

Comparing Brand Placements And Advertisements on Brand Recall And Recognition

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ABSTRACT

Despite the popularity of brand placements in television programming, little is known about their effectiveness when they are used separately compared with when they are combined with television commercials. The current study confirmed that brand placements in television sitcoms elicit lower levels of recall than, but similar levels of recognition to, a 30-second advertisement during a commercial break in the show. The study suggests that the ability of consumers to remember specific brands might be enhanced by a combination of brand placements and television commercials. This can be explained by the beneficial synergy effects of using a mixture of promotional tactics.

Management Slant

- In this study, a brand placement was equally as effective as a 30-second commercial in eliciting brand recognition.
- Participants' unaided recall was higher when they saw a 30-second commercial than when they watched a prominent brand placement.
- A combination of brand placement with a 30-second commercial elicited unaided recall similar to that of two 30-second commercials.

- Advertisers should consider utilizing less expensive brand placements if their objective is to increase brand recognition.
- Advertisers can benefit from possible synergy effects when combining a brand placement with a 30-second commercial.

INTRODUCTION

The creative inclusion of brands in the content of movies and television shows is not a new practice. One of the first known brand-placement agreements dates to 1896, when the French filmmakers, the Lumiere Brothers, signed an agreement with the Lever Brothers' soap company to include Sun- light Soap in their films. The cooperation of movie- makers and product manufacturers became more common in the early 1900s, as the young movie industry grew. By featuring real brands in their movies, producers increased the realism of the film and help cover production costs. In exchange for promotional support, studios offered manufacturers an opportunity to reach a target audience with a branded message that was hard for viewers to avoid (Barry and Sargeant, 1927).

The number of brand placements continued to grow in the second half of the 20th century, and the practice expanded beyond the movie industry to radio and television programming. Surprisingly, this tie-in advertising did not capture the attention of marketers and academics until 1982, when Hershey's Inc. signed a \$1 million agreement with Universal Pictures for featuring Hershey's Reese's Pieces in their movie "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial." As a result of the collaboration, sales of the "Reese's Pieces" brand increased by 66 percent within three months of the film's release (Reed, 1989). Thereafter, such place-ments became regarded as an emerging brand-marketing technique. The approach was widely adopted by marketers and became a central focus of brand-placement research. Since then, leading characters of Hollywood blockbusters wear Ray Ban sunglasses, like Tom Cruise in "Risky Busi-ness"; drive a Mercedes-Benz, like Kim Cat-trall in "Sex and the City"; or play Sony's PS3, like Kevin Spacey in "House of Cards."

The U.S. brand-placement market was valued at \$6.01 billion in 2014 and was projected to grow, according to a PQ Media report. Heineken paid a record \$45 million to replace Agent 007's traditional cocktail with their beer in one of the recent epi-sodes of the James Bond series, "Skyfall." In fact, this partnership continued into the latest episode of Bondiana, "Spectre." Brand placement, clearly utilized in

movies, is now taking over the small screen. On television, the winning team from "Survivor" is rewarded with swigs of Mountain Dew. Netflix's "House of Cards" is littered with cameos from BlackBerry, Dell, Samsung, and Coca-Cola, in the case of stream-ing content. Yet research has given limited consideration to this context, going from movies right to gaming. For example, the promotional billboards of Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign appeared in "Burnout Paradise," the racing video game (Freeman, 2014).

Advertisements in the form of commer-cials were almost entirely absent in the silent movie era. Instead, movie theaters showed slide advertisements of local businesses on their screens (Segrave, 2004), a practice that still can be found in selected movie theaters. The first television advertisement was aired on July 1, 1941, during a local baseball game. A ten-second commercial for Bulova watches that cost \$9 dollars, it reached only several thousand people but transformed the advertising industry. Since then, television advertising has become one of the leading marketing communication mediums. The total expenditure by U.S. companies on television commercials is expected to surpass \$70 billion in 2016, according to eMarketer. Nevertheless, because of the changing media environment, the skipping of advertisements by viewers, and the rise in cost of television advertising, an increasing num-ber of marketing professionals question the future of the traditional 30-second spot (Jaffe, 2005; Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez, and Page, 2011). One solution to this problem may be to shift to less expensive marketing messages, such as brand placement in television shows, which might allow marketers to gain product exposure in a context where targeted audiences are par-ticularly receptive (d'Astous and Seguin, 1999; Russell, 2002).

