

Article

Implementation Gaps and Governance Challenges in Thailand's Community Liquor Law Reform: Evidence from Multi-Stakeholder Fieldwork

Anurak Wongta ¹, Muhammadfahmee Talek ² , Pintip Kaewkamthong ³ , Kriengkrai Peungchuer ⁴ and Kanittha Thaikla ^{1,*}

¹ Research Institute for Health Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand; anurak.wongta@cmu.ac.th

² Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus, Pattani 94000, Thailand; tmfahmee@gmail.com

³ Faculty of Science and Technology, Phetchabun Rajabhat University, Phetchabun 67000, Thailand; pintip.kae@pcru.ac.th

⁴ Independent Researcher, Nakhon Pathom 73110, Thailand; kimonkung@gmail.com

* Correspondence: kanittha.th@cmu.ac.th

Abstract

Thailand's Community Liquor Law Reform aimed to encourage small-scale alcohol production in 2022. Early evidence suggests a mismatch between legislative changes and the capacity of existing institutions to implement them. This study aims to examine governance challenges, stakeholder experiences, and implementation gaps during the early phase of the reform across four provinces. A qualitative policy analysis was performed through semi-structured interviews with fifty-eight participants, comprising twenty-three community liquor producers and thirty-five officials from excise units, public health offices, and local administrative bodies. Data was collected through interviews, meeting records, field observations, and policy documents. Thematic analysis followed a hybrid inductive and deductive approach, and triangulation strengthened the credibility of the findings. The research revealed a significant gap between national policy goals and local implementation. Stakeholders noted the unclear procedural guidelines, resulting in continued reliance on pre-reform practices. They also reported substantial administrative challenges and inconsistent enforcement across regions. Limited technical capacity among producers contributed to unstable alcohol strength, variable product quality, and inadequate waste management. Furthermore, the reform raised concerns about increased alcohol availability, potential youth access, and community misinterpretation of policy objectives. These findings suggest that legislative reform alone is insufficient for effective implementation. Clear guidelines, coordinated enforcement, technical training, and monitoring systems are essential to align policy with practice.



Academic Editor: Gregor Wolbring

Received: 15 January 2026

Revised: 20 April 2026

Accepted: 3 May 2026

Published: 6 May 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the authors.

Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

Keywords: community liquor; implementation; governance; alcohol policy; Thailand; qualitative study

1. Introduction

Alcohol regulation in Thailand has relied on centralized control, excise-based governance, and restrictive licensing systems for more than five decades. These structures favored large industrial producers and created barriers that limited the participation of small or community-based distillers. Previous studies in Southeast Asia and other low-

and middle-income countries report similar patterns in which regulatory systems were designed around taxation and enforcement rather than supporting small-scale production or rural enterprise development [1–3].

In 2022, the Ministry of Finance introduced the Ministerial Regulation on Liquor Production B.E. 2565 (2022). B.E. (Buddhist Era) is the Thai calendar system, which is 543 years ahead of the Gregorian calendar. The reform removed production thresholds, reduced capital requirements [4], and allowed limited household level production for personal use [5]. Prior to the reform, alcohol production in Thailand was subject to strict regulatory requirements, including high minimum production thresholds and substantial capital requirements for licensing, which effectively restricted market entry to large-scale producers [6]. For example, minimum production thresholds were approximately 30,000 L per day for distilled spirits and 10 million liters per year for beer, while capital requirements often exceeded 10 million THB and required industrial-scale facilities [7,8]. In this context, “capital requirements” refer to the financial and infrastructural capacity that applicants were required to demonstrate, such as minimum levels of investment, production facilities, and equipment.

The reform lowered these entry barriers and introduced provisions for small-scale, non-commercial household production. However, the definition of “personal use” and the scope of allowable distribution remain ambiguous in practice [9,10], particularly in relation to sharing within households or informal social networks. This ambiguity has also been reflected in Thai policy discussions, including debates surrounding the “Progressive Liquor Law” and subsequent regulatory changes, where concerns were raised about unclear distinctions between personal consumption and informal distribution [11]. These changes were presented as a strategy to stimulate local economies [12] and preserve cultural identity [5,13]. International experiences show that regulatory flexibility can support small producers when administrative systems, enforcement, and technical services evolve together. These international experiences are often cited in Thai policy discussions, yet their applicability depends heavily on local administrative capacity [14,15]. For example, legalization of homebrewing contributed to the rapid growth of the craft beer sector in the United States [16,17]. Research from Japan also illustrates how flexible licensing has helped maintain traditional sake production and regional revitalization [18].

Although the reform sought to reduce longstanding structural barriers, local implementation has lagged legislative changes. Producers and officials report ambiguous procedures, dependence on pre-reform practices, and varied legal interpretations. These difficulties mirror longstanding findings in Thai public administration research, which emphasize how ambiguous procedural guidance and limited frontline capacity can weaken implementation [19,20]. Research indicates that entrenched central authority and resistance from political elites hinder reform implementation [20,21]. The evidence indicates that legislative reforms may face ongoing implementation challenges in the absence of definitive operational guidance and robust institutional backing.

Public health concerns add further complexity. Evidence from low- and middle-income countries demonstrates that informal and newly legalized alcohol producers frequently encounter technical limitations leading to variable alcohol strength, inconsistent product quality, and contamination risks [22–24]. Multiple methanol poisoning outbreaks linked to poorly regulated alcohol supply chains have been documented across Asia and Africa [25,26]. Regional evidence from Southeast Asia demonstrates quality control challenges, safety concerns from unrecorded alcohol, and regulatory enforcement gaps that may facilitate contamination and increase youth access to unsafe products [27–30].

These changes were intended to promote local entrepreneurship and community-based production. However, the extent to which these regulatory adjustments translate

into practical access and implementation remains uncertain, forming the central focus of this study.

The existing literature on regulatory governance and law reform in Thailand highlights persistent gaps between statutory changes and their implementation in practice. Studies on regulatory impact assessment and recent legal reforms have identified challenges related to institutional capacity, enforcement mechanisms, and coordination across administrative levels. For instance, previous work has emphasized the need to strengthen parliamentary RIA capacity and independent quality assurance to improve legislative outcomes [31], while empirical research has documented implementation delays and weak interagency coordination in multisectoral policies [32], institutional obstacles and enforcement problems in sectoral reforms [33], and mismatches between formal regulatory requirements and actual practice [8]. These findings align with broader theoretical perspectives on policy implementation, which emphasize the importance of governance structures, administrative capacity, and the role of frontline actors in shaping policy outcomes [34].

In particular, concepts such as implementation gaps, multilevel governance, and street-level bureaucracy provide useful analytical lenses for understanding how formal regulatory changes are translated into practice.

Despite the intent of the 2022 Community Liquor Law Reform to reduce longstanding structural barriers, early implementation at the local level has not fully aligned with legislative change. Producers and frontline officials have reported uncertainty regarding procedures, continued reliance on pre-reform practices, and varied interpretations of regulatory requirements across provinces. These challenges reflect broader issues of institutional adaptation and governance processes during periods of regulatory transition. To date, limited empirical evidence has examined how local administrative actors and community producers interpret and navigate the reform in practice. This study therefore aimed to examine governance dynamics, stakeholder experiences, and implementation gaps during the early phase of Thailand's Community Liquor Law Reform across four provinces, with particular attention to how institutional and social processes shape policy implementation at the community level.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Administrative Burden

The notion of administrative burden underscores the costs associated with engaging with regulatory frameworks. It encompasses citizens' experiences in deciphering and complying with governmental mandates, elucidating disparities in access to state initiatives and regulatory avenues [35–37]. Academics have emphasized that these costs are not only technical but also behavioral, shaping whether individuals feel confident engaging with formal processes or perceive them as unpredictable or exclusionary. Prior research shows that individuals with lower human, social, or financial capital often face higher learning and compliance costs, reducing their ability to participate fully in regulated systems [38,39]. This framework elucidates the mechanisms through which regulatory design and administrative processes perpetuate inequitable access despite the formal removal of legal obstacles.

