

**Surveillance on University Students' Living Behaviors  
in the Private Residence, Prathumthani, Thailand**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among lifestyles, personal relationship (friendship and romantic relationship), and living behaviors shared with closed friends and romantic friends. The study undertook a quantitative research of university students' living behaviors in the private residence. A survey questionnaire was employed with three hundred and eighty-four students living in the private residence nearby their universities. Reliability of the questionnaire was 0.93. The significance was tested by Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Results indicate that there was a positive relationship at a low level between friendship and romantic relationship, between students' lifestyle and friendship, between students' lifestyle and romantic relationship, between friendship and living behaviors shared with closed friends and between romantic relationship and living behaviors shared with closed friends. There was no significant difference between friendship and living behaviors shared with romantic friends, however, there was a negative relationship at a moderate level between romantic relationship and living behaviors shared with romantic friends. Results show that friendship was developed to romantic relationship, and students' lifestyle in the private residence had an effect on friendship and on romantic relationship. Moreover, different types of personal relationship could explain living behaviors shared with closed friends, but could not explain living behaviors shared with romantic friends. The development of relationship asserts the necessity for educators to give a careful look when students lived in the private residence and work proactively with owners of the private residence by using two-way communication to build mutual understanding and trust to get their participation to create constructive lifestyles and living behaviors to students.

**Key words:** friendship, romantic relationship, social penetration theory, participation

## **Introduction**

The demand of students who wanted to study in the university increased while many universities in the city in Thailand were not able to serve all new students anymore. It was crucial for universities to expand their campus to other provinces not too far from the city. Due to the expansion, students themselves found some difficulties to go back and forth every day because the distance was farther, and the traffic was congested. They had to wake up earlier in the morning and come back home late. Also, they paid more expenses for their transportation. They were very tired, and parents started to worry about their children's security and inconvenience. To alleviate their worries, parents began to look for the nearest accommodation which was the dormitory in the university or private residence outside the university. Many universities provided the dormitory, but it was still not sufficient while some did not. As a result, a lot of students had to stay in the private residence. Staying in the private residence could bring both advantages and disadvantages. Since students had more freedom after getting away from parents, and they met both same-sex and different-sex friends and communicated in terms of many topics. In terms of interpersonal communication, when they became friends, they were closer, and their relationship later could be changed. Social psychologists Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor (1973) initiated the relationship theory called "social penetration theory." The central idea of this theory is that every relationship – whether with a friend, a family member, a lover, or a co-worker- is in terms of two concepts: breadth and depth. Breadth has to do with how many topics are discussed with the other person. Depth has to do with how central the topics are to self-concept and how much topics are revealed. Relationships begin with relatively narrow breadth (few topics are spoken about) and shallow depth and progress over time in intensity and intimacy as both breadth and depth increase. Thus relationships develop incrementally as few to many topics, and superficial topics to intensely personal topics are discussed.

Students were at the age of teenagers who were excited to meet new challenges that might bring both desirable and undesirable behaviors. If they were close with opposite sex until the relationship was changed into romantic relationship, they would privately choose to live in their own world. According to communication privacy management theory (Petronio, 2003), it focuses on the establishment of the boundaries and borders that people decide others may or may not cross. For each relationship, people compute a "mental calculus" to guide them in deciding whether to share information with another person or keep it private, avoiding disclosure by engaging in the deliberate withholding of information. As a result, it is possible that students in the private residence will perform what they want to do even negative behaviors: hanging out until late night, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, having sexuality, etc. that might lead them to absenteeism, low responsibility, low attentiveness, low achievement, or incomplete study due to being retired, dead, or disabled.

## **Objectives of the Study**

This study aimed to:

1. study the relationship development of students after having stayed in the private residence.
2. study the relationship between students' lifestyles and friendship.
3. study the relationship between students' lifestyles and romantic relationship.
4. study the relationship between friendship and students' living behaviors shared with closed friends.
5. study the relationship between romantic relationship and students' living behaviors shared with romantic friends.

## **Hypotheses**

From the foregoing discussion, the following hypotheses are formed:

1. Students begin with friendship and gradually develop to romantic relationship after having stayed in the private residence.
2. Students' lifestyles in the private residence has a positive relationship with friendship.
3. Students' lifestyles in the private residence has a positive relationship with romantic relationship.
4. Friendship has a positive relationship with living behaviors shared with closed friends.

Romantic relationship has no relationship with living behaviors shared with closed friends.

5. Friendship has no relationship with living behaviors shared with romantic friends.

Romantic relationship has a positive relationship with living behaviors shared with romantic friends.

## **Significance of the Study**

1. To stimulate university role of giving closer look at students in the private residence.
2. To encourage university to put an emphasis on communication network and communication activities with the private residence.

