The Effective Product Placement: 
Finding Appropriate Methods and Contexts 
for Higher Brand Salience

SOONKWAN HONG, YONG JIAN WANG, 
AND GILBERTO DE LOS SANTOS

Notwithstanding the little understanding on the product placement in movies, practitioners have misbelieved that this marketing activity eventually generates favorable attitudes toward their products/brands exposed in movies; likewise, research on product placement tends to perpetuate the practicality of the practice by using improper measures for the effectiveness of product placement. By designing a novel experiment and creating a measure for brand salience as an outcome of product placement, this article entails distinct research findings. In order to achieve a higher brand salience, product placements need to be either demonstrative or placed in negative context. Future research may contribute further by inventing an experiment design enabling researchers to grasp the interaction effects of different factors addressed in the study.

KEYWORDS Brand salience, demonstration, experimental design, integration, movies, product placement

Soonkwan Hong is a PhD student in Marketing, College of Business Administration, University of Texas-Pan American, 1201 West University Drive, Edinburg, TX 78539 USA (E-mail: shong@utpa.edu). Yong Jian Wang (PhD, University of Texas-Pan American) is an Assistant Professor of Marketing, Ohio University, College of Business, Copeland Hall, Athens, OH 45701 USA (E-mail: wangy@ohio.edu). Gilberto De Los Santos (PhD, University of Texas at Austin) is a Professor of Marketing, University of Texas-Pan American, College of Business Administration, University of Texas-Pan American, 1201 West University Drive, Edinburg, TX 78539 (E-mail: gdelossanto@utpa.edu).
INTRODUCTION

A movie without any brand or product present is seldom seen today. Practically, moviemakers acquire financial sponsorship from businesses by adding various types of advertisements for the businesses (e.g., Lubbers and Adams, 2004). Since the sponsors know the moviemakers’ need for financial assistance, they try to take advantage of the opportunity to expose their products and services to people in cinemas, given the cost effectiveness of the product placement with respect to brand exposure (Howard-Williams, 1993; Steorz, 1987; Vollmers and Mizerski, 1994). Ever since E.T. was fascinated by Hershey’s Reese’s Pieces, the product placement has been deemed one of the most effective and efficient methods of promotion due to its sales increasing potential, as proven by many movies (Galician, 2004; Lehu, 2007; Reed, 1989; Russell, 1998, 2002).

Balasubramanian (1994, p. 31) defined product placement as a “paid product message aimed at influencing movie (or television) audiences via the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into a movie (or television program).” d’Astous and Chartier (2000, p. 31) also defined product placement as “the inclusion of a product, a brand name, or the name of a firm in a movie or in a television program for promotional purposes.” In accordance with Balasubramanian’s (1994) statement, Gupta and Gould (1997) also mentioned that product placement is an incorporation of brands in movies for financial and/or other promotional advantages. Nonetheless, the seeming effectiveness of product placement has not been fully evaluated. It is owing to the fact that research has been centered on the audiences’ attitudes towards product placement itself (e.g., Gupta and Gould, 1997; Nebenzahl and Secunda, 1993; Ong and Meri, 1994; Tiwsakul, Hackley, and Szmigin, 2005), rather than the attitudes toward the products or brands, which is the ultimate goal marketers seek.

Some of the empirical studies dealing with properties in product placement have endeavored to grasp the impact of culture and gender on product placement. Karrh, Frith, and Callison (2001) contrasted American with Singapore audiences and pointed out that the two different cultures affected the perception of product placement in the movies. Americans have shown their greater acceptance of product placement than do the Chinese (McKechnie and Zhou, 2003). Country (culture) effects, ethical issues of the products, and individual differences were empirically investigated in Gould, Gupta, and Grabner-Krauter’s (2000) study, which seems to be the genesis of product placement studies in multinational contexts. Gould et al. (2000) and Gupta and Gould (1997) both found that ethically charged products deteriorated the audiences’ attitudes toward product placement. Albeit the findings are somewhat helpful to marketers, these findings are not conclusive. Their research findings associated with ethics and individual differences may be
true, but the studies have not scrutinized the conditions for desirable outcomes of product placement. As a result, these studies do not contribute much to the understanding of the critical matters pertaining to the effectiveness of product placement. A specific experimental setting covering basic considerations, which may be the factors for successful product placement practice, will be necessary.

