

Product Placement in Movies : Relationship Between Beliefs Towards Product Placement and Usage Behavior

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Abstract

Product placement (PL) in movies is an emergent media vehicle for promoting brands and products. It is receiving a great deal of attention from both academicians and media persons. This paper presented an exploratory quantitative study that reports the beliefs of 163 college going students towards the practice of product placements and links them with product usage behavior. The study suggests that some beliefs are very useful in predicting the usage behavior and can be used potentially by marketers. A very limited number of studies have tried to explore this relationship in the past.

Keywords: product placement in movies, beliefs about product placement, behavior, advertising

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Product placement in movies is a practice that incorporates placing brands in movies for a fee that is paid by the product marketers to the movie producers. Product placement (PPL) is a paid message aimed at influencing the movie audience via planned, unobtrusive entry of a branded product in a movie (Balasubramanian, 1994). Product placement may also involve a barter agreement between a marketer and a movie producer. Products are placed in the movies with the intention to heighten the visibility of the brand, increase its memorability and instant recognition at point of purchase (Panda, 2004). While the general belief is that product placement started off as a practice for making scenes in movies look genuine, in the current times, it has evolved as a successful strategy for promoting products (Morton & Friedman, 2002). Over time, marketers have lost confidence in traditional advertising and are resorting to this popular strategy. It successfully helps them break the clutter and declining advertising rating (Gupta & Lord, 1998).

Products are placed in movies or TV programs in different ways. One method is placing a brand/ product, logo, signage in a movie with no mention of the brand whatsoever. This kind of placement is known as implicit product placement. Another way is that the brand is formally mentioned in the movie and plays just not a passive, but an active role. This is known as integrated explicit PPL. The third form is called as the non integrated explicit PPL, wherein the brand is neither mentioned nor placed in the movie, but the brand may be presented at the beginning, middle, or end of the movie or simply used in the title only.

In literature, various factors have emerged that have led to increasing interest in product placement, not only in movies, but also in TV programs and video games. Channel switching behavior of audience, audience fragmentation of TV channels, and technological advances, which allow consumers to avoid commercials are some of the significant factors leading to the use of PPL strategy (Nelson & Devanathan, 2006). Fourier and Dalan (1997) found that brand recall is poor for commercials that are featured in TV programs with higher television

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rating point (TRP) owing to the channel switching behavior of the audience. Product placements offer a number of advantages to the marketers - such as the amount of hype that a brand achieves when it gets associated with a movie or a movie star; allows them to get access to more commercial time; and free from direct competition (Panda, 2004). Morton and Friedman (2002) believed that PPL provides marketers an unconventional medium to give exposure to products/ brands. They also believed that movie audience are more receptive. Globalization has also played a significant role in making PPL in movies a relevant and useful strategy as movies, and subsequently, brand/ products get exposed to both national and international audience (Balasubramanian, 1994).

In the past and recent times, studies have investigated the effectiveness of product placements in movies in terms of brand recall and recognition. Another group of studies have tried to find the attitudes of audience towards product placement in movies, while some have tried to link attitude with purchase intention. Cross-cultural studies investigated which cultures are more receptive to the practice of PPL. India has one of the world's biggest movie industries in terms of the number of movies produced every year (Sharma, Chadha, & Goyal, 2014). However, it can be safely concluded that not much is still known about the practice of PPL in movies and even lesser is known in the Indian market (Choubey & Bumb, 2013). In this paper, an attempt has been made to explore the relationship between belief towards PPL in movies and behavioral outcomes, which has been scarcely studied in the Indian context.

