Hmong in the United States have found it hard to adjust to Western culture because they trust their traditional culture, especially in health care, where the Shamans have served them successfully for many years.

The several challenges which the group has faced over the years when it comes to accessing Western medical assistance include cultural and linguistic problems. Some Hmong people have maintained their language for decades and have not learned any other language over the years. Many may have a poor conceptualization of the English language, which is fully used in health centers, and thus find language a barrier to accessing health care (Xiong, Dauphin, & Weisfeld, 2018). Trained medical interpreters are limited among Hmong people, who thus need to rely upon their traditional healers for healing. The lack of understanding of the terminology used in Western culture is also a great barrier to accessing health care (Her-Xiong & Schroepfer, 2018). The exposure to Western medicine among the Hmong has been minimal, and traditional healing has been the most dependable means of health care in California (Fang & Stewart, 2018).

Some efforts have been made to ensure that Hmong people within the country receive proper health care. Because many Hmong family members have died due to a lack of proper healthcare, interpretation training for Hmong people in Western medication has been put in place. Traditional healers have been certified in Western medicine for healing people without any fear and to ensure people feel secure when receiving health care from them (Lor et al., 2016). Interpreters who serve as the medium between Hmong people and the physicians have also been trained in Western medication (Xiong, Dauphin, & Weisfeld, 2018). Health education among the ethnic groups in the United States has been seeking to establish trust in Western medicine. Hmong communities often choose to receive health services from certified personnel.

Shaman Leaders' Experience

Shaman leaders in the Hmong ethnic group have been unique in American society and they possess good strategies that can be incorporated into leadership today. These leaders bring a sense of hope to the Hmong people in times of difficulty (Xiong, Dauphin, & Weisfeld, 2018). Just as Shamans inspired people to look at the positivity of life, leaders need to focus on inspiring their followers. Shamans establish confidence in people through their connection to the cause of illnesses, which is important to leaders today. Nissinen (2020) explained that leaders must be wise enough and have a wide breadth of knowledge to intervene in the times of need within their organization. Shamans treat illnesses and thereby provide a solution to the problem, which serves as a lesson that leaders need to be good analysts of the problems affecting their organization so they can offer a reasonable solution.

Shamans encourage people to heal themselves through belief. In turn, leaders today need to be encouraging their followers to partake in the work of the organization. Just like the Shamans' example, leaders should have the courage to face their fears by addressing them and

developing solutions to their problems. Leaders should be encouraging followers to reframe their understanding of the world and discover their talents (Nissinen, 2020). Leaders need to be able to help people discover their insights and what they can do best. Like the Shamans' example, leaders must lead ethically and must be aware of their roles as leaders and live according to the expectations of their people. Leadership is critical in society, and leaders need leadership qualities that will enable their organizations or communities to achieve its objectives.

Leaders need to be experienced in the field in which they lead and Shamans accomplish this by collaborating with another Shamans to gain experience. Focus is also important in leadership and it is critical to have goals. Shamans have been delivering effective and accurate health services for many years (Xiong, Dauphin, & Weisfeld, 2018). Leaders must have a clear understanding of the system they lead and the possible challenges which may occur, just as the Shamans had to analyze the majority of the illnesses that the people encountered. Leaders need to be treated with dignity, and leaders must be persistent in what they do, as in the case of the Shamans. The aim is not to discourage traditional leadership, but to ensure integration of the changes the world has been experiencing. The spiritual leadership of the Shamans in the Hmong community includes important leadership traits that should be recognized in the broader leadership of today.

Reflecting on the leadership of the Hmong group, it is also evident that forgiveness is essential for leadership just as it is seen in Vang Pao, who requested forgiveness from other nations. Vang Pao insisted that it was important for the nations to beg forgiveness to maintain peace between them whenever they misunderstand each other due to factors like politics. The Hmong leaders also practice forgiving each other whenever one wronged the other. The role of the Shamans in the community was to cool down two different bodies in a society based on the

rules of their culture (Lor et al., 2016). Forgiveness is an essential aspect that must be emulated by leaders whenever there are quarrels among them. The Shamans' leadership in the Hmong community has led to peace within the people because they settle disputes among members of the community (Xiong, Dauphin, & Weisfeld, 2018). Peace among the Hmong people is essential for their mutual co-existence and unity.

Leadership among the Hmong people can be viewed as having observed changes in society and adapting to those changes. Similarly, Shamans visit hospitals to seek Western medication after evaluating the capability of their traditional approaches and the urgency of medication (Xiong, Dauphin, & Weisfeld, 2018). The leadership of Shamans is a unifying factor among the Hmong people living in America. Integrity in the Hmong culture is highly valued and it is believed that anyone who promised a sacrifice and failed to deliver it could be attacked by illness (Khan & Ramzan, 2019).

The motivation of people through the Shamans' imagination was also experienced among the people who went to seek help. An essential aspect of leadership can lead to the success of an organization as it gives people hope to move on with life. Shamans could heal non-physical illness and could translate the cause for certain illness as being attributed to a specific phenomenon (Olaniyan, 2017). Many people get healed through believing and many Hmong experienced a cure without taking any drugs. The imaginative power of the Shamans could heal diseases, which is an essential aspect of leadership today. The leaders of organizations today must be able to imagine the growth of their organization and work towards its implementation.

Cultural Challenges

The Hmong culture has been challenged during their emigration to the United States. Through the change of environment from a mountainous region to cities in the United States,

Hmong people's lives as farmers ceased and they were forced to adapt to the American way of life (Khan & Ramzan, 2019). Reflecting on these challenges, people face different problems when they enter a new place and they need to adapt to the changing environment. The environs continue to change and human being must be prepared to face a future of change (Lor et al., 2016). Education should be sought, as necessary, especially when learning the national language of a country. According to Fang (2016), education is essential in communicating with others, fostering harmony among citizens of the same country. The challenges which Hmong Americans faced when they could not communicate with Americans were numerous and emphasized the importance of learning the national language and following laws and policies. For instance, before emigrating, the Hmong people were able to live freely in their homeland and fish, hunt, and cut trees as they wish. They did not need to purchase a hunting or fishing license and get permission from anyone to farm on a land; however, the Hmong learned that the American customs and the way of living are totally different from their prior customs.

Governments need to allow people to perform their cultural traditions without interference; however, cultural rules should make sense to the people performing rituals and should be received positively by society (Khan & Ramzan, 2018). The healing rituals among the Hmong Americans were viewed negatively by local United States citizens. These views should be discouraged because Americans should understand and appreciate other people's way of life. Discriminating against people based on religion or culture is very dangerous and needs to be prevented. Hmong Americans became depressed and considered themselves inferior to the original American culture (Khan & Ramzan, 2019).

Disciples and Creating New Leaders

New leaders need to be guided by current leaders to gain the required experiences necessary for taking leadership roles (Fang, 2016). Experienced leaders must be ready to intervene and have capability of choosing new leaders based on their characteristics (Khan & Ramzan, 2018). As seen in the Shamanic leadership, an experienced Shaman can see through a person and determine if that person will become a Shaman. The Shamanic behavior of detecting new leaders through a lengthy sickness is not ideal for choosing new leaders (Fang, 2016). Leaders can be identified in organizations based on their capabilities and the leadership virtues they possess, such as obedience, humility, trustworthiness, patience, kindness, and the ability to coordinate and motivate others.

Leaders should create future successors through selecting and motivating young people with leadership qualities to be courageous and ready for leadership. Experienced leaders should enlighten the visionary young men and women and tell them what they are expected to do when they join the profession (Robinson et al., 2017). Leaders should live like role models who can be followed by the younger generations by demonstrating the virtues required for the leadership. Just as the Shamans do, leaders should encourage discipleship of the incoming leaders to learn from them the leadership roles which are essential before taking a specific leadership position. Nowadays, one should seek education to gain more knowledge of leadership strategies (Khan & Ramzan, 2019). Not everyone is chosen to become a Shaman; they spiritually inherit the skills through family members. Typically, there is a strong chance for an individual to become a Shaman if one's family contains Shamans. Traditionally, Hmong people believe that ancestral spirits, including the spirits of Shamans, are reincarnated into the same family.

The leadership roles of the Shamans are different from the roles of the leaders in for-profit organizations, who aim at making a profit and achieving organizational goals. Leaders

have multiple purposes and responsibilities (Olaniyan, 2017), and today's leaders need to be able to understand the whole organization, as well as the general activities which take place throughout the organization, to carry out his or her roles effectively (Robinson et al., 2017).

Organizations of today aim to increase productivity and maximize resources while producing products at a faster rate, which is very different from the goals of the Shaman leaders within the Hmong society (Fang, 2016). Thus, the leadership qualities for upcoming leaders cannot, to a large extent, depend on the Shamanic leadership which was founded mostly on beliefs.

Maxwell's Five Levels of Leadership

Level 1: Position

The first level of leadership, according to Maxwell (2011), is the position which is argued to be the lowest in administration. Position can be given to anybody because it does not need effort to be achieved, and the person appointed to a position does not have team members (Robinson et al., 2017). They only have followers who are required to follow their leadership and rely on policies, rules, and regulations to control the organization. There are boundaries in the relationship between the leadership position holder and the subordinates, so not every subordinate can contact the person in a leadership position.

Level 2: Permission

Permission is the second step in leadership. Leaders create a relationship with the people, start to create rules, and have significant influence over the people (Brown, 2016). If the leaders at this stage include and value the followers, leaders can then rely upon changes to the environment of the organization to achieve goals and objectives. People tend to cooperate under the leadership of a person with whom they like to work within an organization.

Level 3: Production

The third level of leadership is making things go as expected, successfully, and leading the organization to realize its goals and objectives through efficient production. Leaders at this level are expected to produce results for the organization on the task they are to handle. Leaders at this level must have capabilities to produce and lead other people in the organization toward production. When taken to scale, the results of the work done are evident, and thus cannot be falsified, because either production has happened or not (Brown, 2016). Some leaders remain at the permission level because they are not capable of leading to effective production. Leaders at this level must possess qualities such as work ethic, organization, and self-discipline, among other attributes that enable them to be productive. One cannot move to another level of leadership if they cannot produce; thus, there is a need to try as much as possible to achieve positive results if they aspire to move to higher levels of leadership.

Level 4: People Development

At this level, the leader invests most in developing other people as leaders to give rise to a highly productive team. The people in an organization are the most important asset; thus, there is a need for the leaders at this level to work towards developing the producers into new leaders (Maxwell, 2019). Leaders of this stage spend 20% of their time on productivity, while the focus on improving others as future leaders is 80%. This level is not as easy as it is for the people who have been accustomed to working hard on production, but it needs to be done as it can lead the revolution of the whole organization.

Level 5: The Pinnacle

The leaders at this level should develop the people developers: the leaders in Level 4. Leaders who can reach this stage are scarce and once they work in an organization, the probability that it will improve measurably is very high (Maxwell, 2016). Leaders at this level

make the most significant impact on the lives of the employees and likely transfer success wherever they go to work. Leaders in this level create the success of every worker in the organization, thus leading to the organization's success. The standard at this level does not allow leaders to rest on their laurels by emphasizing what they have done in the past. Instead, they must lift as many new leaders as they can while tackling as many problems as they can while leaving a positive difference in their organizations.

Maxwell and Leadership Characteristics

According to Maxwell (2011), knowing how to lead is different from leading itself. The quality of a true leader's character motivates the leader to take on leadership roles as opposed to only knowing how to lead. Following Maxwell's model means that one must possess attributes such as charisma, courage, and the ability to solve problems (Maxwell, 2018). These attributes, among others, are essential in leadership. Leaders must also be visionary as they can only achieve what they perceive in their vision (Burkhart et al., 2017). Leaders should not let any problem go unsolved during their leadership, and they must strive to increase knowledge so that they can adapt to changes in the environment.

Additional Leadership Models

There are many additional leadership models that can be used to examine individuals' leadership development or leadership effectiveness. Shamans serve as community leaders, so in some cases traditional leadership models may not represent or reflect their leadership experiences. However, there are some common themes that can be connected to Shamans' leadership; for instance, leaders can benefit from self-awareness, priority setting, optimism, and hope (Brown, 2016; Burkhart et al., 2017). Kise (2013) focused on how great leaders must develop a clear and concise path towards achieving their goals. The quality of a leader's

characteristics can enable the leader to make the right decision. Leaders must also be intentional and carefully define priorities (Kise, 2013). Once leaders identify priorities, then leaders can align their leadership actions to communicate the importance of what the priorities are to their audience (Kiese, 2013). Leaders must be able to value the ideas of others, listen to others, and respect others (Maxwell, 2019). Leaders should be good motivators who can impact the practical perspectives of the workers, thus enabling them to achieve the goals of an organization. Leaders must have a vision and guide others to achieve the vision through persistence and hard work in the organization's affairs. The aspect of having a vision for the company leads to confidence in the organization being unbeatable in the competitive edge against other organizations (Maxwell, 2019).

Summary

In this chapter, the following three main topics were highlighted in the literature review: (a) culture challenges, (b) Shamans as religious leaders, and (c) various leadership models. The challenges Hmong Americans faced when they could not communicate with Americans were numerous and emphasized the importance of learning the national language and following laws and policies. For instance, before emigrating, the Hmong people were able to live freely in their homeland and fish, hunt, and cut trees as they wish.

Through the change of environment from a mountainous region to cities in the United States, Hmong people's lives as farmers ceased and they were forced to adapt to the American way of life. Many Hmong people learned that the American way of life was very different from their cultural customs back home. For instance, in Laos, the Hmong people were able to farm, hunt, build homes, and perform Shaman rituals openly under no rules or law. Since their immigration to the United States, Hmong leaders have struggled with how the American way of

life and laws prevent the Hmong from performing and maintaining their spiritual Shaman practice.

Shamans are the religious leaders among the Hmong ethnic group who are responsible for healing the people through spiritual means. Shamans are chosen for the Shaman role by the spiritual world, and they are selected by the family to perform Shaman ritual calling and ceremony and are traditional healers who can diagnose and treat spiritual illness. In the United States, when such diseases occur, Hmong people prefer to see a Shaman or opt for Western treatments as opposed to going to the hospital.

Shaman leaders in the Hmong ethnic group have been unique in American society, and they possess good strategies that can be incorporated into leadership today. Leaders must lead ethically and be aware of their roles as leaders and live according to their people's expectations. Leaders must have a clear understanding of the system they lead and the possible challenges that may occur, just as the Shamans had to analyze most of the illnesses that the people encountered. Leaders need to be treated with dignity, and leaders must be persistent in what they do. Leaders should encourage the incoming leaders to learn from them the essential leadership roles before taking a specific leadership position. The quality of a true leader's character motivates the leader to take on leadership roles instead of only knowing how to lead. Once leaders identify priorities, then leaders can align their leadership actions to communicate the importance of what the priorities are to their audience. The next chapter, which is Chapter 3, will describe the methodology and research design of this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the rationale and process of the qualitative phenomenological research methodology regarding the lived experience of Shaman leaders. The focus of this study is to understand the self-perceived views of Shamans' leadership role. Phenomenology is used to understand participants' experience and gain insight into people's life events and issues that brought these leaders to their leadership role (Lester, 1999; Merriam, 2009; Qutoshi, 2018). The participants were asked to share their experience, how they became a Shaman, how their role impacts the community, their leadership role as a Shaman, and their perspectives about Maxwell's (2011) five levels of leadership. The rest of the chapter will discuss how participants are selected, the tool or instrument used to collect the data, the process, data collection, the limitations of the study, and how participants will be protected within this study.

Theoretical Framework

This research study was conducted using a qualitative phenomenological research methodology to explore the life experiences of Shaman leaders. The focus of this study is to understand the essence of their experience as leaders. Phenomenological research will be used in this study to explore the essential features of the life events and issues that brought the Shamans to their leadership role.

Phenomenology is a study of people's conscious experience of their life-world, that is, their everyday life (Merriam, 2009). In other words, stories can give us essential features of personal identity, personality, and the essence of the life event that brought Shamans to their leadership roles. The participants in this study are the experts in their field. The researcher chose qualitative research for this study because little has been written about leadership qualities of the Shamans other than their role as healers. The researcher wanted to conduct the study in a natural

and comfortable setting for the individual to uncover the essence of their experiences as Shaman leaders.

