

**PERCEPTIONS TOWARD CIGARETTE PACK DESIGN : A COMPARISON  
BETWEEN REGULAR AND PLAIN PACKAGING  
AMONG YOUNG ADULTS**

**ABSTRACT**

The increase in numbers of smokers among the young adults is a major challenge for the government. Expression on visual messages only affects in the short term but eventually becomes cliché and ignored by the smokers. Malaysian Government plans to implement the Plain Packaging Regulation 2018 in accordance to World Health Organisations' Framework Convention on Tobacco Control 2005 (FCTC), as an effort to decrease smoking initiation and increase cessation. This study is carried out to explore the perception of cigarette packs comparison between the regular pack and the plain pack among the young adults. A qualitative study was conducted, involving six focus groups discussion and 32 students of Politeknik Merlimau, Melaka. Health Belief Model was used as a theoretical framework. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select participants for this study. Audio recorded discussion in *Bahasa* Malaysia was conducted with all the participants. The recorded information was analysed by using NVivo 8. The participants were asked to indicate how they perceived the regular pack and the prototype plain packs with regards to three main themes; product appeal, product harmfulness and self efficacy. The plain pack received mixed perception of appeal; low quality, bad taste and less attractive but some said it has better quality and taste. On the contrary, the regular pack perceived has better quality, tasty and more attractive. The plain pack also perceived as more harmful to health. Other than that, the plain packs reduces the self efficacy and the desire to smoke, reduces smoking habit, provides support for the implementation of Plain Packaging Regulation 2018 but not the core factor to quit smoking. Therefore, this study suggested that the Government of Malaysia should implement the Plain Packaging Regulation 2018 as one of the multiple strategies in tobacco control.