



The effectiveness of product placement in series and movies: Exploring audience awareness and its impact on brand recall.

Graduating Project.

Juan Diego Noguera Rodriguez.

Bogotá D.C. Colombia.

2025.



The effectiveness of product placement in series and movies: Exploring audience awareness and its impact on brand recall.

Graduating Project.

Juan Diego Noguera Rodriguez (Administración de Negocios Internacionales)

Laura J. Noval.

Bogotá D.C. Colombia.

2025.

Declaración de originalidad y autonomía

Declaro bajo la gravedad del juramento, que he escrito el documento de título “The effectiveness of product placement in series and movies: Exploring audience awareness and its impact on brand recall”, en la opción de grado de Doble titulación y que por lo tanto, su contenido es original.

Declaro que he indicado clara y precisamente todas las fuentes directas e indirectas de información y que este trabajo no ha sido entregado a ninguna otra institución con fines de calificación o publicación.

Juan Diego Noguera Rodriguez

Declaración de exoneración de responsabilidad

Declaro que la responsabilidad intelectual del presente trabajo es exclusivamente de su autor. La Universidad del Rosario no se hace responsable de contenidos, opiniones o ideologías expresadas total o parcialmente en él.

Juan Diego Noguera Rodriguez

Acknowledgement

I sincerely want to acknowledge my supervisor, Laura J. Noval, for her direction, backing and notes during the preparation of this Graduating Project. The advice and inspiration she gave me were the key to the accomplishment of this investigation. I am grateful to all those who took part in the survey and gave their time and energy to make this study possible; without their involvement, this work would not be feasible.

Table of Contents

Declaración de originalidad y autonomía	3
Declaración de exoneración de responsabilidad	4
Acknowledgement	5
Table of Tables	9
Table of Figures	10
Glossary	11
Abstract	12
Resumen.....	14
1. Introduction.....	16
1.1 General context	16
1.2 Research problem.....	20
1.3 Justification	21
1.4 Research question and objectives	23
2. Literature review	24
2.1 Definition and evolution of product placement	24
2.2 Types and strategies of product placement	26
2.3 Effectiveness of product placement in brand recall	28
2.4 Consumer awareness and ethical perception	32
2.5 Factors influencing the effectiveness of product placement	34

2.6 Gaps in the literature.....	36
2.7 Conclusion	38
3. Methodology.....	40
3.1 Context of the study.....	40
3.2 Methodological approach.....	41
3.3 Participants and sample.....	42
3.3.1 Description of the sample	43
3.3.2 Justification of age range and sampling.....	44
3.3.3 Adequacy of sample size.....	44
3.4 Data collection instrument	45
3.5 Data collection and preparation procedure	46
3.6 Variables and operationalization	47
3.6.1 Research hypothesis.....	49
3.7 Data analysis plan	50
3.8 Ethical considerations	50
4. Analysis of results and discussion.....	52
4.1 Sample profile.....	52
4.2 Brand perception and recall	56
4.3 Characteristics of product placement.....	61
4.4 Associations	65
4.5 Discussion.....	68
4.5.1 Scope of the descriptive findings.....	71
4.5.2 Reading the bivariate contrasts	71
4.5.3 Practical implications for brands and producers	72

4.5.4 Methodological recommendations	72
4.5.5 Limitations and future directions	73
4.6 Connection to the study objectives	73
4.7 Key findings of the chapter	74
5. Practical implications and Conclusion	77
5.1 Conclusions	77
5.2 Practical implications	81
5.3 Recommendations and future lines of research	83
6. Limitations and Suggested Future Research	85
6.1 Contributions of the study	85
6.2 Limitations of the study	87
6.3 Future lines of research	88
6.4 Methodological recommendations for replication	90
6.5 Final reflection	91
7. References	93

Table of Tables

“Table 4.1 – Sample profile (Age)”	53
“Table 4.2 – Sample profile (Gender)”	53
“Table 4.3 – Sample profile (Education level)”	54
“Table 4.8 – Where do you usually watch? (Q5)”	54
“Table 4.9 – Favorite genres (Q7)”	55
“Table 4.4 – Brand recall (Q15)”	58
“Table 4.5 – Knowledge of product placement (Q10)”	59
“Table 4.6 – How often do you notice brands? (Q11)”	60
“Table 4.7 – Have you noticed brands in movies/series? (Q9)”	60
“Table 4.14 – Appearance type (Q17, recall subsample)”	62
“Table 4.15 – Perceived naturalness (Q18)”	63
“Table 4.16 – Interest level (Q19)”	63
“Table 4.17 – Purchase intention (Q20, recall subsample)”	64
“Table 4.10 – Q10 × Q15”	66
“Table 4.11 – Q11 × Q15”	66
“Table 4.12 – Q17 × Q19 (sub-sample Q15 = “Yes”)”	67
“Table 4.13 – Q17 × Q20 (subsample Q15 = “Yes”)”	67

Table of Figures

“Figure 4.4 – Where do you usually watch? (Q5)”.....	54
“Figure 4.5 – Favorite genres (Q7)”	55
“Figure 4.1 – Brand recall (Q15)”	57
“Figure 4.2 – Knowledge of product placement (Q10)”	58
“Figure 4.3 – How often do you notice brands? (Q11)”	59
“Figure 4.6 – Appearance type (Q17, recall subsample)”	62
“Figure 4.7 – Purchase intention (Q20, recall subsample)”	64

Glossary

Advertising effectiveness: Extent to which an advertising message achieves its objectives, such as brand awareness or purchase intention.

Brand awareness: How easily consumers recognize or recall a brand.

Brand recall: Ability to retrieve a brand from memory when thinking of a product category.

Brand recognition: Ability to identify a brand when exposed to its visual or verbal elements.

Consumer behavior: How individuals select, use, and evaluate products or services.

Explicit memory: Conscious recollection of previously seen information.

Implicit memory: Unconscious influence of previous exposure on attitudes or behavior.

Product placement: Integration of branded products within media content to increase exposure and influence perception.

Abstract

One of the marketing strategies in which products or companies are presented as part of TV programs or films is known as product placement. In contrast to traditional advertising, with this strategy, the goal is to embed the brand more naturally in the story of the movie or show to bring forth good feelings to the audience and, as a result, to improve brand perception and recall. The brand-product placement has become more effective due to the advent and popularity of streaming platforms as it enables brands to target different groups of consumers and thus be free of the missing advertisement. Nevertheless, the point of effectiveness of the strategy and the level of audience recall is still under dispute.

First of all, this analysis will look into the extent of bearing in mind the brands as a result of product placement and furthermore, whether the viewers are not only aware of this happening, but also that it happens to facilitate recall of brands in a natural way. Alongside that, it will check out if such a perception of these things differs between various generations. In order to achieve this goal, a quantitative method based on online surveys aimed at people between 18 and 40 years old who watch either streaming content or go to the cinema will be implemented. The study will examine how consumer perception and recall are influenced by the differences in the degree of passivity and activity of the action and mention of product placement.

Studying the collected data will reveal which product placement is the leading method to evoke brand recall and if the influence can change depending on the average age and habit of

consumers. Besides, it will study the issue of overexploited product placement from a perspective that such marketing may antagonize viewers and of its ethical standpoints in terms of transparency and consumer consent.

This study's findings will inform brands and marketers on how to efficiently use their audio-visual content to maintain the user's experience. Furthermore, this will open new ways in the academic field by becoming a current source of the product context impact because of the technological revolution.

Keywords: Product placement, brand recall, consumer awareness, marketing strategy, organic advertising.

Resumen

Una de las estrategias de marketing en las que se presentan productos o empresas como parte de programas de televisión o películas se conoce como colocación de productos. A diferencia de la publicidad tradicional, con esta estrategia, el objetivo es integrar la marca de forma más natural en la historia de la película o el programa para despertar sentimientos positivos en el público y, como resultado, mejorar la percepción y el recuerdo de la marca. La colocación de productos de marca se ha vuelto más eficaz debido a la llegada y la popularidad de las plataformas de streaming, ya que permite a las marcas dirigirse a diferentes grupos de consumidores y, por lo tanto, liberarse de la publicidad que falta. No obstante, la eficacia de la estrategia y el nivel de recuerdo de la audiencia siguen siendo objeto de debate.

En primer lugar, este análisis examinará en qué medida se recuerdan las marcas como resultado de la colocación de productos y, además, si los espectadores no solo son conscientes de que esto ocurre, sino que también facilita el recuerdo de las marcas de forma natural. Además, se comprobará si la percepción de estos aspectos difiere entre las distintas generaciones. Para lograr este objetivo, se aplicará un método cuantitativo basado en encuestas en línea dirigidas a personas de entre 18 y 40 años que ven contenidos en streaming o van al cine. El estudio examinará cómo la percepción y el recuerdo de los consumidores se ven influidos por las

diferencias en el grado de pasividad y actividad de la acción y la mención de la colocación de productos.

El análisis de los datos recopilados revelará qué tipo de colocación de productos es el método más eficaz para evocar el recuerdo de la marca y si la influencia puede variar en función de la edad media y los hábitos de los consumidores. Además, se estudiará la cuestión de la sobreexplotación de la colocación de productos desde la perspectiva de que este tipo de marketing puede antagonizar a los espectadores y desde el punto de vista ético en términos de transparencia y consentimiento del consumidor.

Los resultados de este estudio informarán a las marcas y a los profesionales del marketing sobre cómo utilizar de manera eficiente su contenido audiovisual para mantener la experiencia del usuario. Además, esto abrirá nuevas vías en el ámbito académico al convertirse en una fuente actual del impacto del contexto del producto debido a la revolución tecnológica.

Palabras clave: Colocación de productos, recuerdo de marca, conciencia del consumidor, estrategia de marketing, publicidad orgánica.

1. Introduction

1.1 General context

Product placement is a marketing strategy that is commonly used by brands all over the world to get themselves to the forefront of the consumers' minds, this strategy is less disturbing to the consumers than regular advertising. Essentially, the technique involves placing products or brands within audiovisual content such as movies or series to encourage audience members to invoke good memories of the brand or product hence obtaining a good brand or product perception. At that time, the strategy was only applied in cinemas, however, the proliferation of technology has changed the game and streaming platforms have deeply influenced people's lives, that is why series are longer than films now.

Product placement also comes in different forms and is categorized into passive and active. Passive product placement is when the product is shown on the screen but is not interacted with characters or is not even in the dialogue. One example can be the TV show called "El Barco," in which the characters are at a table with Coca-Cola bottles in the background of the scene. The bottles are merely the part of the environment and are not being used or mentioned.

Active product placement consists of two types: active by action and active by mention. Active by action is when characters are shown using the product but are not referring to it. For

example, in the series "Suits," the main characters are holding Apple MacBook laptops as part of the scene, but no brand or product is referred to at any time. On the other hand, active by mention is when the characters only use the product, however, it is also stated in the dialogue of the scene. Such a case occurs in the film "Cast Away," where the actor is playing with a Wilson brand volleyball, which he calls and treats as a friend.

One of the best-known examples that is often referred to when we talk about the effect of product placement is the use of Reese's Pieces in the movie E.T. (1982). Although there was no direct commercial message from the character, the simple act of observing and using these products led a rise in sales which was over 60% in just a few months, marking this event as a milestone in both the history of the cinema and advertising (Snyder, 1992). Consequently, this achievement ignited a controversy inside the legal and societal spheres whether movies with brand insertions should be regarded as a source of commercial speech and, therefore, be under specific regulations. The debates reveal that issues about the effect and the openness of product placement are not new but have been with the tactic since its first mass appearances in Hollywood.