2.2. Implementation Gaps

Implementation gap theory describes the mismatch that often emerges between national policy intentions and the ways policies are carried out by local administrative units [40]. Policies that change rapidly or without sufficient operational guidance often result in inconsistent implementation across jurisdictions, particularly when local actors interpret policies differently or rely on existing administrative routines [41,42]. Such gaps are commonly associated with limited administrative capacity, including constraints in

relation to personnel, coordination mechanisms, and operational clarity. In these situations, officials may depend on informal practices or partial interpretations while awaiting clearer guidance. As a result, formal policy changes may not immediately translate into consistent administrative practices, especially in systems that rely heavily on decentralized implementation structures. These gaps are closely tied to administrative processes at the local level, particularly in how licensing procedures, enforcement practices, and inter-agency coordination are operationalized in practice.

2.3. Street-Level Bureaucracy

The street-level bureaucracy framework illustrates the discretionary power of frontline officials implementing public policy amid resource constraints, substantial workloads, and varied citizen expectations [43,44]. Street-level bureaucrats act as the main link between the government and citizens. Their choices influence how policies are experienced by the public [45]. Due to conflicting pressures, research indicates that they frequently adopt coping mechanisms, including service rationing, selective enforcement, or personal rule interpretation. Recent studies highlight how information availability, digital systems, and administrative pressure influence whether street-level agents adopt strict or flexible approaches to rule application [46,47]. This framework elucidates the impact of discretion on procedural inconsistencies and regulatory disparities geographically.

2.4. Integrating the Three Frameworks

When combined, these frameworks create a solid foundation for analyzing how administrative systems, institutional constraints, and frontline discretion affect regulatory changes. Implementation gap theory explains how misalignment between national reform intentions and operational practice can generate inconsistencies across administrative units. Street-level bureaucracy highlights the discretionary choices of frontline officials influencing rule application in practice. Integrating these viewpoints offers a complete perspective on the interplay between policy adjustments and administrative frameworks, consequently shaping the scope, reliability, and predictability of the regulatory system. These frameworks are used as analytical lenses to examine how social and institutional processes shape regulatory practice during periods of policy transition, rather than as prescriptive models for evaluating administrative performance. In this study, these frameworks guide the analysis of how regulatory changes under the Community Liquor Law Reform are interpreted and enacted in practice, particularly in relation to access, compliance, and administrative decision-making at the local level.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Study Design

This study used a qualitative policy analysis design to examine how Thailand's 2022 Community Liquor Law Reform was interpreted and implemented during its early phase. Qualitative approaches are well suited for understanding administrative practice, decision making, and policy interpretation in real settings [48,49]. Semi-structured interviews and a document review were used to capture both lived experience and formal regulatory processes. In addition, field observations and meeting records were incorporated to contextualize how regulatory processes were enacted in practice at the local level, consistent with qualitative policy analysis approaches that integrate multiple data sources. The design followed COREQ principles to enhance transparency in reporting [50].

3.2. Study Setting and Province Selection

Fieldwork was conducted in four provinces. Province selection followed criteria documented in the national community liquor study. The primary criteria included: (1) the presence of active community or household liquor production, (2) a minimum of approximately 15 producers in each province to ensure sufficient stakeholder representation, and (3) diversity of local liquor types reflecting different production practices. These criteria were applied to ensure variation in both production contexts and regulatory environments across regions. Secondary considerations included the cooperation of local authorities, willingness of communities to participate, accessibility of field sites, and safety of researchers. This purposive selection strategy consists of qualitative implementation research, where site selection aims to capture variation in administrative conditions rather than statistical representativeness.

3.3. Participant Recruitment and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to capture variation in roles, responsibilities, and experiences with the reform. This approach is appropriate for implementation and governance research because it focuses on individuals directly involved in decision making or affected by administrative processes [51]. Participants included local alcohol producers, excise regulators, public health personnel, and local administrative officers. Eligibility criteria required participants to be Thai citizens aged 18 years or older, residing in the selected study areas, and actively involved in either production or regulatory processes.

Participants were recruited through coordination with district-level authorities and community leaders, who facilitated access to relevant stakeholders in each province. This approach ensured inclusion of both regulatory actors and community producers with direct experience of the reform. Recruitment continued until sufficient variation in stakeholder perspectives was achieved across provinces and roles. Participant codes followed those used in previous fieldwork documentation.

3.4. Data Sources

Three data sources were used.

3.4.1. Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews captured perspectives on licensing processes, documentation requirements, inspection practices, and challenges emerging during early implementation. Semi-structured interviews support the exploration of policy reasoning and administrative interpretation [52].

3.4.2. Meeting Transcripts and Field Notes

Transcripts from local meetings and consultation forums documented how regulatory changes were communicated and interpreted among stakeholders. Field observations were conducted at community production sites and local administrative settings. Observations focused on production practices, inspection activities, and routine administrative interactions. Data were recorded as structured field notes using predefined templates, including descriptive notes on processes, interactions, and contextual conditions. These observations provided contextual evidence to support or contrast with interview accounts, particularly in relation to how regulations were enacted in practice.

3.4.3. Policy and Administrative Documents

Ministerial regulations, provincial instructions, and local administrative guidelines related to liquor production and licensing were reviewed. Document selection focused on materials directly relevant to the 2022 reform and its implementation at national and provin-

cial levels. Document analysis was used to identify formal regulatory expectations and compare them with observed practices and stakeholder experiences, a standard approach in qualitative policy research.

3.5. Participant Details

A total of 58 participants were included in the study. Twenty-three were community liquor producers and 35 were officials responsible for licensing, inspection, health related functions, or local administration. Participants were recruited from 4 provinces representing northern, northeastern, central, and southern regions. The distribution of participants across provinces and stakeholder groups is summarized in Table 1. This distribution ensured that perspectives from both regulatory actors and community producers were represented across diverse administrative contexts, which is important for interpreting the variation in governance experiences reported in the Results.

Table 1. Participant distribution by province and stakeholder group.

Province	Producers (n)	Officials (n)	Total (n)
Chiang Mai (C)	7	12	19
Khon Kaen (K)	7	9	16
Nakhon Pathom (N)	5	7	12
Songkhla (S)	4	7	11
Total	23	35	58

This distribution ensured representation of both regulatory and production perspectives across diverse administrative contexts.

3.6. Data Collection

Data collection occurred from March to August 2025. Interviews were carried out in Thai by trained researchers using a semi-structured guide. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 90 min and was recorded with participant consent. Field observations were conducted alongside interviews during site visits. Observations included community production environments, inspection processes, and routine administrative interactions. Field notes were recorded immediately after each visit using structured templates. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English for analysis.

3.7. Researcher Reflexivity and Positionality

The research team had no prior relationship with producers or local officials. Researchers approached the field as external observers without professional or personal involvement in alcohol production or regulatory functions. Reflexive discussions were held to identify potential biases during data collection and analysis. Reflexivity supports transparency and improves interpretive accuracy in qualitative research [53]. The research team took a neutral stance toward administrative decisions and used team discussions to prevent over interpretation.

