

Influencing Factors on Smoking Habits in Public Schools of Bhaktapur in Nepal

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Abstract

Teenage is the prime time for a person where most of students of grade 11 and 12 fall under it. This is the transition age of their growth. During this transition period, the students experience change in physical, mental and cognitive stages of mind. Therefore, they desire to have new experiences. One of the major desires is smoking habit, which is considered growing popular culture among students. However, the study covers teenager students and their smoking habits of public schools in Bhaktapur with the objectives to explore the overview of smoking habits and influencing factors to smoke.

Keywords: teenage students, smoking habits, experiences, influencing factors

1. Introduction

Teenage is the period of crossed childhood but has not reached adulthood (Witmer, 2016). It is the *prime age of People between 13-19 years* (Morin, 2016). Most of students who study at grade 11 and 12 falls under these groups are both problematic and creative age (Hurlock, 1992; Sanford, 1962) where students show many desires to taste new things and receive knowledge in their life. That's why, during this period students desire to test new experiences like smoking. The teenage students are about 712 million in the Asia region (WHO, 2004) and about 24.48 % of the total population of Nepal (CBS, 2012). Smoking is a serious problem for parents, teachers and community people (Jackson, Colby & Sher, 2010). Parents and community people think that their children are at schools and they are safe from bad activities like smoking habits. Even teachers do not expect that their students smoke. However, often these students start smoking habits behind the curtain.

Influenced by globalization and modernization, people adopt different habits (WYR, 2003). That is why students adopt new technology to be clever and smarter. Often students adopt smoking that affects their economic and social wellbeing in a number of ways (Witkiewitz et al., 2012). It adversely affects their physical, mental and cognitive development (Hurlock, 1992).

Fundamentally, smoking habits are the reflection of poverty, and weak economic and social institutions (Bach, 2016). Other local factors such as family members, community people and the culture of their people also contribute to its continuation (Kim & Tsoh, 2016). Often advertisements related to smoking are featured prominently in the mass media as well as in public places in the form of hoarding boards or billboards (Cool, Freeman & Tanielu, 2014). There has hardly been any restriction to the advertising of smoking despite its possible health and social impacts though the government of Nepal restricts these activities in such places (MoPH, 2012). Students are influenced towards smoking by the national media. As a result, it is not uncommon to see city skylines, roads, shop walls and boards, houses and national highways teeming with smoking billboards, banners and posters.

2. Literature review

This literature review provides a background of smoking habits, and review of smoking policy and its practice in Nepal. It begins with an overview of smoking habits and the issue of smoking related with the public concern in health and education. Then, the researcher discusses the influencing factors of smoking.

2.1. Overview of Smoking

Globally, 1.1 billion people who smoke and their starting age of smoking at first is 15 years (Sah, Shah, Subedi, & Jha, 2015). More than 700 million males live in developing countries (WHO, 2004). According to the World Health Organization 5 million individuals died every year from smoking-related conditions (Krauth, 2005; Uprety et al., 2014). In Asia, many studies show that 73% of smokers live in developing countries (Sah, Shah, Subedi, & Jha, 2015). More than 27.59 million adults are daily smokers and nearly 1.38 million people have been killed by smoking related causes (TA, 2010).

Every day, about 71 people die due to diseases related to smoking (TheHimalayaTimes, 2014). On the other hand, the government has been spending Rs 16 billion rupees annually for the treatment of patients suffering from these diseases (Times, 2011). Among them, 85% death occurs due to lung cancer. Those smokers suffering from lung cancer often neglect initial symptoms and take medicine themselves without undergoing any medical check-ups (S. Aarati, personal communication, 2015, 05, 05). In this way, smoking kills millions of people and causes billions of economic damage every year.

