

# Product Placement and Consumer Behavior and Attitude: An Analytical Review and Marketing Implications

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## Abstract

The article aims to conduct an analytical and comprehensive review of the academic literature on product placement. The article introduces the concept and practice of product placement and the research approach applied. Next, the author articulates the definition of product placement and provides an overview, followed by an analytical review of the theoretical foundation of product placement. After the theoretical review, the author analyzes product placements' effects and influences on consumers' behavior and attitudes, marketing strategy, movies, advertisements, and ethics. The author then outlines some findings and marketing implications of his analysis. The article concludes with the author's final comments.

**Keywords:** Product, Placement, Consumer, Behavior, Attitude

## Introduction

Product placement was introduced to American consumers in the 1980s. It was depicted as placing a brand or logo in media content. Concepts such as exploitation, tie-ups, and tie-ins were utilized to define product placement. The idea of exploitation was used to delineate publicity that could bring about attendance. Gradually, the concept developed into tie-ups and tie-in advertising, allowing the actor to approve of a product on-screen or off-screen (Kit & P'ng, 2014).

Product placements can be categorized as creative or on-set, with the former referring to when a product is placed in the background of a shot and the latter referring to when a product is placed more prominently. Academic studies justify the industry's tendency to group product placements into creative and on-site. This is because product placement immensely impacts consumer recognition, even when the measure of consumer recognition is modified for the effects of false recognition. Scholarly studies also report that the impacts of exposure time attained by product placement on consumer recognition are influenced by the kind of product placement (Brennan et al., 1999). As integral elements of media settings

or plots, product placements are not seen as advertising and are usually not believed to be annoying (Knoll et al., 2015).

Previous investigations into consumer attitudes toward product placement have shown favorable perceptions of the practice overall but with concerns about the placement of certain ethically controversial brands. For example, guns, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages are usually perceived as the most unethical for placement, particularly in youth-targeted content (Gregorio & Sung, 2010). Although the emergence of product placement resulted from intermarriage family ties, it gained popularity in motion pictures when stakeholders discovered a win-win proposition whereby the production costs and related expenses would be immensely lower for the movie and program creators. In contrast, firms could promote their brands more effectively as well-known movie actors and programs indirectly promote them. Today, the popularity of product placements in films is estimated at \$1.2 billion yearly, and television revenues generated by product placements surpass \$1.8 billion yearly (Kite & P'ng, 2014).

## **Literature Review**

### *Definitions and Overview*

Product placement is inserting and positioning a product in media to influence viewer behavior. Put another way, companies compensate media program creators or license an amount of monetary reward to have their brand displayed and advertised during the film. Celebrities endorsing a specific product usually confer a favorable image of the brand, affecting viewers' perceptions of the product. Consumer behavior is defined as how consumers seek information when buying products to gratify their needs and desires. Consumer behavior is driven by the consumer's decision-making process, which entails: (1) need discovery. Consumers recognize an unmet need when faced with a problem. Therefore, they will (2) seek a product to satisfy the unmet need using multiple sources. For example, an internal source entails previous experiences, whereas external sources include marketing and noncommercial information. Before making decisions, they will (3) assess options derived from many available brands. Ultimately, the consumer will have a (4) post-purchase assessment, which will lead to a repurchase or regret buying the product. However, it is essential to be aware that consumers go through some of the steps of this process because their decision depends on whether their need is satisfied by buying a product (Kit & P'ng, 2014).

Product placement is also defined as the strategic insertion of products or brand signs through visual, verbal, and audiovisual mechanisms within television and films. Academics describe product placement with a three-dimensional conceptual model: screen placement (visual element), script placement (audio element), and plot placement (association with the plot) (Ho et al., 2011). The objective of product placement is to improve viewers' product awareness. Unfortunately, not all game players may recognize the products inserted within games because their attention is directed to the game itself. These findings of associations are crucial for purchasing behavior since the decision to buy a product is likely to result from such connections. They are also important from another perspective: Consumers will associate different ethical interpretations of product placements regarding their acceptability. i.e., consumers carry their ethical perceptions of marketing various brands into how they perceive them as brand placements (Gould et al., 2000). The association between

commercial practices and content creators expounds the concept known as advertising-as-entertainment (Lin, 2014).

