

Cigarette Consumption among Foreign Tourists in Thailand

Lakkhana Termsirikulchai PhD*, Mondha Kengganpanich PhD*,
Sarunya Benjakul PhD**, Tharadol Kengganpanich MA*

* *Department of Health Education and Behavioral Sciences, Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand*

** *Bureau of Tobacco Control, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, Nonthaburi, Thailand*

Objective: To explore the cigarette consumption among foreign tourists in Thailand.

Material and Method: The data in this cross-sectional survey is collected by interviewing 655 foreign tourist smokers with questionnaires in congested areas including Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Khao San Road, shopping centers and tourist attraction sites. The data was collected in October, 2010, analyzed by descriptive statistic and the crude magnitude of cigarette consumption was calculated.

Results: The findings indicated that 62.9% of tourists were male and 58.9% were from European countries and 22.7% were from Asian countries. 59.2% smoked cigarettes sold in Thailand and were taxed legally. In that amount, 55.7% smoked imported cigarettes and only 3.5% smoked Thai cigarettes. 40.8% had brought cigarettes from their countries or bought cigarettes from Duty Free shops with the amount allowed by Thai law. The top 2 popular brands were Marlboro and L&M. The main reason why they bought imported cigarettes in Thailand was that the price was cheaper or the same when compared with that in their countries. The cigarette consumption share crudely calculated was around 8.90 million packs.

Conclusion: Foreign tourists smoked imported cigarettes distributed in Thailand and cigarettes brought from abroad. So, Free Trade Agreement in bilateral level or multilateral level need to be reviewed and should separate cigarettes from other goods. The tax barrier, excise tax measure and permission law of carrying in 200 sticks should be reviewed in order to control cigarette consumption effectively.

Keywords: Cigarette consumption, Tourists, Thailand

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Tobacco consumption surveys have been constantly conducted since 1976 up to the present study by the National Statistical Office (NSO). Questions regarding tobacco consumption were attached as a core module in the index of each Health and Welfare survey. The survey's findings indicated that current smokers in Thailand had slightly declined in the last decade. In 2004, the smoking rate was 22.98% or equivalent to 11.36 million people while the prevalence declined to 20.7% or equivalent to 10.91 million people in 2009⁽¹⁾. When the amount of domestic manufactured cigarettes combined with imported cigarettes had been compared with cigarette consumption, the present results were the imbalance between demand and supply of cigarettes. That is,

supply exceeded demand at almost a double rate. Pirudee Pavananunt's study on demand and supply of cigarettes in Thailand related to tax avoidant cigarette consumption, which showed that the quantity of domestic manufactured cigarettes by Thailand Tobacco Monopoly (TTM) plus the quantity of legally imported cigarettes in 2003 was higher than the overall quantity of cigarette consumption of Thai smokers at that time (calculated on the basis of smoking rate and smoking quantity) at a discrepancy of nearly 1 billion packs of cigarette⁽²⁾. One answer to this discrepancy was underestimated demand because of the under reported data of uncovered smokers, the number of cigarette smokers and quantity of cigarette smoking. A common explanation why the supply exceeding the demand would be the smuggling out. Nevertheless, given the situation and condition in Thailand, smuggling out didn't seem to be quite relevant because the cigarette tax rate and cigarette price were higher than the neighboring countries, like Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Malaysia⁽³⁾ Sungsih Piriyanangsan's

Correspondence to:

Kengganpanich M, Department of Health Education and Behavioral Sciences, Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University, Bangkok 10400, Thailand.

Phone: 0-2354-8543-5 ext. 3704

E-mail: kmondha@yahoo.com

study reported that Thailand has faced with the smuggling in⁽⁴⁾ which related to Joosen et al, estimated the market share of illegal cigarettes in Thailand at around 10% of the sales⁽⁵⁾. These have been confirmed by thousands cases of cigarette's smuggling in through Thailand's borders from 2010 to 2011⁽⁶⁾.

From retrospective analysis of the National survey such as the Statistical Office as well as Health and exam survey of Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and related organizations, the data regarding smoking behaviors by targeting Thai population have continuously been collected. However, Shreehari Acharya has conducted a research on tobacco use among Myanmar Gorkha workers who migrated and worked in Bangkok, Thailand. The present study revealed that 82.7% of the workers used tobacco which 62.9% smoked cigarettes and some smoked hand-roll cigarettes⁽⁷⁾. The present results reflects cigarette consumption in Thailand, which is partly consumed by foreign workers residing and working in Thailand. This evidence implied the loss of cigarettes which may be distributed in various populations.