Researcher's Positionality

I never thought that one day in my life, I would become a Shaman. After giving birth to our second child, strange things began happening to me. My journey in becoming a Shaman was difficult. I dreamed of wanting to jump off a cliff or mountain to see if I could fly. I began experiencing strange things such as my right foot hurting every day. Some days I felt light-headed like I was going to pass out, I had hard time breathing, or I could not stand to look at traditional Hmong clothes. Some days, I felt like I was going to have a heart attack.

My mother-in-law had to massage my feet twice a week in order for me to sleep at night. I was scared, I visited the doctor many times, and I went into the emergency room a few times to get my heart tested. The doctor could not diagnose me. Blood tests, x-rays, and heart tests were done multiple times; yet, everything was normal. Every year my husband and my mother-in-law would host a Shaman ceremony for me to keep me healthy, and no one was able to see that I would become a Shaman.

I did not know what to do. I never thought that one day I would gain the Shamanistic power from my ancestors. Pregnant with my fifth child, I could not eat. A relative came from Laos, performing a Shamanism ritual at my in-law's house. I asked her to use her spiritual Shaman practices to see why I felt this way and could not eat during this pregnancy. During this moment, she told me that I have a Shaman spirit, and that it was time for me to take the role of helping people. I was shocked and scared at the moment. I told the Shaman, I could not do this job at this time because I was pregnant. Can you tell them to wait until after I give birth? She was able to ask my Shaman spirituals and they agreed to wait until I gave birth.

After giving birth to my fifth child, and after my one-month chicken diet, my symptoms came back. I told my husband that I guessed I have no choice but to complete this Shaman tradition. My husband was very supportive of my decision. He did not want to see me getting sick anymore. With the support of my husband and his aunt, I was able to complete all the levels of my Shaman spiritual practice. Without their support, I do not believe I would have made it this far.

Research Design: Participant Selection

To understand the essence of Shaman leaders' experience, a total of eight participants from the Twin Cities in Minnesota were selected for the research using the following criteria: (a) newly Shaman who have been Shamans for only 1 year, (b) experienced Shamans who have been Shamans for more than 3 years, and (c) highly experienced Shamans who have been Shamans for more than 5 years.

In order to minimize conflict of interest, a purposive sampling method was used for this study. The researcher carefully selected participants who currently held a Shaman title and who felt comfortable communicating with the researcher and were willing to share their thoughts to provide the needed information to the researcher. The researcher contacted participants to ask them to consider participating in this study. If the individual participants were not interested, the researcher asked the participants to refer another Shaman who might be interested in taking part of this study by providing names and contact information (see Appendix C), thus using the "snowball sampling" method (Patten, 2005).

Instruments

In order for the researcher to adequately answer the research questions presented in this study, the researcher used a semi-structured interview design. In a semi-structured interview, the

researcher talks to people in order to find out about their experiences (Fylan, 2005). The researcher chose the semi-structure interview format to ask additional questions beyond predetermined questions (Patten, 2005). Patten stated:

First, if a participant does not seem to understand a question, it can be reworded by the interviewer. Second, if a response is too terse, the interviewer can ask additional questions such as, “Can you tell me more about it?” Third, the interviewer can probe with additional questions (in addition to the predetermined questions) in order to explore unexpected unusual, or especially relevant material revealed by a participant. (p. 147)

Based on the participants’ consented permission (see Appendix E), the interviewer used a tape recorder.

Procedures

Due to the COVID pandemic, the researcher conducted virtual interviews at the time and location decided by each participant. The researcher asked the interviewee sub-interview questions, and ended the interview by asking the interviewee the research question (see Appendix A). The researcher conducted the interviews in English or Hmong based on the participant’s need. Consent forms were obtained through Bethel University’s required process and procedure.

Data Analysis

Qualitative researchers often use a general procedure and steps in data analysis (Creswell, 2014). Creswell provided helpful information regarding how to organize the data. Once the data was collected, the researcher used the interview questions to analyze the data to determine the best data analysis protocol to be used. All data gathered was recorded, transcribed, and exported to a voice recorder and coded for future use. The researcher had the recorded interview transcribed

into written form, and the translator also signed a consent form (see Appendix B). To analyze the data, the researcher followed the protocol described by Creswell (2014), and carefully paid attention to transcribing the information collected, coded, and categorized. The following steps were taken to analyze the data in this study:

Step 1: Transcribe the interviews. This first step was to have the tape/recording transcribed of each interview for understanding of the individual story.

Step 2: Read the transcripts. The second step was to read the transcripts to reflect on its overall meaning and to take notes.

Step 3: Label/index the transcripts. The third step was to label the transcript by relevant words, phrases, sentences, or sections manually. The researcher decided what was relevant based on how often it was repeated by participants, if it surprised the researcher, and if the interviewee explicitly stated that it was important. The researcher looked for conceptualization of underlying patterns.

Step 4: Code the data. At the fourth step, coding was the crucial aspect of this study. Coding refers to taking the data gathered during the data collection and labeling them into themes by organizing the transcript into sections or groups. The researcher decided which codes were the most important and created categories.

Step 5: Cluster the data into units or categories. At the fifth step, the researcher clustered similar themes into columns or units. The researcher combined Step 4 data from all participants and synthesized common themes that are shared by all or nearly all participants into a descriptive narrative statement. The researcher decided which categories or themes were the most relevant to retain and analyze how they are connected.

Step 6: Summarizing each interview. At the sixth step, after all the information had been categorized into themes, the researcher compiled a summary of the interview incorporating the themes or categories and how they are connected from the data. The researcher also wrote interpretations and discussed the results.

Limitations of Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate how an individual Shamans became leaders and what influenced who they are as leaders. It was hard to recruit the participants; some Shamans were afraid to leak information about what they have learned to the public due to some dishonest people in this world. Some participants did not feel comfortable to provide the data because with this new trend of generation not many people believe in Shaman. In the 21st century, there are many different types of Shamans within the Hmong community. Can the researcher really say that the life experience of the eight participants is what is felt by others across the world in regards to that phenomenon? Another challenge depended upon the Shaman master. Some masters do not want their student to share the information or what they have learned from their master due to the different types of Shamans within the Hmong communities.

To plan for and address the limitations of this research, the researcher built relationships with participants, and signed a document stating that all information and the identity of the participants would be kept confidential, names would not be released, and anonymous names would be used. Participants have every right to safeguard their identity so they can protect themselves. The researcher ensured the participants that the school protects the participants' identity in the research. Building and sustaining that relationship with the participants helped them better understand the research and thus encouraged the participants to share the information with the researcher.

Ethical Considerations

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) process was sought and completed to assure all ethical principles and IRB protocols are followed. The research followed all IRB guidelines, including, but not limited to, the observation of openness of interview questions and securely guarding personal data.

Safeguards were utilized to protect the confidentiality of this study's participants. Data privacy is a major ethical concern when dealing with interviews. First, the researcher obtained written consent from the participants in this study. Consent forms informed participants that: (a) all of the information they provided would be kept confidential, (b) any identifiable names of the interviewee would be removed or modified during the transcription process, (c) the researcher would use codes that concealed identities in the transcripts, (d) audiotapes and interview notes would be kept in locked files, (e) audiotapes would be destroyed once transcripts were verified for accuracy, and (f) finalized transcripts, written interpretations, and reports would be available to the participants.

Even though the researcher implemented all of the above safeguards to protect the participants in this study, others may recognize the title or status of the participating leaders from the content of the experiences they lead in the community. The researcher modified and removed identifiable details of all participants for purposes of consistency and to protect all participants' confidentiality. The researcher followed federal law, the Privacy Act of 1974, Privacy, Confidentiality and Protection of Personal Information, Minnesota Data Privacy Act, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule, so people's identity and records were protected.

Field Test

In this phenomenological study, a field study was conducted with three Shaman leaders with different levels of experience in the Twin Cities in Minnesota, and Decatur, Arkansas, to understand the views of Shaman and their leadership experience. One of the advantages of this field study was to gather precise data about what people believe, and to provide suggestions to change the research questions to better align with the research study. The researcher reached out to the three participants to ask if they were willing to participate in this research study. All three Shaman leaders agreed to participate. The researcher explained that all information collected and shared would be confidential and only be used for the purposes of this study and nowhere else. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and all participants were given a copy of the transcribed interview. The researcher also ensured all three participants that they would be kept anonymous and their names would not be used in the field test.

The researcher conducted in-depth individual interviews with the three Shaman leaders who had over five years of experience in the Shaman role. Due to COVID-19, the researcher contacted all three participants by phone, and scheduled phone interviews on different dates and times. The researcher then collected the data through each phone interview. The interview questions were translated into Hmong by the researcher. All three interviews were conducted over the phone in the Hmong language, were recorded, and lasted about 45 minutes to one hour. The researcher asked each participant sub-questions and follow-up questions to clarify the participant's response and understanding of the question; the researcher then asked the research question. After all of the interviews were completed during the field study, the researcher recorded the interviews, transcribed them in Hmong, and translated them into English.

After the researcher conducted the interviews, the researcher read the transcribed interviews and paid close attention to the participants' suggestions. The results of the field test

revealed that the sub-questions and research questions needed to be revised in order for the participant to understand the questions being asked. The participants provided feedback on how the questions should be asked in order to answer the research question. The researcher took the participants' feedback and adjusted the sub-questions and research questions.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher described the methodology and rationale for the research design of this phenomenological study focusing on the development of leadership of Shamans. Chapter 3 also described the procedure of instrument use, procedures, participant selection, data collection, and what data analysis was used after the coding process using a phenomenological research method. Protecting participants and the approval from the institutional review board were discussed. Further, this chapter addressed potential assumptions and biases the researcher may have brought to this study, and the limitations of this study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Data Collection

The intent of the research was to explore the self-perceived views of Shamans regarding their leadership roles within the Hmong community. Therefore, the researcher took a phenomenological research approach, which solved some of the communication barriers between the participants and researcher. A semi-structured interview format was used to offer each participant to speak openly about their views as the researcher asked each question (Fylan, 2005). The research and data collected in this study were heavily dependent on the testimonies and interviews of Hmong Shamans. A total of eight participants were chosen based on their gender and the number of years they had been a Shaman. Two Shamans were newly practicing, three Shamans had five to ten years of experience, and three Shamans had over ten years of experience. Four Shamans were male and four were female. All the Shamans who contributed to this study resided in the Twin Cities.

As stated in Chapter 3, phenomenology is a study of people's conscious experience of their life-world, that is, their everyday life and activities (Merriam, 2009). In order to adapt to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher conducted virtual interviews using Google Hangout, Zoom meetings, and phone calls. The researcher conducted interviews in the language that the participant felt most comfortable using, English and/or Hmong, because the researcher is bilingual. Two interviews were conducted in Hmong. Six interviews were conducted in both English and Hmong. During the interview, the researcher asked the eight participants a set of sub-questions, follow-up questions, and the research questions (see Appendix D). These types of follow-up questions were asked to provide clarification for the researcher (e.g., "Can you tell me more?" or "Can you explain more in detail?"). The researcher listened to and recorded the

participants' responses and views of the Shaman role in the Hmong community. The researcher tried to accommodate each participant's language, media, and unique needs to complete the scheduled setting interviews. Per the participant's request, the researcher conducted one in-person interview. The researcher observed one of the study participants dressed in Shaman attire during the Google Hangout interview. The researcher also observed the participant's outfit had two symbols: thaj hiaj and humliam (see Appendix G and Appendix H).

Participants

As stated earlier, eight Shamans were interviewed, including four male and four female Shamans from the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota. To maintain the eight participants' privacy, the researcher used pseudonyms to identify the participants' identity, such as P1 or P2 for each participant. The researcher went over the interview guidelines and obtained either written or verbal consent from each participant. The researcher concealed information that meets the participants' confidentially under federal law, the Privacy Act, and HIPPA privacy rule. The researcher also disclosed to all eight participants that their participation in this research was entirely voluntary. Their decision to participate would not affect their relationship with the researcher or Bethel University.

Because Hmong Shamanism is not often explored or found in academic research, the participants all expressed excitement to be discovered and interviewed. Participants P3, P4, and P6 stated:

P3: I am very excited. I have done interview with some researchers as well. We need educators like you to help educate and do more research about who Siv Yis is and teach the new generation of Hmong or our younger children to understand the Shaman role better.

P4: I am very excited to see that you are doing this research. From my experience, when researchers research on a topic, they should feel passionate and have a role in the topic; this shows a true researcher. I hope you will continue to do more research on this topic.

P6: This is very exciting that someone is taking the time to research this topic. I am very excited and cannot wait to see the findings from your research.

Description of Participants

Participant 1: P1 started his journey as a Shaman in 1990 and has taken the Shaman leadership role for over 30 years. One other family member in his family, his wife, also holds a Shaman title. He shared that before he became a Shaman, he was sick for one full year before finding his master:

Once I found out that I was gifted with this, I sought help from other Shamans. I had to search for my master/teacher who will guide or lead the way for me. I finally found my master. Once I found my master, my master performed a healing ritual for me and determined if I would become a Shaman. Once that was done, I started on my first altar. Like I said, I was sick for one full year before I finally completed the different sizes of altars. Once I completed all the steps and my last altar, I was no longer sick.

Participant 2: P2 shared that he is 50 years old. He started his Shaman at the age of 20. He also shared that nine people in his family also hold a Shaman title. He shared that before he became a Shaman, he started experiencing symptoms similar to a seizure. He has been to the doctor many times, and the doctor could not diagnose his illness. They

took x-rays, blood work and did a complete examination, but they still could not diagnose his illness:

The doctor said to me, “you are a healthy person; we cannot diagnose your illness, and we cannot seem to find what is wrong with you.” At this time, I decided to tig rov los rau sab dab qhua. I was only 20 years old and still young, so I did not know what to do. My wife and I went to talk to my parents. Both my parents are Shaman and they said, “ntshe yog koj yuav ua neeb xwb pob?” Kuv niam thiab kuv txiv thiaj li muab kuv txhib seb kuv puas tshee. Kuv niam thiab kuv txiv nkawv txhib los kuv tsis tshee. Yog li kuv txiv thiaj li kom kuv tus txiv ntxawm tuaj muab kuv txhib los tsis tshee. Kuv txiv thiaj li kom nws tus kwv tuaj txhib kuv seb kuv puas tshee. Kuv tus uncle tuaj txog ces nws txhib kiag nruas xwb ces kuv cia li tshee lawm. My uncle told me when I get home kuv yuav tsum txua thaj. My uncle became my master. Ever since that day, I continue to practice, and by the time I notice, I became a Shaman leader and was able to help heal people.

Participant 3: P3, a businessman, shared that he started his Shaman role in 2012. He has been a spiritual healer for 9 years. He also shared that three other people in his family also hold a Shaman role. He shared that in 2006 he found out that he was gifted with the Shaman role. At first, he did not believe in himself. As a businessman, he did not pay much attention. In 2006 an incident happened, and he decided to move his family to Minnesota. In 2008, the second incident happened where he went through a business situation where he could not solve the problem.

I still did not believe in the Shaman role and was not willing to accept it. In 2011 the third incident happened when I was visiting Thailand. An uncle told me to

study numerology/saib hmoov (fortune teller). I was reluctant to learn, but I surrendered and gave up after a week with my uncle. My time in Thailand, I learned how to read numerology/saib hmoov (fortuneteller). I have an office at Hmong Village, and people started to ask me to saib hmoov for them. One day a lady came knocking at my office door; she told me that I could not do any reading for anyone because I have not completed my training yet. To make the story short, I said, “okay,” if that is the case, I will come to see you tonight (I did not know that she was a Shaman). I did not know that she was going to be my xib fwb (master). She told me why I am not reaching my financial goal because I did not accept my healing gift. I said, “Okay, I will take it,” if that is the obstacle to my financial freedom, I will become a Shaman.

In 2013 what made you decide that you will take on the Shaman role?

That is the question because when I was told in 2011-2013, my business financial was not going how I want it to, I told my wife and said, “Hey, if that is the case, I will fulfill my role as a Shaman, but please allow me to continue with my business.” So, I accepted my role as a Shaman.

