Challenges in Enforcing Alcohol Sales Regulations: A Descriptive and Correlational Study of Store Owners in Pagadian City

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges in enforcing alcohol sales regulations among store owners in Pagadian City, Philippines, focusing on their awareness and compliance with Presidential Decree No. 1619, which prohibits the sale of alcohol to minors. Using a descriptive and correlational research design, data were collected from 150 store owners through a validated questionnaire-checklist. The study assessed demographic profiles, levels of awareness, and compliance with the decree. Results revealed that the majority of respondents were female (70%) and aged 36 and above (46.7%). Store owners demonstrated a high level of awareness (weighted mean = 4.18) regarding the law, but compliance was only moderate (weighted mean = 3.21), indicating a gap between knowledge and adherence. A Spearman rho correlation test showed a moderate positive relationship ($\rho = 0.734$, $p = 0.021$) between awareness and compliance, suggesting that increased awareness positively influences compliance, though other factors such as financial incentives, age verification difficulties, and fear of losing customers also play a role. The study concludes that while awareness is high, compliance remains inconsistent, highlighting the need for targeted interventions, including regular enforcement, training programs, and fact sheets on liquor laws, to bridge the gap and improve adherence to alcohol sales regulations.

Keywords: Alcohol sales regulations, Presidential Decree No. 1619, Awareness, Compliance, Underage drinking, descriptive-correlational study.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

This study aims to understand how store owners in Pagadian City, Philippines, perceive and adhere to regulations regarding the sale of alcohol to minors, specifically Presidential Decree No. 1619. Addressing this issue is vital due to the significant public health and social challenges associated with underage drinking (TN Fitria et.al., 2021). Data indicates that a notable percentage of young individuals in the Philippines consume alcohol, with 16.8% of adolescents identified as current drinkers, and 4.0% engaging in binge drinking. Binge drinkers are predominantly young men (4.5%) who are not currently enrolled in school (12.4%) and reside in urban areas (4.1%). These findings underscore the necessity of reinforcing existing legal frameworks, such as Presidential Decree No. 1619, to safeguard young people from the risks of underage drinking (TN Fitria et.al., 2021).

Several elements, including age, education level, personal attitudes, media impact, and peer conformity, influence alcohol consumption among high school students (MT McKay & JC Cole, 2012). A study in Thailand revealed that most students (63.2%) maintained good academic standing, with moderate alcohol consumption habits. A significant correlation was observed between alcohol use and factors such as age, academic year, attitudes, media influence, and peer pressure (MG Kovacs, 2022).

Underage drinking is an escalating concern globally, with research suggesting it can contribute to alcohol dependence in adulthood, alongside various health and social problems. In Europe, the average age for initiating alcohol consumption has decreased from 14 to 12 years. Differing legal frameworks exist across nations, with the legal drinking age set at 16 in some countries, 18 in others, and 21 in the United States

(R. Callaghan, et. al., 2016). To effectively curb alcohol use among young people, it's crucial to consider the settings and contexts in which they consume alcohol. Interventions that focus on modifying the circumstances surrounding underage drinking can be particularly effective. For instance, a web-based intervention demonstrated a reduction in weekly drinking among binge drinkers aged 15 to 20, especially among males (EE Bonar et. Al., 2020).

Many countries have enacted Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) laws to address underage drinking. In Lithuania, raising the MLDA from 18 to 20 years correlated with a decrease in mortality rates among young adults, though a definitive causal link was not established (Atif Yaseen et. al., 2024). In the United States, the effectiveness of these laws is influenced by their specific provisions, with laws concerning possession and purchase linked to fewer fatal crashes involving underage drinking drivers (E Romano et. al., 2015).

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the level of awareness and compliance among store owners in Pagadian City regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages to minors. Specifically, the study seeks to: 1. Determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age and gender. 2. Assess the level of awareness among store owners about Presidential Decree No. 1619. 3. Evaluate the level of compliance among store owners with Presidential Decree No. 1619. 4. Examine the relationship between the level of awareness and compliance among store owners.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a descriptive and correlational research design to explore the relationship between store owners' awareness and compliance with Presidential Decree No. 1619. The research was conducted in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur, with 150 store owners as respondents. The data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire-checklist, which was validated by 3 experts through Face and Content Validation. The questionnaire assessed the respondents' demographic profiles, level of awareness, and level of compliance. The data were analyzed using statistical tools such as weighted mean, measures of central tendency, and Spearman correlation to determine the relationship between awareness and compliance. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly observed throughout the study.