The economic aspect of product placement indicates that brand insertions are not always accompanied by multimillion-dollar payments. There are some high-profile cases like Heineken's \$45 million investment in a James Bond film or Harley-Davidson's \$10 million deal for Avengers: Age of Ultron, but these are only a few exceptions in comparison with the general trend. As Crockett (2024) points out, most of the placements are based on the situations that are good for both parties in which brands provide products free of charge to the filmmakers who can

then save production costs ranging from \$250,000 to \$5 million. There are iconic examples like the Wilson volleyball in *Cast Away* or Ray-Ban sunglasses in *Top Gun* and *Risky Business*, where the brands did not get paid directly but still managed to gain highly recognizable exposure. Usually, this kind of deal is facilitated by a third party (usually specialized agencies), who determines the value of placements in terms of the equivalent cost of television advertising. Nevertheless, the plan might be risky as in the case of Reebok which was portrayed unfavorably in *Jerry Maguire*. In spite of that, instances like the huge sales growth of Reese's Pieces after *E.T.* still point to the strong influence of product placement on consumer behavior.

Brand integration is a one more dependable source that supplies money for movies. Cha (2016) emphasizes that, besides the main objective of marketing, brand exposure through the use of this focus is just the tip of the iceberg since it gets a lot of the budget of production and distribution for these firms. Product placement in a movie is able to procure the entire budget of the film, as this was the case with *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997) when it was reported to have gained over \$100 million from nine corporate sponsors, of which BMW, Heineken, and Visa, are the most recognizable. It is worth noting, on the other hand, that The Weinstein Company's relationship with L'Oréal Paris, being a long-term commitment, seems indicative of how the advertisers convert not only into the erstwhile sponsors but strategic partners in movie development. This way of thinking leads to the understanding that product placement is a marketing instrument that also serves as a financing mechanism for the film industry.

One can only think this marketing approach's expansion trend to be valid to a larger extent. PQ Media has forecasted in one of its reports that the worldwide adoption of this plan

will rise annually by 12.1% within the next years. Stewart David comments, in line with the views of the most recent study authors, that this steady growth is reflective of the general marketers' preference of strategies that elicit emotional reactions from consumers. However, the placement that is inserted into the plot of a movie or a series makes the associations with the viewers more natural and less irritating that they could be a suitable tool for consumers who are annoyed by the advertising they encounter on any platform.

Status of the academic research in regard to product placement is that the effectiveness of product placement is not limited to visibility or brand recall, and the main factors are consumer emotions and levels of immersion. Different studies suggest that seamless integration of brand placement into the plot and linkage to characters or celebrities can evoke positive emotions, resulting in strengthening of purchase intention. Besides, story commitment further intensifies this phenomenon, thus, leaving the viewers connected at the subconscious level to the brand while at the same time, they stay interested in the storyline. Such an attitude echoes the notion of product placement solely as a tool at times of economic difficulties acting as a psychological mechanism that softly yet powerfully changes consumer thoughts and behaviors (임청, & Lin Qing, 2025).

Adaptations in the way persons consume audiovisual content have provided them with more power over the choice of the programs they want to watch, the time to watch them, and the place to watch them. As a result, firms have to find eclectically ways to get in touch with their customers who are, in this case, in the middle of their adventures, because interruption could provoke negative associations with their experiences. Product placement, due to the fact that it is

done seamlessly, has become a major feature in the marketing mix from the past conventional ways of advertising. This answer has turned out to be an intuitive and tactical approach for making the public's attention, mainly those of the format, where plot and characters bring an emotional connection to the audience.

1.2 Research problem

Product placement is one of the most commonly used methods, yet there remain many questions about its efficiency in brand recall and consumer awareness to this strategy, many viewers may not even know they are being subjected to advertising while watching entertainment content. This issue leads to some questions about the ethics of that form of advertising.

Besides, the consumption of movies and series has grown during the last years mainly because of the competition between digital platforms, and the newcomers such as the Millennials and Generation Z, who are deeply rooted in a digital world, might get and decode product placement in a different way compared to the older generations.

This research tries to fill these gaps by measuring not only if brand recall is the main point of product placement but also if viewer awareness will keep the watchfulness effect of placing a product.

One more point is the unavailability of research in this field regarding the perception of this method of communication by different population segments considering the factor of age, cultural background, and degree of exposure to digital content. For instance, the person that decides to watch a series in the middle of the night, and the one that binge-watches the whole thing, may perceive the same strategy very differently. This difference could have an impact on the strategy's effectiveness, on the kind of consumer recalling of the brand and on their attitudes towards it. If brands do not have access to thorough research, they might end up spending money on a strategy that does not produce the results they invested in.

1.3 Justification

The objective of this study is to explore the influence of marketing tactics, in by way of example product placement, on consumer preferences. As digital world has become more and more full of different types of content, the brands' ability to stay in customers' minds without disturbing their entertainment has become a fundamental goal. While the said goal is being

achieved, there is still very little information on how users feel about this strategy and how much they know about it.

The understanding of the degree of public awareness of the practice may help companies get a vision of how they can implement the practice ethically and effectively. A higher degree of awareness among consumers can be a factor that will make the issue of brands' transparency more relevant. Conversely, if they are not, a discussion on the covert influence of buying behavior arises.

Moreover, the findings of this paper will provide a significant contribution to the academic field and help to proliferate the literature on contemporary marketing strategies as well as offer practical value for marketing professionals in terms of providing relevant information to the design of campaigns that are more efficient and accountable.

From a strategic point of view, brand getting a hold of the public perception of product placement in various types of content and by different audience as well as understanding, is a valuable step to them optimizing their marketing budget. The strategy if executed badly will not only be ineffective but also counterproductive, resulting in consumer rejection or suspicion of the brand. In addition, this research can also become a font of the new ideas for transparency marketing getting the new guidelines, where more ethical practices are advocated and the consumers' right to detect when they are being exposed to the advertising is respected, is practiced.

1.4 Research question and objectives

Research question

To what extent is product placement effective for brand recall, and how aware are audiences of its use as a marketing strategy?

General objective

Analyze if the product placement strategy is effective for brand recall and to identify if people are aware of this strategy and if this influences their perception.

Establishing the research question and objective allows the research to have a precise direction and applicable results. By analyzing the effectiveness of product placement and the level of public awareness, this study adopts an approach that combines strategic and ethical aspects. This allows for the evaluation of people's perception and recall when exposed to marketing strategies.

2. Literature review

2.1 Definition and evolution of product placement

Product placement is a marketing strategy where products or brands are carefully integrated into a film, television, or any other audiovisual content with the purpose of promoting them in a non-intrusive manner. Unlike traditional advertising, usually detested by consumers due to its intrusiveness and visibility, this strategy is implemented in the storyline, hence being more accessible for the audience, since it is not displayed suddenly but more naturally, without changing the entertainment experience (Gupta & Lord, 2012).

Once digital media has come to light, product placement has been gone through a change, in the past, it was mainly done in movies and TV shows, where brands found an opportunity to relate themselves with the plots, the characters, and the situations that would evoke emotional bonds with the viewer. But now, with the creation of streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Max, Disney+, and more, the number of people who get exposed to products has skyrocketed. Today's consumers can enjoy a wide variety of entertainment programs without having to undergo advertising breaks, so brands have prompted the product placement tactic to ensure that they stay visible during viewers' content (PQ Media, 2024).

Moreover, as stated by Gupta and Lord (2012), the main point at which product placement turns into success is when the brand manages to associate itself with the storyline of the series or movie and evoke the emotional connection, which might lead to a favorable opinion of the product without the viewer being fully aware of the effect. This has sparked the growing interest of the marketing professionals, who are always on the lookout to find a way to seamlessly and meaningfully place their products into the stories.

The way product placement evolved has seen it going beyond traditional media to incorporate digital environments.

Product placement is a strong factor that is not only confined to films but has been extended to TV shows, series and even video games. The usage of this marketing strategy has been going on for several years and it continues to flourish over time with the aim of providing better consumer experiences when interacting with brands (García & Pérez, 2023).

As consumers get more creative in avoiding traditional advertising, for instance, through ad-free subscriptions, using ad blockers and ignoring ads, product placement seems to be the only viable effective solution for targeting the audience without causing any form of rejection. The strategy has proven its ability to harmoniously adjust to binge-watching, a behavior where consumers watch a lot of episodes of a series in a short period of time, thus, giving brands new opportunities to expose themselves in a natural way.

One of the most significant cases illustrating this transition is Coca-Cola's presence in the third season of *Stranger Things*. In 2019, the company brought back one of its controversial products, "New Coke," for a short period of time, as part of a joint project with the Netflix series.

The product was considered one of the largest commercial and failures of the 20th century. The story in which the product was included not only helped the series to depict the 1980s but also became the reason for debate all over the world with people talking about the brand, as the idea of nostalgia was being called upon and a long forgotten product was brought back to life (BBC, 2019). This is an instance that clearly shows how the phenomena of product placement has turned from being one of the mere actions of visibility to becoming a powerful instrument that can evoke cultural memories, create immersive experiences and deepen the emotional connection between brands and customers.

Product placement is not a secondary strategy anymore, but it has become a resource that is used in marketing campaigns. Its feature to reflect the modern consumer behavior, to integrate the story with the exposure and the positioning, makes this tool very valuable in digital marketing.

2.2 Types and strategies of product placement

Product placement has been depicted in various manners depending on the level of its presence, its integration with the narrative, and the perception of the consumer. One of the most recognizable ways to categorize is to differentiate passive and active product placement.

D'Astous and Chartier (2000) define passive product placement as a product that is shown in a scene without any direct interaction with the characters. For instance, in the TV series, "El Barco," there is a scene where the protagonists are hanging out in a room. In the middle of the room, there is a dining table, and on it, there are several bottles of Coca Cola. The people are not directly interacting with the products; they just show up in the scene.

By contrast, the active product implies that the product is conducted, used, or mentioned in the scene. A good example is the case when a cell phone or computer is used in movies or series. In one episode of "Suits," the main character is seen using a MacBook. Knowing that active product placement brings about more brand recall is the main point of this classification.

On the other hand, Balasubramaian (1994) has made a new point with regard to content and advertising. According to him, product placement is a "commercial" that is different from the traditional advertising only in the terms of its subtleness and integration with the program. Hence, how the product is presented and linked to the storyline becomes the main factor of its effectivity.

Identification of product placement by consumers is a function of the degree of appearance. A product that is highly visible or shown repeatedly can easily be detected, as a result, the viewer may recall the product later on. However, it could also evoke negative associations, since it is still perceived as advertising. More discreet products may be completely unnoticed which results in a more unforced brand positioning (Gupta & Lord, 2012). One of the most significant issues that arise regarding this strategy is how to achieve harmony between visibility and naturalness.

But on the other hand, this method can be less efficient if spectators knowing it influence. If they notice that the content they consume includes hidden ads, it can evoke negative feelings.

2.3 Effectiveness of product placement in brand recall

Brand recall is one of the main goals of product placement, and this practice relies on the exposure of the brand through the film or series story to impact the consumer's memory. How the brand is presented, either silently or actively, is also an important factor that allows the viewer to connect with the brand.

Priscilla et al. (2022) argue that product placement works best when it is seamlessly blended into the narrative. One of the major benefits of repeated appearances is that they can generate a high degree of familiarity and hence product recall, which is a significant impact of the frequency of exposure on brand recall.

Per Li (2023), product placement that is done through mention or action leads to a higher level of recall as compared to passive placement. Direct visual participation and being named in the plot increase the efficiency of product recall in viewers' memory. Such is the case with studies on selective attention, where the conscious processing of a stimulus results in its being stored in memory.

Moreover, in their opinion, Meyer et al. (2016) maintain that the emotional aspect of the scene is the main deciding factor of product placement impact. When an emotion, whether positive or negative, is linked to recalling the product, this side of recall has emotion as its feature. Emotions are, in fact, an important factor in recall because they become a link between the brand and the scene.

Contrarily, Lowe et al. (2006) argue that effectiveness can also be dependent on the nature of the content into which the brand is inserted. For instance, in the case of a comedy series, the audience may be more accepting of such a strategy, but with suspense or horror, the product's appearance might not be welcomed if it is not introduced properly.

