

The Relationship between Brand-program Congruency and Purchase Intention

Liening Cheng & Seungmo Kim*

Department of Physical Education Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract

The main purposes of the current study were 1) to understand the perceptions of consumers toward congruency levels for a placed brand based on the type of movie and gender of endorser and 2) to examine the relationship between consumers' perceptions of congruency and purchase intention to have a successful sport media sponsorship. A total of 200 participants completed the questionnaires. The results revealed consumers had higher perceptions of congruency for a sportswear brand placed in a sports program than in a non-sports program. This study also found the positive association between congruency and purchase intention.

Key words: Brand placement, program-brand congruity, purchase intention

Introduction

Sponsorship is defined as “an investment, in cash or in kind, in an activity, in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity” (Meenaghan, 1991, p.36). It has been one of the biggest and fast growing businesses activities. In North American market alone, the expenditure for sponsorship reached around US\$14 billion in 2014, and about 20% of the amount was spent on television and advertising (Kwon, Ratneshwar, & Kim, 2016). As media programs like TV shows and movies are becoming more important parts of people's daily life (Cornwell & Kwak, 2015), more corporations have attempted to embed their brands or products into various media channels. The majority of product placements were utilized in movies, televisions, and video games (Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez, & Page, 2011). In addition, brands and products were also found in radio programs (van Reijmersdal, 2011), novels (Olsen &

Lanseng, 2012), song lyrics (Delattre & Colovic, 2009), plays (Wilson & Till, 2011) and video games (Hang & Auty, 2011) via media sponsorship activities.

In sport, it is not surprising that sponsorship has also become an important resource for local, national, and international events to be successful. For example, Brazil FIFA World Cup generated over US\$1 billion through sponsorship (Jacobs, Jain, & Surana, 2014). With respect to media sponsorship in sports, many sportswear brands have utilized various movies or TV shows for their sponsorship activities, such as Nike Mag in *Back to the Future II* (1989), Nike Internationalist in *The Breakfast Club* (1985), Under Armour apparel in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015), Onitsuka Tiger Tai Chi sneakers in *Kill Bill Vol.1* (2003), and Adidas jacket in *Friends Season 5 Episode 20* (1999).

Product Placement

In order to obtain intended outcomes from media sponsorship, it is very important for marketing to formulate effective product placement strategies. Karrh (1998)

defined brand placement as “the paid inclusion of branded products or brand identifiers, through audio and/or visual means, within mass media programming.” (p. 33). Hudson and Hudson (2006) also introduced brand entertainment as integration among brands, entertainment, and media by embedding the advertising brands into storylines of a movie, TV program, or other media outlets.

To understand product placement, it is important to identify different types of product placement. Russell (1998) categorized placements into three dimensions: visual, auditory, and visual-auditory. Visual placement means showing a brand, product or other visual images without relevant audio and sounds on that particular brand or product (Gupta & Lord, 1998). Russell (2002) added that visual dimension has different degrees depending on levels of appearances on the screen. The second dimension auditory or verbal referred to mentioning brand names or messages related to the brand through an audio form (Gupta & Lord, 1998). Auditory placement also has different degrees, depending on the frequency, the character’s tone of voice, and the product’s role in the conversation (Russell, 1998; Russell, 2002). The third dimension was first proposed by Gupta and Lord (1998), and it was also described by Russell (1998) as “plot connection”, which is the combination of visual and audio display in terms of brand name. Later Russell (2002) further suggested that plot connection refers to the degree of integration between the product and the plot. Higher plot connection shows a more important place in the storyline or closer connection with the character, while lower plot connection does not contribute that much to the theme (Holbrook & Grayson, 1986).

Other researchers (e.g. Cowley & Barron, 2008) distinguished product placement into prominence and subtlety. Prominent placement was defined by Gupta and Lord (1998), if the placed brand or product has high visibility on the screen and becomes central to the scene, the placement is prominent. Variables that contribute to prominence usually include the size of the brand logo, connection, and integration to the scene, time of exposure and number of mentions (Cowley & Barron, 2008; Law &

Braun, 2000; Russell, 2002). Subtle placement is the opposite, which is not shown prominently on screen, such as short duration of brand exposure (Gupta & Lord). However, regardless of the type of product placement, prominent or subtle placement both has an impact on product placement effectiveness (Gupta & Lord).

Many researchers (Delorme & Reid, 1999; Gould, Gupta, & Grabner-Krauter, 2000) found the advantages of product placement over traditional advertising. They proposed that product placement could be more cost-effective because appropriate product placement may link to positive brand associations and images. Traditional TV commercials are usually direct and obvious so most of the viewers are likely to be on alert and have negative attitudes towards TV commercials (Balasubramanian, Karth, & Patwardhan, 2006). However, in terms of product placement, when a product is embedded properly into a scene or storyline, audiences are less likely to perceive the product placement as an obvious commercial attempt while watching (Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1998). Thus, audiences tend to lower their guard towards product placement per se, which would make product placement more convincing.

Another disadvantage of traditional advertising is the low exposure rate. Kiley (2006) estimated two-third of audiences turn off the sound during commercials or switching channels and skip them all because audiences found commercials between television programs very annoying. However, the amount of exposure time to viewers is secured since product placement is integrated into the program (Meenaghan, 1991). Hudson and Hudson (2006) also indicated that product placement would decrease viewer’s resistance towards the commercial content because product placement is a part of the entertainment entity.

