



Research Article

Agathokakological Aspect of Alcohol Advertising in Newspapers

Yajur Karki^{1*}

¹Department of Sociology, Rato Bangala School, Lalitpur, Nepal

Article Information

Received: 11 June 2021

Revised version received: 06 July 2021

Accepted: 12 July 2021

Published: 29 July 2021

Cite this article as:

Y. Karki (2021) *Int. J. Soc. Sc. Manage.* 8(3): 408-415. DOI: [10.3126/ijssm.v8i3.37708](https://doi.org/10.3126/ijssm.v8i3.37708)

*Corresponding author

Yajur Karki,

Department of Sociology, Rato Bangala School,
Lalitpur, Nepal

Email: yajurkarki318@gmail.com

Peer reviewed under authority of IJSSM

© 2021 IJSSM, Permits unrestricted use under the
CC-BY-NC license.

OPEN ACCESS



This is an open access article & it is licensed under a
[Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

[International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Keywords: Alcohol; Consumerism; Capitalism; Mass Culture

Abstract

Nepal has a perennial history with the culture of alcohol and it is mostly seen as a form of social capital. Alcohol usage has been inextricable with local cultures, i.e., festivals. The current study aims to investigate aspects of alcohol advertising in newspapers using content analysis. The study focuses on unraveling the ideologies of liquor advertisers in boosting alcohol promotion mostly among the youth. Ostensibly, the boosterism of alcohol advertisements has been concomitant in an attempt to establish it as a mass culture. Consumerism remains the central theme of global contemporary societies and the fundamentals of capitalism are characterized by oligopolistic standards. Facets of such attempt to create a culture revolving around alcohol by injecting messages through advertisements to specific age groups. Forty random private newspapers and twenty state newspapers are taken into consideration and simplified into a coding form to test the two hypotheses. Variables such as themes of advertisement, age, published days, messages espoused, alcohol types, and types of advertisements have been independently tested for correlation. The research has highlighted that advertisers tend to promote alcohol as a form of reinforcing different cultures with the sales of alcohol. Also, there have been frequent reported attempts to magnify use of alcohol during weekends for tranquility from rigid bureaucratic norms. Waves of global cultures have also been associated with alcohol promotion as means of celebration.

Introduction

Newspaper is a product of media regarded as a mode of one of the ways of communication. Societies are composed of many biases and the role of newspapers is to represent the interest of a multitude of groups and institutions that interact in their own ways. The type of medium used to disseminate messages are pivotal to the impact of what messages leave. The nature of the content, language, interpretation have a crucial effect on the messages being conveyed (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). In the context of this research, those involved in promoting alcohol delineate their own biases

and a conflict of interest. Alcohol advertisements reflect the ideology behind the capitalist bosses who operate these firms for profit incentivization. Capitalist social orders have put an extraordinary significance on consumerism. By and large, there are a lot higher expectations for everyday comforts, and there is a considerable accentuation on getting individuals to devour items that can be delivered in higher numbers. A more well-to-do populace with more recreation time should be engaged and convinced to go through cash if organizations are to keep on making benefits

(Strinati, 1995). Present day cultures are described by an interest in advancing postmodern culture. Such occupations incorporate planning, promoting, publicizing and imaginative positions in the different media. These positions include convincing individuals about the significance of taste (alcohol). Whenever individuals are convinced of this, they will access this aptitude through the media.

