

THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND PLACEMENT IN BOLLYWOOD ON THE INDIAN
CONSUMER

by

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Abstract

Brand placement in Bollywood is becoming increasingly common, yet little is known about its effectiveness. A review of the main areas of research undertaken to date reveals that researchers have focused on a few central themes: consumer/viewer attitude toward product placement, recognition and recall of brands and the effects of brand placement on consumer behavior. Researchers have largely ignored assessments of the impact of brand placement on brand sales. This thesis examines the effectiveness of product placement by measuring its impact on purchase decisions. Results indicate that brand placement has little or no influence on a consumer's decision to purchase brands and that brand sales are not a successful measure of effective placement. Brand placements lead to awareness and recall but do not necessarily translate to sales; hence, brand placements cannot be a stand-alone strategy. To achieve the desired outcome of improved brand awareness, enhanced brand recall and increased sales, product placement has to be integrated with other established marketing tools. Even when integrated in a larger media plan, product placement has to have a keen focus on consumers, characters and film category.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Avatar, a Twentieth Century Fox production, was one of the most-anticipated releases of 2010. Directed by blockbuster director James Cameron, it was a tale of nine-foot, blue-skinned Na'vi warriors on the fantastical planet of Pandora. The film's team, aware of the fact that it was going to be hard to place brands into the plot and setting of the movie and dissuaded by egregious placements in sci-fi movies like Disney's *2012*, 20th Century Fox's *I, Robot* and Dreamwork's *The Island*, engaged in brand sponsorships that did not interfere with their creative vision. Though the "future" is a clever area for brands to invest in if they are looking for longevity, the storyline of *Avatar* precluded typical product placement. *Avatar* officials formed a unique product partnership with Coca-Cola that included a dedicated website AVTR.com, merchandise, TV commercials, social media, cinema spots and displays for retail outlets, such as Wal-Mart and Kroger. Coca-Cola executives wanted to capitalize on the hype around *Avatar* without integrating or interfering with the setting, plot and storyline. The main intention was to develop an association between Coke Zero and *Avatar*, and to engage target consumers in an entertaining way:

Coca-Cola decided to partner with *Avatar* because "It was a movie that targeted Coke Zero customers, 18- to 24-year-old males," said Chip York, Coca-Cola's director of worldwide entertainment marketing . . . "We tailor our programs to really build on the hype before the movie comes out," York said. "If the film is a box office smash, then we'll ride the wave with it." Don't look for Coca-Cola in the movie, though. "A product placement didn't make sense. Coca-Cola tries to fit products where they would naturally occur, and it was hard to figure out the right place or package for a movie set 100 years in the future." (Collier 2009)

Previously exclusive to Hollywood, promotional opportunities such as these are becoming a global phenomenon. Companies like Coca-Cola are looking to adopt promotional opportunities similar to this all over the world. It is convenient for brand and marketing executives to take promotional formats that have proven successful in developed markets and apply them in emerging economies. An example of this is Coca-Cola's focus on product placement in Bollywood, India's Hindi language film industry. The most successful movie branding for Coca-Cola in India was probably that of *Rang De Basanti*. India's official entry for the Golden Globe Awards and the Academy Awards in the Best Foreign Language Film category in 2007, *Rang De Basanti* is the story of five young men who, in a unique turn of events, shed their apathy toward politics and governance to stand up for what they believe in. The movie reflects the growing national pride among Indian youth and instigates young India to rise against corruption. Unlike *Avatar*, *Rang De Basanti* is a story about young India and provided the perfect storyline for the brand. It was a strategic fit for Coca-Cola in more ways than one – it targeted the young consumer, resonated with Coca-Cola's advertising campaign, reflected urban India and its protagonist already was a brand ambassador for Coke. Instead of being a mere tactical one-off activity, Coca-Cola used the film as an integral part of its marketing, advertising and product strategy. The film complemented Coca-Cola's then-new advertising campaign "Piyo Sar Utha Ke" ("Drink with your Head Held High") – a campaign built around the common gesture of lifting one's head and tipping it backwards while drinking out of a bottle, which associated drinking Coke with national pride. To promote the campaign as well as build a brand association with the film, Coca-Cola

launched a special-edition collectible bottle for the film, developed special merchandise and also ran contests to integrate the film and the brand. This was supported by an integrated marketing communications program involving print, television and radio.

According to Vikas Gupta, Vice President Coca-Cola India, “The launch of the special edition ‘Coca-Cola-*Rang De Basanti*’ bottles is all about making Bollywood history and adding yet another innovation to celebrate the ever growing popularity of Indian movies.” The film *Rang De Basanti* underlines one’s belief in truth and optimism for success. Such emotions in a way also reflect Coca-Cola’s current theme of ‘Piyo Sar Utha Ke’...*Rang De Basanti* is all about fun-seeking wanderers who find meaning in their lives. With ‘A generation awakens’ as the tag-line, the whole film stresses on pride in one’s beliefs, quite like Coca-Cola’s tag-line of ‘Piyo Sar Utha Ke.’ (PRdomain.com 2006).

