

VAPING PRODUCTS ADVERTISING LEGISLATION IN FRANCE, A POORLY ENFORCED LAW

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BACKGROUND

With the launch of new products, the market for tobacco and nicotine products has recently rapidly evolved. Scientific studies show that advertising these products at points-of-sale is strategic and efficient. Thus, in France, a legislation regulating vaping products advertising has been adopted, only advertising via small posters not visible from the outside is allowed.

This study aimed to **assess the compliance of advertising at point-of-sale with the French legislation for vaping products.**

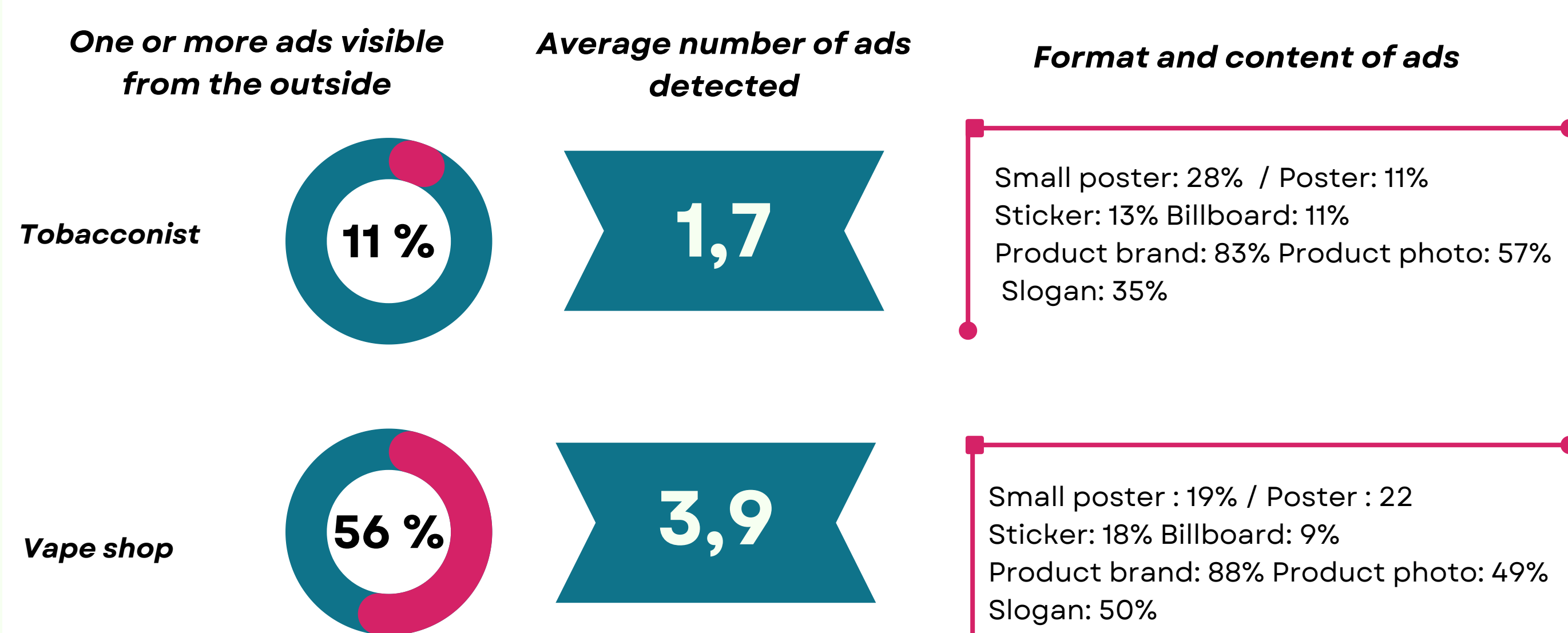
METHODOLOGY

Observational mystery-shopper study of a representative sample of **415 French tobacco retailers** and **200 vape shops**, in spring 2021.

