



# The Influence of Cigarette Advertising on Teenagers' Attitudes Toward Cigarette Purchasing Decisions

Ira Nur Dewita Siregar<sup>\*1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Politeknik Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: [iranurdewita@polmed.ac.id](mailto:iranurdewita@polmed.ac.id)

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 26 June 2025

Revised 29 July 2025

Accepted 30 July 2025

Available 31 July 2025

E-ISSN: 2963-4377

### How to cite:

Siregar, I. N. D. (2025). The Influence of Cigarette Advertising on Teenagers' Attitudes Toward Cigarette Purchasing Decisions. *Journal Business Administration: Entrepreneurship and Creative Industry*, 4(2), 86–90. <https://doi.org/10.32734/jba.v4i2.22308>

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of cigarette advertising on adolescents' attitudes toward cigarette purchasing decisions and the role of the media in supporting the cigarette industry. Cigarettes have become a serious issue in global health due to their addictive substances that have a detrimental impact on health. Cigarette advertising, particularly through television and social media, is considered to greatly influence adolescents' perceptions of cigarettes as symbols of “coolness” and masculinity. This study employs a qualitative approach through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and online media observation. The research findings indicate that most adolescents are unaware of the connection between advertising and their decision to purchase cigarettes; however, advertising still exerts an indirect influence on the formation of adolescents' opinions and attitudes. The study also found that weak government regulations and the widespread presence of cigarette advertisements exacerbate this situation. Therefore, strict oversight of advertisements and cigarette distribution, particularly those targeting teenagers, is crucial in efforts to control cigarette consumption in Indonesia.

**Keyword:** Cigarette Advertisements, Teenage Attitudes, Media, Purchasing Decisions

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh iklan rokok terhadap sikap remaja terkait keputusan pembelian rokok serta peran media dalam mendukung industri rokok. Rokok telah menjadi masalah serius dalam kesehatan global akibat zat adiktifnya yang berdampak buruk bagi kesehatan. Iklan rokok, terutama melalui televisi dan media sosial, dianggap sangat mempengaruhi persepsi remaja terhadap rokok sebagai simbol “keren” dan maskulinitas. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui Diskusi Kelompok Terfokus (FGD) dan pengamatan media online. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar remaja tidak menyadari hubungan antara iklan dan keputusan mereka untuk membeli rokok; namun, iklan tetap memiliki pengaruh tidak langsung terhadap pembentukan opini dan sikap remaja. Studi ini juga menemukan bahwa regulasi pemerintah yang lemah dan penyebaran luas iklan rokok memperparah situasi ini. Oleh karena itu, pengawasan ketat terhadap iklan dan distribusi rokok, terutama yang menargetkan remaja, sangat penting dalam upaya mengendalikan konsumsi rokok di Indonesia.

**Kata kunci:** Iklan Rokok, Sikap Remaja, Media, Keputusan Pembelian



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons  
Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International.  
<http://doi.org/10.32734/jba.v4i2.22308>

## 1. Introduction

Cigarettes have been a focus of attention in the health sector for many years. This is because cigarettes have harmful effects on the human body. These effects are caused by the addictive substances contained in cigarettes. As a result of the influence of these addictive substances, cigarettes cause addiction among their consumers. There are various diseases caused by cigarettes, including heart attacks, cancer, impotence,

pregnancy complications, and fetal disorders. Additionally, smoking also leads to deaths caused by the diseases it induces. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2013, it is stated that 5 million people died due to cigarette consumption. This figure increased from 2011, which recorded 400,000 deaths caused by cigarettes.

According to the Director General of Disease Prevention and Control (P2P) at the Indonesian Ministry of Health, Dr. H. Mohamad Subuh, MPPM, Indonesia has reached an alarming level of tobacco product consumption, particularly cigarettes. This is evidenced by the statement made by the Director General of Disease Control and Environmental Health (P2PL) of the Indonesian Ministry of Health, Tjadra Yoga Aditama, who said that in 2013 Indonesia was still the third country in the world with the highest number of active smokers. The number of active smokers in Indonesia is around 61.4 million out of the total population.