Product placement has also drawn significant attentions in the academic field. The previous research on product placement can be summarized into three topics (McCarty, 2004). First, researchers studied the popularity of product placement in movie and television (DeLorme & Reid, 1999) and attempted to find the nature of product placement (Avery & Ferraro, 2000). The second line of research focused on audiences’ acceptance of product

placement in general. Gupta and Gould (1997) conducted a research in the United States, discovering a positive attitude generated by audiences towards product placement in general. The third research topic on the concept was about the effectiveness of product placement. Balasubramanian et al. (2006) summarized three main aspects of the studies on effectiveness of product placement, cognition aspect (brand memory, brand recognition or recall, brand salience, brand typicality), affect aspect (brand portrayal rating, identification with brand/imitation, brand attitude) and conation aspect (purchase intention, brand choice, brand usage behavior). Most researchers focused on the cognition and affect aspect. Several researchers (Gupta & Lord, 1998; Lehu & Bressoud, 2008) studied brand recall and concluded that product placement has a significant impact on increasing recall rate after watching the movie clip. Argan, Velioglu, and Argan (2007) reported a nearly 90% recall rate after watching a strong plot connection placement, even though the duration of the product on the screen was short. Law and Braun (2000) also found an improvement of brand recognition for placed brand. Regarding affect domain, most studies were conducted on consumer attitude towards the placed brand. Kirmani and Shiv (1998) tested that when consumers perceive the product and movie a match, a positive attitude would most likely be generated. Compared the effect of persuasion with congruence, an incongruence between the brand and the movies had a negative relationship with consumer attitude (d'Astous & Seguin, 1999; Russell, 2002).

Despite the popularity of product placement research, only a few studies have been conducted relating to conation aspect, such as purchase intention (Vildan, 2014) and the findings of the research were somewhat inconsistent. Some researchers (e.g. Ong & Meri, 1994; Vollmers & Mizerski, 1994) found no impact of product placement on purchase intention, while Jin and Villegas (2007) revealed an increase of purchase intention after watching the brands/products placed in the movie.

In fact, sports movies have a long history dating back to 1908 (Anderson, 2009). Several studies were conducted relating to sports movies. For example, Briley, Schoenecke,

and Carmichael (2008) summarized some sports movies studies regarding historical contents, cultural values, racial, gender and class issues. Warner (2013) conducted a research revealing how movies carried the sportswear into the American style and influenced on how people dressed from 1912-1940. However, research specific on product placement in sports movies is still rare and needs more findings since sports is one of most often used contexts for product placement. Thus, the purposes of the current study were to understand the perceptions of consumers toward congruency levels for a placed brand based on movie theme (e.g., sports movie vs. non-sports movie) and gender of endorser (e.g., male vs. female) and to examine the relationship between consumers' perceptions of congruency and their purchase intentions.

Program-product Congruity

Congruity topic has been widely spread in advertising and marketing literature. Congruence can be described as "relatedness" and "relevance" by Johar and Pham (1999), or as "compatibility" by Ruth and Simonin (2003), or "link" by d'Astous and Bitz (1995) in sponsorship literature. In cause-related marketing literature, it is proposed as a "fit" (Bainbridge, 2001; Gray 2000). Some researchers (McDonald 1991; Murphy 1999) studied congruence based on the relevance (direct vs. indirect) between the sponsor and the event. Further on, Gwinner (1997) categorized sponsorship congruence into functional and image similarity, interpreting the relationship between core values of consumers and values represented by sponsor and sponsorship event. In addition, Heckler and Childers (1992) defined congruency from the psychological perspective, constructed into relevancy and expectancy. Relevancy refers to how the stimulus pertaining to the meaning of the theme detracts identifications of the major communication messages (Heckler & Childers). Expectancy addresses the degree of how well the messages and information would be expected in the theme (Heckler & Childers).

The classical conditioning theory was mirrored in this study in order to understand the mechanism of how

congruity works. The conditioning theory suggests the level of conditioning achieved would be enhanced if the conditioned and conditioned stimuli were suitably placed together (Allen & Janiszewski, 1989). So congruence can moderate and enhance the conditioning process (Speed & Thompson, 2000). This, therefore, suggested that if the sponsor and the event were perceived as fit, participants would generate more positive attitude to the brand.

More specifically, research findings in sponsorship literature revealed the influence of congruence or incongruence on brands. Gwinner (1997) suggested that the sponsor-event congruence can help transfer the image from the event to the sponsors. d'Astous and Bitz (1995) also pointed out the sponsor image was improved significantly when the congruence level between sponsor and event increased from a lower level to a moderate level. Besides, the product-event congruity was found for affecting consumer attitude towards the sponsor. Speed and Thompson (2000) justified that there was a positive relationship between product-event congruity and consumer attitude towards the sponsor. Similar findings were also pointed out by D. Basil and M. Basil (2003) and Rodgers (2003, 2004), suggesting that the congruence would affect the attitudes from consumer towards sponsor positively. Audience responses to sponsorship event were examined by several researchers (Crimmins & Horn, 1996; Speed & Thompson, 2000). They highlighted the positive impact of the close match between the sponsor and the event to audiences.

Researchers (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006) studied the effect of low congruence level as well and found that low congruent levels would increase brand recall. But they also suggested that brand attitude and credibility would be harmed with a low congruence level. Lee and Faber (2007) conducted a research of product placement in the online gaming industry, proposing a consistent finding. They concluded that incongruence between a game and a product would trigger a higher brand recall because people attempted to justify and make sense of the incongruity.

