Title

Determinants Shaping the Development of Alcohol Use among Non-Muslim School-age Adolescents
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In recent years, alcohol use among non-Muslim school-age adolescents has become rampant and unchecked, and spurred them to noticeable disciplinary and social problems in school, family and community. Previous studies in adolescence alcohol use were focused on quantitative methodology to examine the issue. However, the present study aims to examine the alcohol use among non-Muslim school-age adolescents between 14-18 years old from the perspectives of various determinants shaping the development of alcohol use. A total of 30 participants were involved in this descriptive qualitative case study. They were comprised of 15 school-going adolescents, five drop-outs and ten juveniles from the northern state of peninsula Malaysia. A qualitative descriptive case study approach was deployed in the current study to provide a more exhaustive and comprehensive findings on the development of alcohol use among non-Muslim school-age adolescents. Semi-structured questions were administered during the in-depth interviews to collect the data and thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data collected. In the findings, the psychological determinants for shaping the development of alcohol use were comprised of depression, self-gratification, conduct problems and maturity. However, in the findings of social and cultural determinants, social events, cultural practices and parental factors were identified. Last but not least, the environmental determinants identified for shaping the development of alcohol use were alcohol advertising, accessibility of alcohol and the drinking act implemented.

Keywords: Psychological Determinants, Social Cultural Determinants, Environmental Determinants, Alcohol Use, Non-Muslim School-age Adolescents,
INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, underage drinking is not a regional problem but a serious global problem as more and more school-age adolescents have had some experience with alcohol at their early age (Donovan, 2004). The current prevalence alcohol consumption among school-going adolescents in Malaysia was 8.9% as compared with 2.6% among adolescents in Indonesia, and 7.3% in Cambodia (Mala Manickam et al., 2014). The statistics indicated that alcohol-use among school-age adolescents in Malaysia was comparatively higher than its neighbouring countries and it was unhealthy for a young developing nation. More importantly, alcohol use in adolescence is linked with an array of other health risk behaviours such as smoking, illicit drug use, and premature sexual behaviour (Kulbok & Cox, 2002), and it increases the risks of negative health social outcome including school dropouts, physical and sexual assault, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and motor vehicles crashes (Bonomo, Coffey, & Wolfe, 2001). In addition, underage drinking could harm the development and the maturity of brain of adolescents consequently causes cognitive deficits that impair the executive functions of the brain such as learning and memory (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2014), and in some adverse cases it increases the likelihood of alcohol dependence in the life of their later adolescence (Hingson, Heeren, & Levenson, 2002).

Therefore, for achieving the objective to understand the development of alcohol use among school-age adolescents, it is critically important to gain a comprehensive insight into the various perspectives to identify the prominent determinants shaping the development of alcohol use among school-age adolescents including dropouts and juveniles to address the issue.

Many conventional studies have had associated the use of psychoactive substance like alcohol with the complex interplay of biological, psychological, social cultural and environmental determinants (Koob & Volkow, 2010). However, in the current study, the attributes of biological determinants was waived due to its complexity and difficulties to ascertain the genetic traits and imbalances of brain chemicals of participants for the determinant of alcohol use. Moreover, biological determinants must be established with the evident of intensive clinical laboratory studies.

Hence, a study in the scope of educational context on the three major determinants for alcohol use was suggested, namely psychological, social cultural and environmental determinants. These three areas of determinants are important to establish the gist for the development of alcohol use among school-age adolescents. The perimeter of psychological determinants includes stress, perception, feelings and other cognitive characteristics that affect the attitude, behaviour and
functions of the mind of school-age adolescents for their indulgence in alcohol use. However, the environmental determinants are noted as external forces which exert influences on the onset of underage drinking, namely alcohol advertising in mass media, public policies and enforcement, peer attitude, and role models. Last but not least, social cultural determinants are more concerned with ways of life in a community, social attitude and family system which influence the perception of alcohol use among the school-age adolescents.

Beside school-going adolescents, school dropouts and juveniles were also inclusive in the study to make the findings more comprehensive and complete. An integrated study to investigate the various determinants of alcohol use on these three categories of school-age adolescents may provide new dimensions and materials for comparative study purposes.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 illustrated the theoretical framework of this study and it comprised of four supporting theories namely, (1) Substance Use Disorders Theory (Koob & Volkow, 2010); (2) Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1969, 1962); (3) Problem Behaviour Theory (Jessor & Jessor, 1977) and lastly (4) Psychosocial Theory (Sher et al., 1997; Donovan, 2004).
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

After having reviewed the literature related to current study, the researcher gained an insight to construct a conceptual framework in line with the relevancy of the research objectives and research questions to streamline the specific areas of study. In the current study, the conceptual framework in Figure 2 has incorporated three important major determinants as the development and causes for the onset of alcohol use among school-age adolescents, namely, the psychological, social cultural and environmental determinants respectively.