The conventional measure of the effectiveness of product placement is another point to ponder. Most studies examining the effectiveness of product placement have been measuring brand recall and/or recognition as the results of product placement (e.g., Babin and Carder, 1996a; Gupta and Lord, 1998; Karrh, 1994; Ong and Meri, 1994; Saberwah, Pokrywczynski, and Griffin, 1994; Tiwsakul et al., 2005). If this practice is implemented in order to initiate market awareness of a new product or brand, recall and/or recognition may be an adequate measure. Nevertheless, it is quite reasonable to assume that most sponsors of product placement are more likely to place well-known products within the movies. This is not only because they are able to afford the financial expense for product placement, but also because they are reluctant to take the risk of not being perceived by audiences who can hardly notice the unfamiliar products or brands in movies when they are totally engaged in viewing the movie.

Likewise, audiences’ attitudes toward the brand/product or purchase intention as dependent variables are also subject to criticism (e.g., Babin and Carder, 1996b; DeLorme, Leonard, and Zimmer, 1994; Ong and Meri, 1994). The main disapproval for using the measures is the difficulty to measure the exact effect of product placement on consumers’ attitudes or purchase intentions. For the precise and theoretically sound measures, the previous states of consumers’ attitudes (specifically behavioral intentions) should be calibrated, but research using attitude or purchase intention measures has failed to consider this fact. Moreover, consumers’ instant self-reported response to the questions about their attitudes or purchase intentions may or may not be substantiated.

Recognizing the paucity of empirical studies revealing the underemphasized aspects of product placement, this study aims to shed light on the following research questions. First, does the demonstration of a product, in fact, augment the effectiveness of the product placement? Second, how do audiences respond to well-integrated/poorly integrated product placement? Third, does the context of the movie affect the effectiveness of product placement? Last, yet most important, what would be the appropriate measures for the effectiveness of product placement? In the following sections, each factor will be addressed in order to converge upon formal hypotheses based on literature support. Afterwards, the experimental research will be executed in response to the research questions and hypotheses. In-depth discussions about the results and implications will be addressed for further contributions to the literature on product placement.
Brand Salience

Brand salience refers to “. . . the order in which brands come to mind. It refers not to what consumers think about brands but to which ones they think about” (Miller and Berry, 1998, p. 78). This concept is commonly deemed to have the same characteristics as top-of-mind awareness and is thus measured by utilizing the rank-ordered list of brands (Johnstone and Dodd, 2000; Miller and Berry, 1998). Alba and Chattopadhyay (1986, p. 363) defined brand salience as “…the prominence or level of activation of a brand in memory.” Therefore, brand salience is closely related to the arousal aspect—the level of activation associated with an emotional response—in the affective PAD (pleasure, arousal, and dominance) dimensions (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). If the subliminal stimuli of product placement in the movies are well embedded in the audience’s subconsciousness, the memory of the brand will be activated, leading to the expected increase in brand salience.

Attitude measures were frequently used in past research (e.g., d’Astous and Seguin, 1999; DeLorme et al., 1994; Rungpaka, Hackley, and Szmiggin, 2005). Attitude measure involves the combination of cognitive and affective statements in response to persuasive communications (Bagozzi, 1992), while brand salience measure involves the activation level in the affective responses to stimuli (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Compared to the use of attitude measures, there are three distinct reasons for using brand salience for gauging the effectiveness of product placement. First, this measure of the effectiveness of product placement is less biased in terms of the subjects’ prior attitudes toward the brand and product. Although the prior attitudes can be considered as a covariate within the analysis in order to precisely measure the influence of product placement on the present attitudes, there are too many superfluous variables still affecting the current attitude toward the product. Second, subjects who have not developed their attitudes toward the brand or product do not have to make up their responses instantly to the attitude measures. Third, attitude measures might be spurious to a certain extent because of the threat of social desirability. When the subjects are asked to reveal their virtual attitudes, they may hide their real impressions or inflate the numbers on the scale. On the contrary, if the subjects are asked to merely list brands in a product category in the order they come to their memories, they would not need to be apprehensive about their answers to be shown to researchers.