Besides that, repeated exposure in narrative contexts is shown to significantly increase brand awareness, other studies revealing up to 20% of an increase, provided all be it that the integration is perceived as natural, and as not interrupting the plot of the series or film. This form of brand promotion is presented as less invasive and can create more favorable associations than the traditional way of advertising (Copymate, 2024).

According to Artigas and de (2024), product placement is a major contributor to success in the capturing of the audience's attention in the field where viewers justly tend to avoid traditional advertising. Their research on Spanish television series points out that brands are looking for the ways to introduce their products as naturally as possible in the story of the series by connecting them, most of the time, with characters which at the same time makes the familiarity with the brand stronger, and the perception of an advertising decrease. This method not only makes the brand stronger but also makes people's use to it and thus advertising's reach

goes beyond those who have already seen the brand. These findings are consistent with the assertion of product placement effectiveness, the main factors being those of the audiovisual narrative products' seamlessness and the viewer's receptivity.

Take Apple as a brilliant example, a brand that remains present even in quite a lot of movies and shows. Products from it, like the iPhone, MacBook, and iPad, are seen in places where people would usually get the feeling of positivity, being up-to-date, and professionalism, thus, the link of brand and lifestyle of high aspiration is reiterated. The active product placement has led to the brand being well remembered (De Vera Martin & Palomino Díez, 2024).

The Nielsen report (2021) shows that consumers are willing to accept brand integration into audiovisual content on video platforms such as series and films. Six out of ten respondents aged between 18 and 35 and 66% of those aged between 35 and 45 said they pay attention to the products used by characters. Moreover, nearly 50% of them indicated that these integrations directly influenced their buying intentions. The figures disclosed that product placement in entertainment content was not only less invasive than traditional advertising, but also could create a more natural and emotional connection with consumers.

Essentially, the papers agree that the integration method, the emotional context, the exposure frequency, and the appropriateness of the content are the main factors for brand recollection to reach their peak through product placement. Nevertheless, it is also acknowledged that the occurrence of too much exposure or the use of forceful integration can result in adverse consequences, such as the rejection of the brand by the audience.

The latest research highlights that the success of product placement is not limited to mere exposure or recall but rather is dependent on the consumer's emotional state and immersion. The study results on product placement in broadcasting show that brand integration into film and television has a positive impact on the audience's emotional reactions and, as a result, a significant purchase intention is facilitated. Furthermore, immersion acts as a moderating factor, deepening the bond between placement and emotional engagement. The study, through variables such as acceptance, plot connection, and celebrity endorsement, reveals that placements become more convincing when they correspond with the storyline and elicit emotional value in the viewers. This evidence provides both theoretical and empirical grounds for understanding the profound effects of product placement on consumer psychology and behavior. This is particularly so in the context of streaming platforms (임청, & Lin Qing, 2025).

Despite that, not all the research findings are positive regarding product placement effects. A couple of studies published lately point out that an overabundance of product placements or their improper integration with the storyline may provoke hostility toward the brand among the viewers. Corkindale, Neale, and Bellman (2023) reveal that the influence on brand recall and program evaluation does not become simply additive but rather interactive when product placements are merged with other integrated marketing communication (IMC) activities, like sponsorship billboards or running advertisements. There has been such an instance where the over-commercialization of the content led to the occurrence of the term “hedonic contamination,” a condition whereby the viewers had downgraded their evaluation of the program. From these results, it follows that product placement can be instrumental in bringing

out of mind and driving purchase intention to the fore, however, its triumph is ultimately up to the achievement of the visibility, narrative integration, and audience acceptance remit.

2.4 Consumer awareness and ethical perception

A primary point for understanding the effectiveness of product placement is how much the viewer recognizes it as a method and how they feel about it while watching a series or a film. This way of doing things is known for being quite discreet, yet its influence may be different depending on whether the audience that they are a part of a brand is something done for advertising purposes or if they are just of the story seems to be recognized.

Gupta & Lord (2012) state consumer awareness of product placement has a direct impact on the way consumers info processing behavior. In that situation, when viewers know that it is a marketing strategy, they may develop a skeptical attitude towards the message. On the other hand, if product placement is not identified, the brand can be remembered without causing rejection, as it is accepted as part of the narrative.

Ethically, this puts the spotlight on transparency in the area of commercial communication, particularly when it comes to young or easily influenced recipients.

Balasubramanian et al (2006) shine a light on the differences between content and advertising,

which in turn confuses the recipients regarding the message's purpose, thus potentially creating a feeling of hiding.

The Copymate article also highlights this confusion among others, stating that although product placement can work well through its invisible integration, the same feature can lead to questioning if no warning is given that it is a promotional content. The lack of disclosure can contribute to undermining consumer trust in the content and the platforms (Copymate, 2024).

Besides, some ethical articles foci that product placement represents a major difficulty as the message, the sender, and the intention of the promotional content are not always clear. It is connected because proper ethical regulation should take into account two factors: the level of transparency of brands, products, and platforms in informing the audience about the use of product placement, and the degree of commercial sophistication attributed to the audience, as far as it is not trained to recognize covert advertising strategies (Hackley et al, 2008).

Furthermore, the viewer's relationship with the characters is another factor. If there is a bond of trust or admiration, the presence of brands may be taken more easily or even wanted, particularly if it is viewed as a lifestyle or values of the characters' that is compatible. On the other hand, if the promotion is felt to be forced or too much, it can result in the reverse effect.

2.5 Factors influencing the effectiveness of product placement

The effectiveness of product placement greatly hinges on the types of integration into the content, be it passive or active. Besides that, apparently, there are some other elements, such as contextual and psychological factors, that influence how a viewer processes and remembers the message. These factors may either strengthen or weaken the cited strategy in terms of brand recall and consumer attitude.

The first and the most significant factor among all is probably the age of the viewer. For example, Millennials and Generation Z who are typically young people are more likely to be the main beneficiaries of integrated advertising, as they are used to being exposed to digital content all the time. On the other hand, they might also be more doubtfully minded and critically alert about these advertising attempts, which may demotivate if they detect the product placement strategy as being quite intrusive or non-genuine.

The audience's emotional connection to the storyline is another factor that impacts the subliminal acceptance of the message. In this respect, as per Meyer et al. (2016), brand presence in the content is seen as a normal thing and the co-remembering of brands and positive feeling towards them is the result when the consumers become deeply emotionally involved in the narrative. Yet, if the product is forcing the storyline leaving the viewer, they might get distracted or reject the advertisement.

Frequency of exposure is yet another important factor that should be considered in this strategy. Intervals of repeated and well-integrated appearances may be the vehicle used for brand familiarity and recall, yet, overexposure might result in advertising fatigue thus, consequently, there will be negative reactions. Respectively, as Copymate (2024) states, "when the product is forced upon the viewer and appears excessively, the viewer's immersion is broken and the strategy loses its impact".

One of the most significant pieces of research in this field is that by Russell (2002), who, basing on two factors: modality and consistency with the plot, created a three-part product placement typology. The research findings indicated that product placement, which is at odds with the plot, is easier to remember but at the same time, it creates negative attitudes towards the brand as it is seen as a fake or an out-of-context element. On the other hand, those that are deeply woven into the storyline help to raise brand perception although they might become less memorable (Russell, 2002). The point Russell makes here is that memory and persuasion may not always be on the same side and that brands need to strike a compromise between visibility and narrative coherence.

Moreover, the nature of the content and the mood of the program can be a factor too. According to Lowe et al (2006), product placement is more effective in certain situations, i.e. the genre of the content; for instance, in comedies or family dramas, the presence of products is accepted by viewers more naturally, whereas, in suspense genres or documentaries, product placement can cause a break in the sense of realism.

Moreover, the type of the device used for watching should also be taken into account. Watching a series on a big screen is totally different from watching it on a small screen while doing some other activities or in a cinema versus a room with a small TV set. This setting can change the level of the viewer's attention and therefore the efficiency of the strategy.

Lastly, the identification of the brand in advance plays an important role. Well-known brands like Apple do not need to put much effort into being recalled, even with low-key appearances.

2.6 Gaps in the literature

Despite the increasing importance of product placement as an advertising tool, especially in the digital era, a literature survey does not reveal that there are many significant gaps that would allow for current studies focused on the present.

One of the most evident gaps is the lack of research on streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon, Max, and Disney+, among others, which nowadays are the main audiovisual consumption for large parts of the population. Most of the previous literature has been concentrated on the analysis of product placement in films and series, without considering the specific effects that could come from more demanding consumption contexts.

Moreover, there are scanty recent research works concerning the perception of product placement by young viewers, especially those in the age bracket of 18-35 years, who are the major consumers of these platforms. These people's groups have been brought up with the constant exposure to digital marketing strategies and possess a higher level of awareness and criticism towards covert advertising techniques, thus their perception may be affected.

Among others, we also found gaps in studies that simultaneously examine key factors such as the kind of product placement, the level of the viewer's awareness, and brand recall. The situation is such that there is a research focus on one or two aspects, for example, Russell, 2002, in the narrative congruence modality, but no studies are there which combine these factors altogether, particularly in the streaming context.

Correspondingly, product placement literature from an ethical viewpoint and with regard to the awareness of the audience is scarce. Authors such as Balasubramanian et al. (2006) and Gupta & Lord (2012) cover the topic; however, more work is needed to uncover how consumers in the present day perceive the openness, genuineness, or even the slight undertone of the manipulation of this strategy.

Most notably, research barely interacts with consumers to elicit their direct thoughts about product placement via qualitative techniques or present-day surveys that depict the attitude towards the practice as well as being able to recognize, remember, and judge the ethicality of the placement. The majority of studies still depend on experimental methods conducted in controlled settings, which somewhat restricts the extent to which the findings can be applied in the real world.

2.7 Conclusion

Most of the literature written is about product placement is one of the main tools specialized in the digital age that is able to overcome consumers' habit changes and the new streaming world besides traditional advertising unfortunately product placement is not overwhelmingly prominent as it's somewhat barely noticeable no 2 characters discuss a brand;

This whole chapter provides and explains different notions, ;types, and even the effectiveness of the brand recall of the concept, The research studies turn out to be in a row of such opinions to consider emotional involvement level, frequency of exposure, plot consistency (Russell, 2002), and content type (Lowe et al., 2006) as very significant factors in the message receptivity.

In this vein, level of viewer awareness has been discussed as an important variable determining the perception of ethic and the effectiveness of the strategy. Gupta & Lord (2012) are among those authors who call attention to the issue of transparency in this kind of communication, especially when dealing with more critical or digitally influential audiences.

Nevertheless, the review also points out some important discrepancies in the literature. For example, the number of studies on product placement in streaming content is significantly lower, there are no extensive studies that consider the mode of integration, consumer awareness,

and brand recall, and in addition to this, there are also some shortcomings related to current approaches that gather public opinion.

Therefore, the current research is a welcome contribution that presents an analysis of online consumers where various key variables are integrated and a phenomenon is studied whose expansion calls for the understanding of the academic, strategic and ethical perspectives.

3. Methodology

3.1 Context of the study

This research has been done within the scope of digital marketing, focusing on product placement strategy, which is the use of brands in audiovisual narratives. The practice has been on the rise in traditional cinema as well as in the streaming platforms and is regarded by many companies as a viable solution to the severe advertising and the increase in the use of ad blockers.

Thus, product placement is depicted as a less disturbing commercial communication method that exploits the user's emotional attachment to characters and storyline. Nevertheless, its success relies on numerous variables, for example, the manner in which the product is introduced and the level of the viewer's consciousness of the plan.

So, this research is to study the audience understanding of product placement as a promotional tool carried out by marketing professionals, who are consumers aged 18 to 40 years, a demographic group that actively consumes the content of movie theaters and platforms such as Netflix, Prime Video, Disney+, etc. These generations are essential because of their influence and their familiarity with audiovisual narrative and modern advertising language.

