

The Difference Analysis of the Effect of Different Types of Product Placements in the Film Advertisement on Young Consumers

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Abstract. Product placement is a form of advertising that uses various media to advertise and promote a product to its audience. It has a long and dynamic history and a large number of studies have been carried out in this field to investigate the factors that affect the effectiveness of this type of advertising method. This research intends to investigate what types of products are best suited to this form of advertising by using data collected by means of an internet questionnaire and quantitative analysis. The study explores the attitudes of young people towards product placement in films from the perspective of potential consumers and analyses their preferences. It recognised that product placement is more likely to attract the attention of today's social media-using and highly globalised youth and increase their desire to consume. The final outcome of this search is the conclusion that food and drink products are the most suitable for this advertising format. The main reasons for the result include the limited spending power of teenagers and the fact that this type of product appears more frequently in films and is more likely to leave a deeper impact on the audience. However, businesses wishing to use this method of advertising need to be aware that product placement does not directly increase the sales of their products. It is therefore essential to combine this type of advertising approach with other marketing methods.

Keywords: Product placement; advertisement; youth consumption; films.

1. Introduction

Product placement is a form of advertising that uses the media of film, television series, and radio programs to advertise and promote a product to its audience. This method works mainly by placing the product in an unobtrusive form within entertaining programs so that the audience is influenced by it without being aware of the persuasive elements of the advertisement. Product placement advertising groups place commercial products in non-commercial contexts, while the product or brand name is used contextually and the audience is involuntarily exposed to the product or brand, thereby increasing the visibility and reputation of the product and creating a desire to buy the product or service being marketed, fulfilling the role of commercial advertising.

As an advertising strategy with a long history, product placement has indeed been a relatively popular method of placing advertisements since the Hollywood era, gaining a great deal of success and flourishing in the late twentieth century as a fairly mature advertising mechanism that has been widely used in many areas of products [1]. These historical and practical contexts provided this form of advertising some value for research.

A great deal of research has focused on audience attitudes towards product placement advertising, the effectiveness of this type of advertising for a particular product and its impact on the audience, and whether the effectiveness of product placement advertising varies by medium [2, 3]. However, there is not enough research on the suitability of different product categories for product placement advertising. As with other types of advertising, the effectiveness of the same type of advertising for different products is inevitably different due to the unique characteristics of each type of advertising. This research wants to confirm this in this research and, based on the data collected, make predictions about the types of products best adapted to this form of advertising. As product placement advertising in films is one of the most common types of product placement advertising and is supported by a large body of past research [2]. The author will choose product placement advertising in films as the main subject of this study.

The main theme of this study is to explore whether the type of product being advertised using product placement affects the efficacy of the advertising and increases the awareness and sales of the advertised product. An online questionnaire will be used as the data collection method for this study to collect quantitative and partially qualitative data on the attention, attitudes, and consumption experiences of potential consumers of the products advertised using product placement in films. Based on the data collected, this research intends to analyse the variations in potential consumers' interests in and propensity to purchase the products advertised in the product placement within films, in order to obtain preliminary answers to research questions.

In addition, from past research on similar topics, this study recognizes that overly broad research topics can make it difficult to reach a consistent set of conclusions. Thus, the author has refined research topics and research questions to make them as detailed and nuanced as possible. Young people's lifestyles are becoming more international and homogenous due to the rapid development of social media and media technology. They are more receptive to advertising-led consumption patterns that fit their lifestyles and, at the same time, are more sensitive to such advertising [4]. Therefore, in this study, this research project will focus on the type of products that attract the attention of young people and increase their desire to consume them when they are placed in films.

The study wants to determine which type of products consumers are most likely to notice and purchase when watching films that include product placement advertisements, in order to verify whether there are products that are relatively more compatible with this form of advertising.

2. Methods

In this study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative online questionnaires will be used as the data collection technique, with approximately fifteen questions, including single and multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions [4]. Firstly, the questionnaire will collect comprehensive general information about the participants' gender, age, education, income, and level of daily consumption. Secondly, this research wants to collect information about the participants' preferences for films, especially the origin and release times of the films. Finally, the questionnaire will mention and collect information about whether the participants have noticed any products that may have used product placement as an advertising tactic during watching the film, the type of product and the specific product that caught their attention, as well as consumption experiences with the products featured in the films.