![Conceptual Framework](image)

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

There are five qualitative models to inquiry research, namely phenomenological research, ethnographic research, narrative research, case study research and grounded research theory. Nevertheless, all the five approaches share some close similarities in the general process of research that commences with a research problem and proceeds to the questions, the data, the data analysis, and the research report. In addition, there are hardly any noticeable differences found, except in varying degrees, in the processes of data collection such as interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 2013).

However, in the current study, a qualitative descriptive research methodology was adopted to explore the determinants shaping the development of alcohol use via using the tool of semi-structured interviews. Qualitative descriptive research is an acceptable design to give a comprehensive summary of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Nonetheless, all qualitative approaches share
a common goal in that they seek to arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomenon from
the perspective of those experiencing it (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Nonetheless, a qualitative descriptive case study research is more flexible in its approaches
and unlike phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnographic approaches which are based on
specific methodological frameworks that emerged from specific disciplinary traditions such as
anthropology, philosophy, sociology, medicine and law (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

With regard to its flexibility over other qualitative approaches, it is less theoretical in
characteristic (Neergaard et al., 2009), facilitating flexibility in commitment to a theory or
framework when designing and conducting a study (Sandelowski, 2010). Hence, researchers have
the flexibility to begin or not begin with a theory of the targeted phenomenon and do not have to
stay committed to a theory or framework if their investigations take them down another path
(Sandelowski, 2010). Moreover, data collection strategies typically involve individuals with
minimal to semi-structured interview guides (Neergaard et al., 2009; Sandelowski, 2010) and
purposeful sampling techniques is employed to procure broad insights and rich information of the
phenomena (Neergaard et al., 2009; Sandelowski, 2010). Besides, thematic analysis may also be
used to analyze data and the report of study findings is commonly straightforward, including
comprehensive descriptive summaries and accurate details of the data collected, and the array of
presentation makes sense to the reader (Neergaard et al., 2009; Sandelowski, 2010).

In the present study, qualitative descriptive case study approach draws information from
naturalistic state of inquiry such as in-depth-interview which is possible within the context of
research arena and its focal point of data collection is on discovering the experiences of alcohol
use among school-age adolescents. Data collection in qualitative descriptive case studies is
typically directed to the discovery of who, what and where of events and experiences. In addition,
the data collection may also be in the form of examination of records, reports, documents and
observations. Furthermore, data analysis of qualitative descriptive research, unlike other aforesaid
qualitative approaches, does not apply a pre-existing set of rules and regulations that have been
generated from the philosophical or epistemological stance of the discipline that created the
specific qualitative research approach (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski, 2010).

More importantly, a qualitative descriptive case study research is virtually data-driven and
the codes are generated from the data collected during the course of interviews. Similar to other
qualitative research, qualitative descriptive case studies are generally characterized by
simultaneous data collection and analysis. Hence, the presentation of data from a qualitative descriptive case study is just involved a simple uncomplicated descriptive summary of the information that organized in a systematic manner so that the findings will be presented in the most relevant manner for the readers (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

According to Sandelowski (2000), qualitative descriptive case study research neither require the researcher to move as far from or into the data, nor a conceptual or highly abstract rendering of the data as compared to other qualitative designs. With regard to the use of sampling in a qualitative descriptive case study design, basically any purposive sampling technique is applicable as long as researchers are able to defend their sampling strategies to meet the objective of their study (Lambert & Lambert, 2012).

The research protocol; of the current study was approved by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia; Federal Social Welfare Department, Putrajaya and Human Research Committee (Ethics), Universiti Sains Malaysia.

INSTRUMENTS

Primarily research instruments are the tools for data collection. Semi-structured interviews are commonly used in small-scale educational research. The instruments used in the current study were semi-structured interviews. Before interviewing, the interviewer set up a general structure by deciding in advance the ground to be covered and main questions to be asked. Therefore, it had a sequence of themes to be covered as well as the suggested questions to meet the requirement of the research questions and statement of problem (Kalve, 1996).

DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was employed in the study. Thematic analyses aim to discover the hidden salient themes in a text at different levels and the thematic networks facilitate the restructuring and description of the themes. Thematic networks systematize the extraction of (i) the most basic or lowest-order theme that is derived from the textual data; (ii) whereas organizing themes organize Basic Themes into clusters of similar issues; (iii) and lastly Global Theme is a super-ordinate theme which encompasses the principle metaphors in the data as a whole (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

In the current study, the views of professional school counsellors were referred for justifying the information provided by the participants to establish a strong chain of evidence in connection
with the semi-structured interview questions, research questions and the findings to enhance the validity of the study.

RESULTS

- Psychological Determinants of Alcohol Use

In this study, depression, self-gratification, conduct problems and maturity were the four major psychological attributes identified for shaping the development of alcohol use among school-age adolescents.

![Psychological Determinants Shaping the Development of Alcohol Use](image)

Figure 3: Psychological Determinants of Alcohol Use

(i) Depression

Depression among school-age adolescents often arises as a reaction to stressful negative events such as breakup of a relationship, the death of a loved one, or unable to cope with study and domestic disharmony. Simply put, depression is a mental state in which a person feels that he is
unhappy or sad. Previous study unveiled that depressive symptoms during childhood or adolescence have the propensity to increase the risk for alcohol dependence and for the earlier onset of alcohol use and higher alcohol consumption.

The two basic themes identified for contributing to depression were strained relationship and personal problems respectively. Basically, adolescents crave for alcohol on certain reasons. Some of them thought that drinking could relieve them from depressive mood especially when they had strained relationship with their romance partners. Strained relationships are caused by a breakdown in communication. Communication is like a path along which words and emotions travel between two individuals.

Nowadays, many school-age adolescents are reluctant to share their problems and feelings with their busy working parents. They resorted to drinking as an alternative path to relieve their depressive mood to free themselves from problems at home or in school.

(ii) Conduct Problems

Conduct problems among school-age adolescents can be translated into a category of ‘anti-social’ behaviour. Adolescents who present themselves through a repetitive and persistent pattern of behaviour in which the fundamental rights of others are violated. In the present study, the two basic themes identified under ‘conduct problems’ were youth violence and vandalism. It was noted that ten out of 30 participants had previously engaged themselves in verbal abuse or heated arguments whereas seven out of 30 participants involved themselves in physical fighting after drinking.

Besides, five of the participants confessed that they had involved themselves in juvenile delinquency with their peers after drinking. Nonetheless, youth violence under the influence of alcohol was common among adolescents but it was not critical in the population of study, majority of the participants were not involved in youth violence after drinking, however, they went straight home to sleep or adjourned to cinema for movies or cyber café for games.

(iii) Self-Gratification

Generally, different set of peers have different motives to crave for alcohol for their personal satisfaction. It was found that 12 out of the 30 participants perceived alcohol use among adolescents of their age was to have a good time at the party, however, the others perceived that they wanted to relieve their unpleasant depressive feelings, and to seek acceptance from their
friends to fit in their community. Hence, in other words, the motives of the adolescents’ drinking were geared to different perspectives of satisfaction: to increase pleasurable emotions, to reduce social rejection and to reduce negative emotion feelings.

Apart from that, many school-age adolescents presumed that alcohol could make them forget problems in school or at home. They resorted to alcohol as a solution to forget their problems so as to relieve their repression. However, some of the participants of the study disagreed alcohol could make them forget problems absolutely.

(iv) Maturity

In the study, a few participants perceived drinking as a sign of maturity or adulthood. Young adulthood is a stage of life marked by change and exploration, they explore their own identities and how they fit in the world. At this critical period, the roles of parents weaken and the influences of peers gain greater strength. Adolescents are anxious to grow up speedily as young adults, to be on their own for the first time, free to make their own decisions, including the decision to drink alcohol. Furthermore, adolescents perceived drinking as a symbol of maturity, adulthood and manhood. Young adolescents wanted to show off their maturity as an adult to their peers by drinking. The adolescents who drink would take drinking as a challenge and pride because they were superior to their counterparts.

• Social and Cultural Determinants of Alcohol Use

In social and cultural setting, many participants believed that social and cultural forces have strong impact on the norm of behaviour practiced in each community especially in the family system and parenting styles, moreover these two practices are the products of their culture, custom and religion.
(i) Social Events

The study indicated that birthday party and wedding dinner were the two common social events participated by school-age adolescents and these social events provided them the platform to try out alcohol at an early age. The study unveiled that 9 out of 30 participants tried out their first drink at the birthday party. However, there were two participants accompanied their parents to attend the wedding dinner and they tried out their first drink in the presence of their parents and relatives.

