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***Perceptions of Thai Adolescents Towards Alcohol Marketing Communication and Its Impacts on Their Alcohol Expectancies and Consumptions***

BY

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**ABSTARCT:**

Problem about adolescent drinking has accelerated at the alarming rate and the first time drinker is also getting younger among the elementary grader. In 2007, statistics revealed that there were 600,000 Thai adolescents aged between 12-19 became alcohol drinkers and the number of girls has increased more than six times. Although the alcohol advertisements are restricted by Thai law, nevertheless the alcohol manufactures could still find their way to convey the message about their products to their consumer, including the adolescents in the school system through several marketing communication tactics. The questionnaire was distributed to 5,145 students at elementary, secondary and vocational students in Thailand. The study aimed to determine the impacts of alcohol marketing communications on alcohol expectancy and alcohol consumption. The Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and Chi-square were used to test the association of perception of alcohol marketing communication with alcohol expectancies and alcohol consumption intentions.

**Keywords:** Thai Students, Thai Adolescents, Intention to Drink, Alcohol Consumption Intention, Alcohol Expectancy, Alcohol Marketing Communication

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Alcohol consumption has also been a topic of concern that threaten health and well-being of Thai adolescents.<sup>1</sup> The Thai National survey conducted in 2007 revealed an increasing numbers of elementary graders who became alcohol drinkers and the first time drinkers at the alarming rate.<sup>2</sup> The population of 15-year olds and above was 29.3% among alcohol drinkers and 600,000 youths aged 12-19 years became drinkers. The number of girl drinkers has increased more than six times. Alcohol is one among the top three substances most widely uses among Thai adolescents. Adolescents reported of using alcohol (37.3%), amphetamine (37.8%), and other illicit drugs (37.9%).<sup>3</sup>

In order to reduce number of underage drinkers, a large body of research has identified the factors lead youth to early involve with alcohol. Alcohol marketing communication and alcohol expectancies are often cited as risk factors of alcohol use among early and late adolescent.<sup>4,5</sup> Whereas, other risk factors related to alcohol use intentions included intrapersonal, family and social factors.<sup>5,6</sup> According to expectancy theory a person is motivated to behave in a certain way because they expect the desirable outcomes of that selected behavior.<sup>7</sup> Positive expectations and beliefs about alcohol such as relaxing, entertaining while a negative expectation is health deteriorating were frequently found to influence youth intention to use or not use of alcohol.<sup>8,9</sup>

Adolescents currently live in social that overwhelm with various alcohol marketing communication tactics include advertising, public relations, promotion, direct marketing, and sales.<sup>10</sup> Despite the restrictions and prevention policies such as alcohol taxation, regulating alcohol promotion and accessibility, there was increasing placement of alcohol advertising on television as adolescent viewership rose.<sup>11</sup> Manufactures sent persuasive message to youths about alcohol products via several marketing communication channels. The popular channels for advertising alcohol products were newspapers, magazines, and the social network on the internet.<sup>12, 13, 14</sup>

Previous studies found the associations between independent or overall exposure to alcohol media marketing and youth's drinking decision. Longitudinal studies followed 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders also confirm the influences of alcohol advertising that leads to initiation of alcohol and

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underage drinking.<sup>15, 16, 17</sup> Children at extremely high levels of overall advertising exposure were subsequently 50% more likely to drink and 36% more likely to intend to drink.<sup>17</sup>

Media literacy or process to logically interpretations of messages related to alcohol marketing communication was significantly associated with alcohol expectancies, decision making and alcohol use.<sup>4</sup> Skepticism was positively related to desirability of alcohol portrayals, magazine readership, and negative alcohol expectancies. Whereas, skepticism was negatively related to time watching TV and alcohol use.<sup>4</sup> Identification (desire to imitate those portrayals) was positively associated with desirability of alcohol portrayals. Alcohol expectancy was positively related to identification. Youth who spent more time watching TV had more positive alcohol expectancies, and found alcohol portrayals more desirable.

In a review of research in Thailand, there is a need to gain more understanding about the trends and channels of alcohol media information and influence of marketing communication tools on levels of perceptions, outcome expectancies, and intentions to drink of early and late adolescents.<sup>18, 19</sup> The findings can be useful for policy makers and all people involved to create awareness and forming more effective ways to improve media literacy toward preventing the new face underage drinkers. This study was 1) to study alcohol marketing communication perception, 2) to study alcohol expectancy, 3) to study alcohol consumption intentions, and 4) to explore and describe the relationships between alcohol marketing communication with alcohol expectancy and alcohol consumption intentions of Thai adolescents.

