

## Factors that Make Thai Teenagers Drink Alcohol

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Received date: Oct 07, 2016; Accepted date: Jan 25, 2018; Published date: Jan 30, 2018

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### Abstract

Thailand teenagers currently have more alcohol consumption habits. Especially in the younger age group, which the government has banned the sales of alcohol to children under 18 years old. However, the legislation was not applicable in practice. This research was a quantity research that aimed to correlate the relationship of factors that affected the alcohol consumption of Chiang Mai teenagers. The sample group consisted of 400 teenagers, who drink alcohol. The questionnaires were administered to collect data that, in turn, were analysed using multiple regressions in order to forecast the relationship of the variables that influence alcohol consumption among adolescents in Chiang Mai. Even though Thailand launched many campaigns about avoiding drinking alcohol or noticed the penalty for drinking alcohol, the results of the research found that the scores of the alcohol consumption among teenagers who live in Chiang Mai were higher than the overall average score. It can be seen that firstly, it is showed that more than half of the sample group consumed alcohol because of their friends as they wanted to be part of a group. Secondly, they had the wrong attitude that drinking alcohol made them cool. Finally, they drank alcohol because of family background or personal problems.

**Keywords:** Adolescent; Alcohol; Liquor; Teenager; Thailand

### Introduction

The situation of alcohol consumption in Thailand has been measured through numerous periodic nationwide studies. Thailand Provincial Alcohol Report [1] indicated that 14 percent of Thai teens have accessed to alcohol before the legal age. In 2013, the situation and effect of alcohol consumption have shown that 31.5 percent of Thai people ages 15 year old and over, about 17 million drinkers, consume alcohol regularly. Additionally, Thailand is number one among Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for alcohol consuming [2]. It can be seen that there is quite a high prevalence of dangerous patterns of consumption compared to other developing countries [3].

There are many surveys in Thailand interested in exploring individual and social negative effects of alcohol consumption. National report for Thailand (2015, p.3) [3] on harm to others from drinking reported that there were three major specific type of alcohol-related problems. Alcohol, firstly, caused injuries and deaths from traffic accidents, which were stated by the Royal Thai police. Then, alcohol produced mortality and morbidity, which were reported by the Ministry of Public Health. Lastly, alcohol caused national violence and sexual abuse, which data were found from Non-government Organization (NGO).

In Thailand, it is noticed that anyone under 18 is not allowed to buy alcohol, but there is no minimum age for the consumption of alcohol [4]. Therefore, teenagers will normally be required to show a proof of age when buying alcohol. In 2015, International Health Policy Program (IHPP), Thailand, Ministry of Public Health found that the situation and the effects of alcohol consumption in the country were getting worst. In the last 10 years, Thai teen drinkers have increased steadily, on average 1 percent per year [3] and it is still growing. The highest

prevalence of young drinker is in the North and the North-east regions, 39.4 percent and 37.2 percent respectively [1].

On the other hand, the surveys of the National Statistical Office reported that 13.5 percent of the population have at least once experienced the following adverse events; such as being injured or getting involved in alcohol-related accidents including traffic accidents, domestic violence or having a family problem due to alcohol drinking, having problem in their working life due to alcohol drinking, drink driving, and drinking during pregnancy or the breastfeeding period. Men were more likely to report experience with adverse events from their own drinking than women such as trouble with household finances, family relationships, working or studying and personal health [3].