Literature Review

Karrh (1998) defined brand placement as a paid inclusion of branded products or brand identifiers through audio and visual means within mass media programming, noting that the term product placement is used interchangeably with brand placement. Many believe that the history of product placement in movies goes back a long way; some even contend that this practice is as old as the medium itself. There is evidence of PPL in Hollywood cinema as back as in 1930s, but it came to the forefront only in 1980s. It was in the movie, *E. T. - the Extra - Terrestrial* (1982) that Hershey's Reese's pieces were used to attract the alien from its hiding places, and it has been reported that only within a month of placement, the sale of the peanut butter candy (Hershey's Reese's) increased by 65% (Gupta & Gould, 1997). Following this, interest in PPL in movies grew up significantly. Many researchers regard this as a milestone in the history of product placement (Gokhale, 2010).

Ericsson mobile phones got a major boost when the phone was placed in the 1997 James Bond movie, *Tomorrow Never Dies* (Morton & Friedman, 2002). BMW had great success after its cars were featured in the James Bond film *GoldenEye*. Other examples from 1980s of PPL in movies include, Budweiser Beer in *Honeysuckle Rose* (1980); Cheerios in *Honky Tonk Freeway* (1981); Wheaties in *Rocky III* (1982). *You've Got Mail* (1998) showed many shots of AOL website, its logo, and messaging template. In the iconic Tom Hanks movie, *Cast Away* (2000), huge screen time was given to FedEx. Tom Cruise made Ray-Ban sunglasses a rage by adorning them in movies like *Risky Business* and *Top Gun*. One of the recent and successful examples of PPL was in the 2012 James Bond movie, *Skyfall*, which featured several brands like Heineken, Omega, BMW, Sony, and Coke (Erik, 2012).

The practice of product placements in Hindi movies started with the 1955 movie, *Shree 420* (Gokhale, 2010). Coca Cola was the first company which pioneered this practice in Hindi movies. Soon after, Mobil brake fluid was featured in *Chalti Ka Naam Gaadi* (1958); Coca Cola in *An Evening in Paris* (1967); and *Bobby* (1975) made Rajdoot motorcycles famous (Gokhale, 2010). While these product placements did happen, they were not so obvious and much talked about. However, after product placements became increasingly popular in the West, this practice also gained significant popularity in India, especially in 1990s. What *E.T.* did to product placements in Hollywood, blockbuster movie, *Taal* (1999) created the same magic in India. Coke was placed very prominently in this movie, and the stars were seen romancing using a bottle of Coke. It is observed that after the hugely successful placement of Coke in the movie, this practice came to limelight in the Indian film industry, and since then, there has been no looking back for marketers and movie producers.

PPL in movies has become a standard practice by companies to promote their products and brands, even though it means paying a great deal of money to the movie makers. It also started working equally well for the movie producers since it helps raise finances for the movies. Brand like Pepsi, Levis, and Killer Jeans got prominently featured in the 1997 blockbuster, *Dil Toh Paagal Hai*. Cadbury's Bournvita was featured in *Koi Mil Gaya* (2003); Star Bucks and Burger King in *Kabhie Khushi Kabhie Ghum* (2001); Tata Safari in *Road* (2002); brands Sunshine and Kimaya in *Fashion* (2008); magazine Verve in *Dostana* (2008); Tag Heuer in *Don*; Coke in *Dhoom* and Singapore Tourism in *Krrish* (2006). Blockbuster movie, *Bodyguard* (2011) is one of the recent examples from Bollywood, which featured multiple brands such as Audi, Tupperware, BlackBerry, Sony Vaio, among others (Gokale, 2010).

Much of the literature on product placements suggests that brand placements affect the consumers' recall, recognition, and attitude towards brands. The research on the practice of PPL started off as finding its effectiveness and acceptability. One of the first studies regarding PPL in movies was conducted by Nibenzahl and Secunda (1993) to understand effectiveness and acceptability of the PPL practice. They found that most of the students, who were in the age group of 18 to 34 years, were open to the idea of placements in movies and those who opposed this practice did so purely on ethical grounds. Gupta and Gould (1997) conducted a study to understand the acceptability and ethics of placing brands/ products in movies and found that audience attitudes were generally favourable. The results revealed that acceptability and effectiveness of PPL can vary by product category, especially on the basis of ethics. Their findings revealed that people opposed the idea of placing and advertising products like guns, alcohol, and cigarettes in movies. This feeling was found to be more predominant amongst women than in men.