## **2. METHOD**

### ***2.1. Procedure and participants***

Adolescent participants in this study were national representatives of 5,145 students grades 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> and vocational school. A sampling population of 6,941,198 was based on the 2011 school directory obtained from Thai Ministry of education. A multistage stratified sampling procedure was used for data collection in all seven regions of Thailand: Bangkok, Central, Eastern, Western, North-Eastern, Northern, and Southern. A sample size calculation<sup>20</sup> required at least 4,442 and additional 10% for a total of 5,000 students to attain 95% confidence interval and 1.5 % relative standard error. All participants were informed of their right before

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participating in the research project. Students were asked to complete the questionnaires in their classroom. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Boromrajonn Nursing College, Saraburi.

## **2.2. Measures**

**Alcohol Marketing Communication Perception.** Perception towards alcohol marketing communication comprised of media exposure level, information reception and perceived of alcohol marketing communication.

**Media exposure.** The students' media exposure of alcohol marketing communication comprised of 3 items for measuring level of exposure on the weekly, daily (through 6 different channels) and overall media exposure estimation per week. Respondents indicated their level of media exposure on weekly and daily basis on five-point scales( weekly-never, 1-2 times/week, 3-4 times/week, 5-6 times/week, every day; daily - never, >15 minutes/day, 15-30 minutes/day, 31-60 minutes/day, <1 hours/day). Likewise, respondents indicated frequency of overall media exposure per week on four-point scales (1-2 days/week, 3-4 days/week, 5-6 days/week, and every day). Cronbach alpha was .84.

**Information reception.** Respondents indicated their amount of alcohol marketing communication information received on six-point scales (none, very less, less, moderate, much, very much received). The 11 items assess amount of information from the manufacturers of different alcohol brands received through different channels included TV, radio, newspapers and magazines, internet, point of purchase (PoP) media, out of home media, sales person, SMS/MMS via telephone, logo brand name, sale promotion activities, and events). Cronbach alpha was .88.

**Perceived of alcohol marketing communication.** This variable was comprised of three subgroup of perceptions which included skepticism, desirability and identification.<sup>4</sup> These variables were measured as follow:

**Skepticism.** Respondents indicated their level of agreement on five-point scales (disagree strongly–agree strongly): “Alcohol ads on TV, radio, print media, internet, PoP media, out-of-home media, and sale person make drinking seem better than it really is” and "sale promotion of the alcohol companies is attractive and make me want to buy and taste it.” A mean score represented overall skepticism. Cronbach alpha was .93.

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*Desirability.* Respondents indicated their level of agreement on five-point scales (disagree strongly–agree strongly) whether: “The women in alcohol ads are always good looking, modern, attractive and a sought after person,” “Men in alcohol ads are strong, masculine, modern and a sought after person” and “People drinking alcohol in alcohol ads seem to have lots of friends.” Cronbach alpha was .83.

*Identification.* Respondents answered, on five-point scales (disagree strongly–agree strongly), whether: “I wish I were as good looking, modern, attractive and sought after as most people in the alcohol drink ads,” “I want to have as much happiness, fresh and fun, as the people in the alcohol ads do,” “I want to have as many friends as the people in the alcohol ads do,” and “Corporate social responsibility (CSR) media of the alcohol manufacturers make me want to buy their products in order to take part in this social contribution activity.” Cronbach alpha was .89.

**Alcohol expectancies.** Respondents answered, on a series of four-point scales to indicate their arguments (disagree strongly–agree strongly) towards 31 items of 7 alcohol expectancy dimensions which was modified from two literature reviews,<sup>4, 21</sup> and from 4 focus groups discussion conducted by the researchers on 49 Thai students. The questionnaire comprised of 15 positive items and 16 negative items concerning the topics of entertaining and joy, carelessness and decision making, sex appeal, violence, power and image, anti religious belief, and health concerned. Cronbach alpha for the total scale was .91

**Alcohol consumption intentions.** The alcohol use intentions assessed future use or intention to drink with one item that ask “In the future, will you drink?” Response options were ‘Definitely not’, ‘Not sure’, and ‘Will drink’.