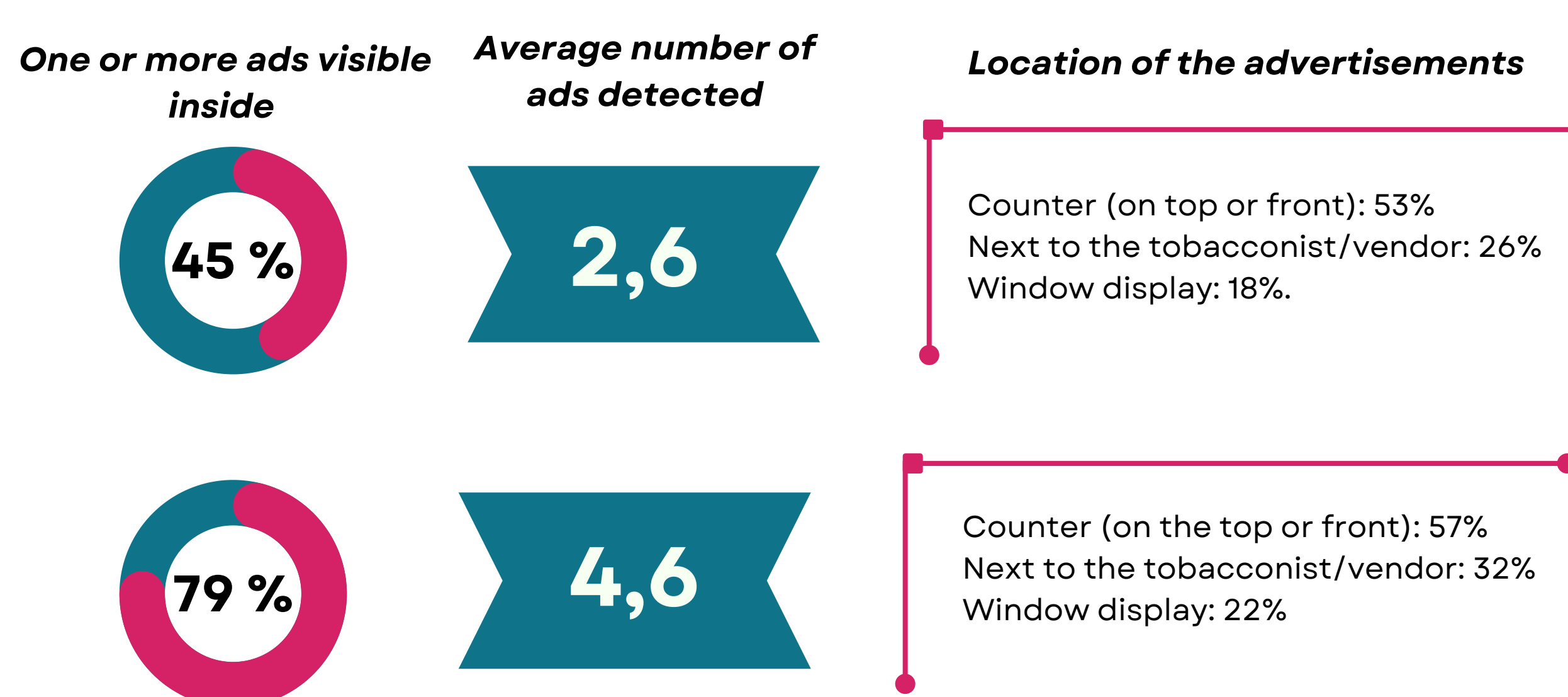
- ▶ The mystery-shopper study was conducted by an independent research institute (Audirep);
- ▶ The duration of a visit was of approximately 10 minutes and took place on all days of the week, giving priority to peak times;
- ▶ The investigator had to note all the advertisements present, their nature and format, their location, their potential visibility from the outside and the brand in question;
- ▶ Following the visit, the investigator had to note down all the elements in a grid containing about twenty items, which would then lead to the analysis of the legal and illegal advertisement.

RESULTS

Advertisements visible from the outside



Indoor advertisements



4,6

In almost **60% of visited points-of-sale, advertising for vaping products was very visible**; this percentage probably underestimates the actual frequency of the presence of such advertising, as in most tobacconists, due to overcrowding, the investigators were less likely to rapidly identify them.

Nearly half (**46%**) of the advertisements for vaping products was visible from the outside, **76%** were not small posters, thus, **87%** of such advertising violated the French law.

CONCLUSION

The deleterious consequences of point-of-sale advertising are well documented in terms of risk of initiation, impulse buying, and deterrence to quit.

Plus, with a rise and diversification of points-of-sale, an increasing number of non-vapers, especially young people, will visit these stores and be exposed to advertising which specifically targets them. Following a similar violation of tobacco products advertising regulation between 1991 and 2015, a comprehensive total ban on all forms of point-of-sale advertising has been implemented in France. Thus, **the authors recommend a complete ban on advertising for vaping products at points-of-sale**, with, in the meantime, **the introduction of an alternative system of information** on these products only available to adults upon request.