There are many studies, for examples, concerning alcohol consumption behaviours in Thailand during these past of years. A research of Trends and Associated factors of alcohol consumption among Southern Thai adolescents, 2003-2009, for instance, established that prevalence of the use of alcohol in grade 11 students also tended to increase in males [5]. Factors that related to decision making in alcohol drinks consumption of students in university in Bangkok were gender, ways of living, means of activities during spare times, trend of alcohol drink consumption, the relationship among family members, the influence of company, friends, and commercial media [6]. The predisposing factors, additionally, significantly related to alcohol drinking behaviours of adolescent in Pranakhon Si Ayutthaya were the alcohol drinking behaviours of close friends and the influence of information received from media [7]. Finally, factors that were significantly related to the level of alcohol consumption behaviour of bachelor degree students in the Bangkok area included gender, the relationship between the parents, attitudes toward the consumption of alcohol beverages, access of selling and buying resources of alcoholic beverage, influence of advertising and public relations media, and support from friends in drinking alcoholic beverage [8]. Consequently,

the aim of this research was to correlate the relationship of four factors, which were individuals, social, psychological, and Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), that affected the alcohol consumption of Chiang Mai teenagers.

## Methods

When conducting research, the data was measured from a sample of the total population of interest, not from all members of the population [9]. Therefore, this research was a quantity research with data collected during November 2015 from a sample of 400 adolescents, aged between 18 to 25 years old. The researchers randomly collected data by accidental sampling method from the sample group; those were accidentally met at shopping malls and education institutions in the city of Chiang Mai Province. The reliability of the questionnaires were at 79 percent ( $r=0.79$ ). As the five response categories are often believed to represent an Interval level of measurement, the data involved rating scales of one kind of another and virtually all rating scales involve variants on the 5 point Likert scale, which are 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, and 5=strongly disagree [10]. This research used descriptive statistics to describe the data and used multiple linear regression analysis to examine the factors that affected alcohol consumption among adolescents.

## Results

Firstly, findings from the study of individual factors showed that the majority of revenues of 303 people (75.80%) were between 5,000-10,000 Baht. 194 people (48.50%) were still studied in secondary schools, grade sixth. The ratio of residents living with their parents were with a total of 137 people (34.30%), living in dormitory with a total of 133 people (33.33%), living in dormitory with couples with a total of 103 people (25.80%), and living alone in dormitory with a total of 27 people (6.80%). Nevertheless, there were others factors used in this study that measured the statistics that can be explained which were, social factors with the average 2.76, psychological factors with the average 2.72, and IMC factors with the average 2.68.

Concerning the various dimensions, it could be noticed that the habit of alcohol consumption among Thai teenagers was moderate (mean=2.85, SD=0.98). The social factors, psychological factors, and IMC factors affected alcohol consumption were moderate, with the average 2.76, 2.72, and 2.68 (Table 1).

	mean	SD	Rating scale
Alcohol consumptions habits (Y)	2.85	0.98	moderate
Social factors (X <sub>4</sub> )	2.76	1.13	moderate
Psychological factors (X <sub>5</sub> )	2.72	1.1	moderate
IMC factors (X <sub>6</sub> )	2.68	1.13	moderate

**Table 1:** Means and standard deviations of alcohol consumption habits and other factors affecting consumption.

Then, when putting the data to test for correlation that affected the behaviour of alcohol consumption with multiple regression analysis by entering the test in order to determine the statistical significance of the quantities of all independent variables by ANOVA, it was found that

the  $F=38.322$  has a statistically significant level at .05, which meant that various factors could lead to a test to predict the factors that affecting alcohol consumption habits.

The test results in Table 2, indicated that the adjusted R square was 0.428, which meant that four independent variables; (1) social factors (X<sub>4</sub>), (2) psychological factors (X<sub>5</sub>), (3) IMC factors (X<sub>6</sub>), and (4) individuals factors, which were sex (X<sub>1</sub>), age (X<sub>2</sub>), income (X<sub>3</sub>), residence (X<sub>4</sub>), affected the behaviour of alcohol consumption (Y), 42.80%.

The results also presented that the t, a statistically significant level at 0.05, including social factors (X<sub>5</sub>), psychological factors (X<sub>6</sub>), IMC factors (X<sub>7</sub>), were Sig=.000, which meant these three factors were affecting the behaviour of alcohol consumption behaviour of teenagers in Chiang Mai. Nonetheless, gender (X<sub>1</sub>) Sig=0.845, age (X<sub>2</sub>) Sig=0.089, income (X<sub>3</sub>) Sig=0.061, and residence (X<sub>4</sub>) Sig=0.113 were assumed no statistically significant level at .05, which meant that the fourth variable of individuals factors did not affect the alcohol consumption of teenagers in Chiang Mai.