### 2.3. Data analyses

Data were analyzed using SPSS (License no. 5718d1986570b7ce5464) and assessed for missing values. There were no missing values more than 20% in any scales. Response rate was 100%. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze frequency distribution and percentages of demographic data. The Chi-square, Pearson’s correlation coefficient and Analysis of variance

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(ANOVA) were used to test the mean differences and describe the relationships between alcohol marketing communication with alcohol expectancies and intension to drink of Thai students.

### 3. RESULTS

#### *Sample characteristics*

Data in Table 1 revealed that the study participants consisted of 42.6% females and 57.4 % males with age ranged from 9 to 22 years (mean = 13.79, SD = 2.59). Majority of samples (74.58%) were younger than 15 years old, and 37.82% were 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> graders. About 35% of students had GPA 2.00-3.00 and 56% had GPA 3.00-4.00. The proportion of students from low income family was 36.25% compare to 32.42% from middle income and 11.04% from high income families. Most students were living with both of their parents (74.97%), had father who drinks alcohol (53.70%) whereas majority of mother, sibling and relative who were not drinkers (85.50%, 87.19% and 85.19 %, respectively). It was also found that majority of sample had friends who did not drink alcohol (53.73%), Among those friends who drank, they reported of drinking it once in a while (6.53%). Majority of the samples lived in a neighborhood of a rural area, 36.27% and 26.57 % in a mixture of rural and urban neighborhood area.

#### *Alcohol marketing communication*

*Media exposure.* Majority of students (77.63%) were found to have light level of media exposure of alcohol marketing communication on the weekly, daily and overall. A majority of the sample who were classified as a light media user reported having low alcohol expectancy at 41.98 % and will definitely not drink alcohol at 40.43%. (Table 2). The mean score of media exposure was 5.5 (SD = 1.8), score ranges 3-14 (Table 4).

*Information reception.* The top three channels for receiving alcohol marketing communication information (Figure 1) were through TV (88.38%), PoP media (84.08%), and out of home media (82.43%). Whereas, the lowest three channels for receiving alcohol marketing communication information were SMS/MMS via telephone (34.97%), radio (59.65%), and personal selling (60.72%). The patterns of alcohol information receptions channels were the same across groups with three different drinking intentions and alcohol expectancies (data not

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show). The mean score of the information reception was 25.56, SD = 15.98. Score ranges from 0-85 (Table 4).

