

Online Marketing of E-cigarettes and Heated Tobacco Products on Brand Websites in the Philippines

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	Tobacco industry	E-cigarette & nicotine product industry	Pharma industry
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Background

- July 2022 – Philippines passed bill RA11900
 - Permit previously banned e-cigarette (e-cig) and heated tobacco products (HTP) flavors
 - Minimum age of purchase lowered from 21 years to 18 years old



Objectives

- Describe product features and marketing strategies on e-cig and HTP brand websites in the Philippines
- Discuss policy recommendations for e-cig and HTP regulations



Methods

- In September 2022, Google searches were used to identify 12 e-cig and 3 HTP brand websites specifically targeting people in the Philippines:
 - **E-cig:** JUUL, JVE, Kardinal Stick, Kokin, Mad Master, NIXX Global, RELX, Snowplus, Spade Vapes, VLADDIN, Yooz, Zalan
 - **HTP:** IQOS, MOK, TEO/NEAFS
- 632 webpages within 2 clicks away from the homepage were coded and analyzed





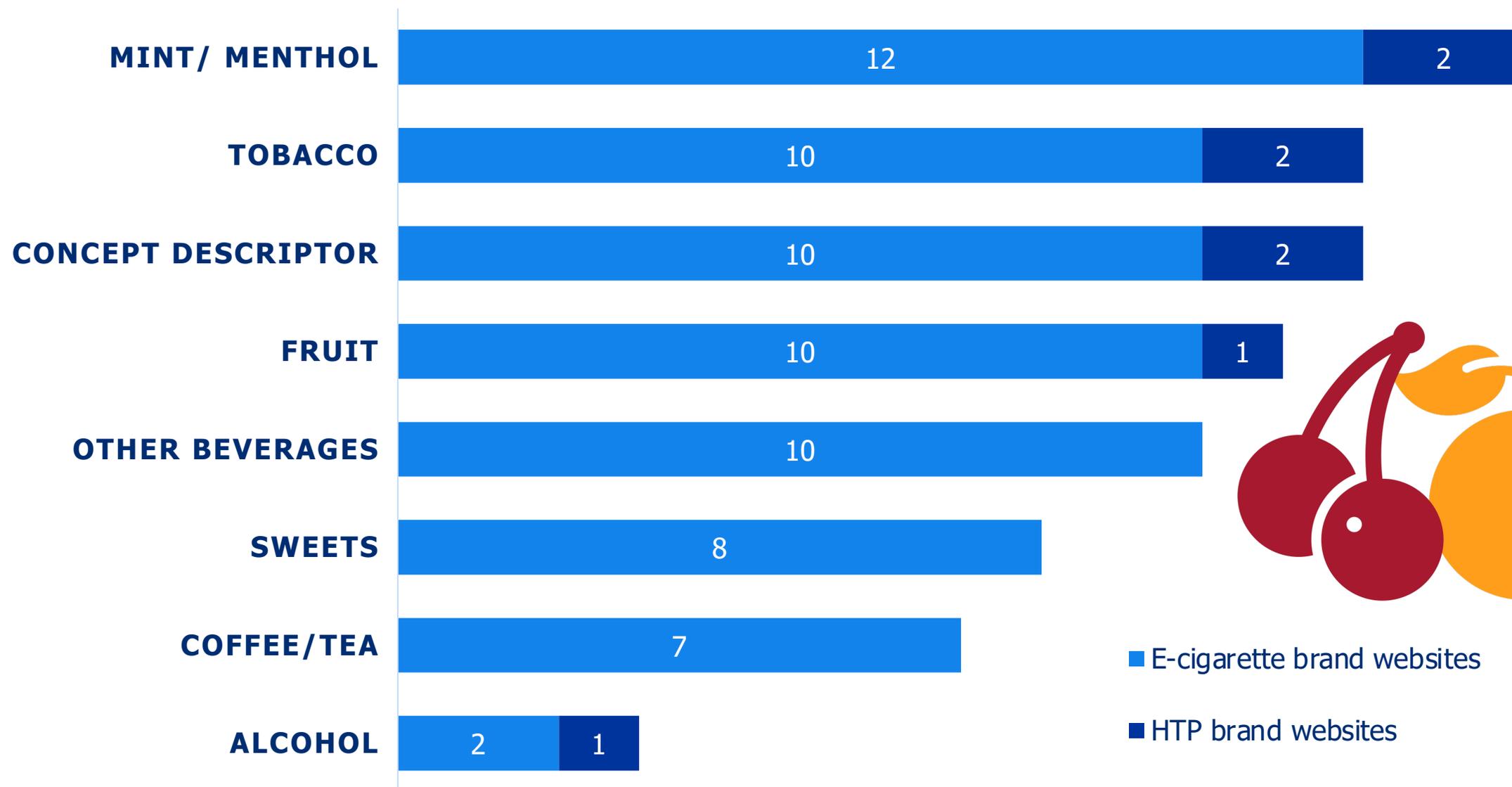
Results

Findings

- 13 brand websites (10 e-cig & 3 HTP) had an age gate
- E-cig devices, cartridges, pods, and e-cigarette liquids were marketed on e-cig brand websites
- HTP devices and inserts were marketed on HTP brand websites
- 12 brand websites (10 e-cig & 2 HTP) offered online sales