### *Associated Theories*

Using the weak advertising theory, researchers found that the product placement approach developed a favorable attitude among gamers toward a product inserted within a computer game. However, the gamers' preconceived attitude toward the product was marginal. Investigators also applied the resource matching theory and generation impact to assess novel product placement. They discovered that recall of low fragmented brand placement, which entails the elimination of a letter in a brand name, was superior to a highly fragmented or complete product name. In addition to the above theories, researchers suggest the limited-capacity model of attention, which can be utilized to evaluate the impact of brand placement in games. The limited-capacity model of attention posits that consumers have a limited capacity of intellectual resources to allocate to a task (Lin, 2014).

Ego depletion theory claims that consumers have limited resources for exercising self-control. Broadly defined, self-regulation is a consumer's ability to control himself when dealing with competing internal needs. These competing needs call for exercising willpower, reducing limited self-regulatory energy, and resulting in ego depletion. A type of ego depletion remains long until a recovery period returns a consumer to full-functioning capacity. Ego depletion is usually shown in the lab by requiring subjects to conduct self-regulation functions. Ego depletion theory is helpful for product placement when a consumer's self-control energy is depleted (Gillespie et al., 2012).

Genre Theory aims to categorize texts following characteristics unique to one genre but not others. The presence of products is the most defining factor of the lifestyle community, with products perceived as essential values in the consumption scenarios that permeate the genre. Past academic studies on character-product associations show that brands function as psycho-cultural cues to the consumer's construction of meanings about characters and society. The genre is a function of a meticulously design sociocultural scenario filled with consumers engaging with products, thus providing cues about them (Russell & Stern, 2006).

Parasocial Theory—Evaluation of the consumer-character dyad derives from parasocial theory, which depicts the consumer's tendency to be associated with or disassociate from fictional characters perceived as genuine. A long line of research on view-character relationships in television covers the disciplines of communications, psychology, and marketing. This research shows how attributes and relationships are established between viewers and television characters (Russell & Stern, 2006).

Balance Theory--Balance theory claims that consumers prefer balanced triadic attitudinal structures. This theory tends to predict the assessment of brands associated with a character in a film. Balance Theory expounds on consumers' desire to remain consistent amid a triad of related attitudes. The premise is that when a consumer perceives a set of elements as related, they tend to seek equilibrium in their attitude toward another person and with an object connected to that individual (Russell & Stern, 2006).

Although not a theory, the theoretical underpinning of consumer socialization is found in its socialization processes component, a foundation connected with the socialization agents. The cognitive development model and social learning theory are the most utilized intellectual perspectives to describe the consumer socialization process. The former depends on the psychological perspective of learning and the socialization mechanism, which is primarily cognitive-psychological, existing as a function of the ongoing cognitive stages that develop as consumers age. This view has been chiefly utilized in consumer socialization research on children, although mental changes progress into adulthood. Rather than focusing on internal cognitive components, the social learning school focuses on external sources of socialization, such as peers and parents. These external factors transmit norms and models of behaviors and responses from which learning takes place (Gregorio & Sung, 2010).

#### *Product Placements and Consumers' Attitudes*

Attitudes toward advertising impact both attitudes toward the ad and the product. Similarly, research shows that consumers with a more positive attitude toward advertising usually have a favorable attitude toward advertising for advertised brands. Thus, since product placement has advertising elements, it is probable that consumers who have a more positive attitude toward product placement will have a positive perception toward product placement for brands advertised in films and a favorable attitude toward the acceptability of actual products, which could be inserted in films (Gupta & Gould, 1997).

