20 Years of Research on Product Placement in Movie, Television and Video Game Media

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Abstract: *The popularity of product placement as a viable alternative to traditional commercials has been increasing rapidly. Latest PQ Media report (2012) noted that global spending on product placement has already reached $8.25 billion. However, despite its popularity, extant academic research on product placement lags behind its practice. The aim of this paper is to review, categorize and analyze exhaustively the existing product placement literature with the purpose of identifying possible research gaps for academics and guidelines of effective product placements for practitioners interested in the field. 73 academic studies that in particular focus on product placements within movies, television (TV) programmes and video games were examined. The exhaustive review revealed that studies in the US investigating product placement effectiveness through memory related measures and consumer attitudes dominate the product placement literature. However, studies investigating effects of product placement on measures other than memory related and attitudinal ones are extremely scarce. Based on the identified research gaps, an agenda for future studies is suggested. Also, factors that were evidenced to trigger product placement effects throughout the literature are revealed and outlined for practitioners use.*

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Introduction

Product placement can be defined briefly as the inclusion of brand and/or brand identifying items within mass media programming such as cinema and TV (Karrh, 1998). The practice was first seen in the mid-1890s[i]. Product placement became a subject of interest for academia during the 1980s following the release of Spielberg's blockbuster film E.T. (1982). It was suggested that Hershey experienced a 66% increase in sales of their Reese's Pieces candy as a result of product placement in the film (Gupta and Lord, 1998; Gupta and Gould, 1997). Practitioner and scholarly interest in product placement has skyrocketed since then and product placement on the silver screen has spread to other mass media vehicles, particularly, TV.

Product placement on TV was rapidly adopted. The introduction of the DVR[ii], which is blamed for decreasing the effectiveness of traditional commercials, has encouraged advertisers to constantly search for viable alternatives. Product placement offers an alternative with several advantages over the venerable 30-second commercial.

First, product placement ensures that the advertiser's message is integrated within the program content. Thus, the TV audience, who mostly opt to zap to other channels when commercials begin (Altaş and Öztunç, 2013), cannot easily avoid product placements. Second, product placement is less intrusive. Placed products are perceived as more natural and credible by the audience, generating favorable consumer associations and goodwill. Traditional commercials are liable to activate the Persuasion Knowledge Model[iii] that is referenced in the marketing literature (Reijmersdal et al., 2007; d'Astous and Chartier, 1998). Third, placements are often more economical than traditional commercials. A season-length placement within a prime-time TV program costs, on average, $200,000 in the United States; whereas a single 30-second commercial within the same type of prime-time programing costs approximately $475,000 (Wells, 1996, in Law and Braun, 2000).

Soon, product placements began appearing within media vehicles other than movies and TV programmes. Especially, video games[iv] started to use very often product placements as a way to add verisimilitude to their virtual worlds. Dole branded bananas in Super Monkey Ball (2001), Sony Ericsson phones in Splinter Cell (2002), Nike, Adidas, Umbro uniforms, crampons in Pro Evolution Soccer (PES) and FIFA games (2008) are examples of video game product placements. Notwithstanding this, there are also instances in which product placements appear

within songs (Volvo cars, Aldo shoes in I don't give a named song by Madonna, 2012), music videos (Sony Xperia in Avril Lavigne's music video Rock N Roll), even novels. To illustrate, British writer Fay Weldon accepted financing from Italian jewellery company, Bulgari, in return to prominently mention the firm and its products in her novel. In fact, Weldon did more than merely mention Bulgari; she integrated Bulgari to the plot and named her 2001 book "The Bulgari Connection", thus earning the renown as the first novel with paid product placement.

Prevalence of product placement practice on different media channels has thus been on rise. However, just as Karrh (1998) noted, academic research on product placement could not keep pace with the growth of its practice. Consequently, a review of the extant literature on product placement research that will provide the current status and identify research gaps will be of high value for both scholars and practitioners. This paper aims at fulfilling this purpose through reviewing, categorizing and analyzing studies which investigated product placement practice particularly in movies, TV programmes and video games.

Paper is further organized in four main sections. The next section presents the analysis of the reviewed literature that was adopted for the purposes of this study, with its scope, methodology, and framework detailly explained. While the third section presents results of the analysis, the fourth discusses them exhaustively. Finally, the fifth section concludes, as well as, notes limitations along with suggestions for future product placement studies.

Literature Analysis

The analysis of the product placement literature is conducted as in the following. First, the scope of and the methodology adopted for this literature review study are presented. Next, the framework of the literature analysis is explained.

Scope of the Literature Analysis and the Analysis Methodology

For the purposes of this study, keyword search and reference search were performed. First, keyword search was carried out for full text, peer-reviewed research studies written in English through using keywords like, "product placement", "brand placement", "TV product placement", video game placement", "advergame" within refereed academic journals of EBSCOHOST database. Only the EBSCOHOST

database was scanned because it is the database that included the most relevant studies for the selected subject amongst those the researcher had full access to.

In addition, to evaluate if all key academic studies within the selected subject area were included, reference search was conducted via the "snowball method" by reviewing the references of the articles found in the database. Again, only published, peer-reviewed articles were selected with the exception of two studies that were neccessarily taken into consideration to provide a better picture of the research theme[v]. Studies reviewing product placement literature (e.g. Kureshi and Sood, 2010), as well as, those dealing with product placement history (e.g. Newell et al., 2006), regulation (e.g. Gupta et al., 2000) were not considered relevant for the purposes of this review and thus were excluded. Additionally, studies that have investigated product placements within other alternative media such as novels, songs, music videos were scarce[vi] and thus they were also excluded from this review study.