The reason for this approach to data collection is that online questionnaires allow us to get responses from as numerous participants as possible in the minimum amount of time while collecting the data needed for the study. At the same time, online questionnaires allow us to make the sampling process easier. By simply placing the questionnaire in an online community that conforms to sampling criteria, the study is able to maximise the number of participants who match the sampling criteria [5]. Although the response rate is not as high as an offline questionnaire, this method does have the highest exposure rate and is relatively easy to administer.

The data selection phase of this study was relatively straightforward, as the author used a targeted questionnaire as the method of collecting research data. The data this study obtained was in most cases designed to address the research topic, i.e., the suitability of different product categories for this form of advertising of product placement, so the data that was collected is closely related to research topics. The only data that had to be screened out of the raw data was the non-compliant questionnaires, which included responses that were not valid in the qualitative section of the questionnaire, as well as responses that had apparent inconsistencies in the qualitative multiple-choice questions. In order to retain the validity of the data and to provide consistent data information, it is important to review the collected responses thoroughly.

Generally speaking, advertising works by two mechanisms, persuasive and reinforcement, to make consumers choose the advertised product over other products of the same type. In short, the persuasion mechanism introduces a set of beliefs or logic to the viewer through the advertisement. It

gives the viewer exposed to the advertisement an incentive to purchase the advertised product or service. By mobilizing the viewer's emotions and behavioral change cues, it causes them to unconsciously choose to consume the advertised product. Reinforcement, on the other hand, is to achieve the effect of advertising by increasing the viewer's positive perception of the advertised product and exposure to it [6]. This theory was also proved by earlier research, which further indicated that this research should also follow this trial [7].

At the same time, research on product placement has shown that the main ways in which product placement can have an advertising effect are by increasing the exposure of the product, increasing brand awareness, and changing consumer behaviour and attitudes towards the advertised product [8]. Basically, the author can get the insight that the products with the highest exposure and the highest impression on the audience in the film are the most likely to be more effective.

Drawing on previous research on the attitudes of young people in different countries towards the placement of products in films and television programs [4], this research chose a comparable method of data collection, in the form of a questionnaire, and followed the lead of that study in choosing an online distribution format, taking into account the choice of internet platform on which the questionnaire was distributed. However, as the topic of the study is highly open-ended, a number of open-ended questions were set up to gather more potential respondents to some of the queries.

Based on these theoretical studies of the effectiveness of advertising, combined with the characteristics of product placement advertising and its target consumers mentioned above, this research project has drawn the following hypothesis about the types of products suitable for this type of advertising.

H1: Products that can be frequently used by the characters in the film, such as daily necessities, food, and non-luxury clothing, are more effective when using product placement as an advertising strategy, attracting more consumers without drawing attention to themselves.

H2: Promotional products that play an important role in the plot of a film, such as cars, introduce the audience to a set of logic about the quality of the product through the plot of the film and are likely to engage with the audience's emotions, thus drawing their attention to the product and motivating them to consume it for the purpose of commercial advertising.

3. Results

150 responses were received to this questionnaire. 21 responses were excluded due to irregularities in the answers. Overall, the questionnaires collected provided sufficient data for a sound analysis of the research questions for this study.

According to the data collected, more than half of the movie-goers would notice the presence of the advertised product during the movie as seen in Fig. 1, which is certainly very productive for such an implicit advertisement. Because at the most basic level, it is noticeable to the viewer, which fulfilled the initial requirement of the advertisement [9].

