

## Predicting Alcohol Drinking Intention and Behavior of Thai Adolescents

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**Abstract:** This study, one of seven projects investigating health risk behaviors of Thai adolescents, sought to determine the ability of Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior to predict alcohol drinking via examination of 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> grade Thai students' attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral controls and alcohol drinking intentions. In addition, the effect of gender differences on the students' drinking intention was examined. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior postulates the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived behavioral control, the stronger one's intention will be to perform a given behavior. During a series of 3 data collection phases (elicitation study, pilot study and final data collection-actual study) data were obtained, through use of a researcher developed Demographic Data Questionnaire and an Alcohol Assessment Questionnaire, and analyzed by way of descriptive statistics and hierarchical multiple regression.

Results revealed 14% of the subjects drank alcohol within the previous month. In addition, the males reported more episodes (3.8 per month) of alcohol consumption and more intake consumption (4.7 glasses per episode) than the females. Regression analysis demonstrated the explanatory power of the Theory of Planned Behavior, in that perceived behavioral control predicted behavioral intention beyond attitude and subjective norm. The adolescents' intention to drink alcohol and perceived behavioral control explained 9.2% of variance in their drinking behavior, while their perceived behavioral control had a significant positive effect on both intention to drink and drinking behavior. Combined, the subjects' attitudes, subjective norm and perceived behavioral controls predicted 39.2 % of variance of their intention to drink alcohol within the next 30 days. In addition, the effect of gender on predicting intention was demonstrated.

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**Key words:** Adolescents' intention to drink; Alcohol consumption; Theory of Planned Behavior; Drinking behavior

### Introduction

Drinking among adolescents is a major threat to the national health of Thais, as the consumption rate established during adolescence influences lifelong drinking patterns.<sup>1</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that 5% of the

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