

Suicidal Ideation among Thai Adolescents: An Empirical Test of a Causal Model

Benjamaporn Rungsang, Nujjaree Chaimongkol, Wannee Deoisres, Pairatana Wongnam*

Abstract: The purpose of this cross-sectional study was to test the Rungsang-Chaimongkol Model of Suicidal Ideation among Thai Adolescents. A multi-stage random sampling technique was used to recruit a sample of 437 adolescents attending secondary schools in a central province of Thailand. Research instruments were self-report questionnaires, including the Scale for Suicidal Ideation, the General Health Questionnaire, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Negative Event Scale. Descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling were used to explore the magnitude of direct and indirect effects on the suicidal ideation among the sample.

Results revealed that negative psychological attributes and stressful events had a direct positive effect on suicidal ideation. Overall distress mediated the link between negative psychological attributes and stressful events, and suicidal ideation. The Model accounted for 32% of the overall variance in prediction of suicidal ideation among Thai adolescents. These findings suggested that the intervention program to prevent suicidal ideation aiming at decrease negative psychological attributes, stressful events and overall distress would be beneficial. However, it requires further testing with other groups.

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Introduction

Suicidal ideation is known to be an indicator of suicide¹ which is the leading cause of death among adolescents throughout the world,¹⁻⁴ and the fourth highest cause of death among Thai adolescents.² Studies of the suicidal ideation among adolescents found that it was at a high prevalence rate.²⁻⁵ For instance, in the United States of America (USA), nearly 40% of ninth-grade Latino females have experienced suicidal ideation, whereas, 20% of non-Latino ninth-grade females experienced suicidal ideation in the past year.⁵ In Bangkok, Thailand, among students aged

Benjamaporn Rungsang, R.N., Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Nursing, Burapha University and Lecturer, Faculty of Nursing, Pathum Thani University. 111/47 Mubanphukapan Soi 7, Nong Pak Long, Muang District, Nakhon Pathom, 73000, Thailand
e-mail: nokkben_nok@hotmail.com

Correspondence to: Nujjaree Chaimongkol*, R.N., Ph.D., Associate Professor Faculty of Nursing, Burapha University. 169 Longhard Bangsaen Road, Muang District, Chon Buri, 20131, Thailand
e-mail: nujjaree@buu.ac.th

Wannee Deoisres, R.N., Ph.D., Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing, Burapha University. 169 Longhard Bangsaen Road, Muang District, Chon Buri, 20131, Thailand **e-mail:** wannee@buu.ac.th

Pairatana Wongnam, Ed.D., Associate Professor Faculty of Education, Burapha University. 169 Longhard Bangsaen Road, Muang District, Chon Buri, 20131, Thailand **e-mail:** pairatana@yahoo.com