

FACTORS INFLUENCING BEER CONSUMPTION INTENTION AMONG VIETNAMESE FEMALES

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Abstract: This paper focuses on identifying the factors influencing beer consumption intention among Vietnamese females by examining various stimuli (attitude, price consciousness, parental influence and peer group influence). A total of 400 sets of questionnaires were collected to analyze the results. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was employed to test the hypotheses in this study. The findings reveal that the main drivers for beer consumption intention are socializing when drinking beers, peer group and price. Also, among Vietnamese girls, parents have been found to have less impact on their children intention to drink beers. Fundamentally, those findings may help marketers/law makers to craft their strategy to deal with marketing or social issues.

Keywords: beer consumption intention, Vietnamese females, peer group influence, parental influence, price consciousness.

1. Introduction

“Gone are the days when young girls used to cook like their mothers, nowadays they drink like their fathers.”

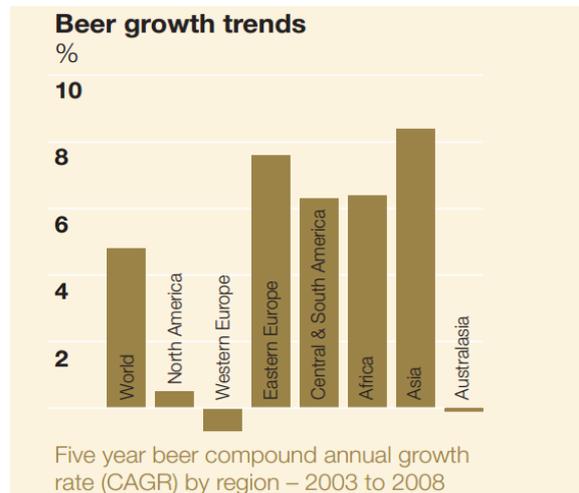
While beer consumption has been on a declining trend in a number of countries traditionally regarded as “beer drinking nations,” such as the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, emerging countries in South Africa, South America and Asian have seen a growth in beer consumption. As can be seen from Figure 1, the rise in beer consumption has been especially dramatic in Asia which during the period 2003-2008 registered the highest growth rate. This is especially true in countries such as China, Vietnam and Thailand among others and both among males and females.

This paper focuses on Vietnam. Specifically, it explores the beer consumption trend among Vietnamese females and seeks to identify some of the factors accounting for this fast-growing trend.

Per capita beer consumption has recently been increasing in Vietnam. In 2012, Vietnam was ranked Southeast Asia’s top country for beer consumption, topping Thailand for the first time (Business Monitor International, 2012). According to Business Monitor International (2012), Vietnamese people consume 32 liters of beer annually and spend about US\$ 3 billion on beer per year. By

comparison, Thailand people consume 25 liters and of beer per years. As expected, the beer industry holds a strong position in the whole Vietnamese beverage industry, a 98% volume share. It is also worth more than 89% of its total market value.

Figure 1: Global beer trend



Source: www.business-review-webinars.com (2010)

Tellingly enough, in 2012, the growth rate of the beer industry (7.78%) outpaced the GDP growth rate, which according to the World Bank, stood at 5% (Business Monitor International, 2012). The Euromonitor forecasts the beer market in Vietnam to rise by 12-15% by 2015 and by 8% during the period 2016-25. Clearly, there will be more room for the beer market to grow in the future.

Women have been observed to have developed a stronger interest in traditionally male-dominated products/services (Cuneo,

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1997). This includes beer as it is acknowledged that beer drinking has become a trending behavior among Vietnamese females in general. The importance of understanding the factors accounting for female consumption intention is growing as women are becoming more independent and increasingly adopting Westernized life style.

After reviewing the relevant literature, the conceptual framework and the methodology used in this study, the focus shifts to the findings, which will be analyzed and discussed. Recommendations will then be made.

