

Facilitating FCTC Implementation through Media Personnel Support Project Newspaper Clipping Database Analysis

Objectives:

1. To identify tobacco-related topics covered by the media between August 2005 and July 2006, and to understand the gaps in the tobacco control information provided to the public via newspapers
2. To determine whether current newspaper coverage is in favor of, neutral, or against tobacco control.

Sampling & Methodology:

The thirty-one most important and most widely circulated newspapers were selected for the media surveillance. The newspapers were identified as “most important” based on information about the number of copies produced and sold per issue provided by the Faculty of Journalism, and on the advice of the Deputy Head of the Press Department under the Communist Party’s Central Committee on Culture and Ideology.

The newspapers included in the surveillance were:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Business Forum | 17. People |
| 2. Countryside Today | 18. People’s Army |
| 3. Culture | 19. Pioneer |
| 4. Customs | 20. Saigon Liberation |
| 5. Education & Times | 21. Science & Development |
| 6. Family & Society | 22. Social Labor |
| 7. Great Unity | 23. Trade |
| 8. HCM City Law | 24. Urban Economy |
| 9. HCM City Youth | 25. Vietnam Agriculture |
| 10. Health & Life | 26. Vietnam Economic Times |
| 11. Investment | 27. Vietnam Financial Times |
| 12. Labor | 28. Vietnam Industry |
| 13. Laborer | 29. Vietnam Law |
| 14. Life & Law | 30. Vietnamese Women |
| 15. New Hanoi | 31. Youth |
| 16. News | |

The media surveillance was conducted on a daily basis between 1st August 2005 and 31st July 2006. Newspaper articles addressing on tobacco topics were coded according to whether their slant was in favor of, unfavorable to, or neutral with respect to tobacco control. Brief summaries of each article were also entered into a database, using MS Access.

Findings:

- 425 tobacco-related newspaper articles from the 31 surveyed newspapers were collected over the one year period. The collection included 314 news stories and articles in favor of tobacco control (*pro-TC*), accounting for 73.9% of the total. Around 21% (88 articles) were identified by the researcher as unfavorable to tobacco control work (Pro-Industry), while the remaining 23 articles (5.4%) showed neutral attitudes to tobacco control.

Table 1 Newspaper clippings by type of slant:

Article's slant	Number of articles	Percent
Pro-TC	314	73.9%
Pro-Industry	88	20.7%
Neutral	23	5.4%
Total	425	100%

- Most of the pro-Industry articles discussed business successes, the economic contribution of the tobacco industry (29 articles), and/or its philanthropy activities (39).

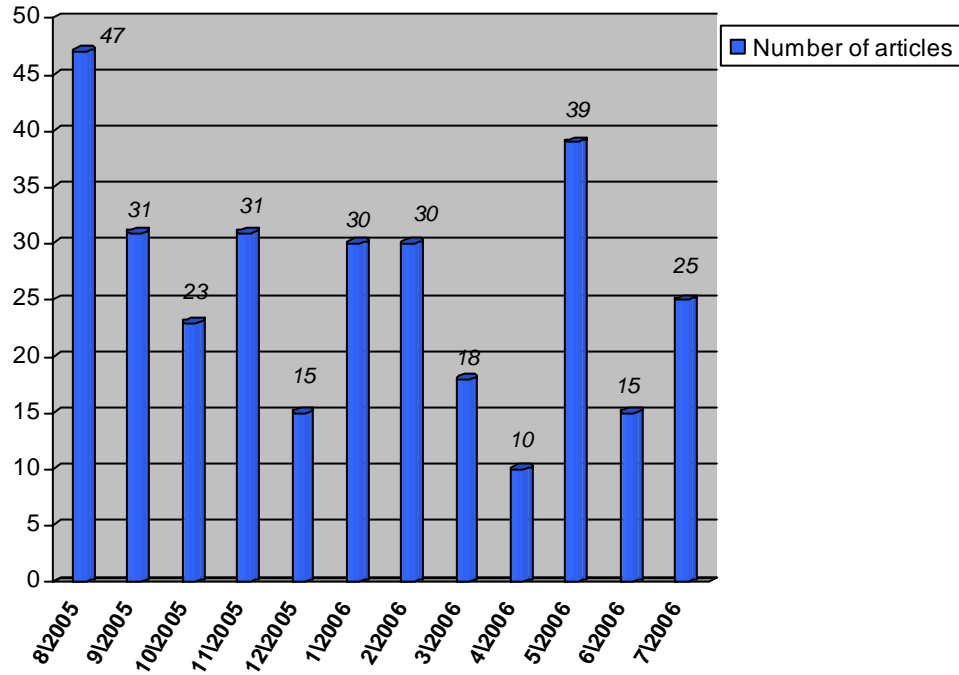
The newspapers posting the most pro-Industry articles were the Vietnam Industry (21 news stories and articles), the Young People (8), Saigon Liberation (7), and New Hanoi (6).

