ABSTRACT

Youth tobacco consumption has been called the single most important public health issue of our era. Non-profit organizations and government agencies are turning increasingly to social marketing to devise antismoking messages that prevent children and youth from initiating smoking. The most fundamental question that must be addressed is whether these antismoking messages dissuade adolescents from smoking.

The purpose of this research was to examine whether antismoking messages affecting Assumption University undergraduates’ cognitions and demographic factors (age, gender, nationality and personal income) are related to their intention not to smoke. In this study, the researcher employed Roger’s (1983) Protection Motivation Theory, a highly comprehensive theory of health communication, to formulate hypotheses regarding the likely impact of antismoking messages on the cognitions that such messages attempt to influence, namely, health and social risk severity and self-efficacy at refusing cigarette offers and resisting tobacco marketing.

Self-administrated questionnaires were distributed to 381 Assumption University undergraduates studying in both Bang Na and Hua Mak campuses. The researcher used descriptive statistics to measure the frequency and percentages for analyzing personal data of respondents. Pearson correlation coefficient was used for hypothesis testing for protection motivation theory factors, T-test and ANOVA was used to test demographic factors on intention not to smoke.

The results indicated that there is a strong positive relationship between the levels of self-efficacy at resisting tobacco marketing, severity of health risks, severity of social disapproval risks and self-efficacy at refusing cigarette offers and intention not to smoke. Results of demographic factors showed that age, gender, nationality and personal income, all have relationships with intention not to smoke with regard to antismoking messages. The findings from this study will prove beneficial to health organizations and the Thai Government that are proactively refining or creating antismoking campaigns. For example, conclusions drawn from this study would help human resource professionals and practitioners in public and private sectors to plan or design more effective programs to reduce smoking among adolescents.