The table 1 outlines the key parameters for face and content validation, emphasizing clarity, relevance, specificity, and appropriateness. These criteria ensure that items are clear, directly related to the research objectives, specific in wording, and free from bias or leading language, making them suitable for the target audience and aligned with the study's goals.

Table 1. Parameters on Face and Content Validation

PARAMETERS	DESCRIPTION
1. CLARITY	The item is clear, concise, and easily understandable by the target audience.
2. RELEVANCE	The item is directly related to the research objectives and topic of the study.
3. SPECIFICITY	The item is specific and avoids vague or general wording.
4. APPROPRIATNESS	The item is free from bias, leading language, or assumptions.

Table 2 presents a scoring scale for assessing the level of awareness, categorizing responses into five levels: Very Aware (4.21-5.0), Aware (3.41-4.20), Neutral (2.41-3.40), Unsure (1.81-2.60), and Unaware (1.0-1.80). This scale provides a structured approach to quantify awareness levels based on weighted scores.

Table 2. Scoring Scale for Level of Awareness

Weight	Scale	Adjectival
5	4.21 – 5.0	Very Aware
4	3.41 – 4.20	Aware
3	2.41 – 3.40	Neutral
2	1.81 – 2.60	Unsure
1	1.0 – 1.80	Unaware

The table 3 also provides a scoring scale for evaluating the level of compliance, with five distinct levels: Always (4.21–5.0), Often (3.41–4.20), Sometimes (2.41–3.40), Rarely (1.81–2.60), and Never (1.0–1.80). This scale allows for a systematic assessment of compliance frequency based on weighted scores.

Table 3. Scoring Scale for Level of Compliance.

Weight	Scale	Adjectival
5	4.21 – 5.0	Always
4	3.41 – 4.20	Often
3	2.41 – 3.40	Sometimes
2	1.81 – 2.60	Rarely
1	1.0 – 1.80	Never

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The majority of the respondents were aged 36 and above (46.7%), with females comprising 70% of the sample. This aligns with global trends where small business owners are typically older and often female.

Table 4.1A . Frequency on Age group Distribution of the Respondents

Age (N=150)	F
21-25 years old	10 (6.7%)
26-30 years old	30 (20%)
31-35 years old	40 (26.7%)
36 years old and above	70 (46.7%)

Table 4.1B Frequency on Gender Distribution of the Respondents.

Gender (N=150)	F
Male	45 (30%)
Female	105 (70%)

Studies suggest that age and gender are important demographic determinants in the consumption of alcoholic beverages. There is limited understanding of hard cider consumer demographics, and the influence of demographics (J Yenerall et. al., 2022).

Demographic variables significantly influence alcoholic beverage consumption. Factors such as consumer decisions and demographic attributes play a crucial role in understanding the demand and purchasing behaviors related to alcohol. A separate first hurdle represents a consumer's decision on whether to consume alcoholic beverages (J Yenerall et. al., 2022).

The data on table 4.1C and table 4.1D shows that the majority of respondents are grocery stores (33.3%), followed by convenience stores (26.7%), with liquor stores and bars/restaurants each comprising 20% of the sample. In terms of years in business, most establishments have been operating for less than 5 years (30%), while those in business for 5-10 years (25.3%) and 11-20 years (24.7%) are almost evenly distributed. Only 20% have been operating for over 20 years. This suggests a diverse mix of store types and a relatively young business landscape, indicating potential growth opportunities and a dynamic market environment.
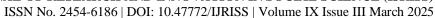
Table 4.1C . Frequency Distribution on The Type of Store.

Type of Store (N=150)	F
Liquor Stores	30 (20%)
Grocery Stores	50 (33.3%)
Convenience Stores	40 (26.7%)
Bars/Restaurants	30 (20%)

Table 4.1D . Frequency Distribution on the no. Of Years in Business.

