

## SELF-ESTEEM, AIDS KNOWLEDGE, AND REASONS OF LATE ADOLESCENTS WITH ONE-NIGHT STAND BEHAVIOR

Pimpicha Supphatkul\* and Panrapee Suttiwan

Faculty of Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

**ABSTRACT:** The purposes of this study were to examine one-night stand behavior of 20 male and 20 female late adolescents in Bangkok. The reasons for their one-night stand behavior, their self-esteem, and their AIDS knowledge were analyzed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews which were content-analyzed into three domains of reasons for such behavior in each gender group: 1) intrapersonal domain, 2) interpersonal domain, and 3) environmental domain. As regards data analysis, *t*-tests were conducted to compare the self-esteem and AIDS knowledge of late adolescents with one-night stand behavior and those without such behavior. The study findings were as follows: 1) There were no statistically significant differences in self-esteem and AIDS knowledge between adolescents with and without one-night stand behavior. 2) The main reasons for one-night stand behavior reported by the majority of late-adolescent males were in the *interpersonal domain* (60%) such as the attractiveness of their partner. In contrast, the main reasons for one-night stand behavior reported by the majority of late-adolescent females were in the *intrapersonal domain* (60%) such as their pride in their sexual attractiveness. 3) Reasons that tended to be related to one-night stand behavior of late adolescents of both genders were their positive values and attitudes toward such behavior, their lack in familial communication, their past sexual experiences, their attraction toward their one-night stand partners, their witnessing social modeling of such behavior, their following their peer norm in such behavior, their being separated from their families to live alone or with their friends, and their alcohol consumption.

**Keywords:** one-night stand, sexual behavior, late adolescents, AIDS knowledge, self-esteem

**INTRODUCTION:** For the past decades, problems concerning sexual behavior of adolescents in Thailand have resulted in numerous negative outcomes including sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS which continue to increase in their severity and which have spread among people from all professions, social circles, and economic statuses. Part of this is due to inappropriate sexual values of Thai adolescents.

One of the sexual behaviors which have gained influences among Thai adolescents and become widespread in the present-day Thai society is one-night stand behavior.

Academically, one-night stand is defined as sexual intercourse between a male and a female who have never known each other before, but they start to get to know each other and develop a relationship within a short period of time before they are mutually willing to have sexual intercourse without any commitment to each other after that.<sup>1)</sup> According to such definition, it is evident that the process of one-night stands begins and ends within a very short time. The relationship that takes place merely results from

an attraction between two people who are willing to have sexual intercourse to satisfy their own sexual desire and to have some fun without having to develop emotional attachment or to be responsible for their action.

In addition, one-night stand is considered a high-risk behavior that can result in sexually transmitted diseases or AIDS, as well as unwanted pregnancy, which in turn leads to illegal abortion among female adolescents who are mostly still in school and are dependent on adult family members. At the same time, having to quit school due to pregnancy makes these female adolescents lose their opportunity to be educated and to secure a good job later in life.<sup>2)</sup> The previous studies on the relationship between the self-esteem and having sexual behavior before the appropriate age or the risk of infection through sexual intercourse exhibited the results in two approaches. The first approach indicated that self-esteem and having sexual behavior before the appropriate age or the risk of infection through sexual intercourse was a positive correlation. It can explain that adolescents having high self –

\*To whom correspondence should be addressed.  
E-mail: pimpicha.s@gmail.com  
Tel. +66 8 58474849

esteem will present self-esteem and having sexual behavior before the appropriate age or the risk of infection through sexual intercourse easily as if they are confident about their sexual intercourse.

Magnani *et al.*<sup>3)</sup> studied the level of self-esteem of male adolescents and sexual intercourse lacking of protection, and they found that the level of self-esteem on male adolescents and the preventing behavior of sexual intercourse demonstrated the negative correlation, although with the sexual behavior before the appropriate age or risk of infection through sexual intercourse presented positive correlation. It can conclude that the male adolescents do not use condoms when they are having sex. Moreover, it will ensure that they do not get the opportunity to have sex.

In the case of negative correlation between self-esteem and the sexual behavior before the appropriate age or risk of infection through sexual intercourse, the adolescents with high self-esteem will not have sex before the appropriate age or risk of infection through sexual intercourse. On the other hand, If they have low self-esteem, will have sex before the appropriate age or risk of infection through sexual intercourse.