Participant 4: P3 shared that he became a Shaman in 2012. He started his journey in 2008, and in 2012 he finally became a Shaman. He has taken on the Shaman role for eight years now. He shared that seven people in his family also hold a Shaman title:

My journey started in 2008. I started experiencing anxiety, fear, and I was scared the majority of the time. No one was able to tell me what my illness was. In 2008 I went to seek help from one of my sisters. She was able to use her spirits to

determine my illness and who is my master. She told me that I would need to find a lady with three-stage/Shaman healing power levels. I came home and thought about it, and I could not think of anyone. I continued to experience an illness that no one was able to determine what it was. I left my job within the school district because I was not getting any better. One year later, I was able to find my master/teacher, one of my sister-in-laws. She was able to help me, and that is when I started my journey; I had the tshee (shake), but I was not able to speak to the spiritual world. Within three years of learning, my master passed away, and I had to find another master. November of 2010, I was able to find another master, and she was able to guide me and I was able to find my way and learn how to speak to the spiritual world. I continued to practice and in 2012, I was able to tsa (raised) my first altar.

My master continued to guide me and the more I practiced performing spiritual callings in 2013, I was able to tsa (raised) the second altar. If I use Maxwell's leadership levels, I see myself at level two: the permission level. I have not completed the last altar yet. I am still in the learning stage and hopefully, one day, I will accomplish the last altar and become a leader myself.

Participant 5: P5 shared that she started her journey in 2017 and had been a Shaman for almost two years. She also shared that four people in her family also hold a Shaman role:

It was a long, hard, and difficult road for me. I was sick for a couple of years with migraines. I had migraines every day, I took medications and went to seek help from the doctor, but the doctor could not help me. My health was good; it was just

the migraines that we could not figure out. Finally, my husband and I assumed that maybe it is related to Shamanism. I started seeking a Shaman healer. My grandpa told me that I have spiritual guides. My husband and I thiaj li mus tsawv tau kuv tus grandpa. After my grandpa came to do Shaman for me, my migraines went away. My grandpa became my master. He was able to provide me with the tshee (shake), I was able to shake my legs and arms, but I could not interact with the spiritual world. I had a dream that the spirits came to tell me that I would not live through June of 2017 because I did not have a master. They were not happy because they did not have a home. As I said, my grandpa was able to give me the tshee (shake) only. My sister was able to help me find another master, but I could not get anywhere with her. I was with my second master for one year and I had to let her go since I could not speak to the spiritual world. Finally, I was able to find my master. She had a combination of the older and newer Shamanism. Before my master accepts me as her follower, I had to agree to her terms and sign an agreement form (see Appendix I). She was able to guide me and now I feel content. I have been with her for two years now.

To clarify, you had two previous masters, which did not work out for you?

Yes, I had two previous masters. She is my third master and can explain it in ways that I can understand, and now I can communicate with the spiritual world and learn how to cheb lub vaj lub tsev.

Participant 6: P6 shared since she was a child, she has been experiencing seeing things. Through her teenage years, she went through major depression experience and saw strange things. When she got married, that is when she reached her ultimate

suffering. That is when she moved into her abilities and started her spiritual awakening in 2002. She shared that she had been a Shaman for 19 years, and that her son is also a Shaman.

Participant 7: P7 shared, she had been a Shaman for 1 ½ years. She shared that her dad also holds a Shaman role:

Growing up, I was a little weird or different from others; I never thought that I would take on the Shaman role one day. My dad was also a Shaman, so I did not think it would get passed down onto me. A friend of mine told me that, “Oh do you know that one day you will become a Shaman?” I was like, really? I was young and said whatever. I did not believe her and then when I went through the emotional term wheel, I was depressed, had suicidal thoughts, I hated everybody, I was angry with myself, with my kids, and with my husband. I realize that this was not me. I realize that if I do not accept it, they will make me pom ub pom no, then I told myself, okay, something weird is going on. I had to figure out what is going on. It is not something that you would wake up and think that you want to become a Shaman? It is not that I want this role; some pros and cons come with this.

Can you expand a little more on when you said you became depressed and dislike yourself?

It was right after my parent passed away. I took a big emotional withdraw on myself for it to happen. Before that, I feel that too, but it was not a big problem and it did not get to the point where I wanted to hurt myself or hurt or hate the people around me. My parents’ passing opened the flood, it opens the gate and everything just came. All the emotions that I held in, all the anger, all the pain are

overwhelming to me and I did not know how to deal with it. I was at a point in my life where you know thaum no ces xav tias yog yuav ua neeb lawm xwb no mas. I was at a point where I was not ready, so when my spiritual spirits came knocking, I was in an emotional mess. It fed onto me not understanding my journey, it feeds onto people around me and you know as you are growing into this journey, the first people you can think of that you can hurt or feel pain are the people around you. I realized that I needed help, my husband said, maybe because I survived the postpartum depression. I did not trust or believe that I have these spiritual healers. I pretended that everything was fine. I finally told my husband that I needed help and this was the beginning of my journey to figure out what is going on.

Participant 8: P8 shared that she had been a Shaman for nine years. She shared that two other people in her family also hold a Shaman role:

I became a Shaman in 2012. I never knew I was gifted. I thought I was normal like other kids. I always dreamed of flying all the time. Almost every night, I dreamed of flying like an eagle, like a bird, flying everywhere. Those dreams were scary. It is like when the roller coaster goes down and you have these nerves racking inside you. I never told my parents. I thought those dreams were normal. I also fear closing my eyes before going to sleep. From 2010-2011, I always dream of these handsome men dressed in all white; they were like my bodyguards. They were always around me. I never shared my story with anybody until 2012, when I became a Shaman and raised my altar in 2012.

You ask me, “What made me become a Shaman?” Many things happened. My daughter got sick and I found out that she was gifted. My master raises an

altar for my daughter and then I found out I was also gifted. I did not believe it until one year later. I got punished by my qhua neeb (spirits). I wanted to challenge my spiritual spirits to see it for myself; I told myself, is this real or fake. I sure was challenged. My spiritual spirits are powerful, qhua neeb muaj txuj tiag tiag, they can do many things to your body. They can make your body shake, freeze, and create illness. I said if they are this powerful, then I will have to accept it.

Language Differences

The researcher tried to accommodate each participant's language when requested so the participant felt comfortable. The researcher is bilingual and speaks both Hmong and English. During the interview, the researcher mixed her two languages often, which included phrases and sentences with both Hmong and English words, so the participant had a better understanding of the question. Although the researcher code-switched frequently, the researcher used the correct language or mix of languages appropriately depending on the participant in order to convey concepts and thoughts to meet the question.

There were many factors to consider when translating the Hmong interview transcriptions into English. The challenge the researcher encountered when translating the transcribed interview was that some Hmong words were not able to be translated into English and some English words were not able to be translated into Hmong. The researcher left the words in Hmong and just tried to translate the words to the best of her knowledge in parenthesis next to the Hmong written word. The researcher also left some sentences or paragraphs in Hmong for a better understanding of the context and meaning.

Data Analysis Process

This qualitative research study used a phenomenological method described by Creswell (2014) and carefully paid attention to transcribing the information collected, coding, and categorizing. This method contains several steps, which were discussed in Chapter 3. These steps of the analysis are based on the individual interview data and included (a) transcribing the data, (b) organizing and preparing data for analysis, (c) reading through all of the data, (d) coding the data, (e) interrelating themes and description, and (f) interpreting the meaning of data through themes and descriptions (Creswell, 2014).

Step 1: Transcribe the Interviews

Step 1 of the phenomenological analysis involved transcribing the audiotaped interview word for word. This process involved typing up notes and organizing the data (Creswell, 2014). The interviews conducted in Hmong were transcribed in Hmong and then translated into English by a translator and the researcher. During the audiotape transcribing, the researcher listened to the recording and realized that some Hmong words could not be translated into English. The researcher kept the transcription in Hmong and translated it to the best of her knowledge in parenthesis next to the Hmong written word or phrase. Through the multiple rounds of listening to the interview, the researcher wanted to make sure she did not miss important information. Below are examples of the transcriptions for participants six and seven (P6 and P7) describing their perspectives of what qualities and behaviors define them as great leaders.

P6: For me, I have five that I look at. The top one is integrity, trustworthy, authentic, genuine, being themselves, and living out the core values of oneself.

I may not live in your core values, but I live in my core values that I have for myself. The second one is treating everyone with respect, showing empathy for human suffering. The third one for me is to live one's life as an example. The next

one or fourth is empowerment. Challenge and bring the best out of the individual through coaching towards the growth of respect and self-love. As a Shaman or a good leader, if [I] can empower that ultimate self-growth, then I have done my job. Lastly is quality; quality is being present. Attending to each moment as special and unique to that person, I need to listen and pay attention without judgment.

P7: The qualities and behaviors that Shamans define as a good leader is honesty. As a leader, you will need to understand the people, understand your vision, trust yourself, and believe in yourself. Shamans' role and vision are to heal the illness. Help people who come and ask for help and be open-minded, this is what lub ntuj have given to you lub yeej kooj yeej huam (some people are destined and given the spiritual healing powers) that makes you become a leader of that role.

Step 2: Read the Transcripts

According to Creswell (2014), the next step was to read the transcripts and review the data for understanding. The researcher thoroughly read the transcripts line by line until the researcher obtained a clear understanding of the participants' experience. Through the multiple rounds of reading of the transcription, the researcher wanted to understand each participant's view clearly. The researcher took notes of the first impression and highlighted key and repeated words.

Step 3: Label/Index the Transcripts

The third step occurred when the researcher labeled relevant words, phrases, sentences, or the transcript sections. The researcher paid attention to repeated words, action words, and

repeated phrases in several places in the transcript. The researcher used different highlighters and colored pen to label the different phrases, sentences, repeated words, and actions words.

Step 4: Code the Data

Coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text and assigning a word or phrase to the segment to develop a general sense of the data. In Step 4, the analyzed data was coded. The researcher read the transcript and identified themes which the researcher felt were important to the research questions. The researcher decided which codes were most important and created keywords to represent each category. The researcher used a “qualitative codebook, a table that contains a list of predetermined codes” (Creswell, 2014, p. 199), which the researcher gathered from the transcription.

Step 5: Cluster the Data into Units or Categories

Step 5 was the stage where the researcher used the “coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis” (Creswell, 2014, p. 199). The researcher decided which codes were important by bringing several codes together to determine the themes or categories. The researcher decided which were the most relevant and how they were connected to create themes related to the study’s main result.

The researcher determined which themes were relevant to create categories related to the main result of the study. According to Creswell (2014), there were three categories: common sense, surprising, and unusual. The researcher paid close attention to the data collected and “assembles the data material belonging to each category in one place and performs a preliminary analysis” (p. 198) which is presented in the qualitative narrative.

Step 6: Summarize the Interviews

The final level of the phenomenological analysis was Step 6: summarizing each interview. After the researcher conducted all eight interviews, the researcher summarized each participant's transcribed interview. The summaries are listed below.

Summaries of the Interviews

P1 has been a Shaman for over 30 years. Before taking on the role, P1 experienced an unusual sickness that doctors could not diagnose. He was sick for one full year before discovering that he was chosen from his ancestors to hold the Shaman title. P1's wife is also a Shaman. During the interview, P1 stated that in order to be a great leader, the qualities and behaviors a Shaman must have are to be respectful, build a trusting relationship, understand the people's needs, understand the Shaman's role, have a vision, have a positive attitude, lead by example, be a great role model, have good teamwork, and be respectful. Four values P1 values the most about being a Shaman are knowing his role as a Shaman, understanding the rituals, having determination and passion, and pab lub siab dawb paug li yus txoj kev txawj.

According to P1, there are many ways to heal a sick person: ua neeb kho ntsuj plig, ua neeb kho ntsuj kho hlauv, ua neeb tsa txhiaj meej, ua neeb ntxiv ntawv, ua neeb kho tsev/ib tsev, ua neeb nplawm vij sub los sis ua neeb thib sub, ua neeb ntsia los sis yaws cuav, thiab ua neeb faib thiab. P1 stated that besides performing spiritual healing ceremony, he knows some khawv koob such as khawv koob tiv thaiv dab, khawv koob txaus pob txha, khawv koob kub hnyiab, khawv koob kom npaws tu, and khawv koob ntshav tu. Furthermore, P1 knows how to perform different types of hu plig rituals: hu plig nyab tshiab, hu plig xyoo tshiab, hu plig tis npe laus, hu plig menyuum tshiab, and hu plig poob plig. The Hmong community relies on Shamans to perform spiritual beliefs for their family. P1 would like the community to trust, respect, believe, and recognize their healing process and respect them for who they are.

P1 believes that Maxwell's (2011) leadership model is a great starting tool to determine Shamans' leadership in the community. To become a Shaman, a person must get chosen for the Shaman role. Once the person determines they are gifted, one will need to search for a master to start their journey of healing others. To heal, Shamans will go into a trance to communicate with the spiritual world. P1 believes that at least 80% to 90% of Shamans can heal a sick person *yog tib ntsuj tib plig*. Like many other participants, P1 also shared that Shamans do not advertise their role in the community, and not all Shamans develop the same illnesses.

P2, who is 50 years old, started the Shaman journey at the age of 20. Other than him, nine people in his family are also Shamans. P2's parents and two of his uncles also hold the Shaman title. Before P2 accepted his Shaman role, he often passed out and was sent to the hospital multiple times. He also experienced an illness similar to a seizure on multiple occasions, but P2's illness was not a seizure with a doctor's diagnosis. The qualities and behaviors that P2 defined a Shaman leader possesses are to be open to suggestions, be honest, accept mistakes, be open-minded, listen, learn from others, be a role model, speak truthfully, and have trust in others.

What he values the most as a Shaman is helping his family members and the Hmong community. He believes that if he can help heal people's illnesses, P2 will feel a sense of relief that he has done something valuable for the community. Secondly, he believes that Shamans are impactful leaders because they have the healing powers to help people to the best of their knowledge. Next, he mentioned that as a leader, one should be honest, be open to suggestions, be a good listener, lead others in the right direction, and show people how leaders would want things to be done (P2).

P2 had not heard of Maxwell's (2011) leadership model, but through his experiences he learned that Shaman leaders will have to face and accomplish many steps before they can get to

where they need to be. He believes that Maxwell's leadership model can be used as a starting point because there is no research on Shamanism and Maxwell's leadership. Also, Shaman leaders have not looked into what model will best describe Shamans' leadership role.

P2 would like the community to have a better understanding of essential factors in Shamans' leadership roles: (a) all Shamans have different healing powers, (b) Shamans do not go out and advertise who they are because they are well known in the community by word of others, depending on how well they heal people, and (c) Shamans gain trust from their family members and the community. Secondly, Shamans cannot heal everyone; it is based on lawm lub yeej koob yeej huam seb puas duav tus neeg mob xwb.

P2 feels that Shamans need more support from the community in the form of respect and trust. The community needs to trust Shamans' healing process and powers. Followers and students in the learning process also need to believe in their role as a Shaman so that they can be guided in the right direction on their new journey. Shamans should build and have trusting relationships with their followers and the community.

P3 started his journey as Shaman in 2012 and has been a spiritual healer for almost 9 years. As a businessman, he did not think that one day he would become a Shaman. He never thought or wanted the role of a Shaman. He was involved in multiple car accidents, and it was not until a Shaman ritual, ua neeb, was done on him that he found out that he was gifted with Shaman healing powers. He was reluctant to take on the Shaman role until he could not reach his business goal and eventually took his role as a Shaman in 2013.

In the interview, P3 identified three qualities that define Shamans' leadership roles. They are trust, respect, and belief. Trust is significant for P3. P3's Shaman style is not the same as the old fashion Shaman style seen 30 years ago, and it is also not the same style as his Shaman father

and Shaman grandparents. P3 wants his siblings and others to respect him and believe in his style of healing. He wants his immediate family to trust him that he can heal others, and to believe in him in the healing process.

P3 feels that Maxwell's (2011) leadership model is not a good model for Shamans to determine their leadership role. He believes that one has to be appointed by someone to become a leader and argues that Shamans are appointed by the inner spiritual side, not in the real world.