The study "Alcohol and youngsters in Nepal" discovered that 11% detailed drinking 'routinely' at present, 23% 'regularly', 58% 'once in a while', and 8 percent 'not in any way'. Among the individuals who had imbibed in the previous 30 days, 49.5% of boys reported binge drinking, a much greater percentage than girls. Alcohol advertisers have especially targeted youths and permeated alcohol promotion during festivals and holidays (Maharjan and Magar, 2017). The transition from adolescence into youthhood presents opportunities to try new things and explore different cultures. Capitalist bosses tend to exploit this transition and assert their capitalist business strategies. The job of media is to ingest youth subcultures into standard social orders. Rather than permitting youths to oppose entrepreneur society, the industrialist world endeavors to neutralize them through synthesis. Youth social signs are changed over into mass created objects. They lose their oppositional implications. The entrepreneur market viably removes ancient rarities from youngsters, estranging them from their own subcultures (Hebdige, 1988). The messages instilled to individuals takes an approach of a hypodermic model. This involves the effect that is left on individuals after a message is injected. The hypnotic power of the mass media deprives one from the capacity of critical thinking which is essential to change the world (Marcuse, 1964). The theoretical explanation can be explicated in terms of cultural hegemony in modern societies. The essence imbued through advertisements can lead to individuals finding liquor appealing. This ignites individuals to let govern the culture of alcohol on a consensus that relentlessly benefits the alcohol industry.

Modern societies are suffused by rational stern bureaucratic principles. There tends to be less trust placed on religious claims and beliefs. The culture of organic solidarity means that people have to be dependent on each other and it is the rational value that strings relations between individuals. Offices and bureaucratic fundamentals dominate daily life. A survey in 2010 found that earning money caused significant stress among 76% of individuals (APA stress in America survey, 2010). In the lens of Marxism this has led to creation of a Mass Culture that seemingly promises relaxation after completion of onerous tasks at weekends. Alcohol administration could reduce conflict-induced stress (Masserman and Yum, 1946). Mass Culture is of little worth. It doesn't herald a veritable culture nor does it contain an inborn worth. Mass culture is manufactured by

specialists, recruited by finance managers; its consumers are detached purchasers, their investment restricted to the decision among purchasing and not purchasing. The supervisors, to put it plainly, misuse the social necessities of the majority to make a benefit or potentially to keep up their authority.

The present study aims to investigate two hypotheses presented below-

- i) Alcohol advertisers precisely target themes of advertisement to reinforce messages in creation of a neo-culture.
- ii) Youths are the target of themes of advertisement when boosting alcohol advertisement.

Statement of Problem

The investigation is based on discovering the ulterior ideologies of alcohol advertisers. Apart from testing the two hypotheses presented above; the research also presents two questions -

- i) Why are alcohol advertisements published every weekend?
- ii) Why doesn't the state newspaper publish alcohol advertisements?

Every random newspaper taken covering weekends has instances of alcohol being reported. On the other hand, there is no particular instance of the state newspaper reporting alcohol. Each and every variable has been closely tested for correlations but greater significance has been reported in hypotheses. In depth frequency counting into variables have found state newspapers rendering the possibility of alcohol reporting. State newspapers are operated by the government and this stems from the assumptions of classical pluralism i.e. the government and state serves to the interest of the respectable members of society and according to the biases of members of society. State is the most responsible body in a society. Pluralists define state as an honest worker which takes account of demand, assertion of coercion and multitude of viewpoints. In 2017, the government of Nepal passed a policy which discourages the promotion of alcohol. The respective policy is biased towards one group of particular interest. Each group of particular interest throughout some stretch of time has its inclinations reflected in administrative choices, due to divisions inside society, it is not feasible for the state to fulfill everybody constantly. Hence, government becomes a business of compromise (Aron, 1968). Creation of a culture during weekends is linked to the hegemonic model of capitalism.

The whole unpredictable practical and hypothetical activities with which the decision class legitimizes and keeps up its strength, however, figures out how to keep up the dynamic assent of those over whom it rules (Gramsci,

1971). There intends to be an imposition of ‘profit-seeking logic’ on other systems where there isn’t the direct involvement of buying of goods by consumers.

