

A Compendium of Research on the Impact of Product Placement on Consumer Buying Behaviour

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Abstract. Product placement has grown in popularity as an alternative to television advertising. Product placements are becoming more common, and their forms are so diverse that they can be seen in a wide range of contexts, including film and television dramas, variety shows, and even games. In recent years, TV dramas have become immensely popular among audiences as a type of endless drama. Some of the most popular TV shows in recent years have also inspired advertisers to consider web series as a promotional channel: web series product placements are cheap cost and high yield. Researchers have found that product placements can influence consumer decision-making to a certain extent, however, there is a lack of a unified explanation of the formation mechanisms behind them and the extent of their influence. As a result, the focus of this essay is on the relationship between product placements and consumer purchase behavior. This essay chooses product placements in TV dramas as the research object, analyzes and researches the effect of product placements on influencing consumers' decision-making from the viewers' cognitive, psychological, and behavioral perspectives, and makes recommendations for improving product placements based on the findings. The essay discovered that the use of product placements' scenes, as well as the high match between advertisements and contents, have a significant impact on consumers' purchasing behaviors; Product placements influence consumers' brand recognition, attitude, purchase intention, and consumption psychology to stimulate consumers' desire to purchase.

Keywords: Product placements; consumers; buying behaviour; marketing design.

1. Introduction

Since the first television commercial aired in 1941, video advertisements have been the major means for brands to promote their products on television. Traditional advertising's efficiency has been called into doubt due to oversaturation and the growing dissatisfaction of viewers who are interrupted by advertisements. As a result, product placement has become a popular method of advertising in recent years as an alternative to television advertising. Implantable advertising is a type of advertising method in which items are integrated into cinema and television, variety shows, games, and so on, leaving a profound impact on the audience and having a subtle publicity effect to achieve the marketing goal [1]. Because audiences are naturally resistant to commercials, including goods in various types of entertainment is frequently far more effective than hard-selling. Product placements have recently gained favor among domestic and foreign enterprises as a new type of marketing tool because they can be created according to different scenes and types of commodities, and cleverly integrate commodity information into entertainment media, and are widely used in TV dramas, short videos, novels, and other communication media. It is gradually replacing traditional TV advertisements and becoming the advertising industry's backbone. With the efficient and rapid development of product placement, advertisers' businesses have clearly realized the need to employ implantable advertisement to carry out effective marketing in order to boost brand effect and strengthen consumers' purchasing behavior. The explosive development of product placement in the advertising world has led to the academic field, and research on this subject has been relatively rich

in recent years. In terms of theoretical aspects, existing studies have explored and investigated the conceptualisation and clarification of product placement, the effect of marketing communication on a single or multiple entertainment media, the degree of fit with communication media and the impact on brand effect and consumer purchase intention [2-4].

To conduct the research, this essay uses the literature review method, which then summarizes the four types of influence in product placement: brand awareness, brand attitude, buying behaviour and consumer psychology, followed by a discussion of the high degree of product integration in film and television works, the use of products in programs showing live scenes and examples. Based on existing research, this research discusses current portable advertising for key marketing strategies, such as integrating short videos. Finally, this research describes the remaining research gaps and makes recommendations for the development of product placement based on the body of existing research.

2. The Concept and Characteristics of Product Placement

Product placement has been defined as the deliberate insertion of a product into a movie or television program and its integration into the plot or content in order to display a brand identification alongside the product by Cockindale David, Neil Michael, and Bellman Stephen [2]. This definition shows that product placement arouses the visual and auditory interest of consumers in a variety of ways, in particular through sounds, texts and scenes that stimulate consumers' desire to buy and trigger consumption behaviour. Product placement also differs significantly from traditional advertising in the way it is placed, moving from traditional advertising based on the intelligent and stealthy integration of advertising product placements in film and television scenes to product placement. Product placement is placed in various film and television scenes, such as dialogue scenes in stories, camera backgrounds and scenes in entertainment shows, which can not only weaken the forced rigidity of the brand implant but also achieve the purpose of the company's advertising. By placing precisely the right advertising, product placement can reduce consumer rejection, stimulating memory and reinforcing the impression of the brand and product. Additionally, because of their highly adaptive and covert character, product placement is also referred to as "soft advertisement," "recessive advertisement," or "embedded advertisement" [5].