It is, therefore, worthwhile to the present study cigarette consumption among foreigners in Thailand, especially tourists because Thailand is a well-known destination attracting a large number of foreign visitors. American Express's Travel & Leisure, a popular traveling magazine in the US, has announced World's Best Award, 2010 (the best tourist destinations) and the first two names were places in Thailand; Bangkok the first rank and Chiang Mai the second⁽⁸⁾. Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, displays the statistic of transnational tourists which has dramatically increased from 2005 to 2010, from 11.52 million to 15.84 million. The largest group was 6.69 million tourists from East Asia including China, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Malaysia, followed by Europe (2.69 million), America (0.71 million) Oceania or Australia (0.50 million)⁽⁹⁾. It is expected that a study of cigarette consumption of tourists will be able to partially explain the discrepancy of supply and demand. Moreover, the types of cigarette use by tourists will explain the cigarette consumption share in Thailand which might be helpful for setting the policy agenda and legal measures for effective tobacco control in Thailand.

Material and Method

This descriptive research involves the acquiring of data through various techniques including primary data, which was collected with a structured

questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of questions about traits of foreign smokers and smoking behavior. Interview was operated after ethical approval (Ref. No. 54-2010) with tourist smokers in October 2010. Secondary data was the collection of information from various sources such as World's Population Smoking Rate from World Health Organization (WHO), Center of Disease Control (CDC), USA, statistics of tourists from Immigration Office and Department of Tourism, and the amount of paid tax cigarettes from Department of Excise, Ministry of Finance.

The samples of the present study were tourists who smoked cigarettes. Purposive Sampling was conducted in the areas frequented by foreigners such as the Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Khao Sarn Road, Siam Square shopping center, Pratunam and Jatujak market. The targeted areas also included tourist attraction sites including Suan Sam Pran, Crocodile Farm, Ancient City and The Emerald Buddha Temple. The tourists were observed and if they smoked, they will be asked permission to interview. The primary data were collected by interviewing 655 tourist smokers and analyzed by descriptive statistic (frequency and percentage). Moreover, primary and secondary data were calculated to describe the cigarette consumption by mathematical method.

Results

Traits of tourist smokers

62.9% of the samples were males, 58.9% of which were tourists from Europe (France 12.5%, Germany 11.5%, England 9.7%, Switzerland 4.4%, Italy 4.3%). 22.7% were from Asia (Korea 4.1%, Israel 3.5%, Japan 3.5%, India 2.4% and Singapore, China and Hong Kong 1.5% equally). 10.2% were from Australia/Oceania (Australia 9.9%) and 5.2% were from North America (USA 4.4%) (Table 1).

Cigarette smoking

For the types of cigarette that the tourists smoked, it was found that 59.2% of the tourists smoked cigarettes sold in Thailand, 40.8% smoked foreign cigarettes which were brought from abroad or bought from duty free shops. For those who bought cigarettes in Thailand, only 3.5% purchased domestic cigarettes. Most of the samples smoked imported cigarettes and the favorite brands were Marlboro (47.5%), L&M (16.5%) and Mild Seven (4.0%) (Table 2). This finding reflects that half of the foreign tourists are actually consuming imported foreign cigarettes distributed in Thailand.

Table 1. Number and percentage of foreign tourists by traits (n = 655)

Traits of foreign tourists	Number (%)
Gender	
Male	412 (62.9)
Female	243 (37.1)
Continent of Nationality	
Asia	148 (22.7)
Europe	386 (58.9)
North America	52 (7.9)
Oceania	67 (10.2)
Africa and Middle East	2 (0.3)

Table 2. Cigarette Smoking of foreign tourists (n = 655)

Smoking behavior	Number (%)
Type of cigarettes smoked	
Thai cigarettes	23 (3.5)
Imported cigarettes with tax paid	365 (55.7)
Foreign cigarettes carried from abroad	267 (40.8)
5 top brands of cigarettes smoked	
Marlboro	311 (47.5)
L&M	108 (16.5)
Mild Seven	26 (4.0)
Krongthip (Thai cigarette)	24 (3.5)
Esse	17 (2.6)

For smoking patterns of tourists categorized according to their nationalities, it was found that most Australian tourists (Oceania) (73%) smoked imported cigarettes distributed in Thailand, followed by the tourists from North America (55.8%) and Europe (54.4%), respectively. However, the tourists from Asia (48.6%) and North America (36.5%) brought their own cigarettes from abroad which exempted excise tax (Table 3). The major reason why tourists from different continents bought foreign cigarettes distributed in Thailand was the low price of the same brand of cigarettes they smoked in their countries. And for some tourists who brought their own cigarettes, they were not sure whether the brands were available for sales in Thailand. Examples of those brands were Esse, Gauloise, Golden, Virginia, Parliament, Benson & Hedges, Season, Davidoff and Kool.