Some essential factors P3 mentioned during the interview that he would like to share with the community are: Shamans do not go out and advertise themselves. Shamans follow their spiritual healing spirits to heal people, and Shaman *kho ntsuj plig*, *kho ntsuj kho lauv* healing the person and not the evil spirits. He believes that 90% of Hmong people still practice Shamanism, and because Shamans do not go out into the public and advertise themselves, the community does not recognize and know of them and does not know their role as a Shaman. The community only knows them by word of mouth. He believes that in the 21st century, educators need to conduct more research on Shamans' leadership role, like who is *Siv Yis*, and educate our children and the community so that the Hmong tradition will not be lost.

P4 started his journey as a Shaman in 2008, but he did not become a Shaman until 2012. Other than him, seven people in his family also hold a Shaman role. His experience was different from his family members; he had anxiety, always felt scared, and feared most of the time. It took him almost one year before he found his first master, and after his first master had passed away, he had to search for another master.

During the interview, P4 defined the following qualities and behaviors for good Shaman leaders: trust, honesty, treating everyone equally, listening, being truthful, respect, and keeping in connection and communication. What P4 values the most is healing the sick person spiritually,

being a great leader in the Hmong community by being honest and open to suggestions, and working as a team to help solve problems.

P4 believes that Maxwell's (2011) leadership model is a great model for Shamans to determine their leadership role because, as Shamans, they are followers; they follow their master and learn as they go. Shamans' leadership role is also to lead spiritually in the Hmong community.

P4 would like to share some factors with the community: Shamans do not go out and advertise their role or brag about how good they are. He states that new and old Shaman practices should be treated equally and that both men and women Shamans should be treated equally. Also, Shamans are like fortune tellers. When one's spirit is lost in the spirit world, the Shaman's role is to bring the lost soul back to the body to heal the sick.

P4 feels that the support he needs from the community is trust, respect, belief, and support. The Hmong community will need to believe in the traditional healing, trust that Shamans are there to help the community, and believe in their healing process. P4 believes that if the community can support Shamans with these three characteristics, Shamans can become great leaders in the Hmong community one day. He knows Shamans are willing to educate the community so they better understand their role. Without the respect and trust from the community or family members, Shamans feels that they cannot become great leaders. Leadership needs to start with the immediate family and then the community.

P5 had been a Shaman for two years. In 2017 she realized that her health was not in good condition. She experienced migraines every day and her doctors could not figure out why she had them. She eventually sought help from her grandfather, who told her that she was the chosen one and had spiritual guides, and she started searching for her master.

P5 identifies the following as qualities and behaviors that Shamans would need to have in order to be a great leader: being patient, speak truthfully, build a trusting relationship with one's master and the people around them, be honest, courteous, chose words wisely when speaking, provide meaningful feedback, and know the reason behind one's purpose. What P5 values the most is helping the sick person feel better, helping them get back on track, and being there for the community when needed.

P5 believes that Maxwell's (2011) leadership model fits well with the Shaman role. She encourages all Shamans to look into Maxwell's leadership model because it is all about learning, educating, seeking help when needed, either from the community or the Shamans, to meet the same ultimate goal. Shamans have followers that they help guide or lead. Shamans themselves are also followers; they have a master or teacher whom they follow. P5 mentioned the learning process starts once they find their master. The master will educate their followers through the process, and once their followers feel confident, they can heal others in the community. People development is about helping each other grow by sharing their stories and ideas to become a good leader. When Shamans accomplish all ultimate goals and raise their altar, they become leaders. Once they become a leader, they will have their follower who will follow them.

P6 had taken on the Shaman role for 19 years. Before becoming a Shaman, as a teenager, she went through depression and saw strange things. P6 believes that in order for Shamans to become great leaders, the qualities and behaviors that Shamans need are: integrity, respect, live one's life as an example, empowerment, being present, compassionate, empathize, and understand the community's responsibility and obligations. Shamans are spiritual and authentic leaders, which defines them as impactful leaders in the Hmong community.

P6 believes that Shamans do play all five levels of leadership in their role. A Shaman master will have followers who will follow in their footsteps to become a Shaman master one day. Masters are like a coach or a mentor to their followers. During the time of coaching, relationships, trust, and respect are made. Coaching and mentoring is an essential role that a Shaman leader has. Shamans' role is to help their thawj tim (followers/student) grow and be successful. When we look at people's development, we Shamans help our followers to become spiritual healers. Level 5 is the pinnacle level; as a spiritual leader, Shamans will need to collaborate and educate the community to understand Shamans' role better.

Essential factors that P6 would like to share with the community are: men and women Shamans should be treated equally with the same amount of trust and respect, Shamans do not go out in public to brag or advertise that they are good at healing, Shamans serve as a mediator between the spiritual world and the world of the living to bring the lost soul back to the body, Shamans are human beings just like everyone else, and the community should not look at the individual differently. The support that Shamans will need from the community is trust, respect, and non-judgmental.

P7 had been a Shaman for 1 ½ years. Growing up, she knew she was different from all her siblings. When she was young, people would tell her, "one day, you will become a Shaman." As a young girl, she did not listen or pay much attention to the words people told her. Things shifted for P7; after both of her parents passed, P7 went through an emotional breakdown. She was depressed, had suicidal thoughts, and hated everyone around her, including herself. She finally sought help from a Shaman. The Shaman told P7 she had been chosen from her ancestors to take on the Shaman role. If she denies it, she will not get better, and more things will happen to her life and family.

P7 believes that the qualities and behaviors to define a Shaman as a good leader are: honesty, understanding the people and the community, see one's vision, trust and believe in oneself, be open-minded, have good relationships, is a good communicator, know how to deal with issues, and should be resourceful. As a Shaman leader, P7 values her *lub yeej koob yeej huam* given to her by her ancestors.

Maxwell's (2011) leadership model plays a vital role for the Shaman. P7 also states the first step in the Shaman's role is finding the right master to guide one to their highest healing potential. Once a master is found, one will need to build a relationship with their master. The follower should follow the instructions that the master gives. The master is making sure the follower completes all the necessary training and that their altar is raised before going out into the community to perform the ritual call. The students follow their master until they feel confident in taking the role by themselves.

Essential factors that P7 wants to share with the community are: A Shaman is a healer who heals people spiritually, not medically; when people seek the help, they have to believe in the Shaman and be ready to listen to what the Shaman is going to share with the individual or with their family. The support that P7 feels she needs from the community is trust, a good relationship with the community, respect, and honesty. The support, trust, and belief from the community will help her become more confident in her role.

P8 had been a Shaman for nine years and started her journey in 2012. Her experience was different from the other participants. As a child, she always had dreams about flying and dreamed a lot about handsome men surrounding her all the time. Her weird dreams made her afraid of closing her eyes to sleep every night.

During the interview, P8 stated that the qualities and behaviors a Shaman possesses that define those as a great leader are: honesty, trust in oneself, believe in oneself first, be open-minded, support others, and be a good role model. P8 would like the community to understand that not every Shaman will perform the same healing process or share the same healing powers. Everyone who has taken on the Shaman roles has experienced strange symptoms that doctors cannot diagnose. Some will experience an illness, while others will experience depression, stress, anxiety, and hatred. The community will need to understand that in the 21st century, the Shaman role is changing, and the community will need to accept those changes. The 21st century Shaman is going to dress differently, speak in a different language when communicating with the spiritual world, and some might not even perform the old way of neeb. The support she feels she will need from the community is respect, trust, and belief. The community needs to trust Shamans in the ritual healing process and believe or accept what they do.

During the interview, P8 shared that Shamans play a significant role in the Hmong Community. No matter which role they play, everyone is a leader. P8 believes the Shaman role is similar to Maxwell's five levels of leadership. Maxwell's leadership model is a great example. The first step in the Shamans' role is knowing who Siv Yis is, the vision that Shamans want to accomplish, and how they will support their followers and the community. The first step before anyone can be a Shaman is they will need to find the right master. Secondly, trust the person and their healing powers; build a trusting relationship with the master and his/her followers; and understand the steps, process, and healing. Once Shaman has a clear understanding of this process, they can move to the next level, permission. Shamans follow their master because they want to. Shamans have an ultimate goal that they need to accomplish, and their master is their leader whom they follow. Shamans follow their master because they are well known or can lead

a group to accomplish their goal. Shamans follow their master because they will be the ones who will guide and help raise their altar for them. Once Shamans have completed all the training from their master and have raised their altar, they are ready to become a leader themselves.

Response to Research Question 1

To better understand how Shamans develop the leadership skills that they possess, below are the participants' responses to Research Question 1: "What qualities and behaviors do Shamans possess that defines them as great leaders?"

During the interview, P1 stated that in order to be a great leader, the qualities and behaviors Shamans will need are: being respectful, building a trusting relationship, understandings people's needs, understanding people's role, having a vision, having a positive attitude, being led by example, being a great role model, being able to work as a team, and being respectful and trustworthy.

P1: Before someone can become a Shaman leader, the people will need to understand and know their role of a Shaman, need the support from the community, relatives, and family members. Secondly, have an understanding of what a leader is. Understand the leadership role, be respectful, and know how to lead a group or the community. Understands concern or issue and everyone's need and try to help problem solve by finding a solution. I lead by being a great role model and lead by example. I talk nicely to them; I understand their needs, concerns, issues and help find a solution to the problem. Have a positive attitude to lead others, be honest, build trust, and help people who are struggling. If you have a vision, follow your vision and lead to the best that you can.

Can you expand little more “what leadership qualities are important to you as a Shaman leader?”

What I truly believe in is the way we support each other, show respect, trust each other, and work as a team, this is what is important to me. Also, being able to build relationship with the community, my family, and relatives is important.

Leadership to me starts with my family. My family will need to have that trust in me and can come to me anytime when they have problems. Once I can lead my family than I know I have the skills to lead others.

P2 defined the qualities and behaviors of a Shaman leader as follows: be open or open to suggestions, be honest, accept your mistakes, be open-minded, listens, learn from others, model, speak truthfully, and being able to have trust.

P2: As a Shaman yus yuav tsum ua lub siab dawb paug (be open and honest), do what is right only, be honest, and build trusting relationships with our family and the community. Not everyone is the same. Everyone has their own way of leading. In order for us to gain trust from the community, we have to do what is right. We need to learn how to accept and learn from others. No one is perfect, but we should try our best to lead the best we can. We do make mistakes, and we should learn from our mistakes. As a Shaman leader, we have to be honest, lead others in the right direction, be open to suggestions, be good listeners, provide meaningful feedback, and most importantly, don't criticize others. A true leader will show followers how to get things done. Besides that, a great leader has to speak truthfully. As Shaman leaders, we need to understand these roles in order for our followers or students to truly trust and understand the Shaman role.

In the interview, P3 identified three qualities that define Shamans as great leaders: trust, respect, and believe in our role.

P3: Many families do not recognize that their child is gifted. They would not believe or trust you, and they would say you are crazy and just pretending to be sick. Myself when I became a Shaman, my older brother, disagreed with me. He said, “You are not a Shaman?” You are supposed to ua neeb ib yam li kuv txiv thiab kuv yawg. Suppose I don’t perform the same rituals as my dad and grandpa, then I’m not a Shaman. So, the trust has to start with your parents and family members. The parent has to recognize that they have a gifted Shaman in the house.

During the interview, P4 defined Shaman leadership’s role as trust, honest, treat everyone equally, listen, be truthful, respectful, and keep in connection or communication.

P4: Being a good leader, you will need to be honest and gain trust from the community. As a Shaman, what qualities define us as a good leader is able to heal the ill person. For me, in order to be a great leader, I must have a clear understanding of my role as a Shaman and be able to answer questions that the community might have. They are also being able to guide people in the right direction by educating them on what they need to know about their role.

Both men and women Shamans should be treated equally. Trust and listen to our master or teacher, be honest when healing people, and keep in close contact or connection with our master.

P5 identified the following as qualities and behaviors that a Shaman would need to have in order to be a great leader: being patient, speak truthfully, build a trusting relationship with

your master and the people around you, be honest, courteous, chose your words wisely when speaking, provide meaningful feedback, and know your purpose.

P5: As spiritual leaders, we have to hold ourselves to high ethical standards.

Some qualities that Shamans have are being patient, only speaking the truth, if it's not the truth, do not share, and build a trusting relationship with others. Be courteous, be honest, don't gossip, spread false rumors, only speak the truth if you want to be respected by people and to be a great leader. Shamans need to follow their master or teacher (xib fwb) to gain confidence before going out to do the healing.

P6 believed that in order for Shamans to become great leaders, the qualities and behaviors that Shamans need are: integrity, respect, lives one's lie as an example, empowerment, being present, compassion, empathize, know your purpose, and understand the community's responsibility and obligations.

P6: Integrity is someone who is really trustworthy, being authentic, being genuine, being themselves, living out the core values of oneself. Treating everyone with respect and showing empathy for human suffering. Live one's life as an example. My actions should really match my words. Empowerment, challenge and bring the best out of an individual through coaching towards the growth of respect and self-love. Being present, attending to each moment as special and unique to that person. I need to listen and pay attention without judgment. The other is compassion, the ability to empathize with how I feel or see you for whom you are rather than comparing you to somebody else. To me, these are very important qualities that I value in the practice that I do.

P7 and P8 had similarity responses. They believed that the qualities and behaviors that define a Shaman as a good leader are: honest, understand the people, understand your own vision, trust and believe in yourself, be open-minded, relationship building, communicate, know how to deal with issues, and be resourceful.

P7: The qualities and behaviors that Shaman defines as a good leader is honesty. As a leader, you will need to be able to understand the people, understand your own vision, trust yourself, and believe in yourself. You know, being a Shaman is no different from being a doctor or any kind of position. It's about building the relationship, having the trust, and that foundation. Be open-minded to everything surround you, be resourceful, know what's right and wrong, and trust and believe your spiritual spirits. This is what defines us Shaman as great leaders in our community.

P8: The qualities and behaviors that Shaman possesses that define them as a great leader are: being honest, trust yourself, believe yourself first. If you don't believe in yourself, then you will not be able to fulfill the Shaman role. Be open-minded, have an open heart, support others when needed and understand your role as a Shaman. Be a good role model.

Summary

It was evident that the Shaman leaders who participated in this study possess a strong understanding of their leadership qualities and behaviors such as: honesty, trustworthiness, truthfulness, respect, good role model/mentor, listening abilities, compassion, empathy, self-awareness, positive attitude, working collaboratively, relationship building, open-mindedness,

dedication, empowerment, vision, values, resourcefulness, influence, and clear understanding of the Shaman role.

Response to Research Question 2

There has been research conducted about the different types of leaders within an organization or individual to better understand each person's leadership skills. As stated in Chapter 2, leaders should create future successors by selecting and motivating young people with leadership qualities to be courageous and ready for the leadership role. Experienced leaders should enlighten the visionary young men and women and tell them what they are expected to do when they join the profession (Robinson et al., 2017). Leaders should live like role models who can be followed by the younger generation demonstrating the virtues required for leadership. Below are the participants' responses to Research Question 2, following Maxwell's (2011) leadership model: "What are Shamans' perspectives about the five roles of leadership that Shamans may play in the Hmong community?"

P1: According to how you explained the five leadership levels, I think that this is something that I think is great. Tag nrho cov niam neeb thiab txiv neeb nyias muaj nyias txoj kev xav. I will only reply to what I think and believe as my perspective; I cannot answer for others. I don't know if they are thinking that same way as me. I can only reply to what I think and how I have been leading. I truly believe for the first level, you will need to reflect on your own personality and follow others how you want to follow them or can do. You can only lead by what you can do. If you cannot lead or do it, don't do it or go beyond what you do not know. You cannot force yourself to do something that you do not want to do.

Secondly, once you become a Shaman, Shaman's role is to heal others so they can be healthy. You will need to lead to the best of what you know and believe in. If you have a vision, follow your vision and lead to the best that you can. Be honest, truthful, and respect everyone. Do not lie to the people around you. Ua dab tsis yuav tsum ua tiag tiag tsis txhob dag luag. The role of a Shaman is to help your family, relatives, and the community. Your role is to help others as Siv Yis has given to you. SivYis tau muab lub yeej koob yeej huam rau yus los pab tib neeg tsis yog los mus nrhiav noj nrhiav haus. I believe that this will be a starting point for us Shaman to understand our leadership role. This is a great tool and a great start for us Shamans to look deeper into our role.

P2: I am not similar to Maxwell's levels of leadership, but what I can is this, according to how you have explained Maxwell's leadership levels, I believe that once we have found our master, then that is the starting point for us.