3.8. Data Management

All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were anonymized by removing personal identifiers and assigning participant codes. Field notes and document data were organized alongside interview transcripts to support integrated analysis. All data was securely stored and accessible only to the research team.

3.9. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis followed a hybrid inductive and deductive approach. Deductive codes were informed by the study's theoretical framework, including administrative burden, implementation gaps, and discretion, and were operationalized through policy concepts such as licensing burden, administrative discretion, and administrative procedures. Inductive codes emerged directly from transcripts. The analysis followed the systematic six phases of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke [54]: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes. The analytic process drew on qualitative policy analysis techniques [55]. Each transcript was reviewed line by line. Codes were refined through comparison across stakeholder groups and across provinces. A subset of transcripts was double coded to ensure consistency. Manual analysis with a structured coding matrix was used to support systematic comparison across cases. Document analysis findings were used to corroborate emerging themes or identify mismatches between regulatory intent and observed implementation practices.

3.10. Triangulation and Validity

Triangulation strengthened the validity of findings. Data triangulation was conducted by systematically comparing evidence from interviews, meeting transcripts, field observations, and policy documents. This allowed the research team to examine consistencies and discrepancies between stakeholder accounts, observed practices, and formal regulatory requirements, consistent with established guidance for methodological triangulation [56]. Cross-case comparison was used to identify patterns that appeared across provinces. For example, reported challenges in licensing procedures were compared across stakeholder groups and verified against documentary and observational evidence. Peer debriefing enhanced the credibility of interpretations. This process involved regular discussions within the research team to review coding decisions and refine theme development. Member checking was not conducted because several participants were frontline officials or small-scale producers who expressed concern about reviewing political or regulatory content after the interview. This decision aligns with recommendations that member checking is not always required in sensitive policy contexts [57]. Analytical decisions were documented in an audit trail to support transparency and enable traceability of analytical decisions.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

Participants received information about the study and provided verbal consent before interviews. No identifying information appears in this manuscript. Data was handled in accordance with ethical standards for qualitative research and stored in secure files accessible only to the research team. The study formed part of a national community liquor research program that received ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Pattani Campus, Prince of Songkla University Thailand (Reference No: NUR.PN/2568, REC Number: NUR.PN0015/2024). All procedures followed institutional guidelines and international principles for research involving human participants.

4. Results

4.1. Overview of Stakeholders

A total of 58 participants contributed to the study. They represented experiences from 4 provinces and covered both production and regulatory roles. Producers were small-scale and family-based groups that had operated in their communities for many years. Many had produced alcohol informally before the reform. Officials worked in excise units,

public health offices, and local administrative organizations. Their roles included licensing, inspection, and community level enforcement.

This mix of participants provided a broad picture of how the new law was experienced at the local level. Producers discussed documentation and production challenges. Officials explained their procedural interpretations and public response strategies. Together these perspectives showed how different actors understood and applied the 2022 Community Liquor Law Reform across diverse administrative settings.

4.2. Perceptions of the Regulatory Environment Before the Reform

Participants across all provinces consistently described the pre-reform regulatory environment as restrictive and difficult for small-scale producers. Many perceived that the system disproportionately favored large capital groups, placing community-based producers at a structural disadvantage.

As one participant explained,

“Small-scale producers could not produce, while only a few large capital groups dominated the system” (K105).

Others similarly noted that the system,

“Mainly benefited large-scale producers” (K107) and imposed constraints that “did not support small-scale producers” (K108).

These accounts reflected a broader perception of structural inequality within the regulatory framework.

The licensing process was widely perceived as complex and difficult to access, particularly for community members with limited technical knowledge and resources. Participants described challenges in understanding and completing regulatory requirements, which discouraged engagement with the formal system.

As one participant stated,

“Obtaining a license was very difficult under the previous system” (S105).

This pattern highlights the presence of administrative burden that limited participation in regulated production.

In this context, both producers and officials described a pattern of informal and concealed production prior to the reform. Community-based alcohol production was commonly practiced outside the formal system, often for household consumption or small-scale distribution.

As one participant noted,

“Local liquor production was common in many communities, mostly for household consumption or informal sale” (S101).

In some cases, production had to be hidden to avoid enforcement, as participants explained that “people produced alcohol secretly to avoid inspection, as enforcement was strict and unpredictable” (S106).

These practices reflected adaptive responses to regulatory barriers rather than intentional non-compliance.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the pre-reform regulatory environment was characterized by structural inequality, administrative burden, and legal uncertainty. These conditions limited access to formal production systems and contributed to the persistence of informal practices among community-based producers. This broader context of perceived unfairness shaped how participants understood the regulatory system prior to the 2022 reform and informed their expectations of change.

4.3. Experiences Following the Reform

Participants described mixed experiences during the early phase of the 2022 reform, reflecting a transition period in which legislative changes were introduced more rapidly than supporting administrative processes. While many viewed the new legal framework as more open compared to the previous system, they reported that practical procedures remained unclear. Field report narratives further indicated that community members often had only partial understanding of what the reform permitted, with some misinterpreting it as allowing unrestricted production, and producers remained uncertain about the steps required to obtain a license.

An official in Songkhla explained:

“The law has become more flexible, but strict control measures are still unclear.” (S101).

This lack of clarity contributed to broader public misunderstanding of the reform. Producers noted that community members tended to interpret the policy in general terms without fully understanding its regulatory requirements. One producer stated,

“People in the community only know in general terms that they can produce freely” (S107).

Uncertainty during this transition also extended to how the law would be applied in practice. In some districts, officials questioned the level of enforcement, reflecting variability in how the reform was perceived and operationalized at the local level. One official commented:

“It shows that the law exists but is not being enforced.” (S104).

Together, these findings illustrate a transitional phase characterized by incomplete administrative readiness, limited procedural clarity, and uncertainty in practical implementation. These experiences also align with field report observations of early-stage misunderstanding and inconsistent local responses and correspond with broader governance-related challenges summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of governance-related themes with illustrative quotes.

Theme	Description	Example Quote	Province
Lack of clear operational guidance	Unclear licensing, inspection, and documentation requirements	“People in the community only know in general terms that they can produce freely.” (S107)	S
Administrative burdens	Licensing remains long, costly, and technically demanding	“The licensing process is complicated, so many communities choose to produce without applying for permission.” (S106)	S
Inconsistent enforcement	Uneven district-level oversight and uncertainty in legal interpretation	“It shows that the law exists but is not being enforced.” (S104)	S
Insufficient support, incentives, and technical oversight	Limited support, weak inspection capacity, and uneven interpretation in practice	“Local alcohol production remains under strict regulatory control, and taxation is clearly imposed. . .” (S104)	K

4.4. Governance Barriers and Implementation Gaps

The analysis revealed four governance challenges influencing the initial reform phase. These themes demonstrate commonalities across provinces and, as summarized in Table 2, were consistently observed across stakeholder groups, with differing emphasis between producers and regulatory officials. Participants associated these challenges with enduring perceptions of inequity from the prior regulatory framework, which persisted in shaping trust and expectations throughout the transition.

4.4.1. Lack of Clear Operational Guidance

Officials reported that updated procedural instructions had not yet been issued and that many districts continued using previous standard operating procedures because new requirements were not fully communicated. Producers faced limited access to information regarding licensing, inspection, and documentation requirements. This uncertainty reinforced a sense of unequal access to information, a concern that had been carried over by the previous system. Field observations and interview data further indicated that both officials and community members experienced uncertainty in interpreting the new regulations. In some cases, authorities continued to rely on previous practices due to unclear guidance.