Data collection was done in Colombia through an online survey (Google Forms). The place was selected for accessibility and convenience reasons that allowed the collection of a sufficient number of responses. Though the study was conducted in Colombia, the results shed light on consumer behavior and may be quite similar in other markets with equivalent audiovisual consumption habits.

3.2 Methodological approach

The study utilized quantitative, descriptive, and non-experimental methods as its methodological approach. The rationale for this choice was that the main goal was to study the level of awareness in viewers of product placement in advertising and to assess the resulting impact on brand recall by gathering measurable data through surveys without changing the variables.

The purpose of the quantitative method was to provide more formal and computable data that can be utilized for the present study of the public's comprehension of product placement and its possible connection with recall of brands in films and series, whether released in theaters or on streaming services. Conducting structured surveys will make it possible to gather data systematically which will then be analyzed statistically.

The best design for this research is the non-experimental one as it is not aimed at changing the naturalness of the participants through intervention but rather focuses on human behavior and opinions as they happen in their usual audiovisual consumption environment. Additionally, it being a cross-sectional study implies that the data was collected only once over a limited period which allows for an overall understanding of the phenomenon in the current context.

Using such a method, it becomes possible to detect the audience's behavioral patterns, the presence of possible relationships and even the trend of the target group's reaction to the product placement in terms of their perception of product placement, their level of recognition, and the influence this may have on their purchase intention and recall of the brands seen in films and series.

3.3 Participants and sample

Target population. People who consume films or series in movie theaters or on streaming platforms and are between 18 and 40 years old (millennials and Generation Z), segments that are intensive in audiovisual consumption and familiar with contemporary advertising language.

Inclusion criteria. (i) Accept informed consent; (ii) state age within the range 18–40; (iii) report consumption of movies/series in theaters or via streaming.

Sampling and sample size. Non-probability convenience sampling was used, distributing the form (Google Forms) via social media and contacts. A total of 155 responses were collected; after filtering by consent and age range, 151 valid questionnaires remained, constituting the sample analyzed (n = 151).

3.3.1 Description of the sample

N= 151

Age: 36-40 (40.4%), 25-30 (25.8%), 18-24 (22.5%), 31-35 (11.3%).

Gender: Male 51.0%; Female 49.0%

Educational level: Undergraduate 43%; Graduate 42%; Technical/Technologist 7%; High school 6%

These percentages characterize the participants and facilitate the reading of the subsequent analyses.

3.3.2 Justification of age range and sampling

The 18–40 age range includes digitally active audiences with high exposure to brands in audiovisual narratives and with purchasing decision-making power in frequent placement categories (technology, food/beverages, fashion, mobility). Convenience sampling is consistent with the descriptive-associative objective and the logistics of the project (online forms). Although it does not allow for probabilistic inferences about a population, it does offer robust exploratory evidence for evaluating associations in the cross-tabulations presented.

3.3.3 Adequacy of sample size

The sample analyzed ($n = 151$) is sufficient for the proposed contingency tables, maintaining reasonable expected counts in cells. When a category has a very low frequency, adjacent levels will be grouped (e.g., on 4-point scales) in order to meet the chi-square assumptions and focus the interpretation on substantive contrasts.

3.4 Data collection instrument

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was used in Google Forms, with 24 closed questions distributed in five blocks. To standardize understanding, Block 3 includes an operational definition of product placement and its three types: (i) Visual—the brand appears on screen without being used or mentioned; (ii) By action—the character uses the product without mentioning it; (iii) By mention—the brand is explicitly named.

Questionnaire structure:

Block 1 (Q1–Q3): sociodemographic (age, gender, educational level).

Block 2 (Q4–Q8): consumption habits (viewing frequency; where they watch—cinema/streaming—; type of content—series/films—; favorite genres—multiple selection—; binge-watching).

Block 3 (Q9–Q14): awareness and attitudes (noticed brands; knew it was an advertising strategy; frequency of noticing; comfort; influence on opinion; importance of informing).

Block 4 (Q15–Q20): brand recall and placement characteristics (context, type of appearance, naturalness, interest, purchase intention).

Block 5 (Q21–Q24): opinions on impact (recall vs. traditional advertising; relevance of duration; recommendation if used by a main character; recall when connected to the plot).

Response types: dichotomous, single choice, multiple choice, and four-point Likert scales. Content validity.

The first draft of the instrument was checked to guarantee that the issues contained were clear, brief, and relevant; furthermore, operational definitions were included before awareness questions for a standard interpretation. The questionnaire, which was divided into thematic blocks, was designed so as to prevent the bias of order and reduce the respondents' fatigue. Scales without the midpoint were used in order to stimulate respondents to express a clear view.

Biases and mitigation.

Since the study is self-administered and online, the risks of self-selection and social desirability are acknowledged. These have been addressed by taking the following measures: anonymity, no provision of incentives, the use of neutral wording, and reminders that there are no right or wrong answers. Q16–Q20 were only presented if Q15 = Yes to avoid forced responses and to lessen cognitive load.

3.5 Data collection and preparation procedure

Phase 1 – Preparation. Definition of scope, drafting of questionnaire, and internal comprehension test. Configuration of form with consent at the beginning and mandatory control question.

Phase 2 – Dissemination and fieldwork. Online distribution through networks and contacts, within a limited collection period. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and without incentives, participants could withdraw at any time.

Phase 3 – Closure and cleaning. Downloading responses to Excel; filtering by consent = Yes and age 18–40; review of internal consistency and possible duplicates. In the case of low-frequency in , adjacent levels were grouped together to strengthen the analysis.

Phase 4 – Analytical preparation. Creation of dummies (cinema/streaming and genres), normalization of labels and base tables that feed into Chapter 4

In the questionnaire, a short explanation of *product placement* was added together with some simple examples (visual, action and verbal mention). The idea of including this was to make sure that all respondents had the same basic understanding of what product placement means before answering the questions. This helped to avoid different interpretations and made the answers more reliable.

3.6 Variables and operationalization

The variables and their analytical treatment are detailed below; the complete coding is provided in Appendix B.

Sociodemographic. Age (Q1): 18–24 / 25–30 / 31–35 / 36–40 → ordinal (1–4). Gender (Q2): Female / Male → nominal (1/2). Educational level (Q3): Secondary / Technical-technological / University / Postgraduate → ordinal (1–4).

Consumption habits. Viewing frequency (Q4): 5 levels (Every day → Rarely) → ordinal (1–5). Where you watch (Q5, multiple): cinema and streaming → r dummies 0/1. Type of content (Q6): Series / Movies / Both → nominal (1–3). Favorite genres (Q7, multiple): action, comedy, drama, romance, science fiction, suspense, horror → dummies 0/1. Binge-watching (Q8): Always / Almost always / Sometimes / Never → ordinal (1–4).

Awareness and attitudes. Have you noticed any signs (Q9): I have noticed / I am not sure / I have not noticed → nominal (1–3). Do you know that you have PP (Q10): Absolutely certain / I suspected it / I had no idea → ordinal (1–3). Frequency with which you notice (Q11): Very frequently → Never → ordinal (1–4). Comfort with PP (Q12): Very comfortable → Not comfortable at all → ordinal (1–4). Influence on opinion (Q13): Very influential → Not influential → ordinal (1–4). Importance of reporting (Q14): Very important → Not important → ordinal (1–4).

Recognition and reaction. Do you remember any brands (Q15): Yes/No → binary (1/0). Where did you see it (Q16): Cinema / Streaming / I don't remember → nominal (1–3). Type of

appearance (Q17): Visual only / Used but not mentioned / Mentioned / I don't remember → nominal (1–4). Naturalness (Q18): Very → Not at all natural → ordinal (1–4). Interest (Q19): A lot of interest → None → ordinal (1–4). Purchase intention (Q20): Very → Not at all likely → ordinal (1–4). Recall vs. advertisement (Q21), Relevance of duration (Q22), Recommend by character (Q23), Recall connected to the plot/ r storyline (Q24): ordinal (1–4). Coding examples. Dummies (Q5): cinema = 1 if "Cinema" was selected; 0 if not. streaming = 1 if "Streaming platforms" was selected; 0 if not. Genres (Q7): columns 0/1 for action, comedy, drama, romance, science fiction, suspense, horror. Scales 1–4: 1 = highest intensity/positivity; 4 = lowest.

3.6.1 Research hypothesis

H1 (association): Knowledge of product placement (Q10) is positively associated with brand recall (Q15).

H2 (association): The frequency with which viewers notice brands (Q11) is positively associated with recall (Q15).

H3 (exploratory): The type of appearance (Q17) is related to interest (Q19) and purchase intention (Q20). Segmentation/control variables: age, gender, and habits (Q1–Q8).

3.7 Data analysis plan

The processing and analysis will be carried out in Microsoft Excel on the sample analyzed ($n = 151$). $\alpha = 0.05$ is set as the significance criterion.

(a) Descriptive: frequencies, percentages, and bar charts for all variables; proportions in multiple-choice questions (e.g., % who stream and % who also go to the cinema; % by favorite gender).

(b) Bivariate: contingency tables and chi-square test of independence to evaluate: (1) Q10 \times Q15, (2) Q11 \times Q15, (3) Q17 \times Q19, (4) Q17 \times Q20, (5) Q18 \times Q20. The effect size (Cramér's V) will be reported to interpret the magnitude.

(c) Missing data and subsamples: complete case analysis in each cross; for Q16–Q20 (conditional on Q15=Yes), the specific N will be indicated.

(d) Scope: ordinal scales are treated as categorical in chi-square; no equidistant distance between levels is assumed. No weightings are applied, nor are results generalized to the population, given the convenience sampling

3.8 Ethical considerations

Prior to the questionnaire, the text on authorization and data processing was presented, requiring an explicit response to “Do you agree with the personal data policy? Yes/No.” The original text in Spanish was as follows:

“En conformidad con la expedición de la Ley Estatutaria 1581 de 2012, “por la cual se dictan disposiciones generales para la protección de datos personales”, y el Decreto Reglamentario número 1377 de 2013, “por el cual se reglamenta parcialmente la Ley 1581 de 2012”, autorizo a emplear y tratar mis datos para fines estadísticos de análisis y de registro. Los datos recolectados en esta encuesta se usarán con fines académicos”.

The corresponding English translation:

“ In accordance with the enactment of Statutory Law 1581 of 2012, “which establishes general provisions for the protection of personal data,” and Regulatory Decree No. 1377 of 2013 “which partially regulates Law 1581 of 2012,” I authorize the use and processing of my data for statistical analysis and recording purposes. The data collected in this survey will be used for academic purposes”.

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards, always ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. No sensitive data or personal identifiers were collected. The information is stored in a digital file belonging to the author with restricted access and a backup copy. The results are reported in aggregate form. This procedure complies with Statutory Law 1581 of 2012 and Decree 1377 of 2013 on personal data protection in Colombia.

4. Analysis of results and discussion

4.1 Sample profile

After applying quality and eligibility filters (affirmative consent and ages between 18 and 40), the final sample size was $N = 151$. This section describes the sample profile in order to contextualize the subsequent analyses. In terms of age (Table 4.1), the largest group is 36–40 (40.4%), followed by the other age ranges in decreasing proportions. Gender is evenly distributed (Table 4.2): Male 51.0%; Female 49.0%. In terms of educational level (Table 4.3), university (undergraduate) predominates (43.0%), followed by other qualifications with lower percentages. Regarding viewing habits (Q5), the vast majority report consumption on streaming platforms ($n = 149$), while a smaller fraction report attending traditional movie theaters ($n = 37$) (Table 4.8 and Figure 4.4). In terms of favorite genres (Q7), preferences show a diverse pattern with a "top 7" led by: Action (90), Comedy (71), Drama (70), Science fiction (67), Romance (65), Thriller (49), and Horror (16) (Table 4.9 and Figure 4.5). These descriptions allow us to anticipate the relevance of predominantly digital contexts and genres with high commercial circulation in brand exposure within audiovisual content.