Product placement was considered one type of sponsorship (d'Astous & Seguin, 1999), thus, the insights of sponsorship congruity can be applied to product

placement. In this study, the concept of product-program was inspired by Speed and Thompson (2000) and Pentecost and Spence (2004). They proposed that placed brand to be sponsorship, and the media host (i.e. movies/TV) to be the program. Though fit can be further divided based on numerous criteria, such as functional and symbolic characteristics (Speed & Thompsons), the perception of fit in this study was modeled in a general sense in order to avoid misleading. Because, the main purpose of this research was to determine the effect of congruence, not the type of congruence. Thus, the product-program congruity represented the connection and fit in general between placed brand and the movie.

Similar to product-event congruence effects, d'Astous and Seguin (1999) indicated that a strong sponsor-program congruity represents a strong relation between sponsor's products and the contents of the program. On the contrary, with a weaker sponsor-program congruity, the placed product will reduce credibility and consistency. Russell (2002) explained how differences of product placement modality and plot connection influence consumers' attitude towards placed brand, and concluded that congruent product placement conveys a strong message so it becomes convincing and favorable brand attitude would be generated by consumers. Moreover, a high congruent placement could evoke a positive emotional response from audiences (d'Astous & Chartier, 2000; Balasubramanian et al. 2006). Balasubramanian et al. explained that with a high product-program match, the audiences tend to criticize less and develop positive attitude compared to incongruent placement.

The product is consistent in this research (i.e. Adidas), the variables (i.e. type of movie and endorser gender) that influence the program were believed to have an impact on the product-program congruity. One factor was the movie theme that the product being placed in. Several studies examined brand placement in movies using content analysis of the movie genre, though most of them examined brand recognition and recall (Park & Berger, 2010). Some researchers studied product placement in different movies and television genres, such as drama (Dirks, 2000), comedy (Zillmann, 2000), and sitcom (Stern

& Russell, 2007). Movie theme contributed to genre identification, which was shared by conventions and served as codes to combine producers, texts, and audiences (Fiske, 1987; Park & Berger, 2010). So movie theme played an important role in the message that was delivered to viewers. So based on the previous literature on relevancy and expectancy (Heckler & Childers, 1992), and conditioning theory (Allen & Jeniszewski, 1989; Speed & Thompson, 2000), sports movie and sporting brand shared similar meaning.

Another factor of product-program congruity was the gender of character or endorser in the movies. Tripp, Jenson and Carlson (1994) proved that source credibility has a positive relationship with endorser effectiveness. There are three factors influencing the source credibility: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Ohanian, 1991; Tripp et al., 1994). Amos, Holmes, and Strutton (2008) found that trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness (in that order) executed the most effective endorsement practice. However, the match-up hypothesis suggested that the natural fit between the endorser and the product being endorsed is the most important element to an effective endorsement (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Boyd & Shank, 2004; Till & Busler, 2000).

In terms of the endorser's gender, especially in the sports industry, there are plenty of differences between male and female endorsers. Female athlete endorsers were less in number than male athlete endorsers, appearing in only 12% of advertisements featured on magazines in the United States (Grau, Roselli, & Taylor, 2007). The image of female athlete endorsers' sexuality was mostly highlighted (Grau et al., 2007). In general, sports are still perceived as masculine and male-dominated (Messner, 2009), which makes it more natural for men than women to participate in (Hardin & Greer, 2009). This is probably due to gender norms and social role theory. The social role theory indicates that there are behavioral expectations for men and women regarding their own gender role (Eagly, 1987; Eagly, Wood, Diekmann, 2000). Heilman (2001) explained that unfavorable evaluations and judgement would evoke from others if one did not behave inconsistently

with one's gender role. Because sport is believed as male dominant, female athletes are seen as violating the gender role which would result in more negative evaluations (Heilman, 2001; Messner, 2002). Thus, male endorsers might be a better fit than female endorsers for a sports brand in movies. Based on the literature, the following hypotheses were proposed.

Hypothesis 1: Movie theme (sports or non-sports) had a significant relationship on product-program congruity level.

Hypothesis 2: Movie theme (sports or non-sports) had a significant relationship on purchase intention.

Hypothesis 3: Character gender in movie/TV had a significant relationship on product-program congruity level.

Hypothesis 4: Character gender in movie/TV had a significant relationship on purchase intention.

Purchase Intention

Spears and Singh (2004, p56) defined purchase intention as "an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand." Purchase intention is a critical indicator for consumer behaviors at a cognitive stage (Beerli & Santana, 1999) and it is widely utilized by researchers to measure purchase behaviors (Schlosser, 2003; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). A fit between a sponsor and an event is considered as a key element in understanding consumer responses, like purchase intention to the sponsorship (Speed & Thompson, 2000). Although the direct impact of the congruence between a sponsor and an event on purchase intention was not clarified, many researchers observed the positive relations in the studies. Gwinner and Bennett (2008) found a positive impact of a close fit between a sponsor and an event on consumers' attitudes for the sponsor, which might eventually lead to higher purchase intention of the consumers. Jin and Villegas (2007) also found the positive link between product placement and purchase intention. Balasubramanian et al. (2006), Lehu (2007), and Lin and Cho (2010) also

proposed that efficient product placement would increase purchase intention and sales. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed based on previous literature.

Hypothesis 5: There was a positive relationship between product-program congruity level and consumers' purchase intention.

Method

Participants and Survey Procedure

The data for the current study were collected from 200 people living in Hong Kong. From a total of 200 participants, 106 participants (53%) were male and 94 participants (47%) were female ($N=106$). In terms of age, the majority of participants were in the 22-25 group with 135 participants (67.5%), followed by the 18-21 age group with 61 participants (30.5%). 86 respondents (43%) reported that they watched movie 2-3 times a month. Table 1 shows the further details of the movie consumption behaviors and demographic information.