The utilization of brand salience for the measure of the effectiveness of product placement can also be rationalized by the sales-enhancing impact of brand salience. Even though attitudes may also lead to sales, the process is not as direct. Studies have verified the path of attitude-purchase intention
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(e.g., Ko, Cho, and Roberts, 2005; Sinclair and Irani, 2005). However, it is also not clear that purchase intention is a determinant of sales increase. In addition, even if a positive attitude is more likely to result in purchase intention, consumers may still have to struggle with many other different brands, unless the attitude is equivalent to brand salience.

A salient brand that is recalled without aid is more likely to be in the consideration set and, therefore, to be purchased (Miller and Georgiou, 1996; Sutherland and Galloway, 1981). Hence, brand salience is closely associated with actual purchase. It was found that brand salience is a signal for the popularity of a brand, which influences consumers in their decision to purchase a product (Sutherland and Galloway, 1981; Sutherland and Sylvester, 2000). Salience of a brand also hinders the unaided recall of other brands that can be considered as part of the evoked set (Alba and Chattopadhyay, 1986). Consequently, brand salience not only solves the difficulties of measuring the core effect of product placement, it also endows marketers with the possibility of sales prediction.

Product Placement and Brand Salience

As mentioned above, brand salience is closely related to the level of activation in the memory. Higher level of attention in response to the exposure of stimuli can lead to a higher level of activation in the memory (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Mowen and Minor, 2001). In various hierarchy of effects models for advertising effectiveness, attention is identified as the first stage in which stimuli receivers respond to the advertising (e.g., DeVoe 1956; Lavidge and Steiner, 1961). Also, consumers’ involvement in the situation significantly influences their patterns of affective response (Coulter, Price and Feick, 2003; Mowen and Minor, 2001; Zaichkowsky, 1985). Accordingly, higher involvement in the situation will lead to higher activation. In addition, facilitating cognitive information processing can lead to easier affective change, including activation (Cacioppo and Petty, 1984; Mowen and Minor, 2001). According to the definition of product placement (e.g., d’Astous and Chartier, 2000; Gupta and Gould, 1997), product placement is the advertising in movies and involves the display of the product or brand to deliver information or stimuli to consumers. Therefore, in the context of product placement in movies, the ways the products deliver direct stimuli to facilitate the audience’s cognitive information processing and to attract the audience’s attention will influence the audience’s activation level, which involves the brand salience in measuring advertising effectiveness.

Demonstration

Given scarce literature, we use the term demonstrative product placement in describing the situation in which a product in movies explicitly conveys
the product’s superiority in terms of its durability, performance, and specifications. On the contrary, non-demonstrative product placement does not show the superiority of the products. There are movie scenes containing demonstrative product messages that present potential benefits of the product to audiences. For example, a cellular phone with high-tech features may appear in a movie, and an actor or actress uses the phone for any sophisticated tasks, such as downloading files and taking a high-resolution video clip. The actor or actress does not necessarily need to mention directly about the product’s supremacy; rather, he or she just uses it in the context. Yet, it is still a demonstration without the brand name spoken out.

There have been no previous research efforts to address the advantages and disadvantages of demonstration. Studies have mainly dealt with the effects of implicit/explicit exposure of product in movies on the audience’s attitude (e.g., d’Astous and Seguin, 1999; DeLorme et al., 1994; Rungpaka et al., 2005). An explicit product placement is similar to, yet still different from, demonstrative product placement where the product is only exposed explicitly, without showing the superiority (DeLorme et al., 1994). The findings are somewhat mixed because of the ethical and emotional dilemmas posed by the concept of implicitness/explicitness. DeLorme et al. (1994) found that respondents showed positive attitudes toward implicit placement; however, they started to feel offended when the brand was excessively exposed in the movie. However, audiences may also show positive attitude toward explicit and disproportionate exposure of a product. In another study, d’Astous and Seguin (1999) found that implicit product placements can lead to negative consumer ethical reactions. In other words, consumers think that implicit product placement is undesirable.

