

Features and Appeals of Flavor Capsule Kreteks

Indonesia 

Background

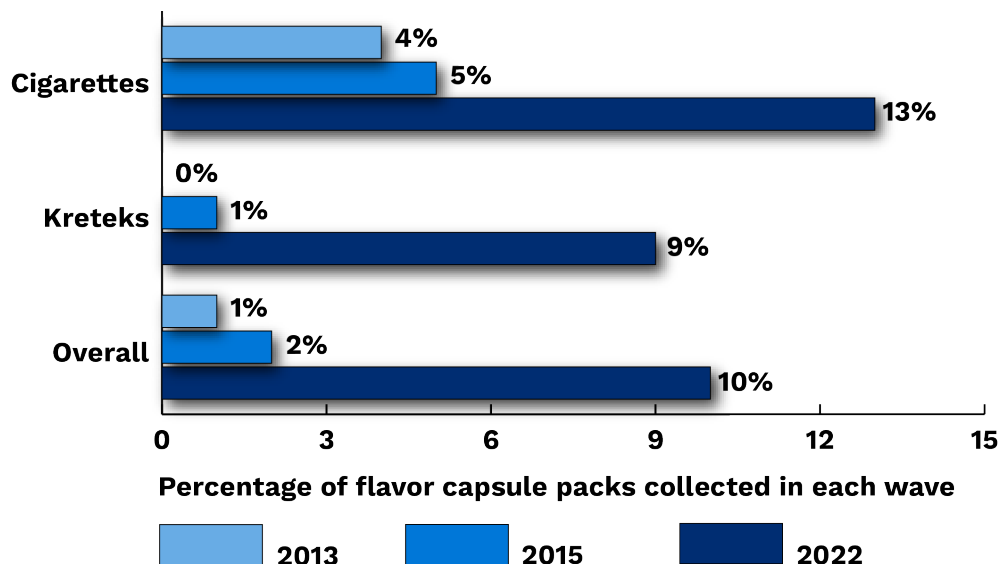
Flavor capsules in cigarette filters allow consumers to crush a liquid-filled capsule at any time while smoking to flavor cigarette smoke.¹ Flavored tobacco products are not restricted in Indonesia, and kreteks are taxed at lower rates than non-clove ‘white’ cigarettes due to a perceived cultural legacy of kreteks.

The Tobacco Pack Surveillance System (TPackSS) collected (white) cigarette and kretek packs across three cities in Indonesia in 2013, 2015, and 2022 using a systematic protocol.² Unique legal cigarette and kretek packs displaying mandated Indonesian health warning labels were systematically assessed for features and appeals, including identifying flavor capsule packs: packs suggest that the user is able to change the stick flavor AND/OR the stick indicates it can be crushed or “turned on.”

Findings

The number and proportion of unique flavor capsule cigarette packs collected (kreteks and white cigarettes combined) increased significantly over the years, rising from two packs in 2013 to 4 packs in 2015 to 31 packs in 2022.

NOTE: The term “unique” refers to unique packs in a yearly collection. Some packs may be duplicated across years.



2013 → 2015 → 2022
0 → 2 → 6

Two transnational companies produced capsule kreteks in 2015. By 2022, six different companies produced capsule kreteks. Three were transnational (KT&G, PMI and JTI) while three were domestic (Djarum PT, Putera Jaya Sakti Perkasa PT and Karya Tajinan Prima). All capsule cigarette packs were produced by transnational tobacco companies.



This kretek pack contains five different flavor capsules.

Capsule Kreteks vs. Non-capsule Kreteks

Compared to non-capsule kreteks, capsule kretek packs were more likely to have technology or foreign appeals, offer a wider range of non-clove flavors (fruits and caramel), and utilize additional pack spaces for promotional purposes (on sticks, under the lid). A higher proportion of capsule kreteks (88%) were owned by transnational tobacco companies than non-capsule kreteks (25%).

| Capsule Kreteks (n=26 unique packs) | Non-capsule Kreteks (n=564 unique packs) |
|--|---|
| More technology appeals including references to turning on or off (42%), power button symbols (46%), and capsule-shaped illustrations (69%) | Only 8% unique packs featured technology terms |
| 35% unique packs featured web presence , like a company email | 10% unique packs featured web presence |
| 23% unique packs featured super Slims/ultra Slims descriptors | 1% unique packs featured super Slims/ultra Slims descriptors |
| More unique packs had flavor lexical appeals, like caramel (8%), mint (27%, other than menthol), fruit (50%), and others (27%; e.g., sunny, honey) | More unique packs featured clove/kretek descriptors (88%) |



Capsule kretek: Power button illustration with “switch” descriptor.

Policy Implications

The capsule kretek market in Indonesia has maintained a small yet expanding presence over seven years, initially driven by transnational tobacco companies. Given the prevalent technological appeals, fruit and sweet flavors, concept descriptors, and branding and promotional elements on packs and sticks, capsule kreteks resemble capsule cigarettes more closely, deviating from a typical conventional non-capsule kretek image representing nationality and Indonesian cultural heritage.

Recommendations

- ➔ The tobacco industry argument for preserving Indonesia’s cultural heritage by not regulating kreteks is weak given the introduction of capsule kreteks. Domestic tobacco companies have introduced capsule kreteks since 2015, potentially trying to keep up with transnational tobacco companies.
- ➔ Flavor capsule cigarettes and their packaging can be highly attractive to consumers and increase interest in trying the product compared to non-capsule cigarettes,³ but standardized packaging and larger health warnings can attenuate this effect.⁴ Plain and standardized packaging can reduce the appeal of packaging and use intentions.

References

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