Salazar *et al.*<sup>4)</sup> investigated on female adolescents. The results showed that the high self-esteem level in female adolescents negatively correlated with the sexual behavior before the appropriate age or risk of infection through sexual intercourse. Female adolescents with high self-esteem level are normally discreet and responsible to protect themselves from disease through sexual contact including a high bold and not worry about negotiating with the partner to use condoms and talking with a sexual partner about a safe sex compared to female adolescents with low levels of self-esteem.

Supporting information was presented by Friedman, 1989<sup>5)</sup> studying the health, belief, and behavior of adolescents. The results indicated that the lack of self-esteem resulting in the harmful behavior to health and have sexual behavior before the appropriate age including the lack of protection, which will lead to unwanted pregnancy and sexual disease. Furthermore, Nathanan Kongkaluang<sup>6)</sup> studied on sexual

behavior of women lacking of sexual protection in the late adolescents and early adulthood women found that the women with low self-esteem accepted their partners to have sex without condoms.

In addition, Rock *et al.*<sup>7)</sup> researched on knowledge about HIV/ AIDS awareness on sexual behavior of adolescents found that both male adolescents and female adolescents having low level of HIV/AIDS knowledge, often increase the number of sexual partner and have sexual behavior before the appropriate age or risk of infection through sexual intercourse.

Even though one-night stand can be widely seen in the present-day Thai society, solutions to this problem have never been seriously discussed. This may be because there are few research studies on the topic as it is difficult to find informants and to collect in-depth data for research on sexual behaviors which are regarded as something to be concealed from others or something not socially acceptable.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, the researcher was interested in investigating one-night stand behaviors in late adolescents.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

### **Subject and Research design**

The most difficult step in conducting the present research was recruiting the study sample. The research had to be carefully designed, and the researcher had to take considerable precautions when approaching would-be subjects. The subjects of the study, both male and female, were selected from night-time entertainment establishments so as to ensure that they actually had one-night stand behavior without asking for payment or anything else in return. In other words, the researcher made sure that the subjects did not work in the sexual industry. One of the inclusion criteria was that the subjects had to have at least one-night stand once in the past three months so as to ensure their eligibility. At the same time, the researcher had to take the issue of protection of the rights of human subjects into careful consideration and made them feel reassured enough to disclose their highly private information to the researcher. The

researcher also made sure that the subjects were willing to participate in in-depth interviews and respond to the psychological instrument once or twice, each lasting one to two hours.

To further explain, in order to recruit 40 late adolescents (20 male adolescents and 20 female adolescents), aged between 18 and 22 years, residing in Bangkok Metropolis, who actually had one-night stand behavior, the researcher had to approach each of the would-be subjects on an individual basis at a night-time entertainment establishment. The late adolescents who did not meet the inclusion criteria previously set (they were older or younger than the specified ages, they were not willing to participate in the study, they were not ready for the interview, they did not have time to complete data collection procedures, or they had one-night stand in exchange of something in return) were excluded from the study. The researcher had to repeat the sampling process until 40 subjects were recruited. The sampling and data collection procedures lasted approximately six months, and the total number of male and female adolescents approached by the researcher at a night-time entertainment establishment was 80.

### Measures

Data collection was carried out by means of semi-structured interviews with a number of main questions formulated in advance, which developed by researcher. It was created based on literature review and adapted to fit with subjects. Then the adapted semi-structured interviews were applied to ten adolescents who were very similar to the research subjects. Finally, the semi-structured interviews were proven to be the reliability and acceptable by three qualified psychologists. The researcher recorded the subjects' responses onto the interview form and asked the subjects to verify the data afterwards. No tape recorders were used during the interviews to make the subjects feel more at ease when disclosing their personal data and to protect their secrecy. All steps in the research were reviewed ethically by Research Ethics Committee on human research of Chulalongkorn University and approved on February 18, 2008

The data gathered from the subjects were then analyzed by means of content analysis to determine different factors that were related to one-night stand behavior. The reasons why adolescents had one-night stand behavior which were content-analyzed into three domains of reasons for such behavior in each gender group: 1) intrapersonal domain such as their positive attitude toward one-night stand behavior, 2) interpersonal domain such as their lack in familial communication, their past sexual experiences, their attraction toward their one-night stand partners, and 3) environmental domain such as their witnessing social modeling of one-night stand behavior, their following their peer norm in one-night stand behavior, their being separated from their families to live alone or with their friends, and their alcohol consumption. The content analysis was conducted by two research assistants to prevent researcher bias. The inter-rater reliability of the two research assistants in the present study was 100%.

