

UNDERSTANDING TOBACCO USE AMONG TEEN BOYS IN JAKARTA:

Insights to Inform Action

Tobacco Use Behaviors & Intention

A 2024 school-based survey with 2771 teen boys in Jakarta found that:

- **12%** reported **currently smoking**, and the average age of smoking initiation was 13.2 years old.
- **24%** reported currently **using e-cigarettes**.
- **28%** currently **used cigarettes or e-cigarette**.
- **7%** currently **co-used both cigarettes and e-cigarettes**.

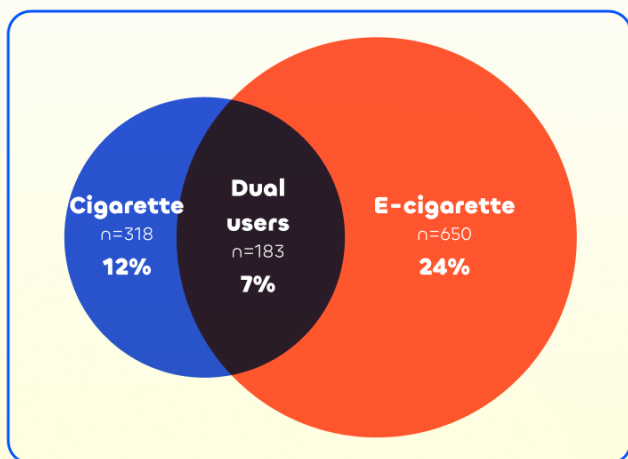


Fig 1. Tobacco use prevalence of teen boys in Jakarta

- **7 out of 10** teen boys aged 12-19 years who **ever tried smoking**, got their first cigarette from a friend because they wanted to be accepted in their social circle
- **85%** of teen boys who ever tried cigarettes did so out of
- In line with the survey findings, qualitative assessments also found that the **reasons teen boys smoke were friends' influence, influence from close relatives who smoke, and easy access to cigarettes**. Among the teen boys who currently smoked, cigarettes were **associated with a lifestyle, an escape from problems, and a way to get calm and inspiration**. Teen boys also considered cigarettes a companion in their daily lives.

"(Cigarettes) have become friends anyway."

Teen boy, senior high school, smoker-03

"An escape from problems and a hangout lifestyle"

Teen boy, senior high school, smoker-05

- Based on the survey, among those who currently smoked, **white/filtered cigarettes** were the **common type used by teen boys (89%)**, followed by cigarettes with **clickable capsules to add flavours**, such as fruit or menthol (**35%**). Qualitative results also found the same, most teen boys who smoked used white cigarettes.
- **39%** of all survey respondents **had tried e-cigarettes**, with **curiosity (48%)**, **family or friends using it (29%)**, **perceived reduced harm (26%)**, and **diverse flavor preferences (20%)** being key motivators.
- From the qualitative assessments, besides curiosity about the products and their flavors or friends' invitations, teen boys also **considered e-cigarettes more economical compared to cigarettes**, because they last longer.

"I use electronic cigarettes and regular cigarettes."

If I don't have money, I use electronic ones because they last longer." Teen boy, junior high school, smoker-06

Ever Used of Heated Tobacco Product (HTP) and Other Nicotine and Tobacco Products

- **5%** of teen boys in the survey **had ever tried using heated tobacco products (HTPs)**, even just once. The most common sources where they reported **seeing HTPs** were **social media (44%)**, followed by **shopping centers (18%)**, **television, (15%)** and **advertisements (13%)**.
- Among the other **nicotine and tobacco products** assessed, the **most common were pipes (2%)**, **shisha/water pipes (2%)**, and **nicotine pouches (1%)**.

Knowledge, Attitude and Perceptions

- **54%** of survey respondents **perceived smoking as "extremely harmful" to health**. Approximately **61%** recognized **secondhand smoke as definitely harmful**.
- **97%** of respondents stated that **smoking causes serious illness**. **41%** said **it is safe to smoke tobacco for only a year or two** as long as you quit after that. In contrast, only **18%** of respondents stated that **e-cigarettes are harmful**.
- Focus group discussions with teen boys who smoked also found that **they knew cigarettes are harmful to health, however, they continued to smoke**, especially in social gatherings when surrounded by people who smoke.

"I could have quit, but the social environment and sometimes seeing my father smoke is really enjoyable."
Teen boy, senior high school, ex-smoker-06

"Environmental influences. It's comfortable and addictive too." Teen boy, junior high school, smoker-03

Smoking Norms and Influences

- **40%** of all survey respondents **believed that smokers have more friends**; meanwhile, **10%** of teen boys who ever tried smoking **still smoked due to peer pressure**
- **62% of teen boys had someone who smoked at home**, the majority were fathers (76%). Those seeing people around them smoke (at home, close friends, students in the class, teachers) were more likely to smoke.
- Qualitative results found that **most teen boys had family members who smoked, predominantly fathers and brothers**. Having a family member who smoked made them familiar with cigarettes. Some teen boys started smoking because they were offered cigarettes by their siblings.