2.2. Smoking Habits in Policy Context

Globally, the World Health Assembly started to adopt framework convention on tobacco control (FCTC) in May 2003, and decided to control smoking habits. WHO FCTC is a legal global treaty for all countries to implement and manage smoking control programs and address the growing epidemic of smoking (WHO, 2011). Altogether 177 member countries reaffirmed the right of people to the highest standard of health by 2013, (WHO, 2013). Many countries have introduced tobacco production control and regulation acts or laws, but no countries in the world have successfully implemented such rules (Choe et al., 2004). Nepal ratified WHO FCTC in November, 2006. The government of Nepal introduced the tobacco product (control and regulation) Act, 2011 which was the primary law governing tobacco consumption in Nepal (MOHP, 2012). It enforced regulations regarding smoking in public places, workplaces, public transport, and limited advertising and sponsorship (MOHP, 2012). The government of Nepal also introduced the amendments of tobacco product and regulatory directive, 2014 with the aim of controlling and minimizing smoking production, sale and distribution (GON, 2014). It introduced the Printing Warning Messages and Pictures on Tobacco Product Boxes, Packets, Cartons, Parcels and Packaging Materials (GON, 2014). However, these acts and directives functioned for few months and later they did not function well due to the lack of strict monitoring and implementing mechanism (Onongha, 2013).

The Government of Nepal mandated all smoking manufacturing companies to put 'danger' pictorials on the cover of all products, which should cover at least 75% of the cover (Mahato, 2012). It was increased up to 90% in a packet of cigarette by 2014 (TheHimalayaTimes, 2014; GON, 2014). The government of Nepal also banned smoking around public places like schools and school areas. It prohibited selling smoking materials within 100 meters around these places (GON, 2014). However, it was not strictly followed up. The government of Nepal has the full power to monitor and take action against illegal smoking and the sale of smoking related products (GON, 2014), but due to the corrupt mentality and less interest in implementation, the existing smoking law, policy and directives are not functioning well in Nepal. The high taxes on cigarettes, no advertisement of cigarettes from any media, and warning labels on cigarette packets also seemed useless in the context of Nepal (Corrao et al, 2000). It is little practiced and not fully implemented by the government of Nepal (Ojha, 2016).

Instead of regulating the ban of advertisement about smoking in print and mass media, data suggested that the national media itself earned around 1.25 million rupees from smoking advertisements annually (Tuladhar, 2004). However, the economic cost of smoking is equally devastating. Smoking killed people at the height of their productivity, depriving the breadwinners of the family and nations (WHO, 2014). So, smokers are less productive while they are alive due to increased sickness.

3. Influencing Factors on Smoking Habits

There are a number of factors that influence students to smoke. These influencing factors can be classified as family condition and environment, community and social culture, role of teachers and parents, school environment, peer group and media. Each of the factors is discussed separately under the following headings.

3.1. Family Condition and Smoking Habits

Poor economic condition of the family is one of the most important reasons for smoking cigarettes (Giannotta & Ozdemir, 2013). In Nepal, the poverty rate is about 25.16 % and about 34.1% people are still illiterate (CBS, 2012). Due to the lack of education, poor people get involved in low and easy type of income activities, and students also get involved in smoking due to the poor economic condition of the family in Nepal (Upriety et al., 2014; Jha & Subba, 2002).

Positive family mealtime environment (mealtime without smoking) also contributes in controlling children from smoking (White & Halliwell, 2010). It was found that the number of family mealtime activities also helped to control smoking among the students (Leatherdale, Hammond & Ahmed, 2008). It also depended on regular assessment and intention of family members to control smoking habits among the students (Thomas, Baker & Lorezetti, 2007). The family based program which was free of smoking also helped stop smoking among the students (Thomas, Baker, Thomas & Lorenzetti, 2015). Such studies suggest that students who have close relationships with family are less likely to smoke (Choe et al., 2004; Hatamleh & Khazaleh, 2016).

3.2. Social Setting and Smoking Habits

Social setting and high stress inspired some students for smoking. These are the potential factors to influence adults in smoking (Witkiewitz et al., 2012). On the other hand, social context and settings such as festivals were also other factors to motivate students toward smoking (Jackson, Colby & Sher, 2010). Zarqa University students suggested that students were less aware of festivals and could think and rethink about social cultural activities of not smoking (Hatamleh & Khazaleh, 2016). For many, smoking habits have been developed primarily from social context. Adult smokers who regularly practiced more smoking in socio-culture settings would motivate students (Jackson, Colby & Sher, 2010).

