

KNOWLEDGE OF AND THE FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO SMOKE-FREE LAW IMPLEMENTATION IN VIETNAMESE HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS

BACKGROUND

In 2013, Vietnam prohibited smoking inside restaurants (completely) and hotels (some designated smoking area exceptions). Both venues and customers can be fined for violations.

Compliance with smoke-free rules in these venues is low. To improve compliance, evidence from the venue's perspective is needed to understand law knowledge and facilitators and barriers to implementation.

METHODS

- We conducted 30 in-depth interviews with hotel (n=12) and restaurant (n=18) owners or managers in summer 2025
- Participants were recruited equally in high- and low-tourism areas across three cities (Hanoi, Da Lat, and Nha Trang) from venues diverse in terms of affordability and facility features (e.g., patios, private dining rooms)
- Interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, following a semi-structured guide, and were translated into English for coding and thematic analysis

STRATEGIC OUTREACH TO HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS IN VIETNAM ABOUT SMOKE-FREE LAWS AND ASSOCIATED FINES COULD IMPROVE COMPLIANCE WITHIN THESE VENUES



◀ Access this poster and other IGTC work presented at the SRNT 2026 Annual Meeting

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RESULTS

- Knowledge of the law, including venue and customer fines, was low, particularly for restaurants
- Many who implemented smoke-free rules believed it was corporate policy or an effort to protect health
- Most participants said they verbally informed customers of the rule and signaled whether smoking was allowed through signs, outdoor ashtrays, and norms regarding not smoking in air-conditioned rooms
- Many hotels enforced damage fees if internal surveillance found that smoking had occurred in bedrooms
- Many participants said they had hesitated to ask VIP or government customers to stop smoking
- Some venues allowed smoking if women and children were not present out of fear from lost business or bad reviews
- Those who knew the law saw venue fines as an effective deterrent, but did not fine customers due to worries about the authority to do so

CONCLUSIONS

Compliance facilitators and barriers varied, but law knowledge was low and venues did not fine customers for violations. Results can inform ways the Vietnamese government communicates about the law, including the ability to fine customers, to support enforcement despite profit and reputation concerns from venues.

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