Description and Framework of the Literature Analysis

A total of 73 out of 266 accessed studies that were published between 1993 and 2013 were considered to be relevant to the selected suject area. Most of them were published in Journal of Advertising (n=8, 11%), Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising (n=5, 6.8%) and International Journal of Advertising (n=4, 5.4%). The majority of the studies were focused on the movie medium (n=38, 52%), followed by TV (n=19, 26%) and lastly by the video game medium (n=14, 19%).

Their methodologies, in general, were either experimental research design (n=39, 53 %), or survey (n=20, 27 %) and, in a few cases, content analysis (n=8, 11%). Additionally, sample of the majority of studies involved university students (n=30, 41%). While with the experimental research design the effectiveness of product placement question was investigated, surveys, in general, investigated product placement acceptability and the content analyses, were employed for investigating prevalence and characteristics of the product placements.

Although in partial, findings of the experimental research studies provided invaluable insights for answering the product placement effectiveness question for all three media. Since the majority of the product placement effectiveness studies investigated the effect of placements on consumer memory and attitude in particular, their effects

on behavioural outcomes, such as purchase intention and preference for placed products remained indeterminate.

Surveys, on the other hand, enabled to discover that men are more accepting product placements than women, as well as, that countries do not differ drastically in relation to their acceptability of ethically charged goods.

Finally, researchers that administered content analysis were able to reveal the nature, characteristics and prevalence of product placements for the medium they were interested with their chosen research method.

In the following pages, first results from the analysis of product placement studies on movie medium is given, to be followed by TV and then video game product placements, respectively.

Results of the Analyses

Research on Product Placements in Movies

Movies are the most investigated product placement medium in the literature. 38 out of 73 studies that were reviewed for this study were focused on movie product placements. In most of the studies investigating product placement effectiveness through memory related measures (n=13, 34.2%), attitude (n=4, 10.5%) or both (n=5, 13.15%) was the aim. Practitioners' views (n=5, 13.15 %), ethics and acceptability of product placements and their cross-national comparison (n=7, 18.4%) were other frequently investigated subjects, whereas, brand consciousness (n=2, 5.2%), consumer interpretations (n=2, 5.2%), purchase intention for placed products were seldom examined for movie product placements. Thus, research on movie product placements can be categorized roughly under three streams:

- *Studies on movie placement effectiveness*
- *Studies dealing with ethics, acceptability of movie placements and their cross-national comparison*
- *Studies examining practitioners' views on movie placements*

Discussion of main findings for the above mentioned streams are provided next.

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Movie placement effectiveness

Majority of scholars attempted to measure movie placement effectiveness through examining its effect on consumer memory. Recall (Gupta and Lord, 1998; Nelson and Devanathan, 2006; Bressoud and Lehu, 2007; Lehu and Bressoud, 2008; 2009), and recognition (Brennan and Babin, 2004), which are known as explicit memory measures, as well as, brand salience[vii] (Babin and Carder, 1996a; Johnstone and Dodd, 2000) were the most widely applied memory-related effectiveness measures. Often, together with consumer memory, consumer attitude toward movie product placements and placed products were investigated as well (Panda, 2000; Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007; Dens et al., 2012; d'Astous and Chartier, 2000; Cholinski, 2012).

Results of these studies, in general, reported that movie placements do have significant effect on enhancing consumer memory (Gupta and Lord, 1998; Nelson and Devanathan, 2006; Lehu and Bressoud, 2007; 2008; 2009; Brennan and Babin, 2004; Babin and Carder, 1996; Johnstone and Dodd, 2000; Argan et al., 2007) and generating positive consumer attitude for products being placed (Panda, 2000; Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007; Dens et al., 2012; d'Astous and Chartier, 2000; Cholinski, 2012). Strong connection of the product placement to the movie plot was found to be vital for ensuring both high recall rates and positive consumer attitude. Even in cases when the strong plot connected placements[viii] were seen only for a short period (4-6 sec) on the screen, unaided recall rate was reported to reach 86.6% (Argan et al., 2007). Nonetheless, the product placement strategy that involves combination of strong plot connection with high prominence[ix] was widely acknowledged to generate even better results but only for retrieval of the placed brand in consumer memory (Gupta and Lord, 1998; Bressoud and Lehu, 2007; Lehu and Bressoud, 2008; 2009; Panda, 2010; Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007; Brennan and Babin, 2004; d'Astous and Chartier, 2000; Cholinski, 2012). The same combination was not found to generate positive consumer attitude (Dens et al., 2012; d'Astous and Chartier, 2000; Cholinski, 2012) since highly prominent placements were often being criticized by the audience for being irritating and distracting from their viewing experience. Strong plot connected but less prominent placements (Dens et al., 2012; d'Astous and Chartier, 2000) were evidenced to attract positive consumer attitudes, especially when they were embedded within humorous film scenes (Jin and Villegas, 2007),.

Additionally, audio-visual placements were found to generate better memory results than visual-only placements (Brennan and Babin, 2004). However, adding an audio and/or visual reference to an already high prominent and high plot connected placement was found to generate mixed results on consumer memory. Since Cholinski (2012) found that if a highly prominent and plot integrated placement is an audio-visual one, then regardless of all other executional variables, it will generate high recall and recognition rates. Nonetheless, when Gupta and Lord (1998) added an audio reference to an already visual highly prominent and plot connected placement, they did not observe enhanced recall rates, whereas, when Brennan and Babin (2004) did the same, they observed enhanced recognition scores.