In summary, the sample profile shows an audience that is intensive in digital consumption, with a balance between genders and a high level of education. This profile is

consistent with greater exposure to brands on streaming platforms, where product integration has become ubiquitous. Given that the instrument collects genre preferences, it is reasonable to consider that exposure depends not only on viewing time but also on the type of content chosen. Although no comparisons by group are made in this section, the descriptions provide a frame of reference for interpreting potential differences that may emerge later. The predominance of streaming also suggests personal viewing contexts and multiple devices, conditions that tend to favor distributed attention and, therefore, the detection of visual elements such as brands on screen.

“Table 4.1 – Sample profile (Age)”

Age	Count	Percent
36-40	61	40.4
25-30	39	25.8
18-24	34	22.5
31-35	17	11.3

Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.2 – Sample profile (Gender)”

Gender	Count	Percent
Male	77	51.0
Female	74	49

Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.3 – Sample profile (Education level)”

Education level	Count	Percent
Undergraduate	65	43
Graduate	64	42
Technical/Technologist	12	7
High school	10	6

Source: Own elaboration

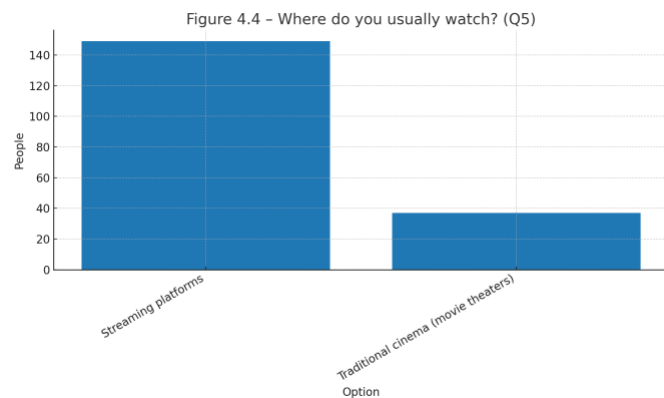
“Table 4.8 – Where do you usually watch? (Q5)”

Option	Number of people	Percent of N
Streaming platforms	149	98.7
Traditional cinema (movie theaters)	37	24.5

Note: Multiple responses allowed; percentages may exceed 100%.

Source: Own elaboration

“Figure 4.4 – Where do you usually watch? (Q5)”



Source: Own elaboration

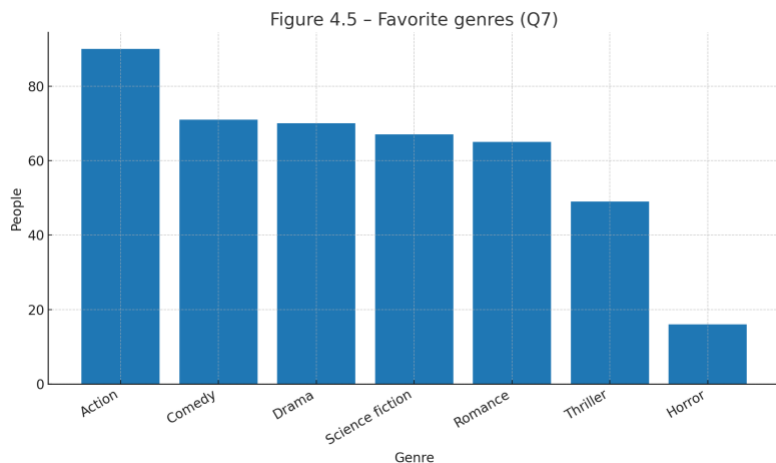
“Table 4.9 – Favorite genres (Q7)”

Favorite genres	Number of people	Percent of N
Action	90	59.6
Comedy	71	47.0
Drama	70	46.4
Science fiction	67	44.4
Romance	65	43
Thriller	49	32.5
Horror	16	10.6

Note: Multiple responses allowed; percentages may exceed 100%.

Source: Own elaboration

“Figure 4.5 – Favorite genres (Q7)”



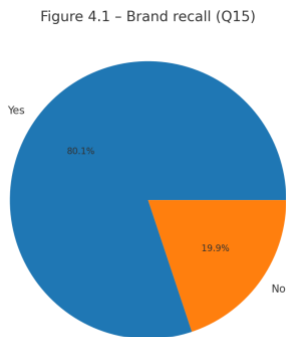
Source: Own elaboration

4.2 Brand perception and recall

Perceptual and attentional indicators related to brands in content can provide initial estimates of the interest phenomenon. The results indicate that spontaneous brand recall was prevalent, with 121 participants (80.1%) recalling at least one brand, while 30 participants (19.9%) were unable to recall any (see Figure 4.1 and Table 4.4). When it comes to the understanding of the campaign (Question 10), the frequencies are as follows: Totally sure = 95 (62.9%), I suspected it = 45 (29.8%), I had no idea = 11 (7.3%) (see Figure 4.2 and Table 4.5). The feeling of how often branding is seen (Question 11) is expressed in the following manner:

Fairly often = 66 (43.7%), Very frequently = 57 (37.7%), Rarely = 26 (17.2%), Never = 2 (1.3%) (see Figure 4.3 and Table 4.6). Question 9 ("Have you noticed branding in movies or series?") adds the following information: I have noticed it = 130 (86.1%), I am not sure = 16 (10.6%), I have not noticed it = 5 (3.3%) (Table 4.7). The above-mentioned descriptive statistics taken as a whole reveal that levels of both perceived exposure and recognition of the practice are very high, which allows us to move on to testing whether these variables are related to recall by means of independence tests.

“Figure 4.1 – Brand recall (Q15)”



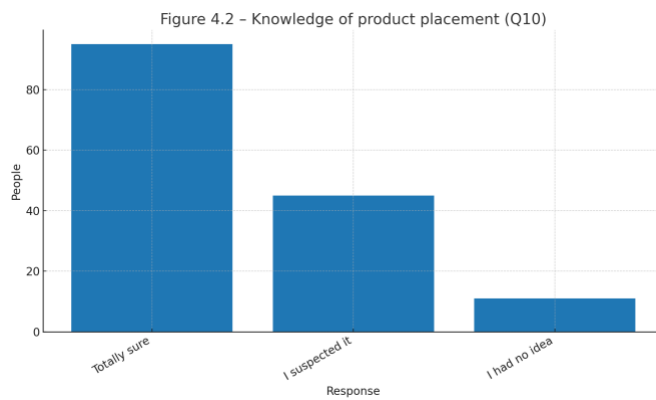
Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.4 – Brand recall (Q15)”

Q15	Count	Percent
Yes	121	80.1
No	30	19.9

Source: Own elaboration

“Figure 4.2 – Knowledge of product placement (Q10)”



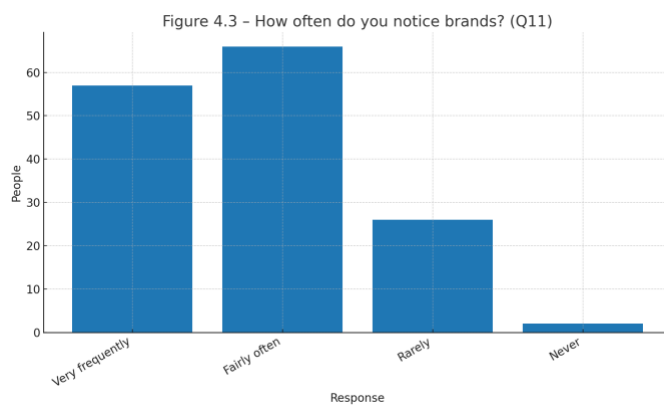
Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.5 – Knowledge of product placement (Q10)”

Q10	Count	Percent
Totally sure	95	62.9
I suspected it	45	29.8
I had no idea	11	7

Source: Own elaboration

“Figure 4.3 – How often do you notice brands? (Q11)”



Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.6 – How often do you notice brands? (Q11)”

Q11	Count	Percent
Fairly often	66	43.7
Very frequently	57	37.7
Rarely	26	17.2
Never	2	1

Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.7 – Have you noticed brands in movies/series? (Q9)”

Q9	Count	Percent
I have noticed it	130	86.1
I am not sure	16	10.6
I haven't noticed it.	5	3.3

Source: Own elaboration

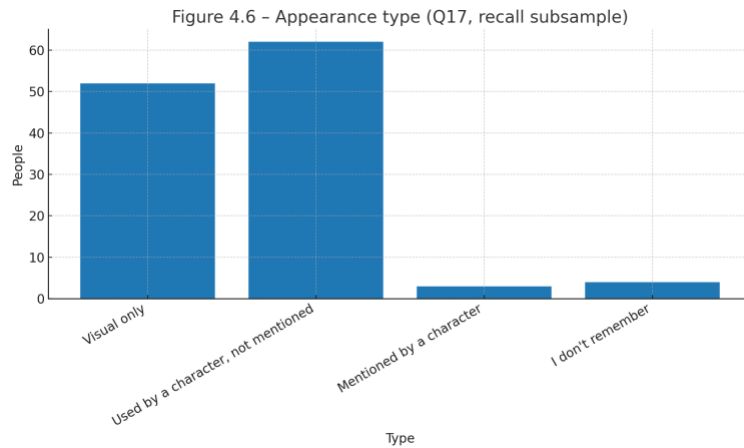
The combined pattern of high recall, high awareness, and frequency of attention is consistent with the idea that viewers have normalized the presence of brands in audiovisual narratives. The coexistence of categories such as "totally sure" and "I suspected it" in Q10 indicates different levels of explicit awareness, but both are compatible with the encoding of the brand in memory. Similarly, the predominance of 'very frequently' and “Fairly often” responses in Q11 suggests that, beyond 'declared awareness', there is attentional vigilance towards

commercially relevant objects within the scene. This pattern does not allow us to infer that all brands are equally memorable; it does indicate, however, that the current consumption context exposes users to multiple opportunities for encoding.

4.3 Characteristics of product placement

To better understand the conditions under which recall occurs, this section describes the subsample that responded affirmatively to Q15. In terms of type of appearance (Q17), the distribution observed is: It was used by a character but not mentioned = 62, It was only shown visually = 52, I don't remember = 4, It was mentioned by a character = 3 (Table 4.14 and Figure 4.6). The perceived naturalness (Q18) is detailed in Table 4.15: Very natural = 65, Somewhat natural = 44, Not very natural = 11, Not at all natural = 1. The level of interest (Q19) shows: Some interest = 55, Little interest = 41, A lot of interest = 14, None = 11 (Table 4.16). In terms of purchase intention (Q20), the counts are: Somewhat likely = 56, Unlikely = 42, Very likely = 16, Not at all likely = 7 (Figure 4.7 and Table 4.17). This picture suggests that 'action' and 'visual' appearances account for most of the memories, and that although interest and intention are mostly distributed at intermediate levels, there is sufficient variability for statistical contrast.