Two lines of investigation in the scholarship on attitude change provide enlightenment and validity for the view that subtle versus prominent product placements will differentially influence consumer attitude. The quiet versus famous type of placement is identical to past noticeable cue manipulations, implying that those literatures are crucial. Advertisers have usually perceived that striking or prominent stimuli are more attention-grabbing with more imagery-evoking power than nonvivid stimuli and, therefore, are likely to enhance attitudes toward the target object. However, past research into the attitudinal effects on prominent/vivid information requires more research. For example, while several investigations show no vividness impacts on attitudinal judgments, others discover effects that other elements may cause. A third research group discovers that the vividness effect is only actualized in specific contexts. Conditional variables were analyzed and found to be associated with vividness centered around message difficulty and source credibility (Homer, 2009). Researchers have also investigated attitudes toward advertising as a substitute for attitudes toward product placement to assess the impacts of advertising on individuals and their attitudes toward them as a substitute (Gould et al., 2000).

A large portion of past research on product placement has investigated how attributes of the placement affect recognition of and attitudes toward placed brands. For instance, past product placement studies have interrogated the influence of placement frequency and sequence, brand-character relationships, and placement of ethically charged brands such as guns, cigarettes, and alcohol. Similarly, subtle placements are presented visually and are not associated with a movie's plot. In contrast, blatant placements are presented via an auditory or audiovisual format and are more associated with a movie's story and characters (Gillespie et al., 2012).

Two research purposefully investigated the kind of product placement (subtle versus prominent) and repetition (low/moderate) to improve understanding of the effects of brand insertions in television and movies. These elements interact so that brand attitude declines when major brand placements are repeated. Still, when placements are subtle, consumer attitudes are mainly positive, and moderate levels of repetition have little marginal impact. Additional findings show that high-profile placements are seen as more distracting and unrealistic and intrude with the ploy; these negative impacts increase with repeated exposures (Homer, 2009).

In the expanding body of research, consumer attitudes toward product placement have gotten the highest attention as a crucial element in estimating the practice's success. These attitudes have been analyzed in several ways, each leveraging a different feature of product placement-related belief. Among them, beliefs about realism improvement and moral appropriateness have been depicted as the main elements of overall attitude toward product placement. Research indicates that consumers usually have a positive attitude toward product placement when they perceive that the approach improves the truthfulness of media content. Studies also show that the naturalistic representation of products strengthens the authenticity of imaginary storylines (Lee et al., 2011).

#### *Product Placements and Marketing Strategy*

Since Unilever's purposeful placement of Sunlight Soap into several early Lumiere movies of late 1890, inserting branded products within movies for commercial objectives has become a unique promotional technique. In an industry study, P.Q. Media estimated that 2006 expenditure on film-based placements amounted to \$885.1 million. The relative popularity of the approach has derived from its cost-benefit ratio and opportunity for larger audiences in the wake of ever-expanding traditional media placement prices, limited ability by viewers to resist exposure to the persuasion attempt, declining costs in marketing and production for movie producers, and the aesthetic improvement of settings described in movie content. Comprehending the consumers' perceptions and how such perceptions affect behavior is crucial for advertisers, as it can help create more effective targeting activities and offer more knowledge about the potential success of utilizing said technique (de Gregorio & Sung, 2010).

The rationale for investigating placement, depicted as a marketing technique in which a company pays to insert its branded products in movies and television shows, is that they have become so popular that in 2005, they were expected to be utilized in 75% of a prime-time network film. The practice has become a component of the marketing mix of about 1,000 U.S. firms, including big Fortune 100 firms, such as Procter & Gamble, PepsiCo, and Anheuser-Busch (Russell & Stern, 2006). An elevation in placement is connected to enhanced sales, mainly when brands are promoted in television shows. This program type provides robust evidence of the approach's success in many product lines (Russell & Stern, 2006). Seeking more creative approaches to connect to their target consumers, many firms use product placement advertising, which entails products in media to impact consumers' attitudes or behavior. Simultaneously, studies on viewer behavior toward product placement have been increasing exponentially. A crucial question for marketers considering product placement is how to successfully insert their brand in a given medium (Gillespie et al., 2012).