Your master will guide and help you complete your levels of learning and altar. As a student, we follow our master. He/she will guide us and on our journey. We show respect and build a trusting relationship with our master and his/her followers. We learn from each other and can succeed in our journey when we work productively with each other. I feel that my master is a mentor for me, and once I become a master, I will have the same role, but you will always still under your master. We have a mission to help the community, and we will try our best to help the community when they ask for our help. There are many steps or levels for us to take to get us to today as a Shaman healer leader.

P3: I'm a big fan of John Maxwell. For John Maxwell's five levels of leadership, when the title is given or a positive is given, it will be going through a voting system where you vote for the person to be your leader. Being a Shaman, we are not being appointed. We are automatically appointed by our inner spiritual side. I don't think that will apply to Hmong Shaman about going through leadership steps.

Can you explain a little more why you think that?

When I look at Maxwell's five levels of leadership, positional is just like relies on position to engage followers. If you find out that you are a Shaman, don't you seek out a master or someone that you can follow?

P4: I'm going to start by saying that our Shaman role has a leader who brought these spiritual to us humans. In order for us to become Shaman, we need to have a master. The master is our leader who will get us started in our Shaman role. Suppose you believe that you have spiritual heal, then you will need to seek assistance from a Shaman. I have two masters. I have not reached the level where I can go to other people's houses to perform ritual healing. By looking at Maxwell's five levels of leadership, I see it as Hmong Shaman we have a leader who is called Siv Yis. Our leadership is to lead healers spiritually. After we have completed all the levels of our Shaman role, then we can become a leader and have followers and be well known in the community. The community sees that we are able to heal people, honest, and trust by the community. We, as Shaman, will need to show respect to the community, and the community will need to show respect to us. Once we become our own master, we can have followers or

students, and we will lead them by modeling and guide them. We have to show respect to our masters because we learn from each other. He/she will help me in my role. I can succeed in my role and be more productive when I follow or ask my master. My ultimate goal is to help the community.

P5: Every Shaman has their own followers. People will go to them repetitively asking for help because they trust them and know that they can help them. At the same time, Shamans are building trusting relationships with others. So basically, when someone comes seeking help, both of have the same goals. The same goal is to figure out what is going on, what is wrong, and trying to help that person. For people's development, at the same time the Shaman is helping their followers grow. When someone seeks for help, Shaman help them spiritually, and at the same time learning as well. Everybody is individually growing while trying to reach their goals. In the fifth stage, leaders slip up into leaders, that kind of falls into when followers find their master/teacher. The master/teacher and his/her followers are working to lift the student up to become a new leader. So, if when Shamans look at it together, then, yes, everything falls into the Shaman role.

P6: Shamans actually play all these roles in different levels at different periods/time based on the connections. As Shaman struggle with the individual or the community, Shaman do play a little bit of positional. The master is the mentor and the follower is the mentee who really wants to follow their master's practice. Talking about permission is the relationship with others that is developed. We are human beings, social, emotional people, and so we have to build relationships.

Relationships are developed based on trust and respect. That is really important in the role we play as Shaman.

The last three is the biggest role for Shaman leaders. Helping the individual, helping the leaders, helping the community to work together to successfully obtain the ultimate goal, whether working together, loving each other, working for racial equity, and one unifies voice, these are important. For people development, Shaman's role and responsibility is to help each individual to become leaders for themselves. To be self-awakening, Shaman will need to do their own spiritual healing, to heal their own illness, to heal their own pain, to heal their family, to self-love themselves, and to be their ultimate self. The pinnacle for a Shaman leader is to be collected as a community, nation, and world. We have challenges that are creating crises, situations and how can we collectively have a positive impact worldwide. If Shaman masters can help lift their students to that leadership position, we can make a huge impact.

P7: Maxwell's five levels of leaders are about building the relationship, having that trust, and that foundation. These five levels play an important role in the Shaman leadership role. When Shamans put themselves in that position, they put themselves on a pedestal because people will go to Shamans for advice. As a leader, Shaman will need to understand the people, understand their own vision, trust and believe in them. For example, it is like selling a product, and the seller is not able to believe in the product or know how to explain the products, then the seller is not going to be able to sell the product.

P8: Shaman role is similar to Maxwell's five levels of leadership if Shaman looks at each level one at a time and makes the comparison. These five levels are important to us. This could be a starting point or tool for us to use if we look at it closely. Shamans see that the community acknowledges them as Shaman leaders. Shamans treat everyone with respect and help heal others. Secondly, we care about the community, especially the person who is ill. We, as Shaman, show respect to others and the community; we try to build trust from the people. We help our followers or students to be committed to their Shaman role by leading by example and model. We show respect to our masters and other followers or Shaman. We learn from each other. We can succeed in our role or be more productive when we follow or master. We work as a team by trusting each other. We all have the vision to help the community, and when we will do our best to be trustworthy. In order to succeed in our Shaman role, we received specific training from our master and especially our spiritual spirits, who lead us the way to heal others. With the help and support of my master I was able to accomplish my ultimate goal as a Shaman leader. Now I have followers of my own who follows me. The Shaman role has made me change my thinking, the way I feel, the way I lead, and my perspective of the people.

It was evident that seven out of the eight participants believe that Maxwell's (2011) leadership model is a great model and starting point for determining Shamans' leadership role. Shamans guide and mentor their followers to be successful in their Shaman role. Participants believe that changes need to occur, and more research needs to be conducted on other leadership models, which will benefit the Shamans in the 21st century.

Summary

As stated in Chapter 2, leadership is associated with several qualities, as expressed by Maxwell (2018). A leader must be able to perceive things differently by being optimistic about discovering reality. Leaders must be hopeful for the best despite the challenges within the organization they lead (Burkhart et al., 2017). Leaders must be able to value others' ideas and, if possible, evaluate them to see if they have a positive impact on the organization. Leaders must have a vision, guide others to achieve their vision, and set their own goals (Stearns et al., 2016).

Based on the research, seven out of the eight participants believe that Maxwell's (2011) leadership model is a great model used to determine Shamans' leadership roles. Seven participants believed that if Shamans follow Maxwell's leadership models, it would help them guide and mentor their followers and attain a good relationship with their master and the community. Their followers will follow them because they have established respect for each other. Furthermore, following Maxwell's leadership model helps the individual thawj tim (followers) work together with their master to achieve the ultimate goal successfully. Participant 3 stated that Maxwell's model is not the best model to determine Shamans' leadership role: "being a Shaman, we are not being appointed. Our inner spiritual side automatically appoints us."

Response to Research Question 3

The Shamans' role has changed from what it used to be 50 years ago. Therefore, Shamans see a need for a better understanding of their role within the Hmong community. This is addressed in the participants' responses to Research Question 3: "What are important factors that Shamans may want to share with community members in order for them to better understand Shamans' leadership roles in the community?"

P1: I want the community to understand that not everyone can become a Shaman. The Shaman role is not an easy role. It is not that all of a sudden I decide that I want to become a Shaman and can become a Shaman. You have to be the chosen one from your ancestors and given the task to help the Hmong community. The role of a Shaman is to help your family, relatives, and the community. The spiritual spirits borrow our body to go to the other side of the dimension to determine to see why the person is sick or due to a lost soul. Our role is to kho mob kho nkeeg, yog lawv thov kom peb ua neeb saib, kho ntsuj kho hlauv, tau menyuam tshiab ces peb yeej ua tau. Other than that muaj cov neeb hnyav xwm li ua neeb faib thiab, nplaw sub, tib sub, yaws cuav, thiab tsa txhiaj meej los kuv yeej ua tau. Tsis tag li ntawd, if our family member or the community asks me to help call a lost soul (hu plig) I also know how to do. I know how to hu plig ib tsev, hu plig nyab tshiab, thiab lwm yam los kuv yeej paub thiab. Kuv txawj khawv koob xwm li, khawv koob txuas pob txha, thaiv dab los sis raug dab los kuv yeej paub thiab. I want to share with the community that us Shaman do not go out and advertise. We let the people look for us. We can help answer questions. Like I said, as a Shaman I am here to help heal people and extend their life so they can be healthier or live a little longer. I am someone who is open and I want others to understand our Shaman role.

Lastly, I want to share with the community that there are many ways to heal a person. We as Shaman kho ntsuj plig and we will bring the lost soul back to the body. Doctors can cure disease, but when one's soul is lost, that is where doctors cannot cure and that is when us Shaman comes in to help with that

process. Peb txawj khawv koob, where we can cure fracture bones and after a surgery we can help heal the wound to heal it quicker or faster. Peb siv khawv koob kho tib neeg yog lawn tau raug dab, kub hnyiab, ua npaws, yog leej twg rau mob los ntshav ces peb ua khawv koob rau kom tu. I would say 80-90% we can heal the person/patient. Shaman cannot cure a person if he/she has been diagnosed with a disease such as cancer, kidney failure, high blood pressure, and broken bones.

P2: I want to address that a Shaman's role is to heal people, and we do not go out into the community to advertise. All Shamans have different word of mouth that gets passed to people of how well we can heal a person. If I talk about this or share this with people, they might think I am crazy. Since you ask me this question, then I will tell you, other Shaman may want to share their Shaman role with the community, but I like to keep this to myself. The community probably knows that we are healers. We have spiritual healing spirits that we can help heal someone who is sick that doctors cannot diagnose. Doctors are trained to help people in the real world. When helping to heal a person, we Shaman will go into a trance to the other side (spiritual world), and we help heal people in the spiritual world. We communicate with the person's spirit and bring the lost soul back to the person's body. I also want the community to understand that we cannot heal everyone. It all depends on peb lub yeej koob yeej huam puas duav tus neeg mob ntawm. Yog peb lub yeej koob yeej huam duav lawm ces tus neeg ntawm yeej zoo xwb. Yog tias peb lub yeej koob yeej huam tsis duav ces peb yuav kho tsis tau tus neeg ntawm.

P3 and P4 both have similar comments for research question 3.

P3 and P4: What I want to share with the community is that we, as Shaman are healers. Shamans do not go out into the community and advertise their role and what they do. The community hears about us Shaman from word of mouth by one of their relatives if we are able to help. The Shaman role is not easy. It is hard work. The Hmong Community will need to understand and truly believe in the cultural beliefs. The community should trust us, Shamans, that we are here to help heal someone's illness. The community needs to know that both men and women. Shaman should be treated equally and gain the same respect. Every Shaman has their way of healing, and the community should not go around and spread rumors about us Shaman if we are not able to help heal the ill person. Not every Shaman can heal everyone. Yog peb lub yeej koob yeej huam duav tus neeg mob ces peb yeej kho tau xwb. Shamans' role is to kho ntsuj plig, kho ntsuj kho hlaus.

P5 and P6 both have similar comments for research question 3.

P5 and P6: The community has this misunderstanding of the Shaman roles. The community misunderstands that we have these expectations or standards that the community has for us in order to perform our healing practices. Historically in the past, Shamans are mostly men in the Hmong Community. Shamans' role is to serve as a mediator between the spirit worlds to bring the soul back to the body. Shamans do not ever go out and advertise or brag about their role.

P7: I would like the community to understand that every Shaman is different. Everyone thinks, leads, teach and work with others differently. The journey to becoming a Shaman is not an easy road for us. Not all Shamans will experience

the same illness, everyone's body is different, and it all depends on your spiritual healing spirits to determine which illness they will give you. I want the community to understand that when people seek help from us Shaman, they need to believe in themselves. Secondly, when asking a Shaman for help, *yog kuv mus thov niam neeb txiv neeb txoj kev pab lawm no ces koj yuav tsum thov dawb thov huv*. Lastly, when the community seeks a Shaman's help, the family or person has to be ready to listen to what the Shaman will reveal or share with them.

Not all Shamans will have the same illness, and not everyone will become a Shamans. The role of a Shaman is not an easy process or journey. It is a hard and long journey, and people may not know this, but many people experience hardship and illness that will cause them to lose what they have.

P8: Taking on the Shaman role is not something that I or anyone would want to, but I have no choice. We were gifted and chosen to take on this role. I cannot say I want to become a Shaman because I just want to; that will not happen. As I stated, you have to be the chosen one to become a Shaman from your ancestors. All Shamans will experience or develop different kinds of illnesses. Some will develop depression, stress, anxiety, afraid, and different symptoms of illness. Some Shamans are like fortune tellers, they do not perform the ritual calling, and some Shamans do not wear veils or wear Hmong clothes. Some Shamans speak a different language when they are communicating with the spiritual world.

Spiritual Healing Ceremony

As stated in Chapter 2, in the Hmong culture, not everyone is able to become a spiritual Shaman leader. There is a strong chance for an individual within the family to become a Shaman

if their family history contains Shamans. Being chosen is the first step for a person to become a spiritual Shaman. The chosen one will experience unusual illness. Doctors will not be able to diagnose the illness. The ill person seeks help from another spiritual Shaman. The Shaman will perform a spiritual healing process to determine why the person is sick; if it is due to a lost soul, the Shaman will bring the lost soul back. Besides healing the illness, the spiritual Shaman communicates with the spiritual world and the ancestors to determine if the ill person is the chosen one and holds a Shaman title. There are some important factors the community needs to understand about the Shaman's leadership role in the community. Below are common types of spiritual healing offered by Shamans:

- Ua neeb saib (ceremony performed to see what is wrong with the person)
- Ua neeb kho ntsuj kho hlaus (ceremony performed when a person's spirit is not with the body)
- Ua neeb faib thiab (ceremony performed for pregnant women before giving birth, separating the mother and the child's soul)
- Ua neeb fab laj (ceremony performed to ntxiv ntaub ntxiv ntawv for an elder)
- Ua neeb thib sub (ceremony performed to get rid of the bad spirits from ancestors/clan)
- Ua neeb khov tsev/ib tsev (ceremony performed to make sure the house is free of bad spirits, cleansing the home)
- Ua neeb ntxiv ntawv (ceremony performed for elders)
- Ua neeb tsa txhiaj meej (ceremony performed to raise the home's guardians guarding someone's home that has qaug (fall))

These are different soul calling ceremonies performed by Shamans:

- Hu plig menyuam tshiab (ceremony performed for new born, usually within the 3 days after birth)
- Hu plig nyab tshiab (ceremony performed 3 days after a couple is married, groom's side)
- Hu plig ib tsev (ceremony performed to call back one's soul to the body and home)
- Hu plig xyoo tshiab (ceremony performed to signify the start of the new year for the family)
- Hu plig cub/poob plig (ceremony performed to bring back one's lost soul)
- Hu plig tis npe laus (ceremony performed when a couple reaches certain age, giving them an older name for the couple)

These are different types of magic performed by Shamans:

- khawv koob tiv thaiv dab (magic to protect the soul from bad spirits)
- khawv koob txuas pob txha (magic to heal a cracked bone)
- khawv koob rho mob (magic to remove an illness caused by something)
- khawv koob tu ntshav (magic to stop the bleeding, especially nose bleed)
- khawv koob kub hnyiab (magic to heal a burn)
- khawv koob tav npaws (magic to stop fevers)

Not all Shamans know how to perform these khawv koob (spiritual magic healing techniques).

Summary

The Shamans' role as religious leaders is to perform a ritual going into a trance to communicate directly with the sick person's spirits and restore the soul to the person's body. In order for Shamans to be successful in their role, the community must trust them.

A true leader is not about holding credentials such as a college degree. The community

has to understand that Shamans are chosen from their ancestors for their role and are normal people like everyone else. Secondly, all Shamans perform different spiritual callings such as healing ceremonies, hu plig, and khawv koob. Shamans can heal the sick person due to ntsuj plig or lost soul. Shamans cannot cure a person if they have been diagnosed with an illness by a medical doctor.

Response to Research Question 4

As stated in Chapter 2, people face different problems when they enter a new place and adapt to the changing environment. According to Fang (2016), adapting to new challenges is essential in communicating with others and fostering harmony among the same country's citizens. It is of great importance that all other citizens respect the culture of every community. Below are responses from the participants to answer the research question: "What support or resources do Shamans need from their followers and/or community members in order to be successful in their leadership roles?"