“Figure 4.6 – Appearance type (Q17, recall subsample)”



Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.14 – Appearance type (Q17, recall subsample)”

Appearance type	Count
Used by a character, not mentioned	62
Visual only	52
I don't remember	4
Mentioned by a character	3

Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.15 – Perceived naturalness (Q18)”

Perceived naturalness	Count
Very natural	65
Somewhat natural	44
Not very natural	11
Not at all natural	1

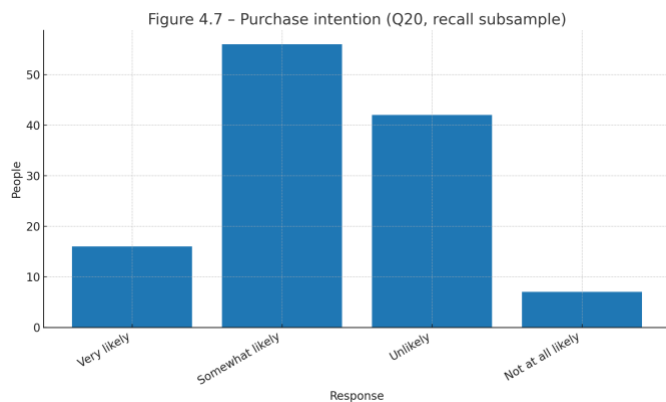
Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.16 – Interest level (Q19)”

Interest level	Count
Some interest	55
Little interest	41
A lot of interest	14
None	11

Source: Own elaboration

“Figure 4.7 – Purchase intention (Q20, recall subsample)”



Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.17 – Purchase intention (Q20, recall subsample)”

Purchase intention	Count
Somewhat likely	56
Unlikely	42
Very likely	16
Not at all likely	7

Source: Own elaboration

In the recall sub-sample, the weight of appearances per action and visuals seems to be linked to two complementary routes: on the one hand, familiarity with everyday objects in the

hands of characters; on the other, the prominence of logos and packaging when clearly framed. The perceived naturalness and intermediate levels of interest suggest a balance between organic integration and commercial relevance. Although high interest and 'very likely' purchase intention are not in the majority, their presence confirms that, for a subset of cases, integration can activate motivations beyond recognition.

4.4 Associations

Associations were evaluated using chi-square independence tests with $\alpha = 0.05$. Q10 \times Q15 (knowledge \times recall): $\chi^2=17.394$; $gl=2$; $p=0.0002$; Cramér's $V=0.339$. Q11 \times Q15 (frequency of noticing \times recall): $\chi^2=20.801$; $gl=3$; $p=0.0001$; Cramér's $V=0.371$. Q17 \times Q19 (type of occurrence \times interest): $\chi^2=16.852$; $gl=9$; $p=0.0511$; Cramér's $V=0.215$. Q17 \times Q20 (type of occurrence \times intention to purchase): $\chi^2=9.774$; $df=9$; $p=0.3691$; Cramér's $V=0.164$. The first two contrasts show p-values below the significance threshold and medium effect sizes, indicating that knowing/suspecting the strategy and paying more attention are associated with higher recall. The cross between type of appearance and interest is borderline ($p \approx 0.05$), while no association with purchase intention is detected; these findings limit the scope of the relationship between placement format and attitudinal/self-reported response.

“Table 4.10 – Q10 × Q15”

	No	Yes
10. Did you know those brands are placed there as part of a marketing strategy (product placement)?		

Totally sure	9	8
--------------	---	---

I suspected it	17	28
----------------	----	----

I had no idea	4	7
---------------	---	---

Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.11 – Q11 × Q15”

	No	Yes
11. How often do you notice brands within the content?		

Fairly often	11	55
--------------	----	----

Very frequently	5	52
-----------------	---	----

Never	1	1
-------	---	---

Rarely	13	1
--------	----	---

Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.12 – Q17 × Q19 (sub-sample Q15 = “Yes”)”

17. What type of appearance did the brand have?	Some interest	A lot of interest	None	Little interest
Mentioned by a character	1	2	0	0
Used by a character, not mentioned	31	6	7	18
I don't remember	0	0	1	3
Visual only	23	6	3	2

Source: Own elaboration

“Table 4.13 – Q17 × Q20 (subsample Q15 = “Yes”)”

17. What type of appearance did the brand have?	Somewhat likely	Very likely	Not at all likely	Unlikely
Mentioned by a character	1	1	0	1
Used by a character, not mentioned	31	9	4	18
I don't remember	0	0	0	4

Visual only	24	6	3	19
-------------	----	---	---	----

Source: Own elaboration

From a methodological point of view, the effect sizes reported by Cramér's V in significant crossings correspond to magnitudes compatible with behavioral phenomena of memory and attention in natural contexts. The borderline result of the appearance \times interest cross could be strengthened in future studies by grouping low-frequency categories or using designs that allow for manipulation of visibility, narrative centrality, and brand-scene congruence. The absence of an association with purchase intention is consistent with the literature that distinguishes between cognition (recall) and conation (intention) metrics, where the latter tends to require greater involvement, repetition, or a link to immediate needs.

4.5 Discussion

The obtained results permit us to debate the implications and limitations of the phenomenon without going beyond the available evidence. Firstly, the finding of medium-sized relationships between 'knowing the strategy'/'looking frequently' and 'remembering brands' indicates that attentional and cognitive mechanisms based on familiarity and salience are the key

that open the short-term memory of brands integrated into narratives. Though, this does not suggest that these factors are the cause or that they will automatically lead to the purchase of the brand, which is also implied by the non-significant result of $Q17 \times Q20$ in the subsample. Secondly, the per action and visual occurrences being concentrated among the memories evoke that, in this set of responses, integrated and non-intrusive formats are dominant in the reported experience. From a practical standpoint, this may point creatives and planners to a preference of organic integrations that do not disrupt the plausibility of the scene, being careful to ensure natural execution to avoid reactance. Lastly, the research depends on convenience sampling and a cross-sectional design; hence there are limits to the generalization, and the effects are to be seen as associations that fit the context and the instrument. Next, the research avenues could combine experimental measures of controlled exposure, probabilistic sampling, and multivariate models that isolate effects, while still abiding by ethical transparency and being clear about the informed consent.

The significant association found between audience awareness of product placement and brand recall reinforces the idea that conscious recognition of persuasive intent strengthens memory encoding processes. This outcome aligns with Gupta and Lord (2012), who argue that recall improves when consumers are able to consciously process a stimulus, even if it occurs within an entertainment context. At the same time, the medium effect sizes obtained in this study suggest that recall is not solely dependent on awareness, but also on attention patterns and contextual cues, as highlighted by Russell (2002) in her analysis of modality and plot congruence. It is worth mentioning that having in particular the brand recall as a very strong

element, the non-existence of a significant relation with purchase intention is comparable to the differentiation drawn in advertising studies between cognitive and conative consequences, whereby recognition and familiarity do not automatically cause a change in behavior (Balasubramanian et al., 2006). This conflict demonstrates that product placement is especially potent in upper-funnel stages—such as awareness and memory—but its implementation into lower-funnel goals like intention is farther with only additional strategies. Thus, the results extend our present understanding of the functioning of product placement in streaming-dominated settings: while product placement realizes the visibility and recognition aspect, thus the consumer can be impacted only when combined with other forms of stimuli.

Confirming H1 and H2 points out the fact that knowledge of the strategy and the frequency of noticing brands were both positively associated with recall, thus underlining the role of metacognitive processes in consumer behavior. According to selective attention theories, when viewers know that a brand has been purposely positioned, they are more likely to task the necessary cognitive resources to memory encode it. Furthermore, the finding that those who "very frequently" or "fairly often" noticed brands had higher recall levels agrees with the idea that repeated attentional engagement strengthens associative memory. The results are consistent with Priscilla et al. (2022) and Li (2023) conclusions, who attest that exposure frequency and modality lead to more durable memory traces. In other words, product placement not only can profit from discreet integration, but also from a day when audiences are vigilant to-brand cues across episodes and genres.

4.5.1 Scope of the descriptive findings

The descriptive findings presented in 4.1–4.3 should be read as a snapshot of the behavior of this sample at a specific point in time. Their value lies in providing proportions, patterns, and hierarchies (e.g., the primacy of streaming), which guide the understanding of the context in which product placement operates. As this is not a probabilistic sample, these proportions should not be extrapolated directly to the entire population; their usefulness here is to guide analysis and decision-making in similar contexts.

4.5.2 Reading the bivariate contrasts

The significant results in Q10×Q15 and Q11×Q15 indicate associations consistent with theoretical expectations: greater attention/awareness goes hand in hand with greater recall. The medium effect size suggests that these relationships are substantive, although not decisive. The borderline result for Q17×Q19 and the lack of association in Q17×Q20 highlight the difference

between interest and intention, bearing in mind that the latter is affected by price, need, availability, and previous preferences, among other factors.

4.5.3 Practical implications for brands and producers

For brands, prioritize integrations with high contextual fit (brand-scene congruence) and appearances that allow for natural use by characters. For producers: design shots that favor visibility without breaking the narrative rhythm; explicit mention can be reserved for cases where it contributes to the plot. For both: systematically measure perceptions of naturalness and post-exposure interest, beyond recall, in order to monitor possible negative reactions.

4.5.4 Methodological recommendations

It is suggested to complement cross-sectional surveys with controlled experiments (A/B testing of appearance formats), include implicit measures of attention (eye tracking, detection tasks), and expand the sample size with probability sampling to improve power and

generalization. In addition, standardization of scales and measurement of internal reliability would strengthen the validity of the attitudinal block.

4.5.5 Limitations and future directions

Limitations stem from non-probabilistic sampling, self-reporting, and the cross-sectional design. Future research could incorporate controlled exposure to scenes with systematic variations in type of appearance, naturalness, and narrative centrality, as well as pre- y brand biases. It would also be valuable to segment by habits (e.g., binge-watching) or specific genres to explore whether certain contexts maximize recall or interest.

4.6 Connection to the study objectives

The overall objective was to analyze the perception of product placement as a marketing tool and evaluate its impact on brand recall among an audience aged 18–40. The descriptive and bivariate findings offer a positive and nuanced response to this objective: recall is high in the

sample and is significantly associated with awareness of the strategy and reported frequency of attention.

Thus, the results support the relevance of the methodological approach and confirm that awareness and attention indicators are useful for anticipating variations in recall.

At the same time, the analysis shows that not every perceptible difference translates into stated purchase intention. This suggests that product placement may play a relevant role in early stages of the funnel (attention, recognition, memory), while conversion to intention may require greater exposure, personal congruence, or complementary stimuli.

4.7 Key findings of the chapter

- The sample (N=151) is streaming-intensive and gender-balanced with a high level of education.

- Recall (Q15) is high ($\approx 80\%$).

- Knowing the strategy (Q10) and paying frequent attention (Q11) are associated with higher recall (medium effect sizes).

- Among those who remember brands, action and visual appearances predominate; purchase intention is mostly at intermediate levels.

- No clear association is observed between type of appearance and purchase intention; the relationship with interest is borderline.

- Recommendation: prioritize organic integrations and measure naturalness and interest, without assuming direct impact on intention without additional evidence.

Percentage breakdown in the subsample (Q15 = "Yes"): in Q17, "Used by a character, not mentioned" represents 51.2% of the subgroup; "Only shown visually" 43.0%; "Was mentioned by a character" 2.5%; "I don't remember" 3.3%. In Q18 (naturalness), the categories are distributed heterogeneously, with a particular weighting of the intermediate levels; in Q19 (interest) and Q20 (intention), mean values also predominate, suggesting cautious responses consistent with everyday exposure.

Notes on assumptions and cell reading: chi-square tests assume sufficient expected counts per cell. In crosses where low-frequency categories appear (e.g., 'explicit mention' in Q17), interpretation is carried out with caution. If the same pattern is observed in future replications, a recommended strategy is to group adjacent levels of ordinal scales (e.g., 1–2 vs. 3–4) or consolidate conceptually close modalities to stabilize counts and improve statistical power.

Profile context: The primacy of streaming in the sample may be associated with non-linear consumption routines, the use of multiple devices, and control over the experience (pausing, rewinding, changing speed). These conditions may increase repeated exposure to scenes with brands and, at the same time, introduce divided attention (multitasking) that favors the detection of salient visual elements. The high educational level of the sample could be linked

to greater media literacy, which would explain the high proportion who say they are 'totally sure' about the strategic presence of brands.

Additional nuances in perception and attention: the marginal nature of the 'never' category in Q11 suggests that brand detection is not an exceptional event, but part of the usual viewing landscape. At the same time, the coexistence of certainty and suspicion in Q10 suggests that the audience combines both explicit cues (logos, mentions) and contextual inferences (use by characters, everyday settings) to identify advertising strategy.