Product placement, a type of advertising practice by marketers, involves a promotional product prominently displayed in a scene of a television program, movie, novel, song, radio program, newscast, game, or other media. Product placement refers to deliberately inserting a product into an entertainment medium. Advertising and entertainment have been integrated, causing some viewers to fail to distinguish between commercial messages and entertainment. Although product placement is a commercial form of advertising, it works more uniquely than paid commercial messages. By effectively integrating a brand's planned and unobtrusive display into a media outlet, consumers will not likely notice the product placement or discern the messages as commercial. Viewers are thus likely to avoid developing misgivings about the message. As a result, audience defense mechanisms for product placement may trigger more gradually. Therefore, the strategic value of product placement is that its popular setting can integrate with entertainment (Lin, 2014).

As marketers see product placement as the hope of television advertising, ideally appropriate for brand communication, product placement is expanding and is forecasted to expand more within the advertising space (Knoll et al., 2015). Brands now play crucial roles in terms of editorial content in many media. Writers, directors, set designers, and other advertising professionals use brands as tools to articulate specific messages to audiences. Within a film or television program, brands always provide authenticity to a drama, assist in setting its time, or reveal a character's personality attributes. However, those brand placements represent intentional advertising activities reinforced by formal contracts between marketers and the managers of editorial content. The latter instance demonstrates product placement. Product placement is a well-known example of a hybrid message or a paid attempt to impact the viewers that does not reveal the sponsor (Balasubramanian et al., 2006).

Product placement traditionally fell within the category of covert advertising because audiences often needed to be aware of the commercial persuasion objective. Many past marketing research endeavors focused on this marketing platform's clandestine elements. However, as viewers have become more discerning in advertising and the practice well-known, it has pivoted toward traditional marketing. The question is whether this tactic remains as successful as in the past; it is usually assumed that when advertisers cross a particular benchmark and overwhelm the viewers with blatant product placements, their approaches will not be practical (Karniouchina et al., 2011).

#### *Product Placements in Films and Advertisements*

With 41% of U.S. homes currently using digital video recorders that enable viewers to skip through advertising by 2008, product placements threaten to disrupt conventional advertising messages. The placement industry is valued at about \$3.46 billion, with \$1.88 billion allotted to television placements alone in 2004 (Russell & Stern, 2006). Researchers have studied attitudes toward advertising as a representative of attitudes toward product placement to assess the impact of advertising on viewers and their attitudes toward them as a proxy (i.e., both are categorized in terms of commercial messages intended for a particular target audience (Gould et al., 2000).

Product placement in the mass media involves incorporating products in films and television programs in exchange for financial or other considerations. Such insertion has also

been perceived as a combination of advertising and public relations. Research has shown the significance of product placement as an extension to the promotional mix, although many challenges exist concerning it (Gould et al., 2000).

Although the ethics and effectiveness of subliminal advertising are controversial, they remain utilized by marketers, particularly in product placement, where brands are perceived as an integral component of films or television programs without being mainly referred to as such by the characters in the films. Product placement was a well-organized and prominent growth opportunity in the late 1970s. Since 1982, when sales of Reese's Candy Pieces exploded by 65% after placement in the film *E.T.*, this advertising approach began to draw the attention of advertising and marketing professionals alike. Product placement and commercials differ in that viewers can switch to a different channel or not view the advertisement prior to a film. In contrast, products placed in films or television programs cannot be scaped similarly (Tsai et al., 2007).

Many scholars agree that product placement can improve the authenticity of advertising content. They discovered that three types of contexts affect viewers' attitudes toward product placement: (1) When celebrities promote brands; (2) When product placement is consistent with a scene displayed; (3) When products are prominently advertised. Scientists further discovered an influential driver for effective placement as plot integration. Well-integrated placements are perceived as more persuasive in altering attitudes than well-known but inconsistent placements. Moreover, they claimed that the story actors' attitudes toward the placed brands will affect audiences' attitudes toward the same brands (Ho et al., 2011).