Smoking at Schools

- Respondents **received explanations from their teachers about the danger of smoking (81%)** or were taught about **the effects of smoking in school (94%)**.
- Based on in-depth interviews with teachers, **all schools are non-smoking areas**. There is a written rule **prohibiting smoking for all school members, with punishment mechanisms** for students caught smoking within school premises: It usually begins with a verbal warning given by the teacher or counseling guidance teacher, summoning parents, and a warning letter. If the behavior continues, the student might not receive grading, or in extreme cases, expelled from the school. For students receiving social assistance in the form of the Jakarta Smart Card (KJP), the card can be revoked because one of the requirements for getting the card is not to smoke.

"For students, it is clear, if it [smoking] is found out, it is usually documented first, then approached by the homeroom teacher first and the homeroom teacher conveys it to the parents. Not directly escalated to BK (counseling guidance teacher). So if for example from there we find it again, then we go to BK. And that is already included in the coaching [unclear voice] if for teachers and employees, it is limited to a warning."
Male high school teacher

Quit Attempts and Barriers

- Of the survey respondents who currently smoked, **66% had tried to quit smoking in the last six months**.
- The main barriers to quitting smoking were **their friends still smoking when they hung out (32%)**, not knowing where or how to get help (27%), cravings or withdrawal symptoms too strong to handle (17%), and family members still smoking (10%).

Cessation Services

- **41%** of teen boys **knew about smoking cessation hotline service**.
- Focus group discussions with teen boys and girls, parents, and teachers found that **almost none of the informants knew about Upaya Berhenti Merokok (UBM) or cessation services at Puskesmas and Quitline services**. From the qualitative findings, the operation of UBM services varies in each Puskesmas, but usually only serves counseling activities 2 days a week.

Social Media Use and Preference

- For the online media platform, the respondents **spent 3 hours or more on TikTok (52%)**, followed by **online games (46%)**, **WhatsApp (46%)**, and **Instagram (30%)**.
- The most frequent daily **social media activities** were **scrolling (73%)**, **chat messages (64%)**, and **giving likes** every day multiple times a week (**67%**).

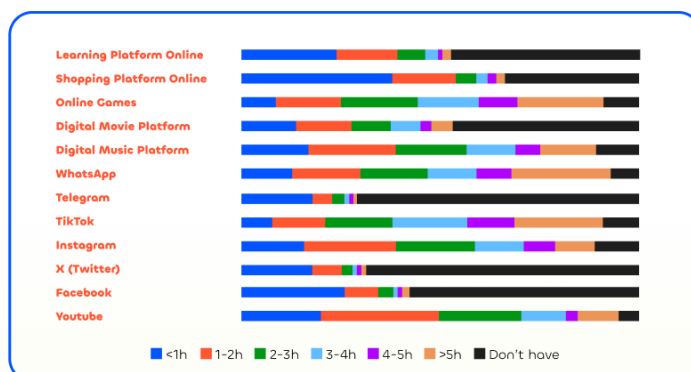


Fig 2. The average time spent on the online platform each day

Type of Social Media Role Model, Content, and Format

The top three most popular social media role models, based on first and second choices, were **gamers, followed by athletes, and then musicians**. The most commonly viewed content in the past seven days included sports, gaming, music, and comedy. As for content formats that caught respondents' attention, videos ranked the highest, followed by music, images, and podcasts.

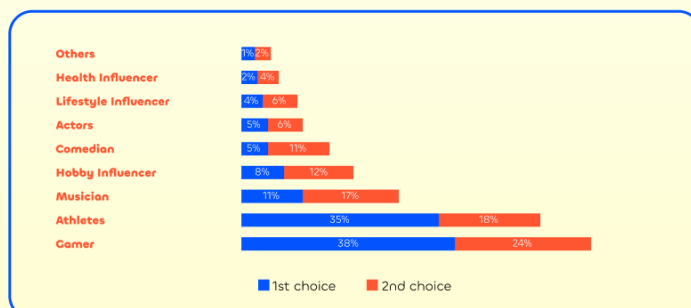


Fig 3. Type of social media role model that respondents were interested in

Methodology :

1. Baseline Survey. A school-based cross-sectional survey was conducted between September–October, 2024. Participants were a representative sample of 2,771 teen boys from 82 schools in Jakarta, including junior high school (SMP), senior high school (SMA), vocational high school (SMK), MTs (religious junior high school), and MA (religious senior high school), stratified by school type and grade level.
2. The qualitative assessment consists of focus groups and in-depth interviews. 7 focus groups were conducted with teen boys aged 13–18 years old who currently smoked, previously smoked, and never smoked, and with teen girls. 38 in-depth interviews were conducted with parents, teachers, health service providers, health offices, and tobacco control organizations in Jakarta, Indonesia. The qualitative assessment took place in December 2024.