Moreover, socio cultural factors also encourage students for smoking (Bobo & Husten, 2000). Equally, social control and family structures may help them to avoid smoking (Kask, Markina & Podana, 2013). Smoking contributes to “negative life events”. Thus, social control depends on social norms, values, social rules and regulations for people in the society (Voigt, 2015). This indicates that parental roles were essential for controlling bad social activities.

3.3. Parental Role and the Role of School on Smoking Habits

The weak role of parents in education is another reason that influences students to smoke (Patrick & Schulenberg, 2013). Similarly, parental education and awareness can be another factor to stop smoking among students (Bach, 2016). Likewise, parental economic and social status also helps to reduce smoking in their children (Choe et al., 2004). Parents can manage time for their children to discourage smoking (Scutti, 2016). In the context of Nepal, the parents who are aware about their social and economic status, their children are less likely to adopt such habits. Study shows that 80% students of the poor family smoked in Jhapa, Nepal (Uprety et al., 2014).

Studies pointed out that corporal punishment is not an effective way of reducing smoking at schools (Anwer, Mohammad, Slman & Salman, 2013). However, often the poor parents find it difficult to manage time to make close observation at their children. Poor school environment is a factor, which motivates students to smoke (Leatherdale, Hammond, & Ahmed, 2008). That is why the students who smoke have poorer school performances. They are likely to left school early.

3.4. Peer Group and the Medias in Relation to Smoking Habits

Peer group behaviors influence students’ smoking habits in the North of Vietnam. According to a study 51.7% of boys and 26.3% of girls smoked just for their friends (Dao, 2010). In this way, peer groups highly motivate the students towards smoking in the North of Vietnam (Dao, 2010). There is an association between the media ((TV and radio) and smoking habits among the school students in the US (Portnoy, Cwu, Tworek, & Chen, 2014). Almost 80% of the students are significantly motivated from the media like TV and movies in Nepal (Aryal & Bhatta, 2015). Moreover, bar and restaurants also motivate students to smoke (Williamson, 2007).

4. Methodology

The researcher has followed descriptive and correlative research design, Bhaktapur district as a geographic area to study, calculating formula for sampling size (FSU,2014) has been used as

1. Sample Size (SS) = $\frac{Z*Z}{(\text{Margin of Error}\% / \text{Confidence Level Score})^2}$
2. True Sample (TS) = $\frac{(\text{SS} \times \text{Total population})}{(\text{SS} + \text{Total Population} - 1)}$

The exact sample for this study was 346 students of grade 11 and 12 and randomly picked up 346 students for this study.

Then, developed the questionnaires to carry out field study to find the indicators where the researcher used a diary as a tool to gather information from the students and teachers to develop independent variables and dependent variables for this research. Library books, news papers, research books, magazines and journal articles were used to collect more information to redefine the research variables. The researcher tested them among four smokers, two teachers of schools, and two staff members who worked in smoking related social organizations with the aims of finding more indicators of smoking and some gaps in designing the questionnaires. Then, the researcher pre-tested the research questionnaires in college of Kathmandu. The researcher entered all collected information in the SPSS program to calculate and design numbering data, to summarize, compare, and generalize about smoking. The researcher used the frequency and descriptive data were used for summarizing the information about smoking. Mean and a criterion for motivation were used for data analysis and interpretation.

Table 1

Criteria for Understanding the Level of Motivation

Motivation level	Mean score
Highly de-motivated	1.00-1.80
De-Motivated	1.81-2.60
Neutral	2.61-3.40
Motivated	3.41-4.20
Highly motivated	4.21-5.00

(Joshi, 2016)

5. Data presentation

There are some factors that influence the students to smoke. Influencing factors were the concern of this study. Table 1 displays the level of such factors in seven different statements.