Table 1. Demographics of respondents and movie watching frequency

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	94	47
Female	106	53
Age Group		
18-21	61	30.5
22-25	135	67.5
26-29	4	2
Movie Watching		
Never	1	0.5
Less than once a month	25	12.5
Once a month	44	22
2-3 times a month	86	43
Once a week	20	10
2-3 times a week	19	9.5
Daily	5	2.5
Total	200	100

Instrumentation

A 35-item survey, including congruency, purchase intention, and demographic information (e.g., age, gender, and movie-watching frequency) was used in this study. The video clips used in the questionnaire were self-edited by the authors. The clips were taken from "Fast Girl" (2012) for a female sports movie, "Glee Season 1 Episode 4" (2009) for a female non-sports, "She's the Man" (2006) for a male sports movie, and "Kingsman: The Secret Service" (2014) for a male non-sports movie. Each movie clip was one minute in length. Characters in the movies wore Adidas' training jackets. In order to avoid potential bias stemming from the sequence of four movie clips in the questionnaire on participants' responses, four sets of questionnaire were developed with different orders of the movie clips as shown in Table 2. Every movie clip was set to show one time only. Congruency between brand and movie and purchase intention were measured using scales from Speed and Thompson (2000) and Till and Busler (2000). The participants indicated the extent of their agreement for congruity by using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The participants were also asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the question by using a 5-point Likert scale.

Data Analysis

All the responses in the questionnaire were coded for further analysis and were inputted into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS program). First, descriptive statistics including demographic information of the participants as well as means and standardized deviations were calculated. Second, the reliability of each construct of the study was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Then, 2x2 MANOVA was performed to measure how the participants perceived congruence between the placed brand and the movie and purchase intention based on the type of movie and gender in the movie. Finally, Pearson correlation was used to examine the linear relationship between congruity and purchase intention.

Table 2. Movie clips sequence in different sets of questionnaires

Set	MovieClip A	MovieClip B	MovieClip C	MovieClip D
Set1	femalesports movie	femalenon-sports movie	malesports movie	malenon-sports movie
Set2	malenon-sports movie	femalesports movie	malesports movie	femalenon-sports movie
Set3	femalenon-sports movie	femalesports movie	malenon-sports movie	malesports movie
Set4	malesports movie	femalenon-sports movie	malenon-sports movie	femalesports movie

Table 3. Mean (M), standard deviations (SD), and Cronbach (α) for the variables.

Variable	Items	Gender				Program				Total		α
		Male		Female		Sports		Non-Sports		M	SD	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
		3.38	.97	3.35	1.04	3.94	.81	2.79	3.37	3.37	1.01	.937
Congruity	There is a logical connection between the brand/product and the movie.	3.28	1.11	3.23	1.16	3.83	.97	2.68	1.00	3.26	1.14	
	The image of the placed brand/product and the movie are similar.	3.37	1.10	3.37	1.13	3.95	.91	2.79	.99	3.37	1.12	
	The placed brand/product and the movie fit together well.	3.46	1.09	3.44	1.18	4.01	.91	2.89	1.07	3.45	1.14	
	The placed brand/product and the movie stand for the similar things.	3.29	1.08	3.32	1.13	3.91	.89	2.71	.96	3.31	1.10	
	It makes sense to me that this brand/product is placed in the movie.	3.51	1.08	3.32	1.13	4.00	.95	2.89	1.03	3.44	1.13	
		3.15	.95	3.19	3.17	3.50	.87	2.83	.95	3.17	.97	.951
Purchase Intention	How likely for you to purchase products from the placed brand? (unlikely-likely)	3.15	1.00	3.18	1.10	3.52	.95	2.81	1.03	3.17	1.05	
	How likely for you to purchase products from the placed brand? (definitely would not-definitely would) (Reversed Code)	3.10	.96	3.14	1.00	3.43	.91	2.81	.95	3.12	.98	
	How likely for you to purchase products from the placed brand? (improbable-probable)	3.19	1.00	3.25	1.04	3.56	.90	2.88	1.02	3.22	1.02	

Results

Reliabilities and Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Reliabilities of two constructs (congruity and purchase intention) were well supported since both Cronbach's Alphas .937 and .951 exceeded the recommended benchmark of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations for each item and variables and reliabilities for variables. The results of congruity means ranged from 3.26 to 3.45, and the means

of purchase intention ranged from 3.12 to 3.22.

2 x 2 (type of movie vs. gender) MANOVA

Assumptions of MANOVA were checked prior to 2x2 MANOVA using normality test, Box' M, and correlation. The results revealed that normality assumption was violated, whereas homoscedasticity and multicollinearity assumptions were met. Therefore, Pillai's Trace, the robust statistic against violations of assumption for non-normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996), was used rather than Wilk's Lambda for further analyses.