Practical implications: to maximize recall without compromising the narrative experience, it is advisable to design appearances that preserve situational coherence, avoiding over r imbalances in prominence. Measuring 'perceived naturalness' can serve as a creative control metric during post-production. The results also suggest complementing recall measurement with attitude and intention indicators at different time windows (immediate vs. delayed) to assess the persistence of the effect.

Conclusion: the body of evidence supports the idea that product placement, in consumption contexts dominated by streaming, operates as a frequent stimulus, recognized by a large part of the audience and capable of sustaining high levels of recall. The translation of this recall into stated intention is not robustly observed in this sample, which emphasizes the need for complementary evaluations and caution in interpreting cognitive metrics as indicators of commercial impact.

5. Practical implications and Conclusion

5.1 Conclusions

This study has examined how placing a product in a film or a series might help a brand be remembered, taking into account the fact that nowadays people mostly watch these things on streaming platforms. We have looked at the ways people hear and see, how much they are aware of the brand's strategy, how many brands they can recall without help and some of the features of the brand in the content (the type of brand, the natural look of the brand, interest in the brand, and purchase intention) through a structured survey with a statistically valid sample of $n = 151$ after age and consent filters. The goal was both to find out how much product placement leads to brand recall and to find out if brand awareness by the public and their attention to the brands on the screen leads to better memory results.

First of all, the findings of this descriptive study reflect, the mentioned above, high levels of engagement with brands implanted in the content. A large majority of subjects say they have noticed branded items in films or series and also report doing so fairly frequently while watching. At the same time, the explicit knowledge level regarding product placement as an advertising practice is quite high: one large group are "absolutely certain" that brands are purposely inserted into the storyline, and another large group are "quite suspicious." This mix of

exposure, attentional vigilance, and declared knowledge results in advantageous conditions for brand information to be encoded in the viewer's memory.

The proportion of individuals who could recall at least one brand without any prompting amounts to 80.1% of the sample, which is in line with the described context. The importance of this finding lies in its implication that product placement, if presented organically in the narrative, is not only able to keep up with other traditional communication formats but also to attract the attention of viewers even in environments that are highly antagonistic towards advertising. Moreover, the bivariate analysis outlines the medium-sized links between recall and (a) consciousness of the strategy and (b) the number of times individuals report that they noticed brands. Simply put, those who are most likely to remember a brand after watching the audiovisual piece are the people who know or suspect that placement exists and those who say that they normally notice brands during the content.

Looking at the portion of the data where respondents said they remembered at least one brand helps us to define these conclusions better. Here the most heavily weighted type of recognition for the viewer's memory was "used by a character but not mentioned," followed by "visual only." No more than minor figures were observed for explicit mentions. From the point of view of the authors, this may imply that the functional interaction with the product, when the character is using the product in the most natural way, adds both visibility and trust, which are two of the characteristics that make better encoding and thus easier access to the brand through memory. Mere exposure without usage (visual only), though less effective, is still a way of the

brand to enter into the viewer's conscious/unconscious memory since the scene can provide enough screen time and framing.

On the other hand, the tendency is for the audience to score the perceived naturalness of integration as either high or medium, which means that the majority does not perceive the appearances as forced. Here, too, declared interest in the brand is generally found at intermediate levels, with a significantly lower proportion of extreme responses. These trends support the notion that "good" integration, in other words, one that can appropriately reflect the narrative and the rhythm and coherence of the scene and, thus, still be able to have a certain positive effect on the audience, does not lead to breaks in immersion and, hence, does not cause a decrease in the rating of both the brand and the content that the user may have.

Still, as we delve deeper into the behavioral funnel, the data do not show the placement characteristics to be clearly associated with purchase intention. In several cross-tabulations, the attitude towards purchasing remains unchanged or does not become strongly linked to the analyzed attributes. This result is interesting as it differentiates between two levels: brand memory, i.e., the one where the effects are visible and robust, and the transition to purchase readiness, i.e., the stage that probably necessitates the concurrence of other factors such as exposure frequency, consumer involvement with the category, the activation of a specific need, or the availability of offers and reminders at decision moments.

The consumption profile found in the sample—mainly viewing on streaming platforms, low cinema attendance, and liking for commercial genres such as action, comedy, and drama—serves as a basis for understanding these conclusions. Streaming being omnipresent indicates

more personal and fragmented viewing situations (multi-device, multitasking), which are the contexts where the viewer's selective attention is more dependent on visual cues and the immediate utility of the objects on the screen. Thus, occurrences of action/use may be the most effective for recall: they link the brand with the character's task and with the plot development at the exact moment that the viewer is following the action.

From a methodological standpoint, these findings are the result of a cross-sectional design and non-probability sampling, thus, they should be interpreted with a caution that limits their generalization. In addition, the measures are based on self-reports and therefore, they do not reflect the actual behavior of people, nor do they control for the level of exposure to the stimulus (screen time, number of appearances, prominence of framing). Notwithstanding these limitations, the internal harmony among exposure, knowledge, attention, and recall, along with the steadiness of purchase intention, points to a broad conclusion: in young adult audiences that are heavy streamers, product placement is effective for high-funnel objectives (attention, recognition, and memory), while its conversion to low-funnel goals (intention) is not automatic and may depend on campaign designs that combine organic integration with activation and reminder tactics outside the content.

Lastly, it is important to recognize the coherence between this data and the rationale of the placement: a practically invisible but on-going use within the event can bring back recognition without breaking the story flow. Although this may be true, it does not mean that brands and producers can neglect the necessity of being honest and moderate in the use of this means in order not to cause an overload or to be considered deceptive. What really counts is to

match exposure, consistency, and frequency with the brand's promise of value and the target audience's expectations.

5.2 Practical implications

Creative design and staging were the highlights in this sample. In essence, you should focus on 'organic' integrations with a clear 'narrative' purpose; that is, the product should either solve a character's problem, enable the plot to develop or simply be a coherent characteristic of the environment. At the same time, you should not allow the product to appear too often and simultaneously as if it were appearing for no good reason. Economy of expression (showing without overemphasizing) and continuity (consistency between shots) are the elements that do not disrupt the viewer's immersion.

Appearance of products according to the desired goal. The characteristics of completely framed "action / use" and "visual-only" formats may give a balance between the prominence and naturalness of a brand when the objective is brand recall. A very limited number of instances with functional dialogues should be sufficient to give explicit mentions in moments that are absolutely necessary and justified by the story, as too much of it may lead to the audience not

accepting the message. In highly dynamic genres such as action and thriller, the use of functional close-ups may be the only solution to making the fast-paced editing meet the genre standards.

Control of naturalness and interest. Brand campaign monitoring can be improved by incorporating qualitative and quantitative metrics of brand-perceived naturalness and interest. These indicators are like "early warning signs" to adjust the framing, duration or frequency before the perception goes down. In analytics, along with recall, introduce brief scales for the ease of transition, consistency, and scene enjoyment.

Omnichannel strategy. The recall that is achieved from the content should be looked at as a first contact. Consequently, the recall should be reinforced by the owned and paid assets such as short clips, behind the scenes, and social formats that are a direct result of the association in windows that are very close to the moment of decision. To coordinate contextual promotions (linked to the scene, character, or season) without breaking brand consistency is the best way to have a purchase intent.

Segmentation and targeting. To better reach the ideal audience, you must modulate the creativity and selection of titles depending on the viewing habits of the target group. In the case of streaming-intensive and multitasking-type audiences, the various executions should be more understandable and more visible for short bursts. If the target is highly involved with the category, then more signal density (e.g., use + logo visibility + packaging elements) can be allowed while still maintaining the naturalness threshold.

Risk management. To avoid saturation, set the maximum frequency thresholds per episode/season and prominence limits. Define ethical suitability criteria (e.g., do not feature

sensitive topics, be careful around vulnerable audiences) and transparency windows if required by law or platform policy. Keep a record of the creative agreements to protect the storytelling integrity as well as the branding one.

5.3 Recommendations and future lines of research

Limitations of the sample. The use of convenience sampling and a cross-sectional design has limited the possibilities to generalize the findings to large populations and that these findings remain unchanged over time. Measures based on the reports of the subjects themselves are open to biases of memory and tendency to respond in socially acceptable ways. The exposure (number of appearances, duration, prominence) was not controlled, and also the observable behavior (search, click, purchase) was not measured, so the inference about the "intention" should be at the level of speculation.

Recommendations for methodology. It is possible to combine the survey method with the controlled experiments where the researchers manipulate type of appearance (visual, action-based, mention), prominence (size/screen time), consistency with the plot, and timing of exposure within the episode. Longitudinal designs would be suitable for studies of the persistence of memory and the change of attitudes. The use of behavioral metrics (searches,

browsing, revealed intention) and light biometrics (eye tracking, galvanic response) would facilitate to get closer to the attentional mechanisms that lie beneath.

Issues related to the agenda. It is quite interesting to find out the conditions under which memory from placement becomes relevance and, eventually, intention. Some of the promising hypotheses are: (i) the moderating role of category involvement (e.g., technology vs. beverages); (ii) the effects of repetition distributed over a season; (iii) the contribution of main characters as vectors of meaning transfer; and (iv) the interaction between scene (action vs. dialogue) and character task in encoding efficiency.

Application and governance. Since platforms and markets vary in regulations, a study in the future might chart the openness and characterization rituals in product placement and their connection with the acceptance of the audience. Besides, a study on the saturation levels that result in negative reactions (anger, feeling of manipulation) and their influence on content ratings would also be worthwhile. Moreover, it is suggested that brands and producers collaboratively develop the best practice guidelines to manage the story and advertising effectiveness simultaneously.

6. Limitations and Suggested Future Research

6.1 Contributions of the study

In this sample, this project provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of product placement for brand recall in predominantly digital audiovisual consumption contexts. Based on a survey of a young adult sample that consumes entertainment content via streaming and, to a lesser extent, in movie theaters, a high level of spontaneous recall is documented and consistent associations are identified between audience awareness of the existence of placement, reported attention to brands during viewing, and the likelihood of recalling at least one brand. These results reinforce the understanding of product placement as a useful tool for high-funnel objectives—attention, recognition, and memory—in environments with high ad avoidance.

On a theoretical level, the study helps clarify the role of narrative congruence and type of appearance in memory formation. The prevalence of "action/use" and "visual only" formats in the subsample that reported recall suggests that functional interaction between character-object and careful visibility, without the need for explicit mention, can generate effective memory traces as long as the naturalness and rhythm of the scene are preserved. Furthermore, the finding of medium-sized associations between knowledge/attention and recall tests the idea that attentional processes operate as a contributing mechanism in the encoding of the cue.

At the applied level, the findings offer criteria for creative decision-making and planning:

- (i) prioritize organic integrations that solve the character's tasks or characterize the environment;
- (ii) reserve explicit mentions for situations that are functional to the plot;
- (iii) routinely monitor indicators of perceived naturalness and interest; and
- (iv) align expectations around purchase intention, which does not show clear relationships with the variables analyzed and therefore requires complementary support outside the content (contextual promotions, distributed repetition, activations at moments of decision).

Methodologically, the work provides a replicable operationalization for survey studies on product placement: integration of consent and age filters, viewing habit measurements, brief attention/knowledge scales, spontaneous recall, and characterization of the type of appearance, as well as bivariate contrasts using chi-square and Cramér's V. This combination enables rapid and comparable diagnostics between projects and seasons, which is useful for marketing teams and producers who require decision inputs in agile creative cycles.

In addition, a structured summary of indicators is provided that can be transformed into a dashboard for creative teams: total spontaneous recall and recall by format, distribution of levels of naturalness and interest, cross-tabulation of attention/awareness and recall, and early saturation alerts. This route simplifies the connection between research and execution and accelerates learning cycles when working with multiple titles or franchises

6.2 Limitations of the study

The results of this research should be taken with a grain of salt due to several limitations in the sample. The first one is that a non-probability convenience sampling method was used. Hence, the sample's makeup does not necessarily reflect the general population of viewers. It limits the external validity of the study's findings and indicates that one should be careful when outlining magnitudes or percentages of other age groups, regions, or platforms.

