

Social Media Marketing by E-cigarette and Heated Tobacco Product Brands in Vietnam

Background

This study examined marketing strategies used and product characteristics advertised by e-cigarette and heated tobacco product (HTP) brands on social media in Vietnam.

At the time of data collection, e-cigarettes and HTPs were not legally imported and sold in Vietnam. As of January 2025, the production, sale, import, storage, transportation, and use of e-cigarettes and HTPs are banned in Vietnam.

Methods

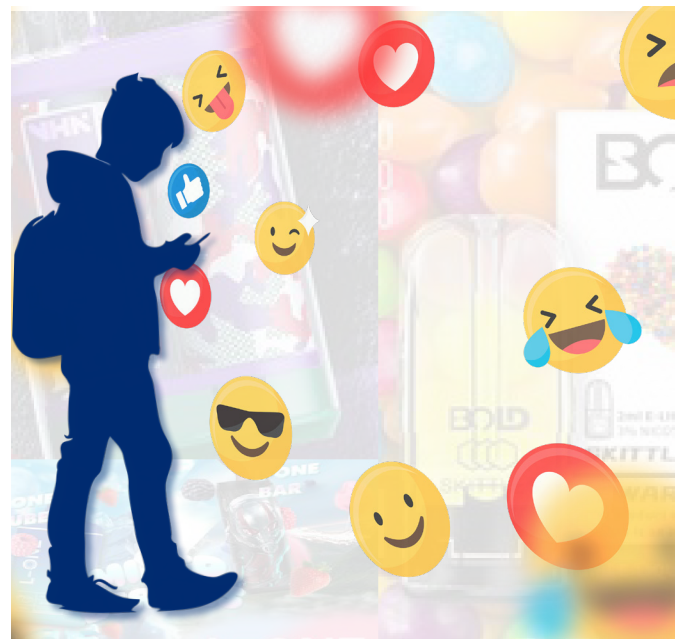
A list of e-cigarette and HTP brands available in Vietnam was generated through Google search, searches of e-commerce platforms, and visits to local retailers. Active Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube accounts (the most popular social media platforms in the country) belonging to:

12 e-cigarette brands: Bold Vape, CISOO, GEEKBAR, L-One, MOTI, OXVA, RELX, SNOWPLUS, WOTOFO, Yeezy, Yooz, and ZQ vapor and **1 HTP brand:** IQOS

Between Aug. 1, 2022 and Jan. 31, 2023, a total of 1,014 publicly-visible posts were found published on these brands' social channels. A randomly selected sample of 186 posts were coded. No YouTube videos were found during data collection.



The coding process entailed an assessment of product characteristics (e.g., product types, flavors), marketing appeals (e.g., cartoons, holidays), promotional strategies (e.g., discounts, giveaways), engagement strategies (e.g., tagging), and the presence of health warning labels and age restrictions.



Key Results & Implications

Study findings suggest e-cigarette and HTP companies used their brand social media pages to advertise their products and engage consumers in Vietnam.

- ➔ Across e-cigarette brand posts, common advertising tactics included featuring flavored products and youth appealing imagery like emoticons or emojis and cartoons
- ➔ Among the HTP brand posts, common advertising tactics included the use of emoticons or emojis, holiday themes (potentially due to the timing of data collection being August - January), and promotions
- ➔ Few e-cigarette and HTP brand posts included health warnings or age restrictions

Restrictions on social media marketing may be an implementation challenge but implementing and enforcing a ban on the marketing of e-cigarettes and HTPs in Vietnam, in addition to the ban on production, sale, import, storage, transportation, and use, would be consistent with these study findings. This would support the implementation of the new policy and help prevent youth exposure to targeted advertisements for e-cigarettes and HTPs.

Key Findings (186 total posts)

Product Types Advertised

E-cigarettes (n=165)

- Disposable (n=77, 47%)
- Non-refillable, pre-filled pod systems (n=54, 33%)
- Open-system (i.e., refillable) (n=41, 25%)
- E-cigarette product accessories (n=12, 7%)

Posts advertising e-liquid or a product including e-liquid (n=124)

- Stated nicotine strength (n=36, 29%)

HTP devices, inserts, and/or accessories (n=21)

- HTP devices and/or inserts (n=20, 95%)
- HTP product accessories (n=2, 10%)

Most Common Flavors (n=84)