In 1998, Gupta and Lord tested brand recall of brands placed in movies, and the impact of various product placement categorizations (prominent vs subtle) and product placement mode (visual, audio, and audio visual). Their study revealed that both audio and visual placements were advantageous over subtle visual placements. Gupta, Balasubramanian, and Klassen's (2000) research also found that consumers' perceptions of product placements were generally positive. Most respondents did not mind if placements appeared in movies; they believed that placements made movies realistic, and expressed a preference for seeing real brands in movies. However, respondents also expressed a little concern that consumers were vulnerable to manipulation via placements, and that it is highly unethical to influence movie audiences through placements. Attitudinal studies in PPL have revealed that the audience in general like placements as they make a movie scene seem to be more authentic and real. Brands aid in character development and give the audience a sense of familiarity (Nelson & Devanathan, 2006). Others have conducted cross cultural studies by comparing effects across cultures after exposing people to movies (Gould, Gupta, and Grabner- Kräuter, 2000; Karrh, Frith, & Callison, 2001). Nelson and Devanathan (2006) found that film involvement had an adverse effect on brand recall, while brand consciousness had a positive effect.

Very few studies have tried to establish a correlation between audience beliefs towards PPL in movies and their purchase intention (Nelli, 2009). Gould et al. (2000) used purchase behavior against country, gender, and movies watched. The results revealed country and gender differences on purchase behavior, but the interaction was not significant. The outcome of their study also revealed a positive attitude towards product placement and that PPL enhanced realism in movies which eventually impacted purchase behavior. Morton and Friedman (2002) examined the relationship between consumer beliefs towards product placement and reported usage behavior. They found in their study that beliefs about PPL were correlated with product usage behaviors.

In India, some work has been done to understand consumers' responses towards PPL in movies. Panda (2004) evaluated the effectiveness of product placements in terms of brand recall, recognition, and attitudes. He found that people had a favorable positive attitude towards PPL. Kureshi and Sood (2009), however, found in their results that the Indian audience was overall indifferent towards the practice of PPL. They also described in their results that the practice of PPL was not aligned with audience preferences. Gokhale (2010) conducted a comparative study between the practice of PPL in Indian movies and in Hollywood. Mathur and Goswami (2012) examined the effectiveness of product placement on viewer's recognition and recall. They reported in their findings that brands

advertised via movies gained acceptance among the Indian audience. They also reported that this form of advertising was growing very rapidly and was a reactive way of advertising.

Morton and Friedman (2002) tried to find a relationship between beliefs towards PPL in movies and the impact of these beliefs on usage behavior. The variables that constitute belief towards PPL have been identified in literature, but not much research has been conducted on exploring the link. The current paper thus tries to explore the beliefs towards PPL and its impact on subsequent behavioral outcomes in the Indian context.

Research Objectives

The aim of the study is to understand the nature of relationship between beliefs towards product placement and usage behavior. The variables and items that constitute belief construct are well identified in the literature. Based on the previous work conducted by Morton and Friedman (2002), we hypothesize that beliefs towards product placement in movies are related with consumer product usage behavior, and these beliefs can be used to predict usage behavior.

Methodology

A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out using convenience sampling. The sample was selected from a reputed business school in New Delhi, which was accessible to us during 2014. Students agreed to participate in the present study as the target audience of movie goers is usually in the age group of 18 to 32 years. Apart from the descriptive statistics, relevant statistical techniques like factor analysis and regression analysis were also used to derive valid conclusions from the data collected from the respondents.

