Thao Vo

will defend the thesis on

Date: May 1, 2019
Time: 11:30 A.M.

Location: Pullman – Education Addition 202

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ITEM RESPONSE OF A YOUTH RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Chair: Brian French

The use and interpretation of educational and psychological tests are paramount to individual outcomes and opportunities. Methods for detecting a lack of item invariance or differential item functioning (DIF) are imperative for item analysis when developing and revising assessments, particularly as it pertains to fairness across various populations, languages, and cultures. A new third generation of DIF proposes an ecological framework for explaining why DIF occurs using sociological, community, and contextual variables as possible explanations of item responding. DIF was examined across school district clusters using random-intercept and random-coefficient models. Multilevel logistic regression analyses revealed that ethnic DIF does exist on the WARNS. Moreover, this study demonstrated how use of district-level collected administrative data as estimates of student's contextual environments were used to explain sources of DIF. The implications of the work is that it progresses DIF research, enhances the approach to understanding item response, and provides a more accurate understanding of youth development though an ecological framework. Recommendations for practice and future studies are also discussed.