Methodology

A sample of a total 60 random newspapers have been taken into consideration from November 2020 to March 2021. Forty newspapers taken are private and 20 are state newspapers. 20 newspapers have been taken from Kantipur, 20 from The Himalayan Times and 20 from Gorkhapatra. Quantitative data has been collected through content analysis and for the collection of subjective data textual analysis has been done. SPSS IBM 25 has been used to test hypotheses by determining correlations and frequency counting. To simplify - events, days, age, advertisement types, reinforcement, alcohol types and types of newspapers have been operationalized and represented in a coding form. Cultural festivities such as Tihar, Maha Shivaratri, Holi have been defined as ‘Local Culture’. Western derived festivities such as Christmas, New Year and St Valentine’s Day have been defined as ‘Global Culture’. Democracy day and International women’s day are categorized as ‘National Days’ whereas alcohol reporting mostly on weekends and working days labelled as ‘Mass Culture’. All these have been collectively classified as themes of advertisements. Content and textual analysis have led to classifying ‘Reinforcement’. Advertisements aggrandizing liquor during local cultures, advocating national identity, relaxation and break from work, means of celebration such as concerts are typified as ‘Cultural’, ‘National Identity’, ‘Tranquility’ and ‘Celebration’ respectively. Fridays and Saturdays are grouped as ‘Weekends’ whereas Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are sorted to ‘Working Days’. Newspapers Kantipur and Himalayan Times are codified as ‘Private’ and Gorkhapatra as ‘State’.

Results

It is inexorable that alcohol advertisements are reported frequently during weekends. Alcohol reporting during

weekends is an attempt to create a common mass culture of tranquility. Analysis of labels attached to advertisements decipher those advertisers try to attract consumers by enchanting labels such as - “Elevate your expectations”, “Move to the next level”. Youths have been the primary focus of advertising. Youths being a vulnerable age group are the prey of capitalist bosses. Analysis of texts have proven that alcohol advertisements tend to promise a means of solidarity in today’s busy world. Labels such as “World class quality enjoyed by friends all over the world”. Drawing comparisons from the hypodermic model - alcohol advertisers have also targeted festivals. These include using alcohol during local cultures and global cultures reinforcing it as a means of celebration. Labels such as “This Tihar, make it large”, “More celebration this Holi”, “This New Year, make it large”, “Kissing Burns 2 calories a minute, That’s wonderful: Happy Valentine’s day” have all been used to boost consumerism culture among individuals. Symbolic codes of social capital have also been exploited in the process of promotion. Lord Shiva, for instance, has been used as an image of liquor promotion because of the past of his which historically had spun around alcohol and drugs. Advertisers have stimulated alcohol promotion during Holi by targeting the culture of drinking *Bhang*. Societies in modern days being characterized by consumerism infers the fact that consumption shapes identity. Alcohol boosterism has also strived to create alcohol as a national identity. Labels as such include “With pride, Nepali”. There are occurrences of promoting celebrations and concerts with alcohol especially among youths. There are also differences in types of alcohol that are advertised. Mostly Whiskey has been reported. All samples in coding form are shown in Table 1. Statistical analysis of sample newspapers is shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Final Coding form

Sample	Newspaper type	Published Days	Alcohol types	Types of Ads	Themes of Ads	Reinforcement	Age Group
	1=State 2=Private	1=Weekend 2=Working Days	1=Whiskey 2=Beer 3=Rum 4=Gin 5=Wine 6=Vodka 7=Cider	1=Classified 2=Display 3=Spotlight	1=Mass Culture 2=Global Culture 3=Local Culture 4=National Days	1=Cultural 2=National Identity 3=Tranquility 4=Celebration	1=Youth 2=Adult 3=Elderly 4=All Age Group
1	2	1	1	2	1	3	2
2	2	2	1	3	3	1	2
3	2	2	3	2	1	2	4
4	2	1	5	3	2	4	1