✎ **Sample Characteristics :** The sample consisted of 163 respondents who were students from a reputed business school in New Delhi. All the students were from PGDM courses from 1st and 2nd years. The sample consisted of 50% males ($n = 81$) and 48% females ($n = 79$). The age of the sample respondents was in the age group of 18-27 years ; 39% ($n = 63$) of the students were in the age group of 18 years to 22 years ; while 61% ($n = 99$) were in the age group 23 - 27 years (Table 1). The particular age range was chosen on purpose as the target audience of movie makers most often lies in these age groups, and therefore, it served our purpose to explore our objective. One respondent was in the age group of 28-32 years. Our sample constituted of 81 males and 79 females. Three respondents did not record their gender. The administration of the questionnaire was done at the end of the class session, and enough time was given to the students to fill in their questionnaires. Each questionnaire form had a background that informed the respondents about the concept of product placements in movies.

✎ **Research Instrument :** A questionnaire was developed to understand the belief of the consumers towards PPL in movies and the impact of their beliefs on usage behavior. The belief statements were borrowed from previous studies on PPL (Gupta & Gould, 1997 ; Morton & Friedman, 2002). Morton and Friedman (2002) had also adopted the belief statements from earlier work done on PPL, and these statements are now well recognized in literature (Gupta & Gould, 1997 ; Karrh, 1998 ; Karrh et al., 2001). In this study, 10 statements have been used to ascertain the beliefs of the respondents towards PPL in terms of feelings, cognition, and awareness. The responses towards belief statements were rated on a 5 - point likert scale, enabling measurement of respondents' levels of agreement and disagreement. The belief construct comprised of cognitive and affective components. The affective component was gauged by statements associated with the following variables - Pref, Like, Feel, Banned, Ethics ; whereas, the cognitive component was queried using statements associated with the variables like Alt, Real, Believe, and Recall. The behavior construct is made up of four statements that were used to measure the respondents' usage behavior as a consequence of exposure to brands placed in movies. The four statements (refer to

Table 1. Demographics of the Sample

No.	Respondent Characteristic's	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age Group		
	18-22	63	39
	23-27	99	61
	28-32	1	1
2	Gender		
	Male	81	50
	Female	79	48
	Missing	3	2
3	Occupation		
	Student school	2	1
	Student college	160	98
	Working private	1	1
4	Monthly Income (Household)		
	upto Rs 20000	13	8
	Rs 20,001 to 40,000	16	10
	Rs 40001 to 60000	29	18
	Rs60001 and above	86	53
	Missing	19	12
	Total	163	100

variables) used were: Search, Start Use, Stop Use, and Try. The behavioral variables were also measured on a 5-point likert scale. In the original paper by Morton and Friedman (2002), the four behavioral statements were measured using a nominal yes, no response.

✍ **Validity and Reliability Analysis :** The content validity of the research instrument (questionnaire) was ensured as the belief construct variables were identified from the literature. Reliability of the factors was confirmed by performing reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha. The value of Cronbach's alpha is .804, which shows that the data had very good internal consistency reliability. The value of Cronbach's alpha for Factor 1 (Pro Placement) is .739 and for Factor 2 (Ethics), it is .695, which is satisfactory.

Analysis and Results

The Table 2 reveals the information regarding the sample with regards to their general attitude towards films and cinema ; 99% of the respondents revealed that they watched films, while only 1% reported to not watching films at all (both respondents were men) ; 20% of the sample respondents said that they preferred watching Hindi movies the most, while 16% preferred watching English movies, 62% of the sample preferred watching both English and Hindi language movies ; 15% of the sample reported that they normally watched movies at home, 13% revealed that they normally watched movies at cinema, and 70% of the respondents watched movies both at home and in cinema halls. On an average, 29% of the sample respondents watched movies 1-3 times in a week, and 64% of the respondents watched movies 1 to 3 times in a month. Only 7% of the respondents watched movies 1 to 3 times in a year. When the respondents were asked whether on watching a movie, they became aware of products or brands placed in movies, 91% ($n = 146$) of the students reported that they were aware, and only 9% revealed that they were