3. Impact of Product Placement on Consumers

3.1. Impact on Consumer's Brand Perception

Product placements can raise brand awareness. The degree of consumer knowledge of a brand is referred to as brand awareness. According to consumer purchasing behavior studies, when customers buy products at the same price, they will prefer the brand with better awareness based on word of mouth. Brand recognition can be raised through product placements in films and television shows, as well as through powerful marketing on social media platforms. The length of advertisements embedded in TV shows has a substantial impact on viewers' brand knowledge, memory, and purchase intentions; the longer the broadcast time, the more likely viewers are to remember and acquire the brand. The more significant the product placements are, the higher the brand awareness among consumers. Woodruff was the first to propose a connection between brand perception and customer perception, concluding that brand perception can increase consumers' perceptions of product quality, service, and added value. The greater the consumers' perception of product quality and value, the greater their inclination to spend, which leads to purchasing behavior. The level of significance of product placements has a positive impact on the level of brand awareness among consumers. The more significant the product placements are, the higher the level of brand recognition of consumers. For example, the brands of clothing sponsors of variety shows are always noticed and remembered by viewers [6].

3.2. Impact on Consumer's Brand Attitudes

Product placement stimulates positive and negative consumer attitudes toward the brand. Using a simulation experiment, Zhou Nan and Wang Dianwen studied the effects of brand awareness and the relevance of product placement on consumer attitudes towards the brand [7]. The importance of product placement is reflected in both temporal dimensions (such as the duration of the ad) and spatial dimensions (such as the size of the ad). Product placement makes the most sense in terms of both temporal dimensions and space dimensions [7]. In product placement, consumers' attitudinal evaluation of the implantable brand follows an inverted U-shaped trajectory that increases and then decreases as the attention paid to the implantable ad increases in temporal dimensions and spatial dimensions [7]. In addition, the degree of conformity between the product placement and the display scene and the degree of connection with the planted plot affect the degree of prominence of the product placement brand through the fluidity with which consumers receive information about the brand's product, which in turn affects consumer attitudes towards the brand and ultimately consumer purchase behavior [7]. The easier it is for consumers to receive product information, the greater the positive mediating effect of product placement, the higher the positive evaluation of consumers' attitudes towards the brand, the more consumers' purchasing behaviour can be encouraged; conversely, the negative mediating effect of implant advertising is noticeable. The effect inhibits consumer purchasing behaviour.

3.3. Impact on Consumer's Purchase Intentions

The influence of product placement on consumers' willingness to buy is mainly based on four important factors: consumers' personal characteristics, the characteristics of the product, the value perceived by consumers and the purchase context [8]. In psychological terms, "motivation" is defined as the probability that people will adopt a certain behaviour, which is a kind of subjective disposition. Motivation plays a decisive role in consumer purchase behaviour, because once consumers are motivated to buy, purchase behaviour occurs. Firstly, individual differences between consumers, such as age, income and education, influence their willingness to buy [8]. Product characteristics include external cues and internal cues. External cues include colour, label, price and brand, while internal cues include texture, ingredients and health [8]. The consumer's perceived value is their assessment of the product, i.e. whether the price they pay for the product is balanced against what they get [8]. Fourthly, the design, environment and atmosphere of the shop, such as smells and music, are also part of the consumer context [8]. Through the above four factors, Product placement can often promote consumers' willingness to buy in the following ways. For example, retailers can formulate marketing strategies tailored to different consumer groups and provide consumers with information such as the features, functions and benefits of products and services to help them understand whether the products meet their needs and expectations. UI designers can also display other people's positive reviews of products and services on the product homepage to create a sense of trust and increase consumers' desire to buy. Shopping center managers are improving the visual impact and convenience of shopping centers and other places of consumption to provide a more pleasant environment for consumers.