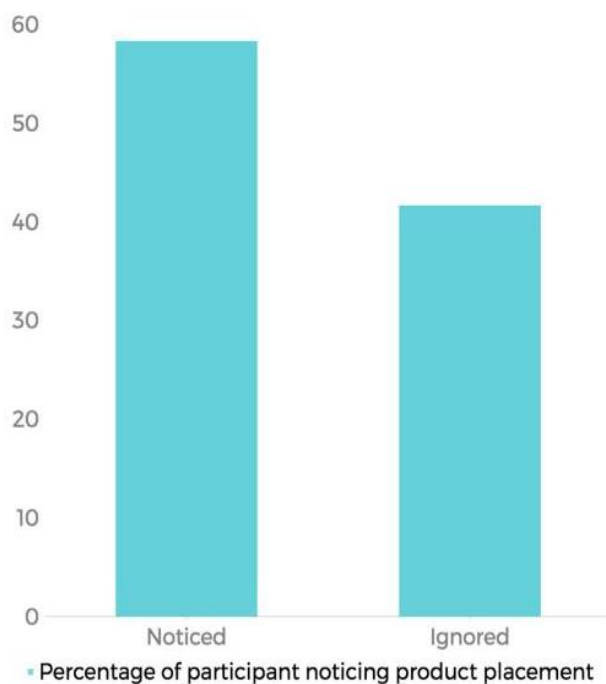


Figure 1. The rates of noticing product placement advertisements

As shown in Fig. 2, the food and drink category were undoubtedly the product that was most adept at attracting the attention of the advertising audience, with participants noticing this product overwhelmingly more than any other category in terms of percentage during the film. However, it is worth noting that several other product types that received more attention from the audience were fashion clothing, vehicles, and home appliances. These products are also consistent with the hypothesis that they are indeed products that are commonly used by film characters, such as clothing and appliances, or products that play an important role in the film, such as vehicles.

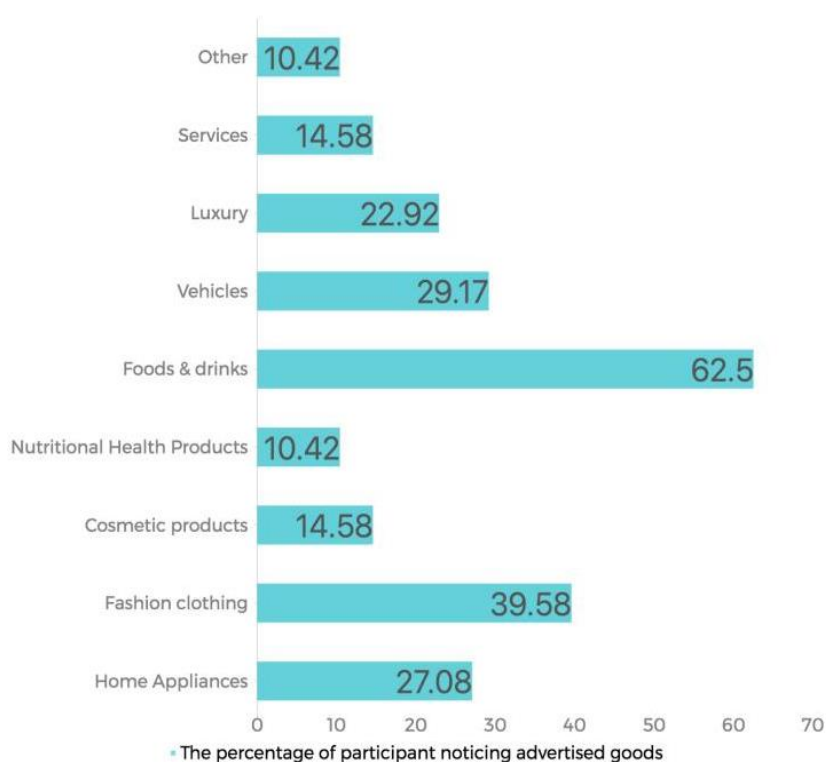


Figure 2. The rate of participants noticing each type of products

In the qualitative data collection, the study also learned that when the concept of advertising in films was mentioned, more than half of the participants also thought of keywords related to food and drink products.

As shown in Fig. 3, the number of participants who consumed the products advertised was quite modest. The qualitative questions revealed that the majority of those who did consume the products were also food and drink products, again proving that these are the more appropriate products for this type of advertising.

**The consumption of the advertised product
by the participant**

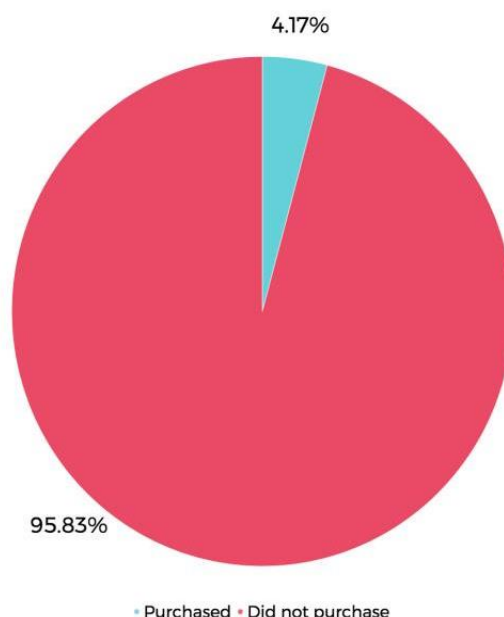


Figure 3. The consumption rate of the advertised products among participants

The results of the survey are largely in line with the hypothesis that was put forward prior to the data collection, and to a large extent the hypothesis presented above is largely correct, however, the hypothesis did not predict such a low purchase rate, a phenomenon that the authors will attempt to analyse later on.