Furthermore, other factors that were reported to enhance explicit memory of the placed brand/product were use of the product by the main character (Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007), familiarity with the product (Brennan and Babin, 2004; Panda, 2004), first viewing of the film at the cinema as well as its second viewing at home on a large screen, liking of the movie, its genre, its director (Lehu and Bressoud, 2008 ;2009; Bressoud et al., 2010) and brand consciousness (Nelson and Devanathan, 2006) which was also found to be highly effective in generating "the most favourable" consumer attitude towards placements (Nelson and McLeod, 2005). Conditions that were reported to increase brand salience were liking the film and being high self-monitor (Johnstone and Dodd, 2000).

On the other hand, although purchase intention is an important effectiveness measure, it has been seldom considered when tapping movie placement effectiveness (Ong and Meri, 1994; Vollmers and Mizerski, 1994; Morton and Friedman; Jin and Villegas, 2007). Also, the results of the few studies are far from reputing significant effects of movie placement on purchase intention. Since while Ong and Meri (1994), as well as, Vollmers and Mizerski (1994) did not observe enhanced purchase intention for products integrated within a movie, Jin and Villegas (2007) did observe enhanced purchase intention for placed products but in particular for positively pre-evaluated brands/products. Auty and Lewis (2004), who examined preference for placed products by children of ages ranging from 6 to 12, reported that children showed higher preference for placed brands but their preference, in addition to placement, was found to be affected by their prior exposure to the brand as well.

Therefore, it can be concluded that based on the reviewed studies the effect of movie placements on consumer memory and attitude is appreciable but their effect on

behavioural outcomes, such as purchase intention and preference for placed products is as yet indeterminate.

Ethics, acceptability of movie product placements and their cross-national comparison

This stream of scholars opted to investigate placement effectiveness indirectly rather than directly, through dealing with placement acceptability and ethical issues which in turn were assumed to have impact on consumer attitudes (Nebenzahl and Secunda, 1993; Gupta and Gould, 1997; Gould et al., 2000; Brennan et al., 2004; Eisend, 2009; Delorme and Reid, 1999).

Ethical concerns regarding placements are twofold: objecting to product placements in general since they are perceived to have subliminal effects and objecting to placements of specific products.

First, in general, positive attitudes toward movie placements (Nebenzahl and Secunda, 1993) especially by non-students (Sung et al., 2009) and those who value perceived realism, fewer restrictions (Gupta and Gould, 1997) were evidenced. Although subtle placements of familiar brands were perceived as enhancing realism (Delorme and Reid, 1999), there were also those, though in minority, who perceived this subtlety as deceptive and expressed negative attitudes (Nebenzahl and Secunda, 1993). Also excessive placements of generic brands were evaluated as being irritating and distracting from their viewing experience (Delorme and Reid, 1999).

On the other hand, perceived (un)acceptability of movie placements was found to differ based on the nature of products, gender and movie watching frequency of the audience. First with regard to their nature, products in the product placement literature were distinguished by Gupta and Gould (1997) as being ethically charged and non-ethically charged ones. Ethically charged goods were defined as those that arouse ethical concerns and differences across consumers regarding their marketing and consumption, such as alcoholic beverages, guns and tobacco. On the other hand, all goods other than ethically charged ones were called as non-ethically charged goods or neutral goods, such as fatty foods, cars, beverages etc.

Next, it was evidenced consistently across product placement literature that placement of ethically charged goods are less acceptable than placement of neutral products in US (Gupta and Gould, 1997; Brennan et al., 2004). Despite this, US

consumers perceived the regulation need for placement of ethically charged goods only for the sake of non-adult audience members (Sung et al., 2009). Additionally, in US, males and frequent movie watchers were found to tolerate and accept placement of ethically charged goods more than females and infrequent movie watchers.

Thus, it can be noted that the earlier studies dealing with placement ethics and acceptability of placements were mainly based on data gathered from US respondents. Fortunately, Gould et al. (2000) took an initiative and compared their findings generated from a US sample in 1997 with those they had generated from Austrian and French samples. Also, other studies that compared attitudes towards and acceptability of product placement by American consumers to those by Chinese, Australian, Austrian, French (McKehnie and Zhou, 2003) and Italian consumers (Nelli, 2009) emerged. All of these studies revealed that US consumers were more accepting and more likely to purchase placed products (country-based difference) than the French, the Austrian, the Australian, the Italian and the Chinese consumers. Nevertheless, ethically charged goods, regardless of country, were found to be less accepted by females and infrequent moviegoers (product difference). Similarly, regardless of country, males were evidenced to purchase the placed product more than females (gender difference).

Furthermore, data of the above mentioned studies by Gould et al. (2000) and Brennen et al. (2004) McKehnie and Zhou (2003) were combined with the one by Mouskourova et al. (2006) in another study that attempted to generalize acceptability of ethically charged and neutral goods over seven different countries (Eisend, 2009). The seven different contries were USA, France, Austria (Gould et al., 2000), Australia (Brennan et al., 2004), China (McKehnie and Zhou, 2003), Germany and Bulgaria (Mouskourava, 2005). As a result, Eisend (2009) reported that acceptability of ethically charged goods was generalizable and it was described as "indifferent" (between acceptable and unacceptable) consistently across seven countries. Also gender related product placement acceptability was generalizable. However, acceptability of neutral products was not generalizable as its accepting levels differed across seven countries. Finally, Torrano and Flores (2009), who compared attitudes toward product placement by French and Spanish consumers, did not also observe significant differences between the Frenchs and the Spanishs in relation to their product placement attitudes.

