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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE PERCEPTION OF LUXURY BRANDS AFTER M&A <i>HSIANG-MING LEE, YA-HUI HSU, TSAI CHEN & YU-CHI WU</i>	1
2.	IMPACT OF CAPITAL BUDGETING TECHNIQUES ON HERO HONDA COMPANY - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>POONAM & Dr. HARPREET KAUR</i>	12
3.	IMPACT OF AUDIENCE SPECIFIC FACTORS ON PRODUCT PLACEMENT: A LITERATURE SURVEY <i>SOMIYA SAXENA & Dr. GITHA HEGGDE</i>	16
4.	DEMONETIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN ECONOMY <i>SUMAIYA FATHIMA</i>	20
5.	GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST) AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN ECONOMY <i>K. KHASIMPEERA & Dr. M. SUGUNATHA REDDY</i>	23
6.	GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE OF DISTRICT CO OPERATIVE BANKS IN INDIA <i>SHABNA MOL TP & Dr. KP VINOD KUMAR</i>	26
7.	PURCHASING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ACROSS THE TAIWAN STRAIT <i>YI-HUI HO</i>	31
8.	PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF SELECT PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES <i>MALOTH RAGHU RAM</i>	35
9.	DETERMINANTS OF FAMILY BUSINESSES' PERFORMANCE IN CAMEROON <i>ODO GABRIEL EMMANUEL</i>	40
10.	EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH <i>SANGRAM PADHY</i>	49
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	52

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IMPACT OF AUDIENCE SPECIFIC FACTORS ON PRODUCT PLACEMENT: A LITERATURE SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Marketing is a dynamic field. There are numerous ways of reaching target market. Marketers keep looking for new ways to acquire target audience as existing marketing strategies turns rotten within few years. One of the marketing strategies that has gained popularity in the last few years is product placement. It is a method of embedding the ads in the storyline of the movies or TV shows. Consumers often tend to ignore the ads shown during a movie or TV show and change the channel, as they often dislike traditional advertisement. But strategically product is shown in the movie or the TV show and consumers just cannot be zapped away without missing the storyline. This research study focuses on individual factors that affect degree of conscious processing. An exploratory research with an emphasis on literature has been the focus.

KEYWORDS

brand recall, consumer attitude, explicit memory, implicit memory, product placement.

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INTRODUCTION

When an individual comes back to home after an entire tiring day, he has TV as one of the main sources of entertainment. But his entertainment is done more by Ads than any real TV show. This makes him nutty over the Ads shown and starts flipping the channel. Marketers lose their value and cost. But product placement makes it possible for the marketers to properly advertise their Ad. Product Placement is the intended incorporation of commercial content into a non-commercial setting (Ginosar, A. & Levi-Faur, D. 2010). It is a mixture of advertising and entertainment. It is becoming a common practice to include product into the storyline of a movie, TV show, magazine, video game, books, comics etc. In simple terms, product placement is a process of producing an engaging content to sell something (Falkow, S. 2010). Product placement has become more effective in today's time when advertising efficacy is declining, media fragmentation and proliferation has increased (Mackay, T.; Ewing, M.; Newton, F. & Windisch, L. 2009). Moreover, viewers are also unable to assimilate so many ads all at a time. According to a study, around two-thirds of TV viewers mute the television sound or change the channel during a commercial as they find the ads as annoying and irrelevant. The literature on product placement is just few years old as it is comparatively a newer topic (Russell and Stern, 2006). Most of the quantitative placement studies differ markedly from one another. Therefore, a conceptual research that informs about Individual and Specific (IS) factors that affects Degree of Conscious Processing (DCP) would work better. Brand plays an important role in marketing communication. Writers, directors, script-writers, creative and media professionals use brands as a tool to communicate specific meaning to audiences. Brand placement also works the same way in movies, TV sitcoms, TV shows and daily soaps. It also sets the mood of the show and depicts the personality traits of the character. However, this process takes place after a formal agreement between the marketer and the producer or the director. Such stories with in-built brand placed in them represent promotional efforts for the brand. Thus, product placement is the paid inclusion of branded products or brand identifiers through audio and visual or both means within mass media (Karrh, 1998). A product placement is also an attempt to influence audiences who does not identify sponsors (Balasubramaniam, 1994).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Product placement is initiated by a marketer who suggests his products to a TV show or studio. It may work the other way round too. Sometimes, brokers or intermediaries too work between a marketer and a producer of the show (Stringer, 2006). The cost involved in a product placed in a movie or TV show may range from \$10,000 to several hundred thousand dollars depending upon the brand value and the budget of movie production. Sometimes, the product placement occurs even free of cost or in lieu of promotional tie-ins (Cebrynski, 2006). The history of product placement is long (Galician and Bourdeau 2004). It started somewhere in 1920-1930. The first product placement was seen in Hollywood film, 'It pays to Advertise'. The first reason to include products in the movie storyline was to reduce the cost of production of the movie during the Great Depression. However, the movie received a negative publicity about the surrender of media content to commercial interests (Brett 1995). Seeing the negative publicity and other factors like diminishing role of movie studios, the emergence of independent producers, location-based movie production hampered the growth of product placement industry. Later it started again in 1960s- 70s (Balasubramaniam 1994; Brett, 1995; Segrave 2004). Later in 1980s, it started flourishing and supports more than a thousand brands in the industry (Galician 2004; Karrh, McKee and Pardun 2003). According to statista.com, the spending in million dollars in 201 was 4657 and in 2019, it is expected to increase to 11 574 million dollars. In India, product placement started long back. Indian film industry is very vast. Impact of films on consumer buying behaviour is evident from his history. It is 100 years old and world's largest producer of films in terms of volume with a production of around 1000 films per annum. There are two types of films produced in India namely, Commercial and non-commercial film. The other film category is tele-film, short film, special effect film etc. Film producers make films which are liked by a larger segment of people. Since the reach of the films is to a larger segment, it is easy to attach an emotional value to the film. This makes way for the corporate and the brand owners to associate their brand with the movie. Advertising agencies also plays a crucial role in setting product placement in Indian movies.