Because there is no commonly accepted method for assessing the value of brand placements or for developing meaningful pricing strategies for them (Balasubramanian, Karrh, and Patwardhan, 2006; Lehu, 2007; Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007), the current study examines the comparative effectiveness of brand placements in television programming relative to traditional advertising. It also investigates the possible synergy between consumers' recall and recognition when using a brand placement together with a 30-second television spot during the commercial break.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Decreasing Value of TV Commercials

Since their introduction in the early 1940s, television commercials have been among the primary advertising media. Recently, however, advertisers have questioned the future of television advertising (Jaffe, 2005). One driver is the increasing cost of commercials to capture attention or create something memorable (Shimp and Andrews, 2013). For example, a 30-second advertisement during the Super Bowl cost about \$1 million in 1985, more than \$2.2 million in 1999, and approximately \$4.5 million in 2015 (Langager, 2015).

Growing advertisement clutter is another issue negatively affecting the effectiveness of television commercials (Panda, 2004; Williams *et al.*, 2011). Most television stations broadcast about 16 minutes of non-programming material every hour during prime time and more than 20 minutes during daytime (Green, 2006). An average NFL game includes 20 commercial breaks featuring more than 100 advertisements (Biderman, 2010). The more advertisements that consumers view, the less attention they pay to a single ad, consequently reducing its effectiveness.

Television commercials also face threats from TiVo, DVRs, and other devices that facilitate advertisement skipping. (Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2006; Ferguson and Perse, 2004; Fransen, Verlegh, Kirmani, and Smit, 2015; Ghosh and Stoc, 2010; O'Neill and Barrett, 2004). Following their introduction in 1999, some in the industry predicted the early death of television advertising. About 62 percent of advertisers expressed lack of confidence in television advertising and stated that they intended to decrease their television advertising budgets (Association of National Advertisers, 2010). This skepticism is still prevalent despite findings that DVRs have had a negligible effect on the sales of the advertised products and should not be considered a threat to television commercials (Bronnenberg, Dube, and Mela, 2010).

Some video streaming services, like Netflix, work on a subscription basis and do not have commercial breaks during their shows. According to an article in *Advertising Age*, GfK tracking survey found that Netflix does not affect television viewing habits of U.S. consumers and should not be considered as a threat for television commercials (Neff, 2014). Nevertheless, this is a lost opportunity for advertisers, as an estimated 36 percent of U.S. households subscribe to Netflix (Nielsen, 2015). According to Neff (2014), an average subscriber is watching 7.1 television shows and 3.8 movies weekly through Netflix. Facing the diminishing value of television commercials, marketers seek more efficient and less expensive advertising techniques that will allow them to catch the attention of consumers. According to advertising professionals, one possible solution is brand placement in

television programming (Kimmel, 2005; Russell, Stern, and Stern, 2006; Smit, Reijmersdal, and Neijens, 2009).

Unfortunately, there are no accepted benchmarks to determine the effectiveness of brand placements (Lehu, 2007; Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007). Companies usually use past experience or common sense for pricing brand placements. Depending on the type of placement and the potential audience for the movie, the price of brand placements can vary from several thousands to several million dollars. Only a few studies have compared the effectiveness of brand placements with traditional commercials, and these studies were focused on placements in movies and radio programs (Gupta and Lord, 1998; van Reijmersdal, 2011). Furthermore, although marketers are including brand placements in their integrated marketing communication (IMC) campaigns, there is very limited information about the potential synergy of combining product placements with other promotional mediums. The authors' current study addresses these issues and offers practical implications for practitioners looking to use an effective communications mix using advertising and brand placements on television.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Classifying Brand Placements