3.4. Mechanisms of Influence on Consumer's Psychology

The mechanism of influence of product placement on consumer psychology can be divided into five aspects: emotional influence, the halo effect, the exploitation of psychological gaps, the cultural aspects of influence and the appearance of reverse psychology. A researcher called Zhang Chunqing has studied the problems and solutions of advertising from the point of view of viewer reactions and audience psychology in film and television works [9]. First, product placement takes advantage of the high credibility and wide dissemination of film and television works to launch a psychological attack on the audience [9]. Second, Product placement fused with film and television make it easy for the audience to maximise the benefits of the emotional appeal and take ownership of the play's plot [9]. Third, the attitude and style of the advertising responds to the plot of the film, reinforces the

values and meaning of the brand and gives consumers a strong sense of identity and belonging to the brand [9]. For example, the glamour of the BMW cars in the James Bond series matches the adventurous spirit of the agent in the film [9]. Fourth, when curious viewers watch films and TV series, the main line of the films and TV series will make the audience think about the changes and ups and downs of the plot, and add product placement to the white parts of the plot of the films and TV series to make the audience imagine, and create a clearer perception of the products in the product placement [9]. In the context of product placement, cultural planting can bring consumers closer to the corporate culture of the planted brand, psychologically induce consumer perceptions of the brand and influence consumer behavior [9]. Fifth, product placement is readily accepted by the public because of its secrecy, but consumers are put off when the number of implants is too high, the depiction of implants is too direct, the implant scenes are stereotyped and rigid, or the aesthetics of the implants leave something to be desired [9].

4. Marketing Design Elements of Product Placement

4.1. Directly Show the Product Usage Scenarios

Product placement often stimulates consumers' desire to buy by directly showing scenes of the product being used. According to Xu Mengya's research on the communication effect of product placement in the TV series "Song of Joy", product placement can increase consumers' sense of reality and desire to buy by showing scenes of product use, creating a relationship with the brand, improve brand image and influence consumers' buying behavior [10]. By showing scenes of product and service use, consumers can experience the convenience and comfort provided by products and services in an immersive environment, which easily triggers the desire to buy. For example, the soap opera "The Smile of My Heart" not only reminded viewers of the Pullman brand, but also immersed them in the experience by showcasing the excellent environment and services of Pullman Samnaerong Bay, which produced excellent promotional effects. In addition, by frequently showing how to use the products and services in films and soap operas, it is possible to encourage consumers to become familiar with the products and services and adopt consumer habits, and cultivate their loyalty and purchasing habits [10]. In variety programmes, particularly life variety programmes, product placement is more common. According to the summary of Han's research on "Tokyo Life4", scene implants mainly present the brand as a backdrop to the programme's narrative scenes, often with a close-up lasting only a few seconds, if at all [11]. For example, in the kitchen of Mushroom House, almost all the kitchen utensils bear the logo of each brand. While the guests are cooking, these brand logos are a natural part of the scene. This creates a perfect partnership between the show's guests and the brand, maximising the immersion and integration effect for the viewer. In short, showing the product in action is one of the most powerful and effective marketing design elements in almost any product placement.

4.2. Integration with Film and Television

Product placement incorporates associations with cinema and television to increase consumer desire and stimulate buying behaviour. In 2023, using the case study method of product placement represented by Audi vehicles in the "Avengers" film series, Guo Yaolan concluded that the film and television industry and the product placement industry are closely related to each other, and that the development of the two complements each other and has a positive impact on the development of the other's industry [12].

In recent years, advertisers have become increasingly interested in the interactivity and integration of entertainment media such as films, dramas and variety programmes, and are placing their ads in specific entertainment scenes. When the prominence of the brand implanted in film or television reaches the optimum value, it is affected by the fluidity of the audience's perceptual information processing, so as not to interfere with consumers' entertainment or provoke their disgust, and certain scenes can be used so that consumers easily understand and retain information about the advertised

products [7]. In addition, the popularity of entertainment media such as films, soap operas and talk shows also helps to increase brand awareness, establish brand effectiveness and reinforce consumers' sense of brand reality. Taking Yi Li's An Muxi yoghurt brand as an example, the company incorporated advertisements for the yoghurt into the popular variety show "Running Man", exploiting the excitement of the show itself to increase awareness of the An Muxi brand, and the unique advertising slogan "thick and very delicious" has been deeply embedded in people's minds. The distinctive slogan "thick and delicious" has been deeply ingrained in people's minds, and consumers naturally associate the positive image of "Running Man" with An Muxi yoghurt. Brand reputation and the reputation of film and television are symbiotic, the good reputation of film and television is perfectly suited to specific scenes to enhance the image of the brand, product placement and film and television play a role in promoting brand reputation, and brand awareness and product understanding play an important role in promoting consumer buying behaviour.