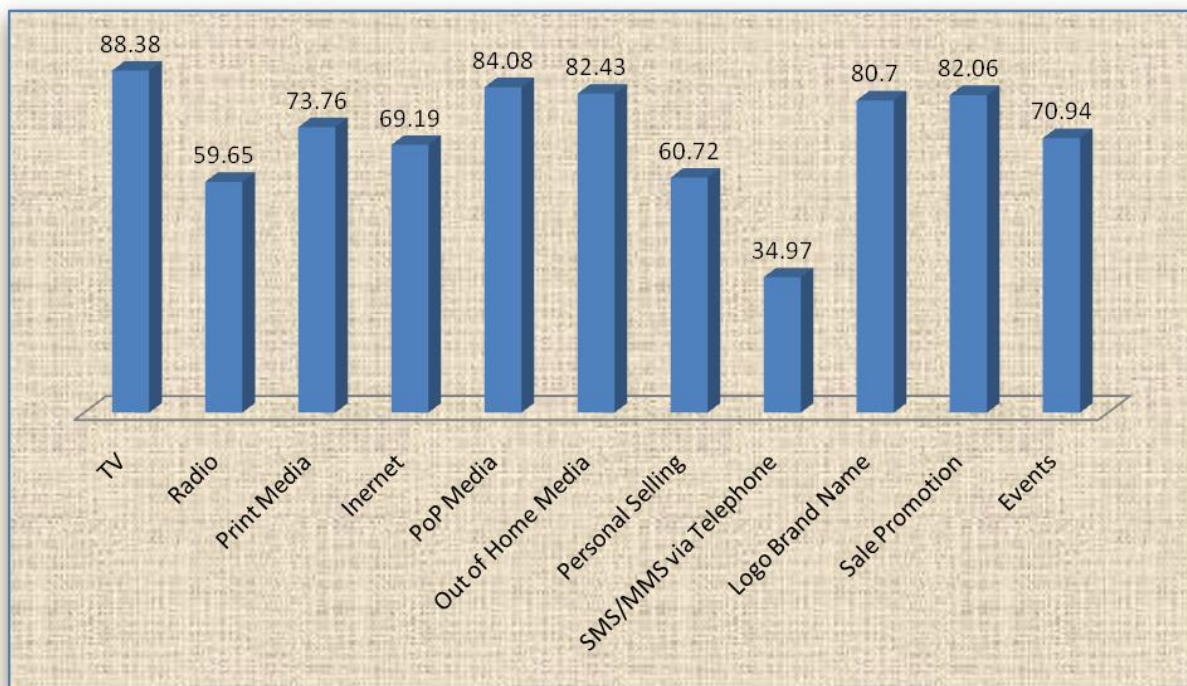


Figure 1. Percent of alcohol information receptions by channels of the samples (N=5154)

*Perceived of alcohol marketing communication.* This variable comprised of skepticism, desirability and identification (Tables 2-3). Majority of respondents were found to have high level of skepticism (80.93%) with mean score of 34.16 (SD = 6.46), low level of desirability (79.77%) and identification (77.12%) with mean score of 5.32 (SD = 2.76), and 7.17 (SD = 3.65), respectively. These findings indicated the good level of overall media literacy on alcohol media marketing of Thai students. Among the three dimensions of marketing communication perceptions, Thai students were found to have high skepticism on alcohol marketing communication (80.93%).

### *Alcohol expectancies*



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Majority of students in this study had low level of alcohol expectancies. The mean score of overall alcohol expectancy in this study was 63.68 (SD = 16.37, score range = 31-108). Table 2 demonstrated proportions of students with three alcohol expectancy levels from low, moderate, and high 2,709 (52.65%), 2,076 (40.35%), and 360 (7%), respectively. Distribution of the low alcohol expectancy samples revealed the proportions of students with high skepticism (46.14%) and low desirability and identification (45.48% and 44.22%, respectively).

### ***Alcohol Consumption***

Of the 5,145 adolescents, 49.9% reported their intention to drink that they will definitely not drink alcohol in the future whereas 11.8% reported not sure whether they will drink alcohol in the future or not, and 38.3% indicated that they will definitely drink alcohol in the future (Table 1). Furthermore, among 37% of students who had friends currently involve with alcohol, about 8% reported that they might drink alcohol in the future. Similar to the alcohol expectancy, the distribution of the definitely will not drink group of samples revealed similar pattern of alcohol marketing communication with high skepticism (43.32%) and low desirability and identification (42.96% and 42.04%, respectively).

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**Table 1** Demographic characteristics according to alcohol expectancies and intention to drink of the samples (N = 5145)

<i>Demographic data</i>	<i>Alcohol expectancies</i>						<i>Intention to drink</i>						<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Low</i>		<i>Moderate</i>		<i>High</i>		<i>Definitely not</i>		<i>Not sure</i>		<i>Will drink</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>			
<b>Gender</b>															
Male	965	18.76	1036	20.14	192	3.73	1023	19.88	859	16.70	311	6.04	2193	42.62	
Female	1744	33.90	1040	20.21	168	3.27	1543	29.99	1112	21.61	297	5.77	2952	57.38	
<b>Age (Year)</b>	<i>Max = 22, Min = 9, Mean = 13.79, SD = 2.59</i>														
<12	955	18.56	714	13.88	193	3.75	1192	23.17	581	11.29	89	1.73	1862	36.19	
13-15	1009	19.61	778	15.12	137	2.66	883	17.16	816	15.86	225	4.37	1924	37.39	
>16	743	14.44	580	11.27	30	0.58	491	9.54	574	11.16	294	5.72	1359	26.42	
<b>Education</b>															
Grade 4-6	936	18.19	697	13.55	185	3.60	1180	22.93	561	10.90	77	1.50	1818	35.34	
Grade 7-9	1021	19.84	780	15.16	145	2.82	882	17.14	830	16.13	234	4.55	1946	37.82	
High School	559	10.86	346	6.72	16	0.31	359	6.98	392	7.62	170	3.30	921	17.90	
Vocational School	193	3.75	253	4.92	14	0.27	145	2.82	188	3.65	127	2.47	460	8.94	
<b>GPA</b>															
< 2.00	144	2.80	228	4.43	47	0.91	160	3.11	182	3.54	77	1.5	419	8.15	
2.01-3.00	808	15.7	842	16.37	150	2.92	758	14.73	752	14.61	290	5.64	1800	34.98	
3.01-4.00	1744	33.9	999	19.42	157	3.05	1633	31.74	1026	19.94	241	4.68	2900	56.36	
Not specified	13	0.25	7	0.14	6	0.12	15	0.29	11	0.21	0	0.00	26	0.50	
<b>Family income</b>															
Low	956	18.58	769	14.95	140	2.72	958	18.62	712	13.84	195	3.79	1865	36.25	
Middle	935	18.17	660	12.83	73	1.42	822	15.98	607	11.80	239	4.65	1668	32.42	
High	287	5.58	238	4.63	43	0.84	265	5.15	218	4.24	85	1.65	568	11.04	
Don't know	531	10.32	409	7.95	104	2.02	521	10.13	434	8.44	89	1.73	1044	20.29	
<b>Parent's marital status</b>															
Married	2027	39.40	1556	30.24	274	5.33	2001	38.89	1423	27.66	433	8.42	3857	74.97	
Separated/divorced	676	13.14	512	9.95	82	1.59	557	10.83	541	10.52	172	3.34	1270	24.68	
No parents (orphan)	6	0.12	8	0.16	4	0.08	8	0.16	7	0.14	3	0.06	18	0.35	