### *Recognition and Recall*

Regarding recognition and recall, research on the influence of subtle versus blatant placements has proved that consumers are more likely to recognize and recall blatantly inserted brands. These discoveries make sense, given the more prominent role of blatant placements and the many ways consumers can digest messages about blatant placements, such as visual and auditory pathways. Regarding attitudes, research comparing the effect of subtle versus blatant placements has resulted in a more sophisticated pattern of outcomes. For instance, using a vignette methodology, scientists proved that attitudes toward product placement (as a tactic) did not change as a function of whether the brand insertion was implicit, explicit, and incorporated into the story or explicit and not incorporated into the story. Research shows that ego depletion decreases motivation to digest messages, countering one's goals. This is useful for product placement because the main objective of the television audience is to enjoy their chosen program (Gillespie et al., 2012).

Because a product placement disclosure can affect audiences' attention while viewing a film and improve their recognition of advertising, such a disclosure may have crucial effects on consumers' brand reactions. A relevant brand response for marketers involves audiences' recollections of the brands. Extant investigations have found that the disclosure of brands in films and television shows directly enhances consumers' brand recall. However, researchers discovered that top-of-mind recognition of a brand is marginal after a brand placement disclosure relative to a situation with no disclosure. The researchers claimed that consumers correct their product recall to avoid the effect of brand placement. In addition, they

demonstrated that the degree to which viewers infer the persuasive effect of a placement mediates the impact of disclosure on brand recollection. Hence, the audience's persuasion knowledge, such as their awareness of advertising messages, could be a crucial mediator of the influence of disclosure on product memory (Boerman et al., 2015).

#### *Product Placement and Cognition*

According to the social learning paradigm, most intellectual mechanisms controlling behavior are verbal rather than visual. These divergences prove that product placement success may depend on individual consumer processing styles (Russell, 1998).

According to the persuasion knowledge model, consumers increase their knowledge of and coping processes to assist them in controlling compelling situations over time. In most cases, activation of such persuasion knowledge can lead to a message having a marginal persuasive effect on the consumers. This is significant because extant academic studies have shown that consumer persuasion knowledge is often triggered by exposure to product placements. When encountering subtle product placements, those in an ego-depleted mindset should be less prone than nondepleted controls to activate persuasion knowledge, avoid persuasive messages, and develop more positive attitudes toward subtly placed products than those in a nondepleted state. However, because depleted consumers are probably to spot overt placements, both groups should be equally likely to activate persuasion knowledge in reacting to blatant placements. Hence, both groups should have a level of brand attitudes toward blatantly placed brands (Gillespie et al., 2012).

#### *Product Placement and Ethics*

The ethics of product placement may be analyzed in terms of two perspectives: (1) general ethical challenges and (2) ethical challenges about brands. Regarding the general ethics of product placements, research discovers that such placement was acceptable; however, those who opposed it did so for ethical concerns. For instance, some viewers believe that brands inserted in films could be misleading. That is, they may be perceived as hidden but paid content. On the other hand, specific brands have been targeted for ethical reasons regarding product placement. A case in point is the placement of cigarettes in films shown on television, which has been seen as a strategy to circumvent the ban on cigarette advertising. Such placement targets television viewers who cannot zip through this commercial intrusion since it would disrupt their viewing experience (Gould et al., 2000).

The increase in product placement in television shows has been a cause for concern for governments, consumer advocacy groups, and researchers because product placement may infringe on the right of consumers to be informed when they are being subjected to advertising content. To guarantee ethical communication and to safeguard consumers from being affected without their knowledge, the European Union developed laws that obligate broadcasters to make known product placement on television programs. The enforcement of these brand placement regulations differs among nations. However, they all share the same objective: to assist viewers in distinguishing commercial messages from editorial messages and to identify advertising integrated into television shows. Stated differently, product placement regulations seek to activate viewers' persuasion knowledge and improve their ability to identify sponsored program messages as advertising (Boerman et al., 2015).