As one official explained, “Relevant government officers continued to follow the previous regulations, possibly because the new rules were not yet clearly defined or because they were accustomed to existing practices” (K107).

Another participant noted that “the interpretation of the law between officials and the public remains unclear, and enforcement is not applied consistently across areas” (K106).

This illustrates an implementation gap, where the absence of clear operational guidance leads local officials to rely on discretionary interpretation.

4.4.2. Administrative Burdens

Participants in several provinces noted that the licensing process remained long, costly, and technically demanding. Field reports described difficulties with documentation, inspection preparation, and navigating unclear administrative pathways. This theme was consistently reported across provinces. These burdens echoed earlier perceptions that the regulatory system favored larger or better resourced producers, reinforcing concerns about fairness that had existed before the reform.

One producer noted that the licensing process remained complex and discouraged formal applications:

“The licensing process is complicated, so many communities choose to produce without applying for permission” (S106).

Another participant emphasized the need for procedural improvement:

“We would like the licensing process to be faster” (C109).

This reflects how regulatory ambiguity increases administrative burden, particularly for small-scale producers with limited institutional support. This finding aligns with the broader thematic patterns summarized in Table 2.

4.4.3. Inconsistent Enforcement

Enforcement exhibited significant district-level discrepancies. Some regions maintained strict inspection practices, while others showed limited enforcement. This variation contributed to perceptions of inconsistency and generated ambiguity in legal interpretation. Participants conveyed that this phenomenon diminished trust in the regulatory system.

An official in Songkhla stated,

“It shows that the law exists but is not being enforced” (S104).

Similarly, another participant emphasized that enforcement varied depending on local interpretation and context, noting that “although enforcement exists, it may not be applied thoroughly and often depends on the perspective of the responsible authorities and local conditions” (K106).

4.4.4. Insufficient Support, Incentives, and Technical Oversight

Participants recognized that tax reductions alleviated costs, yet comprehensive support was insufficient. Producers indicated challenges in product marketing, quality compli-

ance, and technical support. Concerns were also raised regarding the limited capacity of inspection systems.

Instead, participants emphasized structural and technical limitations in implementation, particularly the lack of incentives and support mechanisms for entering the formal system.

One producer explained: “local alcohol production remains under strict regulatory control, and taxation is clearly imposed, making compliance appear burdensome without sufficient benefits” (S104). These perceptions suggest that, despite regulatory relaxation, producers did not perceive clear economic or institutional advantages in formal participation.

Field accounts highlighted that quality assessments were inconsistent and lacked definitive criteria.

In several provinces, environmental regulation was inadequate. Stakeholders expressed ambiguity regarding waste management protocols and inconsistent directives on the disposal of distillation residues. These deficiencies restricted the reform’s capacity to mitigate environmental hazards linked to small-scale production, as delineated in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of policy gaps and their implications.

Policy Gap	Linked Governance Theme	Implications
Insufficient procedural guidance	Lack of clear operational guidance	Confusion over licensing, inspection, and compliance; continued reliance on older procedures
Limited capacity building for small producers	Insufficient support, incentives, and technical oversight	Limited ability to meet standards; weak quality control; difficulty achieving safe production
Uneven enforcement practices	Inconsistent enforcement	Unequal treatment across districts; uncertainty in interpretation and implementation
Emerging public health risks	Insufficient support, incentives, and technical oversight	Contamination risk; irregular quality monitoring; youth access; uncontrolled home-based distribution
Limited environmental oversight	Insufficient support, incentives, and technical oversight	Unclear waste disposal standards; weak environmental monitoring; uneven compliance

Reform implementation showed discrepancies across regions due to limited administrative coordination, unclear operational guidance, and insufficient technical support.

4.5. Social, Economic, and Health Implications

Participants identified various implications of the reform. These findings showed the broader community consequences arising from modifications in production and licensing norms, particularly during the early transition period when regulatory clarity remained limited.

4.5.1. Social Implications

Concerns about youth access were raised in several provinces. Field report findings indicated that increased home-based production was sometimes misinterpreted as unrestricted, leading to concerns about expanded access points within communities. Participants noted that these new points of availability were difficult to monitor, particularly in settings where enforcement mechanisms were not yet clearly established.

4.5.2. Health Implications

Participants examined risks concerning product quality and safety. Officials indicated difficulties in maintaining uniform oversight of production practices. Participants also linked these challenges to concerns about product safety and quality. One producer noted, “Production still lacks proper control” (S101).

Narrative accounts from the field report described concerns about contamination, uncontrolled distillation practices, and limited access to technical support for small-scale producers. These issues were further linked to gaps in regulatory guidance and inspection capacity identified in earlier sections.

4.5.3. Economic Implications

Economic perspectives varied across participant groups. Some producers supported the principle that excise tax should benefit local communities. One participant stated, “Taxes should be collected to support local communities” (C101).

Others worried that reduced revenue from excise taxes might shift financial burdens to other sectors. One producer reflected:

“The state loses revenue and must collect it from other areas” (C103).

These perspectives illustrate how the reform influenced community-level dynamics beyond formal regulatory processes. Participants linked the law to changes in youth access, production safety, and economic expectations, reflecting interconnected social, health, and economic dimensions of the reform’s early impact.

4.6. Policy Gaps and Opportunities

Triangulation of interviews, field observations, and policy documents identified five key policy gaps that shaped the early implementation phase of the reform. Document analysis further indicated that official procedural guidelines and ministerial communications did not clearly specify operational steps for licensing, inspection, and household-level production, contributing to inconsistencies in local implementation. These gaps reflected inconsistencies between national intentions and local administrative conditions and corresponded to the patterns summarized in Table 3.

4.6.1. Insufficient Procedural Guidance

Across provinces, both producers and officials described a lack of clear operational instructions. Several districts had not received updated guidance, and officers continued relying on pre-reform procedures. This gap created confusion about the steps for licensing, inspection expectations, and compliance requirements, making it difficult for small producers to navigate the transition to legal production.

A producer described the lack of communication and understanding:

“Community members still lack a clear understanding of the details of the new law” (S106).

4.6.2. Limited Capacity Building for Small Producers

Participants reported insufficient technical support to help producers meet regulatory standards. Concerns included limited training on documentation, production standards, distillation control, and quality assurance. Field observations conducted during site visits revealed variation in production practices, including differences in fermentation control, equipment use, and quality monitoring across communities. These observations were based on structured field notes collected during inspections and production site visits. The gaps hindered community distillers’ capacity to enhance product uniformity and meet

safety standards. These findings align with report evidence indicating that many producers lacked readiness to comply with production standards and technical requirements.

4.6.3. Uneven Enforcement Practices

Enforcement varied widely across districts. Some officials maintained strict oversight while others conducted minimal monitoring. This inconsistency created perceptions of unequal treatment and contributed to uncertainty about how the law should be interpreted in practice. As one official stated,

“It shows that the law exists but is not being enforced” (S104).

This reflects perceived gaps between formal regulation and actual enforcement practices at the local level.

4.6.4. Emerging Public Health Risks

Participants raised concerns about unstable alcohol strength, limited quality monitoring, and inconsistent safety checks. In several provinces, officials acknowledged that laboratory testing and field inspections were irregular or not linked to clear criteria. Producers also described difficulties in maintaining product safety without technical assistance.