The definition of brand placements, sometimes called product placements, has changed over the last two decades. More than 15 new definitions have emerged over the years (Chan, 2012). One of the first definitions of brand placement was, "the inclusion of a brand name, product package, signage or other trademark merchandise with a motion picture, television show, or music video" (Steertz, 1987, p. 22). Another study highlighted the unobtrusiveness and paid nature of brand placements, characterizing them as "a paid product message aimed at influencing movie (or television) audiences via the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into a movie (or television program)" (Balasubramanian, 1994, p. 29). Still another described brand placements as a "practice that involves incorporating brands in movies in return for money or for some promotional or other consideration" (Gupta and Gould, 1997, p. 37). One of the most popular definitions and the one used by the authors in the current study stated that brand placement is "a compensated inclusion of brands or brand identifiers, through audio and/or visual means, with mass media programming" (Karrh, 1998, p. 33).

Brand Placement and Memory

Prior studies on brand placements have demonstrated that prominent brand placements, where the brand identifier is highly visible or central to the scene, evoke greater brand recall than advertising (Gupta and Lord, 1998; van Reijmersdal, Smit, and Neijens, 2010). Few studies have given significant consideration to the fact that consumers have a limited capacity to process information in a television program. With respect to short-term memory, this notion supports the idea that during a sensory rich situation like watching a movie or a television show, consumers cannot fully attend to every stimulus or object they encounter (Lang, 2000). They may focus on a particular stimulus or object for a period of time, while simultaneously ignoring other stimuli they feel are irrelevant (Moran and Desimone, 1985). People do this on a daily basis during most situations, and selective attention clearly plays a role in determining what aspects of an advertisement resonate with viewers.

On the other hand, consumers welcome the realism that brand placements provide to mass media programming (Delorme and Reid, 1999). Past literature has described such placements as frequently used symbols that enrich the plot, theme, and characters of the programming or movie (Hirschman, 1988; Holbrook and Grayson, 1986). But the realism of a brand placement also may be a weakness for the marketer: When the placement of the brand is natural, the action, actors, or set may be more relevant than the brand itself and, thus, garner more attention than it does. In this case, audiences may selectively ignore brand placements, which will negatively affect subsequent recall and recognition of the placed brand. In contrast, in television commercials, the featured brand is the main focus of the spot. Considering that both audio and visual selective attention may occur during the viewing of a television sitcom, the current authors proposed the following two hypotheses:

- H1a: Advertising during the commercial break of a television sitcom will elicit higher brand recall than prominent brand placement in the same program.
- H1b: Advertising during the commercial break of a television sitcom will elicit higher brand recognition than prominent brand placement in the same program.

It is important to note that researchers distinguish between recall and recognition based on the amount of information that needs to be stored for each process. Specifically, the literature has described recall as a two-stage process comprising retrieval and familiarity, whereas recognition is comprised solely of familiarity. Recall and recognition are related to each other because when people retrieve a piece of

information from their memory, they are involved in a recall task and when people subsequently make familiarity decisions, they are involved in a recognition task (Haist, Shimamura, and Squire, 1992). As such, recall demands a deeper level of processing than recognition (Hygge, 2003). Recall and recognition both should be considered when assessing the effectiveness of promotional messages. In some purchasing situations, such as with online purchases, recall is more effective, but for others, including grocery store purchases, recognition may be adequate.

Synergistic Effects of Combining Brand Placements and Commercials

Past research on brand placement primarily categorizes it independently from the traditional advertising, such as commercials. Research on television advertising has focused on how product placement influences viewers' recall of brands. Relatively limited research has investigated the relationship between the two (Gupta and Gould, 2007; Gupta and Lord, 1998). One early study tested the concept of synergy and the context of radio programming (van Reijmersdal, 2011). The study examined how recall was influenced by a single brand placement, a single commercial, or both a brand placement and a commercial on the radio. It concluded that the combination resulted in higher recall than a lone commercial, but not more than only a single brand placement. Thus, adding a brand placement to a radio commercial can increase the recall of the brand.