The early example of product placement movies were in 1967, "An evening in Paris" where the lead actress Sharmila Tagore was seen sipping from a bottle of Coke, aggressive to make sure the logo was visible. Another instance is of the movie "Bobby" where Rishi Kapoor was shown riding the Rajdoot bike from Enfield Motors. In another movie, "Prem Diwane", people were shown carrying the Benzer bags. In the movie, "Love Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega", the actor holds a ball with Mac 'M' over it. In a very famous movie, "Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai", Hrithik Roshan asks the heroine if she would like to have McDonald's burger. In another famous and hit movie, "Taal", Coke was placed well throughout the story. Another instance is of "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge" where Shahrukh Khan talks about the Stroh's beer. Amitabh Bachan in the movie "Baghban" promoted many brands like ICICI bank, Ford Ikon and Tata Tea. In another example of the movie "Bunty aur

Babli", Maruti Suzuki launched its Maruti Swift car. In the movie, "Viruddh", Amitabh Bachan endorsed Calcium Sandoz Tablets and Asian Paints. In the movie "Parineeta", Vidya Balan endorsed Saridon.

In few of the recent catches, in the movie, "Ta Ra Rum Pum", brands like Castrol to Goodyear to Chevrolet were shown. In the movie, "Koi Mil Gaya" Hrithik Roshan says "Mai to sirf Bournvita peeta hun". In the movie, "Rang De Basanti", brands like Coca-Cola, Airtel, LG, Berger and Provogue were shown. In the movie, "Two States", Alia Bhatt endorsed Sunsilk shampoo and Yes Bank. In another movie, "Bodyguard", Kareena Kapoor was sowing carrying a Sony Vaio laptop. The examples of product placement won't end in Bollywood context.

The product placement has many advantages for the media industry. A product that is used by the favourite characters in the TV shows and films is better than just showing a simple product Ad (Kamins M. A, 1990). Audience relate themselves with the product used by their favourite character and associate themselves easily (Solomon M. R., Ashmore R. D., Longo L. C, 1992). It has been observed that small brands benefit more than big brands in product placement (Till, B. D., Busler, M., 2002).