(ii) Cultural Practices

Among the 15 Chinese adolescents in the study, five of them tried out their first drink during Chinese New Year in the presence of their parents and relatives. However, only two of the other 14 adolescents of Indian ethnicity tried out their first drink during Deepavali celebration together with friends or family members.

Due to the common use of alcohol beverages in social events and cultural festive celebrations, majority of the study population concurred that drinking was a common social and cultural practice.
for the family members in their community. However, a minority of the study population which comprised of five participants, refuted the claims.

(iii) Parental Factors

All parents of the participants and their community disapproved of underage drinking unanimously, they perceived underage drinking was bad for the children’s health and their future. Unfortunately, there was different attitude towards their children’s alcohol use. There was still a portion of them ignored the ill-effects of alcohol use and allowed their children to consume a minimal quantity for pleasure.

Generally, most people perceived that there was a link between the parental education background and their parental tolerance of alcohol for their children but the study unveiled that the link between them was relatively weak. As a matter of fact, the parenting style in alcohol tolerance was predominantly influenced by the cultural practices of their norms towards alcohol.

• Environmental Determinants of Alcohol Use

The environmental determinants shaping the development of alcohol among school-age adolescents include alcohol advertising, drinking act, and accessibility of alcohol.

Figure 5: Environmental Determinants of Alcohol Use
(i) Alcohol Advertising

The study indicated that alcohol advertising was an effective tool to induce school-age adolescents to have an urge to try out alcohol. An effective advertising contains persuasive messages and connects with its audience, it is memorable and easily recalled. Alcohol advertising could be easily seen in printed and audio-visual media such as newspapers, magazines, movies and in internet. Obviously, alcohol advertising in audio-visual mode of presentation would attract more audiences. One of the participant added that alcohol advertising with free drinks would attract more school-age adolescents to try out their first drink.

(ii) Drinking Acts

It was found that 26 out of 30 participants welcomed the increase and enforcement of MLDA, but three of the participants disagreed and one of them abstained. Majority of the participants gave their appraisal to the enforcement of MLDA to curb underage drinking and to reduce social and health problems among school-age adolescents. One of the participants added that it was a good enforcement, if there were no restrictions on the minimum legal drinking age more teenagers would visit pubs for their drinks.

However, a minority of the participants did not agree and commented that the increase of MLDA to 21 years old was impractical. One of the participants argued that MLDA at 18 years old was reasonable but to increase it to 21 years old was not practical as it had delayed their privilege to drink, and they might face difficulties to entertain their customers in their future career after their graduation.

Nevertheless, another participant commented that if the policy was not effectively enforced, it would be a loop-hole and underage adolescents could still drink undetected and unpunished.

(iii) Accessibility of Alcohol

The study unveiled that the primary sources for school-age adolescents to obtain alcohol were from parents, friends and relatives, liquor stores, groceries and coffee-shops. Nonetheless, adolescents required financial means to purchase alcohol from the alcohol outlets whereas they could access for free from their parents, relatives and friends.

One of the school counsellors added that part-time job was one of the crucial determinants in his school for students to engage in underage drinking. He asserted that those who involved in alcohol use were those who worked part-time after school. These students were raised in poor
families. They earned extra pocket money after school and with their wages they could afford to consume alcohol and sometimes even giving treats to their school counterparts. They met regularly once or twice a month or during weekends to consume alcohol after getting their wages. They were better off compared to other students, it was the extra money that they earned provided them the opportunity to indulge in drinking.

These working adolescents were physically tired after work and the elders told them that alcohol could refresh their strength and relieve their pain after their hard work. Consequently, they became habitual drinkers and addicted to drinking at an early age.

DISCUSSION

According to the Social Learning Theory through Imitation (Banura, 1962), adolescents are surrounded by many influential models such as parents in the family and adolescents may have picked up the behaviour of drinking alcohol from the modelling of their parents and other important persons in their culture. Hence, in the mind of school-age adolescents, they may have presumed whatever their elders did was morally right, therefore they were naïve to pick up the bad drinking habit of their elders without knowing the consequences. Moreover, previous studies have indicated that children may have assumed and learnt that alcohol use is an acceptable behaviour and prone to engage in them (Sudhinaraset, Wigglesworth, & Takeuchi, 2016). Parents and siblings can influence an adolescent’s propensity to drink. According to Essau and Hutchinson (2008), adolescents are more likely to drink alcohol when at least one of their parents has a history of alcoholism or alcohol use. In addition, if parents do not set clear behavioural expectations or monitor their children’s behaviour, children may be more likely to indulge in underage drinking (Bonnie & O' Connell, 2004).