This concept has been described in the literature as synergy, specifically with respect to differing forms of advertising on the same medium rather than different forms of advertising on multiple media (Schweidel, Foutz, and Tanner, 2014). Research on priming effects suggests that initial exposures to visual stimuli can unconsciously affect how people respond to subsequent stimuli (Neely, 1977). Subsequent research therefore should attempt to demonstrate this synergy beyond radio commercials.

Synergy across multiple media may build the brand equity of products and services and reap the benefits of integrated marketing communication (Belch and Belch, 1998). A primary goal of combining multiple promotional vehicles is to have them synergize so that they have a greater persuasive effect than each vehicle has on its own (Caywood, Schultz, and Wang, 1991). This notion of synergy rests on the proposition that the combined effect of multiple activities exceeds the sum of their individual effects (Belch and Belch, 1998). Advertising initiatives can take place in multiple forms, including news, public relations, television and movie product placements, commercials and infomercials. Several researchers

have shown that combining different advertising forms might enhance consumers' memory of the brand (Consterdine, 1990; Edell and Keller, 1999; Lord and Putrevu, 1998). The integrated marketing communication theory of synergy is important, therefore, when considering the resultant relationship of combining product placements in a sitcom with commercials that air during the intermissions.

According to prior findings, information from multiple sources is perceived as more credible and may positively affect the motivation to process it (Harkins' and Petty, 1991). The motivation to process may lead to better memory performance, in terms of recall and recognition (Zaichkowsky, 1985). When audiences view a commercial that is followed by a brand placement, or vice versa, the audio-visual elements of the brand placement might activate associated memories with the brand from the commercial, thus making it more noticeable. With regard to a sitcom or other television programming, the current authors examined the difference in brand recognition and recall after viewing a commercial with a brand placement versus a commercial or a brand placement alone through the following hypotheses:

- H2a: The combination of brand placement and advertising will elicit higher brand recall than brand placement only.
- H2b: The combination of brand placement and advertising will elicit higher brand recall than advertising only.
- H3a: The combination of brand placement and advertising will elicit higher brand recognition than brand placement only.
- H3b: The combination of brand placement and advertising will elicit higher brand recognition than advertising only.

Many researchers have shown the positive relationship between message repetition and memory (Anand and Sternthal, 1990; Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999). At a low level of repetition, any subsequent stimulus enhances the effectiveness of the message (Cox and Cox, 1988). At least two advertising exposures usually are needed to form personal responses and evaluations (Krugman, 1972). Consequently, if the above-mentioned synergy effects exist, it is reasonable to test them in multiple exposure conditions as well. People pay more attention to a message when they are exposed to

multisource messages than when repeatedly exposed to single source messages (Chang and Thorson, 2004). Thus, when exposed to a combination of brand placement and a commercial, consumers should show higher processing of the information than when they are exposed to two commercials. As such, the authors suggested the following hypotheses:

H4a: The combination of brand placement and advertising in sitcoms will elicit higher brand recall than two advertisements.

H4b: The combination of brand placement and advertising in sitcoms will elicit higher brand recognition than two advertisements.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

Five hundred and sixty-one adults were selected based on U.S. census data from an online panel provided by Critical Mix, a research company, and asked to participate in the study by giving them access to a Qualtrics questionnaire hyperlink. A total of 318 individuals in the United States completed the survey successfully, a response rate of 56.6 percent. Fifty-three percent of the respondents were female, and the median age of the sample was 32 years. Eighteen percent of the sample had a graduate degree, 20 percent had an undergraduate degree, 31 percent had some college, and 24 percent had a high school degree. For household income, 12 percent of consumers made more than \$100,000 per year; 11 percent between \$80,000 and \$99,999; 17 percent between \$60,000 and \$79,999; 21 percent between \$40,000 and \$59,999; 29 percent between \$20,000 and \$39,999; and 10 percent reported making less than \$20,000 per year.

