

A STUDY OF ACCEPTANCE BY THE AUDIENCE FOR BRAND PLACEMENTS IN HINDI FILMS.



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ABSTRACT

A new industry has recently developed around this promotion technique known as brand placement. More and more ad-space is popping up every day. Looking at this situation Brand placement is an important emerging area of marketing communications and is becoming increasingly important in practice. The main findings and conclusions of this research maintains that the prominence of a Brand placement in a film affects the consumers' ability to recognize the placed Brand.

Key Words: - Brand Placement, Realism, Credibility, Film congruity

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Product placement is considered an important marketing vehicle; it should be used to complement the other vehicles of advertising and marketing. The goal that marketers hope to achieve when using product placements is to establish a brand name or to reinforce it. Moster, Bryant & Sylvester (2002) explains that films offer product exposure to millions of customers, making product placements a rapidly growing marketing communication medium. By cleverly weaving a product into a scene, marketers hope audiences will connect their brand with the stars or story they see on the screen. In order to counter television commercials zipping and zapping, audience fragmentation due to the rise in the number of cable channels, commercial clutter driven by increasing time allocated to advertisements and a simultaneous decrease in commercial length. Due to the proliferation of advertisements and the consequent difficulty in getting commercial messages to reach and influence potential customers, product placement appears to be an interesting alternative to traditional marketing communication tools (D'Astros and Chartier, 2000).

Berglund and Spets (2003) state that research has established product placements as an effective marketing communication tool that has the ability to enhance brand recognition by consumers. Recognition is an advertising effectiveness test that involves showing a respondent an advertisement to determine if he or she has seen it. Recognition tests measure consumer recognition of an individual advertisement. Lamb (2004) explains that

recognition tests are typically used to measure the effectiveness of the advertisement. If an advertisement is considered to have high recognition, it is assumed that the advertisement is effective. Previous research by Gupta and Lord (1998) has shown that recognition will be higher when a product placement includes both an audio and a visual compared to that of only a subtle visual usage. This research attempted to evaluate the recognition a film attendee had when viewing a product that is placed more prominently.

2.1 METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 Sample

For the purpose of this article, the sampling method used was a non-probability sampling approach. A sample was drawn from a student Population of at Surat City. The motivation for this selection was that respondents were thought to be an appropriate sample since young adults (18 to 24 years of age) are avid film attendees.

Product placement in films is therefore an effective way to target young, affluent and well-educated consumers. The researchers, however, were only able to use two hundred and seventy six questionnaires that were incorrectly completed by the respondents out of 300. (N=276).

2.1.2 Questionnaire

Taking into consideration that a large number of the respondents were second-language English speakers, the statements and statements were set both in English as well as Gujarati in a simplified style.

2.1.3 Formulation of Hypothesis

To determine the respondent’s ethical acceptance
 Research question RQ: - Do viewers feel that if it is ethical or unethical to place brands in the movie for the sake of marketing tool for the particular brand

H_{0A}: There is no association (relation) between respondents considering Brand Placements as an unethical marketing method and respondents Awareness that brand placement is a marketing tool.

H_{0B}: The average of the realism, credibility & film congruity enhancement amongst the 2 group of respondents considering brand

2.1.4. Data analysis

This data was entered into Microsoft Excel and imported to SPSS, once the required computations

for the products placed in films had been completed in Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), cross tabulation and inferential statistics (t-tests for significant differences at a 95% confidence level) were executed. The reliability and validity of the measurement scales were determined by way of Cronbach’s coefficient alpha (Cooper and Schindler, 2006).

Table-2.1 Cross tabulation: - Percentage frequency distribution of respondents considering Brand Placements as an unethical marketing method with respondents Awareness that brand placement is a marketing tool using chi-square test for independence.