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Table 1 con't

<i>Demographic data</i>	<i>Alcohol expectancies</i>						<i>Intention to drink</i>						<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Low</i>		<i>Moderate</i>		<i>High</i>		<i>Definitely not</i>		<i>Not sure</i>		<i>Will drink</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>		
<b>Relationship with drinkers</b>														
<b>Father</b>														
Yes	1801	35.00	1461	28.40	222	4.31	1224	23.79	1156	22.47	383	7.44	2763	53.70
No	908	17.65	615	11.95	138	2.68	1342	26.08	815	15.84	225	4.37	2382	46.30
<b>Mother</b>														
Yes	413	8.03	295	5.73	38	0.74	251	4.88	359	6.98	136	2.64	746	14.50
No	2296	44.63	1781	34.62	322	6.26	2315	45.00	1612	31.33	472	9.17	4399	85.50
<b>Sibling</b>														
Yes	338	6.57	287	5.58	34	0.66	194	3.77	313	6.08	152	2.95	659	12.81
No	2371	46.08	1789	34.77	326	6.34	2372	46.10	1658	32.23	456	8.86	4486	87.19
<b>Relative</b>														
Yes	405	7.87	298	5.79	59	1.15	349	6.78	311	6.04	102	1.98	762	14.81
No	2304	44.78	1778	34.56	301	5.85	2217	43.09	1660	32.26	506	9.83	4383	85.19
<b>Friend's drinking behavior</b>														
Every day or almost	39	0.76	65	1.26	13	0.25	43	0.84	42	0.82	32	0.62	117	2.27
Every week	35	0.68	87	1.69	10	0.19	32	0.62	57	1.11	43	0.84	132	2.57
Every month	39	0.76	47	0.91	1	0.02	22	0.43	33	0.64	32	0.62	87	1.69
Once in a while	765	14.87	693	13.47	72	1.40	467	9.08	727	14.13	336	6.53	1530	29.74
Never	1831	35.59	1184	23.01	264	5.13	2002	38.91	1112	21.61	165	3.21	3279	63.73
<b>Neighborhood area</b>														
Urban	968	18.81	774	15.04	124	2.41	884	17.18	680	13.22	302	5.87	1866	36.27
Rural	981	19.07	764	14.85	167	3.25	1032	20.06	712	13.84	168	3.27	1912	37.16
Mixed	760	14.77	538	10.46	69	1.34	650	12.63	579	11.25	138	2.68	1367	26.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>2709</b>	<b>52.65</b>	<b>2076</b>	<b>40.35</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>7.00</b>	<b>2566</b>	<b>49.87</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>38.31</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>11.82</b>	<b>5145</b>	<b>100.00</b>

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Table 2 Media exposure, information reception and perceived alcohol marketing communication according to alcohol expectancies and intention to drink of the samples (N=5145)