Comparing cigarette price among countries

The survey showed that a great number of

tourists selected foreign paid tax cigarettes because the prices in Thailand are cheaper than that in their countries. Consequently, they do not need to bring their own. When comparing the price of famous brands of domestic cigarettes in Thailand with the price of imported foreign cigarettes distributed in Thailand, it was found that the price margin of foreign cigarettes and Thai cigarettes was less than 1 US Dollar. When comparing the price of imported cigarettes in Thailand with the price of the same brand of cigarettes sold in the tourists' countries, it was found that the price margin ranged from 1-9 US Dollar. The sale prices of cigarettes in Singapore, The UK, Australia, European countries, and America were found significantly higher than those in Thailand (Table 4).

Cigarette consumption of tourists in thailand

As mentioned above, 55.7% of foreign tourists in Thailand smoke imported cigarettes distributed in Thailand and 3.5% smoked domestic cigarette. This shows the tobacco consumption at the rate of 59.2%. Moreover, the result found that the tourists smoked 7.8 cigarettes a day in average. From the report of the current cigarette smoking of different countries around the world, it was found that the average smoking rate was 24.34%⁽¹¹⁾. Therefore, the crude estimation of cigarette consumption of tourists in Thailand was calculated by the formulated equation as the following:

$$Q = (T \times P \times TS \times N \times D) / SP$$

Q = quantity of cigarette used by tourists, a unit of pack

T = numbers of tourists in Thailand in 2010, 15,841,683 people

P = average current smoking rate of world's population of 24.34%, or equivalent to 0.2434

TS = a figure of foreign tourists as cigarette consumption in Thailand (from survey) of 59.2%, or equivalent to 0.592

N = numbers of cigarette used by tourists per day (from survey), 7.8 sticks a day

D = average number of days tourists spending time in Thailand, which was estimated for 10 days

SP = 20 sticks in one pack

Thus, $Q = (15,841,683 \times 0.592 \times 0.2434 \times 7.8 \times 10) / 20$.

The result Q is approximately 8.90 million packs or 1,780 million sticks in 2010.

Discussion

The present study revealed 2 patterns of smoking behaviors among foreign tourists; 1) smoking

Table 3. Types of cigarettes smoked by continents of nationality

Continents of nationality	Types of cigarettes smoked (%)		
	Domestic cigarettes	Imported cigarettes	Foreign cigarettes brought from abroad which exempted imported tax
Asia	0.0	51.4	48.6
Europe	4.1	54.4	41.5
North America	7.7	55.8	36.5
Oceania	3.0	73.1	23.9

Remark: Africa and Middle East =Less than 5 cases

Table 4. Compare cigarette price among countries

Types of Cigarettes	Brand of Cigarettes	Retail price per pack (20 sticks) in Thailand (a) ⁽¹⁰⁾	Retail price per pack (20 sticks) of the famous brands in some countries in 2010 (b) ⁽¹¹⁾
1. Popular brand of domestic cigarettes	Krongthip, Sai-Fon, Samit	1.94 USD	USA = 5.72 USD India = 3.95 USD Germany = 4.51-5.74 USD
2. Popular brand of imported cigarettes	Marlboro, Camel, Winston, L & M, Dunhill, Mild Seven	2.60 USD	France = 5.60-6.15 USD
		2.50 USD	UK = 6.65-9.36 USD
		2.50 USD	Japan = 1.26-2.71 USD
		1.93 USD	Malaysia = 3.88-5.54 USD
		1.93 USD	Singapore = 7.98-11.30 USD
		2.80 USD	Australia = 5.13-7.74 USD

(a) Rapid survey in October, 2010, and from <http://www/thaitobacco.or.th>.

(b) Prices of a pack of the most sold and cheapest brands of cigarettes in international dollars, globally, 2010.

