Reviewer’s report

Title: Anti-tobacco control industry strategies in Turkey

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Reviewer: Hadii Mamudu

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TITLE

Anti-tobacco control industry strategies in Turkey

BRIEF SUMMARY

This article examines the changes in the tobacco market, consumption, and production within Turkey post liberalization of tobacco industry by the Turkish government in the 1980s. The authors argue that tobacco supply-side control policies are needed in conjunction with demand-side policies, as the tobacco industry is able to undermine the effectiveness of demand-side policies with product innovations, advertisement or promotion, cost managing, pricing, and illegal activities.

GENERAL COMMENT

This article contains very helpful information on the tactics and strategies of the current tobacco industry, and it should inform policy makers in effort of aiding the global tobacco epidemic. Although the article is very rich in content, it appears more of a report than a journal publication. Nevertheless, the article could benefit from some corrections mentioned below. Suggested corrections:

* In total, the article consists of 79 pages, including 16 tables and 17 figures. As such, while the topic is interesting, it appears to me that this is a report, hence, there is no clear objective and theme. Thus, the authors should carefully think through what they want the article to be about. In other words, major revisions are required to make such an important paper publishable.

* The entire article is plagued with redundancies, so the authors should clean things up and tighten it.
Overall, some results are presented in the background, methods, and discussions, which is due to the volume of information the authors have. I will, therefore, suggest that the authors move the results from such sections and incorporate them in the actual results sections in a more concise, precise, and coherent manner.

The article has major language problems and may benefit by using a professional editor. In any case, here are few examples:

Occasionally, the article uses wording and phrasing that can be perceived as emotionally influenced and unprofessional. For example, under the "Background" section is the following quote: "Meanwhile, TTCs, similar to other companies, have maintained their profit driven activities without feeling any moral concern and guiltiness despite the illnesses and deaths caused by their products." While this may be true, the phrasing of "without feeling any moral concern or guiltiness" makes the sentence sound more like propaganda instead of a professional and objective sentence. The same point could be achieved more strongly if the phrasing were, "Meanwhile, TTCs, similar to other companies, have maintained their profit driven activities despite the illness and death caused to their consumers by their products." Similar occurrences of this are found throughout the article, and are mentioned in the SPECIFIC COMMENTS section of this review.

Maintain consistency with serial comma use. For example, in line 9/10 on page 7, the last serial comma is left off ("to trade down to cheaper brands, give up smoking or switch to illicit trade."). In line 31/32 of page 7, the last serial comma is included ("fruit, candy, and alcohol flavours."). Either way is acceptable depending on the grammatical rules used, but the use of the serial comma should be uniform throughout the article.

Revise comma and other punctuation use throughout the article. Throughout the article there are missing and misplaced commas. Some examples of this have been included in the SPECIFIC COMMENTS section of this review.

The methods section needs major revision. In particular, some of the criteria in the "Methods" and "Analysis" sections of the article are too vague. For example, one of the criteria judged is the tar level in cigarettes consumed over a time period. The tar levels are listed as, "high tar, low tar, ultra low tar and mid-tar cigarettes." There is no apparent measure given as to what tar level puts a cigarette in one of these categories. This type of vagueness is also given with the subjects of advertising strategies and illegal activities.

There are too many tables and figures. In fact, the data presentation in some of them can be written in simple text. From example, Figure 17 can be presented as: "Between 2003 and 2015,
SCT revenues from tobacco production increased from 20 to 25 billion Turkish Lira [or US$ equivalent]." With that, there is no need for Figure 17.

* The conclusion section is too long, so it will be beneficial for the authors to shorten it and limit the number of references used in the section.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

 Corrections and changes are explained with a sentence or inserted/removed within brackets: [ ].

 Page 5, lines 37-43: As mentioned above, make the wording and phrasing less propagandistic by avoiding words such as "feelings," "moral concerns," and "guiltiness."

 Page 6, lines 53/54: "tobacco control policies[,] or if it cannot prevent [them], aims to

 Page 7, line 5: "pricing and, advertisement, promotion, [or] sponsorship."

 Page 7, line 27: "advertised widely to the youth, as a healthier alternative to tobacco cigarettes[,] using"

 Page 10, line 23/24: "tobacco through TEKEL were ended[,] and contracted"

 Page 10, line 31: "tobacco manufacturers/traders. However[,]"

 Page 12, line 4/5: "FCTC in 2004[,] and by abiding its requirements, a new law"

 Page 13, line 38: "In reality, it makes [it] more difficult to"

 Page 19, line 54/55: "sponsorship activities, [the] tobacco industry violates the rule[] in Turkey"

 Page 31, line 43/44: "withdrawal of TEKEL from [the]"

 Page 33, line 19/20: "Hence, [the] tobacco industry is made free"

 MINOR COMMENTS

 Page 21, line 40/41: Consider using more professional language instead of "lion's share" in the following quote: "lion's share of the market"
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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