So, based on the above mentioned exceptional studies, countries do not differ drastically in relation to their acceptability of ethically charged goods. Nonetheless, there is still a gap regarding the ethical concerns and acceptability of product placements within countries other than US.

Practitioners' views on movie product placements

Some scholars, alternatively, showed a special interest in the practitioners' beliefs when examining product placements on the silver screen (Karrh, 1995; McKee and Pardun, 1996; 2000; Karrh, McKee and Pardun, 2003; Jan and Martina, 2013) .

Karrh (1995) was the first to investigate practitioners' views. His seminal study involved a survey of 23 ERMA[x] members, who described the most effective brand placements as those that were "easily recognized", "portrayed positively in the movie plot", as well as, "being accompanied by further promotional support". Moreover, practitioners in his study generally noted recall and recognition as the best measures of brand placement effectiveness.

Subsequently, Pardun and McKee (1996) surveyed 89 advertising agency media directors and examined factors most important in making product placement decision for a feature film. "National viewing potential", "price of the placement" and "theme of the movie" were noted as the most important ones, while "action in the movie", "international viewing potential", "movie producer" as the least important ones out of 10 listed factors. Practitioners noted further positive and long term roles as well as increased use of movie placements in future.

Pardun and McKee (2000) later repeated the same study with 106 public relations (PR) professionals. PR professionals reported "international viewing potential" instead of national one together with "price of the placement" and "theme of the movie" as the most important factors.

Later on, Karrh together with McKee and Pardun (2003) repeated his seminal study conducted in 1995 to reveal the evolution of practitioners' product placement views. The survey items from Karrh's study was responded 28 ERMA members and results revealed that effective placements in 2003 mandated a more expanded set of both executional factors and brand characteristics. Also, the importance attached by practitioners to each executional factor and brand characteristic increased. More practitioners in 2003 believed that product placements have a subliminal dimension

than in 1995. Additionally, practitioners' belief regarding the future rise in product placements was reinforced in 2003.

With the exception of a recent study, in which Jan and Martina (2013) revealed that Czech practitioners are sure of product placement efficiency and regard it as long-term marketing field that involves brand-building efforts, studies investigating practitioners' views, especially those of other than US, are extremely hard-to-come-by.

Research on Product Placements on TV

TV product placements have been attracting scholarly interest especially in the last decade, when 16 out of 19 reviewed TV placement studies were conducted. Studies on TV product placement mostly focused on its effectiveness (n=10, 52.6%) through attitude (n=5, 26.3%), memory related measures (n=3, 15.7%) or both (n=2, 10.5%) at the same time. On the other hand, another stream of studies investigated its prevalence and characteristics (n=7, 36.8%). It can be noted that scholars mainly employed either experiment (n=9, 47.3%) or content analysis (n=7, 36.8%) method to investigate product placement applications on TV programmes. Those who investigated its effectiveness used the experiment method, while those who aimed at shedding light on its nature and characteristics employed the content analysis method.

Academic studies on TV product placements can be examined under two categories:

- *Studies on TV placement effectiveness*
- *Studies investigating prevalence, nature and characteristics of TV placements*

TV placement effectiveness

Just as movie placement effectiveness, effectiveness of TV placements was generally tapped through consumer attitude and memory related measures.

The methodology utilized most frequently was viewing by a sample of students a whole TV programme or an excerpt from it with product placements. This viewing experience was immediately followed by a questionnaire that probed recall, recognition levels and/or attitudes towards the placed products by the sample audience (Law and Braun, 2000; Reijmersdal et al., 2007; Tiwsakul et al., 2005;

Cowley and Barron, 2008; Homer, 2009). In general, overall enhancement of recall and recognition levels for placed products (Law and Braun, 2000) and positive attitudes towards TV placements as well as placed products were noted (Tiwsakul et al., 2005; Schmoll et al., 2006).

Results with regard to effective placement strategies revealed that products that were placed as visual-only were least recalled but mostly preferred, whereas products that were placed central to the plot were most recalled but least preferred ones on the TV screen (Law and Braun, 2000). It was also evidenced that incongruences between modality (visual or audio) and plot connection attracts consumer attention and thus improves memory for placed product. However, persuasion was found to enhance by congruency, therefore the said incongruence was reported to affect consumer attitude negatively (Russell, 2002; d'Astous and Seguin, 1998).

High prominence was not found to be a promising characteristic for TV placement effectiveness as it was for movie placements. Highly prominent TV placements were found to diminish positive consumer attitudes, especially in case of being repeated frequently for known brands and being displayed in favourite programmes. On the contrary, subtle placements were evidenced to generate positive consumer attitudes (Cowley and Barron, 2008; Homer, 2009).

Moreover, placements of ethically charged goods were found to arouse ethical concerns and negative attitudes on TV screen as well. Females were once more found to evaluate placements of ethically charged goods more negatively than males (Tiwsakul et al., 2005; Schmoll et al., 2006). Additionally, subliminal, implicit and passive placements were found to arouse negative attitudes and ethical concerns, especially when they were within information and services TV programme type (Tiwsakul et al., 2005). On the other hand, congruity between placement sponsor and the program was found to generate positive ethical and evaluative reactions for all TV program types except for mini-series and dramas, in which placements were evidenced to generate most negative attitudes (d'Astous and Seguin,1998).