75%
(n=63)
Fruit



32%
(n=27)
**Concept
Flavors^**



25%
(n=21)
**Mint/
menthol**

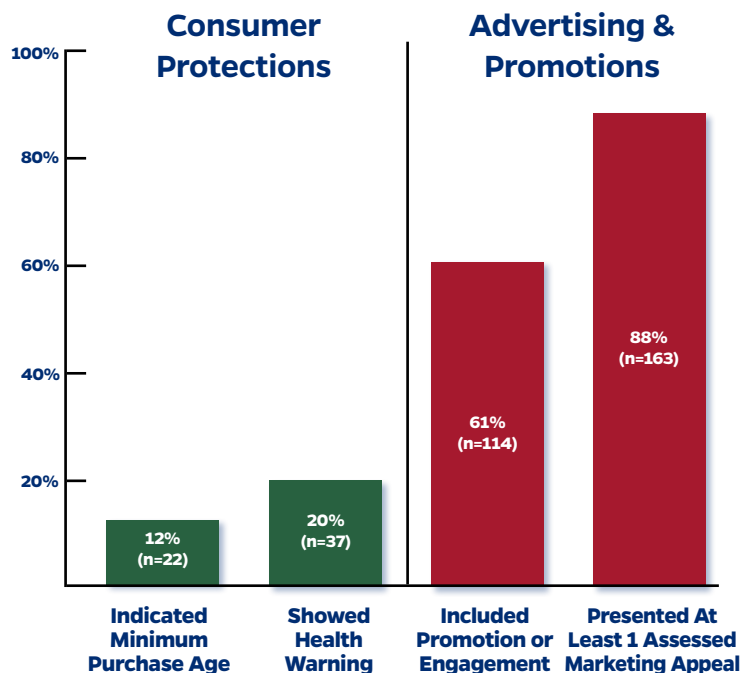


21%
(n=18)
Beverages*

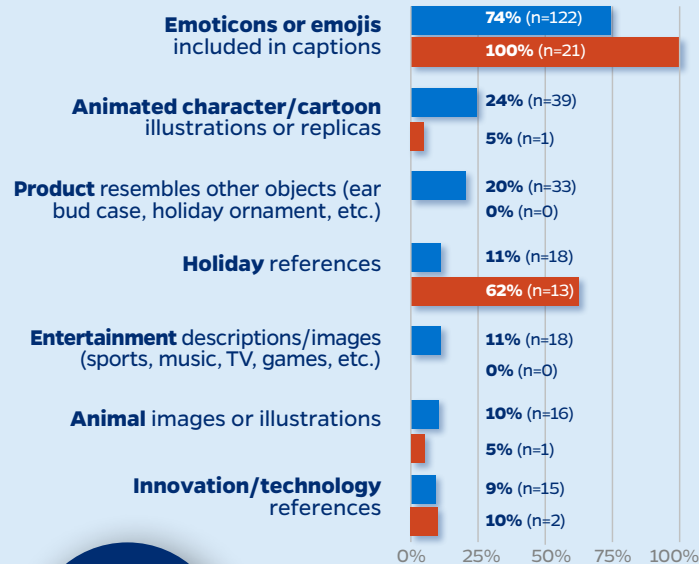
^terms that imply some type of flavor, sensation, taste, or aroma; e.g., "cold," "storm," "summer"

*excluding coffee/tea/alcohol; e.g., soda, juice, energy drinks

Prevalence of Advertised Characteristics and Features



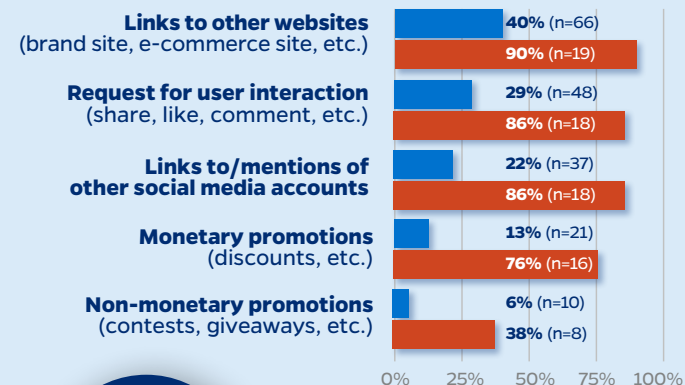
Common Marketing Appeals



E-cigarettes (n=165)

HTPs (n=21)

Common Promotion & Engagement Strategies



Learn more about e-cigarette and HTP online marketing tactics in Vietnam