Table 2. General Information about Respondents with Regards to Films and PPL

No	Question	Frequency	%
1	Watch Movies?		
	Yes	161	99
	No	2	1
	Total	163	100
2	Type of Film watched		
	Hindi Movies	33	21
	English Movies	26	16
	Both	101	63
	Others	1	1
	Total	161	100
3	Place of Watching Films		
	Home	25	16
	Cinema	22	14
	Both	114	71
	Total	161	100
4	Frequency of Watching Films		
	1-3 times a week	47	29
	1 to 3 times a month	103	64
	1 to 3 times a year	11	7
	Total	161	100
5	Awareness about Product Placement (PPL)		
	Yes	146	91
	No	15	9
	Total	161	100

not aware of this practice. On further probing regarding the familiarity with product placements, 7% were very familiar, 45% were familiar, and 36% were little familiar. At an overall level, 88% of the respondents were familiar with PPL, and only 7% of the respondents were not familiar with PPL.

Descriptive Analysis

The belief construct comprised of 10 statements, out of which three statements have negative wordings; these three statements are depicted by variables : Pref, Ethics, and Banned, which were later reverse coded. The Table 3 has the mean score for each of the attitudinal statements about PPL. Affective statements include (depicted by variables) Like, Pref, Feel, Banned, and Ethics. Cognitive statements include Alt, Real, Believe, Recall, and Ticket. Beliefs about PPL were measured using these statements adapted from previous studies. The statements were operationalized on a 1 to 5-point likert scale from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. Higher mean score for each belief statement (for positive statements) is interpreted to mean stronger agreement with the statement. Higher mean score for each belief statement (for negative statements) is interpreted to mean stronger disagreement with the statement. The highest mean is for Banned (R), which is 4.06. This implies that the respondents disagreed that PPL should be banned. This finding is in line with Morton and Friedman's (2002) study that also revealed that respondents generally disagreed with the proposition of prohibiting product placement in movies. From the

Table 3. Attitudinal Statements Indicating Their Mean Score and Standard Deviation

Name	Statement Name	Mean	SD
Like	I like to see branded products in movies.	3.48	.849
Alt	Product placement in movies is a good alternative to traditional commercials.	3.83	.800
Pref*	I would not prefer to see a movie without product placements (R).	3.27	.783
Real	The presence of a branded product in a movie makes them more realistic.	3.50	.934
Believe	Real products should be used extensively in movies to make a scene more believable.	3.51	.912
Feel	The way a product is used in a movie scene can affect my feelings about the product.	3.50	.963
Recall	When a character that I like uses a product in a movie, I am more likely to remember that product.	3.71	1.077
Ethics*	The idea of placing products in movies is not ethical because the movie goer doesn't want to watch paid advertising (R).	3.39	.920
Ticket	Product placements in movies are a good idea for keeping down the price of movie tickets.	3.34	.957
Banned*	In my opinion, product placements should not be banned (R).	4.06	0.820
Name	Statement Name	Mean	SD
Search	I generally look for a product in a store after seeing it in a movie.	2.77	.891
Start Use	I generally start using a brand after seeing it in a movie.	2.51	0.824
Stop Use	I generally do not stop using a brand after seeing it in a movie(R).	3.87	.631
Try	I want to try a brand after seeing it in a movie.	3.16	0.932

Note : Asterix (*) sign stands for statements that are negatively worded statements and ,therefore, reverse coded.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test & Total Variance Explained

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.848	Component	Initial Eigen Values			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Sig = 0			Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
		1	3.53	2.42	26.892	26.892
		2	1.086	2.201	24.453	24.453

Table 3, it can be inferred that the highest mean score (that is highest agreement) is for two positive statements: "Product placement in movies is a good alternative to traditional commercials" (3.83) and "When a character who I like uses a product in a movie, I am more likely to remember the product" (3.71).