Table 2

Factors Influencing Smoking Habits

Factors	Boys			Girls		
	Mean	S D	Result	Mean	SD	Result
Peer group/pressure	4.4	0.6	HM	3.9	1.2	M
Social activities and social festival such as Shivaratri / phagu Purnima.	3.2	1.4	N	2.9	1.3	N
Neighbors	3.7	1.4	N	3.4	1.3	N
Family environment	2.1	1.1	DM	2.2	1.1	DM
School environment	3.6	1.3	M	3.2	1.1	N
Media (television and radio)	3.6	1.3	M	3.5	1.2	M
Pubs/clubs or restaurants	3.3	1.4	N	3.3	1.4	N
Total	3.3	1.2	N	3.2	1.2	N

(Note= 1- 1.80 = Highly De-motivated (HDM), 1.81-2.60 =De-motivated (DM), 2.61 – 3.40 =Neutral (N), 3.41 – 4.20 =Motivated (M) and 4.21-5.00 =Highly Motivated (HM)

The result presented in Table 2 shows the level of motivation and influence on the boys and girls to smoking. The boys were found to be highly motivated by one item, motivated by two items, neutral by three items and de-motivated by one item and girls were found to be motivated by two items, neutral by four items and de-motivated by one item. It indicated that the boys (mean =4.3, SD=1.2) and girls (mean =4.3, SD=1.2) were neutrally motivated to smoking habits.

Regarding the statement in Table 2, 'Influenced by peer pressure ', the boys (mean =4.4, SD=0.6) were highly motivated to smoke then girls (mean =3.9, SD=1.2) were. This result indicated that teachers and parents could make them aware from the existing smoking situation. Likewise, friends could rethink to make them good friends with no smoking habits in the coming days. Regarding the statement, 'Influenced by school environment' the boys (mean =3.6, SD=1.3) were motivated to smoke but the girls (mean =3.2, SD=1.1) were neutral about it.

Regarding the statement, 'Influenced by social festivals such as Shivaratri / Phagu Purnima' the boys (mean =3.2, SD= 1.4) and girls (mean =2.9, SD=1.3) were neutrally motivated. In addition, the mean score indicated that the boys were more influenced than the girls. In terms of the statement, 'Influenced by the media (TV, radio, posters and pamphlets) the boys(mean =3.6, SD=1.3) and girls(mean =3.5, SD=1.2) were motivated to smoke but from the mean score indicated that most of the boys were motivated rather than the girls. This result indicated that students could be aware by the media. The boys (mean =3. 6, SD=1.4) and girls (mean =3.4, SD=1.2) were neutrally motivated to smoking by the neighbors. But the mean score showed that the girls were more influenced from their neighbors. This result indicated that students could be aware from the neighbors and community learning approaches.

As per the statement, 'Influenced by pubs/clubs or restaurants' the boys (mean =3.3, SD=1.3) and the girls (mean =3.3, SD=1.3) were neutrally motivated to smoke, indicating that they could save themselves from these places. However, the boys and the girls were de-motivated from smoking by their family members and family environment.

6. Discussion of Findings

There are a number of factors that influence students to smoke. These influencing factors can be classified as family condition and environment, community and social culture, role of teachers and parents, school environment, peer group and media.

Poor family condition was one of the most important reasons and influencing factors for smoking (Giannotta & Ozdemir, 2013). However, in this study there was no relationship between poor family conditions and smoking habits. There was some relationship between the number of smokers in the family and smoking habits which was similar to the study on smoking among adolescents in the Jhaukhel-Duwakot of Nepal (Aryal, Petzold, Bondjers,& Krettek, 2014). It means that there is high possibility of smoking in economically poorer families (Aryal & Bhatta, 2015). Less involvement of parents on education is also another influence on the students' smoking (Patrick & Schulenberg, 2013). In this study, the researcher found that there was no relationship between education of the father and smoking habits; some relationship between education of mothers and smoking habits; and parental age and smoking habits. It indicates that there is a higher chance that students smoke if the mother in a family is illiterate or uneducated. There is high possibility for students to smoke if there is more age gap between parents and their children (Neubert, 2013).

Positive family environment (no smoking family) motivates students not to smoke (White & Halliwell, 2010). Being familiar with these students' problem could be one of the ways of reducing smoking among the school going children (Leatherdale, Hammond, & Ahmed, 2008). The students who have close relationships with their family are less likely to smoke (Choe et al., 2004). However, in this research, there was no relationship between time spent in school and smoking habits. However, there is relationship between time spent with friends and time spent with family on smoking habits. It can be informed that those students of the public schools who spent significantly more time with their families are less likely to smoke; whereas, those students who spent significantly more times with their friends have high possibility to smoke. This result was similar to the study on smoking among Zarqa University students in Jordan (Hatamleh & Khazaleh, 2016).