Table 1: Final Coding form

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Newspaper type</i> 1=State 2=Private	<i>Published Days</i> 1=Weekend 2=Working Days	<i>Alcohol types</i> 1=Whiskey 2=Beer 3=Rum 4=Gin 5=Wine 6=Vodka 7=Cider	<i>Types of Ads</i> 1=Classified 2=Display 3=Spotlight	<i>Themes of Ads</i> 1=Mass Culture 2=Global Culture 3=Local Culture 4=National Days	<i>Reinforcement</i> 1=Cultural Identity 2=National Identity 3=Tranquility 4=Celebration	<i>Age Group</i> 1=Youth 2=Adult 3=Elderly 4=All Age Group
5	2	2	6	2	2	4	1
6	2	1	1	2	2	4	1
7	2	1	3	1	1	3	4
8	2	2	1	2	1	3	1
9	2	1	3	2	1	2	2
10	2	1	5	3	2	4	1
11	2	2	3	2	1	2	2
12	2	1	5	2	4	2	2
13	2	1	2	3	1	4	1
14	2	2	5	2	4	2	2
15	2	2	5	2	3	1	1
16	2	1	2	1	1	4	4
17	2	2	2	2	3	1	1
18	2	1	2	1	3	1	1
19	2	2	5	2	3	4	1
20	2	2	3	1	1	2	4
21	2	1	1	1	1	3	2
22	2	2	2	2	3	1	1
23	2	1	4	2	3	1	1
24	2	2	3	2	1	2	2
25	2	2	1	2	1	3	4
26	2	1	1	2	2	4	1
27	2	2	2	3	2	4	1

Table 1: Final Coding form

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Newspaper type</i>	<i>Published Days</i>	<i>Alcohol types</i>	<i>Types of Ads</i>	<i>Themes of Ads</i>	<i>Reinforcement</i>	<i>Age Group</i>
	1=State 2=Private	1=Weekend 2=Working Days	1=Whiskey 2=Beer 3=Rum 4=Gin 5=Wine 6=Vodka 7=Cider	1=Classified 2=Display 3=Spotlight	1=Mass Culture 2=Global Culture 3=Local Culture 4=National Days	1=Cultural Identity 2=National Identity 3=Tranquility 4=Celebration	1=Youth 2=Adult 3=Elderly 4=All Age Group
28	2	1	1	2	2	4	1
29	2	1	6	2	1	3	2
30	2	2	1	1	1	3	1
31	2	1	3	2	1	2	4
32	2	2	6	2	2	4	1
33	2	2	1	2	1	3	1
34	2	1	2	2	1	3	2
35	2	2	2	3	3	1	1
36	2	1	7	2	1	3	4
37	2	1	2	2	3	1	1
38	2	1	6	2	3	1	1
39	2	2	2	3	1	3	2
40	2	2	1	2	1	2	1

Table 2: Statistical analysis of sample newspapers

	Published Days	Types of Alcohol	Types of Ads	Themes of Ads	Types of Newspapers	Reinforcement	Age Group
N Valid	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.50	2.92	2.08	1.85	2.00	2.65	1.80
Standard deviation	0.51	1.83	0.57	0.98	0.00	1.14	1.11
Minimum	Weekend	Cider	Classified	National Day	Private	Cultural	All age group
Maximum	Working Days	Whiskey	Display	Mass Culture	Private	Celebration	Youth

Testing Hypothesis 1

Testing of hypothesis one shows a significant correlation between themes of advertisements and the messages reinforced. The conjecture statement tends to be 95.8% correct with $p < 0.05$ (Table 3). This is a strong vindication to the fact that themes of advertisements, i.e., covering an array of events correlates with reinforcing messages to create the form of culture that alcohol advertisers attempt to establish. Mass Culture being more cognate to means of celebration and tranquility. Alcohol is promoted to reduce stressful bureaucratic workload and also as a means of celebration during weekends. Instances of alcohol promotion have been interlinked with cultural espousal. Cultural symbols and signs of local cultures have been associated when advertising liquors. Alcohol has also been used as a tool for instituting a national identity. In a case in point, alcohol has been subject to empower women creating a new liberal identity and also pride Nepali identity attached to alcohol advertisement. Global cultures are mostly popular among youths and as a result liquor has been customarily reported as means of celebration.