According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions model (2001), India scored high in the cultural dimension power distance and verticality (individualist vs collectivist), which means that status in the hierarchy is important for Indians. Thus, celebrities have always been looked upto in our country, and in some areas (South India), film stars are even worshiped, and temples have been constructed in their honor. Thus, it makes a lot of sense for marketers to place brands in movies (which will be used by film stars). The same is also revealed in our study, since the respondents reported that they were more likely to recall and remember a product if their favorite character used it in a movie (mean = 3.71). The respondents generally disagreed with the statement that they stopped using a brand after seeing it in movies (highest mean for a negative statement). The next highest mean (3.16) is for the statement associated with the variable Try, which shows that after seeing a brand in a movie, the respondents also wanted to try the same.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was performed on the 10 belief statements. A principal component technique with varimax rotation was used as it was assumed that the observed variables could be better explained in terms of a smaller number of

Table 5. Principal Component Analysis : Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	Statements	Components	
FEEL	The way a product is used in a movie scene can affect my feelings about the product.	1	2
RECALL	When a character that I like uses a product in a movie, I am more likely to remember the product.	0.808	
BELIEVE	Real products should be used extensively in movies to make a scene more believable.	0.766	
REAL	The presence of a brand name /product in a movie makes the movie more realistic.	0.727	
ETHICS	The idea of placing products in movies is ethical.	0.513	
BANNED	In my opinion, product placements should not be banned.		0.749
PREF	I would prefer to see a movie with product placements.		0.745
ALT	Product placement in movies are a good alternative to traditional commercials.		0.562
LIKE	I would like to see brand names/ products in movies.		0.522
		0.473	0.508

underlying perceptual dimensions. The Table 4 shows that the value of KMO statistic is very high (.848) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant (sig=.000). This indicates the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis.

The 10 belief statements were explained by two factors that together accounted for 51% of the variance. This means that the original data set of 10 variables could be reduced by using these two components (eigen values greater than 1 as shown in the Table 5). The rotated sum of square loadings reveals that the first factor accounted for 26.892% of the total variance (eigen value 2.42) and the second factor accounted for 24.453% of the total variance (eigen value 2.201).

The rotated component matrix (Table 5) reveals two factors. The first factor contains three variables; Feel, Recall, and Believe. Feel and Recall are related to the impact of how and by whom the product is used in a movie ; whereas, Believe is related to realism. This factor is exactly in keeping with Morton and Friedman's (2002) study, where the factor was named, Pro Placement. In this study, Pro Placement has been retained as the name for this factor. The second factor contains two variables - Ethics and Banned. Both these are related to people's perception towards PPL as an effective means of advertising and opposing its prohibition from movies. The second factor is titled as Ethics in this study.

Table 6. Regression Analysis - Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Sig
1 (Pro Placement)	0.468 ^a	0.219	0
2 (Ethics)	0.583 ^b	0.34	0

a – only one independent variable (Pro Placement)

b - two independent variables (Pro Placement, Ethics)

Table 7. Regression Analysis- Regression Coefficients

Model	B	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.075	0.04		77.55	0
	REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	0.252	0.04	0.468	6.341	0
2	(Constant)	3.075	0.037		84.04	0
	REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	0.252	0.037	0.468	6.872	0
	REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	0.187	0.037	0.347	5.093	0

It becomes important to mention that the variable “Ticket” was not a part of the factor analysis and was removed since its inclusion in FA (factor analysis) resulted in three factors, with Ticket alone being part of the third factor.

Regression Analysis

A linear multiple regression analysis was performed to predict the relationship between audience's beliefs towards product placement in movies and their usage behavior. The two factors (Pro Placement & Ethics) extracted from factor analysis are the two independent variables that were used in multiple regression as they account for all the belief items used in the study. The behavior construct contained four variables, which were used as the dependent variable. Since the behavioral construct constituted of four variables, therefore, the mean score was computed, and the average or mean score of four variables was the dependent variable.