To increase the stability of the experiment and generalizability of the results, as well as the replication across products, the stimulus used in the study was alternatively either Heinz or Snapple. These are leading brands in ketchup and iced tea, respectively. A pretest was conducted to ensure that Heinz and Snapple brands were visible and identifiable by the viewers of the sitcom. Ninety percent of the subjects in the pretest successfully identified both brands. Two episodes of the "Two and a Half Men" sitcom containing prominent brand placements of the selected brands were used as stimuli. No other brands were presented in the selected scenes.

After answering some demographic questions, subjects were asked to watch one full episode of the show with two commercial break-with six 30-second commercials in each-and one brand placement. Depending on the scenario, one commercial in each commercial break was shown for either Heinz or Snapple (See Table 1). The rest of the commercials were random television commercials for the products popular in s corresponding product category, such as Nokia, Nikon, Kia, Stella Artois, and Kindle. Pretests of the control commercials did not indicate any outliers in terms of recall or recognition. Participants equally recalled the brand for each commercial.

TABLE 1 Summary of Treatment Groups

	Brand Placement	Commercial
Scenario 1 N=73	Heinz	Two 30-second Snapple commercials, no Heinz commercial.
Scenario 2 N=79	Heinz	One 30-second Heinz commercial, one 30-second Snapple commercial.
Scenario 3 N=80	Snapple	One 30-second Snapple commercial, one 30-second Heinz commercial.
Scenario 4 N=86	Snapple	Two 30-second Heinz commercials, no Snapple commercial.

In order to address the proposed research hypotheses, four scenarios were created (See Table 1). For each brand the four scenarios were a one-minute brand placement, a 30-second commercial, a combination of both a brand placement and a 30-second commercial, and two 30-second commercials. In all the scenarios where both commercials and brand placements were present, the commercial was shown before the brand-placement scene.

It is important to consider how the brand was introduced in the context of the show. In the first brand-placement scene, for example, Heinz was introduced when two leading characters-Alan and Walden-were sitting around a table having breakfast. The bottle of Heinz ketchup was on the table. During the conversation Alan was trying to pour some ketchup on his plate, but because the ketchup was very thick he did not succeed. In the following scene Walden took the ketchup bottle and tried to help Alan, but after several unsuccessful attempts he spilled the ketchup on Alan's T-shirt.

The scene with Snapple's brand placement started with Walden sitting near the table, eating a brownie, and chatting with Brenda, another character in the show. The bottle of Snapple iced tea was on

the table in front of him. In the second part of the scene, Alan entered the room, and Walden took the bottle and drank from it several times.

Brand-placement scenes were not edited, and were kept in their original form and duration of about one minute, exactly as they appeared during the original CBS broadcast. After watching the show, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire designed to measure recall and recognition of the brands featured during the program.

Measures

Recall and recognition of an advertisement are among the most commonly used measures of assessing the effectiveness of television commercials (Singh, Rothschild, and Churchill, 1988). Moreover, numerous studies demonstrate the positive effects of brand placements on consumers' memory (Brennan, 2008; Delattre and Colovic, 2009; Gupta and Lord, 1998). Brand recall and recognition are commonly examined measures for the effect of brand placements on memory, and many academicians use these measures to evaluate the success of brand placements (Gupta and Lord, 1998; Karrh, 1998; Russell, 1998; van Rejimersdal, 2011). Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that the efficiency of both television commercials and brand placements can be evaluated based on such memory measures as recall and recognition.

In the authors' current study, recall was defined as whether a participant was able to name correctly the brand shown during the program or commercial break without external clues or aids. For recall, the question asked was, "Now that you have watched the video, please indicate all products or brands that you recall having seen during the video." Recall was subsequently recoded for the target brands only- Heinz and Snapple-using a dichotomous item (recall= 1, no recall= 0). Recognition was defined if a participant was able to select a certain brand from a list of other brands and indicate having seen it during the program or commercial break. For recognition, the question asked was, "Thinking about the program that you watched, please indicate if you remember any of the following brands." It was recoded then with a dichotomous item (recognition= 1, no recognition = 0).

In order to eliminate false recall and recognition, collected scores for both recall and recognition were adjusted according to the procedure suggested by Brennan and Babin (2004). Specifically, recall

and recognition results were decreased by the percentage of respondents who recalled seeing the focal brands after watching an episode of the show that didn't feature these brands.