**Emerging Issues and Trends from the Above Empirical Literature Analysis**

The following issues and trends emerged from the analysis of the empirical literature above. First, research confirms that brand attitudes decline when product placements are known, particularly when such apparent product mentions are repeated. Consumer behavior is relatively favorable for subtle instances of product placement, and repeated exposures have little additional effect. These findings are robust across films and television. Furthermore, repeated prominent product insertions motivate audiences to consider the usefulness of these promotional techniques, perceiving them as annoying and distorting the storyline. These discoveries support past evidence (1) that content repetition can improve or hinder persuasion, depending on the positive state of a consumer's cognitive responses, and (2) that tactic unusefulness mediates the impact of ad repetition on content effectiveness. Consequently, repeating well-known brand placements in films and television shows can have negative results. In contrast, for subtle placements, the effect of a moderate degree of repetition is in the positive direction, and the impact is marginal (Homer, 2009).

Second, the favorable influence on brand memory is mediated by consumers' visual attention to the disclosure, their visual attention to the product placement, and their recognition of advertising. This implies more than attention to brand placement is required to enhance brand memory. Consumers must also identify it as advertising. These findings align with processing and persuasion knowledge theories, which posit that activating persuasion knowledge calls for elaborate message processing. Hence, as consumers' recognition of advertising in a film solidifies, their memory of the product integrated into the program is also enhanced. In the same view, recognizing advertising triggered by a brand placement disclosure may affect consumers' reactions to the brand. When the manipulative nature of the content is inferred, an alteration of meaning can happen, and the consumer may choose a more critical processing style, which may impact the sender's assessment (Boerman et al., 2015).

Third, based on the balanced model of product placement effects, viewers position their attitudes toward products with the inside-program characters' attitudes to products, and the viewers' extra-program association influences this alignment mechanism to the characters. In this way, the model adds to understanding product placement effects, depicting the significance of a character's impact on viewers' attitudes toward placed products, primarily when characters' attitudes towards brands are positive. However, when characters' attitudes toward a brand are negative, characters affect viewer attitudes only when there is a robust association with the product (Russell & Stern, 2006).

Finally, research shows that peer consumption-related communication strongly predicts placement attitudes and placement-related behaviors. Because of the social nature of much film-watching, analysis of placed brands and the strategy itself that emerges from exposure through film-watching may lead to more positive acceptance for product placement in general, driven by the fact that the overall attitudes toward placement are positive and the proven tendency of attitudes and behaviors to comply with those of one's referent group (Gregorio & Sung, 2010).

### **Marketing Implications**

Marketers would better align their placement activities based on a specific movie's projected target consumers. In addition to the kind of brands placed, marketers must also be aware of the potential ethical dimensions in terms of the perceived vulnerability of the targeted consumers via placement (such as kids). Advertisers must proceed consciously and consider the type of product to be advertised and the perception of the viewers they are targeting, given that consumers display notably negative responses to the targeting of ethically controversial products to vulnerable target segments (Gregorio & Sung, 2010).

Research findings indicate that marketers should be conscious of all potential differences (i.e., national, product, and personal differences) when developing multicultural marketing initiatives. Product placement programs should always be seen in a much wilder context to ensure they are effectively embedded into marketing programs (McKechnie & Zhou, 2003).

When budgeting for product placements, marketers should also be conscious that global acceptance of a specific brand may vary. Thus, they should allocate less spending for product placement on that consideration (Gould et al., 2000)

Given the analysis above in this article, marketers and movie makers should tread carefully if considering the placement/acceptance of cigarettes, guns, gambling, and alcohol products. In fact, it is suggested that entertainment and marketing professionals self-regulate and agree not to accept branded placements of such ethically charged products in movies with less than an R-rating in order to avoid turning public opinion against the technique and to keep government agencies from believing there is reason to impose controls from external forces (Sung et al., 2009).