Awareness that brand placement being a marketing tool	Considering Brand Placements as an unethical marketing method				
	YES		NO		ROW TOTAL
	Count	%	Count	%	
YES	102	40.5	150	59.5	252
NO	9	37.5	15	62.5	24
Column total	111	40.2	165	59.8	276
Chi-Square	Value- 0.081		df-1	p-value-0.776	

H_{0A}: There is no association (relation) between respondents considering Brand Placements as an unethical marketing method and respondents Awareness that brand placement is a marketing tool.

H_{1A}: There is an association (relation) between respondents considering Brand Placements as an unethical marketing method and respondents Awareness that brand placement is a marketing tool

Interpretation: - The null hypothesis should be accepted. Chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation and it was non significant $\chi^2 (1, N=276)=0.081, p=0.776$

The p value is $p>0.05$ for the chi-square χ^2 tests of independence performed to examine the association.

Table-2.2 Table for t-test for independent samples

	Brand Placements are Un-ethical	N	Mean	Std. D	t-value	d.f	p-value
Realism, credibility & film congruity enhancement	YES	111	5.5946	2.196	2.048	274	0.041
	NO	165	6.1455	2.187			

H_{0B}: The average of the realism , credibility & film congruity enhancement amongst the 2 group of respondents considering brand placements as being or not being unethical are equal using independent t-test .H₀= $\mu_{yes}=\mu_{no}$

H_{1B}: The average of the realism , credibility & film congruity enhancement amongst the 2 group of respondents considering brand placements as

being or not being unethical are not equal using independent t-test $H_1 = \mu_{yes} \neq \mu_{no}$

Interpretation :- The null hypothesis (H_0) should be rejected in favor of alternative hypothesis (H_1). The average of the realism, credibility & film congruity enhancement amongst the 2 group of respondents considering brand placements as being or not being unethical are not equal using independent t-test.

FINDINGS: -Result indicate that respondents believing realism, credibility & film congruity enhancement is higher amongst the respondents believing brand placements to not be unethical ($M=165, SD=2.187$) than respondents of the opinion that brand placements are unethical ($M=111, SD=2.196$), $t(274)=2.048, p=0.0491$.

As it is evident that the respondents are not only noticing brands in films but are also aware of this being a marketing method. 59.8% of respondents don't mind this and do not find it as an unethical marketing method. Respondents in the age bracket of 23-24 years probably doing Postgraduate are highest to not consider brand placement as unethical marketing method at 84.4% and 78.6% respectively. Again respondents belonging to the technical stream are more tolerant towards brand placements being highest 69.3%. Also the high monthly family income respondents i.e. >25000 are not finding brand placements as unethical being highest at 81.7%. It is depicted that even though those respondents who were not aware of brand placements as being a marketing method do not consider it to be wrong or unethical method with being high at 62.5% as against 37.5% who consider it as a wrong or unethical marketing method.

Again earlier it was observed that male respondents were higher who did not consider brand placement as unethical at 68.1% in comparison to 51.4% of female respondents not considering it unethical. Therefore overall the acceptance level of Male respondents is higher for brand placement. Infact respondents of higher age and technical background and the male gender are seemingly very tolerant towards the phenomenon of brand placements in the movies. The research finds that Brand Placement relies on the gender of the viewer also. Female respondents seemed to view product

placement as a unnatural intrusion into the viewing experience, which they believed should be free of manipulative marketing practices. Whereas Male respondents were more inclined to view brands as interactive touchstones within a film, that helped increase reality of the scene, thus increasing the immediacy and enjoyment of the viewing experience.

5.1 CONCLUSION

Throughout the course of this paper it has been found that the respondents in general had a positive perception of product placements in films even though the respondents considered product placements in films as commercials in disguise. A conclusion that was drawn from the entire paper was that product placements in films are a viable alternative to traditional forms of advertising. :- Hence it is evident that brand placement is not being really viewed as unethical marketing method. Product placements therefore offer numerous benefits to the marketer in terms of reach and diminishing cost per viewer. Product placement is an immense field of research within which much is yet to be discovered.

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