After the interviews ended, the subjects were asked to complete the self-esteem questionnaire (Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory: Adult form – Coopersmith, 2002) and the AIDS knowledge questionnaire. Self-esteem questionnaire (Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory: Adult form – Coopersmith, 2002) was derived from questionnaire used in Nathanan Kongkaluang's study in 2005<sup>6)</sup>, which is translated into Thai. It has reliability ( $\alpha$ ) of .86 and acceptable Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC) ( $p < .05$ ). AIDS knowledge questionnaire derived from questionnaire used in Nattapong Chino's study in 2003<sup>8)</sup>, which has reliability ( $\alpha$ ) of .82 and acceptable Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC) ( $p < .05$ )

Both self-esteem questionnaire scores and AIDS knowledge questionnaire scores were compared to the compare group who are totally 42 late adolescents (21 male adolescents and 21 female adolescents) which were very similar to the research subjects but without one-night stand behavior. Statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software (SPSS version 11, SPSS Inc., Chicago, USA) to find the difference between

mean values between each group. The predetermined acceptable level of probability was 1% ( $p < .01$ ) for all the comparison.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:** The findings of the present study led to the answers to the following initial questions:

**1. What are characteristics of one-night stand behavior among Thai adolescents?**

The research findings showed that one-night stand behavior among Thai adolescents tended to start at a night-time entertainment establishment, where male adolescents looked for females who dressed revealingly, drank alcohol, and danced provocatively. After that, male adolescents approached and started to get acquainted with the targeted females. If they liked each other, they agreed to have sex on that night, mostly at the male adolescents' place. They did not have any further contact or relationship after that, and if they happened to run into each other again, they would pretend that they had never met before. In general, they did not have any contact or have sex with each other after that night. Instead, they would look for a new partner for their next one-night stand.

It was found that female adolescents generally preferred to have a one-night stand with males who had good personality and looked well-to-do, called 'having full options' among adolescents; that is using an expensive model of cell phones, driving a flashy car, particularly a European make, and having their own residence such as a condominium or an apartment. As a result, the behaviors expressed by male adolescents at night-time entertainment establishments in order to show off included talking on a cell phone, leaving a cell phone on a table for everyone to see, playing with a car key with the make apparent to everyone and talking about their own place.

The interview data indicated that the male and female adolescents who had one-night stand behaviors shared certain similar characteristics. The factors that tended to be related to one-night stand behavior of late adolescents of both genders could be their positive values and attitudes toward such behavior, their lack in familial

communication, their past sexual experiences, their attraction toward their one-night stand partners, their witnessing social modeling of such behavior, their following their peer norm in such behavior, their being separated from their families to live alone or with their friends, and their alcohol consumption. As shown in Table 1

**2. Self-esteem and AIDS knowledge are the main factors of one-night stand behavior in adolescents or not?**

Self-esteem scores are about the awareness of own worth. If people feel themselves valuable, they will get high Self-esteem scores. In contrast, if people feel that their worthless, they will have low Self-esteem scores. The feelings are coming from past experience different from the individual and express their feelings from communications with speech or action behavior<sup>9,10</sup>. AIDS knowledge scores are understanding about HIV / AIDS. The facts and details about AIDS, including meaning, causes, infections, the spread of disease, symptoms and symptoms show, and diagnostics<sup>11</sup>. If people have knowledge about HIV / AIDS in good levels, they will have high AIDS knowledge scores. On the other hand, if people have knowledge about HIV / AIDS in poor levels, they will have low AIDS knowledge scores.

The data in Table 2 showed that self-esteem mean score of the adolescents with one night stand behavior is 16.93 (SD = 5.11) and self-esteem mean score of the adolescents without one night stand behavior is 17.79 (SD = 5.70) and when comparing the differences between the adolescents with and without one-night stand behavior by t-test, it was found that no statistically significant differences in self-esteem between adolescents with and without one-night stand behavior ( $t = -.719$ ,  $df = 80$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Harmoniously with data in Table 3 which showed the AIDS knowledge mean score of the adolescents with one night stand behavior is 11.45 (SD = 2.35) and AIDS knowledge mean score of the adolescents without one night stand behavior is 11.52 (SD = 1.99) and when comparing the differences between the adolescents with and without one-night stand

