

## Intention to Consume Alcohol among Dayak Adolescents in Sarawak: An Application of Theory of Planned Behavior

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** To explore the application of a model that integrates various factors that influence Dayak adolescents' intentions to consume alcohol in Sarawak, Malaysia.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted from September 2019 to February 2022. Through multistage stratified cluster sampling, 12 districts were selected from 12 divisions. Respondents were selected randomly and were interviewed using a questionnaire.

**Results:** Structural equation modeling was used to test the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and explore the relationship between various variables and respondents' intention to consume alcohol. The findings suggest that attitude ( $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ), subjective norm ( $\beta = .33, p < .001$ ), and perceived behavior control ( $\beta = -.41, p < .001$ ) influenced the intention to consume alcohol. In contrast, alcohol consumption was associated with intention ( $\beta = .15, p < .001$ ), attitude ( $\beta = .20, p < .001$ ), and perceived behavior control ( $\beta = -.32, p < .001$ ).

**Conclusion:** The findings demonstrated that the TPB model can be used to explore various variables that influence the intention to consume alcohol among Dayak adolescents, with attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control as the variable influencing the intention. This highlights the need for paying attention to those variables when developing age-appropriate strategies that address various social levels to curb alcohol consumption. Given the concerning rates of risky drinking and dependency, school-based health initiatives and focused screening for Dayak adolescents are crucial.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, alcohol, dayak, theory of planned behavior

## Introduction

The psychoactive component of alcohol is ethanol, a molecule containing carbon atoms and the hydroxyl (-OH) group. It is commonly referred to as ethanol or ethyl alcohol and is known to have stimulant effects. Ethanol is produced through fermentation and distillation and is a key ingredient in various beverages, including wine, beer, and hard liquor.<sup>1</sup> Early alcohol use was believed to be detrimental to the adolescent brain's development, particularly in those who began drinking before or by age 15.<sup>2</sup> Such individuals may experience alcohol-related problems later

in life, including dependency and a consistent pattern of high alcohol use.<sup>3</sup> These problems can lead to physical or mental disorders, as described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.<sup>4</sup> Alcohol use disorder, previously known as alcoholism or alcohol dependence, is characterized by excessive alcohol consumption that causes personal or professional problems, an inability to regulate drinking, and the need for increasing amounts of alcohol to achieve the same effects.<sup>5</sup> Alcohol consumption in Malaysia has steadily risen, increasing from 0.8 liters in 2005 to 1.7 liters in 2015 per person.<sup>6</sup> However, the prevalence of alcohol usage in