Given the differences between brand salience and attitude toward the brand, the effects of demonstration in product placement on brand salience are different from those on attitudes toward the brand. As mentioned above, facilitating cognitive information processing can foster activation in the memory. Past research found that the explicitness of a product placement increases the possibilities of demonstrating the features and advantages of the products in movies (Rungpaka et al., 2005). These stimuli about the product characteristics can provide direct information to facilitate consumers’ cognitive information processing, and reduce the effort in acquiring, recalling, and retrieving relevant information. As compared to non-demonstrative product placement, demonstrative product placement is more likely to facilitate consumers’ cognitive information processing on a brand, leading to higher brand salience (i.e., activation) in the next stage. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

**H1:** Demonstrative product placement will lead to higher brand salience than will non-demonstrative product placement.
Integration

Well-integrated product placement refers to the situation in which a product in movies perfectly fits the scenery, narrative, historic, and communicative environment in the movies (d’Astous and Seguin, 1999). On the contrary, poorly integrated product placement makes the audience feel that the product is artificially inserted for advertising purposes. When a product appears in a movie without any connection to the rest of the scene, context, or actor, the audience may feel that the appearance is inappropriate and unnatural. The degree of integration of the product affects consumers’ evaluations of the product placement in movies, as well as the brand recall. For example, d’Astous and Seguin (1999) noted that consumers showed positive evaluations of the product placement when the product placement is well integrated with the movie. d’Astous and Chartier (2000) extended their research to brand recall. Their results suggested that, while consumers appreciated the integration of product placements in movies, they showed a lower level of brand recall and recognition of well-integrated brands. However, opposite findings were found. In a previous qualitative study conducted by DeLorme and Reid (1999) investigating moviegoers’ interpretations of product placements in movies, the brands located in scenes that made the situation more realistic deeply pleased consumers. In addition, these brands were more likely to remain in consumers’ memory. DeLorme and Reid’s (1999) findings revealed that the product placement is effective in memory enhancing when the product placement is well integrated into the movies.

In the current study, brand salience (i.e., level of activation in memory) measures a distinctively different concept from brand evaluation (i.e., knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes) or brand recall (i.e., information retrieval from long-term to short-term memory). As mentioned above, higher level of attention on the advertised stimuli leads to higher level of activation in the memory. Although well-integrated product placement may lead to higher valence in the affective state, products that are set in a poorly integrated product placement condition are more likely to be prominent in the visual context. Gupta and Lord (1998) found that the prominence of a product in a movie setting positively affected brand recall. The prominence of a product display also showed a positive impact on brand recognition in a following study conducted by d’Astous and Chartier’s (2000). Similarly, poorly integrated product placement features the prominence of the product and offers noticeable stimuli to audiences, enhancing their attention to such stimuli. Accordingly, the likelihood that consumers’ activation in memory resulted from the attention is higher in poorly integrated product placement than in well-integrated product placement. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

**H2:** Poorly integrated product placement will lead to higher brand salience than will well-integrated product placement.
Context

In the context of cognitive judgment of advertising stimuli, context effect and contrast effect in information processing have been intensively investigated (e.g., Martin, 1986; Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1997). Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1997) illustrated that consumers' evaluation of products is influenced by contextual cues in a communication or advertising scenario. For example, negative advertising context causes negative evaluation of the product. In the movies, if a scoundrel using a particular brand keeps committing sequential crimes, or a brand is presented in negative venues, audiences might store, consciously or unconsciously, negative feelings toward the brand. Russell (1998) proposed the concept of affective transfer. His main argument is that negative stimuli tend to strengthen the negative affective transfer. That is to say, consumers tend to pair the negative stimuli with the product itself. Richmond (2000) addressed the influence of positive/negative cues on the brand image in product placement. The positive or negative contextual scenes that consumers have seen can be cues that enhance or depreciate the brand image. However, contrast effect will occur when the contextual influence is perceived as inappropriate and consumers make efforts to counterbalance the context effect (Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1997). For example, positive advertising context causes negative evaluation of the product.