P1: To support me in my Shaman role, I want to community to recognize who we are. The community has to believe us in our Shaman role. This goes back to it all depends on how you lead, what kind of leader you are, does the community trust you, and do your family members trust you. Our followers and the community need to understand that not all Shamans perform the same. Everyone is gifted, and they have their spiritual guides to lead them differently. The community will need to show respect in what we do, respect our feelings because we are normal people like everyone else. The community will need to trust and recognize who we are. The community will need to believe in our healing process, yuav tsum ntseeg peb thiab.

P2: I am not sure how the community has supported the Shaman's role in the past, but the supports I feel we need from the community are as follows:

- Our students and followers will need to trust us to help lead and guide them through the right direction of their Shaman role.
- The community should trust our healing process and also understand that we cannot heal everyone. As I said, it all depends on our yeej koob yeej huam.
- Understand that everyone is gifted differently, and everyone has their spiritual healers to heal people.
- The community and our followers will need to show respect to Shaman just like how they show respect to nurses and doctors.

P3: The supports Shamans need from the community are: respect and recognize who we are, just like how they recognize other religions and cultural faith.

Besides the community, I would like support from my family members. When I became a Shaman, my older brother disagreed with me. He said, "You are not a Shaman!" I am supposed to ua neeb ib yam li kuv txiv, kuv yuav tsum ua neeb ib yam li kuv yawg. Yog kuv tsis ua neeb ib yam li kuv txiv thiab kuv yawg ces kuv tsis yog txiv neeb. I want my family to believe, trust, and recognize that I am gifted, and my spiritual healing will be different from other Shamans. They need to accept who I am and what role I play or do.

P4: I am not sure how the community has supported my role but what we Shaman need from the community are:

- Trust, if the community can trust us, our cultural beliefs will be notified and respected in the community.

- Show respect, see our Shaman role as something important, and respect our healing proves.
- The community needs to understand that everyone has different healing powers, and we Shaman will not be able to heal everyone.
- The community should respect us for who we are, and being a Shaman does not make us any different from anyone.
- A Shaman is similar to a fortune-teller who tells people what causes their illness and what they will need to cure their illness.
- We need the trust and support from our family members, especially our immediate family. I want my family to trust and believe in my Shaman role as a healer and come to me for help when needed.
- Both men and women Shamans should be treated equally.
- Shamans volunteer their time to help the community; it is like a second job but volunteering.
- Communication is a big thing. Both parties need to sit down and share their thoughts and understand each other's roles.

P5: I want the community to trust us, Shaman, when we are performing our rituals. Be open-minded that everyone is gifted uniquely and differently and own skills or lub yeej kooj yeej huam to heal others. We want to be respected by the community and trust that we can do our spiritual healing properly. The Hmong community will need to support our children; since our children are more Americanized, they are losing the Hmong language and barely know how to

speak Hmong. Family members, especially, have to recognize that their child is gifted and seek help from a Shaman to help their child.

P6: I am still a person, despite what I have and can do as a healer, and I am still a human with qualities as weakness or strength. We are in the 21st century, and both men and women Shamans should be treated equally. There is disbelief that women do not have the ability or better healing powers than men. With this being said, this has been an image that has been tainted in the past. Women Shaman are not respected in the community and not viewed as an important Shaman or viewed as having equal spiritual healing powers. The community or family has different expectations and standards, so the new generation cannot follow those expectations. No matter if we are new or old Shamans, we should all be respected and treated equally.

P7: The support that we Shaman need from the community is that the Shaman role has changed in the 21st century, and people will not experience the same illness as 30 years ago. The community needs to show respect to us, new Shamans. The community needs to trust us, support us when we encounter issues, and be honest with us to help us become a stronger person and lead my followers and the community.

P8: The support that Shaman need from the community is their trust and respect. The community has to understand that Shamans volunteer their time and effort to help cure the illness; performing a ritual calling is exhausting and tiring; the community will need to respect the hard work of a Shaman.

Summary

It is evident from the interviews that the support that Shamans need from the community includes trust, respect, belief, recognition, equality, and non-judgmental attitudes. During the interviews, participants shared their strong feelings about being trusted and respected by their immediate family members and the community. Shamans believe that they can be more open to talking about their role if the community shows respect to them. The community must be able to accept change. The Shaman role is not how it used to be 50 years ago: no matter if the person has old or new healing powers, everyone can heal an ill person based on their healing powers. Secondly, Shamans' needed support from the community is to trust their healing process and understand that all Shamans have their own way of healing people. Lastly, effective communication is important for Shamans, who believe that communicating allows them to express or explain who they are and allows both the Shaman and the community to respect each other. Effective communication is the key to preventing miscommunication. When both parties express themselves to each other, trust and respect is built.

Overall Summary

The research intended to understand the role of Shamanism and leadership and a deeper understanding of how each individual carries out their duties. The researcher took a phenomenological research approach. A semi-structured interview format was used to offer each participant the opportunity to speak openly about their views as the researcher asked each question. A total of eight participants were chosen based on the number of years they have been a Shaman and their gender. The researcher used a phenomenological data analysis process described by Creswell (2014), which contains the six steps: transcribe, read the transcript, indexing/labeling, coding, clustering, and summarizing to gather all the data collected from participants. The journey to becoming a Shaman is not an easy road for the participants. During

the interview, participants expressed strange illnesses such as anxiety, fear, depression, undetected illness, and seeing things. It takes at least 1 to 2 years before realizing they are gifted with their ancestors' spiritual healing powers. These are illnesses that medical doctors were not able to diagnose. Three participants also shared that they had to go through two or more masters before finding the right master to help guide them.

Hmong Shaman leaders identified 18 characteristics of qualities and behaviors. Shamans also believe that Maxwell's (2011) leadership model is a good model that can be used to determine Shamans' leadership in the Hmong community. Shamans shared a few key points that would help the community to have a better understanding of their role. Lastly, what Shamans need from the community is trust and respect.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

Overview of Study

Chapter 5 is the final chapter in which the researcher will summarize the study and the results for the four research questions. Also, the chapter includes the researcher's conclusions, the implications of the study, and recommendations for future related research and practitioners. The researcher took steps to remove her personal bias from the discussion and recommendations to the greatest extent possible. Instead, they were based on everything from the Shamans in the interviews.

Limitations

The limitations to this research were related to the sample size, geographic region, language, and mode of interviews. The first limitation is the sample size, which only consisted of eight participants. Due to the number of Hmong Shaman participants in Twin Cities, this study does not represent the views of all practicing Hmong Shamans.

In addition to the sample size, there was a lack of research participants from other states. In Chapter 3, the researcher limited the geographical location of Hmong Shamans to the Twin Cities, of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. The researcher could not include participants from other states to participate in the study, which may have affected the outcomes of this research.

An additional limitation was the difference between languages. Some Hmong words were difficult to translate because not all meanings or colloquial language could be conveyed in English. The researcher had to do code-switching frequently in the interviews; the researcher tried to use the correct language or mix languages to accurately convey concepts or understand the question.

There were also limitations with regard to translating the definitions or meanings that may not be clear due to how the interviews were conducted. One disadvantage of conducting virtual interviews over in-person interviews is that the researcher could not read the Shamans' body language. The Shaman may not have been open to sharing their honest feelings with the researcher. Also, the researcher could not tell as accurately if the interviewee was able to comprehend the questions asked over the phone or video compared to having a more intimate dialogue during a face-to-face interview. Through video, the researcher could not see the interviewees' facial expressions, the interviewees' Shaman altars, and the interviewees' spiritual tools.

Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was, "What qualities and behaviors do Hmong Shamans possess that define them as great leaders?" Based on the research, these are the characteristics of qualities (although trust, honesty, and respect were mentioned most often there is no particular order to this list) and behaviors that were identified by Hmong Shaman participants during the interview:

- Trust
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Respect
- Empowerment
- Compassion
- Communication
- Self-Awareness
- Empathy

- Relationship building
- Vision
- Values
- Resourcefulness
- Dedication
- Open-mindedness
- Positive attitude
- Influential
- Inspirational

For example, they also expressed their personal belief and social responsibility to improve the lives of others. P1 expressed his style of leadership, stating:

...being able to build relationship with the community, my family, and relatives is important. Leadership to me starts with my family. My family will need to have that trust in me and can come to me anytime when they have problems. Once I can lead my family than I know I have the skills to lead others.

With a clear vision of the leadership role, P2 focused on how to use his strength in leading others, stating:

No one is perfect, but we should try our best to lead the best we can; we make mistakes and learn from our mistakes. As a Shaman leader, we have to be honest, lead others in the right direction, be open to suggestions, be a good listener, provide meaningful feedback, and most importantly, do not criticize others. A true leader will show his followers how he/she wants things done. Besides that, a great leader has to speak truthfully.

Participants also noted it was important to work collaboratively with others who have the same vision as Shaman and understand the needs of the people. P1 shared that

... a few Shamans in Sacramento, including me, collaborated with the Hmong Health Collaborative, a non-profit organization where we visited a few hospitals. The ultimate goal is to empower Hmong families to have a better understanding of American healthcare. They took me to a few hospitals around Sacramento. I discussed with doctors and learned about how doctors heal people. I shared with doctors that Shaman cannot cure a diagnosed disease such as kidney failure, cancer, high blood pressure, and broken bones, but doctors cannot cure when one's soul is lost, and that is when Shaman comes in to help. I taught doctors how I could heal the human souls by doing spiritual ceremonies.

Also, I taught doctors how Shaman could use *khawv koob* to heal cuts after surgery, cracked bones, and others such as fever, bloody nose, burns, and *raug dab*.

These leadership skills are parallel to the definition of leadership discussed in Chapter 2. Leadership is often described in terms of the relationships built up by the leader with team members and understanding their weakness or strengths. The effectiveness of leaders is determined by the extent to which they understand their beliefs and values and the beliefs and values of their followers (Green, 2013). Leaders require qualities such as intelligence and highly mature behavior. An effective leader will support a team by offering professional development opportunities, knowing how to motivate others, communicating effectively, and developing a special trusting relationship between the team. Leadership can also be defined as influencing other people towards completing a task (Olaniyan, 2017).

Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was, “What are Shamans’ perspectives about the five roles of leadership that Shamans may play in the Hmong community?” Based on the research, Hmong Shaman participants shared their perspective on Maxwell’s five levels of leadership and how it plays in the Hmong Community:

1. Position

- When one is chosen to be a Shaman, one will need to search for a master.
- The master will guide or serve as the person that the follower will follow to accomplish the ultimate goal.
- A Shaman has the vision to help the community and will do their best to be trustworthy.

2. Permission

- Shamans build relationships with their master and followers.
- Shamans follow their master because they are required to do so. Shamans have an ultimate goal that they need to accomplish.

3. Production

- A Shaman receives specific training from their master, especially the process of the spiritual spirit going into a trance into the spiritual world.
- The master helps guide and provide clear instructions on how to cure an ill person in the real world, but when a Shaman goes into a trance, their spiritual spirits will lead the way.

4. People Development

- Shamans' masters help their followers commit to their Shaman role by modeling and guiding them on performing different rituals in the community.
- Followers show respect to their master; they learn from each other and work as a team by trusting each other to accomplish the same ultimate goal.

5. Pinnacle

- Shamans guide their followers to complete the levels of training and raise their final altar so they can lead and heal in the Hmong community on their own.
- Followers will become their own masters and they will have their own followers to follow them.

Shamans believe that Maxwell's (2011) leadership model can determine the role Shamans play in the Hmong community.

Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was, "What are important factors that Shamans may want to share with community members in order for them to better understand Shamans' leadership roles in the community?" Hmong Americans' culture is established, and the community recognizes the importance of both traditional and United States national governance. Hmong Americans have now learned the various values and nuances essential in their tradition (Fang, 2016). The community and followers should reframe their understanding of the world and their talents (Nissinen, 2020). The community needs to be able to help people discover what and how Shamans lead in the community. With that being said, the community must be aware of the Shamans' role as leaders and live according to Shaman leaders' expectations. Shamans play an important role in the community and the community needs to have a better understanding of their leadership role in the community.

The Hmong community has attested that Shamanism is respected and has been in use for centuries to heal illness among patients (Fang & Stewart, 2018). Based on the research, the following are important factors Shamans want to share with the community about their role:

- The journey of becoming a Shaman is not an easy process or journey. You cannot just wake up one day and tell yourself you want to become a Shaman. The role of Shamanism is not an individual's decision, it is a role assigned to a person by their ancestor. It is a "calling" instead of a choice. Not everyone is chosen to take on the Shaman role.
- Many people think that in order for someone to become a Shaman, they will need to be ill and not get up from their bed. Not everyone who is sick is chosen to be a Shaman. It might be due to other health conditions, or their ancestors, grandparents, and parents want something from the family. These are signs that the family will need to seek help from a Shaman to determine what is wrong.
- Everyone is different, and most Shamans will experience the following symptoms or illness in their calling to become a Shaman: depression, stress, anxiety, fear, or an illness that doctors cannot diagnose. The only person who can understand you is yourself and your spiritual spirits.
- Historically, in the past, Shamans are mostly men in the Hmong community. Today, there are more women being gifted than in the past.
- A Shaman is a healer who heals people spiritually, not medically. If a person is diagnosed with an illness such as cancer, Shaman will not heal that.
- Some Shamans are fortune tellers. They see the person's illness and can interpret the ritual that need to be performed for the ill person.

- A Shaman has spiritual healing powers that can heal someone sick related to ntsuj plig that doctors cannot diagnose. A Shaman's duty is to bring the lost soul in the spiritual world back to the body, niam neeb or txiv neeb uas yog Siv Yis coj tus ntsuj plig rov los puab lub cev kom rov qab los ua ke.
- The Shaman's role is to serve as a mediator between the physical world and the spirit world. Shamans help heal the person who is sick by bringing the soul back to the body.
- The community must understand that every Shaman performs rituals differently, and 80%-90% of the time, Shaman can heal a person yog tib ntsuj plig. Shamans cannot heal everyone. Yog peb lub yeej koob yeej huam duav tus neeg mob lawm ces tus neeg ntawd yeej zoo xwb or peb yeej kho tau. Yog tias peb lub yeej koob yeej huam tsis duav ces peb kho tsis tau tus neeg ntawd. The family will need to seek help from another Shaman (P1). This Shaman can help cure your illness, but maybe another Shaman cannot heal you; everyone lub yeej koob yeej huam is different. The Hmong community does not see this, and they believe every Shaman is going to be able to help cure their illness. For example, just like medical doctors, everyone specializes in something different. Not all doctors can help cure a patient. Doctors work as a team and communicate with each other.
- Shamans help people by healing them spiritually, aligning or balancing their health with their body and mind.
- Shamans do not go out in public to advertise or promote their Shaman role. Word of mouth gets passed to people. The family member or community will need to search for the Shaman.

- Shamans' role is a gift from their ancestors or Siv Yis given to the Hmong community to heal their people just like nurses and doctors. Even though Shamans have healing powers, they should not be treated differently.
- Shamans are normal people like everyone else. When Shamans put on the Shaman's hat, the community sees Shamans as cultural leaders.
- Shamans volunteer their time to help the community and they do not charge for their time or service.

The role of Shamans is changing in the 21st century. There will be many new Shamans vs. old Shamans. The old Shaman practices are those that were followed prior to 2000. The community has to understand that the world is changing and the Shaman role is also changing. All Shamans will still have healing powers, but they dress or the language they speak when communicating with the spiritual world has change, and they will speak other languages besides just Hmong.

- Shamans' altars and the tools they use will look different than 30 years ago.

There are different types of Shaman leaders in the Hmong community: some Shamans are fortune tellers, some Shamans can only give out Western medications such as herbs, and some Shamans do not wear a veil or traditional Hmong clothes when performing rituals.

Furthermore, some Shamans do not use the same tools or any tools at all and some Shamans only know how to perform khawv koob.

During the interview, P7 expressed three important factors that she wants the community to understand about Hmong Shamans. First, the community needs to understand that when people seek Shamans' help, they have to believe in the Shamans themselves. Otherwise, once they arrive at the house, their Shaman spirits have already told them, and they will close their

mouth and eyes, and they will not be able to do any reading or help them. It is vital to seek advice from a Shaman; the person seeking the help will need to go with parity. Secondly, the community needs to understand that if they seek or ask a Hmong Shaman for help, they need to genuinely search and yog koj mus thov lawn no ces koj yuav tsum thov muaj txiaj ntsim thaib thov dawb thov hu. Lastly, the community needs to know that when they seek help from a Shaman, they will need to be ready to listen to what the Shaman is going to tell or share with them. They can only seek help for themselves or a family member.