Table 4. *Multivariate Tests.*

Variable	Value	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Error df</i>
Intercept	.949	7351.894	.000	2	795
Movie	.327	193.152	.000	2	795
Gender	.002	.847	.429	2	795
Movie*Gender	.003	1.109	.330	2	795

As shown in the table 4, the results for the MANOVA indicated significant main effects for different movie theme (sports or non-sports) [Pillai's Trace=.327, $F(2,795)=193.152$, $p<.01$] and no significant main effects for character gender [Pillai's Trace =.002, $F(2,795)=.847$, $p=.429$] interaction between movie theme and character gender [Pillai's Trace =.003, $F(2,795)=1.109$, $p=.330$] on congruity and purchase intention. Therefore, tests of between-subject effects were conducted to examine differences separately. The results of the univariate tests indicated significant main effects for movie theme [$F(1,796)=385.177$, $p<.01$] for congruity, but no significant effects for gender [$F(1,796)=.338$, $p=.561$]. For purchase intention, significant effects was found for movie theme [$F(1,796)=108.392$, $p<.01$], while no significant effects for character gender for [$F(1,796)=.369$, $p=.543$]. In other words, the mean differences for congruity between sports movie (3.94) and non-sports movie (2.79) for purchase intention between sports movie (3.50) and non-sports movie (2.83) were significant, whereas, the mean differences for congruity between male (3.38) and female (3.35) characters in movie/TV and purchase intention between male (3.15) and female (3.19) were not significant. Therefore, H1 and H2 were supported, while H3 and H4 were not supported.

Pearson Correlation

The Pearson correlation between congruity and intention was .646 ($p<.01$) which indicated that they were strongly correlated. Thus, H5 was supported.

Discussion

The results of the research's descriptive statistics

revealed higher congruence between sportswear brand and sports movies and lower congruence between sportswear brand and non-sports movie. More specifically, for sports movie, the mean (3.94) was above mid-point (3.00), but for non-sports movie, the mean (2.79) was below average. As the placed brand can be viewed as sponsor and media host as program conceptually, stronger relations between sponsor's products and the contents in the program represent higher congruence (d'Astous & Seguin, 1999; Speed & Thompson, 2000). The findings of the current study were consistent with research by Russell (2002), proposing that with higher plot connection, the product would be perceived congruent with the scene. Thus, the results could be explained by the fact that the nature of sports movie and sportswear brand match with each other.

Research (Crimmins & Horn, 1996; Speed & Thompson, 2000) confirmed the positive impact of fitness on audiences' responses. According to the meaning transfer model (McCracken, 1989), consistency between source's meaning and the desired meaning for the product was required. The meanings of sportswear brand and sports movie were consistent. In other words, sportswear brand and sports movie had similar function and image. The similarity indicated that the core values perceived by consumers were consistent with the values of the brand and the movie (Gwinner, 1997).

The results also revealed that consumers would buy products from brand placement in sports movie instead of those placed in non-sports movie although some researchers found no positive effect of increasing purchase intention, regardless of integrated product placement in movies (Vollmers & Mizerski, 1994). The current study suggested that sportswear brand partnered with sports movie would mostly increase consumers purchase intention. Based on the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), positive overall attitude toward placed brand is expected to increase purchase intention. The results could be somehow explained as the fitness of sportswear brand and sports movie gained consumers' positive attitude, they were more likely to purchase products from the sports movie. In addition, congruence

and purchase intention were highly related to one another as the correlation was high. With a higher congruity level, consumers were more likely to purchase sportswear brand from sports movies. On the contrary, sportswear brand placed in non-sports movies generated less logical or functional connection and this combination pushed the brand further away from the storyline.

The most important suggestion to marketers would be that marketers should consider how they can embed the product into the plot and demonstrate a fit between product and the scene for conation aspect (e.g. purchase intention) rather than how big they want to put the logo on the screen alone in selecting movies and televisions because placement congruence would be more important for consumers to make their purchase decision. So to speak, congruence would generate more consumer interests and desire, which would lead to purchase behavior (Barry, 1987). The results of this study could also help practitioners narrow down potential media host, especially for sportswear companies.

In addition, the results also indicated that the combination of visual and verbal placement was not necessary to reach congruence between product and program, as long as they have a similar meaning. Researchers (d'Astous & Chartier, 2000; Dens et al., 2012) found that even less prominent placements could generate positive brand attitudes if the plot connection was strong. It is because there is a high possibility that viewers would criticize high prominent placement as annoying and distracting (Cholinski, 2012; d'Astous & Chartier, 2000; Dens et al., 2012). Nevertheless, congruence of product placement is more powerful than placement methods on consumer's purchase desire toward the brand placed in movies and televisions.

Although hypothesis 3 and 4 proposed that there was an influence of character gender in movie/TV on consumers' perception of congruity level and also on purchase intention, the results indicated no significant effect of the character gender in movie/TV on neither relativeness of the product and program nor purchase intention. Though sport, in general, is more associated with masculine and male, some sports are considered feminine and neutral based on sports' aesthetics, risk, and speed (Koivula, 2001). Hardin

and Greer (2009) also placed sports into four types: hyper-masculine (e.g. rugby), masculine (e.g. snowboarding), neutral (e.g. soccer, swimming) and feminine (e.g. gymnastics, volleyball). The findings could be explained because sports movies shown in this research (i.e. soccer, track and field) represented neutral sports and neither a male endorser nor a female endorser violated the social role expectation. For non-sports related movies, the fact that the gender of the character did not change any story development, which made no impact on the storyline influenced the research outcomes. Thus, the findings that gender difference of the character in the movie had no significant interfere between product and the movie as well as consumer's intention to make a purchase provide the implication to practitioners to save time in choosing female or male endorser/spokesperson for the brand because the results revealed no major influence of gender difference on purchase intention.

