

Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter focuses on the issues related to this research. It includes advantages and disadvantages of the relationship, and approval and disapproval of cohabitation.

2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of cohabitation

There are some advantages of sharing lives together before getting married.

- Living with a boyfriend or a girlfriend is fun. It also can be practical, meaningful, and a sign of deep commitment (Scelfo, 2002).
- It saves on rent money, travel time between locations and they get the daily bonus of seeing each other whenever they want (Blassingame, no date).
- Couples who live together can share expenses and learn more about each other. If things do not work out, breaking up is easy to do (Popenoe & Whitehead, 2000).
- Sex is readily available and cohabitators have more individual free time (Anonymous, no date).
- For students, cohabitation has no ill effect on grades and 90 percent of them like it very much (Stewart, 1978: 345).
- Almost all the respondents stressed the emotional benefits of sharing their lives and they profited greatly from having shared their lives with someone else (Stewart, 1978:347).
- Miscellaneous – Cohabitors experienced significantly more difficulty in their marriage with adultery, alcohol, drugs, independence, and more permissive sexual relationships (Newcomb and Bentler, 1980 as cited in Stanton, 2003).
- One article said that only one benefit of living together without marriage is for sexual pleasure (เมื่อวัน, 2544).

Stanton argued that there are a few bad effects of cohabitation:

- Domestic violence

Nearly 14 percent of cohabitants admit hitting, shoving, or throwing things at their partner in past years compared to only 5 percent of married people. The Family Violence Research Program at the University of New Hampshire, the nation's leading institute studying domestic violence, finds that the rate of violence for cohabiting couples is twice as high as for married couples and the overall rate for severe violence is nearly five times as high.

- Contentment and depression

In three out of every four cohabiting relationships, at least one partner reported having thought the relationship was in trouble. Women are most likely to have such feelings.

- Infidelity

The National Sex Survey reports that cohabiting men were nearly 4 times more likely than husbands to have cheated on their partner in the past year, while women were generally more faithful than men. Cohabiting women were eight times more likely than wives to cheat. It concludes that the commitment of the marital relationship served as protection against infidelity.

- Cohabitation is not monolithic.

- Financial

Married people typically earn and save more than their unmarried counterparts. Wealth accumulating in cohabiting situations is far below what is typical in marriage.

- Miscellaneous

There were very high and increasing rates of health-destroying and dangerous behaviors including smoking, drinking, carousing, and illegal drug use (Stanton, 2003).

Cohabitation has not always been an acceptable practice. In the United States of America it was not legal until around 1970. But now it is routine. More than half of all first marriages are preceded by cohabitation (Anonymous. United States: Come Live With Me). Nowadays both adults and students cohabit. Between 10 and 30 percent of all unmarried college students on major campuses lived with a lover of the opposite sex (Stewart,1978). It was estimated that 30 – 40 percent of college students cohabited during their time at school (Anonymous. United States: Come Live With Me).

But cohabitation in Japan has not increased, though Japan is as modernized as many other western countries. The evidence shows that the level of single youths' sexual activities in Japan was far behind those in western societies. The proportion of women aged in their 20s and 30s having sexual intercourse is at most 50 percent in Japan while it is 80 percent to 100 percent in many northern and western European countries. It is because Japanese women have been socially and economically emancipated. Moreover, they have achieved high education. They hesitate to cohabit or to get married because they might have less freedom or they think having lovers and work and hobbies are not easily compatible. (Atoh, 2001).

It is true that student cohabitation spread from western societies to some eastern countries. Chen Xinxin reports in China Today, September 2003 that Xiao Lin and Xiao Ma were expelled from Chongqing Institute of Posts and Telecommunication because they committed sexual misconduct and Ma was pregnant. President of the school, Nie Neng, says that moral and ethic courses must be conducted and sex outside marriage is morally unacceptable. Lin and Ma must be punished so that other students will not imitate that behavior.

In China the rules of each university are very strict. For example, in Shenzhen University intimate gestures such as holding hands, hugging or kissing between boys and girls on campus will get black marks. Those who accumulate thirty points will be expelled. If students' cohabitation is discovered, they will be expelled as well. Premarital sex was a social taboo but attitudes towards sex have been changing due to western influence. Some students think that their cohabitation does no harm to society, school, nor anyone else. According to a recent survey

among university students, forty percent of them understood and agreed with the concept of cohabitation which means it is going to be common for them. Though university rules are strict, Saywell stated that of the 500 students surveyed at nine Beijing colleges, 13.4 percent admitted to having some sexual experience, while 69.1 percent thought that premarital sex or cohabitation was acceptable (Saywell, 1998).

Student cohabitation also happens in Korea. Most Korean students take advantage of it as a means of fulfilling their sexual desire (Jung, 2001). There are many ways to access their partners. Internet sites enable boys to search for girls to live with them. Songs, films, and soap operas show themes of cohabitation. The influence of the mass media has undoubtedly been an important factor in the 30 percent increase in cohabitation since 1999. Cohabitation in Korea is spreading across the country and nobody can stop that trend.

