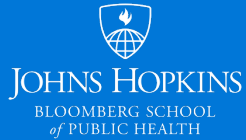


Banning E-cigarette Flavors is Not Enough



Institute for Global
Tobacco Control

RELX Brand Variants and Packaging in China

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	Tobacco industry	E-cigarette & nicotine product industry	Pharma industry
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Photography Allowed





Background

China E-cigarette Regulations

Effective in October 2022:

- Ban on non-tobacco flavored e-cigarettes
- Mandated text-only health warning label (HWL)
- Nicotine concentration $\leq 20\text{mg/g}$



RELX



- A leading e-cigarette brand in China
- 63% market share
- 5,000+ branded partner stores and 100,000+ other retail outlets in 250 cities



Objective



Examine RELX's brand variants and packaging strategies that may undermine efforts to reduce the appeal of e-cigarettes to youth and prevent youth initiation

Source: <https://finance.sina.com.cn/jjxw/2025-04-16/doc-inetirww6966944.shtml>

RELX



Methods



- April-May 2023
- Six cities of China
- Purchased e-cigarette packs using the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System (TPackSS) systematic protocol



Vendor Selection

- Two types of vape stores identified:

Brand name stores
(e.g., RELX, YOOZ, SNOWPLUS, MOTI)

- Data collected
- Stores were
- each of the



protocol to find stores
neighborhoods of different

Non-brand name stores



use packs
nic status in



Coding



- A detailed codebook was used to assess design elements and descriptors on RELX packaging
- Packs were double-coded by trained, native Chinese speakers





Results

Brands Purchased

Brand Family	N
RELX	33
Produced BEFORE Oct. 2022	8
Produced AFTER Oct. 2022	25
MOTI	9
Boulder	8
Binye	8
YOOZ	8
Other (33 brands)	77
Total	143



Branding

Pack produced
BEFORE
Oct. 2022

Brand Family Name

RELX

Series Name

Infinity

Series Logo



Branding

Pack produced
AFTER
Oct. 2022

Brand Family Name
RELX

Series Name
RELX Phantom

Device Descriptor
POWER



Slogan
"In this moment,
I'm with you."

Brand Logo

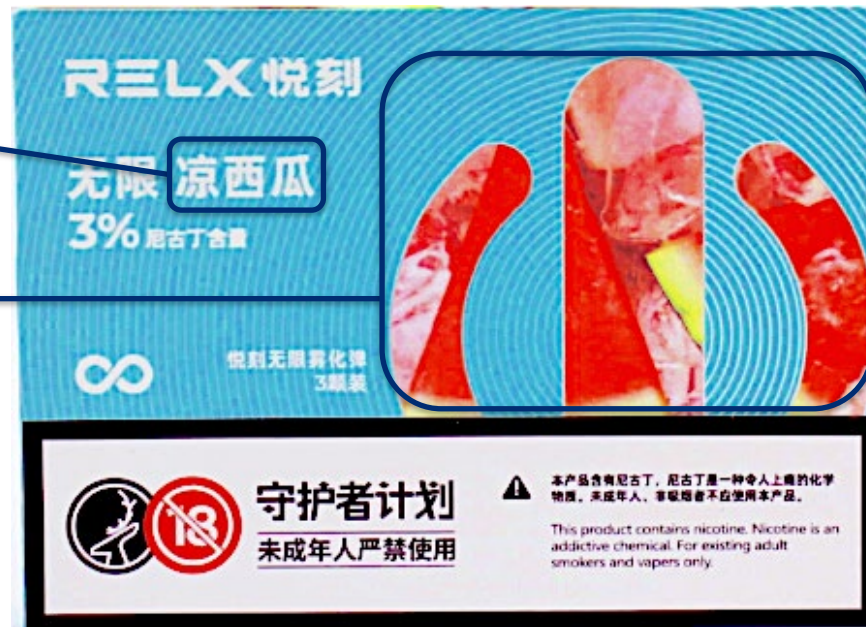


Flavor Descriptor/Imagery

Pack produced
BEFORE
Oct. 2022

Flavor
Watermelon

Flavor Imagery
Watermelon



守护者计划
未成年人严禁使用



本产品含有尼古丁，尼古丁是一种令人上瘾的化学物质。未成年人、非吸烟者不应使用本产品。

This product contains nicotine. Nicotine is an addictive chemical. For existing adult smokers and vapers only.



Flavor Descriptor/Imagery

Pack produced
AFTER
Oct. 2022

Concept Descriptor
Colorful Clouds

Flavor
Tobacco



Tobacco & Concept Descriptor

Packs produced
AFTER
Oct. 2022

Tobacco Flavor Descriptor	Concept Descriptor
Mountain Roasted Tobacco (N=13)	A Path Beyond the River (n=3)
	Forest Revival (n=6)
	Simple Joys of Life (n=2)
	Graceful Clouds of Smoke (n=2)
Creek Tobacco (N=7)	Colorful Clouds (n=5)
	Moments of Connection (n=1)
	Warm Sun over Blue Fields (n=1)
Fall Tobacco (N=3)	Swaying Green Fan (n=3)
Rock Roasted Tobacco (N=2)	Rolling Good Fortune (n=2)
Total	



Flavor
Creek Tobacco



Flavor
Fall Tobacco



Health Warning Label

Pack produced
BEFORE
Oct. 2022



**“Guardian Program
Strictly Prohibited
for Minors”**

**Addiction/
Nicotine Warning**



Health Warning Label

Pack produced
AFTER
Oct. 2022

Health Warning Label

“The company reminds you:
Using
e-cigarettes is
harmful to
health.
Please do not
use e-cigarettes
in public places.”



Nicotine Concentration

Pack produced
BEFORE
Oct. 2022

Nicotine
Concentration
3%



Nicotine Concentration

Pack produced
AFTER
Oct. 2022



Nicotine Concentration
18mg/g





Conclusions

Flavors

Even with a ban on non-tobacco flavors, RELX Technology still tries to convey differences between brand variants



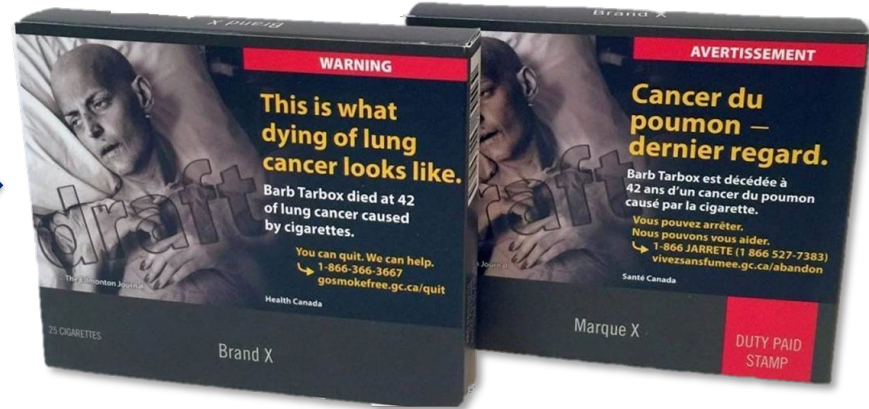
Warning Labels

Colors/patterns carried into the health warning label area may diminish their effectiveness



Policy Implications

- Use of **concept descriptors** and **branding strategies** allows RELX Technology to differentiate its products and sustain appeal without technically violating China's e-cigarette regulations
- Stricter **packaging regulations** can **reduce product appeal** and **enhance health warning label impact**



Protocols, Codebooks, and Resources



*Available on the
Tobacco Pack Surveillance System
(TPackSS) website*





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