## **Definition of Terms**

1. **Private residence** refers to the accommodation nearby the universities where the students rent and pay their fees

2. **Students' lifestyles** refers to individuals' daily activities such as time to wake up and time to bed, days of staying in the private residence, number of closed friends, sex of closed friends, frequency of friends' visit, group meeting, activities done during spare time, types of friends: same-sex and/or different-sex friends, activities doing with friends

3. **Friendship** refers to the stages of how friendship was developed: role-limited interaction, friendly relations, moving toward friendship, nascent friendship, stabilized friendship, waning friendship, and repaired friendship

4. **Romantic relationship** refers to stages of how romantic relationship was developed: individuals with particular needs, goals, and qualities that affect what we look for in romantic relationship, invitational communication, explorational communication, intensifying communication, revising communication, intimate bonding, and navigating communication

5. **Living behaviors shared with closed friends** refers to helping each other to do homework or activities, revising textbook together, etc.

6. **Living behaviors shared with romantic friends** refers to hanging out in the late night, playing online game until late night, having sexuality, taking drugs and drinking alcohol, etc.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The researcher collected questionnaires from the students in the private residence living nearby their universities, Pratumthani, Thailand. Students were studying in the second year to the fourth year. The first year students were not the sample in this study, and they had to live in the private residence at least one semester because they were

adjusting themselves to study in the university. Also, at the time the researcher collected the data, students were still living in their private residence.

## **Methodology**

### **Subjects**

The subjects of this study were three hundred and eighty-four students who stayed in the private residence, Pratumthani, Thailand. In this study, the researcher got the sample from one hundred and two private residences.

### **Research Tool**

Questionnaire was made by researching concepts and document to cover the studied variables. Extra care and caution were applied in constructing the questionnaire. The researcher made the closed-ended questionnaire which consisted of six parts which are 1) demographic data such as sex, faculty, and present year of study 2) student's lifestyles in the private residence 3) friendship 4) romantic relationship 5) living behaviors shared with closed friends 6) living behaviors shared with romantic friends.

### **The Test Instrument**

To ensure that the test had content validity, the questionnaire was checked and corrected by the research mentor. The researcher conducted the pre-test with fifty students in the private residence, and correction was made. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested by Coefficient Alpha of Cronbrach. The result of reliability ( $\alpha$ ) was 0.93.

### **Research Procedure**

The questionnaire which was administered with three hundred and eighty-four students in the private residence contained six sections.

The first section is the demographic data of the respondents : sex, faculty, present year of study.

The second section is students' lifestyles in the private residence consisting of 14 items with 5-point Likert scale : frequently portray students' lifestyles, often portray students' lifestyles, sometimes portray students' lifestyles, hardly portray students' lifestyles, and never portray students' lifestyles.

The third section is friendship consisting of 23 items with 5-point Likert scale : frequently have relationship with closed friends, often have relationship with closed friends, sometimes have relationship with closed friends, hardly have relationship with closed friends, and never have relationship with closed friends. Friendship development was developed by interpersonal communication researcher Bill Rawlins (1981, 1994)

The fourth section is romantic relationship consisting of 17 items with 5-point Likert scale : frequently have romantic relationship, often have romantic relationship, sometimes have romantic relationship, hardly have romantic relationship, and never have relationship. Romantic relationship development was developed by interpersonal communication researcher Bill Rawlins (1981, 1994)

The fifth section is living behaviors shared with closed friends consisting of 7 items with 5-point Likert scale : frequently, often, sometimes, hardly, and never.

The sixth section is living behaviors shared with romantic friends 10 items with 5-point Likert scale : frequently, often, sometimes, hardly, and never.

## Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was performed. The acceptable statistical significance level was set at .01 and .05.

To test Hypothesis One, the researcher used Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to investigate the relationship of dependent variable (romantic relationship)

To test Hypothesis Two, the researcher used Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to investigate the relationship of dependent variable (friendship)

To test Hypothesis Three, the researcher used Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to investigate the relationship of dependent variable (romantic relationship)

To test Hypothesis Four, the researcher used Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to investigate the relationship of dependent variable (living behaviors shared with closed friends)

To test Hypothesis Five, the researcher used Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to investigate the relationship of dependent variable (living behaviors shared with romantic friends)

## Research Findings

**Hypothesis One** predicted that students begin with friendship and gradually develop to romantic relationship after having stayed in the private residence. The hypothesis was supported. (Table 1)

**Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Between Friendship and Romantic Relationship**

Variable	Romantic Relationship
Friendship	.231**

\*\*Sig 0.01

The results revealed a significant difference exists. There is a positive relationship at a low level ( $r = .231, p < .01$ ). That means friendship of students in the private residence is likely to develop to romantic relationship.

**Hypothesis Two** predicted that students' lifestyles in the private residence has positive relationship with friendship. The hypothesis was supported. (Table 2)

**Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Between Students' Lifestyle and Friendship**

Variable	Friendship
Students' Lifestyles	.305**

\*\*Sig 0.01

The results revealed a significant difference exists. There is a positive relationship at a low level ( $r = .305, p < .01$ ). That means students' lifestyles in the private residence is likely to have the effect on friendship.

**Hypothesis Three** predicted that students' lifestyles in the private residence has positive relationship with romantic relationship. The hypothesis was supported. (Table 3)

**Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Between Students' Lifestyle and Romantic relationship**

Variable	Romantic Relationship
Students' Lifestyles	.109*

\*Sig 0.05

The results revealed a significant difference exists. There is a positive relationship at a low level ( $r = .109, p < .05$ ). That means students' lifestyles in the private residence is likely to have the effect on romantic relationship.