The second limitation is that the study was designed as cross-sectional and relied on self-reports, which hampers the establishment of causal relationships and may cause memory bias, selective attention, and social desirability. Spontaneous recall, although considered to be valuable, does not reflect the actual exposure of the participants (brand screen time, the number of appearances, prominence of framing, narrative centrality, repetition throughout episodes) - the factors that can influence the reaction and were not controlled in this survey.

The third limitation is that the characteristics of the appearance were detailed, and the perceptions of naturalness and interest were gathered, but no behavioral indicators (e.g., searches, site visits, additions to shopping carts, or purchases) were measured after exposure. Psychophysiological or observational metrics (eye tracking, galvanic skin response) that could help the triangulation of attentional mechanisms, have also not been included. Hence, any suggestions of purchase intent should be seen as hypothetical.

Lastly, this research was only possible during a very short time and with a very versatile but brief instrument, which affects the feasibility of the thesis and at the same time limits the depth of the measurements. Variables such as category involvement, prior attitudes towards the remembered brands, affinity with the characters, or favorite genres could have been moderators and, therefore, be present in future designs to deepen the analysis.

Moreover, it is also believed that respondents understand terms like "naturalness" or "interest" in the same manner. Without uniformed visual guides (like the reference clips) the respondents' perceptions may vary significantly because of their different interpretations. This drawback is typical of surveys as well as an indication for the use of different methods for more precise results.

6.3 Future lines of research

Limitations noted and patterns observed in this sample have led to the proposal of several lines of work. The first one refers to the experiments that should be controlled, as the authors suggest, and these experiments should systematically change the type of appearance (visual, by action/use, by mention), prominence (screen size, duration, location), consistency with the plot,

and timing within the episode. The purpose would be to measure the causal effects on recall and test potential saturation thresholds that lead to negative reactions.

The second areas of research seek longitudinal designs that enable capturing memory persistence and tracing attitudes and intentions over time. A multi-wave measurement (immediately after, one week and one month, for example) would allow the observation of the rate of memory decay and the role of repetition distributed over complete seasons. Besides, this method would make it possible to conduct the analysis of intention "trajectories", i.e., to separate those transient responses from more permanent changes.

The integration of behavioral data and, if possible, light biometric data, is the third proposal. For example, linking surveys with voluntary digital traces (searches, visits, social interactions) would be a good way to estimate the conditions in which recall becomes behavioral relevance. Moreover, instrumental measures of fixations and saccades (eye tracking) could be useful to determine the role of visual salience and attentional focus in scenes with multiple competing objects.

The fourth perspective is further research that would understand more about the moderators and segmentation. More specifically the involvement with the category (e.g., technology, beverages, fashion), affinity with characters, and the gender of the content could be factors that change the effectiveness of each appearance format. Crossings of these variables in studies will permit more accurate recommendations of matching between placement type, title, and target audience.

The fifth research line outlines the idea of comparing different countries and platforms, and cultures to better understand the role of cultural norms, transparency policies, and specific consumption routines. Such research findings could, among other things, serve as adaptation guidelines for local markets and risk matrices for creatives and advertisers.

Moreover, it is quite relevant to consider transparency and labeling schemes for product placement across different platforms and jurisdictions, and their relationship with audience acceptance. This type of research would enable the development of best practice guidelines that harmonize commercial goals with narrative and viewer experience.

6.4 Methodological recommendations for replication

In this sample, to streamline future replicas, we recommend: (i) retaining the core questions used in this study to ensure comparability; (ii) adding a brief module on involvement with the category and affinity with characters, which are plausible candidates for moderators; (iii) incorporating visual anchors (frames or clips) as a common reference when rating naturalness and interest; and (iv) specifying the classification of the type of appearance more precisely, including illustrative examples in the questionnaire to reduce interpretative ambiguity.

In terms of sample design, it would be ideal to move toward stratified probability samples or, when not feasible, toward quotas controlled by age, gender, and consumption platform, increasing the sample size to improve statistical power in cross-tabulations. For the analysis, it is advisable to anticipate the effect sizes of interest in advance and perform power calculations to guide the required n per hypothesis block.

Finally, if you decide to combine surveys with experimentation, we suggest using a platform that allows you to present clips with control over duration, order, and randomization, while also collecting metrics on viewing time and attention. This architecture will facilitate the leap from robust correlations to causal evidence and allow you to build richer response functions (recall, liking, intention, behavior).

6.5 Final reflection

Overall, this sample supports the thesis that product placement, when integrated coherently and in moderation, is an effective tool for building brand memory- tive audiences that are heavy users of streaming services. However, the high level of recall observed and the associations with awareness and attention do not imply an automatic translation into purchase

intention. On the contrary, they point to the need for complementary strategies that activate relevance at moments of decision and accompany exposure with stimuli outside the content.

The value of these conclusions is twofold: on the one hand, they offer immediate practical guidance for brands and producers—from creative design to the evaluation of naturalness and interest—and, on the other hand, they outline a research agenda that will allow, with more controlled methods and richer measurements, robust correlations to be transformed into causal evidence and, with this, more accurate recommendations to be made. Along the way, it will be key to maintain an ethical view of transparency and respect for the viewer's experience, as the success of placement depends as much on its communicative effectiveness as on its legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

7. References

- Balasubramanian, S. K. (1994). Beyond Advertising and Publicity: Hybrid Messages and Public Policy Issues. *Journal of Advertising*, 23(4), 29–46.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1943.10673457>
- Balasubramanian, S. K., Karrh, J. A., & Patwardhan, H. (2006). Audience Response to Product Placements. *Journal of Advertising*, 35(3), 115–141. <https://doi-org.rennes.sb.idm.oclc.org/10.2753/JOA0091-336735030>
- BBC. (2019, 24 mayo). *New Coke en «Stranger Things 3»: por qué Coca-Cola volverá a lanzar al mercado el peor fracaso comercial de su historia*. BBC News Mundo.
<https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias48403731#:~:text=La%20presi%C3%B3n%20fue%20tal%20que,errores%20comerciales%20del%20%C3%BAltimo%20siglo>
- Ben Lowe, F., Chan, F. F. Y., & Petrovici, D. A. (2016). Antecedents of product placement effectiveness across cultures. *International Marketing Review*, 33, 5–24.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/imr-07-2014-0249>
- Blanco, J. (2024, 12 agosto). *Reporte PQ Media: El gasto global en product placement crecerá a un ritmo más lento hasta los US\$32.980 millones en 2024*. PRODU.
<https://www.produ.com/mercadeo/noticias/reportes-pq-media-el-gasto-global-en-product-placement-crecera-a-un-ritmo-mas-lento-hasta-los-us32-980-millones-en-2024/>
- Bretón, L. (2022, 8 julio). *¿De dónde salió el product placement?* Soy.Marketing.
<https://soy.marketing/de-donde-salio-el-product-placement%EF%BF%BC%EF%BF%BC/>
- Cha, J. (2016). Product placement in movies: perspectives from motion picture firms. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, 13(2), 95–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16522354.2016.1159802>

- Copymate. (2024, 1 abril). *Colocación de producto – eficacia del product placement como herramienta de marketing*. Copymate. <https://copymate.app/es/blog/multi/colocacion-de-producto-eficacia-del-product-placement-como-herramienta-de-marketing/>
- Corkindale, D., Neale, M., & Bellman, S. (2023). Product Placement and Integrated Marketing Communications Effects on an Informational TV Program. *Journal of Advertising*, 52(1), 75–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2021.1981500>
- Crockett, Z. (2024, febrero 9). *The economics of movie product placements*. The Hustle. <https://thehustle.co/the-economics-of-movie-product-placements>
- D’Astous, A., & Berrada, C. (2011). Communication Strategies to Enhance the Effectiveness of Product Placement in Movies: The Case of Comparative Appeal. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 14(1), 45–55.
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2000.10505106>
- De Vera Martín, J., Palomino Díez, I., & Universidad de Valladolid. Facultad de Ciencias Sociales. (2024). *Publicidad por Emplazamiento en el Cine y la Televisión: Desafíos Legales y Éticos del Product Placement de Apple*.
- Dirconfidencial. (2024). *Product Placement: tipos y ejemplos de éxito*. <https://dirconfidencial.com/diccionario/product-placement-20161205-1428/>
- ESIC University. (2024). *Product placement: qué es y ejemplos de éxito*. <https://www.esic.edu/rethink/marketing-y-comunicaci%C3%B3n/product-placement-que-es-c>
- Gupta, P. B., & Lord, K. R. (2012). Product Placement in Movies: The Effect of Prominence and Mode on Audience Recall. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 20(1), 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.1998.10505076>

- Hackley, C., Tiwsakul, R. A., & Preuss, L. (2008). An ethical evaluation of product placement: a deceptive practice? *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 17(2), 109–120. <https://doi-org.rennes-sb.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1467-8608.2008.00525.x>
- Hofman-Kohlmeyer, M. (2020). Impact of Product Placement Strategies on Brand Reception - Literature Review. *Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Humanitas. Zarządzanie*, 66(3), 69–86. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.4509>
- Li, S. (2023). Effectiveness of product placement in streaming TV series: the roles of product involvement, placement prominence, and celebrity endorsement. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2023.2258374>
- Mas, J. S. V., Martín García, A., & Pérez Expósito, S. (2025). Metaverso, Product Placement Y Publicidad Inmersiva: Nuevas Presencias De Las Marcas en Los Espacios Digitales. *Revista Prisma Social*, 49, 162–188.
- Meyer, J., Song, R., & Ha, K. (2016). The effect of product placements on the evaluation of movies. *European Journal of Marketing*, 50(3/4), 530–549. <https://doi-org.rennes-sb.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/EJM-12-2014-078>
- Miguel Artigas, E. de. (2024). *How product placement in fiction can be utilized as a marketing strategy to attract the user's attention and boost sales in the modern era.*
Urn:Tid:203692160.
- Nielsen. (2021). *Beyond martech: Building trust with consumers and engaging where sentiment is high.* Nielsen. <https://www.nielsen.com/es/insights/2021/beyond-martech-building-trust-with-consumers-and-engaging-where-sentiment-is-high/>
- PQ Media. (2024, 9 agosto). *Global Product Placement Forecast 2024-2028.* PQ Media® | Custom Media Research. <https://www.pqmedia.com/product/global-product-placement-forecast-2024-2028/>
- Priscilla, E. B. K., Hidayat, V. V., & Supriadi, O. (2022). Product Placement Across Digital Media: The Impact of Prominence, Modality, and Plot Connection toward Brand Recall

on Korean Drama ‘Business Proposal.’ *2022 5th International Seminar on Research of Information Technology and Intelligent Systems (ISRITI)*, 184–190.

<https://doi.org/10.1109/ISRITI56927.2022.10052872>

Puspanathan, C. A., Khor, K. K., & Ramendran, C. S. R. (2024). The Ability of a Brand Recall to Mediate between Product Placement and Multi-Ethnic Moviegoer’s Consumer Purchase Intentions. *International Journal of Management Studies*, 31(1).

<https://doi.org/10.32890/ijms2024.31.1.11>

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. <https://doi-org.rennes-sb.idm.oclc.org/10.1086/344432>

Snyder, S. L. (1992). Movies and Product Placement: Is Hollywood Turning Films into Commercial Speech. *University of Illinois Law Review*, 1992(1), 301–338.

UNADE. (2021). *Qué es product placement: una técnica para cine y televisión*. Universidad Americana de Europa. <https://unade.edu.mx/que-es-product-placement/>

임청, & Lin, Q. (2025). The Effect of Broadcasting Product Placement and Emotional Response on Purchase Intention : Moderating Effect of Immersion.