The product placement cannot let the readers infer quantitative facts so easily. It is not based on practitioner sentiments that include occasional claims of success from placements, empirical studies that include impact of memory on brands and qualitative inquiries that includes complex meanings specified by the audience (Balasubramaniam; Karrh; Patwardhan 2006). There can be perceptual differences based on subjectivity and biasness between a corporate and academican. Practitioners may have a biased approach towards the success of the placement even if it is just shown in the media (Karrh, 1995; Karrh, McKee and Pardun, 2003; Pardun and McKee, 1999). Many corporate agencies just rely on different performance indices of which source is not available (Law and Braun-LaTour 2004). There are many qualitative evidence available from many sources like a depth interview, focus groups, interpretative studies (DeLorme and Reid 1999, Gould and Gupta, 2006; La Pastina 2001). These sources show themes about program viewing that is appreciating realism, noticing the known, referencing it to others, association with a program genre, its embedded characters and placed products (DeLorme and Reid 1999, Gould and Gupta, 2006; La Pastina 2001). It also has individual consumption that includes using information to develop aspirations and buying related products (DeLorme and Reid 1999, Gould and Gupta, 2006; La Pastina 2001).

In this study, a framework between the individual specific factors and its effect on the degree of conscious processing of information is studied.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, the individual specific factors such as brand familiarity, judgement of "Fit", defence mechanism towards placement, involvement and connectedness with product and motivation to process brand information will be studied in respect to the degree of conscious processing of information shown in product placement.

BRAND FAMILIARITY

The Von Restorff effect (Wallace 1965) also known as isolation effect (Huang, Scale, McIntyre, 1976) may act as a factor to influence the recall of brand placement (Balasubramaniam 1994). It is said that familiar brands does not arouse brand familiarity to the extent an unfamiliar brand would do so. The less familiar brands demonstrated familiarity superiority (Nelson 2002). It can be thus said that unfamiliar brands generate more attention but familiar brands establishes association with the character in the movie. Familiar brands help audience to quickly understand the context of the brand used. As it is said that users form opinion about others based on characteristics easily understood (Beike and Sherman 1994; McCracken 1989).

JUDGEMENT OF "FIT"

It includes appropriateness of fit in the movie and TV shows. It is noticed by the practitioners and the audience both (Karrh 1995; Karrh, McKee and Pardun 2003). Individuals may perceive the placement based on various judgements related to product, medium, communicator, message dimensions (Balasubramaniam 1994; Bhatnagar, Aksoy and Malkoc 2004). Another aspect of "judgement of fit" is depicted by the incongruence that is higher-plot visual placement or lower-plot audio placement improved the brand recall, whereas congruence that is lower-plot visual placement and Higher-plot audio placement improved persuasion (Russell 2002).

DEFENCE MECHANISM TOWARDS PLACEMENT

Audience are sometimes sceptical about the credibility of the placement. This scepticism arises when audience acquires more knowledge and insights about the tactics and persuasive intent of the advertisers (Boush, Friestad and Rose 1994). The disbelief decreases the attitude of consumers in general towards both the ad and the placement. It is found that audience who are more positively inclined towards the advertising were more positive towards placement and audience who were less positive towards advertising were less inclined towards placement (Gupta, Balasubramaniam and Klassen 2000).

INVOLVEMENT AND CONNECTEDNESS WITH PRODUCT AND MOTIVATION TO PROCESS BRAND INFORMATION

The success of product placement lies in the audience involvement with the content of the program (Bhatnagar, Aksoy and Malkoc, 2004). The video games are short-lived and involvement is less, so in a study it was revealed that program involvement with a computer game increased short-term brand recall (Nelson 2002). However, a large program involvement may hinder the brand recall completely (Newell, Henderson and Wu 2011). So, the increase in program involvement decreases the brand recall and decreased involvement in the program increases the recall of brand.