An official highlighted gaps in quality control:

“There is no strict quality control of locally produced alcohol, so it is unclear whether the products contain harmful substances” (S104).

These gaps increased risks related to contamination, youth access, and uncontrolled home-based distribution.

4.6.5. Limited Environmental Oversight

Producers and officials noted that guidance on waste disposal and management of distillation byproducts was limited or inconsistently applied. Field observations showed variation in disposal practices across provinces, with some producers lacking awareness of environmental requirements. The absence of clear standards restricted efforts to prevent environmental contamination and hampered local authorities’ ability to monitor compliance.

Together, Tables 2 and 3 illustrate how observed governance challenges translate into concrete policy gaps during early implementation. In turn, these gaps highlight the misalignment between legislative reform and on-the-ground administrative capacity. These findings indicate the need for clearer operational guidance, strengthened technical support, and improved coordination across administrative levels to support safe and consistent implementation.

5. Discussion

5.1. Summary of Key Findings

The findings indicate a clear gap between legislative reform and its practical implementation at the local level, pointing to systemic challenges in translating regulatory change into consistent administrative practice. However, it is important to recognize that these findings reflect the early phase of implementation, during which administrative systems are still adapting to new regulatory conditions. This gap is reflected in the persistence of pre-reform practices, procedural ambiguity, and variation in enforcement across provinces.

The integration of empirical themes (Table 2) and identified policy gaps (Table 3) provides a structured basis for interpreting how these implementation challenges emerge within local administrative contexts.

These patterns align with implementation gap theory, suggesting a disconnect between national policy intent and local execution. In this context, limited procedural clarity and uneven administrative readiness led to varied interpretations of regulatory requirements

across jurisdictions. At the same time, differences in implementation across provinces reflect the dynamics of multilevel governance, where local authorities adapt national policies based on institutional capacity and contextual constraints.

The findings also demonstrate features of street-level bureaucracy. In the absence of clear guidance, frontline officials relied on discretion in decision-making, contributing to inconsistent enforcement and uncertainty among producers regarding compliance processes.

In addition, producers faced technical constraints that limited their ability to comply with regulatory standards, including unstable alcohol strength, inconsistent product quality, and limited access to training or routine testing. Concerns regarding youth access and increased local availability of alcohol further highlight the broader social implications of the reform.

Overall, the findings reveal a mismatch between policy ambition and implementation capacity. This mismatch should be interpreted with caution, as it may also reflect transitional processes of institutional adjustment rather than structural limitations alone. While the reform created new opportunities for community producers, limitations in administrative clarity, technical support, and regulatory consistency constrained its effective realization.

5.2. Interpretation of Findings in the Thai Context

The findings suggest that the reform has not fully addressed the structural barriers faced by small producers experienced under the previous regulatory system. Persistent uncertainty regarding licensing, production standards, and documentation reflects ongoing administrative complexity in Thailand, where fragmented communication and delayed dissemination of guidance continue to constrain effective policy execution.

Local officials often relied on procedures from the previous regulatory framework due to limited or delayed operational guidance. This indicates that administrative adaptation lagged legislative change. Such lag is not uncommon in early-stage regulatory reform, where institutional actors require time to interpret, internalize, and operationalize new policy directives. Reports from officers further suggest that incomplete or unclear instructions contributed to inconsistent inspection practices. In this context, implementation appears to depend more on the discretion and capacity of frontline personnel than on formal regulatory design.

Variation in enforcement across provinces reinforces this interpretation. Some districts maintained tight control while others monitored production lightly, creating perceptions of unequal treatment among producers. Similar patterns have been observed in other areas of Thai alcohol governance where unclear mandates and limited cross ministerial coordination influence local making process.

Technical issues identified by producers represent an additional dimension of the implementation gap. Observations of variable alcohol content, inconsistent sensory attributes, and quality disparities reaffirm earlier research on small-scale alcohol production and contamination hazards [58]. These challenges should be understood as part of broader governance and support system limitations rather than isolated technical problems.

Overall, while the reform expanded legal participation, it did not translate into clear or well-coordinated implementation. At the same time, these patterns may reflect an ongoing process of administrative learning and adaptation, rather than a fixed structural limitation of the system. Administrative limitations, uneven enforcement, and insufficient technical support continued to shape how the reform was interpreted and applied in practice.

5.3. Comparison with International and Regional Literature

The study's findings are consistent with global challenges faced by small-scale alcohol producers in weak or transitional regulatory environments. Studies on unrecorded alcohol indicate that small producers often operate with limited technical support and inconsistent oversight, resulting in variability in ethanol concentration, labeling accuracy, and chemical composition [59]. These patterns are consistent with the concerns reported by Thai producers in this study, who described fluctuating alcohol concentration and limited access to routine quality testing.

Regional evidence shows similar dynamics. The production environment in Vietnam shows marked differences in ethanol content and heightened acetaldehyde presence among smaller-scale producers because of inadequate fermentation control and monitoring [2]. Similar issues in Sri Lanka impede policy execution and limit small producers' market access due to administrative challenges and poor coordination [1]. The experiences of Thai producers in this study reflect similar patterns, particularly in the persistence of administrative challenges despite regulatory reform.

International studies highlight the necessity of coordinated governance and available technical support. Research from Japan shows that traditional sake producers benefited from well-defined licensing frameworks and structured training programs that helped maintain product quality and supported local economic development [18]. The absence of comparable support systems in Thailand may contribute to the technical and regulatory challenges identified in this study.

Evidence from Thailand further supports the observation that product quality can vary widely in community-based alcohol production. Previous studies have documented inconsistencies between reported and actual ethanol concentrations, as well as the presence of volatile impurities such as aldehydes [58]. These findings correspond closely with participants' concerns about unstable alcohol strength and inconsistent sensory characteristics during the early implementation phase of the reform.

Overall, the findings suggest that the challenges observed in this study are not unique to Thailand but reflect common issues in early-stage regulatory reform. In many contexts, initial phases of policy implementation are characterized by procedural ambiguity, variation in enforcement, and gradual institutional adjustment. International experience indicates that effective implementation requires not only legislative change but also coordinated governance, clear operational guidance, and sustained technical support. The absence or delay of these elements helps explain the implementation gaps identified in the Thai context.

5.4. Governance and Implementation Implications

The findings show that legislative reform alone is not sufficient to change everyday regulatory practice. Although the 2022 reform expanded legal pathways for small producers, local agencies lacked the operational structures needed to support implementation. Officials in several provinces reported that they had not received updated standard operating procedures and continued to rely on guidance from the previous regulatory system. This situation created ambiguity in regulatory assessments and limited consistency in decision-making. Earlier Thai policy research has described similar challenges, noting that unclear mandates and fragmented communication can slow administrative adaptation.

Variation in enforcement also carries important governance implications. This study found that some districts maintained strict control while others monitored production lightly. Such inconsistencies may reduce trust in regulatory systems and create perceptions of unequal treatment. Research in Sri Lanka and other countries in the region has reported that administrative burden and weak coordination often lead to comparable patterns of

uneven enforcement [1,60]. These parallels suggest that Thailand may face similar risks if local guidance and interagency coordination are not strengthened.

Technical challenges raised by producers highlight another dimension of implementation capacity. Participants identified obstacles concerning fermentation, distillation, and product scrutiny. Small-scale producers face difficulties in maintaining safety and quality standards due to limited access to training and laboratory support. These concerns are consistent with findings from Thai and regional studies on unrecorded alcohol and underscore the importance of technical assistance as an integral component of regulatory implementation.