According to Wakefield, McElrath, and Emery (2006), the tobacco industry has actively worked to create a public image and opinion that its products are targeted at teenagers. The tobacco industry targets teenagers because the age group of 15 to 21 years old is still in the process of self-discovery. At this age, individuals are still unstable and easily influenced. This is why the tobacco industry targets teenagers as potential smokers.

It is no surprise that we often encounter teenagers who smoke around us. According to a survey by Lentera in 2015, 45% of teenagers in Indonesia aged 13 to 19 already smoke. This figure has increased from 2013, when only 18.3% of teenagers smoked (Pratiwi, 2015).

Health Minister Endang Rahayu Sedyaningsih stated that the continuing increase in the number of smokers is partly due to cigarette advertisements and promotions in the mass media, which are packaged very well and attract public attention. According to Viana Ananta Siska Simanjuntak (2014), in her thesis, she cited that advertisements are known as an effective marketing medium. This is because advertisements are a technique for disseminating information through media that can reach across time, heterogeneity, and a wide audience.

## **2. Theoretical basis**

### ***Cultivation Theory***

This theory explores the general hypothesis that the more time viewers spend watching television, the more their conception of the world and society will reflect what they see on television. The danger is that, due to commercial constraints, television presents a worldview and common stereotypes through a relatively rigid set of images and messages that cross all programs on all delivery systems (Gerbner et al., 1994). Cultivation theory states that the media, especially television, has a strong influence in changing individuals' perceptions of reality. Cultivation theory argues that television is highly responsible for the development of perceptions about norms and reality on a daily basis (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980, 1986).

Currently, cigarette advertisements on television present creative ads, and the most effective medium for supporting such cigarette advertising activities is television (TV) because TV ads can reach a wide audience. Due to restrictions on depicting the product, cigarette advertisements have become creative, giving them a positive impression. As a result, teenagers perceive cigarette advertisements as cool, macho, and impressive.

### ***Cumulative Effects Theory***

According to Elizabeth M. Perse (2001), this theory explains that certain types of media content can be found everywhere and are presented continuously and consistently. Media content presented in such a way makes it impossible for the audience to avoid the message. As a result, the audience is easily influenced. The audience will adopt the content and messages conveyed by the media in their own way. With repeated exposure over a long period of time, the media will more easily have an effect on the audience. As a result, the effect will last for a long time.

This also impacts the audience's mindset or how they perceive an object. With various media messages portraying cigarettes as a product targeted at teenagers, the teenage audience, as the recipients of these messages, will think in line with what is presented without filtering the content of the media messages. Thus,

the tobacco industry achieves its goal of using media marketing to attract public attention, particularly its target audience

### 3. Discussion

Cigarettes in Indonesia have become a serious topic of discussion lately, with the cigarette industry sparking controversy. (Sumarno, 2002) states that the amount of money the government receives from the cigarette industry has a significant impact on the state budget and is able to provide many jobs. According to the speaker at the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Indonesia is among the countries lagging behind in addressing the tobacco industry. In contrast, when compared to the United States—a developed nation that has been familiar with tobacco for longer—the U.S. has banned tobacco advertising on TV since 1971, following two decades of awareness about the health impacts caused by tobacco.