**Hypothesis Four** predicted that friendship has a positive relationship with living behaviors shared with closed friends. The hypothesis was supported. Romantic relationship has no relationship with living behaviors shared with closed friends. The hypothesis was rejected. (Table 4)

**Table 4: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Between Friendship And Living Behaviors Shared With Closed Friends And Between Romantic Relationship and Living Behaviors Shared With Closed Friends**

Variable	Friendship	Romantic Relationship	Living Behaviors Shared With Closed Friends
Friendship	-		
Romantic Relationship	.231**	-	
Living Behaviors Shared With Closed Friends	.334**	.351**	-

\*\*Sig0 .01

The results revealed a significant difference exists. There is a positive relationship at a low level ( $r = .334, p < .01$ ) between friendship and living behaviors shared with closed friends. That means friendship and living behaviors shared with closed friends have the relationship in the same direction.

There is a positive relationship at a low level ( $r = .351, p < .01$ ) between romantic relationship and living behaviors shared with closed friends. That means romantic relationship and living behaviors shared with closed friends have the relationship in the same direction.

**Hypothesis Five** predicted that friendship has no relationship with living behaviors shared with romantic friends. The hypothesis was accepted. Romantic relationship has a positive relationship with living behaviors shared with romantic friends. The hypothesis was rejected. (Table 5)

**Table 5: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Between Friendship And Living Behaviors Shared With Romantic Friends And Between Romantic Relationship and Living Behaviors Shared With Romantic Friends**

Variable	Friendship	Romantic Relationship	Living Behaviors Shared With Romantic Friends
Friendship	-		
Romantic Relationship	.231**	-	
Living Behaviors Shared With Romantic Friends	-.010	-.528**	-

\*\*Sig0 .01

The results revealed no significant difference exists between friendship and living behaviors shared with romantic friends ( $r = -.010$ ). That means friendship doesn’t lead to living behaviors shared with romantic friends.

On the other hand, the results indicated a significant difference exists between romantic relationship and living behaviors shared with romantic friends. There is a negative relationship at a moderate level ( $r = -.528$ ,  $p < .01$ ) between romantic relationship and living behaviors shared with romantic friends. That means romantic relationship can lead to living behaviors shared with romantic friends in opposite direction.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The researcher intends to conduct a quantitative research concerning students’ lifestyles, personal relationship (friendship or romantic), living behaviors shared with closed friends, and living behaviors shared with romantic friends. As the results have shown, students’ lifestyles in the private residence can be the factor to develop students in the private residence from friendship to romantic relationship. The reason that they meet and do activities together, they are then easy to close to one another. As Wood (2008) mentioned that the two greatest influences on initial attraction are proximity or physical nearness and similarity. Also, Wood (2008) emphasized that the stages of relationship evolution do not just happen automatically. Rather, particular experiences and events cause relationships to become more or less intimate.

The result also revealed that different types of personal relationship (friendship and romantic relationship) do not lead to different living behaviors shared with closed friends and with romantic friends. To illustrate, friendship has a positive relationship with living behaviors shared with closed friends, and romantic relationship has a positive relationship with living behaviors shared with closed friends in the same direction. In this case, it can be explained that since romantic relationship is formed after friendship has been developed to a certain point. Then, friendship can become romantic relationship. Another result is that romantic relationship can lead to living behaviors shared with romantic friends in opposite direction, while friendship has no relationship with living behaviors shared with closed friends. This can be explained that the stages in romantic relationship are individual communication, explorational communication, intensifying communication, revising communication, and intimate bonding. At each stage moves, the relationship is gaining depth as the increasing amount of intimacy and happiness it typically embodies. They spend more or more time together, and they rely less on external structure such as movies or parties.



The results from the research can be applied to urge universities to give a closer look on students' living behaviors in the private residence. Private residence is the environment which is the external factor that can have great influence on the students positively and negatively. In this case, students having different sex stay together in the same private residence, therefore, without knowing, it can probably bring misunderstanding and misperceptions in their communication. Communication of both sides may come from different backgrounds such as countries, ages, and organizational position (Coupland, Wiemann, & Giles, 1991) and gender (Maltz, & Borker, 1982).

Finally, the researcher would like to suggest universities to take the role as a facilitator to work proactively with the private residence by using communication network to build mutual understanding. Universities may often have meeting with owners of private residence near universities to share problems and solutions and do activities together. Meeting and doing activities can be a two-way communication, that is, universities join with owners of the private residence, and owners of private residence join with universities. To sum up, universities and owners of the private residence can work successfully because of participation. Participation can be fulfilled because of cooperation, coordination, and responsibility. Participation is the heart of working together; cooperation is individuals' intention to work together to accomplish the group goal; coordination is the time and sequential events which help activities or jobs finish effectively; and responsibility is the commitment to work and build trust. The benefits will go to every party: universities, owners of the private residence, and community as a whole.

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