Findings for Research Question 4

Research Question 4 was, “What support or resources do Shamans need from their followers and/or community members in order to be successful in their leadership roles?” Nissinen (2020) explained that leaders must be wise enough and have a wide breadth of knowledge to intervene in times of need within their organization. Leaders must have a clear understanding of the system they lead and the possible challenges that may occur, just as the Shamans had to analyze most of the illnesses that the people encountered. The Shamans’ spiritual leadership in the Hmong community includes important leadership traits that should be recognized in the broader leadership of today.

Reflecting on the Hmong group’s leadership, it is also evident that forgiveness is essential for leadership, just as seen in Vang Pao, who requested forgiveness from other nations. Based on the research findings, the following are the support Shamans will need from the community in order to successfully continue their Shaman role:

- Trust – Shamans want the community to trust them in their healing role. (P1, P2, P4, and P6)

- Respect - the community needs to respect Shamans feelings and what they do (healing process). (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, and P7)
- Shamans are normal people who have the same feelings as everyone else. Shamans want the community to respect them in the way that the community respect doctors and nurses. (P7 and P8)
- The community should recognize, appreciate, and acknowledge Shamans and what they do just as they recognize other religions and culture's faith. (P7)
- Believe in Shamans, ntseeg peb txoj kev pab tib neeg (believe in their help). (P1, P3, P7, and P8)
- Both men and women Shaman needs to be treated equally. (P4 and P6)
- Support and trust from their immediate family members, followers, master/teacher. (P3, P4, and P7)
- Non-judgmental - do not judge Shamans based on their appearances or their personality. (P6)

During the interview, four participants shared their thoughts about 21st-century Shamans:

- The community will need to support the non-Hmong-speaking children who have taken on the Shaman role and barely speak the Hmong language
 - Hmong children, are more Americanized now. They have lost the Hmong language and tradition and barely know how to speak the language. As a Shaman leader, they will need to provide resources either written or visual, in Hmong or English, to their students in order for them to understand when the master/teacher is explaining things. (P5 and P7)

- The community and their family need to understand that the Shaman role is changing and a person will probably not experience the same illness as 30 years ago. The 21st century has awakened many new Shamans, and the experience and roles are different. Children these days are not exposed to the Shaman experience, and the family will need to support their child or family to accomplish the Shaman role. The family will need to trust and recognize that their child is gifted and is the chosen one.

Summary of the Study's Findings

This study sought to better understand the roles of Shamans in the Hmong Community and how they can become great leaders. This research's major purpose was to explore the self-perceived views of Hmong Shamans regarding their leadership roles within the Hmong community. The researcher collected information on the demographics of Shamans and responses to the study's four research questions.

According to all of the participants, not everyone is chosen to become a spiritual Shaman leader. There is a strong belief that an individual may become a Shaman if the gift was passed down spiritually from one's family generation to another. The Shamans' leadership approach is unique, and the experience of the guidance is of great importance to the designing of the administration today (Lor, 2018). Hmong Shamans must focus on the leadership examples of different communities that have been successful in their cultures, religions, and activities. Maxwell's (2011) leadership levels and their characteristics are also helpful in studying leadership principles and the training of leaders. The qualities in Shaman leadership are not significantly different from Maxwell's (2011) leadership qualities.

Shamans want the community to trust the skills or healing process they use to help heal people. The support that Shamans need from the community trusting, and respectful. Shamans

can be stronger in their role if there is respect from the community. Shamans volunteer their time and effort to help cure spiritual illnesses. Performing a ritual calling is exhausting and tiring, so the community will need to respect the hard work of a Shaman.

The community needs to understand that the Shamanism practiced post-Vietnam War Era is not practiced in the current Westernized world. In the 21st century, the Shaman's role has shifted. The community needs to understand and respect the different types of Shamanism (P6). The community has adapted to Western medical practices and recommendations from their doctors to follow through on their treatment, and has accepted the view that Shaman's role is not to cure physical illness.

Recommendations

By revealing each participant's story and view of the Shaman leadership role, this study raised several suggestions for others to consider regarding Hmong Shamans as leaders in the Hmong community. These suggestions are recommended for practitioners and researchers. Furthermore, three discussions took place during the interview that raised topics for further research: (a) the importance of Siv Yis day December 16, (b) the contribution of Siv Yis, and (c) new vs. old Shamans.

Recommendation for Practitioners

Based on the research, seven out of the eight participants believed Maxwell's (2011) model was a good model to describe Shaman leadership contributions in their community. Shamans could benefit from studying or getting trained on Maxwell's leadership model. Shamans should adopt the Maxwell model because it would make them stronger leaders in the Hmong community. Here is an example of what one participant said:

Talking about permission is the relationship with others that is developed. Relationships are developed based on trust and respect. That is important in the role we play as Shaman. The last three is the biggest role for me. Helping the individual, helping the leaders, helping the community work together to successfully obtain the ultimate goal, [by] working together, loving each other, [and] working for racial equity, one [unified] voice, and those are important. For people development, I feel that my role and responsibility are to help each individual become the leader. To be self-awaken, to [do] their own spiritual healing, heal their own illness, heal their own pain, heal their family, self-love themselves, and be their ultimate self. The pinnacle for a Shaman leader is to be collected as a community, nation, and world. We have challenges creating the crisis, situations, and how we can collectively [and] positively impact worldwide. If I can help lift everybody to that leadership position, we can make a huge impact. (P6)

One participant disagreed with Maxwell's (2011) leadership model used to guide Shamans leadership. Here is an example of what that participant (P3) said:

If you were to classify Hmong Shaman, I do not think any leadership levels apply to Hmong Shaman. When you look at John Maxwell's five leadership levels, when the title is given, or a position is given, it like going through a voting system, where you vote for the person or the person is being appointed. Being a Shaman, we are not appointed by the community, but we are chosen or automatically appointed by our inner spiritual side. For example, position relies

on engaging followers. We Shamans do not engage with the community. We do not go out and advertise. (P3)

Shamans should work together and try to find a model to develop the best leadership skills for all Shamans. Dialogue needs to take place on how the old Shaman way differs from new Shaman ways. Both the community and Shamans need to better understand the differences between old and new Shamans. The old Shamans will need to educate the new Shamans, and the new Shamans should educate the old Shamans to better understand each other's role in the Hmong community. Here is an example of what one participant said:

In the 21st century, the Shaman role is going to target the younger generation with the new Shamans. There will be different kinds or types of Shaman in the 21st century compared to the old Shamans. The community needs to respect the old and new Shaman generations, we need to change, and we cannot be what we were 50 years ago. (P5)

Recommendations for Shamans

Based on this research, if Shamans want to be respected by the community, they should demonstrate the characteristics of trustworthiness, honesty, integrity, compassion, vision, dedication, self-awareness, empowerment, positive attitude, and team building. These are things that Shamans should work on personally that will make them better Shamans and increase their communities' respect for Shamans.

During the research, participants raised a concern that not all men and women Shamans are treated or respected equally by the Hmong community. The community needs to respect both male and female Shamans equally. Female Shamans should not feel disrespected. Here is an example of what one participant said:

I think the male Shaman [have] more respect in the community compared to female Shaman. I feel that culturally, we are just in a patriarchal community that men are to lead (the father of the family), and the women are supposed to serve. For women, how do we earn our respect? Comparing a male Shaman and a female Shaman is very different. I think male Shamans have an easier role compared to female Shamans. They do not have to justify their roles; they automatically earn them. The Shaman role is meant for the male and not the female because [the] role is to serve. Another narrative is that there is this [belief] that women do not have a better ability or better healing than men. Man would have a [equal] ability or [equal] healing than men. So, [a] women Shaman is not as respected in the community. They are not viewed as an important Shaman or viewed as ... having equal spiritual healing. If the community [is asked], they will [seek] a male Shaman compared to a female Shaman for help. Even if you are present at the home of someone you are dealing with, the men will earn more respect; they will be treated better. As I said, men will be treated differently than females. (P6)

The final recommendation is that if Shamans want the community to understand their role better, they will need to work together to educate the community on their role. Future researchers should interview Shamans on their roles and post on YouTube or other media the Hmong community regularly accesses. Shamans could offer free educational workshops or classes to the Hmong community and/or invite the community (including other ethnicities) to watch a live performance of ritual calling or healing. The findings revealed that Shamans do not go out and advertise themselves; they wait for the community to find them. Shamans should not

be afraid of introducing or telling the community of things they can do to help the community. Like the old saying, it will take a whole village to get things done. Now is the time for all new and old Shamans to work together to accomplish an ultimate goal. Shamans need to step out of their comfort zone and educate the community and the doctors about the Shaman roles.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher's first recommendation is that future researchers should conduct research specifically on the life of Siv Yis. Shamans perform ritual healings, but from who or from where did Shamans get the healing powers? There is no research done on who Siv Yis is. Is Siv Yis like God? If the community wants to learn Siv Yis's origin, someone would need to research more on "who Siv Yis is?" Here is an example of what one participant said:

The community recognizes Hmong Shaman as [cultural] and spiritual healers, but does the community know who Siv Yis is? Siv Yis is a saver; Siv Yis is the first Hmong Spiritual healer. (P4)

Three participants said December 16 is when they honor Siv Yis, just like Christians honor Jesus on December 25. There is little research on what day Siv Yis went back and left all his tools for people to find. Is this the day Siv Yis returned to heaven and left his tools behind? Is December 16 the accurate date? Here is an example of what four participants said:

Our Shaman group celebrates Siv Yis day on the 16th of December. All Shamans know that Siv Yis yog tus cawm seej, yog tus muaj cwj neeb cwj yaig rau peb cov niam neeb txiv neeb, peb thiaj li sawv neeb. No one, not even Shamans, [have] ever honored Siv Yis. That is why our group decided to honor Siv Yis, vim muaj nws peb thiaj li sawv neeb sawv yaig. According to our master, December 16 is the day we honor Siv Yis. We celebrate this for three days and three nights at our

own home. On December 16, we worship him and honor him in public. (P3, P7, and P8)

Research needs to be conducted on how the old Shaman ways differ from the new Shaman ways. Both the community and Shamans need to better understand the differences between old and new Shamans. The old Shamans will need to educate the new Shamans, and the new Shamans should educate the old Shamans to better understand each other's role in the Hmong community. Here is an example of what one participant said:

In the 21st century, the Shaman role is going to target the younger generation with the new Shamans. There will be different kinds or types of Shaman in the 21st century compared to the old Shamans. The community needs to respect the old and new Shaman generations, we need to change, and we cannot be what we were 50 years ago. (P5)

Shamans are important to the Hmong community. But, how are Shamans important to other ethnicities as well? Shamans perform many rituals in the Hmong community and most Shaman leaders are Hmong. Have there been Shamans in other cultures? There is little research done on this topic. We need research to look into the inclusion of other communities in the Shamans' role and conduct phenomenological research with a group of Shamans to determine if they have helped another culture. Here is an example of what one participant said:

[We] Shamans [are] very important to the community, not just the Hmong community but the whole community. I have had other ethnicities such as Laos, Thai, Hispanic, and Americans seeking help. Everyone has their illness, but some of us have spirits, but different from the Hmong. When they come to see me, I will tell them what they need to bring. We have a follower who is American. My

master raised his altar a few years ago. My master helps him purchase all the tools needed. Besides him, another American guy is married to a Hmong girl; he also has healing powers. (P8)

Conclusions

This chapter comprehensively presented primary themes evident in this phenomenological study on Hmong Shamans as cultural leaders. Shamans are the religious leaders among the Hmong ethnic group who resettled in the United States after the Vietnam War. Since the Hmong resettled in the United States, research on Hmong Shamanism has been very limited.

The major finding in this research on Shaman leadership is that Shamans are the foremost Hmong traditional healers. Though there has been some research on Shamans' role as healers, there is very little research done on Shamans as community leaders. Furthermore, the data collected from participants does not reflect the traditional view of Shamans only as healers. Instead, Shaman leadership has shifted in the 21st century. In the old days, a Shaman's role was only to cure illness. P6 shared:

I feel like the Shaman role has changed. In the 21st century, we do not [only] serve as spiritual healers, but we have become guidance counselors, therapists, consultants, social workers, you name it. (P6)

With these findings, the researcher hopes the information will shed light and give direction to future studies that might thoroughly examine how 21st-century Shaman leaders will lead the Hmong community. Thus, creating more culturally appropriate and competent services to engage old and new Hmong Shamans and the individuals they serve.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Respondents

Research Questions

RQ1: What qualities and behaviors do Shamans possess that define them as good leaders?

Sub Interview Questions

1. What roles do Shamans play in the community? Please share some examples and/or stories.
2. What values are most important to you as a Shaman leader?
3. How are Shamans impactful leaders in the community? Please share some examples and/or stories.

RQ2: What are Shamans' perspectives about the five roles of leadership that Shamans may play in the Hmong community?

- a) Positional – relies on position to engage followers
- b) Permission – develops relationships with other people to enhance their lives
- c) Production – engages others in the community to successfully obtain community goals
- d) People Development –cultivates others to individually grow while positively contributing to reach personal and community goals
- e) The Pinnacle –lifts up new leaders in a variety of settings addressing challenges that positively impact the community

Sub Interview Question

1. What steps did you take to get you to where you are today as a Shaman leader?

RQ3: What are important factors that Shamans may want to share with community members in order for them to better understand Shamans' leadership roles in the community?

Sub Interview Questions

1. Please share stories and/ or perspectives that reflect the community members' understanding about Shaman's roles in the community.
2. How do Shamans garner respect in the Hmong community?
3. Share some reflections and/or stories regarding how the new generation of Shamans are being trained to become spiritual and community leaders.

RQ4: What support or resources do Shamans need from their followers and/or community members in order to be successful in their leadership roles?

Sub Interview Questions

1. What other leadership skills and practices have you gained or learned from community members to enhance your roles as a Shaman leader?
2. Please share stories and/or insights regarding how community members support the Shamans' leadership roles.
3. Are there new and/or additional influences that support your roles as a Shaman leader?
4. Are there any other stories, insights, or thoughts that you would like to share?

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Respondents (Hmong Translation)

RQ1: Ib tug txiv neeb los sis niam neeb tus yam ntxwv yuav coj li cas thiaj li yuav ua qhia tau tias nws yuav yog ib tug thawj coj zoo?

1. Ib tug txiv neeb los sis niam neeb, nws lub luag hauj lwm rau hauv pej xeeb yog dab tsi?

Thov koj piav me ntsis hais txog qhov ntawm no thiab cov dab neeg koj tau muaj los?

2. Koj yog ib tug txiv neeb los sis niam neeb, yam dab tsi muaj nuj nqis rau koj tshaj?

3. Cov txiv neeb los sis niam neeb ua tau tej yam dab tsi zoo rau hauv peb lub zej zog?

Thov koj piav txog tej yam qauv los sis tej yam dab neeg koj tau muaj los yog pom los.

RQ2: Koj pab qhia txog koj txoj kev xav ntawm tsib ntsiab lus hais txog txoj kev ua ib tug thawj coj, uas koj pom tau tias cov txiv neeb niam neeb tau ua rau hauv peb Hmoob lub zej zog?

- a) Txoj hauj lwm (Positional) – tso siab rau txoj hauj lwm qhia cov thwj tim.
- b) Tso cai (Permission) – tsim kev sib raug zoo nrog lwm tus neeg los txhim kho lawv txoj luag hauj lwm, los sis lub zeem muag.
- c) Tsim ib yam khoom (Production) – koom tes nrog zej zog kom ua tiav lub hom phiaj.
- d) Tib Neeg lub hom phiaj (People Development) – saib xyuas lwm tus kom loj hlob, muaj tswv yim zoo kom ncau cuag nws tus kheej thiab zej zog lub hom phiaj thiab.
- e) Qhov siab tshaj plaws (The Pinnacle) – tsa cov thawj coj tshiab los daws cov kev cov nyom uas cuam tshuam rau lub zej zog.