Table 2 Pro-Industry newspaper articles by topic

Topic	Number of articles	Percent
Industry	77	87.5%
Smuggling	2	2.3%
Taxation	5	5.7%
Youth	1	1.1%
Other	3	3.4%
Total	88	100%

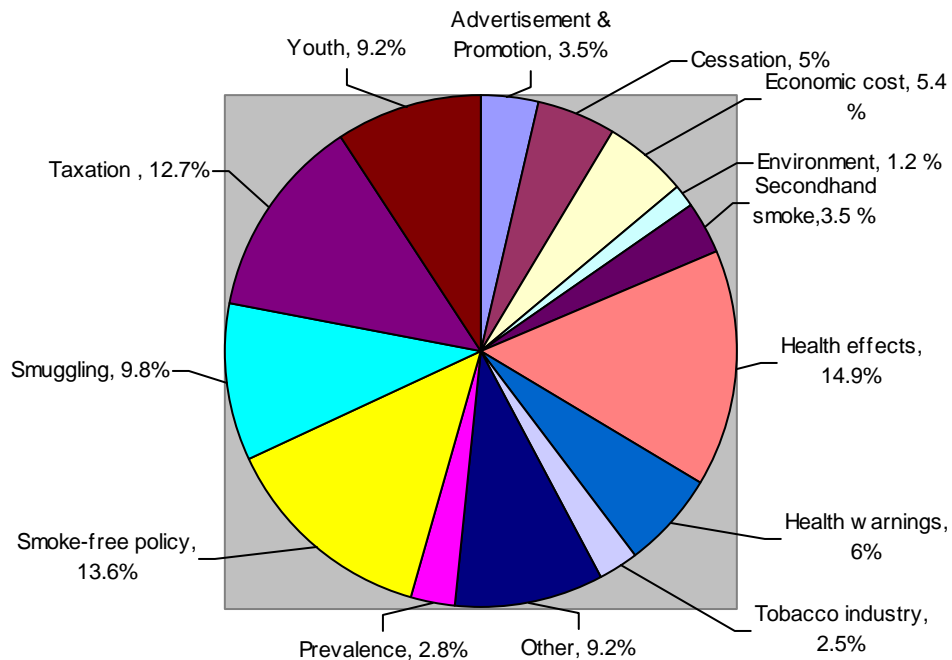
- Pro-TC articles appeared more often when there was an active media advocacy campaign or during National Tobacco-Free Week and World No Tobacco Day. The largest number of Pro-TC newspaper articles was found in August 2005; this was during a media advocacy campaign for tobacco tax increases. The campaign resulted in 29 articles being published on cigarette taxation, accounting for 61.7% of the articles identified in August 2005. In May 2006, 39 articles in favor of tobacco control were identified.

Figure 01 Number of Pro-TC newspaper clippings by month



- The topics addressed most commonly in the Pro-TC newspaper articles over the 12 month period were: health hazards of smoking (14.9%), smoke free policy (13.6%), taxation (12.7), and smuggling (9.8%). Other important topics such as the health effects of secondhand smoking, the economic costs of smoking, and the cigarette advertisement and promotion ban were not widely addressed.

Figure 02 Pro-TC Newspaper Clippings by Topic



- 80% of the articles addressing the health hazards of smoking were written using international sources. For other tobacco control topics, the media personnel mainly used local information sources.

Figure 03: Number of Pro-TC articles by source and topic