2. Literature review

- *Attitude*

Attitude is a broad category which can be applied to many fields. Attitudes can be defined as subjective tendencies to do something, expressed through the favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a given object (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). It has also been defined as the overall evaluation of a person in respect of a behavior and whether it is good or not if he/she performs that behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). From the very early research, Allport (1935), and Guttman (1944) regarded the concept of attitude as the reason for the formation of individual behaviors.

The close relationship of attitude and behavior intention was first conceptualized by the Reasoned Action Model, later applied by many researchers. Attitude has often been used to predict behavior intentions. Moreover, as Solomon (2002) argued, the swiftness of attitude has an effect on the consumer's behavior. Simply put, if consumers change their attitude toward a behavior, it implies that they are going to change their way of thinking and treat the behavior in a different way.

Attitudes largely explain the motivations of behavior. Attitude is a significant factor to predict intention to consume alcohol among students and adults (O'Callaghan et al., 1997; McMillan & Conner, 2003). Consequently, students are more likely to drink alcohol if they have a favorable attitude toward the behavior of consumption alcohol, and vice versa.

- *Price Consciousness*

Price can broadly be defined as an amount of money that consumers must give up to own a product (Needley et al., 2010). There is much literature and numerous studies on

how price affects alcohol consumption (Zeithaml, 1988; Olsent et al., 2003; Lockshin & Rhodus, 1993; Smith & Mitry, 2006). Not all scholars agree on the impact of price on alcohol consumption. Some argue that there is an inverse relationship of price of alcohol and consumption (e.g. Gruenewald, et al., 1993). Alternatively, others argue that when the price of alcohol increases to a certain level, consumers feel they cannot afford to buy it and are therefore unlikely to perform the behavioral intention (e.g. Thompson & Thompson, 2008). From their study of the Hungarian beer market, Hajdu et al. (2007) found out that price was among the most important factors that affecting consumption of beer in that market. Neeley et al. (2010) found that price consciousness plays a critical role in the consumption decision in regards to wine.

Studies have also proved that when alcohol products have a price promotion, it encourages people to consume more (Elder et al., 2010; Skidmore & Murphy, 2011). In other words, the fundamental economic theory about the law of demand is working well in the relationship between price promotion and alcohol consumption (Rabinovich et al., 2009; Elder et al., 2010). The tax legislation on "Alcopops" in Australia was an example of this relationship. During the 12 months of this policy implementation, consumption fell greatly.

According to Thompson & Vourvachis (1995), however, the price of alcohol is not a significant barrier that prevents people from consuming alcohol. Parson and Stephenson's (2013) study also determined that price had no statistically significant relationship with consumption levels in New Zealand or Australia.

- *Parental Influence*

Moschis & Churchill (1987) and Moschis et al. (1983) argued that parents always try to pass on to their kids rational and social practices which they wish their kids would adopt. According to some researchers, parental drinking behaviors also influence children's alcohol-related behavior. It has also been shown that perceived parental trust would diminish the intention to drink alcohol (Borawski et al., 2003).

The relationship between parental influence and children intention to consume alcohol does exist, especially among pre-

college students (Turrisi, Wiersman & Kelli, 2000; Turrisi, et al., 2001). A study by Kuther & Higgins-D'Alessandro (2003) shows that the attitude of parents towards drinking and their approval of their children drinking have motivated college juniors to use alcohol. These, however, have no influence on the alcohol use of college freshmen. Turrisi et al. (2000) found that college freshmen who have ever talked with their mothers about alcohol would not hold a positive belief towards alcohol. They are less likely to believe that alcohol can enhance social position, that drinking alcohol is cool and that alcohol leads to positive transformations. They are also more likely to believe that alcohol is associated with sexual abuse, trouble with police, and unhealthy lifestyle.

Many papers have studied the similarity of attitudes toward drinking of college students and their parents. As reported by Wilks & Callan (1984), there is a similarity in drinking attitudes between sons and parents. There was, however, a large difference between daughters and parents. The link between the children/parent relationship and drinking behavior was also investigated. If parents and children openly communicate, the chances that children will use alcohol will be much lower (Kafka & London, 1991). Beck et al.'s (2003) report shows that 12-17 year olds adolescents who usually asked their mothers questions about alcohol were less likely to drink alcohol without letting their parent know or less likely drink their parent's alcohol.