The regression analysis was conducted using step wise method in regression. As can be inferred from the Table 6 (Model Summary), the first factor explains 21.9% of the variation in the behavior of the sample. Both factors, if taken together, explain 34% of the variation in the behavior of the sample. Adding a factor has the regression robust. Both factors (Pro Placement and Ethics) are significant (p -value=.000) in predicting behavior. We can, therefore, conclude that the regression model is good fit of the data.

The estimated regression equation with standardized beta coefficients is (Table 7):

$$\text{Behavior} = 3.075 (\text{constant}) + .468 (\text{Pro Placement}) + .347 (\text{Ethics})$$

This equation supports the hypothesis that behavior is correlated with belief towards product placement in movies. Hence, it can safely be inferred that factor 1 (Pro Placement) is relatively more important in predicting and explaining the behavior. Morton and Friedman's (2002) study also revealed that beliefs were related with behavior and impacted the product usage behavior of people. Hence, our outcomes of regression support the hypothesis.

Managerial Implications

Media planners and brand marketers are looking for alternative communicative mediums to reach consumers. Product placement's growing importance as a component of integrated marketing communication requires that Indian as well as global managers make every effort to better understand its potential. In tune with the global trend, the present study has some important implications for the managers viz-a-viz product placement.

✎ By placing products in movies, the audience is left with no option but to notice the products. Thus, through placement of products in movies, it is ensured that the audience will notice the promoted products.

✎ As the current study reveals, the Indian audience holds favourable beliefs towards PPL in movies, thereby implying that PPL can augment the visibility of brands. This will enhance brand recall and recognition.

✎ The research findings also suggest that people are potentially influenced by the way a product is portrayed in a movie: the way it is used and the person who uses it. The brand managers can use this finding to create a positive portrayal of a brand in a movie. The effectiveness of this practice would depend upon the choice of movie and the actor portraying the brand as it has to be in synergy to preserve the equity of the brand.

✎ The liking and association of the audience with the character/actor involved with the placement affects the attitude and liking towards a brand (Kureshi & Sood, 2009). Kaur (2014) suggested that movie audience want to identify themselves with certain movies and characters. This implies greater benefits for lifestyle products in terms of acceptability, recall, and recognition. These findings have serious implications for product/ brand managers while designing a PPL strategy.

✎ The study also reports a positive attitude towards PPL as it opposes the idea of banning this practice or did not deem it unethical. This suggests that brand managers should seriously look at PPL in movies as a new and effective vehicle for reaching consumers. The current study is, therefore, expected to help marketers to better define their strategies.

✎ PPL is an effective and efficient alternative to traditional tools of communication, as its cost is quite low compared to the above-the-line methods of advertising or endorsements and stands out from other brands. This is in tune with previous studies like Kureshi and Sood (2009), who suggested that PPL in movies is cheaper and could be used by marketers to help cut the clutter of traditional advertising.

✎ Famous and cherished stars lend greater credibility to the brands they use. This helps in building brand and corporate image at national and international levels.

✎ PPL can be effectively used as an effective means to market brands on a global basis with a standardized strategy. Sung, de Gregorio, and Jung (2009) were also of the same opinion.

✎ Movies have evolved over time as an effective medium to change the attitude and purchase behaviour of consumers. Thus, product placements in movies increases the credibility of the brand. Kaur (2014) also reported similar findings.

Conclusion

Research suggests that consumers connect the world of movies, including product placement, with their social world and also with consumption behavior (Gould et al., 2000). It is, therefore, suggested that such linkages are important in predicting product usage and buying decisions. The rationale for the current study is in accordance with this research suggestion. The framework studied in this paper, based upon prior research by Morton and Friedman (2002), proves to be both useful and robust in explaining and revealing consumer usage behavior in response to product placement. Extending the work of Morton and Friedman (2002), this study tries to cover one limitation of their paper. They made use of a dichotomous, nominal scale (yes-no) to collect data about reported behavior, which was replaced with an interval scale for measurement in this study. Measuring respondent perceptions about product usage/ behavior was done by using a 5 point *agreement - disagreement* likert scale, which is assumed to be potentially more useful.

