Rebelliousness Predicts Smoking Status and Smoking Susceptibility Among Youth in Thailand and Malaysia: Findings from the ITC Southeast Asia Survey

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International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project

Background

- Approximately 500 million of the world's 1.3 billion smokers live in Asia (Mackay & Erikson, 2002).
- The tobacco industry is targeting developing countries. It is therefore important to understand what factors influence adolescent smoking initiation in these countries to prevent smoking uptake.
- The majority of studies examining factors influencing smoking initiation have been conducted among Western populations. Yet the culture, norms, and tobacco control policies are very different in Southeast Asia.
- Rebelliousness has been identified as a major factor associated with smoking among youth in Western populations.

Research Question

Is rebelliousness associated with susceptibility to future smoking and current smoking among youth in Thailand? In Malaysia?

ITC Southeast Asia Survey

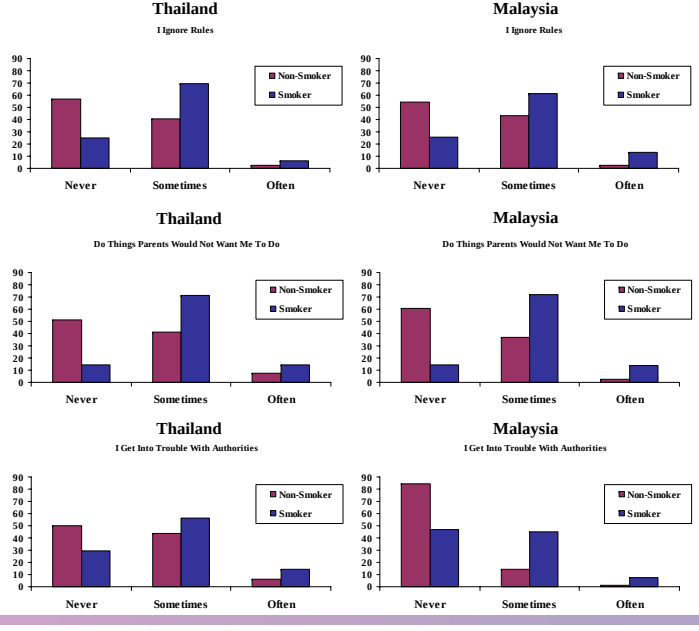
- A nationally representative face-to-face survey of 2,005 adolescents (13-17 years old) in Thailand and Malaysia. Respondents were recruited using a stratified multi-stage sampling design. Data reported are from the baseline wave (Jan-March 2005).

Sample

Country	Smokers (occasional or current)	Non-Smokers	Susceptible to Smoking
Thailand	161	848	39
Malaysia	145	833	61

Results

Rebelliousness Item and Smoking Status



Results

- Rebelliousness items were averaged to form a single measure of rebelliousness.
- Conducted a weighted logistic regression analysis predicting smoking status (smoker vs. non-smoker) by rebelliousness (controlling for ethnicity, age, gender, and number of friends that smoke).
- Rebellious adolescents were more likely to be smokers:
  Thailand p<0.001, OR=5.04 (2.86-8.88) (N=989)
  Malaysia p<0.001, OR=17.5 (6.49-47.30) (N=955)
- Susceptibility to smoking among current non-smokers if answered probably not, probably yes, or definitely yes the questions, "If one of your best friends were to offer you a cigarette would you smoke it?" and "At any time during the next year do you think you will smoke a cigarette?" (Not susceptible if they answered definitely not to both questions.) adapted from Pierce et al. (1996)
- Conducted a weighted logistic regression analysis predicting susceptibility (susceptible vs. not susceptible) by rebelliousness (controlling for ethnicity, age, gender, and number of friends that smoke).
- Rebellious adolescents were more likely to be susceptible to future smoking:
  Thailand p<0.001, OR=5.53 (3.36-9.14) (N=754)
  Malaysia p=0.004, OR=4.59 (1.72-12.26) (N=733)

Conclusions

- This was the first nationally representative study of youth in Thailand and Malaysia to examine the association between rebelliousness, smoking and susceptibility to future smoking.
- Consistent with previous research in Western societies, rebelliousness is associated with smoking among adolescents in Thailand and Malaysia.
- Programs aimed at rebellious youth may help prevent smoking or aid cessation.

ITC Participating Institutions

ITC Project Research Support