Based on the literature above, positive versus negative contexts in product placement may well explain brand evaluation, but have not provided enough explanation of brand salience. Past research showed that involvement significantly influences consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses in association with memory, attention, information search and processing, satisfaction, and commitment (e.g., Coulter et al., 2003; Eroglu, Machleit, and Davis, 2001; Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1987). Consumers with higher involvement tend to have higher attention on information provided in the given communicative environment and a higher effort to acquire relevant unknown information (Celsi and Olson, 1988). On the contrary, when consumers have lower involvement, they are more concerned about hedonic features (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Thus, if other conditions are equal, higher involvement will lead to higher activation. The involvement level is influenced by the characteristics of the communication and characteristics of the situation (Mowen and Minor, 2001). Consumers' involvement level is more likely to increase when negative communications, such as fear or risk, are deployed, resulting in higher arousal (Mowen and Minor, 2001). Accordingly, product placement in a negative context will create higher involvement, which, in turn, will lead to higher brand salience. Thus, the following extract is proposed.
**H3:** *Product placement in a negative context will experience higher brand salience than will a product placement in a positive context.*

**METHODOLOGY**

**Samples**

The experiments were conducted in classroom settings at a university located in a Southwest region. Undergraduate students participated in the experiments. These subjects were divided into two groups. Each group watched different clips corresponding to the hypothetical classification of the clips (demonstration/non-demonstration, well-integrated/poorly integrated product placement, and positive/negative context). Student sample may be appropriate because homogeneity in subjects’ characteristics is desirable when testing theoretical hypotheses (Sternthal, Tybout, and Calder, 1994). Several questionnaires were not used for the study due to the insufficient number of brands per each product category.

**Brand Salience Measure**

Since there is no established brand salience measure that can be utilized for a group comparison, a novel method was invented as follows. One week before the subjects encountered (watched) the movie clips, pre-exposure questionnaires were distributed to the subjects. Subjects were asked to list five brand names for each of the product category. On the following meeting, subjects were exposed to the movies and then asked to list five brand names again for the same product categories. The difference between the orders of brand names in the two questionnaires is the quantitative measure for brand salience. For example, if a brand was listed third place on the pre-exposure questionnaire and is now relocated to the first place on the post-exposure questionnaire after a subject watches the clips, the brand salience score for the subject in the specific product category would be assigned 2 as the brand moved two steps. If a brand was not listed on the pre-exposure questionnaire but listed on the post-exposure questionnaire, the brand salience score would be 5. If a brand is dropped out after the subject watches the clips, the brand salience would be assigned $-5$. However, it should be noted that, for testing hypotheses (H2 and H3) involved with cellular phone brand exposure, only three cellular phone brands (manufacturers) were utilized from each subject’s responses due to the fact that many of them were not able to provide five cellular phone brands. Therefore, the brand salience measure for cellular phone brands ranges from $-3$ to $+3$. 
Procedures

Subjects were briefed that the pre-exposure questionnaire was to investigate general brand preferences and asked to list five brands per each of the six product categories. In order to identify subjects with a series of questionnaires (pre- and post-exposure), subjects were told to provide the last four digits of their student identification number on the top corner of the questionnaires. Note that it was necessary to manipulate the subjects so that they were less able to guess the purpose of study. In this way, the subjects were kept from looking for the brands belonging to the product categories for which they had listed five brands. Therefore, three additional spurious product categories were included in the questionnaires. After they finished watching the clips, post-exposure questionnaires were distributed. The subjects were instructed to do the same task as they did for the pre-exposure questionnaire.

Stimuli

A total of five movie clips were edited for testing the hypotheses. They were all approximately five minutes long and edited to have some storyline in the clip so as to make the subjects feel they were really enjoying a movie rather than a short trailer. Two movie clips containing two different automobile brands were shown to audiences. Each clip was representing a demonstrative and a non-demonstrative product placement. A Cadillac in the movie *Matrix Reloaded* was used for demonstrative product placement. The car was showing the superiority in handling, breaking, acceleration, and so forth. A Mercedes in the movie *Interpreter* was also exposed to subjects. An actor in the movie merely drove the car to follow an actress’s bike, and no superior performance of the car was shown in the movie.