There are several reasons why cigarette consumption in Indonesia continues to increase, including Indonesia's failure to ratify the convention, political elements in tobacco industry regulations, rampant cigarette advertising, and the greed of the cigarette industry. Indonesia's failure to ratify the treaty has a significant impact on tobacco regulations in the country. This results in less stringent government regulations on tobacco compared to countries that have ratified the treaty. Weak regulations allow the tobacco industry to market its products more freely, both in terms of sales and marketing. The impact of Indonesia's failure to ratify the convention is the emergence of politicians who benefit from weak regulations. According to the speaker at the FGD, he often hears of fraud committed by politicians who facilitate the tobacco industry's marketing strategies. It is very difficult to stop politicians from committing fraud because their networks are so strong. Currently, cigarette advertisements are everywhere in Indonesia. Creative cigarette advertisements that convey messages and meanings continuously appear in conventional and new media. As a result, Indonesians, especially children and teenagers, are constantly exposed to rampant cigarette advertisements that seem to have no limits. According to speakers at the FGD, 2 out of 3 adult residents in Indonesia smoke, and 68% are adult men. Meanwhile, 1 out of 3 students start smoking before the age of 10. The number of child smokers increases by 40% annually, and 60% of smokers are from low-income households. Not only are cigarette advertisements rampant, but the greed of the cigarette industry in Indonesia is also very concerning. Advertising companies deliberately pay individuals or institutions perceived as influential in certain areas. This is commonly found near schools. Cigarette sellers at small shops claim they are paid to display advertisers' banners. These sellers also openly sell cigarettes by the stick so that students can purchase them at lower prices. The reason why children are easily influenced by cigarette advertisements is because advertisers use creative persuasion techniques and understand the characteristics of their target market, and they implement creative strategies, one of which is through the use of media. Children are easily influenced by the media they see on a daily basis. For example, cigarette advertisements on billboards, with their large size, inevitably draw children's attention to the images in the advertisements and make them perceive the messages conveyed by the advertisements as “cool.” This influence is not only from advertisements but also from the surrounding environment, particularly parents.

Another impact of smoking is its effect on physical health. According to the speaker, in 2014, the cost of medical treatment for the public due to smoking reached 280 trillion, while the tax revenue from the tobacco industry was around 200 trillion. From these data, it can be seen that Indonesia is still suffering losses due to smoking, even though the tobacco industry continues to engage in CSR. However, the CSR activities conducted are merely “CSR washing,” where CSR is used to cover up wrongdoing while appearing to do good. In reality, the CSR activities carried out by the tobacco industry in Indonesia are still far insufficient compared to the harm caused.

In response to the increase in cigarette consumption in Indonesia, the government has not remained silent. The government has created a program called MPOWER, which is a follow-up to the WHO FCTC to implement tobacco control activities and measure the extent to which these activities have been carried out. MPOWER stands for Monitoring, Protecting, Offering, Warning, Enforcing, and Raising. As the name suggests, the functions of MPOWER are to monitor tobacco use and regulations, protect against the effects of

smoking, offer assistance to quit tobacco products, warn about the dangers of tobacco, enforce bans on advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of tobacco products, and increase tobacco taxes (WHO, 2013).

According to the speaker, the implementation of MPOWER has not been maximized because the tobacco industry in Indonesia remains controversial, with many people both for and against it. Additionally, there are obstacles that make it difficult to implement, as explained above.

The government itself has a policy on smoking. This policy is outlined in Government Regulation (PP) No. 109 of 2012, which addresses the handling of materials containing addictive substances in the form of tobacco products for health purposes. Article 2, paragraph 1 of this regulation contains rules on the implementation of smoking control for health purposes, with the aim of preventing diseases caused by smoking among individuals and the community. Through this article, it is clear that there are already regulations in place to protect public health from the effects of tobacco use.

On the other hand, Indonesia is the only country in the Asia-Pacific region that has not signed the FCTC (Framework Convention on Tobacco Control) initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO). The FCTC itself is an international treaty that serves to limit and control the spread of tobacco products such as cigarettes. According to Istman MP (2016), the reason Indonesia has not ratified the FCTC is because Indonesia is one of the largest producers of tobacco and cigarettes in the world.

In response to this, in 2020 the government held discussions on the Tobacco Industry Bill. According to Taufiqulhadi, a politician from the Nasdem Party, the bill was prepared to protect tobacco farmers, following feedback from farmers who felt they were suffering losses due to tobacco import policies. However, according to Indriyani Astuti (2017), the Tobacco Bill itself is considered by some parties as a form of government support for the cigarette industry. This is because the Tobacco Bill is seen as having business-oriented objectives and conflicting with efforts to protect public health. The bill states that it aims to increase cigarette production for business interests. However, this is contrary to efforts to reduce the prevalence of smoking.

