

MASTER'S THESIS

Product placement in television drama: effects of information overload and character attributes

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**Product Placement in Television Drama: Effects of Information
Overload and Character Attributes**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

Including branded information within media contents is an emerging yet important area of marketing communication. Around the world, the barriers against product placement in television programs are gradually removed. For instance, Television Without Frontiers Directive, a special taskforce of the European Commission, reached mutual agreement to allow product placement in television programs in 2007. In Hong Kong, product placement in television program was permitted since 2005. This study examines two common placement practices used currently in local television dramas. Based on the persuasion knowledge model, entertainment persuasion and balance theory, the current study investigates the effects of information-overload and character genre (leading and supporting character) on placement recall and viewers' attitudes towards placement and the placed product. The moderation effect of character involvement is explored as well. Two quasi-experiments with sample size of 100 and 60 respectively were conducted. Experimental subjects were university students recruited by convenience sampling. Results reflect that though information-overloaded placement enhances placement recall, it generates more negative attitudes towards placement and the placed product. However, high involvement with the television drama character can dampen such negative effects. In contrast, viewers in non-information-overloaded placement condition report lower recall rate but more positive placement attitudes. In addition, results reveal that placement associated with more favorable leading character is more effective in generating placement recall and positive placement attitudes than placement associated with less favorable supporting character. Managerial implications to industry professionals and theoretical implications to consumer researchers are provided.

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