Years in Business (N=150)	F
Less than 5 years	45 (30%)
5 - 10 years	38 (25.3%)
11 - 20 years	37 (24.7%)
Over 20 years	30 (20%)

Some studies explore the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and the types of food stores, including liquor stores, available in those areas. One study found that the distribution of store types varied across different sites, with some sites having more liquor stores per population than others. This suggests a potential link between demographic factors and the prevalence of certain types of alcohol outlets (K. Morland et. al., 2002).

Another study explored the connection between demographics and drinking habits in the U.S. alcohol market (J. Hart & JM. Alston, 2019). These studies indicate that demographic factors play a role in shaping consumer preferences and choices in the alcohol market.

Level of Awareness

The respondents displayed a high level of awareness regarding Presidential Decree No. 1619, with an overall weighted mean of 4.18, falling into the "Aware" category. This suggests that store owners are generally knowledgeable about the law prohibiting the sale of alcohol to minors.

Table 4.2 Level of Awareness among the Store Owners about Presidential Decree No. 1619 in Terms of Selling Prohibited Alcoholic Beverages towards Minors**.**

Constructs	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Level of Awareness	4.18	Aware

Note: Scale: 4.21 - 5.0 (Very Aware); 3.41 - 4.20 (Aware); 2.61 - 3.40 (Neutral); 1.81 - 2.60 (Unsure); 1.0-1.80 (Unaware)

Awareness among store owners regarding laws prohibiting alcohol sales to minors is a crucial factor in ensuring compliance. If authorities observe a violation, they may issue warnings or fines to the vendor or store owner. Studies emphasize that compliance with age limits is heavily dependent on knowledge of the rules (JF Gosselt et. al., 2012). Understanding key laws and regulations governing alcohol sales is essential for those in the hospitality industry, such as restaurant owners and bar managers (FN Adwoah, 2024). A lack of awareness of alcohol sale regulations can contribute to non-adherence (PW Gitau, 2018). Conversely, awareness and support of the law can positively influence compliance (MJ Paschall et. al., 2021).

Several factors can influence store owners' awareness of laws related to alcohol sales. Training programs for alcohol managers and owners can help them avoid selling alcohol to underage individuals. Regular enforcement of the law, including unannounced checks using minors, can also increase awareness. Providing fact-sheets on relevant liquor laws and underage sales might encourage employees to remain vigilant (LS Wolff et. al., 2011).

Level of Compliance

Despite the high level of awareness, the level of compliance was "Sometimes" , with an overall weighted mean of 3.21. This indicates a gap between knowledge of the law and actual adherence to it. Store owners may face barriers such as financial incentives, difficulty in verifying age, or fear of losing customers.

Table 4.3 Level of Compliance among the Store Owners about Presidential Decree No. 1619 in Terms of Selling Prohibited Alcoholic Beverages towards Minors

Constructs	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Level of Compliance	3.21	Sometimes

Note: 4.21 - 5.0 (Always); 3.41 - 4.20 (Often); 2.61 - 3.40 (Sometimes); 1.81 - 2.60 (Rarely); 1.0-1.80 (Never)

Store owners' decisions to comply with rules are influenced by business considerations. Some owners may prioritize customer service or fear losing customers, which affects their adherence to tobacco sales regulations (S Burton et. al., 2018). The fear of reduced market share and fewer customers can deter compliance (R Sampson et. al., 2010).

Despite knowing the law, vendors often fail to comply with it. Research indicates that alcohol is still readily accessible to minors. Effective methods are needed to enhance compliance with minimum age laws among cashiers, as many interventions do not result in long-term effects (M. Broekhuis, 2015).

Financial incentives can influence retailers to sell alcohol to minors. Franchised stores, driven by financial motivations, may be more inclined to sell alcohol to teens (J Utgård et. al., 2015). Removing the economic incentive to buy unrecorded alcohol may help curb illegal sales, including sales to minors (DW Lachenmeier et. al., 2011).

