



Social norms and religious beliefs: Predictors of rationalization and regret

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Introduction

- 1. Social norms – People’s belief about the attitudes and behaviors that are normal, acceptable or expected in a particular social context.** (Malaysian society disapproves of smoking)
- 2. Religious belief – a faith or creed concerning the supernatural, sacred or divine or a set of rules to guide one’s life.** (In your day-to-day life, how often do you refer to or use your religious beliefs and values to guide your actions?)
- 3. Regret – feel sorry about something you have done and wish you had not done it.** (If you had to do it over again, you would not have started smoking)
- 4. Rationalization – to devise self satisfying but incorrect reasons for your behavior.** (Everybody has got to die of something, so why not enjoy yourself and smoke)
- 5. Malaysia showed the lowest level (79%) of regret and the highest level of rationalization (49%) compared to Thailand, Korea, US, Canada, Australia and UK.**

Objective

- 1.To test any association of social norms with regret & rationalization**
- 2.To assess any relation of religious beliefs with regret & rationalization**

Methodology

- Cohort study (5 years).
- Wave 1 International Tobacco Control Survey data (2005)
- Strata selected states from 6 states
- Samples from urban and rural areas
- 2006 adult smokers
- Face to face interview
- Cross sectional data

Distribution of smokers according to regret and rationalization

Variable (s)	Frequency	(%)
Regret		
Yes	1396	71.6
No	555	28.4
Rationalize		
Yes	785	40.2
No	1169	59.8
Society disapproves smoking		
Agree	525	26.9
Disagree	1430	73.1

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Variable (s)	Frequency	(%)
Religion		
Islam	1513	75.5
Christianity	150	7.5
Hinduism	91	4.5
Buddhism & traditional Chinese religions	213	10.6
Others	38	1.9
Belief guides action (Religiosity)		
Yes	1733	87.5
No	247	12.5

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Variable (s)	Frequency	(%)
Religion discourages smoking		
Yes	1323	68.1
No	621	31.9
Islam rule on smoking		
Strictly forbidden	137	9.3
Discouraged	1112	75.6
Others	222	15.1

Association of social norms and religious beliefs with regret

	Independent Variable (s)	Regret	
		OR (95%)	p value
1)	Society disapproves smoking	1.56 (1.24-1.98)	<0.001
2)	Beliefs guide action (religiosity)	1.29 (0.96-1.74)	0.090
3)	Religion discourages smoking	1.47 (1.19-1.81)	<0.001
4)	Religion (*Islam - reference)		0.083
	a) Christianity	1.18 (0.80-1.75)	0.394
	b) Hinduism	1.18 (0.72-1.94)	0.511
	c) Buddhism	0.68 (0.50-0.92)	0.012
	d) Other & no religion	1.01 (0.48-2.11)	0.983
5)	Islam rule on smoking (*other - reference)		
	a) strictly forbidden	1.80 (1.08-3.00)	0.024
	b) discouraged	1.21 (0.88-1.65)	0.243
6)	Ramadan motivates quitting (*other - reference)		
	a) a little	1.83 (1.33-2.54)	<0.001
	b) a lot	3.60 (2.29-5.64)	<0.001

Association of social norms and religious beliefs with rationalization

	Independent Variable (s)	Rationalization	
		OR (95%)	p value
1)	Society disapproves smoking	0.99 (0.81-1.22)	0.943
2)	Beliefs guide action (Religiosity)	1.21 (0.91-1.61)	0.192
3)	Religion discourages smoking	0.92(0.76-1.12)	0.411
4)	Religion (*Islam - reference)		0.031
	a) Christianity	0.61 (0.42-0.87)	0.007
	b) Hinduism	0.90 (0.58-1.49)	0.646
	c) Buddhism	1.24 (0.93-1.66)	0.144
	d) Other & no religion	0.83 (0.41-1.64)	0.583
5)	Islam rule on smoking (*other - reference)		
	a) strictly forbidden	0.87 (0.56-1.34)	0.520
	b) discouraged	0.78 (0.58-1.04)	0.930
6)	Ramadan motivates quitting (*other - reference)		
	a) a little	0.60 (0.44-0.83)	0.002
	b) a lot	0.59 (0.40-0.87)	0.007

Association between regret and rationalization

		Regret	
		Do not regret	Regret
Rationalization	Do not rationalize	346 (62.9%)	816 (58.6%)
	Rationalize	204 (37.1%)	576 (41.4%)

OR = 1.20 (0.98-1.47)

P value = 0.82

Important points to highlight

1. Only 26.9% of the Malaysian smokers agreed that society disapproves smoking.
2. 56% of them were more likely to regret over their smoking.
3. 68.1% of the smokers thought that all religions in Malaysia discourage smoking.
4. Believing that religion discourages smoking was associated with an increased chance of regret (47%).
5. Only 9.3% of the Muslim smokers believed that smoking is strictly forbidden in Islam whereas 75.6% of them felt that smoking is only discouraged.
6. Among them, those who believed that smoking is forbidden in Islam 80% were more likely to regret.
7. Believing that Ramadan motivates quitting was associated with an increased probability of regret and decreased probability of the justification for their smoking behavior (rationalization).

Conclusion

- 1. In conclusion, these results point to the importance of social norms and religious beliefs in rationalization and regret.**
- 2. Engaging religious norms or key religious periods, for example, Ramadan, in quit-smoking campaigns and publicizing the notion that smoking should be forbidden may as well be a good theme to incorporate in attempts to increase quitting among Muslims.**

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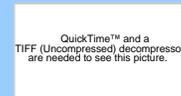
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<http://www.itcproject.org>

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Thank you.