Previous studies also found that family conflict such as domestic violence is associated with the increase in adolescent alcohol use (Bray, Adams, Getz, & Baer, 2001). Adolescents may turn to peer groups who consumed alcohol to cope with family conflict. Therefore, alcohol use among school-age adolescents must not be taken lightly, and it should look deeper into the cause of initial alcohol use. Similarly, many studies have indicated peer as one of the risk factors for the early onset of alcohol use. As adolescence progresses, the importance of peer relationship becomes dramatically increased. Adolescents spend less time with their family and more time with their peers and their relationships have become more intimate. Especially, school-age adolescents amid
the biological transition stages to puberty, they strive for social acceptance by their peers. They want to fit into peer community and usually they choose peer groups whose values and behaviours are similar to their own (Larson & Richards, 1991).

Underage drinking often occurs at social events that peer groups attend. If drinking is a typical activity for these groups, then they are much more likely to drink. However, if they are reluctantly turned down the offer, they may have confronted with peer pressure such as peer persuasion and victimization. Under such circumstances, they bowed to peer pressure to condone with their behaviour to avoid social rejection. According to Topper, Castellanos-Ryan, Mackie, and Conrod (2011), peer victimization is often positively associated with early onset of substance use like consumption of alcohol.

Nonetheless, the outcome of previous study on peer victimization on alcohol use indicated that there was a positive relationship between alcohol use and peer victimization for both sexes. However, the effect was stronger for boys at the highest levels of peer victimization, but boys were less likely to indulge in alcohol use than girls at low levels of peer victimizations. Therefore, boys who were victimized highly were most likely at risk for early onset of alcohol use (Wormington, Anderson, Tomlinson, & Brown, 2013).

It is an undeniable fact that alcohol is the most commonly used psychoactive substance during adolescence (Johnston, Miech, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2014). Therefore, amid the biological transition stages to puberty, young adolescents may experience their first encounter with alcohol in the form of learning from their peer groups who have been indulged in alcohol use or being offered an opportunity to try on them (Stone, 2016; Wagner & Anthony, 2002).

Previous studies indicated that depressive symptoms during childhood or adolescence have increased the risk for alcohol dependence and for the earlier onset of alcohol use and higher alcohol consumption (Pedrelli, Shapero, Archibald, & Dale, 2016). However, early adolescents who experienced multiple depressive and conduct symptoms were more likely to indulge in alcohol use than those early adolescents with depressive symptoms only. Nonetheless, there was no relation between an increase in alcohol use and conduct problem symptoms if depressive problems were absent. Nevertheless, conduct problem symptoms were linked to higher risk of early adolescent alcohol use when depressive symptoms were present. McCarty et al. (2013)
argued that there was a strong evidence to suggest that there was a corresponding relation between conduct problems and alcohol use.

Past studies also found that the prevalence of antisocial behaviour such as youth violence and vandalism among school-age adolescents has increased dramatically over the past decades along with the prevalent of alcohol use among young adolescents. The issue concerning crimes committed among the conduct problems adolescents in vandalism and youth violence among juveniles in Malaysia is reported on the rise each year (Mallow, 2015). However, a recent study claimed that young adolescents who have their early onset of alcohol use and frequently engaged in binge drinking have a greater propensity to involve in youth violence as both victims and perpetrators (Healey, Rahman, Faizal, & Kinderman, 2014). Nonetheless, previous research unveils that drinking motives are important predictors of alcohol use and problems among adolescents and undergraduates (Simons, Gaher, Correia, Hansen, & Christopher, 2005).

The study had also found that strained interpersonal relationship among romance school-age adolescents could cause them depression leading to alcohol use. A study unveils that adolescence alcohol problems were associated with romance relationship. Adolescents in love are more prone to psychological problems like depression and alcohol abuse than those who avoid romance.