This study originally aimed to provide some guidelines to practitioners in selecting movies or television programs to place the brand and products based on the match between brand and media platform. However, the results offered recommendations not only for marketers to make efficient and effective product placement strategies but also for filmmakers or producers to seek and leverage sponsorship packages. For filmmakers and producers, this study should be relevant to enhance product placement value and design placement package. In sponsorship field, Speed and Thompson (2000) found that if opportunities were given to sponsors to demonstrate a match, the owners of the sponsored property could add sponsorship value. The similar condition for product placement, filmmakers and producers can seek sponsors by providing different levels of placement strategies based on that match (value).

Future Studies

Previous research rarely examined the relationship between product placement and purchase intention although purchase intention was one of the most important

measures to see the effectiveness of product placement (Ong & Meri, 1994; Vollmers & Mizerski, 1994; Jin & Villegas, 2007). Therefore, the current study's results provided a unique academic contribution to the literature by exploring those relationships as well as adding usefulness for future studies as well as practical implications for practitioners. However, future research based on the limitation of the current study could be developed to provide more academic and practical implications of the topic.

First, the major limitation of this study was being able to control all the variables. Ideally, the product placed in the two different movies should be the same product and the endorser in the movies should be the same person for each gender, and between male and female, the story scene should be the same. By doing so, prior familiarity with the product (Balasubramanian, 1994), and influence from the endorser/character (Kamins & Gupta, 1994) would be controlled.

Second, for this study, the questionnaires were used to collect responses from participants, though each movie clips were shown once, the reality of participants searching or watching it again could not be controlled. Therefore, for future studies, focus group, and experimental design were recommended to control and minimize those factors.

Finally, the current study unveiled the congruence between brand and media host had a positive association with purchase intention, but it did not examine any causal relation between the concepts and how individual differences would influence viewers' perceptions on product placement. For example, other studies found visual processing differences between holistic and analytic, which leads to different emphases and results (Goh, Tan, & Park, 2009). Other individual factors included general attitude and acceptability towards product placement (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Balasubramanian et al., 2006), personal involvement with the program (Nelson, 2002), program connectedness, which represented the extent of connection beyond viewing program into personal and social life (Russell, 1998; Russell & Stern, 2006). Thus, future studies should adopt those factors to help marketers and researchers understand product placement's effectiveness

based on the microscope perspectives. Future studies also should examine potential causal relationships among relevant variables.

References

- Agrawal, J., & Kamakura, W. A. (1995). The economic worth of celebrity endorsers: An event study analysis. *Journal of Marketing*, *59*, 56–62.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Allen, C. T., & Janiszewski, C. A. (1989). Assessing the role of contingency awareness in attitudinal conditioning with implications for advertising research. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *26*(1), 30–43.
- Amos, C., Holmes, G., & Strutton, D. (2008). Exploring the relationship between celebrity endorser effects and advertising effectiveness. *International Journal of Advertising*, *27*, 209–234.
- Anderson, R. (2009). Book review: All-stars and movie stars: Sports in film and history. *The Journal of American Culture*, *32*(1), 77–78.
- Argan, M., Velioglu, M. N., & Argan, M. T. (2007). Audience attitudes towards product placement in movies: A case from Turkey. *Journal of American Academy of Business*, *11*(1), 161–168.
- Bainbridge, J. (2001). Brand fit is crucial to the success of cause related ties. *Marketing*, *5*(3), 21.
- Balasubramanian, S. K., Karrh, J. A., & Patwardhan, H. (2006). Audience response to product placements: An integrative framework and future research agenda. *Journal of Advertising*, *35*(3), 115–141.
- Barry, T. F. (1987). The development of the hierarchy of effects: An historical perspective. *Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, *10*(1–2), 251–135.
- Basil, D., & Basil, M. (2003). Towards an understanding of fit: Effects of association and complementarity in cause-related marketing alliances. *Marketing Communications and Consumer Behavior 2003 proceedings*, 11–13.

- Berli, A., & Santana, M. J. (1999). Design and validation of an instrument for measuring advertising effectiveness in the printed media. *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, **21**(2), 11-30.
- Boyd, T. C., & Shank, M. D. (2004). Athletes as product endorsers: The effect of gender and product relatedness. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, **13**(2), 82-93.
- Briley, R., Schoenecke, M., & Carmichael, D. (Ed.). (2008). *All-Stars and Movie Stars: Sports in Film and History*. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Cholinski. (2012). The effectiveness of product placement: A field quasi experiment. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, **4**(5), 14-28.
- Comwell, T. B., & Kwak, D. H. (2015). Sponsorship-linked marketing: Introduction to topics. *Journal of Sports Management*, **29**(2), 133-136.
- Cowley, E., & Barron, C. (2008). When product placement goes wrong: The effects of program liking and placement prominence. *Journal of Advertising*, **37**(1), 89-98.
- Crimmins, J., & Horn, M. (1996). Sponsorship: From managerial ego trip to marketing success. *Journal of Advertising Research*, **36**(4), 11-21.
- d'Astous, A., & Bitz, P. (1995). Consumer evaluations of sponsorship programmes. *European Journal of Marketing*, **29**(12), 6-22.
- d'Astous, A., & Chartier, F. (2000). A study of factors affecting consumer evaluations and memory of product placements in movies. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, **22**(2), 31-40.
- d'Astous, A., & Seguin, N. (1999). Consumer reactions to product placement strategies in television sponsorship. *European Journal of Marketing*, **33**(9/10), 896-910.
- Delattre, E., & Colovic, A. (2009). Memory and perception of brand mentions and placement of brands in songs. *International Journal of Advertising*, **28**(5), 807-842.
- DeLorme, D. E., & Reid, L. N. (1999). Moviegoers' experiences and interpretations of brands in films revisited. *Journal of Advertising*, **28**(2), 71-95.
- Dens, N., De Pelsmacker, P., Wouters, M., & Purnawirawan, N. (2012). Do you like what you recognize? *Journal of Advertising*, **41**(3), 35-54.
- Dirks, T. (2000). Main film genres. Retrieved from <http://www.filmsite.org/genres>
- Grau, S. L., Roselli, G., & Taylor, C. R. (2007). Where's Tamika catchings? A content analysis of female athlete endorsers in magazine advertisements. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, **29**, 55-65.
- Gray, R. (2000). Developing a tight fit is crucial to CRM. *Marketing*, **5**(4), 37-38.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Eagly, A. H., Wood, W., & Diekmann, A. B. (2000). Social role theory of sex differences and similarities: A current appraisal. In H. M. Trautner (Ed.), *The developmental social psychology of gender* (pp. 123-174). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Fiske, J. (1987). *Television culture*. London: Routledge.
- Goh, J. O., Tan, J. C., & Park, D. C. (2009). Culture modulates eye-movements to visual novelty. *PLoS ONE*, **4**(12).
- Gould, S. J., Gupta, P. B., & Grabner-Krauter, S. (2000). Product placements in movies: A cross-cultural analysis of Austrian, French and American Consumers' attitudes toward this emerging, international promotional medium. *Journal of Advertising*, **29**(4), 41-58.
- Gupta, P., & Lord, K. (1998). Product placement in movies: The effect of prominence and mode on audience recall. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, **20**(1), 47-59.
- Gwinner, K. (1997). A model of image creation and image transfer in event sponsorship. *International Marketing Review*, **14**(3), 145-158.
- Gwinner, K., & Bennett, G. (2008). The impact of brand cohesiveness and sport identification on brand fit