A single movie clip was used to show well-integrated and poorly integrated product placements. The movie *Cellular* was used to show both types of product placement. An actress mentioned Office Depot and kept carrying an Office Depot box; however, the brand exposure was not necessary for the plot, and it was even distractive. On the contrary, Nokia (a cellular phone brand) was exposed twice in the clip, but it was unavoidable to show the brand in the movie; the brand did not disrupt the plot.

Two different movie clips were made to show audiences product placements in a positive and a negative context. The movie *Mr. Hitch* was used to show a product placement in a positive context. An actor was searching a person’s name in order to help somebody else in a very hilarious situation. A Motorola cellular phone was exposed in a negative context in the movie *Man on Fire*. An actor was on his cellular phone while he was threatening people, and, eventually, he hurt somebody in the clip.
In order to ensure the internal validity of the clips chosen, seven academicians in a business school were recruited and asked to judge the appropriateness of the movie clips. They were given the definition of product placement and the subsequent hypothesized types of product placements. There was unanimity among judges on the two clips showing demonstrative/non-demonstrative product placement. The clip to show the integration aspect of product placement was also judged to be proper. However, the movie clip showing a product placement in a positive context showed a conflicting judgment. A judge mentioned that the scene showed frustration of a man at the beginning of the clip, even though the clip was funny as a whole and wrapped with much humor. Regardless of the concern from a judge, the clip was used because it was conceivable that audiences tend to appreciate the context as a whole. The movie clip was long enough to show the entire context; thus, audiences would not have felt the context was less positive just because of the little frustration at the beginning.

RESULTS

The independent sample t test for mean differences was deployed to investigate the differences in brand salience scores between pre- and post-exposure. The t test result for demonstration versus non-demonstration reveals that the difference in brand salience scores is significant (t = 3.56, df = 121, p < .01). Brand salience was enhanced only by the demonstration of the superiority of the products, and differences between the effects of demonstration and non-demonstration is significant. Therefore, H1 is supported.

The t test result for well-integration versus poor-integration reveals that the difference in brand salience scores is not significant (t = −1.56, df = 121, p > .10). Brand salience scores were enhanced by both well- and poorly integrated product placement, but the differences between the effects of well-integrated and poorly integrated product placement is not significant by using our sample. However, the mean score of the poorly integrated product placement is higher than that of the well-integrated product placement, indicating that the effect of poorly integrated product placement is stronger than well-integrated product placement in our sample. Therefore, H2 is partly supported.

The t test result for positive versus negative contexts reveals that the difference in brand salience scores is significant (t = −.42, df = 121, p < .05). Brand salience scores were enhanced by both positive and negative context in product placement, and the differences between the effects of positive and negative contexts is significant, indicating that the effect of negative context is stronger. Therefore, H3 is supported. The results of the mean comparisons and the three t tests are displayed in Table 1.
**TABLE 1** Results of Group Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-demonstrative</td>
<td>−.44</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>−.16</td>
<td>−.49</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Well-integrated</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>−.16</td>
<td>−.49</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poorly integrated</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>−.16</td>
<td>−.49</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>−.69</td>
<td>−2.42</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>−.69</td>
<td>−2.42</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION

This study investigated brand salience in response to different patterns of product placement. In particular, the study focused on three variables—demonstration, integration, and context—that have not been explored in the product placement research. Our findings show that demonstrative, negative-context product placement is more likely to foster brand salience, compared to non-demonstrative, positive-context product placement. In addition, although the difference of well- and poorly integrated product placement is not significant, poorly integrated product placement has the greater potential to foster brand salience than does well-integrated product placement.

Our findings provide some important insights for building effective product placement strategies. First, as compared to non-demonstrative product placement, demonstrative product placement is more likely to facilitate consumers' cognitive information processing on a brand, leading to higher brand salience. Thus, product placement strategies should focus on how a product in movies can explicitly convey the product's superiority in terms of durability, performance, specification, etc. On the contrary, results showed that non-demonstrative product placement does not enhance brand salience; therefore, capitals and efforts invested in non-demonstrative product placement can hardly create desirable effectiveness.