The study found that some school-age adolescents perceived drinking as a symbol or an iconic of maturity. Their misconception of maturity may due to the frequent exposure to adults indulged in drinking in real life environment and in alcohol advertising especially the admiration of the lifestyle and the portrayal of drinking celebrities in alcohol advertising. According to Paglia and Room (1999), rebellious oriented adolescents who are seeking to establish independence, and messages that tell them to wait until they are ‘old enough’ to drink may serve to make alcohol a symbol of maturity and independence. Subsequently, school-age adolescents misconceived that drinking is a representative of manhood and adulthood. The self-perceived maturity makes them impatient and anxious to try out alcohol at an early age.

In Malaysia settings, ethnicity, custom and religion in a community have a substantial influence on the use of alcohol among young adolescents. High prevalence of alcohol use are among the Chinese, Indian and bumiputras of Sabah and Sarawak. The excessive use of alcohol use among them is due to the social acceptance of their community during wedding, religious and cultural practices. On the contrary, Malays in Muslim faith are uncommon in drinking due to the prohibition enforced in their religion (Mohd Hatta et al., 2014).
Dayna et al. (2014) added that when the perceptions of community disapproval were strong among the very young adolescents, these adolescents may be at lesser risk of alcohol involvement. However, on the contrary, these adolescents may be at greater risk of involvement in alcohol if they changed the perceptions of community norms based on their personal alcohol-related outcomes. Nevertheless, underage drinking often occurs at social events and festive celebrations that peer groups attend.

Familial is another crucial factor for shaping the development of adolescent alcohol use. Of all the potential risk and protective factors available, family is still being considered as the most powerful and influential institution over the child’s emotional, social, psychological, and physical development. Past studies have affirmed that the situation is absolutely true if one grows up in a two-parent or a single-parent family or is raised by other kin or foster parents (Turner, 1995). However, in any circumstances, parents are protectors of cohesive, supportive families even though a dysfunction like alcoholism is found among them (Kumpfer & DeMarsh, 1985).

Nonetheless, Brook, Gordon, Whiteman, and Cohen (1986) claimed that children who were closed to their parents and participated in family activities were less probable to initiate onset of alcohol use and unlikely to associate with their peers users. Kumpfer and DeMarsh (1985) suggested that good parental modelling, good parental skills, close supervision and family responsibilities would offer support and protection to enhance resiliency and keep the risk factors of alcohol use to the minimum (Kumpfer & DeMarsh, 1985).

Evidences from previous studies have suggested that exposure to alcohol advertisements, portrayals and promotions activities would have contributed to adolescent alcohol drinking (Chang et al., 2016). If a portrayal corresponds closely to personally relevant reference groups, the young adolescents will be more likely to emulate the portrayals. Similarly, if the young adolescents admire a mediated reference group such as models in an advertisement, obviously they will tend to expect imitating the models’ drinking behaviours (Austin, Pinkleton, & Fujioka, 2000).

In addition, the longitudinal review of Anderson, Bruijn, Angus, Gordon, and Hastings (2009) on the impact of alcohol advertising reported that there was a positive relationship between alcohol use and adolescents’ exposure to alcohol advertising. The evidence had successfully predicted both the onset of drinking amongst non-drinkers and increased levels of consumption among the existing drinkers Nonetheless, in whatever circumstances, it is hardly to refute the
reality that there are strong links between persuasive media messages in alcohol advertising and adolescents’ decision to drink (Grube & Wallack, 1994; Robinson, Chen, & Killen, 1998). Predominantly, young adolescents are preoccupied with the need to enhance personal attractiveness and social value at this stage of development (Elkind, 1978).

With respect to the accessibility or availability of alcohol, previous studies indicated that not all alcohol merchants are vigilant or aware of underage adolescents from purchasing alcohol. Some underage adolescents use false identification to purchase alcohol from alcohol outlets; some of them would persuade adults to buy alcohol for them; and some of them would even steal alcohol from parents, friends, and commercial establishments. However, it was found that adults often purchase alcohol and provide it to school-age adolescents at parties and events, and sometimes with the permission or collusion of parents (Bonnie & O’Connell, 2004). In addition, it was found that part-time job was a medium of accessibility to alcohol and it was a common scenario among students from poor family backgrounds. Alcohol is expensive and these part-time working school-going adolescents earned their extra pocket money after school and with their wages they could afford to consume alcohol.

Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) has played a significant role in reducing underage drinking. Malaysia government had recently increased MLDA to 21 years old to curb social-illness and underage drinking among school-age adolescents. The efficacy in the imposition of MLDA is to protect school-age adolescents from adverse drinking experiences and it is very important to parents, teachers and members of general public. The rational for its legislation and implementation for drinking alcohol may be an evident-based. According to Callaghan, Gatley, Sanches, and Asbridge (2014), drinking-age laws continue to be an essential component of current alcohol control and driving-related policies enforcement by the government.