**Table 1** Late Adolescents with one-night stand behavior characteristics

Characteristics	Total (%) (N=40)	Characteristics	Total (%) (N=40)
<b>Gender</b>		<i>One-night stand partner</i>	
Male	20 (50.0)	Male	13.2 (8-20)
Female	20 (50.0)	Female	12.8 (8-20)
<b>Age(mean)</b>		<b>Number of current one-night stand partner /Month (mean)</b>	
Male	20.10 years (18-22)	Male	6.6 (4-12)
Female	19.60 years (18-22)	Female	12.4 (8-16)
<b>Money earned /month(mean)</b>		<b>attraction toward their one-night stand partners*</b>	
Male	23,500 Bath	<i>Physical attraction</i>	
Female	14,250 Bath	Male	20 (100.0)
<b>Educational level</b>		Female	16 (80.0)
studying in universities	40 (100.0)	<i>Full option attraction</i>	
<b>Experienced in sexual intercourse before one night stand behavior*</b>		Male	0 (0.0)
Male	40 (100.0)	Female	4 (20.0)
Female	40 (100.0)	<b>Concerns and prevention of sexual infections diseases</b>	
<b>Have lover</b>		<i>Concerns</i>	
Male	2 (10.0)	Male	0 (0.0)
Female	9 (45.0)	Female	0 (0.0)
<b>Living Status*</b>		<i>Prevention</i>	
<i>Separated from their families</i>		<i>Lover</i>	
Male	18 (90.0)	Male	0 (0.0)
Female	18 (90.0)	Female	0 (0.0)
<i>Live with their parents</i>		<i>One-night stand partner</i>	
Male	2 (10.0)	Male	19 (95.0)
Female	2 (10.0)	Female	18 (90.0)
<b>Lack in familial communication*</b>		<b>Witnessing social modeling of one-night stand behavior*</b>	
Male	18 (90.0)	Male	16 (80.0)
Female	18 (90.0)	Female	18 (90.0)
<b>Positive values and attitudes toward one night stand behavior *</b>		<b>Following their peer norm in one-night stand behavior*</b>	
Male	20 (100.0)	Male	17 (85.0)
Female	20 (100.0)	Female	18 (90.0)
<b>Age at first sexual intercourse (mean)</b>		<b>Alcohol consumption before or while sexual intercourse*</b>	
Male	14.50 years	<i>Always</i>	
Female	13.15 years	Male	20 (100.0)
<b>Type of sexual partner for the first time</b>		Female	20 (100.0)
<i>Lover</i>		<i>Never</i>	
Male	16 (80.0)	Male	0 (0.0)
Female	18 (90.0)	Female	0 (0.0)
<i>One-night stand partner</i>		<b>Place for one-night stand sexual intercourse</b>	
Male	4 (20.0)	<i>Male's home or accommodation</i>	
Female	2 (10.0)	Male	16 (80.0)
<b>Time taken before sexual intercourse (mean)</b>		Female	16 (80.0)
Male	2.3 days	<i>Female's home or accommodation</i>	
Female	2.4 days	Male	1 (5.0)
<b>Type of the current sexual partner</b>		Female	1 (5.0)
<i>Lover and One-night stand partner</i>		<i>Friend's home or accommodation</i>	
Male	2 (10.0)	Male	1 (5.0)
Female	9 (45.0)	Female	1 (5.0)
<i>Only One-night stand partner</i>		<i>Hotel/ Motel/ Inn</i>	
Male	18 (90.0)	Male	1 (5.0)
Female	11 (55.0)	Female	1 (5.0)
<b>Frequency of current sexual intercourse /Month (mean)</b>		<i>Others(Theater or parking lot)</i>	
<i>Lover</i>		Male	1 (5.0)
Male	1 (1)	Female	1 (5.0)
Female	5.2 (2-12)		

\* Factors in this research

**Table 2** Compare the difference of self-esteem scores between the adolescents with one night stand behavior and the adolescents without one night-stand behavior

Group	Subjects (n)	Mean	S.D.	statistical analysis using t-test
Subjects	40	16.93	5.11	t = -.719
Compared	42	17.79	5.70	

P < .01

**Table 3** Compare the difference of AIDS knowledge scores between the adolescents with one night stand behavior and the adolescents without one night-stand behavior