Second, products that are set in a poorly integrated product placement condition are more likely to be prominent in the visual context and receive higher attention from the audiences. Higher level of attention on the product in the movies can lead to higher level of brand salience in the memory. Although well-integrated product placement better fits the scenery and narrative, and historic and communicative environment in the movies, the effectiveness of well-integrated product placement is weaker than poorly integrated product placement, indicated by our sample means. Product placement strategies should focus on how a product can be noticed, even if it is perceived as artificially inserted for commercial purpose. The strategy is similar to the idea of inserted commercials or breakup news in the TV programs that can significantly raise the audience’s attention.

Third, the audience’s involvement level is more likely to increase when negative context in a movie, such as fear, tension, or risk, is deployed. The audience's higher involvement level created by product placement in a negative context will lead to higher brand salience than in a positive context. Although product placement in both positive and negative contexts will lead to brand salience, product placement strategies should focus on investing more in negative-context movies or chapters than in positive ones, in order to achieve higher brand salience (c.f. Galician and Bourdeau, 2004).
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Albeit the findings indicate a more specified and concrete understanding of product placement, there are also limitations of the study. First, it seems to be difficult to control over all other variables in the movie clip because this study has utilized actual movie scenes. For example, the clip for the demonstrative product placement can be considered as a negative context that is hypothesized to deteriorate the effectiveness of product placement. The clip contains many violent scenes even though the good defeats evil in the scene. As such, the interaction effect of treatments is virtually embedded in most of product placement practices. Therefore, future research should devise an experiment design that can capture and explain the profound interaction effects. It may be initiated by selecting movies that well reflect the proposed treatments and preclude all possible extrinsic variables. These endeavors to reveal interactions will be more fruitful than those to find main effects because of the complex and intermixed nature of movie contexts where most product placements are implemented.

Second, the reason neither well-integrated nor poorly integrated product placement yielded a higher brand salience than the other should be reevaluated. It has been found that product placement tends to affect brand salience positively, regardless of the integration level. A poorly integrated product placement was expected to be more effective than a well-integrated one because the poorly integrated one is more likely to be vivid and noticeable for audiences. Nonetheless, audiences seem able to detect product/brand in movie contexts even though it is well integrated enough not to be easily observable. This unexpected result might be owing to the research setting where subjects are asked to watch the clips during the class hour in a business school. Thus, future research may have to employ a more realistic research setting whereby subjects are less likely to spot products/brands. Researchers may determine which movie contains well-integrated or poorly integrated product placement in advance, then they survey audiences who have just finished watching the movie in cinemas.

Last, the brand salience measure may need to be improved in a way that it contains more information about consumers’ reactivation of memory. The mechanism of retrieving commodity brands from memory might not be equivalent to that of recalling durable or high-involvement products. For the former, a comparison between pre- and post-exposure responses can signify and cover the core effect of product placement; however, the latter may not be correctly measured by comparing the pre- and post-exposure responses. This is because the latter is involved with many other considerations and even previous attitudes. Even though the present study succeeded in supporting hypotheses, the brand salience measure employed in the study might have been too simplified for the products included in the treatment clips. Future
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research should be able to develop a brand salience measure that can either control and nullify all the effects of extraneous variables or incorporate them.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study suggests that product placement actually upholds brand salience, provided the practice is appropriately managed. Studies have focused on consumers’ attitudes toward product placements or willingness to accept the seemingly intrusive marketing activities, while there has been a dearth of endeavors to scrutinize the proper methods to present products/brands in movie contexts. Through the experimental procedure this study creates, at least two means have been found that augment the brand salience, the outcome of product placement. A demonstrative product placement is encouraged for the higher brand salience inasmuch as the demonstration is not excessively interfering with the plot. Intriguingly, product placements in negative contexts are the ones that will remain longer in consumers’ minds and strike strongly their senses; thus, those product placements will be more salient.

In conclusion, regardless of the aforementioned latent limitations, the findings provide new theoretical perspectives and a basis for researchers by proposing a new measure for brand salience as the upshot of product placement in movies. Since the study utilized actual movie clips in order to examine the effectiveness of product placement, it may be considered as an inspiring footprint of research on product placement. With more insightful methods and experimental procedures, the significance of the findings will be further enhanced.

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