<i>Marketing communication</i>	<i>Alcohol expectancies</i>						<i>Intention to drink</i>						<i>Total</i>		
	Low		Moderate		High		Definitely not		Not sure		Will drink		n	%	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%			
<b>Media Exposure</b>															
Light	2160	41.98	1536	29.85	298	5.79	2080	40.43	1502	29.19	412	8.01	3994	77.63	
Moderate	511	9.93	520	10.11	61	1.19	459	8.92	445	8.65	188	3.65	1092	21.22	
Heavy	38	0.74	20	0.39	1	0.02	27	0.52	24	0.47	8	0.16	59	1.15	
<b>Information Reception (by channels)</b>															
Television	yes	2481	48.22	1819	35.35	247	4.80	2236	43.46	1764	34.29	547	10.63	4547	88.38
	no	228	4.34	257	5.00	113	2.20	330	6.41	207	4.02	61	1.19	598	11.62
Radio	yes	1567	30.46	1335	25.95	167	3.25	1431	27.81	1243	24.16	395	7.68	3069	59.65
	no	1142	22.20	741	14.40	193	3.75	1135	22.06	728	14.15	213	4.14	2076	40.35
Print media	yes	2019	39.24	1582	30.75	194	3.77	1803	35.04	1490	28.96	502	9.76	3795	73.76
	no	690	13.41	494	9.60	166	3.23	763	14.83	481	9.35	106	2.06	1350	26.24
Internet	yes	1873	36.40	1516	29.47	171	3.32	1651	32.09	1407	27.35	502	9.76	3560	69.19
	no	836	16.25	560	10.88	189	3.67	915	17.78	564	10.96	106	2.06	1585	30.81
PoP media	yes	2301	44.72	1790	34.79	235	4.57	2098	40.78	1684	32.73	544	10.57	4326	84.08
	no	408	7.93	286	5.56	125	2.43	468	9.10	287	5.58	64	1.24	819	15.92
Out of home media	yes	2271	44.14	1743	33.88	227	4.41	2053	39.90	1646	31.99	542	10.53	4241	82.43
	no	438	8.51	333	6.47	133	2.59	513	9.97	325	6.32	66	1.28	904	17.57
Personal selling	yes	1548	30.09	1413	27.46	163	3.17	1451	28.20	1245	24.20	428	8.32	3124	60.72
	no	1161	22.57	663	12.89	197	3.83	1115	21.67	726	14.11	180	3.50	2021	39.28

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Table 2 con't

<i>Marketing communication</i>		<i>Alcohol expectancies</i>						<i>Intention to drink</i>						<i>Total</i>	
		Low		Moderate		High		Definitely not		Not sure		Will drink			
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
SMS/MMS via telephone	yes	758	14.73	951	18.48	90	1.75	840	16.33	712	13.84	247	4.80	1799	34.97
	no	1951	37.92	1125	21.87	270	5.25	1726	33.55	1259	24.47	361	7.02	3346	65.03
Logo brand name	yes	2249	43.71	1710	33.24	193	3.75	1982	38.52	1628	31.64	542	10.53	4152	80.70
	no	460	8.94	366	7.11	167	3.25	584	11.35	343	6.67	66	1.28	993	19.30
Sale promotion	yes	2181	42.39	1810	35.18	231	4.49	2001	38.89	1685	32.75	536	10.42	4222	82.06
	no	528	10.26	266	5.17	129	2.51	565	10.98	286	5.56	72	1.40	923	17.94
Events	yes	1912	37.16	1548	30.09	190	3.69	1719	33.41	1437	27.93	494	9.60	3650	70.94
	no	797	15.49	528	10.26	170	3.30	847	16.46	534	10.38	114	2.22	1495	29.06
<b>Perceived of Alcohol Marketing Communication</b>															
<b>Skepticism</b>															
	Low	51	0.99	127	2.47	3	0.06	68	1.32	66	1.28	47	.91	181	3.52
	Moderate	284	5.52	478	9.29	38	0.75	269	5.23	371	7.21	160	3.11	800	15.55
	High	2374	46.14	1471	28.59	319	6.20	2229	43.32	1534	29.82	401	7.79	4164	80.93
<b>Desirability</b>															
	Low	2340	45.48	1445	28.09	319	6.20	2210	42.95	1527	29.68	367	7.13	4104	79.77
	Moderate	298	5.79	484	9.41	36	0.70	284	5.52	364	7.07	170	3.30	818	15.90
	High	71	1.38	147	2.86	5	0.18	72	1.40	80	1.55	71	1.38	223	4.33
<b>Identification</b>															
	Low	2274	44.22	1383	26.88	311	6.04	2163	42.04	1460	28.38	345	6.71	3968	77.12
	Moderate	363	7.06	512	9.95	39	0.76	317	6.16	409	7.95	188	3.65	914	17.76
	High	72	1.40	181	3.52	10	0.19	86	1.67	102	1.98	75	1.46	263	5.11
<b>Total</b>		<b>2709</b>	<b>52.65</b>	<b>2076</b>	<b>40.35</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>7.00</b>	<b>2566</b>	<b>49.87</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>38.31</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>11.82</b>	<b>5145</b>	<b>100.00</b>