On the other hand, the Tobacco Bill is also considered to be in conflict with the FCTC. The Tobacco Bill contains provisions that aim to increase cigarette production, while the FCTC seeks to reduce cigarette production. In addition, there are other provisions in the Tobacco Bill that conflict with the FCTC. These provisions allow cigarette advertising and sponsorship in the Tobacco Bill. However, the FCTC prohibits tobacco advertising and sponsorship. Furthermore, some parties feel that Indonesia does not strictly monitor and enforce regulations. Sanctions for violations of regulations are not strictly enforced. As a result, the regulations are merely regulations that are not obeyed by some parties. Therefore, the regulations that have been implemented cannot optimally protect public health due to the lack of strict enforcement of sanctions.

#### 4. Conclusion

1. Based on the results, the number of smokers in Indonesia continues to increase due to the proliferation of cigarette advertisements in Indonesia. The proliferation of these advertisements is closely related to the government's weak regulations in controlling and supervising the cigarette industry. This has led to uncontrolled tobacco advertising and marketing strategies, resulting in various impacts, including influencing children and adolescents to smoke, and affecting the health of both active and passive smokers.
2. The government has regulations governing the handling of tobacco products, particularly cigarettes. However, the implementation of these regulations has not been carried out optimally. As a result, these regulations have not significantly contributed to protecting public health. On the other hand, Indonesia has drafted a law related to tobacco. However, some parties argue that the Tobacco Bill favors the tobacco industry and is not in line with efforts to reduce the prevalence of smoking.
3. There are facts on the ground, aside from the media, that also support the tobacco industry in its marketing efforts. This includes the widespread sale of loose cigarettes in almost all small shops. With the availability of loose cigarettes, the public can easily purchase cigarettes for around 1,500 Rupiah per stick. This relatively low price also creates opportunities for minors to buy and consume them.

## References

- Afif, A. N., & Astuti, K. (2017). Hubungan Antara Persepsi Terhadap Iklan Rokok Dengan Perilaku merokok Pada Remaja. *Insight: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 17(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.26486/psikologi.v17i1.68>
- Astuti, Indriyani. (2017). *RUU Tembakau Jangan Dilanjutkan*. MediaIndonesia.com. Accessed by <http://mediaindonesia.com/news/read/95240/ruu-tembakau-jangan-dilanjutkan/2017-03-07>
- Baharudin, (2017). Faktor-Faktor Yang Berhubungan Dengan perilaku merokok Pada Anak Usia Remaja Madya
- Holmes, M. (2019). *Marketing Mix: Product, Price, Distribution and Promotion*. America: Prentice Hall Jarsey University Press
- Nainggolan, Nora Pitri. (2018). Pengaruh Kepuasan, Kepercayaan Dan Kemudahan Terhadap Loyalitas Pelanggan PT Great Seasons Tours And Travel Di Kota Batam
- Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia. (2003). *Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 19 Tahun 2003 Tentang Pengamanan Rokok Bagi Kesehatan*. <https://luk.staff.ugm.ac.id/atur/PP19-2003PengamananRokokBagiKesehatan.pdf>
- Rachmaningtyas, Ayu. (2016). *Tudingan Persengkokolan Pemerintah dan DPR yang Pro-Industri Rokok*. <http://jateng.tribunnews.com/2016/06/27/tudingan-persengkokolan-pemerintah-dan-dpr-yang-pro-industri-rokok>
- Samad, Abdul dan Imam Wibowo. 2016. “Pengaruh Produk Dan Citra Merek Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Sepatu Olahraga Merek Specs Di Kota Bekasi”. *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis Krisnadwipayana* Vol.
- Wedyastantri, Tresya Oktavera. (2021). Pengaruh Persepsi Keamanan, Pengalaman, Keanekaragaman Produk Terhadap Kepercayaan Dan Kepuasan Serta Dampaknya Terhadap Loyalitas Pada Situs E-Commerce B2c Zalora