

Vaping Is the Most Common Nicotine Use Among Filipino Students – Even Where Tobacco Control Is Active



Background

The Philippines has enacted multiple measures to curb youth tobacco and nicotine use, including **Republic Act No. 11900 (the Vape Law of 2022)**, which sets the minimum age for purchasing vape and heated tobacco products (HTPs) at 18 and prohibits youth-appealing flavor descriptors. Several Philippine cities have also implemented **local tobacco control ordinances and prevention programs**.

If these measures are working, youth nicotine use should be limited in cities where tobacco control is actively implemented. **This study tested that assumption by measuring cigarette, vape, and HTP use among students in Grades 7–10 in four highly urbanized cities (Baguio, Pasig, Iloilo, and Davao), all of which have ongoing tobacco and vape control initiatives.**

Methods



Between November and December 2025, 4,340 students in Grades 7–10 from public and private schools across the four cities completed a self-administered survey adapted from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) and the PATH Youth Survey.



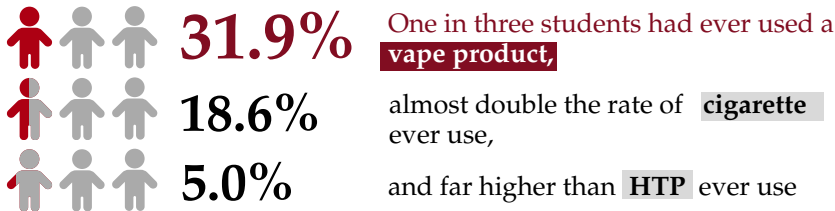
Cities were purposively selected because they have active tobacco control programs, making the study a conservative test of how widespread youth nicotine use has become in regulated environments.



Multi-stage sampling with probability proportional to size ensured representative coverage across cities, school types, and grade levels.

Key Findings & Implications

Even in cities with active tobacco control programs, youth vaping is widespread.



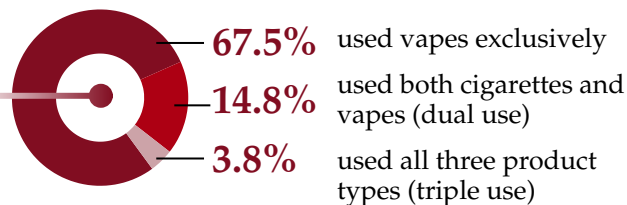
In Baguio, ever-vape use reached :

41.7%



Vaping is the predominant pattern among current users.

Among the **810 students** currently using any nicotine product



These findings demonstrate that the enforcement of RA 11900 and tobacco control ordinances **have not curbed youth access.**

Key Recommendation

The findings support moving beyond incremental regulation toward a **comprehensive ban on the manufacture, sale, distribution, and promotion of nicotine products**, an approach already adopted by eight ASEAN neighbors (Brunei, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, and Myanmar). Such a measure should be paired with **accessible cessation programs** for current users.

Where a comprehensive ban is not feasible, the findings support advocating **targeted amendments to RA 11900**, including: (1) **banning all flavors** except plain and menthol; (2) **raising the age-based restriction to 21 years**; and (3) **prohibiting online sale, advertising, promotion, and sponsorships**.

Supplemental Results

Ever Use of Nicotine Products by City

Baguio recorded the highest prevalence across all product types, even though it operates an active tobacco control program.

Baguio:

- 46.3% any use
- 41.7% vape
- 28.1% cigarette
- 7.0% HTP

Pasig:

- 36.5% any use
- 32.9% vape
- 18.5% cigarette
- 4.6% HTP

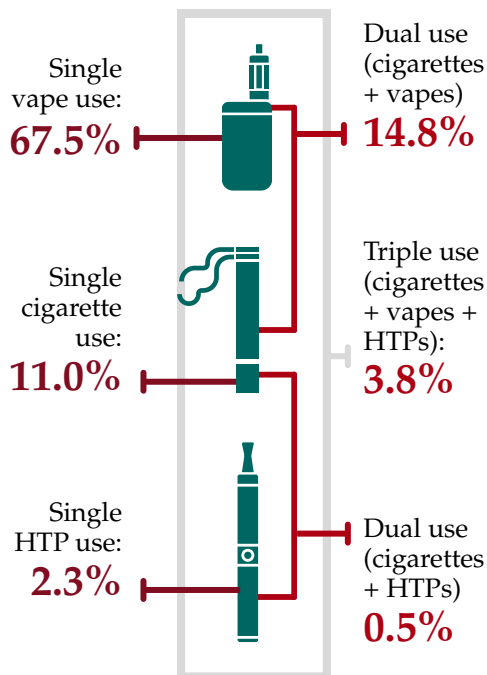
Iloilo City:

- 34.0% any use
- 28.5% vape
- 15.9% cigarette
- 4.3% HTP

Davao:

- 27.5% any use
- 24.2% vape
- 11.8% cigarette
- 4.3% HTP

Current User Profiles (n=810)



Use Rises Sharply With Age

Ever use of any nicotine product climbed steadily across age groups:

Age 12		30.10%
Age 13		35.90%
Age 14		34.70%
Age 15		38.40%
Age 16		42.00%
Age 17		54.50%
Age 18		72.70%

Dual use peaked at 9.1% among 18-year-olds, suggesting that experimentation deepens into multi-product use as students grow older.

Contact us!

For questions and concerns, reach out to us through the following channels:

healthpromo.upm@up.edu.ph

<https://healthpromo.nih.upm.edu.ph>



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