In Thailand student cohabitation is widely spread in almost every province. According to an ABAC poll of November 2002, 49.4 percent of male and 21.4 percent of female students at vocational colleges commit this activity (เอกสารค์ ภานุพงษ์ และกนกวนี ตรีวัฒน์กุล, 2546). Moreover, some famous and popular stars and singers admit that they cohabit. Some of these are Kanokporn Losiri who has shared her life with her boyfriend for 6 years (ไทยโพสต์, 9 ตุลาคม 2543); Noppon Komarachoon and Preeyanuch Panpradub who cohabit but never think of a wedding ceremony (ไทยโพสต์, 6 ตุลาคม 2543). But not all stars agree with cohabitation. Sonya Cooling and Jimmy, her boyfriend, say that they plan to get married soon but they will not cohabit because Jimmy is a Muslim who is very religious. Cohabitation is against Islamic rules. They love each other very much. Their love is romantic, not erotic (ไทยรัฐ, 14 กันยายน 2545). A large body of sociological and psycho-sociological research has already shown the relevance of actors' social embeddedness in shaping individual behavior via the influence of other actors' behavior (Kahan, 1997 as cited in Nazio, no date). This trend has rooted and spread all over the country (ณ พจนารถ, 2547). Thai women who cohabit in Thai society may be to blame for such behavior because it is deviant. Their parents and/or relatives may blame them as they do not conform to the custom and tradition (อมรา อิน ใจชานนท์, 2544).

2.2 Approval and disapproval of cohabitation

However, whether cohabitation is approved or disapproved of varies in different societies. For example, boys and girls of the Trobriand Islands are given complete instruction in all forms of sexual expression and intimacy by their parents before they cohabit. At harvest time Ila – speaking people (one of the primitive groups) of central Africa allow boys and girls to live together before getting married, which is cohabitation. On the other hand, in some societies, it is discouraged. For example, Tepoztlan Indian girls of Mexico are confined from the first day of their first menstruation. Cohabitation is restricted for them. In Muslim society, a girl's premarital chastity was tested after her marriage. After the wedding night, blood-stained sheets were proof of the bride's virginity (Ember, 1996:351). The United States is much different from these two societies.

Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that the number of unmarried couple households grew to 5,500,000 in the year 2000 from 439,000 in the year 1960 (Anonymous. The Problem of Cohabitation, 2003). Research found that the proportion of high school seniors who agreed with cohabitation rose from 35 percent to 59 percent between 1975 and 1995 (Popenoe, 2000). And a result of another research was estimated that 60% of East Carolina University students had been involved in an interracial relationship (Knox, Zusman, Buffington, Hemphill, 2000). We can see that almost every group of people in the United States cohabits.

Cohabitation increased so much in western societies and it was more widely approved because oral contraceptive pills were popular. It led to a reduction in the fear of unwanted pregnancies. Moreover, it was due to women's emancipation. They achieved higher education. They were more economically independent. Furthermore, it was because of value change. They were free from religion and morality. They determined their reproductive behavior as an individual right for self-actualization (Atoh, 2001).

It depends on each society whether cohabitation is approved or not. Though cohabitation has expanded much in western countries, it contradicts the Bible. Living together is a form of prostitution. Jenkins (1998) explains the Greek word translated 'fornication' is 'porneia', which means prostitution, and porne was a prostitute. God chose these words to describe and label any sexual activity outside marriage (1 Cor. 7:9; Matt. 19:9). Cohabitation is not conformity to norms yet it is becoming more acceptable.

Theoretical Framework

Cohabitation as a deviant behavior

In the old days it was normal that Thai people of the opposite sex did not spend their lives together without getting married or without their parents' permission. Sukda stated in her research (Sukda, 2000) that men and women should not have sexual experience before marriage. Women's sexual experience before marriage would not be accepted by Thai society. Virginity was still important and women should maintain their virginity till they got married (Sukda, 2000). But nowadays we live in a time of enormous change. It's clear that our old ways of being and doing no longer work. Some people of the new generation, including some college students, cohabit – they share their lives before getting married which is deviant from the culture and tradition.

Deviant behavior is something that is caused by some other things, events, occurrences, or phenomena in the environment. In fact, every human being behaves the way he/she is made, he/she understands life, views a particular situation, or follows a particular pattern of behavior which results from his/her beliefs, understanding, and motivation that he/she interacts. It is caused or motivated rather than uncaused (Thio, 1988).

The definitions of deviance are different according to each sociologist:

Talcott Parsons, (Thio, 1988:2), one of the earliest sociologists, defined deviance as a departure from the normative standards of the common culture, a tendency to deviate from norms. Robert Morton (Thio, 1988:2) defined deviant behavior as conduct that departs significantly from the norms set for people in their society. While Howard Becker (Thio, 1988:5) stated that deviance is not the act the person commits but it is the behavior that people label. From these definitions, college students' cohabitation is a kind of deviance.

Sexual needs

Thio (1988) stated that behaviors, including deviance, are caused or motivated. Motivation is one of the important factors that makes people act out. It activates and directs behavior. It also makes our behavior more vigorous and energetic. Such behavior is aroused by needs. According to Maslow, people's behavior is governed by a hierarchy of needs (Simons, Irwin and Drinnien, 1987). The most basic are physiological needs for food, drink, oxygen, protection from heat or cold, sex, and so forth. These needs are the strongest because when they are not satisfied, a person who is deprived may feel sick, irritated, painful, and uncomfortable (Boeree, no date). Above all basic needs mentioned, having sex is so complicated that some groups of people have to get married before committing such activity while others do not – they cohabit instead.

Once people have satisfied all of their physiological needs, they seek to satisfy their safety needs such as security from attack and avoidance of pain (Stewart, 1978). Cohabiting satisfies their safety needs since they feel secure by having somebody close to them to protect them, especially female students who are scared of burglary or dogs howling at night.

When the students feel satisfied with safety needs, they want love: to love, to be loved and to belong to someone or to the group – the needs of love. These needs push students to please their lovers. For example, the females do the chores while the males are tutors. The dread of being misunderstood, rejected, betrayed, engulfed, or ignored by a beloved seems worse than death (Schnider, Bugental and Pierson, 2001). ชาเน่ ปียะสุข (2547) remarked that should food be excluded, sexual needs are the second most important for some people's lives.

The other two needs, esteem needs – prestige, fame, being accomplished, and self-actualization – achievement of one's potential, are not related to students' cohabitation.

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