Additionally, genre of the TV programme was found to influence effectiveness of product placement as well. Russell and Stern (2005a) studied US sitcoms and they found out, based on their Product-Character Association (PCA) model, that US audience associate products placed within sitcoms with the sitcom characters and their attitudes toward placed products was found to be driven by their attitude

toward the characters. The same association was evidenced to occur in case of US soap operas as well (Russell and Stern, 2006).

On the other hand, Gupta and Gould (2007) examined placements within TV game shows in particular. First, they studied how consumers evaluate game shows and products placed in them and subsequently their effectiveness on consumer memory in relation to traditional advertising. While location and price of the product within a game were found to be the factors enhancing recall the most, overall traditional advertisements were recalled better.

Effectiveness studies that do not employ memory based measures are scarce for TV product placements as well. Only one study which investigated the effect of TV product placements on brand image was reviewed. The said study evidenced that brand image starts to change in the direction of the TV programme after -at least- a second exposure (Reijmersdal et al., 2005).

So, there is a need in the literature for more studies that shed light on effectiveness of product placement practice on TV screen through measures other than memory and attitude related ones.

Prevalence, nature and characteristics of TV product placements

This stream of researchers opted to examine characteristics of product placements appearing on the TV screen. Their research method, content analysis, chiefly involved analysis of TV programming on major TV networks of the countries to be studied. Very often prime-time, which represents largest number of viewers in relation to any other time period of the day, was chosen as the period to be analysed (Avery and Ferraro, 2000). Most of these studies were conducted in the US (Ferraro and Avery, 2000a; 2000b; La Ferle and Edwards, 2006) with the notable exceptions by Smit et al. (2006), who examined TV placements on Dutch TV networks and Wouters and Pelsmacker (2011), who provided comparison of placements on US and Flemish TV networks.

The study by Avery and Ferraro (2000a) was among the earliest ones examining prevalence and nature of TV product placements. The authors content analysed 112 hours of US prime-time programming (April, 1997) and reported that brands are prevalent on prime time television (one placement every two-minutes of TV programming) with the majority appearing in real-life events, such as sports, news,

feature magazine and game shows. Moreover, most of them were found to be visually prominent, with extended portrayals (75%) and foreground placements (79%) and almost half of the visual placements involving interaction with the programme character (40%) (Ferraro and Avery, 2000b). In addition, the content analysis of the nature of TV placements revealed that their commercial intent was overshadowing the intent for enhancing realism. Despite this, still 60% of the viewers were found to perceive placements as adding realism to the TV programmes (Schmoll et al., 2006).

Five years later, when La Ferle and Edwards (2006) content analysed US prime time TV programming (January, 2002), they observed relatively less prevalence of brand placements (one placement every three-minutes TV programming) in relation to 1997. Visual TV placements in 2002 were also observed to be less prevalent in relation to 1997 (52.8%). Also, in 2002 the type of US TV programmes that involved most brand appearances was found to be sitcoms and dramas rather than real life events as they were in 1997. Real life events, such as news and feature magazines, took the second place. (La Ferle and Edwards, 2006). On the other hand, in another study, frequency and nature of US TV placements were compared with Flemish TV placements (Wouters and Pelsmacker, 2011). It was found that the difference between placement frequencies on Flemish and US TV programmes was not statistically significant. Nonetheless placements were embedded mostly within non-scripted TV programmes in US, whereas they were integrated generally within scripted TV programmes in Belgium.

Additionally, Pervan and Martin (2002) investigated product placements within soap operas of US and New Zealand. They found that while placements within US soap operas were mainly produced for promotion of leisure and appearance related products, those in New Zealand soap operas were largely promoted transport and food related products. In addition, soap opera viewers in New Zealand found to show more positive emotional outcome towards placements in soap operas than US viewers.

Only two studies that inspected characteristics of TV placements in a country other than US were found (Smit et al., 2005, La Pastina, 2001). First, Smit et al.., (2005) focused on Dutch TV placements and observed placements to be more prevalent on commercial Dutch TV networks than on public networks. Additionally, those on commercial networks were found to be more prominent than those displayed on public networks. On the other hand, La Pastina (2001) who studied TV viewers in a

Brazilian rural area revealed that the products placed within soap operas were not perceived as promotional efforts but rather as portrayals of daily life necessities by those in upper class.

Alternatively, a theoretical study conducted by Russell and Puto (1999) content analysed viewers' opinions regarding TV placements expressed via focus groups, internet fan forums, phenomenological interviews and tapped audiences' relationships with TV programs. As a result, a construct named "connectedness" was revealed, which denotes the intense relationships between the audience and a TV program that touches to individuals' personal and social lives.

Research on Product Placements in Video Games

The extant literature on video game placements is currently scarce but promising. Nevertheless, 16 studies on in-game placements, all of which were conducted during the last decade, were examined. The review of the literature revealed that effectiveness was the most investigated subject also for video game placements. The effectiveness studies on in-game placements were also found to be based mostly on explicit memory related measures (Lee and Faber, 2007; Nelson, 2002; Glass, 2007; Walsh et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2006; Winkler, 2006; Kuhn et al., 2007; Chaney et al., 2004; Acar, 2007; Wise et al., 2008) and players' attitudes toward placed products (Nelson, 2002; Nelson et al., 2004; Winkler, 2006).

Moreover, the methodology of video game effectiveness studies was also the same; an experiment followed by a questionnaire. In case of video games, the experiment involved playing of a game that encompasses product placements by participants and following this game session a survey was conducted delving into their memory of and/or attitudes toward placements in the game.