Testing Hypothesis 2

Testing of hypothesis 2 indicates a strong correlation between themes of advertisements and a particular age group being earmarked. 55% of alcohol advertisements have focused on youths. The calculated significance is 0.003 i.e. $p < 0.05$ (Table 4), the estimated statement being 99.7% true. Celebration has been linked to youths and a reported meticulous effort to integrate alcohol into youth culture of celebration. Liquors have been introduced into musical concerts and group festivals. Local cultures such as Holi that are illustrious among youths constantly promote collective celebration attached with cultural code. Nepal is slowly inching towards modernization and as an effect there are festivities that are celebrated by youths which aren't culturally embedded such as Valentine's day. Celebration yet again remains the central tenet. Today's fast paced society requires a young workforce. People remain enmeshed in bureaucratic tasks and find themselves under pressure. Alcohol advertisers conscientiously utilize weekends and few random days to create a mass culture which includes stress reduction from work.

Table 3: Testing of hypothesis 1

		Themes of Ads	Reinforcement
Themes of Ads	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.324
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.042
	N	40	40
Reinforcement	Pearson Correlation	-.324	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	
	N	40	40

Table 4: Testing of hypothesis 2

		Age Group	Themes of Ads
Age Group	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.453
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	40	40
Themes of Ads	Pearson Correlation	-.453	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	40	40

Discussions

Results resolutely denote that alcohol is being established as a mass culture. This mostly contributes to celebration, tranquility and leisure. On all weekend alcohol advertisements have been reported. Weekends mark break from bureaucratic work. The first research question is answered in terms of hunting leisure. Leisure has been related with the possibility of opportunity and would in general be viewed as including escape from more compelled and restricted spaces of public activity like work. In today's society leisure is viewed as a means of experiencing freedom from complex social duties. Rojek (1995) argues at each stage individuals have a solid feeling of what their identity is and participate in recreation pursuits proper to their age and character. Youngsters will go out mingling and may well take part in more calm pursuits related to present day thinking. Society turns out to be more pluralistic in the ways of life. People in turn shift to the leisure industry. People derive their satisfaction and a certain level of joy turning to alcohol as a result of breakaway from confinement is the basic presumption of alcohol advertisers. Occurrences of alcohol advertising in promoting national identity can be explained in similar terms. Identity politics becomes an integral part of life in pursuit of identity. Advertisers attach connotative codes for liquor promotion.

Thompson (1967) claims that before industrialisation, there was no clear distinction between leisure and work. This has led to alcohol playing a role in promoting global culture, mass culture and local culture for solidarity by the alcohol advertisers, which in turn profits them. Scranton and Bramham (1995) argue that coordinated relaxation and festivity is a vital part of the present day project. It is the time left over from work and paid business which is occupied with worthy extra free-time or unwinding, supporting existing financial and political game plans. The state and willful area gets engaged with getting sorted out recreation which should profit philosophies of the vested party. Older people are most likely to confine themselves in their home and pursue their hobbies but choosing a lifestyle for youth. Giddens (1991) claims that way of life turns out to be progressively significant in present day cultures. Ways of life include the creation of a feeling of culture instead of addressing utilitarian requirements. Recreation turns into a declaration of quest for a specific way of life, looking for personal growth or relaxation. Relaxation can be covered by many things such as movies, amusement parks or maybe even sex but the advertisements have depicted alcohol as the means of relaxation. Festivals remain the means to maintain togetherness in today's societies. The connotative codes attached place emphasis on using alcohol during festivals.

The second research question can be answered in terms of the roles that are bestowed upon the roles of government. The study in itself is evidence of alcohol advertisements not being published in state newspapers. Chomsky (2002) argues that the information provided to the public is narrowly and rigidly controlled. From the dimension of state newspapers, alcohol promotion isn't reported or can be reported to create a sense of fear. Burton and Sheron (2018) claim that alcohol has resulted in significant societal harms and disruption to social harmony. Local newspapers haven't portrayed alcohol advertisements nor presented the dark side of liquor. This is due to the fact that governments often face political barriers to introducing policies regarding controlling of alcohol because of the public pushback and opposition from the powerful alcohol industry (Hope, 2006). Nepal's economy is classified as a mixed economy. This refers to the fact that capitalist standards can maximize their incentives on a longer basis. As a result, alcohol industries have expanded their schemes with minimal curtailments.