RESULTS

Given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, logistic regression analysis was conducted to address the proposed hypotheses. Recall and recognition were used as dependent variables. The combined group-the brand placement + 1 Ad scenario-was used as the reference group during comparisons.

Recall

TABLE 2 Comparison of Brand Recall Results

Brand	Condition	Hypothesis	Recall	χ^2
Heinz	Brand Placement vs. 1 Ad	H1a	9.6%	15.12*
			38.4%	
	Brand Placement vs. Brand Placement + 1 Ad	H2a	9.6%	28.05*
			54.4%	
	1 Ad vs. Brand Placement + 1Ad	H3a	38.4%	4.23*
			54.4%	
	1 Ad + Brand Placement vs. 2 Ads	H4a	54.4%	1.42
			63.8%	
Snapple	Brand Placement vs. 1 Ad	H1a	6.3%	14.71*
			32.9%	
	Brand Placement vs. Brand Placement + 1 Ad	H2a	6.3%	27.25*
			48.8%	
	1 Ad vs. Brand Placement + 1Ad	H3a	32.9%	4.26*
			48.8%	
	1 Ad + Brand Placement vs. 2 Ads	H4a	48.8%	0.85
			56.2%	

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Hypothesis 1a proposed that an advertisement during a commercial break would elicit higher recall than brand placement during the show. The results of logistic regression supported this hypothesis both for Heinz ($\chi^2 = 15.12, p < 0.05$) and Snapple ($\chi^2 = 14.71, p < 0.05$) (See Table 2). Respondents more likely would recall the brand when it was featured during the commercial break than when it was prominently placed in the show. Specifically, 38.4 percent of respondents who saw the Heinz commercial only recalled the brand correctly, while fewer than 10 percent who saw the Heinz brand placement recalled it correctly. Moreover, 32.9 percent of respondents who saw the Snapple commercial only recalled the brand correctly, while fewer than 7 percent who saw the Snapple brand placement recalled it correctly.

As proposed by Hypothesis 2a and 3a, participants who saw a combination of both the brand placement and advertising had significantly higher recall than participants who only saw a commercial, or participants who only saw a brand placement. For Heinz, $\chi^2 = 28.05, p < 0.05$, and $\chi^2 = 4.23, p < 0.05$, when contrasting the Brand Placement + 1 Ad group with the separate Brand Placement and 1 Ad groups, respectively. Similar results are observed for Snapple, $\chi^2 = 27.25, p < 0.05$, for Brand Placement versus Brand Placement + 1 Ad, and $\chi^2 = 4.26, p < 0.05$, for 1 Ad versus Brand Placement + 1 Ad.

Specifically, 54.5 percent of respondents who saw both the Heinz commercial and brand placement recalled the brand correctly, compared with less than 10 percent who saw only the Heinz brand placement, and 38.4 percent who saw only the Heinz commercial. Moreover, 48.8 percent of respondents who saw both the Snapple commercial and brand placement recalled the brand correctly, whereas fewer than 7 percent who saw only the Snapple brand placement and 32.9 percent who saw only the Snapple commercial, recalled the brand correctly.

Hypothesis 4a proposed that a combination of brand placement and advertising in sitcoms would elicit higher brand recall than two advertisements. Results demonstrated that recall was not significantly different in those two conditions for either Heinz ($\chi^2 = 1.42, p < 0.05$) or Snapple ($\chi^2 = 0.85, p < 0.05$), thus rejecting H4a. Participants were equally able to recall the brand, regardless of whether they saw a combination of brand placement and commercial or simply two commercials.