- Peer Influence

Peer influence on alcohol consumption was investigated by Marshal & Chassin (2000). Their findings indicate that adolescents' behavior with regard to alcohol consumption is influenced by peers who drank alcohol. This determination was supported by a contemporary study by Fox and Marsh (2000) who found that the drinking behavior was considered to be a social behavior and young adults took their peers drinking behavior (Gunter, et al., 2009).

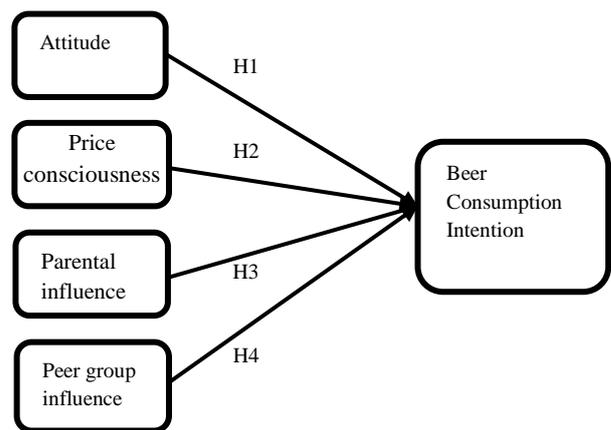
For young people, peer influence is generally more apparent. Young people who perceive that their friends drink more than them and feel their friends encourage and accept heavy drinking are more likely to engage in drinking than those who do not have those friends (Larimer, et al., 1997; Reis & Riley, 2000). Martin and Hoffman (1993)

added that people who have friends that drink are more likely to become drinkers themselves. This is also true of people who are sociable because they have more chances to drink (Ham & Hope, 2003). Experimental research holds similar opinions. The exposure to drinking friends often leads to the same drinking behavior and a comparable amount of alcohol consumed (Collins & Marlatt, 1981).

3. Conceptual Framework and Methodology

This study uses Ajzen's (1988) Theory of Reasoned Action model and the studies of Neeley et al. (2010) and Sancho et al. (2011) as the basis for its theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The conceptual framework articulates the relationship among the determinants, which include attitude, price consciousness, parental influence and peer influence.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Source: Created by the author for this study.

This study seeks to determine the relationship between the four variables (attitude, price, parental influence and peer group influence) and beer consumption intention. The following four hypotheses were thus developed:

Hypothesis 1: *There is a relationship between attitude and beer consumption intention among Vietnamese females.*

Hypothesis 2: *There is a relationship between price consciousness and beer consumption intention among Vietnamese females.*

Hypothesis 3: *There is a relationship between parental influence and beer consumption intention among Vietnamese females.*

Hypothesis 4: *There is a relationship between peer group influence and beer consumption intention among Vietnamese females.*

This study uses a qualitative approach through self-administrated questionnaires. A questionnaire form was uploaded on the Internet via various social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, or Vietnamese female forums, to collect data from the research target population. Beer consumption among female is still by and large considered a sensitive topic, hence the use of self-administered questionnaires, much suitable given the sensitivity of the issues raised. The questionnaire was designed in accordance with the conceptual framework.

Questionnaire was split into 4 parts: (i) screen questions which made sure respondents were females who have drunk or intended to drink beer when reaching the drinking age; (ii) demographic information (age, income, etc); (iii) factors influencing beer consumption intention (attitude, price, parental influence, peer group influence); and (iv) general questions.

The questions in parts 1 and 2 were designed with category scale. The questions pertaining to attitude (in part 3) were designed with a five- point semantic differential scale, in which the attitude towards drinking beer was ranged from “tasty/disgusting, beneficial/harmful, enjoyable/repulsive, sociable /unsociable and attractive /unattractive”. The other factors such as price consciousness, parental influence and peer group influence used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The last part, which included 6 questions, investigated alcohol drink choice, frequency, level of drinking, drinking places, perception of beer-drinking females, and awareness of beer-drinking-related negative consequences

4. Results and Discussion

- Descriptive Analysis

The findings from the descriptive analysis show that Vietnamese females who have ever drunk or intended to drink beer are young females, aged between 18 and 29 years old, earning a monthly income between 7,001 to 14,000 baht, holding a bachelor’s degree or equivalent, and currently living with their parents. These findings indicate that Vietnamese women who drink beer are young,

financially independent, and well-educated girls.

