

FRENCH STUDIES ON TOBACCO PLAIN PACKAGING

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Aims

The cigarette pack helps promote the product through novel pack design, recognisable colours, logos and trademarks as well as familiar brand names. It may be possible however to reduce its attractiveness through plain (or standardised) packaging, which involves removing design elements and leaving only the health warnings and brand name in a standardised font and size. To investigate the impact of plain packaging on French people, studies funded by the French National Cancer Institute, the Mission Interministérielle de Lutte contre les Drogues et Toxicomanies and INSERM were implemented in 2007 and 2008.

Methods

Qualitative survey (2007)

Six focus groups were conducted with a total of 50 people aged from 15 to 46 (smokers and non-smokers). Different Marlboro packs were tested: current packs and plain packs with or without visual warnings, grey, white and brown plain packs (appendix A. A1 and A2).

Quantitative survey (2008)

An experimental study was conducted on a representative sample of 905 French smokers and non smokers aged 15 to 46 (smokers and non smokers). They were shown one out of 6 real cigarette packs (appendix B) and were asked to answer different questions.

Results

Qualitative survey

Focus groups revealed that plain packs effectively ruin the attractiveness and marketing of cigarette packets. Participants judged the plain packs less attractive than the current ones. Plain packs evoke death, the grave and the hazards of tobacco. They reduced the motivation to smoke and to buy the cigarette packet. In addition the visibility of warnings is increased on plain packs. When comparing the three plain packaging colours (grey, white and brown), the grey color was perceived as the most effective in reducing the attractiveness of the pack.

Quantitative survey

The experimental study on 905 people highlighted that compared to the current Marlboro pack with only textual warnings, the plain packs with visual warnings (white or grey) were significantly perceived as less like a fashion accessory. They also reduce the Marlboro brand imagery (cowboys, etc.), and make people think more of the dangers of tobacco. They increase the motivation to quit, deter smokers from taking a cigarette and they prevent non smokers from starting smoking.

Conclusion

Our studies both reveal that tobacco plain packs are a real opportunity to reduce the impact of cigarettes advertising and to influence behavioural intentions of smokers and non smokers.

Appendix A.

A.1- The packs tested in the qualitative study



A.2. The three colours of the plain packs tested in the qualitative study



Appendix B. The 6 packs tested on a representative sample

	Paquet Marlboro rouge NORMAL	Paquet Marlboro générique GRIS	Paquet Marlboro générique BLANC
Avertissements sanitaires TEXTUELS devant et derrière (format actuel)	 <p>151 individus interrogés sur ce paquet.</p>	 <p>149 individus interrogés sur ce paquet.</p>	 <p>150 individus interrogés sur ce paquet.</p>
Avertissement sanitaire texte devant et VISUEL derrière (format proposé par l'Union Européenne)	 <p>153 individus interrogés sur ce paquet.</p>	 <p>151 individus interrogés sur ce paquet.</p>	 <p>151 individus interrogés sur ce paquet.</p>