Lastly, the test results revealed that the IMC factors (X<sub>7</sub>) was the most affected alcohol consumption, then the psychological factors (X<sub>6</sub>), and then the social factors (X<sub>5</sub>). On the other hand, four variables of individuals' factors, including sex (X<sub>1</sub>), age (X<sub>2</sub>), income (X<sub>3</sub>), residence (X<sub>4</sub>), had no affected on alcohol consumption habits of teenagers in Chiang Mai.

As a result, it could be written as an equation to predict the alcohol consumption behaviour of teenagers in Chiang Mai is  $Y=0.264+0.354X_6+0.339X_5+0.164X_4$

	Unstandardized	Standardized		
Factor	Coefficients (B)	Coefficients (β)	t-test	Sig
IMC factors (X <sub>7</sub> )	0.354	0.408	10.561	0
Psychological factors (X <sub>6</sub> )	0.339	0.379	9.851	0
Social factors (X <sub>5</sub> )	0.164	0.189	4.89	0
Sex (X <sub>1</sub> )	0.015	0.007	0.195	0.845
Age (X <sub>2</sub> )	0.106	0.067	1.231	0.089
Income (X <sub>3</sub> )	0.123	0.093	1.878	0.061
Residence (X <sub>4</sub> )	0.144	0.069	1.59	0.113

**Table 2:** Analysis of factors affecting alcohol consumption. Constant =0.264, R<sup>2</sup> =0.663, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> =0.428, F=38.322, p<0.05.

## Discussion and Recommendations

The study found that individuals factors, including gender, age, income, and residence, did not affect the behaviour of alcohol consumption among adolescents in Chiang Mai. The results were in consistent with the previous study of Buasorn & Ratchadapunnathikul (2012) [8], Wonglitkrai (2008) [11], and Potiast (1998) [7], which those results showed that age, income, and residence were not associated with alcohol consumption habits of teenagers in Bangkok.

However, IMC factors, social factors, and psychological factors were influenced alcohol consumption behaviour of teenagers in Chiang Mai.

It was consistent with the study of Buasorn & Ratchadapunnathikul (2012), Wonglitrakul (2008) [11], and Potiast (1998), which found that triggered by advertising media, attitudes, and people around were awarding alcohol consumption. Moreover, the research study by Wiruntangtrakul (2007) [6] found that students in Bangkok decided to drink alcohol because they thought that it was not such a serious matter, as it is not drugs. It was just psychological reasons that caused the alcohol consumption among adolescents. In conclusion, IMC factors, social factors, and psychological factors were influencing consumption of alcohol among teenagers in Thailand.

As social factors, psychological factors, and IMC factors causes causal influence alcohol consumptions, these problems are quite complex. Therefore, Thailand needs more campaigns to reduce the consumption of alcohol. For example, the government should enact the regulations or the policies that could help reducing the consumption of alcohol behavior among teenagers. Otherwise, the government should raise awareness of the danger of drinking alcohol and create awareness of the dangers of alcohol in each group of ages.

Alternatively, the study of alcohol consumption may provide another alternative methods or should make a thorough study of the variables; such as, IMC factors may be studied in depth in each instance variable or the content of alcohol consumption in various aspects, in order to know the reasons that may cause the consumption of alcohol in Thai adolescents in each dimension.

## Acknowledgements

This research was partially the collaboration between Department of Communication Arts, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University and Department of Communication Arts, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University. We thank our colleagues from both universities who provided insight and expertise that greatly supported the research, although they may

not come to an agreement with all of the interpretations of this paper. We are enormously grateful to all the experts for their comments on an earlier version of the manuscript, although any errors are our own and should not tarnish the reputations of these respected persons.

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