* exchange rate 1 USD = 30 Baht

imported cigarettes distributed in Thailand and 2) smoking cigarettes brought from abroad. For those foreign tourists who smoked imported cigarettes, the study discovered 2 brands frequently selected by the tourists, which were Marlboro (47.5%) and L&M (16.5%). Such result could imply the preference of smokers toward the brand selected or brand royalty. The phenomena of brand royalty reflected the success of the marketing and sale promoting of the transnational tobacco corporations, namely Philip Morris International (PMI), Marlboro and L&M's manufacturer⁽¹²⁾. This corporation was able to take the market share of cigarettes in all countries around the world including Thailand⁽¹³⁾. The trend of imported cigarettes has gained an increasing market share, from 0.6% in 1991, before Free Trade was adopted, to 24.6% in 2007 and 32.9% in 2008⁽¹³⁾. In 2008, PMI was able to hold the market share as high as 26.8% whereas BAT could gain 3.1%. Thailand Tobacco Monopoly (TTM)'s market

share, on the contrary, declined to 67.1%⁽¹⁴⁾. The fact that imported cigarettes possessed an increasing market share reflects that those cigarettes were sold to foreigners residing in Thailand. Nevertheless, the main goal of the transnational cigarettes companies' marketing was directed at the population in developing countries which had huge population and high rate of smoking⁽¹⁵⁾ and Thailand has been one of those countries where over 10 million people smoked cigarettes. More importantly, transnational cigarette corporations seem to target new smokers, both teenagers and women. Cigarettes companies knew well that having young smokers as customers would benefit cigarette business in a long run⁽¹⁶⁾. Some research confirmed that tobacco addiction at a very early age was difficult to quit. Cigarette companies, therefore, viewed youth smokers as their priority for marketing. PMI's 1994 report stated that "generally speaking in Asia, Marlboro Red's share of young adults

and beginners was up everywhere which was encouraging". The report in 1995 further stated that "...if the company was competent in preventing legal measures which would become obstacles to the young adults in being able to access to cigarette, that will secure our business in decades ahead⁽¹⁶⁾". Another target of PMI was women, as mentioned in an advertisement to encourage women to smoke "... women who smoked our cigarette were women sitting in the middle of the front row. They were shining stars, who were happy and healthy...". Another vigorous attempt can be found when PMI has looked for researchers, writers, and experts to present to public that cigarette smoking is actually a part of Asian women's lifestyle⁽¹⁷⁾. These evidences indicated the need to have the measures to control and eliminate the foreign cigarettes away from the way of life and norm of the young and female.

The success in terms of marketing of transnational tobacco corporation could partially be related to capitalism practiced by the developed capitalism countries through various trade measures to seek benefits from developing countries. Also contribute to the success was trade policies and measures in tobacco control which affected the variation of cigarette prices in each country⁽¹⁸⁾. Those measures include tax measure in relation to cigarette prices, allowance number of cigarettes to bring in country, the enforcement of law against smuggling cigarette. All these affect market share of imported and domestic cigarette. For Thailand, the motivation to buy cigarette in Thailand was the cheaper price compare with their own countries (92.4%). The price comparison between imported cigarettes and domestic cigarettes in Thailand showed a slight difference. There has never been a law and proper legal measures in Thailand which attempts to increase the price of imported cigarettes so their prices not much more expensive than domestic cigarette. Furthermore, imported cigarettes were monopolized by only 1-2 transnational cigarette corporations⁽¹²⁾. Domestic distribution was monopolized by TTM main providing sources such as convenient stores and local wholesale shops through a variety of sale promotion such as offering free showcase, giving discounts and free products. All these measures were used to share domestic cigarette market. Though TTM, as a major manufacturer, monopolized the supply of cigarette in Thailand, marketing strategies of transnational tobacco corporations and Free Trade policies were still heavily threatening the market share and cigarette consump-

tion. It was necessary that tobacco control networks must review their role to be able to handle with this situation and to come up with the effective legal measures.

In other smoking cigarette pattern of foreign tourists who brought cigarettes from abroad under the amount allowed by the law, not more than 200 sticks⁽¹⁹⁾ which reflected by the finding that 40.8% of tourists carried cigarette into Thailand with the main concern that the cigarette brands they smoked were not sold in Thailand (67%). The brand preference and the gap of Thai law which allowed tourists bring with them 200 cigarettes without paying tax has become a supporting factor for this pattern of smoking. Therefore, this target was not considered in term of cigarette consumption share in Thailand and this also effected on the loss of tax revenue for thousand millions baht each year.