The positive attributes of the product and the relatively negative attributes of the product will attract the interest of potential consumers and even create the desire to buy. Although this is completely contrary to the theories in advertising research, it does suggest some new insights into the production of advertising, namely that advertising does not need to present the product as a perfect image, but that some harmless flaws may even be the attraction of the product.

4. Discussion

From the analysis of the mechanism of advertising effect, the results of the questionnaire are consistent with the two hypotheses of this study. Due to its powerful ability to increase product exposure, product placement can make a significant proportion of potential consumers become conscious of the existence of the product and become intrigued by it. The mechanism of this effect coincides with the mechanism of advertising mentioned above, which is a combination of persuasion and reinforcement, showing the outstanding quality of the product while increasing its exposure, and sometimes even persuading viewers to change their behaviours which results in making them become attracted to the product and even have the desire to consume it.

However, the hypothesis does not predict such a low purchase frequency, in fact, the majority of potential consumers who noticed the advertised product did not engage in consumer behaviour. A major reason for this might be that the young consumers involved in this research do not have a particularly high consumption level, and research into the history of product placement advertising suggests that product placement is often used to promote products that are not necessities. This may result in many viewers not consuming the advertised product even though they have become interested in it. In addition, one of the characteristics of product placement advertising is that it places commercial products in non-commercial contexts for inconspicuous promotion [2]. It is likely to do no more than increase product exposure and attract the interest of potential consumers. This argument is also underpinned by the success of some well-known film series from the past, such as the James Bond series, in which fame has been built [10].

Firstly, according to the survey results, the food and affordable clothing categories are more suitable for this type of advertising, with more than half of the potential consumers interested in the advertised products being interested in the food category, making the choice of the right product category a must for brands and companies wishing to trial this type of advertising.

The fact that the main audience for product placement is young people, a large proportion of whom do not yet have the income and spending power to spend on expensive advertised products, is also an issue that needs to be considered when choosing advertised products.

However, product placement in films and other media alone may not be effective in increasing sales, as it can increase exposure and, in most cases, interest in the product among potential young consumers. Therefore, by combining product placement with other types of advertising during the release of a film containing product placement, it is possible to increase consumer interest and thus achieve the ultimate goal of advertising: to promote the consumption of the advertised product. Another method is to link the film with a commercial context, for example by having the actors in the film filming commercials for the product, so that the viewer is aware of the commercial nature of the product and thus has the desire to consume it.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the results of the study indicate that in the context of the young Chinese consumer, there is one category of product that receives the most attention in terms of product placement, namely the food and drink category. In general, these products are the ones that directly interest most potential consumers. And even though viewers do not often show a desire to purchase products using this type of advertising, in the few cases where they do, the participants in the survey consume food products. Therefore, the study was able to conclude that food products are the most suitable advertising format for the use of cinematic product placement.

For firms interested in product placement, this study provides a simple hint as to which products are best suited to the Chinese market using film product placement. After validating existing research on the effectiveness of advertising, the study also raises the possibility that harmless flaws can sometimes go a long way in attracting the interest of potential consumers. At the same time, the study also provides a warning to companies and firms interested in using this type of advertising that it is difficult to increase product sales through this single form of advertising and that a combination of different types of advertising may be the way to truly achieve advertising objectives.

The greatest limitation of this study would be overcome if future research were to expand the diversity of participants and examine the attitudes of a wider age range of people of different occupations and incomes towards in-movie product placement as an advertising method. The question of whether the results of this study are generalizable in a wider context can also be tested. At the same time, the food and drink category are a large one, and future research exploring which food and drink products are best suited to this type of advertising would certainly add to the findings of this study. The main limitation of this study is the lack of data diversity. The study focused more on product

type than product brand. So, this factor was not considered in the design of the questionnaire for this study. In future study, this factor could be considered for in-depth research.

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