Finally, from a practical standpoint, findings on attitude change show that product managers not using product placements should recalibrate their advertising tactics and consider allotting more money to commercially lucrative, attitude-enhancing techniques.

### **Recommendations for Marketing Decision-Making**

Product placements are already a nuisance based on the viewers' perceptions. Therefore, to avoid placements further hurting the brand, these products must be displayed more subtly in media to develop a favorable attitude towards the brand. However, there is a crucial point marketers should know: consumers are more likely to appreciate placements when their favorite actors talk about them. This encourages better consumer recall of the brand than placement, which needs to be communicated verbally. Hence, although placements generally function as distractions, they are more appreciated when the viewer's favorite actor talks about them (Kit & P'ng, 2014).

Explicit and implicit memory operate within differing neural structures; explicit memory entails conscious collection, while implicit memory involves unconscious recollection. If the marketer's objective for placement is to enhance brand awareness and show product benefits, explicit techniques might be appropriate for success. However, for consumers' purchasing decisions, implicit techniques have been proven to be a preferred

instrument for implicit memory, which is connected to the consumer's actual behavior than the explicit alternative (Ho et al., 2011).

Subtle placements positively impact brand attitudes more than blatant placements. Moreover, subtle placements are more likely to improve brand attitudes beyond those held by nonexposed controls. These results suggest that marketers using prime-time product placements may want to try affordable subtle placements instead of more blatant alternatives. While further research is needed before marketers significantly revise their product placement approaches, the results show an initial impetus for pivoting in that direction (Gillespie et al., 2012).

Since a movie's viewers can be grouped demographically, marketers would better align their placement activities based on a specific movie's forecasted targeted consumers. Moreover, as research indicates, indiscriminate placement risks increasingly destroy the generally favorable perceptions of product placement and encourage the imposition of external regulations. In addition to the kind of products placed, marketers must also be careful of the underlying ethical implications regarding the perceived vulnerability of the targeted consumers via placements (such as kids). Marketers must proceed mindfully and consider the type of product to be placed and the perceived susceptibility of the viewers they are targeting, given that consumers show notably negative responses to the targeting of ethically controversial products to susceptible target groups (de Gregorio & Sung, 2010). Finally, the commonalities and differences between targeted segments, individual consumers, and product categories are important variables marketers should assess when designing their product placement practices (McKechnie & Zhou, 2003).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Product placement is no longer seen as an emerging marketing technique; instead, it has reached prominence as a media platform as marketers seek more successful strategies to affect consumers' attitudes in the current oversaturated and fragmented advertising space. Not only are marketers expending vast sums of their advertising expenditures on these kinds of initiatives, but media studios depend on such arrangements as an essential source of cash inflows (Homer, 2009).

The practice of product placement has evolved significantly during the past decades, from one that was local and simple to one that is now international in reach and purpose. Marketers are increasingly adopting product placement as an instrument for cheaply obtaining substantial reach, improving memory for the product, and establishing favorable connections with film characters. Researchers have discovered more about consumers' responses to product placement initiatives as the technique has become more mainstream. For example, viewers may have diverse attitudes toward placement depending on the media approach deployed, the targeted segment, and the product's nature (Karrh et al., 2001).

Finally, an analysis of the critical areas of research conducted to date indicates that many studies have emphasized certain types of product placement, such as the nature of the product chosen for placement, the influences of placement type and viewing timeframe on product recognition, and the impact of branded props on consumers' behavior. Some researchers have examined product placement in terms of its ethical acceptance. Most

studies found respondents to have a generally positive perception of product placement. However, some studies did claim other findings, such as a low recall rate, no enhanced purchase intention, and the belief that product placement is potentially unethical (McKechnie & Zhou, 2003).

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