Effectiveness of video game placements

Consistent with the previous literature on the effectiveness of movie and TV product placements, effectiveness of video game placements were also attempted to be tapped through memory related measures mostly.

Main findings illustrate that placements as billboards in video games were recalled better than those in real outdoor billboards (Chaney et al., 2004), however, recall rates for placements in a live sport event outperformed those in a sport game (Walsh

et al., 2008). On the other hand, congruency between the game setting and the brand was found to generate a positive attitude both toward the game and the brand, if it is noticed by the player (Wise et al., 2008). Hence, Lee and Faber (2007) and Nelson (2002) proposed that the placement, which involves high incongruency between the game setting and the placed brand, generated higher recall rate than those in which high congruency is present.

Moreover, it was validated in several studies that the proximity of the product/brand to the focal area in the game scene is vital for its recall and recognition (Acar, 2007; Lee and Faber, 2007). Besides, recall rate was found to be higher when the placed brand is a local one (Nelson, 2002) and the player is an experienced and skilled one who has been acquainted with the game (Kuhn et al., 2007), as well as, being moderately involved at that game play (Lee and Faber, 2008).

However, there were contradictory results for the recall of brands that were new. Nelson (2002) found out that the recall rate of the brand placed in a video game would be enhanced if that brand was a new one. Whereas, Winkler (2006) proposed that placement of a brand that was already known by the player would be better recalled in relation to a new one.

On the other hand, with regard to attitudes, it was found that players in general held positive attitudes toward placements in games and they do not think that placements are deceptive. It was observed that generally players believe placements enhance realism, except for the study conducted by Chaney et al. (2004) who reported only limited support. Moreover, Nelson et al. (2004) evidenced that there was a direct relationship between attitudes toward advertising in general and placements in games, meaning that if a player had positive attitude toward advertising he/she had a positive attitude toward placements in games as well or vice versa. However, Winkler (2006) found that this direct relationship generates stronger outcomes in case of having negative attitudes toward advertising. Furthermore, just as it is with movie and TV media, placements of ethically-charged goods within a video game were found to be less acceptable than placements of non-ethically charged goods among gamers consistently (Kim and McClung, 2009).

Recently, Mackay et al. (2009), who examined whether brand placements in video games can shift pre-existing consumer attitudes towards a specific brand, evidenced that after exposure to a placed product during game-play, positive brand attitudes did not but recall rates did increase for those who had already positive attitude

towards the placed product. Jeong et al. (2011), on the other hand, reported psychological arousal in a game (with violence cues) had positive effect on consumer attitude, but did not on brand logo memory. Rather high engagement in a violent video game enhanced recall rates, but generated negative attitude toward the placed brand logos.

Yang and Wang (2008), alternatively, assert that product placements should take into account the type of product, placement and the game for enhancing effectiveness. They proposed that within shooting/sport games, tool products[xi] should be placed as feedback placements[xii], while within role-playing/strategic games; tool and enhancement products should be placed as operator placements. Goal placements, on the other hand, were proposed to appear when the player passes a new level.

Two studies that did not investigate effectiveness were the ones by Acar (2007) and Choi et al., 2013). Acar (2007) examined the incidental exposure and evidenced that high proximity to the focal area had but message content did not have incidental effects for video game placements. Choi et al., (2013), on the other hand, examined the effect of sensory distractions on implicit memory and they found that while auditory distractions did visual ones did not inhibit implicit memory for the placed brand within a video game.

Discussion

The review of 73 academic studies on product placement yielded invaluable results and implications.

This review study revealed factors that trigger product placement effectiveness for all three media. The extended list of factors that influence product placement effectiveness for all three media vehicles are categorized and outlined within tables that are provided in the following (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

In the three tables that follow (Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3), factors that influence product placement effectiveness are categorized as those related with *placed product/brand, respective medium, product placement execution* and *audience characteristics*. Next, the said factors are outlined, primarily, in relation to their effects on *explicit memory* measures and *attitude,* which were revealed to be the most investigated effectiveness measures in the product placement literature. Nonetheless,

as it was mentioned previously, though being extremely rare, the researcher came across studies that investigated product placement effects on measures other than explicit memory and attitude as well. The findings regarding said rare effectiveness measures are provided under the column named *other effectiveness measures.*

In addition, factors that were evidenced to generate favourable/positive outcomes for those effectiveness measures were denoted with a (+) sign, whereas those that generated unfavourable/negative outcomes were denoted with a (-) sign. To illustrate, *familiarity*, which is determined as a product/brand related factor affecting explicit memory for movie placements (Table 1), has a (+) sign and thus implies that familiarity with the placed product/brand was evidenced to increase explicit memory for the placed product/brand. On the other hand, the *mini-series and drama* are displayed as TV programme genres under the attitude and acceptability column within Table 2. The (-) sign implies that product placements within these TV programme genres generate unfavourable consumer attitudes (Table 2).