Cross-ministerial coordination is crucial component for governance. Alcohol regulation in Thailand involves multiple sectors, including excise, health services, local administration, agriculture, and cultural practices. When these sectors operate independently with different priorities, frontline staff may receive inconsistent guidance and lack clear operational direction. In Japan, structured licensing systems and coordinated technical support have contributed to maintaining product quality and supporting local industry development [18]. This highlights the role of integrated governance in aligning regulatory objectives with implementation capacity.

Overall, the results indicate that the main constraints to implementation are administrative rather than legislative. However, these constraints should be understood within the context of an evolving regulatory system, where administrative structures are still being aligned with newly introduced policy objectives. Effective operational guidance, coordinated enforcement, and enhanced technical support are crucial for small producers' legal participation and compliance with health and safety standards. Without these elements, implementation is likely to remain inconsistent and fall short of policy objectives.

5.5. Public Health and Consumer Protection Implications

The findings point to several public health implications arising from the rapid expansion of community level alcohol production without corresponding investment in technical or regulatory support. Variability in alcohol strength, inconsistent sensory characteristics, and limited access to testing services indicate gaps in fermentation control and distillation practices. Earlier studies in Thailand have documented similar problems, including discrepancies between labeled and measured ethanol content and contamination with volatile compounds such as aldehydes [58,61]. This consistency suggests that product quality variation remains a persistent structural risk in small-scale production.

Concerns are present regarding oversight directly impacting consumer safety. Officials noted that quality checks were inconsistent, and some districts lacked clear procedures for evaluating safety. The regional literature highlights that unrecorded or minimally regulated alcohol often presents unpredictable ethanol concentration and unstable chemical profiles [59]. Vietnam has reported similar risks, including elevated acetaldehyde levels linked to weak oversight and limited technical support for producers [2,22]. These findings highlight the importance of consistent monitoring systems in reducing risks related to contamination and unsafe production conditions.

Social and behavioral risks also emerged from the findings. In the Thai context, increased home-based alcohol production may expand availability within local communities, particularly where regulatory oversight is limited. Concerns regarding youth access were raised in some areas, reflecting challenges in controlling distribution when production becomes decentralized. These observations are consistent with previous research indicating that informal or weakly regulated alcohol markets can increase opportunities for early or hazardous drinking. Global evidence further supports that increased availability of

alcohol, particularly in poorly regulated settings, is associated with higher risks of harmful consumption and reduced control over access [62].

The combined effects of technical variability, weak monitoring, and increased accessibility suggest that legislative reform alone is insufficient to ensure public health protection. At the same time, these findings reflect the challenges commonly observed during the early expansion of newly regulated production systems, where safety mechanisms may not yet be fully established. Consumer safety requires integrated inspection systems, accessible testing services, and clear safety communication. Without these elements, regulatory reform may unintentionally increase access to products with variable quality and uncertain health risks.

5.6. Strengths and Limitations

A key strength of this study is its use of multiple qualitative sources. Interviews, field observations, and policy documents were analyzed in combination, enhancing the robustness of data interpretation through triangulation. Including both producers and officials enabled the study to capture contrasting perspectives on how the reform was implemented in practice. The inclusion of four provinces further enhanced the diversity of administrative settings and community contexts, contributing to variation in regulatory environments and production conditions.

The study was conducted during the early phase of the reform. As administrative adaptation is ongoing, some procedures may have evolved after data collection, limiting the ability of the findings to reflect longer-term implementation. The study also did not include chemical testing across all sites. As a result, technical issues were interpreted through participant accounts rather than laboratory verification. In addition, qualitative findings are context-specific and may not represent all areas where community liquor production occurs.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a detailed and credible account of early implementation. The triangulated approach offers grounded insight into how administrative capacity, enforcement patterns, and technical constraints shape regulatory practice. These findings highlight key areas where stronger institutional support may be required to improve implementation outcomes.

5.7. Policy Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study point to several policy actions that can strengthen implementation of the 2022 reform. A key priority is the development of clear operational guidance. Both producers and officials reported uncertainty about licensing steps, documentation requirements, and inspection expectations. Concise and practical updated guidance could improve clarity and support more consistent interpretation across provinces.

Administrative complexity remains a substantial barrier for small-scale producers. A simplified licensing process and a coordinated service point may reduce procedural burden and improve access for new entrants. Earlier studies of Thai alcohol governance have noted similar challenges, particularly when regulatory change outpaces administrative adaptation. Clear and predictable procedures could support compliance, reduce discretionary variation, and strengthen enforcement.

Technical capacity also requires attention. Producers reported challenges in managing fermentation, distillation, and product quality. These challenges are consistent with previous Thai and regional findings on unrecorded and community-based alcohol production. Strengthening access to training and technical support may help producers meet safety standards and reduce contamination risks.

Enforcement practices should be more consistent across districts. Variations in oversight contributed to perceptions of unequal treatment and may complicate producers' understanding of regulatory expectations. Improved coordination among exercise, public health, agricultural, and local administrative agencies may help reduce these inconsistencies. Experiences from Japan and other countries show that coordinated governance structures can support product quality alongside community based economic activities [18,63,64].

Public communication is another important area. Misunderstandings regarding the extent of legal permission may increase alcohol availability and youth access in some communities. Clear communication on legal requirements and safety standards could help reduce misinterpretation and support responsible practices.

Ongoing assessment of product quality and safety is crucial for consumer protection and regulatory sustainability. Regular testing and clearly defined inspection criteria may support more consistent enforcement and improve regulatory transparency across provinces.

Taken together, these findings suggest that aligning legislative intent with implementation requires not only legal reform but also sustained administrative and technical support. These implications should be interpreted as part of a broader process of policy development, where refinement of implementation mechanisms is expected over time. Strengthening operational clarity, coordination, and capacity will be important for improving implementation outcomes while supporting both public health protection and community-level economic participation.

6. Conclusions

This study shows that the 2022 Community Liquor Law Reform has opened new opportunities for small-scale producers but has not yet resulted in clear or consistent implementation. Participants across four provinces described uncertainty about licensing steps, incomplete operational guidance, and uneven enforcement. Technical constraints, including unstable alcohol strength and limited access to testing services, also affected product safety and reliability.

These findings illustrate that legislative change alone is insufficient for achieving effective community liquor governance. Local administrative systems require clear procedures, coordinated enforcement, and practical support for producers. Improved communication with communities and routine monitoring of product quality may also help protect public health and support responsible production.

Continued evaluation will be essential as implementation evolves. Aligning national policy intentions with local administrative capacity will be critical to ensuring that the reform supports economic opportunity while maintaining consumer safety and addressing broader social and health risks. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on how regulatory reform in LMIC contexts is shaped by administrative capacity, frontline discretion, and governance alignment during early implementation.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, K.T.; methodology, A.W., M.T., P.K., K.P. and K.T.; software, A.W.; validation, M.T., P.K., K.P. and K.T.; formal analysis, A.W., M.T., P.K., K.P. and K.T.; investigation, M.T., P.K., K.P. and K.T.; resources, M.T., P.K., K.P. and K.T.; data curation, M.T., P.K., K.P. and K.T.; writing—original draft preparation, A.W.; writing—review and editing, A.W. and K.T.; visualization, A.W.; supervision, M.T., P.K., and K.T.; project administration, K.T.; funding acquisition, K.T. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the Centre for Alcohol Studies (CAS), contract numbers 65-10068-45.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Pattani Campus, Prince of Songkla University Thailand (Reference No: NUR.PN/2568, REC Number: NUR.PN0015/2024).