Peer groups were the cause of smoking among students in the North of Vietnam (Dao, 2010). Also, in this research the researcher found that 74.8% of the smokers knew about smoking from their friends. The significantly higher numbers of students smoked more with their friends rather than community people and family members. Smoking students were influenced by peer group in the North of Vietnam (Dao, 2010). The researcher found that out-of-school friends of the boys (75.0%) were significantly higher than those of the girls (25.0%). This result indicates that the boy students are in high risks from out-of-school friends. On the level of peer groups, they were highly motivated to smoking habits in the North of Vietnam (Dao, 2010). This concern was similar in this study as there was relationship between peer groups and smoking habits.

Social context and social settings such as festivals are other factors that motivate smoking among the students (Jackson, Colby, & Sher, 2010). This research, the researcher found that social festivals such as Shivaratri and Phagu Purnima significantly motivated to smoke, which was similar to the study on the causes of smoking habits among the students in Islamabad (Khurshid, 2012). This result indicates that students need to practice healthy cultural practices. This is also similar to the study on smoking among Zarqa University students (Hatamleh & Khazaleh, 2016).

There was direct association between the media ((TV and radio) advertisement and smoking habits among the school students in the US (Portnoy, Cwu, Tworek, & Chen, 2014). Eight percent of the students were motivated by the media like TV and movies in Nepal (Aryal & Bhatta, 2015). As indicated by this study, the media has a role in making students to smoke. Bars and restaurants also motivate students to smoke.

7. Summary

Teenagers are those young people, including students, who are aged between 13 and 19. There are about 712 million teenagers in the Asian region, and 24.48 % in Nepal. This study explored the existing realities, influencing factors of smoking habits among the secondary school students in Bhaktapur. So, this study has provided inputs for the teachers, parents, students, policy makers, implementers, and decision makers on smoking among the students of public schools. In this study, books, newspapers, research books, magazines and journal articles were used as a secondary source. In primary sources, the researcher was used questionnaires to collect information from school students. The researcher used the SPSS for filtering, editing and analyzing the data. The mean and a criterion for motivation were used for data analysis and interpretation.

The researcher presented statistics, and analyzed data related to the students' influencing factors. From the demography of the students, the researcher found that 36.7% of the students were smokers. The students who smoked were highly influenced by peer pressure, and were motivated by social festival such as Shivaratri / phagu Purnima, media and neighbors. The students were neutrally motivated to smoke from pubs/clubs or restaurants and from family environment and school environment.

8. Conclusion

Smoking negatively affects students' health and education. Students usually think that it is a minor issue but it may proceed to become major issue in student's future. As the study suggests, the greater numbers of boys are smokers as compared to the girls. The students are highly influenced by peer pressure. They are motivated by social festivals such as Shivaratri / Phagu Purnima, media and neighbors.

It has not been easy either to accept or deny the existing realities on smoking habits among the students in school. It is widely accepted that smoking is a problem, which can harm students' health and education. There have been both challenges and opportunities for reducing smoking habits among the students. However, the question is how to solve and minimize the existing challenges of smoking. Many social and government organizations have been working with this issue. There might be strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in public schools. However, teachers, parents, neighbors and community people can play supportive roles to reduce smoking habits among the students in public schools.

9. Implications

Education is commonly accepted tool of development. It is to transmit knowledge, skills and information to people. Education plays a vital role to raise awareness among students, parents and community people in our

society. However, our school education may not go effective, if we are not serious about smoking habits among the students at schools.

Students are highly influenced by peer group and motivated by the media and social festival which is the existing situation at schools. Hence, schools and teachers can publish wall magazines and newsletters to discourage students about the health hazards of smoking. If the parents are dissatisfied with the performance of public schools, they may send their children to others schools. So, schools have to review and rethink about the existing situation. They may act on reducing the problem of smoking in schools. Only unity and coordination of parents, teachers and community people possibly reduce such bad habits by increasing the quality of education. So, schools could establish sharing mechanisms and peer education against wrong activities among the students, parents, teachers and community people. Parents can work as watch dogs. They can play an active role for making good relationship among teachers, students and the school management committee. It is likely to play significant role to reduce smoking habits among the students.

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