Therefore, in other words, MLDA is to keep school-age adolescents from drinking by force of law, but nevertheless most studies have failed to show any impact of drinking age laws on adolescent drinking. It is because not all liquor vendors are vigilant about preventing underage drinking. Some adolescents may use false identification to purchase alcohol or persuade their adult friends to buy it for them.
CONCLUSION

The prevalence of alcohol use among early adolescents is a major public health and safety concern not only in Malaysia but in countries all over the world because it entails physical, mental and social consequences (Rozin & Zagonel, 2012). Excessive consumption of alcohol has contributed to a significant change in the rate of the morbidity and mortality risk among adolescence (Connor, George, Gullo, Kelly, & Young, 2011). The magnitude of the problem is largely due to its significant associations between early adolescent alcohol use and subsequent short-term and long term alcohol-related harms (Lubman & Yucel, 2008). Hence, the onset of alcohol use is a strong and powerful predictor or precursor of young adolescence alcohol-related injury and assault (Kypri, Paschall, & Langley, 2009), alcohol dependence and other mental health problems in adulthood (Palmer, Young, & Hopfer, 2009). Therefore, the understanding of the phenomena and mechanisms for the early onset of alcohol and its development into alcohol use are crucial factors in designing effective and appropriately timed prevention programmes.

According to World Health Organization report (WHO, 2009), harmful use of alcohol causes damage to health whereas hazardous alcohol use increases the risk of harmful consequences for the user. Underage drinking is a serious social phenomenon and an important contributing factor to youth violence, vandalism and juvenile delinquency. Youth violence may take many forms including vandalism, bullying, gang fight, sexual aggression, and assaults occurring in streets, bars and nightclubs. It is noted that the victims and perpetrators of youth violence alike are related to alcohol use.

The impact of youth violence reaches all sectors of society especially public and community services have been plagued by its adverse effects. Apart from youth violence, the common unintentional alcohol-related injuries due to drowning, poisoning, burns, falls and automobile accidents also caused abundant deaths each year globally (Rehm, et al., 2003, WHO 2005). More significantly, the end products of heavy alcohol consumption among adolescence would further aggravate their existing social problems on vandalism, bully, sexual assault and suicide (Mohd Ramlan et al., 2015). Consequently, the inner city may become a breeding ground of alcohol misuse and juvenile delinquencies for the urban adolescents and subsequently these undesired activities might plague the naïve rural adolescents.

Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that alcohol is the most commonly used and available psychoactive drug in majority of countries including Malaysia. The prevalent of alcohol use
among adolescents is mainly due to its effects to provide satisfaction, easy to get acquaintance with new friends and last but not least to serve as a source of stress relief from family and school problems. However, many studies have predicted that the earlier the adolescents consume alcohol, the greater their chances of becoming dependent (Alvanzo et al., 2011; Rozin & Zagonel, 2012).

In the interviews, some of the school counsellors emphasized the importance of ‘friend factor’ and ‘social environment’ to influence the onset and development of alcohol use among school-age adolescents. The influence of peers, people surrounding the growing adolescents and the environment in which they lived have profound impact to shape their behaviour especially to try on something new like drinking and drugs.

Today, alcohol is widely available and aggressively promoted throughout society. Moreover, alcohol use is perceived by many people as a normal part of growing up and this misconception has misled the school-age adolescents to ignore the harm and ill-effects of alcohol. The increase of underage drinking is dangerous and its harms and ill-effects would have put the society, community and school institutions under pressure.

**IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY**

The findings of the study appeared to have important implications for various stakeholders in the educational institutions such as the Ministry of Education, Social Welfare Department, teachers and school counsellors and parents who have encountered with challenges to delve with problems of underage drinking.

(a) The study indicated that alcohol ignorance was still prevailed among school-age adolescents. They were naïve about alcohol use and its risk factors for other diseases especially mental disorders. Ultimately, the alcohol addicted students may suffer from memory difficulties and inability to process new information that affect their learning behaviour and academic performance. Thus, The Ministry of Education shall strengthen its mechanism in educational and publicity campaigns to educate young innocent school-age adolescents for the awareness of ill-effects of alcohol use. The Ministry of Education shall incorporate alcohol literacy programmes into school curriculum so that alcohol literacy is introduced within the system of formal education to benefit all students.