Most respondents choose beers as their drink of choice when it comes to alcoholic beverage (52%) with cocktail as the second choice (29%). A majority of the respondents prefer to drink beer several times a month (48.3%) and 1 or 2 bottles each time they drink. However, the second largest group indicated that they drank more than 5 bottles during each drinking session. This signals binge drinking among Vietnamese females.

Besides, with street vendors the favorite places where a great number of respondents choose to enjoy their beers, and almost respondents considered the sight of young women drinking beer as normal and neither offensive nor taboo at all. Most of them also said that they were all aware of the negative consequences associated with beer drinking.

Table 1 below shows that the means score of ‘peer group influence’ is the highest with 3.46, which shows that this factor is important. Meanwhile, other factors such as attitude and price consciousness, with a mean of 3.34 and 2.89 respectively are classified as neutral. Finally, the ‘parental influence’ factor is deemed to be unimportant to influence Vietnamese females to drink beer.

Table 1: Mean scores of variables

	Mean	Range of mean	Level of importance
Attitude	3.3400	2.61-3.40	Neutral
Price consciousness	2.8963	2.61-3.40	Neutral
Peer group influence	3.4606	3.41-4.20	Important
Parental influence	2.2069	1.81-2.60	Unimportant

- Inferential Analysis

4 hypotheses were tested with the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. As mentioned earlier, the independent variables are attitude, price consciousness, parental influence, peer group influence. They were tested against the intention to consume beer among Vietnamese women. The results turned out as expected. All the influential factors have a positive relationship with beer consumption intention.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) testing results show there is a relationship between attitude and

beer consumption intention. The Correlation Coefficient level is .785, which means that there is a strong positive relationship between attitude and beer consumption intention. This result is in-keeping with the results of several prior studies (e.g. O'Callaghan et al., 1997; McMillan & Conner, 2003). A majority of Vietnamese women agree that drinking beers is good for socialization and that it is enjoyable to drink beers. It is the opinion of the researcher that Vietnamese women, like many beer-drinking women around the world, view drinking alcohol as a way to have fun and good for social integration and bonding (Carpenter et al., 2007; Young et al., 2005).

The data from hypothesis 2 testing shows the correlation coefficient level at .530. There is a medium positive relationship between price consciousness and beer consumption intention. This result is consistent with Gjonbalaj et al. (2010)'s findings that most of customers consider price to be an important factor when buying beer. The findings in this study also indicate that since female beer drinkers found beer to be affordable, they have an intention to consume beer. Compared to other alcoholic beverage, beer is suitable for a night out and also affordable, unlike wine and whisky which have a heavier alcohol content and are more expensive and cocktails which are served in small quantities and cannot quench their thirst.

With a Pearson Correlation score of .298, Hypothesis 3 testing results confirm that there is a low positive relationship between parental influence and beer consumption intention. Consistent with these findings, various previous studies mentioned that student alcohol use has been found to be associated with parental levels of alcohol use (e.g. Fromme & Ruela, 1994). It has been consistently found that students who have parents who drink more both in terms of quantity and frequency are more likely to drink than students whose parents did not drink (Reeves, 1984; Jung, 1995). However, Wilks and Callan (1984) found that sons and parents had similar attitudes towards drinking while there were greater differences in the attitudes of daughters and parents. This may explain why in this study the significant level of parent influence over beer consumption intention is at a very low level (.298).