The study revealed that the target consumers disagreed with the idea that the practice of PPL in movies should be banned. This finding is in line with Morton and Friedman's (2002) study that also revealed that consumers generally disagreed with the proposition of prohibiting product placement in movies. Rather, the present study suggests that product placement in movies is a good alternative to traditional commercials, which is in line with the finding of the study conducted by Mathur and Goswami (2012). The current study also reveals that when an actor, who is liked by consumers uses a product in a movie, the consumers are more likely to remember that product. The study has reported that consumers are more likely to recall and remember a product if their favorite character is using that in a movie. The current study generally disagrees with the fact that consumers stop using a brand after seeing it in the movies. Instead, it reveals that after seeing a brand in a movie, consumers would like to try it. This finding is in conformity with the study conducted by Mathur and Goswami (2012). The research findings suggest that people are potentially influenced by the way a product is portrayed in a movie. The findings suggest that beliefs or attitudes towards PPL may be more influenced by how a product is used in a movie and by whom.

The audience also reported a positive attitude towards PPL and did not deem it unethical, which confirms the findings of earlier studies (Brennan, Dubas, & Babin, 2004; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003; Nelli, 2009; Sung et al., 2009). However, Nelli (2009) further reported that product and gender did have an impact on PPL acceptability. Favourable attitudes towards PPL were reported amongst student respondents; whereas, ethical issues were

raised against products like alcohol and cigarettes (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993). This study revealed that behavior is correlated with attitude towards product placement in movies. It could be safely inferred that factor 1 (Pro Placement) is relatively more important in predicting and explaining the behavior of consumers. Morton and Friedman's (2002) study also revealed that beliefs were related with behavior and impacted the product usage behavior of people. The current study suggests that the beliefs towards PPL in movies are significantly related to usage behavior. Several studies have revealed that attitude towards PPL correlates with behavioural intent/ outcomes (Brennan et al., 1999 ; Gould et al. , 2000; Gupta & Lord, 1998 ; Morton & Freidman, 2002; Mathur & Goswami, 2012 ; Nelli , 2009). The beliefs were found to be significantly impacting the product usage behavior and hence, beliefs can be used to predict behavioral outcomes.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Future Research

The study being primarily descriptive in nature with convenience sampling has some limitations. The sample was restricted to college students and ,therefore, may not be an accurate representative of the population of moviegoers. If other movie goer segments were included in the study, the research outcomes may vary to some extent. As such, this study can be followed by some other studies with more representative samples to verify the results of the study. Geographically, the study was restricted to Delhi, and this might prove to be a limitation. The resources and the time available with the scholars are also the limitations of the study as this restricted the study in nature and scope. However, this study, in spite of its limitations, is aimed to educate marketers and researchers alike to conduct research in this scarcely researched area, particularly in India.

Although, the frequency of using PPL in movies as an advertising vehicle is increasing, but it can be noticed that very little research has been conducted outside of the U.S. in this field. Thus, it becomes imperative to conduct more research in this area. Also, majority of the research that has been conducted in this area has made use of the student sample, which limits the representativeness of the sample. It is ,therefore, suggested that future research should extend the work beyond the student sample. Studies that are descriptive and exploratory in nature can have biases, which compromise the validity of the study. So, future research studies should be experimental in nature. This is expected to lead to effective communication results for the marketers (Kureshi & Sood, 2009).

As a future research direction, Morton and Friedman (2002) suggested exploration of additional variables to segment movie goers. This shall help design the brand communication techniques targeted at the right type of audience. While most of the past studies have only investigated the effectiveness of PPL in terms of recall, favorability, attitude, and recognition, there are many issues that need to be investigated. It is believed that further research in this field shall prove to be beneficial for the marketers as well as academicians.

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