Conclusion

Hence, the verification of the first hypothesis means that the motive behind advertising themes of advertisement is creation of a culture that is blended into alcohol. Celebration and establishment of national identity remains the central theme. The search for leisure tends to attract individuals towards alcohol. The effect of westernization is clearly reflected in celebrating global cultures and yet liquor is an asset of celebration. This finding also strongly correlates with the first research question. Potentially, the continuous advertising from the alcohol industry simply will lead to a dampening effect of alcoholism which will become a local problem.

Secondly, the validation of the second hypothesis indicates that themes of advertisements target youths mainly. The reason being that youths are the productive and active workforce in pursuit of leisure due to stressful workload. Music and concerts are popular among youths, alcohol advertisers have used the symbolic meaning of such to promote alcohol. The agenda is cogent that alcohol advertisements are an attempt to create a youth subculture that integrates alcohol. This in fact alienates the population from the true nature of alcohol.

Lastly, the state newspaper stays neutral when it comes to alcohol reporting. This is due to the forces of the alcohol industry. Put simply, the government becomes a mere business of compromise. Alcohol consumption is seen as an undesirable behaviour. As a dependable organ of the state, alcohol furtherance is given zero priority.

Suggestions

Alcohol consumption has become a global issue. Private newspapers regularly publish alcohol advertisements without any restrictions, whereas state newspapers and the state have stayed neutral. The following recommendations illustrate what media should do to control the possible side effects that are to be caused by alcohol advertising -

- 1) State newspapers should generate moral panic highlighting the negative side of alcohol. This includes attaching cancerous labels with alcohol advertising.
- 2) Private newspapers advertising liquors should pin age restrictions for legal access to alcohol consumption.
- 3) If possible, newspapers should publish articles and images of high valence regarding mental, social, physical and societal harm caused by alcohol.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest with the present study.

References

APA stress in America survey (2010) American Psychological Association. Harris Interactive.

Aron R (1967) *Social Class, Political Class, Ruling Class Text*. In: R. Bendix and Lipset SM (Eds) *Class, Status and Power*. pp-201.

Burton R and Sheron N (2018) No level of alcohol consumption improves health. *The Lancet* 392: 987-988.

Chomsky N (2002) *Media control: The spectacular achievements of propaganda* (Vol. 7). Seven Stories Press.

Giddens A (1991) *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Stanford university press.

Gramsci A (1971) The modern prince. *Selections from the prison notebooks*: pp.123-205.

Hebdige D (2003) Subculture: The meaning of style. In *Reading into cultural studies*. pp 110-127.

Hope A (2006) The influence of the alcohol industry on alcohol policy in Ireland. *Nordic Studies on alcohol and Drugs* 23(6). pp. 467-481.

Katz E and Lazarsfeld PF (1995) *Personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communications*. Routledge.

Maharjan PL and Magar KT (2017) Prevalence of Alcohol Consumption and Factors Associated with the Alcohol Use among the Youth of Suryabinayak Municipality, Bhaktapur. *Journal of J Pharmaceutical Care & Health Systems*.

Marcuse H (2013) *One-dimensional man: Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*. Routledge.

Masserman JH and Yum KS (1946) An analysis of the influence of alcohol on experimental neurosis in cats. *Psychosomatic Medicine*.

Rojek C (1995) *Decentring leisure: Rethinking leisure theory* (Vol. 35). Sage.

Scranton S and Brahmam P (1995) Leisure and postmodernity in *Haralambos*. pp. 705-706.

Strinati D (1995) *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*. Routledge, London.

Thompson EP (1967) Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism. *Past & present* (38). pp. 56-97.