- in a sponsorship context. *Journal of Sport Management*, **22**, 410-426.
- Hang, H., & Auty, S. (2011). Children playing branded video games: The impact of interactivity on product placement effectiveness. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, **21**(1), 65-72.
- Hardin, M., & Greer, J. D. (2009). The influence of gender-role socialization, media use and sports participation on perceptions of gender-appropriate sports. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, **32**, 207-226.
- Heckler, S. E., & Childers, T. L. (1992). The role of expectancy and relevancy in memory for verbal and visual information: what is incongruity? *Journal of Consumer Research*, **18**(4), 475-92.
- Heilman, M. E. (2001). Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder. *Journal of Social Issues*, **57**, 657-674.
- Holbrook, M. B., & Grayson, M. W. (1986). The semiology of cinematic consumption: Symbolic consumer behavior in out of Africa. *Journal of Consumer Research*, **13**, 374-381.
- Hudson, S., & Hudson, D. (2006). Branded entertainment: A new advertising technique or product placement in disguise? *Journal of Marketing Management*, **22**(5/6), 489-504.
- Jacobs, J., Jain, P., & Surana, K. (2014, June). Is sports sponsorship worth it? Retrieved from: <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/is-sports-sponsorship-worth-it>
- Johar, G. V., & Pham, M. T. (1999). Relatedness, prominence, and constructive sponsor identification. *Journal of Marketing Research*, **36**(3), 299-312.
- Jin, C. H., & Villegas, J. (2007). The effect of the placement of the product: Consumers' emotional responses to humorous stimuli and prior brand evaluation. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, **15**, 244-255.
- Kahle, L. R., & Homer, P. (1985). Physical attractiveness of celebrity endorser: A social adaptation perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, **11**, 954-961.
- Kamins, M. A., & Gupta, K. (1994). Congruence between spokesperson and product type: A matchup hypothesis perspective. *Psychology & Marketing*, **11**(6), 569-586.
- Karrh, J. A. (1998). Brand placement: A review. *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, **20**(2), 31-49.
- Kiley, D. (2006). Television: Counting the eyeballs. *Bloomberg Business*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/stories/2006-01-htt15/television-counting-the-eyeballs>
- Kirmani, A., & Shiv, B. (1998). The effects of source congruity on brand attitudes and beliefs: The moderating role of issue-relevant elaboration. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, **7**(1), 25-47.
- Koivula, N. (2001). Perceives characteristics of sports categorized as gender-neutral, feminine and masculine. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, **24**, 377.
- Kwon, E., Ratneshwar, S., & Kim, E. (2016). Brand image congruency through sponsorship of sporting events: A reinquiry of Gwinner and Eaton (1999). *Journal of Advertising*, **45**(1), 130-138.
- Law, S., & Braun, K. A. (2000). I'll have what she's having: Gauging the impact of product placements on viewers. *Psychology & Marketing*, **17**(12), 1059-1075.
- Lee, M., & Faber, R. J. (2007). Effects of product placement in on-line games on brand memory: A perspective of the limited-capacity model of attention. *Journal of Advertising*, **36**(4), 75-90.
- Lehu, J. M. (2007). *Branded Entertainment: Product Placement and Brand Strategy in the Entertainment Business*. London: Kogan Page Publishers.
- Lehu, J. M., & Bressoud, E. (2008). Effectiveness of brand placement: New insights about viewers. *Journal of Business Research*, **61**(10), 1083-1090.
- Lin, J. S., & Cho, C. H. (2010). Antecedents and consequences of cross-media usage: a study of a TV program's official web site. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, **54**(2), 316-336.
- McCarty, J. A. (2004). Product placement: The nature of the practice and potential avenues of inquiry. In L. J. Shrum (Ed.), *The psychology of entertainment*