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*Association between alcohol marketing communication, alcohol expectancies, and alcohol use intentions*

Correlational analysis in Table 3 revealed significant relationships between media exposure, information reception, alcohol marketing communication perceptions (skeptical, desirability, identification), and alcohol expectancies ( $p < .01$ ). Alcohol expectancy was weakly correlated with overall media exposure ( $r = .18$ ), overall information receptions ( $r = .26$ ), skepticism ( $r = -.26$ ), desirability ( $r = .28$ ), and identification ( $r = .28$ ). Media exposure was moderately correlated with information receptions ( $r = .55$ ).

**Table 3** Correlations between media exposure, alcohol information receptions, perceived media marketing communication, and alcohol expectancies (N=5145)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Alcohol expectancy	-				
2. Media exposure	.18**				
3. Information Reception	.26**	.55**			
4. Skepticism	-.26**	-.29**	-.36**		
5. Desirability	.28**	.24**	.32**	-.74**	
6. Identification	.28**	.25**	.33**	-.75**	.79**

\*\* Correlation is significant at  $P < 0.01$

Utilizing ANOVA for data analysis as showed in Table 4 revealed that the mean scores of alcohol media exposure, alcohol information reception, and alcohol marketing communication perceptions were significantly different among three groups of students with different alcohol use intentions. Comparing the average scores of overall alcohol expectancies according to three categories of alcohol use intentions, students who indicated the future use of alcohol were found to have the highest mean score of alcohol expectancies (mean = 66.77, SD = 13.42) compare to the students who indicated not sure whether they will drink alcohol in their future (mean = 64.58, SD=15.33), and students who definitely will not drink alcohol in the future (mean = 62.22, SD = 17.48).

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**Table 4** Mean scores comparison of media exposure, alcohol information receptions, perceived media marketing communication, and alcohol expectancies according to intentions to drink (N=5145)

<i>Intention to drink</i>	<i>Total Scores</i>				Statistic	post hoc test
	n	%	mean	SD		
<b>Media exposure</b> (Mean = 5.5, SD = 1.8, Score range 3-14)						
1. Definitely not	2566	49.87	5.32	1.769		
2. Not sure	1971	38.31	5.68	1.80	F=51.90***	3>2>1
3. Will drink	608	11.82	6.06	1.85		
<b>Information Reception</b> (Mean = 25.56, SD = 15.98, Score range 0-85)						
1. Definitely not	2566	49.90	23.56	15.94		
2. Not sure	1971	38.30	26.32	15.43	F=58.38***	3>2>1
3. Will drink	608	11.80	30.94	15.99		
<b>Perceived Alcohol Marketing Communication</b>						
<i>Skepticism</i> (Mean = 34.16, SD = 6.46, Score range 8-40)						
1. Definitely not	2556	49.97	35.45	5.97		
2. Not sure	1971	38.30	33.46	6.30	F=140.35***	3>2>1
3. Will drink	608	11.81	31.05	7.43		
<i>Desirability</i> (Mean = 5.32, SD = 2.76, Score range 3-15)						
1. Definitely not	2556	49.97	4.77	2.48		
2. Not sure	1971	38.30	5.55	2.71	F=162.33***	3>2>1
3. Will drink	608	11.81	6.86	3.28		
<i>Identification</i> (Mean = 7.17, SD = 3.65, Score range 4-20)						
1. Definitely not	2556	49.97	6.41	3.29		
2. Not sure	1971	38.30	7.56	3.62	F=161.43***	3>2>1
3. Will drink	608	11.81	9.11	4.24		
<b>Alcohol expectancies</b> (Mean = 63.68, SD = 16.37, Score range 31-108)						
1. Definitely not	2566	49.87	62.22	17.48		
2. Not sure	1971	38.31	64.58	15.53	F=24.18***	3>2>1
3. Will drink	608	11.82	66.77	13.42		