Table 1. Factors Influencing Effectiveness of Movie Product Placements

Factors affecting on….	Explicit memory	Attitude and acceptability	Other effectiveness measures
product/brand related	- familiarity (+)	- ethically charged goods(-) - familiarity (+)	
respective medium related	- first viewing of the movie at the cinema (+) - 2. viewing at home on a large home cinema screen (+)	- humorous scenes (+)	
execution related	- strong plot connection (+) - high prominence (+) - used by main character (+) - audio-visual (+)	- used by main character (+) - multiple simultaneous placements (+) - strong plot connection but less prominent (+) - subtlety (+) - high repetition frequency (-)	- brand saliance: repeated display of high prominent placement (+)
audience charactersitics	- high film involvement (-) - brand consciousness (+) - liking the film (+) - liking film genre (+) - liking director (+)	- gender (males (+)), - movie watching frequency (+) - postive attitudes towards advertisments (+) - appreciating realism and fewer restrictions (+)	- purchase intention: prior brand evaluation (+) - brand saliance: liking the film (+), being high self monitors (+)

In a similar way, in the following tables factors influencing effectiveness of product placements on TV and video game media are presented respectively (Table 2 and Table 3).

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Table 2. Factors Influencing Effectiveness of TV Product Placements

Factors affecting on….	Explicit memory	Attitude and acceptability	Other effectiveness measures
product/ brand related	- location (central to the scene (+))	- ethically charged goods(-) - familiarity (+)	
respective medium related		- TV programme genre (mini-serie and drama (-)) - program liking (prominent and high repetitive placements in liked TV programmes (-))	
execution related	- explicit, non-integrated placements (-) - high plot integration (+) - visual placements (-) - congruency between plot and the product (+)	- passive and implicit placements in information/services programmes (-) - sponsor-programme congruity, - explicit, non-integrated placements (+) - subliminal; prominent placements in favourite programs (-) - subtlety (+) - high repetition levels (-)	- choice: visual placements (+); - brand image: (when repetition frequency of placement is 2 or more (+))
audience characteristics		- gender (males) - positive attitude toward TV programme characters (+)	

Table 3. Factors influencing Effectiveness of Video Game Product Placements

Factors affecting on...	Explicit memory	Attitude and acceptability	Other effectiveness measures
product/ brand related	- product type (symbolic, tool and enhancement) brand origin (local (+))	- ethically charged goods(-)	
respective medium related	- introductory footage to game (+) - game genre (shooting/sport games, role playing/strategic games)		- implicit memory: auditory distraction(-)
execution related	- incongruency between the product and the game content (+)	- strong thematic connection between game and brand (+)	- incidental exposure: high proximity (+)
gamers' characteristics	- experience (+) - game skill (+) - moderate game involvement (+) - pre-existing positive attitude (+)	- positive attitude towards advertising (+) - psychological arousal (+)	- purchase intention:positive attitudes towards placements (+)

Then based on these results, first for movie placements briefly it can be said that practitioners should formulate strong plot connected and at the same time highly prominent product placements to enhance consumer memory of the placed brand. In order to generate favourable consumer attitudes at the same time, practitioners should be cautious of the prominence dose of the placement since its perceived excessiveness may easily prompt negative consumer attitudes. Also, it can be said that practitioners will most probably not regret executing placements that are audio-visual and involve interaction with the main character of the movie.

Second, for TV placements; practitioners can easily attract consumer attention and enhance the recall of placed brands through use of strong plot integrated placements. However, practitioners should take into consideration that attitude towards and preference for the strong plot integrated and prominently placed brands weakens on

TV screen, especially for known ones within favourite programs, with the exception of those placed in an information and services programmes, where, on the contrary, implicit placements are negatively evaluated (Tiwsakul et al., 2005). Moreover, although product placements were found to be most prevalent within mini-series, sitcoms and dramas (LaFerle and Edwards, 2006), it was also evidenced that these TV programme genres were the ones, in which placement of products generated most negative consumer attitudes (d'Astous and Seguin,1998). So, practitioners should devote high attention when planning for product placements within the said TV programme genres.

Third, for video game placements; billboard placement strategy can be advised as an effective one for in-game placements. Incongruence between the game plot and the placed brand together with proximity of the placed brand to the focal area will attract consumer attention and enhance his memory of the placed brand. On the other hand, congruence between the game plot and the placed brand, as well as, psychological arousal during the gameplay are the factors that do not enhance the consumer memory on placed brands but generate positive attitudes. So, practitioners should make a detailed assessment of objectives (enhancing consumer memory and awareness of placed brands vs. positive consumer attitudes towards placed brands) before formulating in-game placements.

Lastly, for all three media, formulation of product placements of ethically charged goods, which are less accepted in relation to neutral ones, should be conducted with high care and vigilance.

Conclusion, Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Studies

This study reviewed and analyzed product placement studies of the last two decades exhaustively. Analysis results contributed to the advancement of knowledge for both academicians and practitioners that are interested in the field of product placement. First for practitioners; the presented extended list of factors that influence product placement effectiveness for all three media vehicles will help practitioners in formulating and executing most striking product placements and thus at the same time help saving the financial resources and time of the whole industry that is wasted every year by ineffective marketing communications campaigns all around the world. For researchers; it was revealed that despite its intensified practice, the literature accumulated on the product placement field during the last two decades is far from providing a complete picture of the phenomenon. Nonetheless, this review study

provided a complete picture and the current state-of-the-art of the product placement literature for researchers by its attempt to analyse the to date accumulated literature on product placement.

However, this study, just as most academic studies, was subject to some limitations, which can be classified as direct and indirect ones. Direct limitations were those limitations that stemmed from this study, while indirect ones were those that stemmed from limitations of reviewed studies.

First, with regard to limitations of this study, it should be noted that only product placement studies on movie, TV and video game media vehicles that were accessed from journals available only on the EBSCOHOST database were reviewed since EBSCOHOST database is the one that was most relevant with the selected subject topic amongst those that the researcher had full access to. Moreover, studies regarding product placement history, definitions, review, and its practice on other than the said media were beyond the scope of this study and thus were excluded. Also only the peer reviewed articles were considered, whereas other forms of published materials such as dissertations, conference proceedings etc. were not included in this review study.