The research recommends several policies and legal measures to control tobacco use. Those suggestions include trade negotiation which should separate cigarette from other goods. Doing this will remove Generalized System of Preference (GSP), tax reduction and tax exemption from cigarette. There should be strict measures and cigarettes should become dangerous product. Such legal measure as the measure to increase cigarette tax as well as the price of cigarette would minimize the number of smokers. Furthermore, excise tax of imported cigarettes should be raised to increase the retailed price. The law allowing foreign tourists to bring along cigarette at a maximum rate of 200 cigarettes should also be reviewed or even terminated in order to make access to cigarettes more difficult. This approach can control the quantity of cigarette and monitor the loss of cigarette tax.

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Potential conflicts of interest

None.

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พฤติกรรมการณ์การสูบบุหรี่ของนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติในประเทศไทย

ลักขณา เต็มศิริกุลชัย, มณฑา เก่งการพานิช, ศรัณญา เบญจกุล, ธราดล เก่งการพานิช

วัตถุประสงค์: เพื่อศึกษาพฤติกรรมการณ์การสูบบุหรี่ชีกาแรตของนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติในประเทศไทย

วัสดุและวิธีการ: การสำรวจแบบภาคตัดขวาง ดำเนินการเก็บข้อมูลโดยใช้แบบสัมภาษณ์ในกลุ่มนักท่องเที่ยวที่สูบบุหรี่ชีกาแรต 655 คน สุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเฉพาะเจาะจงในบริเวณที่มีนักท่องเที่ยวจำนวนมาก ได้แก่ สนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ ขาออก ถนนข้าวสาร ย่าน shopping center และสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวสำคัญ รวบรวมข้อมูลในเดือนตุลาคม พ.ศ. 2553 วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา และวิธีการทางคณิตศาสตร์ในการคำนวณปริมาณการบริโภคบุหรี่ชีกาแรต

ผลการศึกษา: กลุ่มตัวอย่างนักท่องเที่ยวที่สูบบุหรี่ชีกาแรตเป็นเพศชายร้อยละ 62.9 เป็นนักท่องเที่ยวมาจากทวีปยุโรป ร้อยละ 58.9 รองลงมาคือ ทวีปเอเชีย ร้อยละ 22.7 โดย ร้อยละ 59.2 สูบบุหรี่ที่จำหน่ายในประเทศไทยและเสียภาษีสรรพสามิตอย่างถูกต้องตามกฎหมาย โดยเป็นบุหรี่ต่างประเทศนำเข้าร้อยละ 55.7 และมีเพียงร้อยละ 3.5 ที่สูบบุหรี่ไทย ขณะที่ร้อยละ 40.8 สูบบุหรี่ต่างประเทศที่นำติดตัวมาจากต่างประเทศหรือซื้อจากร้านค้าปลอดภาษีตามปริมาณที่กฎหมายอนุญาต ยี่ห้อบุหรี่ที่นักท่องเที่ยวนิยมซื้อสูบคือ มาร์ลโบโรและ L&M เหตุผลที่ซื้อบุหรี่ในประเทศไทยคือ ราคาถูก ส่วนแบ่งการบริโภคยาสูบจากการคำนวณอย่างหยาบประมาณ 8.9 ล้านซอง

สรุป: นักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติส่วนใหญ่สูบบุหรี่นำเข้าที่จำหน่ายในประเทศไทยและบุหรี่ที่ถือติดตัวมาตามกฏหมายอนุญาต นักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติจึงมีส่วนแบ่งการบริโภคบุหรี่ชีกาแรตในประเทศไทย ดังนั้นข้อตกลงเจรจาทางการค้าในทุกระดับ จำเป็นต้องทบทวนให้บุหรี่อยู่นอกกรอบการเจรจาร่วมกับสินค้าอุปโภคอื่นๆ การใช้สิทธิพิเศษทางการค้า มาตรการทางภาษีและกฎหมายห้ามนำเข้าบุหรี่ติดตัวควรได้รับการทบทวน เพื่อการควบคุมยาสูบของไทยให้มีประสิทธิภาพ รวมถึงการเพิ่มภาษีบุหรี่นำเข้า