Informed Consent Statement: Voluntary informed consent was obtained from all study participants. Verbal informed consent was obtained rather than written because the study addressed sensitive issues, and written consent could have caused discomfort or concerns about identification; therefore, verbal consent was approved by the ethics committee.

Data Availability Statement: The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article; further inquiries can be directed at the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Nugawela, M.D.; Lewis, S.; Szatkowski, L.; Langley, T. Rapidly increasing trend of recorded alcohol consumption since the end of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka. *Alcohol Alcohol.* **2017**, *52*, 550–556. [CrossRef]
2. Casswell, S. Development of alcohol control policy in Vietnam: Transnational corporate interests at the policy table, global public health largely absent. *Int. J. Health Policy Manag.* **2022**, *11*, 3032–3039. [CrossRef]
3. Probst, C.; Manthey, J.; Ferreira-Borges, C.; Neufeld, M.; Rakovac, I.; Andreasyan, D.; Sturua, L.; Novik, I.; Hagverdiyev, G.; Obreja, G.; et al. Cross-sectional study on the characteristics of unrecorded alcohol consumption in nine newly independent states between 2013 and 2017. *BMJ Open* **2021**, *11*, e051874. [CrossRef]
4. Han, B.; Kongyou, P.; Jintanalert, N.; Khuanmuang, S.; Kamhangwong, D.; Yamsa-Ard, S. The study of critical success factors for small and medium size craft beer brewery in northern Thailand: A fuzzy AHP approach. In Proceedings of the 2024 International Conference on Decision Aid Sciences and Applications (DASA), Chiang Mai, Thailand, 11–12 December 2024; pp. 1–4. [CrossRef]
5. Sakdiyakorn, M.; Chirakranont, R. Brewing social capital: A case study of Thailand's craft beer consumption community. *J. Consum. Cult.* **2024**, *24*, 400–419. [CrossRef]
6. Kaewpramkusol, R.; Senior, K.; Chenhall, R.; Nanthamongkolchai, S.; Chaiyasong, S. A qualitative exploration of Thai alcohol policy in regulating availability and access. *Int. J. Drug Policy* **2018**, *58*, 1–8. [CrossRef]
7. KAP (Kudun and Partners). Does the New Manufacturing of Alcoholic Beverages Regulation Open Things Up for New Players or Simply Impose New Restrictions? 2022. Available online: <https://www.kap.co.th/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-12-Legal-Alert-Does-the-New-Manufacturing-of-Alcoholic-Beverages-Regulation-open-things-up-for-new-players-or-simply-impose-new-restrictions.pdf> (accessed on 20 March 2026).
8. OECD. *Regulatory Policy in Thailand: Building Momentum for Reform*; OECD Publishing: Paris, France, 2022; Available online: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/regulatory-reform-in-thailand_7892759c-en.html (accessed on 20 March 2026).
9. Humphreys, D.K.; Eisner, M.P. Evaluating a natural experiment in alcohol policy. *Criminol. Public Policy* **2010**, *9*, 41–67. [CrossRef]
10. Wright, A. Local alcohol policy implementation in Scotland: Understanding the role of accountability within licensing. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2019**, *16*, 1880. [CrossRef]
11. Thai Health Promotion Foundation. *Thai Health 2023*; Thai Health Promotion Foundation: Bangkok, Thailand, 2023; Available online: <https://www.thaihealth.or.th/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Thai-Health-2023.pdf> (accessed on 20 March 2026).
12. Reid, N.; Gatrell, J.D. Craft breweries and economic development: Local geographies of beer. *Polymath* **2017**, *7*, 90–110.
13. Thongmadee, P. Enforcement of the Liquor Act A.D. 1990: The case study of manufacturing SATO local liquor in Nakhon Sawan Province. *J. Leg. Entity Manag. Local Innov.* **2021**, *7*, 235–248.
14. Garavaglia, C.; Swinnen, J. *Economics of the Craft Beer Revolution: A Comparative International Perspective*; Springer: Cham, Switzerland, 2018; pp. 3–51.
15. Giesbrecht, N.; Bosma, L.M.; Juras, J.; Quadri, M. Implementing and sustaining effective alcohol-related policies at the local level: Evidence, challenges, and next steps. *World Med. Health Policy* **2014**, *6*, 203–230. [CrossRef]
16. McCullough, M.; Berning, J.; Hanson, J.L. Learning by brewing: Homebrewing legalization and the brewing industry. *Contemp. Econ. Policy* **2019**, *37*, 25–39. [CrossRef]
17. Elzinga, K.; Tremblay, C.; Tremblay, V. Craft beer in the United States: History, numbers, and geography. *J. Wine Econ.* **2015**, *10*, 242–274. [CrossRef]
18. Lee, Y.-S.; Shin, W.-J. Marketing tradition-bound products through storytelling: A case study of a Japanese sake brewery. *Serv. Bus.* **2015**, *9*, 281–295. [CrossRef]
19. Punyaratabandhu, S.; Unger, D. Managing performance in a context of political clientelism: The case of Thailand. In *Managing Performance in Developing Countries*; Routledge: London, UK, 2015; pp. 279–306. [CrossRef]