With regard to limitations stemming from reviewed studies, it was revealed that majority of to date conducted studies were either concentrated on particular countries or on investigating effects on particular measures.

First, product placement studies on all three media used mostly US based data (n=46, 63%). Only 17.8% (n=13) and 13.7% (n=10) of the reviewed studies were conducted in European countries and rest of the world (e.g. India, Australia, and China) respectively, while 5.4 % (n=4) of the studies were comparing product placement practices in US with other countries (e.g. New Zealand, Belgium) (see Table 4). Although it can be noted that European interest to product placement research, in particular on TV medium, has been on rise, still there is a huge gap in the placement literature regarding its practice in countries other than US. Then, future studies that will concentrate on this issue will also contribute to the academic literature largely.

Table 4. Locations of the Reviewed Product Placement Studies

Location of the Reviewed Studies	US	Europe	Rest of the World	US vs Other Countries
Number/percentage of studies conducted in this location out of 73 reviewed studies	n=46 63%	n= 13 17.8%	n=10 13.7%	n=4 5.4 %

Second, majority of studies, across all three media vehicles were concentrated on tapping product placement effectiveness through either explicit memory related measures, namely recall and recognition, or consumer attitude. Studies to date on effects of product placements on behavioural outcomes, (e.g. purchase intention, preferences), and attention are extremely scarce and inconclusive. Also the effects of demographics, such as age and level of education, were rarely taken into consideration. Therefore, there is a need for academic studies that will investigate effects of product placements on measures other than memory and attitude related ones, as well as, for those that will focus on demographic characteristics and reveal the impact of product placements on different groups in the society.

In addition, especially those studies that had investigated product placement effectiveness, performed experiments as the research methodology and used students as their samples. However, the application of experimental methodology and mainly to student samples has some general limitations that might have influenced the findings. First of all, the artificial setting usually results in more attention to the stimuli, which in turn can generate higher recall and recognition rates, as well as, different behaviours (Van Reijmersdal et al., 2007). Second, the student samples involved mostly young and highly educated respondents, who might have been better at noticing product placements and understanding their commercial intents than less educated ones. Hence, the said methodology might have biased findings. Therefore, future studies which employ a mix of different methods to samples that are more representative of the product placement audience can provide additional insights into brand placement effects.

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[i] Product placement in motion pictures is as old as the motion picture industry itself. Both events were generated by the Lumière brothers in the mid-1890s (Karrh, 1998; Newell et al., 2006; Galician and Bourdeau, 2004; Avery and Ferraro, 2000; Hudson and Hudson, 2006; Dens et al., 2013). The Lumière brothers exhibited their newly invented projected motion pictures to the first paying audience ever in the basement lounge of the Grand Café in Paris on December 28, 1895. This event is credited as the world's first public film screening and heralded the birth of the film industry (Pearson, 1996). A few months later, in the spring of 1896, the Lumière brothers conducted an arrangement with the UK soap producer Lever Brothers (today's giant multinational company, Unilever) that would constitute the first prototype of product placement that displayed a Lever Brothers leading product, *"Sunlight Soap"*, in a Lumière brothers' film.

[ii] DVRs, also known as time-shifting devices, include a hard drive that enables the audience to record their favorite programs for playback at any time. The devices can also fast forward through traditional commercials.

[iii] According to this widely cited model by Friested and Wright (1995), if consumers perceive that advertising messages have the intent to affect their judgement, then they may generate negative attitudes towards those commercials.

[iv] Video game term denotes all game genres including, computer and on-line games since most of the time these terms were used interchangeably in the product placement literature (Winkler, 2006; Nelson, 2002; Yang et al., 2006).

[v] Two key studies that were not published in refereed academic journals but nonetheless were reviewed in order to provide a complete picture of the "Practitioners' view on movie placements" research theme (see page 7). The said studies were proceeding papers by Karrh (1995), Pardun and McKee (1996).

[vi] Although its practice in alternative media (those other than movies, TV programmes and games) is not scarce, academic studies that focus on product placements in the said media are extremely rare. To illustrate, with regard to placements in novels, only one study was found in which Nelson (2004) examined the product placement practice within the novel named "The Bulgari Connection".

[vii] Brand salience is also considered among memory-related measures since it involves the recognition of a brand in relation to other brands in that product category.

[viii] Plot connection of placements refers to the degree to which the brand/product is integrated into the plot of the story (Russell, 1998).

[ix] In high prominent placements the product is made conspicuous either through its size, position on the screen or centrality to the plot, integration to the plot, number of mentions, and/or duration on the screen (Gupta and Lord, 1998).

[x] Entertainment Resources and Marketing Association is a leading product placement industry group.

[xi] Tool products are high-utility but low price products such as food and fuel, whereas, symbolic products are high price but low utility such as jewellery and enhancement products are high price and high utility such as white electronic goods (Yang and Wang, 2008).

[xii] Goal in a videogame describes the milestone that players attempt to achieve. For example, in a shooting game, the goal may be rescuing hostages whereas feedback is a kind of reinforcement. If some predetermined desirable or undesirable player behaviours are demonstrated, a reward or punishment is provided for positive or negative feedback. Operators, on the other hand, indicate those instruments, such as knife, cape, and magic that players can apply to achieve their objectives (Yang and Wang, 2008).