Group	Subjects (n)	Mean	S.D.	statistical analysis using t-test
Subjects	40	11.45	2.35	t = -.154
Compared	42	11.52	1.99	

P < .01

behavior by t-test, it was found that no statistically significant differences in AIDS knowledge between adolescents with and without one-night stand behavior ( $t = -.154$ ,  $df = 80$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### **3. What are reasons for one-night stand behavior of Thai male adolescents?**

According to the study findings, there were altogether 20 reasons why male adolescents preferred to have a one-night stand. These 20 reasons could be divided into three categories: intrapersonal domain, interpersonal domain, and environmental domain. Major reasons for one-night stand behavior cited by male adolescents were those categorized under the interpersonal domain, accounting for 60% of the reasons, while those categorized under the intrapersonal domain made up the other 40% of the reasons. It is noteworthy that no male adolescents mentioned any reasons under the environmental domain as underlying reasons for their one-night stand behavior in this study.

When considering the reasons categorized under the interpersonal domain, it was found that most of the male adolescents pointed out that the most important reason was their attraction to the female partners. They explained that they had positive feelings toward their one-night stand behavior because *"I was unable to resist the temptation of the partner."* On the other hand, the most frequently mentioned intrapersonal reason among these male adolescents was *"My own desire to have a sexual intercourse."*

### **4. What are reasons for one-night stand behavior of Thai female adolescents?**

The findings revealed that there were altogether 20 reasons why female adolescents preferred to have one-night stand behavior. These 20 reasons could be divided into three categories: intrapersonal domain, interpersonal domain, and environmental domain. Major reasons for one-night stand behavior cited by female adolescents were those categorized under the intrapersonal domain, accounting for 60% of the reasons, while those categorized under the intrapersonal domain and the environmental domain made up the remaining 25% and 15% of the reasons,

respectively.

To further explain, as regards the intrapersonal domain, the most important reason was their positive attitude toward one-night stand behavior. The female adolescents in this study explained that they had positive feelings toward their one-night stand behavior because *"Having a lot of partners reflects my values, my sexual appeal, and my desirability perceived by others."* On the other hand, the most frequently cited interpersonal reason among the female adolescents was *"The attractiveness of the partner,"* whereas the most commonly found environmental reason was *"The competition to see who has the highest number of partners with friends."*

**CONCLUSION:** Based on the initial study findings, it could be concluded that the factors that are associated with one-night stand behavior of male late adolescents are under the interpersonal domain, accounting for 60% of the reasons, such as lack of communication with parents, as they tend to meet, talk to, or consult their parents at a rather low level, had Experience in sexual intercourse before one night stand behavior and attraction to the female partners.

And the factors that are associated with one-night stand behavior of female late adolescents are under the intrapersonal domain, accounting for 60% of the reasons, such as their positive attitude toward one-night stand behavior, including misbelieve among female adolescents who perceive "their self-worth" through their desirability among male adolescents, which is in fact superficial and temporary rather than through their inner values such as their morals, ethics, or various abilities which are considered far more admirable and long-lasting.

In addition to factors already mentioned, all samples have the same denominator are influence from significant persons, that is they have seen a model of one-night stand from their peer groups and movie stars or well-known persons in society, living on their own, as they are likely to live by themselves or with friends at a dormitory, apartment, or condominium without the presence

of their parents; and, interestingly, and Alcohol consumption before or while sexual intercourse.

Therefore, the study findings have led to a conclusion that one-night stand behavior, which is regarded as a major problem in the present-day Thai society, is not a result of lack of AIDS knowledge or lack of self-esteem. Instead, it results from misconception among late adolescents that one-night stand behavior reflects their desirability and self-worth. It also results from late adolescents' lack of communication skills, warmth and attachment in the family, wrong modeling commonly seen in the media and on the Internet, values and behaviors of the peer groups, alcohol abuse, and living on their own without the presence of an adult.

However, it is noteworthy that the present research is considered a preliminary study which helps shed light on one-night stand behavior among male and female late adolescents in Thailand. Its preliminary findings offer suggestion on some influential factors associated with one-night stand behavior among these adolescents. It is believed that further research, especially a factor analysis and model analysis to determine behavioral causes of one-night stand behaviors, is called for. This is because when major causes and factors related to one-night stand behavior of male and female late adolescents are conclusively pinpointed, solutions to this major social problem can be developed so as to more effectively and appropriately solve the problem and prevent further problems that may be caused by one-night stand behavior.

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