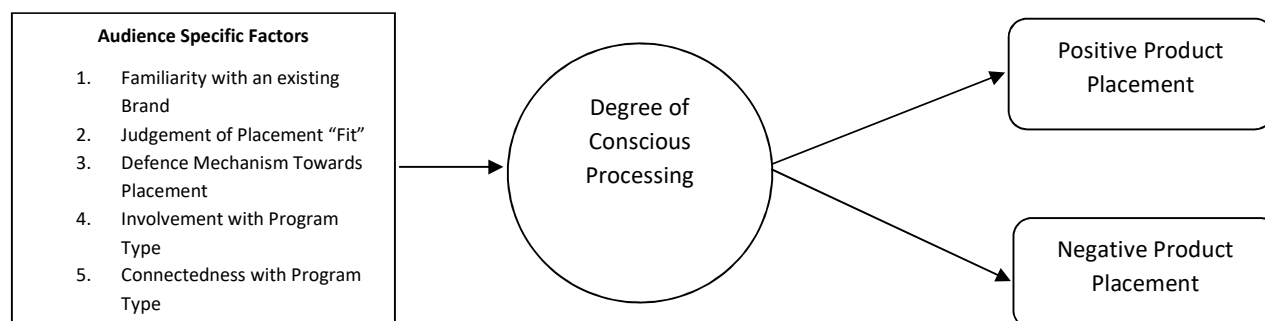
Program connectedness is related to the association of the audience with the characters, ads and context shown in the movies or TV shows with his social and personal life (Russell 1998; Russell, Norman and Hecker 2004a 2004b; Russell and Puto 1999; Russell and Stern 2006).

The high level of connectedness leads to more influential affect than a high level involvement. This happens by imitating the characters in real-life, referencing about it in social groups (Russell 1998).

PROCESSING DEPTH

Processing the information is based on the brand recall. It is based on explicit and implicit memory. Explicit memory is tested directly with the help of recall and recognition tests. It involves an intentional effort to retrieve information through some kind of stimulus (Krishnan and Chakravarti 1999; Shapiro and Krishnan 2001). Implicit memory is tested through projection tests like sentence completion, word association and projective techniques. Such test does not involve consumer's conscious memory retrieval (Duke and Carlson 1993; Krishnan and Chakravarti 1999).

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF IMPACT ON PRODUCT PLACEMENT



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study has tried to evaluate the impact of product placements. Thus, the discussion lands into following points:

- Practitioners tend to bring success to product placement just by its presence in a hit movie or a TV show. However, any success of product placement should be analysed on a rating scale to find out the degree of favourable portray of the brand (Avery and Ferraro 2000).
- Understanding of the product placement may even arise at a low level of conscious processing. Audience seek information and relatedness to product placement by empathy. Entertainment marketing plays dominant role in arousing audience's self-concepts and identity formation through brand exposure with the right fit in the content (Hackley and Tiwasul 2006).
- The effectiveness of product placement can be identified with compassionate identification of product with oneself (Russell 1998). However, identification with product placement is done either with conative and affective ways (Gould and Gupta 2006; Hirshman and Thompson 1997; Stern and Russell 2004).
- Product placement changes brand attitude. However, there were no changes found in brand attitude even when the placement was made memorable (Karrh 1994). But Russell (2002) found that favourable impact arises on brand attitude if product is placed neatly.
- Audience accepts product placement more willingly if it is free of marketing gimmick. Few surveys in America showed that product placement is largely accepted (Gould and Gupta and Grabner- Krauter 2000). Moreover, the acceptance is likely to increase in future as digital transformation will act as catalyst in the field (Sheehan and Guo 2005).
- Designing a suitable placement strategy is difficult for practitioners and corporate bodies because there can be multiple outcomes like cognitive, affective and conative. A good understanding of dissociations and related processes will empower sponsors to frame suitable marketing strategy.

CONCLUSION

Placement is an embedded form of ad tweaked in the message content. Placements arrange for a mood upliftment of the audience better than paid Ads. It is a transformational way of associating the product with the real-life of the audience. The stimuli based factors in product placement are type of the program, flexibility of execution of program, placement processing, expressing placement content, Showcasing appearance of brand, type and amount of brand information presented, link between the content of the show and the brand presented. The audience related factors that impact product placement are existing familiarity with the brand, judgement of placement fit, disbelief towards advertising, involvement and connectedness towards program and motivation to process information presented in the program. From the conceptual study, it is found that unfamiliar brands create better brand recall than the familiar brands. However, audience relate themselves better with the character and the storyline when brand is familiar. Incongruence that is higher-plot visual placement or lower-plot audio placement improved the brand recall, whereas congruence that is lower-plot visual placement and Higher-plot audio placement improved persuasion. The higher attitude towards brand placement leads to affective outcome towards the brand placed. The connectedness with the program plays an important role in deciding the positive product placement or negative product placement.

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