Verifying the age of customers is legally imperative to prevent minors from accessing age-restricted products (Adedapo T Aladegbaiye et. al., 2015). Electronic Age Verification (EAV) devices have been introduced to improve compliance, but their effectiveness depends on proper implementation and training (B. Krevor et al., 2003). Online alcohol sales, particularly through mobile apps, present new challenges for age verification and can lead to excessive drinking (Michał Bujalski & M. Rowicka, 2024)

Relationship Between Awareness and Compliance

The Spearman rho correlation test revealed a moderate positive correlation ($\rho = 0.734$) between awareness and compliance, with a p-value of 0.021, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. Which indicates that the researcher's is rejecting the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Table 4.4 Significant Relationship between the Levels of Awareness and Compliance of Respondents of in Terms of Presidential Decree No. 1619

Variables	Highest Value	Lowest Value	n	Mean	Mean Difference	(ρ) Spearman Correlation	P-Value	Interpretation
Awareness of P.D No. 1619	5.0	3.0	150	4.19	0.87	0.734	0.021	Have Significant Relationship
Compliance of P.D. No. 1619	4.6	1.8	150	3.32				

Note: p<0.01 (Highly Significant); p<0.05 (Significant); p>0.05 (Not significant)

A moderate positive correlation between awareness and compliance suggests that as store owners' awareness of alcohol sales regulations increases, their compliance tends to increase as well. However, the correlation is not perfect, indicating other factors also influence compliance. The p-value of 0.021 indicates that the observed correlation is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance, meaning that there is a low probability (2.1%) of observing such a correlation if there were no actual relationship between awareness and compliance. This supports the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Despite increased awareness, challenges persist in enforcing alcohol sales regulations. Factors such as economic incentives, difficulties in age verification, and fear of losing customers can contribute to the gap between awareness and compliance. Interventions that focus on increasing both awareness and addressing these barriers may be more effective in improving compliance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Awareness among store owners of regulations like Presidential Decree No. 1619 is high, with a weighted mean of 4.18, indicating that they are generally knowledgeable about the laws prohibiting alcohol sales to minors. Despite this high level of awareness, the actual compliance among store owners is only moderate, with a weighted mean of 3.21, revealing a gap between knowing the law and adhering to it. This gap is influenced by

factors such as financial considerations, difficulties in verifying customer age, and concerns about losing customers. A Spearman rho correlation test indicates a moderate positive correlation ($\rho = 0.734$) between awareness and compliance, with a p-value of 0.021, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant.

Recommendations

To improve compliance, interventions should focus on addressing the barriers that store owners face despite their awareness of the regulations. Consistency in alcohol outlet licensing facilitated by legislative and enforcement recommendations could further improve adherence to regulations (CDM Furr-Holden et. al., 2020). Regular enforcement of the law, including unannounced checks, can help increase compliance (J Mosher et. al.,2009). Providing store owners and their staff with fact sheets on relevant liquor laws and underage sales may also encourage greater vigilance. Training programs for alcohol managers and owners can also help prevent sales to underage individuals. Furthermore, strategies could include tips for reducing alcohol consumption and referral to alcohol-related support service (K Hughes et. al., 2010).

To improve compliance with alcohol sales regulations, a multi-faceted approach is essential, incorporating rigorous enforcement, community collaboration, and technological solutions (P. Kremer et. al., 2018). By addressing the economic and social factors that contribute to non-compliance, communities can more effectively reduce underage drinking and promote responsible alcohol consumption (K. Stewart & L. Miramontes, 2013).

Increased monitoring and enforcement of alcohol sales regulations are crucial (P. Kremer et. al., 2018). Compliance checks, although expensive, are an effective approach for preventing underage sales (M Duch et. al., 2020). Rigorous enforcement of laws restricting alcohol sales, coupled with licensing curbs on alcohol outlets, can improve reliability and enhance compliance (NF Hernández-Llanes & E Pérez-Pérez, 2020). To improve compliance with intoxication regulations, strategies for responsible alcohol promotion should be implemented (S Randerson et. al., 2018).

Challenges in age verification contribute to non-compliance. Implementing electronic age verification (EAV) devices is one possible means to improve compliance with sales to minors laws (B. Krevor et. al., 2003). Expanding the focus of ID checks for age verification can help attendants comply with sales legislation of age-restricted products (Adedapo T Aladegbaiye et. al., 2015).

Economic incentives and fear of losing customers can lead to non-compliance (K. Stewart & L. Miramontes, 2013). Community health agencies can collaborate with sporting clubs to improve compliance with alcohol sales regulations and educate clubs on their role in shaping adolescent alcohol culture (P. Kremer et. al., 2018). Counteracting negative attitudes towards addiction, which may reflect in enforcement practices, requires participation on many levels (CM. Delos Reyes et. al., 2002).

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