FLAVOR DESCRIPTORS IN PRODUCT NAMES



■ E-cigarette brand websites

■ HTP brand websites

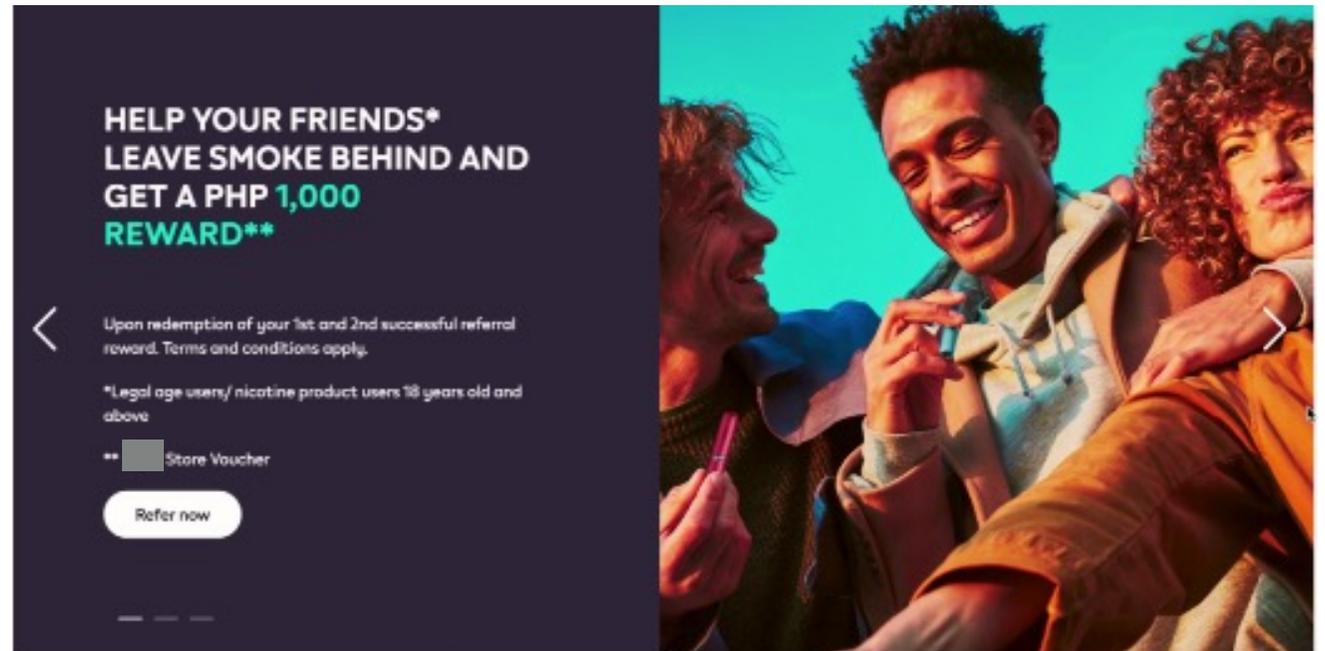


Promotion/Engagement Strategies

Promotion/engagement strategies were found on all 15 brand websites

Common engagement strategies included:

- Social media links (n=13)
- Endorsement/testimonials by customers, celebrities, influencers (n= 8)
- Pay-to-promote affiliate or ambassador program (n=7)
- Referral discounts (n=6)



Marketing Messages

- Common marketing messages included **claims of smoking cessation assistance** (n=13), **lower health risks than cigarettes** (n=10), and **depictions of the company as responsible or self-regulating** (n=10).

“We inform consumers of all relevant safety information about our smoke-free products.”

“Perfect for anyone looking to make the switch from smoking to vaping.”

“[Brand Name] has developed a smart alternative for tobacco users, delivering a product that’s simple, enjoyable, and most importantly, less harmful than combustible cigarettes.”

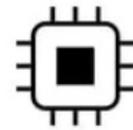


Advertising Appeals

Flavor (n=14)



Innovation (n=13)



X1 Chip



Power level indicator



Fast charge

Luxury/high-end (n=13)



- Other appeals: Asian appeal, vapor/cloud, recreation/fun, masculinity, femininity, cigarette-like satisfaction, cartoon/animation, fashionable

Advertising Appeals





Discussion

Conclusions

- E-cig and HTP brand websites in the Philippines commonly employ youth-targeted marketing strategies
- Findings support policy changes to safeguard Filipino youth from tobacco and nicotine harm:
 - Strengthened regulation around digital marketing of e-cig and HTP
 - Increased minimum purchase age
 - Stricter flavor bans



Access the study:



Thank you!

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