Recognition

TABLE 3 Comparison of Brand Recognition Results

Brand	Condition	Hypothesis	Recall	χ^2
Heinz	Brand Placement vs. 1 Ad	H1b	64.4%	3.25
			75.6%	
	Brand Placement vs. Brand Placement + 1 Ad	H2b	64.4%	12.73*
			89.9%	
	1 Ad vs. Brand Placement + 1Ad	H3b	75.6%	5.49*
			89.9%	
	1 Ad + Brand Placement vs. 2 Ads	H4b	89.9%	0.00
			90.0%	
Snapple	Brand Placement vs. 1 Ad	H1b	70.0%	0.22
			73.41%	
	Brand Placement vs. Brand Placement + 1 Ad	H2b	70.0%	7.02*
			87.2%	
	1 Ad vs. Brand Placement + 1Ad	H3b	73.4%	4.82*
			87.2%	
	1 Ad + Brand Placement vs. 2 Ads	H4b	87.2%	0.02
			86.3%	

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Hypothesis 1b stated that advertising during the commercial break of a television sitcom would elicit higher brand recognition than prominent brand placement in the same program. Inconsistent with H1b, the authors found no significant difference between recognition elicited by brand placement or by a single commercial for Heinz ($\chi^2 = 2.35$, $p > 0.05$) and Snapple ($\chi^2 = 0.22$, $p > 0.05$) (See Table 3). Participants were equally able to recognize the brand regardless of whether they saw a brand placement (% $\text{recog}_{\text{Heinz}} = 64.4$; % $\text{recog}_{\text{Snapple}} = 70.0\%$) or a commercial (% $\text{recog}_{\text{Heinz}} = 75.6$; % $\text{recog}_{\text{Snapple}} = 73.4\%$).

Hypotheses 2b and 3b predicted higher recognition for the combination of brand placements and advertising over the use of brand placement or advertising only. The results supported both of these

predictions, as recognition for the combination of both brand placement and commercial condition significantly differed from the commercial only condition ($\chi^2_{\text{Heinz}} = 5.49, p < 0.05$, and $\chi^2_{\text{Snapple}} = 4.82, p < 0.05$), as well as from the brand-placement only condition ($\chi^2_{\text{Heinz}} = 12.73, p < 0.05$, and $\chi^2_{\text{Snapple}} = 7.02, p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 4b predicted that exposure to two advertisements would stimulate better recognition than exposure to a commercial and brand placement of the same brand during the show; the data did not, however, indicate any significant difference between these conditions ($\chi^2_{\text{Heinz}} = 0.00, p > 0.05$, and $\chi^2_{\text{Snapple}} = 0.02, p > 0.05$) for either the Heinz or Snapple brand.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to compare the effect of brand placements versus television commercials on consumers' ability to remember a particular brand. The authors' findings indicate that a single television commercial stimulates higher brand recall than a prominent brand placement during the same show. These results differ from the findings of the widely cited research of Gupta and Lord (1998). A possible explanation for this discrepancy is that Gupta and Lord used only short episodes of the movies in their study, and this partial exposure might have limited the ability of participants to follow the storyline. As a result they may have paid more attention to secondary attributes of the movies such as brand placements. In contrast, in the present experiment respondents had a chance to follow the story from the very beginning, which allowed them to focus on the content of the show, so they may have paid less attention to brand placements.

Furthermore, H1b was not supported during the study, indicating that participants showed similar levels of recognition when exposed to a brand placement scene as when shown a commercial for the brand. These results are similar to the findings of Babin and Carder (1996), which showed that brand placements might elicit high recognition but relatively low recall. This may be because recall is a more difficult task than recognition. Recall usually requires more extensive reinstatement of the learning event (Haist *et al.*, 1992). The results of the current authors' study indicate that exposure to a brand placement might not be enough to elicit strong recall, but it is enough to stimulate recognition comparable with exposure to a 30-second commercial.

Additionally, the findings indicate that highest recall was observed when two commercials or when a commercial and a brand placement were shown. The single commercial format had a significantly lower recall. The lowest recall was observed in the brand-placement-only condition. Thus, the use of mixed media messages appears to boost brand recall to the same level attained when exposing an audience to two television commercials. This improvement in recall compared to the brand-placement only scenario might be attributed to the potentially synergistic effects of combining brand placements and commercials within the same program (Schweidel *et al.*, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Managerial Implications

By specifying the relative superiority of some brand-placement scenarios in eliciting brand recall or recognition, the results of this study offer useful insights for marketing practitioners. As illustrated above, brand placements in television sitcoms can elicit recognition similar to that of a 30-second television commercial. This finding has important implications for marketers looking to increase brand equity by enhancing recognition of the brand.

