

MASTER'S THESIS

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

Kong, Sze Kei Fanny

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

KONG Sze Kei Fanny

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

Principal Supervisor: Dr. HUNG Kineta H

Hong Kong Baptist University

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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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Table of contents	iv-v
List of tables	vi
List of figures	vii
List of Appendices	viii
CHAPTER I : BACKGROUND	1
CHAPTER II : LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1 Conceptualization of information overload	5
2.1.1 Information overload and consumer information processing	5
2.1.2 Information overload and product placement	6
2.2 Amount of product information in placement and effects on placement recall	6
2.3 Amount of product information in placement and effects on placement attitudes	7
2.4 Involvement with television drama character	9
2.4.1 Involvement as moderator	10
2.5 Placement associated character genre and effects of placement	12
CHAPTER III : METHODOLOGY & RESULTS	15
3.1 Experiment one	16
3.1.1 Study design	16
3.1.2 Experimental instrument	16
3.1.3 Pretest	26
3.1.4 Subjects	27
3.1.5 Procedure	28
3.1.6 Measures	28
3.1.7 Results	30
3.2 Experiment two	34
3.2.1 Objectives	34
3.2.2 Study design	34
3.2.3 Experimental instrument	35
3.2.4 Pretest	37

3.2.5 Subjects	38
3.2.6 Procedure	38
3.2.7 Measures	38
3.2.8 Results	39
CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION	41
4.1 General discussion	41
4.1.1 Amount of product information in placement and effects of placement	41
4.1.2 Placement associated character genre and effects of placement	45
4.2 Implications	47
4.3 Limitations and further research	50
4.4 Concluding remarks	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY	56
APPENDICES	64
CURRICULUM VITAE	78