When investigating the correlation between peer group influence and beer

consumption intention (H5), it was found that, with a Pearson Correlation score of .718, the relationship was significant. These findings are in keeping with a number of previous studies which determined that drinking behaviors are social behaviors and young adults took their peers' drinking behavior (Reis & Riley, 2000; Marshal & Chassin, 2000; Gunter, et al., 2009). Simply put, people who have friends who drink are more likely to become a drinker themselves (Martin & Hoffman, 1993).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors influencing beer consumption intention among Vietnamese females. The hypotheses results provide some valuable information. For the most part, Vietnamese women see drinking beer as being good for socialization and as something enjoyable. Previous research also shows that social and interpersonal factors influence alcohol drinking (Trafimow, 1996). However, in most of these studies, the female respondents did like the taste of beer, which is not the case with many Vietnamese women. Although they do not like the taste of beer, the need to socialize is stronger than the lack of appeal of its taste, thus leading them to consume beer.

With regard to hypothesis 2 and price consciousness, female beer drinkers found beer to be affordable and therefore intend to consume beer. Compared to other alcoholic beverages, beer is, in their view, suitable for a night out and also affordable. Wine and whisky have heavier alcohol content and are more expensive and cocktails by dint of their size cannot quench their thirst Gruenewald et al.'s (1993) study of various behavioral criteria reports similar findings. Since in any drinking gathering of a group of friends, beer is consumed in large amounts; its price of beer is bound to be one of the main factors influencing beer drinking.

As we saw with hypothesis 3, parents can have an impact on their children's beer drinking intention. However, the influence of parent over their daughters was found to be less important than other factors. This is in line with Wilks and Callan's (1984) findings that while sons and parents had similar attitudes towards drinking, there were larger differences in the attitudes of daughters and parents.

The results of hypothesis 4 on peer group influence show that peers and friends play a major role in the intention to consume beer among Vietnamese women. Since female beer drinkers emphasized that they mostly drink beer with friends (both males and females) to chill out and celebrate. Vietnamese women look at to their friends' drinking behavior and adopt them. These findings are in keeping with previous studies (e.g. Gunter, et al., 2009).

- Recommendations

Brewers should consider the taste of beer for a female perspective because it is the next attitudinal factor in beer consumption overall. One of the most important factor for users is taste, so it is essential to get it right for women. Though as a lot of research indicate, beer drinkers love its taste (e.g. Pettigrew & Charters, 2009), the situation seems to be different for Vietnamese females. Beer marketers who target Vietnamese women should adapt the taste of beers to the Vietnamese liking. Light beers and fruit beers are two good options since the findings from the general information obtained in this study reveal that many women like the taste of cocktail/alcopop which is sweet, refreshing and has fruit flavors.

As price was found to have an impact on intention to drink beer among Vietnamese females, beer companies should consider this factor when seeking to expand their market share. Promotional campaigns related to price discount or product bundling are strongly recommended. Also, law makers can also make use of this factor to regulate the level of consumption among females.

Should businesses be looking for a message to convey with their brand or for a theme for an advertising campaign, they should understand that female beer drinkers first and foremost are looking for socializing and relaxing when they come to drink beer. With regard to marketing campaigns, the findings of this study on peer group influence may shed some light on the direction to take. Many Vietnamese women refer their friends or their peers when being asked about consuming beer, hence the influence of peer groups or friends is very strong among them.

Moreover, to break down the barrier of the ignorance (lack of knowledge about the harm excessive beer drinking may cause), beer marketers should join in with the government to educate their customers. In this case,

communication campaigns can play an important role. It is necessary for everyone to know the real consequences of alcohol abuse. Warning labels on beer bottles or cans is one of the suggestions. Beer marketers may also remind consumers of the consequences of excessive alcohol consumption. This will help individuals to make informed decisions about their own alcohol consumption.

Available statistics on the alcohol-related accidents rate and problems show that the number of males involved in those negative is invariably higher than females (Diep et al., 2013). However, with the possible increase of the number of female beer drinkers or the number of women drinking any other alcoholic beverages for that matter, it is important to understand their behavior so that lawmakers to find a appropriate legal response to ensure that they are responsible drinkers. Obviously, the solution is not to restrain them or forbid them from drinking.

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