(b) Whereas the Social Welfare Department shall focus more on social environment of problematic adolescents especially those from poor and broken families. Social Welfare
Department shall address their issues with counselling sessions and caregiving services so that these students do not mislead by their peers for undesired activities such as drinking, drugs and other delinquencies.

(c) The findings of the study shall provide relevant resources of information to school counsellors to delve with problems of underage drinking among students. The data of findings shall be useful as references for school counsellors to design effective alcohol intervention programmes to deter underage drinking to reduce the occurrence of social problems and upholding a conducive learning environment of school.

(d) The findings of the study shall provide relevant information on the various determinants shaping the development of alcohol use among school-age adolescents so that class teachers could detect the unusual behaviour of alcoholic students with ease and give proper guidance to the problematic students at an early stage to reduce negative learning environment in classroom setting.

(e) The findings of the study shall have raise the awareness of parents on the dangers of improper parenting in alcohol tolerance on their children. Working parents are encouraged to spend more time together with their children to listen to their problems and share their feelings to avoid peers negative influence. The outcome of the findings shall help the parents to adopt a proper and effective contemporary parenting style to guide their children with close surveillance on their children’s activities to distant from alcohol use.

**RECOMMENDATION**

In view of the new enforcement of MLDA increased to 21 years old effective from 1st December 2017, future study should consider the effects and impact of MLDA on alcohol use among our school-age adolescents in the coming years. It will be a good study to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy to reduce underage drinking. The method used should be a mixed-methodology constitutes of qualitative and quantitative inquiry to generate reliable analysis and strong evidence to validate the data to compare the degree of impact on underage drinking before and after the new enforcement of MLDA.

Future research should also consider using informant reports such as peer reports instead of self-reporting or any other effective instruments to avoid self-report biases. The reasons are there
may be a considerable amount of hidden unexplained motives for school-age adolescents to drink and the motives can only be explored through the findings of third party.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Limitations and shortcomings are commonly found in any research study. They are the influences beyond the control of the researcher. As a result, the credibility of the research findings may be impaired due to the limitations of the study sample or study design. Hence, the results of the current study need to be interpreted within the context of several limitations such as study sample, coding procedures and biases, instrument of inquiry and nature of self-reporting of the participants.

In fact, in-depth qualitative descriptive interviews are excellent tools to explore the subject matter of the current study because the semi-structured open-ended questions deployed are discovery-oriented and they are capable of elucidating more resourceful information than other collection methods such as surveys.

Nevertheless, the potential pitfalls are prone to bias and unable to make generalization due to its small sample size. The current study also deployed retrospective memory inquiries on self-reporting of the participants and they may be prone to memory biases. In addition, self-reporting measures may also be prone to social desirability, where the participants may have altered their responses to project favourable impression. Over-reporting or under-reporting of participants are bound to happen and they may also affect the quality of the data collected.

With regard to sample of school-going adolescents, the sample was restricted to students of non-examination classes as instructed in the authorised letter of the Ministry of Education. Hence, there might be biases in the distribution of sample. In addition, the gender distribution of the sample was lopsided with 27 males and 3 females. However, it was noted that the gender gap in alcohol use is much greater among males than females who subscribe to traditional gender roles, which condone drinking for males but not the females (Wilsnack, Wilsnack, Kristjanson, Vogeltanz-Holm, & Gmel, 2009).

The juveniles at the certain Juvenile Rehabilitation Centres did not have enough sample to study, under these circumstances, the researcher had to apply to increase the locations of studies to meet the sample requirement. As for the dropouts, the difficulties to contact and access to them
were the stumbling blocks to procure sufficient number of interviewees for interviews as most of them are working in out-stations.

In the process of interview, the researcher found that the participants who chose to speak in their mother-tongue were more vocal and expressive. Nonetheless, the researcher was able to produce all transcripts successfully from the voice-recorder. In the process of translating, the researcher kept the translation as close as the original message as possible to keep biases of translation to a minimum. Nevertheless, the compatibility of certain words might not be exactly the same but they were equivalent in sense and meanings.

The coding of the transcript was done manually except the identification of certain important keywords. Hence, certain biases may have occurred in the process of coding. As a result, the themes derived from the coding might be tilted or biased and affected the analysis of the data. Biases in coding were unavoidable especially in the stage of deciding final codes to establish larger themes corresponded to the research questions. However, the researcher had taken every preventive measure to keep the biases to a minimum to ensure that the coding and the analysis of data were profoundly relevance and reliable.

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REFERENCES