4.3. Integration with Short Videos

Short video has a close relationship with advertising goods as one of the primary fields of the new marketing mode in today's day. With the help of modern Internet technologies and social media platforms, short video has reached unparalleled heights, with over 600 million daily active users. Because of the high volume of traffic, the short video platform has evolved into an advertising gathering place for advertisers and brands, making it an excellent arena for product placement. The efficient combination of short films with Product placements can boost not only the quality and liquidity of short video works, but also the influence of high-quality companies. Short-video social media represented by TikTok and Kuaishou have a large number of active users, with the advantages of large platform traffic and more focused user attention. Advertisements may be implanted more efficiently in these short video platforms, and the dissemination effect and speed of dissemination are superior to traditional media. Short videos and advertisements spread "virally" as a result of big data push, which is also a major feature of short video product placement. Furthermore, advertising can make precise delivery based on short videos. Advertisers can select acceptable bloggers for collaboration based on their own product characteristics [13]. For example, the majority of beauty bloggers' audiences are female, and they are groups that frequently wear and like make-up. In this regard, beauty products, toiletries, and other products can utilize these self-media accounts to product placement, correctly situating the user groups, concealing the marketing, and considerably improving the promotion effect. Furthermore, the cost of product placements into short movies is relatively minimal. Short videos have the advantage of being less expensive to produce than TV advertising. The highlight of short videos is quick, fast, new, and odd, with only a small number of actors and simple props to complete. Advertisers can entirely pay the video maker based on the number of views, likes, or even sales of the work, which can substantially condense the capital investment of advertisement pushing and save more money. As a result, product placements in short videos are a good option for advertisers.

5. Conclusion

The discussion of domestic and foreign studies on the effect of product placement on consumer purchasing behavior can be combined to come to the following findings. Compared to traditional advertising with its unique and flexible implant application, product placement is ubiquitous in people's lives today, combines perfectly with all kinds of media and can have a greater influence on consumer purchasing behaviour, starting from factors such as cognitive attitudes and consumer psychology towards the brand to promote consumer purchasing behaviour. It is also easier to influence consumer purchasing behaviour by using factors such as cognitive attitudes and consumer psychology to influence consumers' willingness to buy. Authors can see that product placement is undoubtedly a highly influential type of advertising strategy, but current research still has some weaknesses and problems that need to be studied in more detail. Firstly, current research is mainly

based on observations and descriptions, and there is a lack of empirical studies on the effectiveness of product placement. Some studies attempt to capture consumer reactions through questionnaires, but it is difficult to accurately capture true consumer feelings and behaviours through these methods. Secondly, current product placement is generally direct, harsh and overly severe, which can not only make viewers feel disgusted, but also damage the brand's image. In addition, there is no unified, scientific method for assessing the effectiveness of product placement. In order to solve the above-mentioned problems, future research should pay more attention to the innovation and creativity of advertising and explore more creative and attractive implant methods, as well as more comprehensive, objective and scientific evaluation methods, in order to better measure the real effect of product placement, attract consumers' attention and increase their desire to buy. With the development of new technologies such as digitisation and social media, the forms and channels of communication for product placement will diversify. Paying attention to the development and application of new technologies and exploring how to use them to improve the effectiveness and impact of product placement will also be something that product placement will need to pay attention to in the future.

In conclusion, it is of great practical significance and theoretical value to study the influence of implanted advertisements on consumer buying behaviour. This study aims to better understand the changes in consumer psychology and behaviour, and to provide advertisers with more accurate marketing strategies so as to improve the effect and revenue of advertising. Future research on the impact of implanted advertisements on consumers' needs to expand the scope of research, strengthen quantitative research, study consumer psychology and behaviour in depth, consider the diversity of influencing factors, and strengthen practical guidance to promote the development and innovation in the field of marketing.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed alphabetical order.

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