20. Bowornwathana, B. Governance reform in Thailand: Questionable assumptions, uncertain outcomes. *Asia Pac. J. Public Adm.* **2013**, *35*, 149–165. [CrossRef]
21. Unger, D.; Mahakanjana, C. Decentralization in Thailand. *J. Southeast Asian Econ.* **2016**, *33*, 172–187. [CrossRef]
22. Lachenmeier, D.W.; Neufeld, M.; Rehm, J. The impact of unrecorded alcohol use on health: What do we know in 2020? *J. Stud. Alcohol Drugs* **2021**, *82*, 28–41. [CrossRef]
23. Zamani, N.; Rafizadeh, A.; Hassanian-Moghaddam, H.; Akhavan-Tavakoli, A.; Ghorbani-Samin, M.; Akhgari, M.; Shariati, S. Evaluation of methanol content of illegal beverages using GC and a modified chromatographic acid method: A cross-sectional study. *Subst. Abus. Treat. Prev. Policy* **2019**, *14*, 56. [CrossRef]
24. Destanoğlu, O.; Ateş, İ. Determination and evaluation of methanol, ethanol and higher alcohols in legally and illegally produced alcoholic beverages. *J. Turk. Chem. Soc. A* **2019**, *6*, 21–28. [CrossRef]
25. Rostrup, M.; Edwards, J.K.; Abukalish, M.; Ezzabi, M.; Some, D.; Ritter, H.; Menge, T.; Abdelrahman, A.; Rootwelt, R.; Janssens, B.; et al. Methanol poisoning outbreaks in Libya 2013 and Kenya 2014. *PLoS ONE* **2016**, *11*, e0152676. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
26. Aghababaeian, H.; Araghi Ahvazi, L.; Ostadtaghizadeh, A. Methanol poisoning outbreaks in Iran 2018. *Alcohol Alcohol.* **2019**, *54*, 128–130. [CrossRef]
27. Pingkan, A. *Policy Reforms for Safe Online Access to Alcoholic Beverages in Indonesia*; Center for Indonesian Policy Studies: Jakarta, Indonesia, 2021; Available online: <https://hdl.handle.net/10419/249411> (accessed on 20 March 2026).
28. Respatiadi, H.; Tandra, S. *Fighting Unrecorded Alcohol: A Policy Priority for Bandung, West Java*; Policy Paper No. 13; Center for Indonesian Policy Studies: Jakarta, Indonesia, 2018; Available online: <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/249393/1/CIPS-PP13.pdf> (accessed on 20 March 2026).
29. Kaewpramkusol, R.; Senior, K.; Nanthamongkolchai, S.; Chenhall, R. A qualitative exploration of Thai alcohol policy in regulating alcohol industry marketing strategies and commercial activities. *Drug Alcohol Rev.* **2019**, *38*, 25–33. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
30. Matsukawa, M.; Hamano, M.; Ito, K.; Tanaka, T. Simplification of the colorimetric method to detect methanol contamination in Cambodian local rice liquor. *Int. J. Environ. Rural Dev.* **2017**, *8*, 150–155. [CrossRef]
31. Srivithaya, S. Regulatory impact assessment for law reform: A comparison of the parliament role. *Corp. Law Gov. Rev.* **2024**, *6*, 69–76. [CrossRef]
32. Kanchanachitra, C.; Tangcharoensathien, V.; Patcharanarumol, W.; Posayanonda, T. Multisectoral governance for health: Challenges in implementing a total ban on chrysotile asbestos in Thailand. *BMJ Glob. Health* **2018**, *3*, e000383. [CrossRef]
33. Wisuttisak, P. Regulatory developments for energy liberalization in Thailand. *Viet. J. Leg. Sci.* **2019**, *1*, 48–63. [CrossRef]
34. Haines, F. Regulatory reform in light of regulatory character: Assessing industrial safety change in the aftermath of the Kader Toy Factory fire in Bangkok, Thailand. *Soc. Leg. Stud.* **2003**, *12*, 461–487. [CrossRef]
35. Moynihan, D.; Herd, P.; Harvey, H. Administrative burden: Learning, psychological, and compliance costs in citizen–state interactions. *J. Public Adm. Res. Theory* **2015**, *25*, 43–69. [CrossRef]
36. Heinrich, C.J. The bite of administrative burden: A theoretical and empirical investigation. *J. Public Adm. Res. Theory* **2016**, *26*, 403–420. [CrossRef]
37. Herd, P.; DeLeire, T.; Harvey, H.; Moynihan, D.P. Shifting administrative burden to the state: The case of Medicaid take-up. *Public Adm. Rev.* **2013**, *73*, S69–S81. [CrossRef]
38. Carter, D.P.; Scott, T.A.; Mahallati, N. Balancing barriers to entry and administrative burden in voluntary regulation. *Perspect. Public Manag. Gov.* **2017**, *1*, 207–221. [CrossRef]
39. Ritzel, C.; Mack, G.; Portmann, M.; Heitkämper, K.; El Benni, N. Factors influencing farmers’ administrative burden: A structural equation modeling approach. *PLoS ONE* **2020**, *15*, e0241075. [CrossRef]
40. Chigudu, D. Navigating policy implementation gaps in Africa: The case of Zimbabwe. *Risk Gov. Control* **2015**, *5*, 7–14. [CrossRef]
41. Matland, R.E. Synthesizing the implementation literature: The ambiguity-conflict model of policy implementation. *J. Public Adm. Res. Theory* **1995**, *5*, 145–174. [CrossRef]
42. Pressman, J.L.; Wildavsky, A.B. *Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington Are Dashed in Oakland*; University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, USA, 1973; ISBN 0-520-05232-3.
43. Sidha, Z. Street-level bureaucrats as the ultimate policy makers. *J. Political Sci. Public Aff.* **2017**, *5*, 306. [CrossRef]
44. Lipsky, M. Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services. *Mich. Law Rev.* **1981**, *79*, 811. [CrossRef]
45. Bell, E.; Smith, K. Perspectives from the front-line: Street-level bureaucrats, administrative burden and access to Oklahoma’s Promise. *EasyChair Preprint* **2019**, 1093.
46. Yang, F.; Li, Z.; Huang, X. Frontline information disclosure and street-level bureaucrats’ willingness to follow rules: Evidence from China. *Int. Public Manag. J.* **2021**, *24*, 831–845. [CrossRef]
47. Wang, Y.; Pan, H. Digital regulation, enforcement attitudes, and discretionary decision-making of regulatory street-level bureaucrats during a pandemic emergency: An experimental study in China. *J. Asian Public Policy* **2025**, *18*, 223–244. [CrossRef]
48. Isik, O. Qualitative research approaches and data collection methods: Understanding meaning and experience. *J. Humanit. Educ. Dev.* **2025**, *7*, 19–32. [CrossRef]

49. Walt, G.; Gilson, L. Reforming the health sector in developing countries: The central role of policy analysis. *Health Policy Plan.* **1994**, *9*, 353–370. [[CrossRef](#)]
50. Tong, A.; Sainsbury, P.; Craig, J. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): A 32-item checklist. *Int. J. Qual. Health Care* **2007**, *19*, 349–357. [[CrossRef](#)]
51. Palinkas, L.A.; Horwitz, S.M.; Green, C.A.; Wisdom, J.P.; Duan, N.; Hoagwood, K. Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis. *Adm. Policy Ment. Health* **2015**, *42*, 533–544. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
52. Qu, S.; Dumay, J. The qualitative research interview. *Qual. Res. Account. Manag.* **2011**, *8*, 238–264. [[CrossRef](#)]
53. Finlay, L. Negotiating the swamp: Reflexivity in research practice. *Qual. Res.* **2002**, *2*, 209–230. [[CrossRef](#)]
54. Braun, V.; Clarke, V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qual. Res. Psychol.* **2006**, *3*, 77–101. [[CrossRef](#)]
55. Creswell, J.W.; Plano Clark, V.L. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*; SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2017.
56. Patton, M.Q. Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Serv. Res.* **1999**, *34*, 1189–1208.
57. Morse, J.M. Critical analysis of strategies for determining rigor in qualitative inquiry. *Qual. Health Res.* **2015**, *25*, 1212–1222. [[CrossRef](#)]
58. Srisuk, N.; Penpong, M.S.; Saengow, U. Unrecorded alcohol consumption in Thailand: Prevalence, geographical variation and socioeconomic correlates. *Drug Alcohol Rev.* **2022**, *41*, 657–665. [[CrossRef](#)]
59. World Health Organization. *Unrecorded Alcohol: What the Evidence Tells Us*; WHO: Geneva, Switzerland, 2021; Available online: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240044463> (accessed on 20 March 2026).
60. Christensen, T.; Lægreid, O.; Lægreid, P. Administrative coordination capacity: Does policy wickedness matter? *Policy Soc.* **2019**, *38*, 237–254. [[CrossRef](#)]
61. Assavanig, A.; Lertsiri, S. Volatile flavour compounds analysis of solid-state fermented Thai rice wine (Ou). *ScienceAsia* **2008**, *34*, 199–206. [[CrossRef](#)]
62. World Health Organization. *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2018*; World Health Organization: Geneva, Switzerland, 2018; Available online: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565639> (accessed on 20 March 2026).
63. Raine, J.; Dunstan, E. The local regulatory state: A case of double standards? *Int. J. Public Adm.* **2011**, *34*, 159–170. [[CrossRef](#)]
64. Ratanakorn, S. Food Regulations and Enforcement in Thailand. In *Reference Module in Food Science*; Elsevier: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2016. [[CrossRef](#)]

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.