Additionally, in situations when brand recognition is considered more important for the purchase of the products, brand placements can be as effective as television advertising. In the case of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), for example, purchase decisions usually are made at stores where the brand name, logo, packaging, and other physical features of the products are physically present; thus; recognition of the product might help to discriminate between similar products (Lynch and Srull, 1982). Likewise, for established brands well-known by consumers, eliciting brand recognition might effectively activate the memory of the brand and drive future sales. In such cases, marketers should consider using brand-placement tactics, as brand placements appear to be as effective at enhancing recognition as more costly commercials.

But when consumers make buying decisions away from the point of purchase, where brand elements are not physically present, as in online purchases, brand recall is more important than recognition in influencing their choice (Lynch and Srull, 1982). In these cases, featuring brands in television commercials may be more effective in enhancing consumers' recall than featuring brands in the context of a television program. Alternatively, when consumers are selecting a service provider, they usually

attempt to retrieve information about available brands from their memory; hence, in such situations, recall is more important than recognition and might have significant impact on choice (Nedungadi, 1990). Accordingly, when designing promotional campaigns for service companies, marketers may consider giving preference to television commercials.

Furthermore, the combined use of commercials and brand placements appears to be more effective than the single use of each method. Combinations can be used as a cost-effective alternative to buying two spots in a commercial break. Moreover, such multisource promotional strategies might result in enhanced elaboration on the messages (Moore and Reardon, 1987). Edell and Keller (1989) examined similar interactions between television and radio advertising. Consequently, this study extends results from prior studies on synergy and the effects of two promotional tools to influence memory for the brand (Edell and Keller, 1989; Jin, 2003). Recall plays a major role in consumer choice, and practitioners might enhance the persuasiveness of a message by employing synergistic strategies, such as using a brand placement in combination with a commercial (Bettman, 1979; Lynch and Srull, 1982).

Future Research

The current study compared the effectiveness of brand placements and commercials in modern sitcoms by evaluating two memory-based measures, recall and recognition. Although many studies support the use of recall as one of multiple measures of persuasion (Cacioppo, Petty, and Morris, 1983), one stated that recall might be a poor predictor of persuasion (Mackie and Asuncion, 1990). Others suggested that assessing the effectiveness of product placement should be expanded to nonmemory metrics (Bhatnagar, Aksoy, and Malkoc, 2004). Future research should extend these findings and evaluate brand placements based on other measures of persuasion, such as attitude and choice.

Memory research implicitly is tied to time. The current research focused on the short-term memory effects in consumer behavior and marketing communications. It is unlikely that people will shop for advertised products immediately after watching a show on television or a commercial. Recall and recognition tend to decrease over the time, so to enhance understanding of the findings in the current study, research further should examine memory across multiple time points-hours, days, weeks (Singh, Roth-schild, and Churchill, 1988).

Future research should examine the relationship between program plot and the brand image of the placed brand. Research might examine whether the brand being placed embodies the characteristic of the brand image in the story line. This might be especially important for brands with highly distinguishable attributes like Heinz. Additionally, in this experiment the characters of the show highlight an important characteristic of the Heinz brand, thickness, whereas the Snapple brand is not involved in the story of the show to a similar degree. As a result, one might conclude that recall and recognition for Heinz might be higher than that of Snapple. Thus, it might be important to study the involvement of the brand placement in the story and its effect on recall and recognition.

Finally, although the findings of this research offer robust insights into the possible synergy effects on brand recall of mixed promotions—brand placements with commercials—they are limited to brands of low-involvement, products, ketchup and iced tea. Such effects are especially important for promoting high-involvement products categories such as cars, because more elaboration may be needed for less frequent, high-cost purchases. Accordingly, future research should examine the effect of the synergy in combining brand placement and commercials on recall for high-involvement products.

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