Note. \*\*\* Significant at  $p < 0.001$

#### 4. DISCUSSION

This study investigated relationships between alcohol marketing communication with alcohol expectancies and alcohol use intentions in a large sample of early and late adolescents in Thai schools. Findings provide context of the channels and types of marketing communication and its influence in the midst of high competitive alcohol marketing in Thailand. The study revealed quite encouraging finding that majority of the early adolescents will definitely not drink in the future especially among the females, younger graders (12 years or younger), high academic achievers, low income family. However, the study revealed the risk of engaging in alcoholic drink will be among the adolescents who reported having a drinking father or a drinking friends, came from middle income family and staying with parents who still live together. The drinking intentions of the adolescents may due to the cultural factor as it was found in previous studies, which indicated that cultural festivities in the Thai context sometime loosen the ban of alcohol on children in the family.<sup>22, 23</sup>

Majority of students (50.5%) reported that they received or exposed to alcohol advertising or marketing communication not often (1-2 days/week), whereas 34% received alcohol information 2-4 days/week. Most youths received alcohol information and alcohol advertising through television, Point of purchase (PoP) media, out of home media, logo/ brand name, and sale promotion. These findings similar to previous studies which indicated that majority of students received alcohol information from TV.<sup>13, 17, 24, 25</sup>. However, it was unexpected that Thai students also received alcohol information from point of purchase and out of home media. The strongest correlations of the top three channels for alcohol information reception were internet, personal selling, and sale promotion indicated the need for monitoring these media.

Correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between exposure to alcohol advertising and favorable alcohol attitudes include desirability and identification, outcome expectancies, and intentions to drink among this study sample of early to late teens. Receiving of alcohol marketing communication was found to have negative relationship with skepticism in this study. Results were in the same direction with studies conducted in western adolescents.<sup>4,15-17</sup> The finding of high skepticism level found in this study sample indicate good media literacy, these Thai students have ability to identify the persuasive messages they received from alcohol



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marketing communication. In addition, these students also had low levels of desirability and identification toward alcohol. In this study perceived of alcohol marketing communication: skepticism, desirability, and identification were found to significant correlated with alcohol expectancies. Findings supported the significant relationships between high media exposure, high information reception, high alcohol expectancies, high level of alcohol desirability, high level of alcohol identification, low level of skepticism, and future drinking intentions. Results were in the same direction with studies conducted in western adolescents.<sup>17</sup>

## 5. SUGGESTIONS

This study provides national data on the perception of alcohol marketing communication, alcohol expectancies and intention to drink alcohol among the Thai adolescents in the school system of the 4th - 12th graders and the first and the second year vocational students. Although it was found that drinking among the young graders is not as critical as foreseen and most of Thai youngsters are media literate especially on alcohol, but the attempts to convey alcohol messages to the consumers do not decrease, new media channels were continually created in order to bring the alcohol messages to the consumers. Therefore, the media literacy program should be carried on to alert the youngsters about toxicity of alcohol.

This study suggests that exposure to alcohol advertising influence drinking intentions and attitudes of adolescence. There should be limit of alcohol media marketing and communication activities on sending persuasive messages arouse adolescents' intentions to drink. Alcohol exposure, alcohol information receptions were significantly correlated with alcohol use intentions and alcohol expectancies. Therefore, prevention programs should target students' receptivity to alcohol marketing. This can be done by limiting the exposure to alcohol advertisings and marketing activities especially through internet, personal selling, and sale promotion. Monitoring of the marketing communication message via PoP media and out of home media is also recommended and taken into consideration when planning preventive measures in order to achieve the most benefit to the young Thai group.

Although results are encouraging, future research should include variables that influence alcohol initiation and underage drinking to gain complete information for effective prevention. Prevention program that can improve refusal skills, peer pressure, and social self-efficacy will ultimately benefit these youngsters. Being the cross-sectional design, this study results could not

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establish the causal relationship between the alcohol use intentions or alcohol expectancies and media exposure. Research on the alcohol media literacy remains an essential tool in the understanding of media exposure, reception, literacy patterns and related problems and forms the basis for prevention policies and planning and management of the media and dissemination of alcohol information to Thai adolescents.

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## 7. HUMAN PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

Institutional review board approval was obtained for this research because it used commercially available data and did not include identifying information for the participants.

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