- media: Blurring the lines between entertainment and persuasion(pp.45-61). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- McCracken, G. (1989). Who is the celebrity endorser? Cultural foundations of the endorsement process. *Journal of Consumer Research*, **16**(3), 310-321.
- McDonald, C. (1991). Sponsorship and the image of the sponsor. *European Journal of Marketing*, **25**(11), 31-38.
- Meenaghan, T. (1991). Sponsorship -legitimizing the medium *European Journal of Marketing*, **25**(11), 5-10.
- Meenaghan, T. (1991). The role of sponsorship in the marketing communications mix. *International Journal of Advertising*, **10**(1), 35-47.
- Messner, M. (2002). Taking the field. Women, men, and sports. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Messner, M. A. (2009). It's all for the kids. Gender, families, and youth sports. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Murphy, C. (1999). Brand values can build on charity ties. *Marketing*, **3**(25), 41.
- Nebenzahl, I. D., & Jaffe, E. D. (1998). Ethical dimensions of advertising executions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, **17**(7), 805-815.
- Nelson, M. R. (2002). Recall of brand placements in computer/video games. *Journal of Advertising Research*, **42**, 80-92.
- Ohanian, R. (1991). The impact of celebrity spokespersons' perceived image on intention to purchase. *Journal of Advertising Research*, **31**(1), 46-56.
- Olsen, L. E., & Lanseng, E. J. (2012). Brands in texts: Attitudinal effects of brand placements in narrative fiction. *Journal of Brand management*, **19**(8), 702-711.
- Ong, B. S., & Meri, D. (1994). Should product placement in movies be banned? *Journal of Promotion Management*, **2**(3/4), 159-175.
- Park, D. J., & Berger, B. K. (2010). Brand placement in movies: The effect of film genre on viewer recognition. *Journal of Promotion Management*, **16**, 428-444
- Pentecost, R., & Spence, M. (2004). Exploring the dimensions of fit within sports sponsorship. In: *Marketing Accountabilities and Responsibilities*. Wellington NZ: ANZMAC.
- Rodgers, S. (2003/2004). The effects of sponsor relevance on consumer reactions to internet Sponsorship. *Journal of Advertising*, **32**(4), 67-76.
- Russell, C. A. (1998). Toward a framework of product placement: Theoretical propositions. *Advances in Consumer Research*, **25**, 357-362.
- Russell, C. A. (2002). Investigating the effectiveness of product placements in television shows: The role of modality and plot connection congruence on brand memory and attitude. *Journal of Consumer Research*, **29**(3), 306-318.
- Russell, C. A., & Stern, B. B. (2006). Consumers, characters, and products: A balance model of sitcom product placement effects. *Journal of Advertising*, **35**(1), 7-21.
- Ruth, J. A., & Simonin, B. L. (2003). Brought to you by brand A and brand B. *Journal of Advertising*, **32**(3), 19-30.
- Schiffman, L. G., & Kanuk, L. L. (2000). *Consumer Behavior* (7th ed.). Wisconsin: Prentice Hall.
- Schlosser, A. E. (2003). Experiencing products in the virtual world: the role of goal and imagery in influencing attitudes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, **30**, 184-198.
- Simmons, C. J., & Becker-Olsen, K. L. (2006). Achieving marketing objectives through social sponsorship. *Journal of Marketing*, **70**(4), 154-169.
- Spears, N., & Singh, S. N. (2004). Measuring attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions. *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, **26**(2), 53-66.
- Speed, R., & Thompson, P. (2000). Determinants of sports sponsorship response. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, **28**(2), 226-238.
- Stern, B. B., & Russell, C. A. (2007). Consumer responses to product placement in television sitcoms: Genre, sex, and consumption. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, **7**(4), 371-394.

- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (1996). Using multivariate statistics (3rd ed.). New York: Harper Collins.
- Till, B. D., & Busler, M. (2000). The match-up hypothesis: Physical attractiveness, expertise, and the role of fit on brand attitude, purchase intent, and brand beliefs. *Journal of Advertising*, *29*, 1-14.
- Tripp, C., Jensen, T. D., & Carlson, L. (1994). The effects of multiple product endorsements by celebrities on consumers' attitudes and intentions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *20*, 535-547.
- van Reijmersdal, E. A. (2011). Mixing advertising and editorial content in radio programmes: Appreciation and recall of brand placements versus commercials. *International Journal of Advertising*, *30*(3), 452-446.
- Vildan, J. K. (2014). 20 Years of research on product placement in movie, television and video Games media. *Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, *4*(2), 253-283.
- Vollmers, S., & Mizerski, R. (1994). A review and investigation into the effectiveness of product placement in films. In K. W. King (Ed.), *The Proceedings of the 1994 Conference of the American Academy of Advertising* (97-102). Athens, GA: American Academy of Advertising.
- Warner, P. C. (2013). From clothing for sport to sportswear and the American style: The movies carried the message, 1912-1940. *The Costume Society*, *47*(1), 45-62.
- Williams, K., Petrosky, A., Hernandez, E., & Page, J. R. (2011). Product placement effectiveness: revisited and renewed. *Journal of Management & Marketing Research*, *7*, 1-24.
- Wilson, R. T., & Till, B. D. (2011). Product placements in movies and on Broadway: A field study. *International Journal of Advertising*, *30*(3), 373-398.
- Zillmann, D. (2000). Humor and comedy. In D. Zillmann, & P. Vorder (Eds.), *Media entertainment: The psychology of its appeal* (pp. 37-57). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.