1. Koj tau taug txoj kev twg koj thiaj li los ua tau ib tug zoo thawj coj ntawm cov txiv neeb thiab niam neeb?

RQ3: Thov qhia tej yam koj xav tias tseem ceeb yuav tau qhia rau pej xeeb kom lawv thiaj li paub txog txoj kev ua ib tug thawj coj ntawv cov txiv neeb niam neeb.

1. Thov koj piav txog tej yam qauv los sis tej yam uas koj tau pom los ntawm pej xeem hais txog lawv txoj kev tau taub lub luag huaj lwm ntawm cov txiv neeb los sis niam neeb.
2. Cov txiv neeb niam neeb yuav tau koj li cas pej xeem thiaj li fwm lawv?
3. Thov koj piav txog tej yam uas cov niam neeb txiv neeb tshiab yuav tau kawm, lawv thiaj li yuav ua tau ib tug cawm seej thiab ib tug thawj koj rau pej xeem.

RQ4: Cov niam neeb txiv neeb yuav xav tau txoj kev pab los sis txoj kev txhawb li cas los ntawm lawv cov thwj tim thiab pej xeem es lawv thiaj li yuav ua tau ib tug zoo thawj koj?

1. Puas muaj tej yam zoo uas koj tau kawm los ntawm lwm tus pej xeem uas yuav pab tau koj ua ib tug zoo thawj koj thiab ib tug zoo niam neeb txiv neeb?
2. Thov piav seb pej xeem tau pab thiab txhawb nqa cov niam neeb thiab txiv neeb seb yog dab tsis.
3. Puas muaj tej yam tshiab los sis puas muaj lwm yam uas tau txhawb koj txoj kev ua ib tug niam neeb los txiv neeb?
4. Puas muaj lwm yam dab tsi uas koj xav piav los qhia txog rau kuv?

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form for Transcriber

Examination of Shaman as Cultural Leaders in the Hmong Community

Project Director:

Phoua Vang, Doctoral Candidate

Department of Education

Bethel University of Minnesota

Phone: 651-216-6705

Email: phv37259@bethel.edu

This study involves the audio taping of the interviewer with the researcher. You agreed to transcribe the recorded information; your name will be used in the data analysis section. You agreed to keep all participants' identity and information confidential. You agreed you will not use participants' information in any other research for your own usage.

The recorded interview will be transcribed by you in written Hmong than translated into written English and erased once the written information has been sent to the researcher and checked for accuracy.

Immediately you will be given the permission from the researcher to have the tape erased if the participants wish to withdraw their consent to taping or participation in this study.

By signing this form you are consenting to:

- have the recorded transcribe in written Hmong than translated into English;
- you acknowledge to keep all participants information confidential;
- you will not use participants information in any other research or study for you own usage.

By checking all the boxes of each item, you are consenting that you understand the confidentiality of the participants' identity and information.

Transcriber's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D

Sample Letter to Participants

Dear [insert participant name],

As part of my doctoral dissertation research, I am planning to conduct interviews with a small number of local Shaman leaders. This person [insert name] has suggested you as someone who may be interested in participating in this study. I am asking you to consider being a part of this study.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine Shaman as cultural leaders in the Hmong community.

Participants will be asked several background questions and will then be asked to complete an approximately one-hour face-to-face, zoom, google hangout, or telephone interview. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Each participant will be assigned a number or study name so that he/she cannot be identified. Further to insure confidentiality, all research participants will be asked to review a copy of their completed interview transcript and make any changes or corrections necessary for anonymity and accuracy. I will incorporate the participants' suggestions until they feel comfortable, or omit the section. Any or parts of interviews may be quoted in published reports of this research.

During a one hour interview, I will be interested in learning: important experiences or relationships in your life that led you to take your Shaman leadership role; what values are most important to you as a Shaman, leadership skills and practices to support the Shaman in their leadership role, and how closely do Shamans believe their role match Maxwell leadership model? I also would like to learn about your life experience that influenced your growth as a leader. I will also be interested in any recommendations you may have for other Shaman leaders who I might be able to interview.

Thank you for your consideration of this project. I look forward to hearing from you.
Sincerely,

Phoua Vang, Doctoral Candidate
phv37259@bethel.

Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Dear [insert name],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. The purpose of this study is to examine how Shamans have become leaders (not just historical leaders) and what has influenced who they are as leaders. I am interested in learning about your Shaman life experiences that led you take a Shaman leadership role.

Before we get started, let me go over the requirements and consent forms. You should have received a copy of the consent form sign and return to me along with the interview questions. Do you have a copy of the interview questions?

Read over the consent form with the participant. Ask participant if they have any questions. Answer the questions and ask for a verbal consent from the participant.

I would like to inform you that this interview will be recorded for accuracy. I will later contact you for a second interview if needed for clarification. I will also contact you later after the recorded interview has been transcribed into written format. Is this fine by you?

If you refused to have this interview recorded, I will write down word for word of the interview and provide you with a copy for your review. I will contact you for a second interview if needed for clarification. Is this fine by you?

If yes, begin recording.

If no, begin writing (note book labeled confidential).

Tell the participant: I will begin the interview by asking you some background questions about yourself. Then I will ask you the sub questions, any follow up questions and follow by the research question.

During the first 5-10 minutes of the interview I will ask you a few questions to gather demographic information. This information will not be use directly in the data analysis. However, the information will be use to organize the data and an introduction of your role.

Participant Demographic Question

I will begin.

What is your name?

When did you become a Shaman?

How long have you held the Shaman position?

How many people in your household hold a Shaman position?

Interview Questions

During the interview I will be asking the interview questions, follow up or probing questions which may include:

Can you clarify what you just said?

What does this mean?

Can you explain more in detail?

What are your thoughts?

Why do you think that?

Etc.

Now we will move onto the interview questions (see Appendix A, Interview Questions for Participants).

Appendix F

Participant Information and Informed Consent Form

Dear [insert name],

You are invited to participate in an anonymous study regarding the Examination of Shaman as Cultural Leaders in the Hmong American Communities. The purpose of this study is to examine how Shamans have become leaders (not just historical leaders) and what has influenced who they are as leaders. I will be interested in learning: important experiences or relationships in your life that led you to take your Shaman leadership role; what values are most important to you as a Shaman, what leadership skills and practices to support the leadership roles of the Shaman, and how closely Shamans believe their role aligns with Maxwell's five levels and leadership role. Also, I would like to learn about your life experiences that influenced your growth as a leader.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are well known by the Hmong Community, referral by a family or friend member and which you hold a Shaman title. This research is part my dissertation research study to earn a degree at Bethel University.

If you decide to participate, or take part of this study your name will be kept anonymous. You will be asked several background questions. Due to COVID you will then be ask to complete an approximately one hour phone, zoom, or google hangout interview. The researcher will review the explanation of research study to participants again at the beginning of the interview. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Each participant will remain anonymous and will be assigned a study name so that the participant cannot be identified as individuals. A second interview will be conducted if the researcher needs to clarify a question. To ensure confidentiality, all research participants will be invited to review a copy of their completed interview transcript and make any changes or corrections necessary. Any or parts of the interview may be quoted in published reports of this research, no name will be used.

You will not be exposed to any risk. You will be asked questions regarding your life experiences. If you do not agree to this interview please let the researcher know and you will be excused and remove from the study. Your choice to participate, not participate, skip questions, or withdraw at any time will not affect your relationship with the research and Bethel University.

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only aggregate data will be presented. The data will be stored in a secured passcode computer and locked in a private location and only the researcher can have access to. If the interview is conducted in English the interview will be transcribe by the researcher. If the interview is conducted in Hmong the researcher will have the recorded interview transcribed by Ong Vang. During transcription and data analysis, you will be assigned a pseudonym. The information obtained in this study may be published in journal articles, or presented at meetings, but the data will be reported anonymous. The recorded audio and written information will be destroyed after this study is completed.

The researcher will follow all Institutional Review Board guidelines, including but not limited to the interview questions and securely guarding personal data. The researcher will modify and removed identifiable details of all participants for purposes of consistency and to protect all participants' confidentiality. The researcher will follow federal law, the Privacy Act of 1974 and Ethics, Confidentiality, MN Data Privacy Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule, people's identity and records will be protected.

Your decision to take part of this research study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with the researcher and Bethel University. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel University's Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research related injury, please call Phoua Vang, researcher, 651-216-6705 or Dr. Craig Paulson, researcher advisor, 651 635-8025.

PARTICIPANT'S STATEMENT OF CONSENT:

I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand I will be offer a copy of this consent form.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix G

Thaj Hiaj Symbol



THAJ HIAJ

It is the sacred seal of a place of worship or temple. It could only be used by those that have attained the rank of Vaaj Leej Thawj or spiritual monks. The official seal cannot be created until the existence of a Vaaj Leej Thawj and place of worship.

The seal consists of three colors, red, white and yellow. Additionally, there are three layers of circles with various titles and symbols in each layer. The following are the general information regarding the seal.

Color Representation:

Red – it represents spiritual protection.

White – it represents purity and righteousness.

Yellow – it represents worship.

The Layers of Circles: The Healing Layer

The small circle with the Red Cross emblem represents the Power of Spiritual Healing. The Red Cross emblem was the spiritual power given to Siv Yig, the first spiritual healer or shaman, a savior for the Hmong people. It is used for healing, protecting and exorcising.

The Purifying Layer

It is a layer for healers pursuing righteousness beyond that of a healer or shaman. The healer will undergo years of purifying oneself, receiving extensive training and abiding by certain precepts or restrictions. A healer at this level is known as Saab Leej Thawj.

The Worship Layer

It is the ultimate level for a healer that has gone through years of purifying oneself, extensive training, abided by all of the precepts of the temple and are willing to commit to being a spiritual monk. A healer at this level is known as Vaaj Leej Thawj.

The Pillars and the Power of Spiritual Healing

This is the layers of circles that consist of four solid red diamond shaped and twelve yellow diamond shaped with red outlines. All Vaaj Leej Thawj are expected to represent the Heavenly Mother and Father in discharging their righteous mandates in healing, managing and preserving all life forms which include mankind, animals, plants and spirits.

Appendix H

Humliam Symbol



HUMLIAM

The diamond shaped symbol is the new spiritual power. It consists of the color red, white, yellow and four layers. The four layers are the Red Cross emblem with the white background in the middle, solid yellow, solid white and solid red as the outer most layers.

Color Representation:

Red – protection

White – purity and righteousness

Yellow – worship

The Four Layers Representation: Spiritual Healing Layer

It is the inner most layer consisting of the Red Cross emblem with the white background. The Red Cross emblem was the spiritual power given to Siv Yis, the first spiritual healer. The emblem could be sewed on the back of a shirt for protection. Additionally, black soot could be used to mark the emblem on a person's forehead for healing or to ward off evil spirits.

The Worship Layer

Yellow is the color for worshipping. The healer's healing guides are capable of providing the appropriate training that may be similar to Buddhist monks, abide by certain restrictions and the altar will have Buddha or other statues. Training in meditation and learning about the importance of all life forms are critical.

The Purity and Righteous Layer

White is the color of purity and righteousness. The Power of Spiritual Healing is entrusted upon individuals that are righteous. Righteousness is expected to be practiced by the healer.

The Protective Layer

Red is the color of protection. The healer will use items of red colored for personal protection or exorcism. The items could be a veil, string, sash, bracelet, dagger or others.

Appendix I

Agreement Between Master and Follower/Student

Nyob Zoo,

Kuv zoo siab hais tias koj tau tuaj thov kuv thiab cov ntsuj neeb ntsuj yaig, los ua koj tus XibFwb, pab koj tsa koj lub thaj neeb thaj yaig thiab qhia/qhib txuj qhia/qhib ci rau koj kom koj ces neeb sawv kom ntsheg, nto ntuj pub teb.

Ua ntev kuv yuav pab koj, kuv xav kom koj nyeem daim ntawv no, hais qhia txog txoj kev kuv yuav pab koj thiab koj yuav tau pab koj tus kheej, thiab koj yuav tau ua li cas koj thiaj li yuav ua tau neeb kom tsheej thiab kom kav koj ntev thiab.

Hello,

I am happy that you have come to seek help from me and my spirit guides to be your teacher. To help you raise your altar and guide you in opening your spiritual gifts so that you may rise to the heavens and expand through the land.

First, before I can help you, I would like you to read this letter, telling you how I will help you and how you will help yourself and what you will or can do for yourself to progress in your shamanic journey so that you can succeed.

Ua Tsaug (Thank You)

XibFwb Txoj Kev Pab - Teacher Responsibilities

Qhib kev neeb kev yaig, Coj Qhuas Neej Qhuas Yaig los

-Open Spiritual healing doors, Initiate & bring, bridge & connect spiritual guides for student

Qhia txhiaj txheem, kev Cai

-teach the basics of how to complete a certain ritual

Tiv thaiv thwj tim thiab Pab thwj tim tiv thaiv nws tus kheej

-Protect student & help student learn to protect themselves

Pab thwj tim npliag qhua thiab txhib qhua

-Help student to learn how to ask spiritual guides for help & to thank spiritual guides for their help

Thwj Tiv Yuav Tsum Ua - Requirements of Student

Kawm txhiaj txheem, kev cai hmoob

-learn the basics of completing a certain ritual & learn culture/customs

Kawm tiv thaiv nws tus kheej

-learn to protect self spiritually

Yuav tsum ua neeb 1-3 zaug ib ab thiv (tsawg kawg)

-Practice trance 1-3 times per week at least

Yuav tsum hu xib fwb ib zaug ib hli, qhia seb nws ua neeb li cas lawm, los si thaum twg nws muaj teeb meem tsis paub...

-call teacher at least once a month to see how he/she is progressing and any questions/concerns.

Thwj Tim Yuav tsum noog Xib Fwb yog nws tsis paub los si tsis tau taub qhov twg, txog kev neeb kev yaig, kev npau suav, kev xav....

-student must ask teacher for help if he/she does not understand or cannot interpret dreams, thoughts, ideas, etc.

Thwj Tim yuav tsum tsis txhob ua qhov tsis zoo (ua phem rau lwm tus, hais lus tsis zoo rau lwm tus, ua qhov tsis dawb tsis huv (tua tsiaj, txi dab, siv ntsav rau saum thaj los si ua lwm yam tsis zoo), tsim kev kub ntshov, hias lus xaiv lus neuas, nrhiav kev plaub kev ntug rau nws tus kheej, xib fwb los si lwm tus.

-student must not harm others, say bad things or curse others, do things that are not clean & pure (such as killing animals, sacrifice or using blood to do things or put on altars, start rumors, disagreements and or trouble that will be harmful to self, teacher and others.

Thwj tim yuav tsum tos **ib xyoo** mam pub tsa tau lus thaj loj los si lus thaj kawg

-Student have to wait **1 year** before student can ask teacher to raise the big altar or the final altar for student

Nqi Neeb - Fees/Price**Thaj Neeb Kho Thawj Tim**

(Ritual to heal student)

\$ teeb li cas los yuav li ntawv
(\$ any amount student wishes to donate)**Thaj Neeb Tos Ntsuj Qhua - Tsa Thaj Me**(Ritual to bring spirit guides to home & raise 1st altar**\$ 200.00**

\$200.00)

Thaj Neeb Qhib Kev Neeb Kev Yaig –**Tos Nstuj Qhua Loj, Tsa Thaj Kawg**(Ritual to Open Doors to Spirit Guides, Healing & Raise Final Altar
\$ 200.00)**\$200.00****Tu Lus Rau Xib Fwb - Ending or Leaving Teacher**

1.) Yog ua tsis tau neeb es yuav tu lus rau xib fwb:

Nqa pab dawb, xyab, tswm ciab thiav ntawv nyiaj tuaj hais ib lo lus rau xib fwb thiab cov qhuas.

If teacher cannot help student to progress or succeed, Student need to end with teacher by bringing: white flower, incense, candle & josspaper. Student need to notify teacher and spirit guides of leaving.

2.) Yog ua tau neeb lawv thiab twb tsa Thaj Loj lawm, tiam si xav mus lwm tus xib fwb los si lwm ces neeb:

Tuaj hais ib los lus rau xib fwb thiab cov qhua paub xwb

If Student has progressed & succeeded in Raising Final Altar, but want to continue with a new teacher and or different group: Student need to end with teacher and guides by notifying teacher and guides.