Coca Cola’s partnership with both *Avatar* and *Rang De Basanti* herald a new direction for the film industry where brands and corporations can capture the opportunity to be topical without being relevant to the unique setting that the storyline of a movie provides. The relationship between brands with films has come a long way from *brand placement*, where product brand names and logos were obviously emblazoned on screen or blatantly included in dialogues, to brand partnerships and integration, where product brand names are either woven into the plot or externally marketed across multiple media channels without an actual presence in the film. Though in spirit both indicate forms of advertisement, the relationship between cinema and commerce has changed over the years with both sides looking at more intelligent and innovative ways of integrating the two. In both the aforementioned examples Coca-Cola transcends the limitations of traditional product placement to create a meaningful association with the respective films and its consumers – a result of the gradual sophistication of brand placement practices popularized in the 1930s.

The intent behind product or brand placement or partnership is to create a connection with its consumers. The placement is considered successful only if the association translates into curiosity, awareness, recall, reference or trial. Keeping the success factors in mind, a series of studies have been devoted to product placement in films (Karrh 1998). The effect of product placement on consumer attitude (Gould, Gupta and Grabner-Kräuter 2005), its potential impact on brand recall (Auty and Lewis 2004) and its overall effectiveness (Law and Brown, 2000) represent the main core of academic research on product placement in Hollywood. In addition, studies on product placement by professional firms like Nielsen and Millward Brown also have become institutionalized across the industry.

Placement of branded products in movies was, until recently, a Hollywood concept (Roy and Bhattacharya 2006). Though the Indian film industry was inspired by Hollywood – in fact, the term Bollywood was created by conflating *Bombay* (the city now called Mumbai) and “Hollywood” – and adopted the Hollywood-style studio systems as early as the 1920s, product placement found its way much later in the 1990s. As a result research on the topic is still at its preliminary stages in India and is primarily focused on impact of product placements on a wide, general audience. However, with 450 million people who are below the age of 21 and poised to begin their consumption journey, India is a huge future growth market for branded products. The last few of years have seen Indian youth emerge as a highly significant audience base for several brands. Young people are now the "Buyers/ influencers" for several products and are significant consumer segments from marketers' perspective. As brands try to actively connect with

consumers, it is important to understand the impact of product placement on the young audience. This thesis will explore whether product placement in the Indian movie industry is having the desired impact on young India. It will examine the awareness of both branded products and product placement among young Indians. The study also will determine what impact product placements currently have on young consumers and how they can create a positive impact that results in increased awareness, trial or usage among the same consumers.

Chapter 2: Brand Placement

2.1: Definition of Brand Placement and the Concept Explained

Brand placement is most commonly referred to as the practice of displaying or showcasing branded products in popular entertainment. Lamb, Hair and McDaniel call it “a public relation strategy.” The public relation function has traditionally used a variety of media platforms and interpersonal tools to develop and support a brand’s reputation. Traditional tools like news releases, special events, press kits incorporating varied media have been typically used to communicate with a brand’s users and develop a positive relationship with them. This roster of tools has expanded over the years with public relations practitioners experimenting with numerous new media tools and approaches. According to Pardun and McKee, “Practitioners, understanding that members of different publics attend to various channels differently, have been receptive to experimentation and change in the choice of medium for message dissemination.” In addition, Solomon and Englis note the frequent need for public relations practitioners to “position a client’s product or service in the context of naturally occurring activities” and connect at a more subtle and sub-conscious level with users. A film provides the perfect “naturally occurring” context for message dissemination and public relations practitioners use it as a platform to build positive relationships between organizations and their many publics. Though not an overt promotion, brand placement is a way of integrating branded products naturally into the setting, plot, dialogue, background and scene of an entertainment program to increase visibility among consumers/viewers. Brand placement

in some companies have been placed within the realms of marketing; however, Hainsworth argues that product placement “falls under the umbrella of public relations and is distinguished from advertising agency placement in that most placements are not paid for.” Brand placement primarily impacts the reputation and image of the company and not sales. In fact, most trade and academic research concentrate on the recall value of brand placements and not on sales impact. This thesis is a unique attempt to link brand placement to purchase behaviors and thereby, to sales and trial.

Initially known as “product placement,” this practice has been called a variety of names: “brand placement,” “in-film advertising,” “branded entertainment,” and “brand integration.” Through its evolution it has also been known as “brand casting,” “brand cameo” and “embedded marketing. In this thesis all of these terms are used interchangeably and are collectively described as “a cooperative effort of advertisers and creator of entertainment products in which trademarked goods are embedded into popular entertainment products in order to encourage their consumption, overriding entertainment and artistic concerns” (Schejeter 2005). The Center for Media and Democracy describes product placement as “a form of advertisement” that does not disclose to consumers its promotional intent (Source Watch, 2005). In reality, brand placement falls in the space between advertising, promotion and entertainment and, for this reason has been characterized as a hybrid advertisement (Balasubramanian 1994). Brand placement is not restricted to films and can extend to television, radio shows, video games, song lyrics, music videos and plays (Wasko, Phillips and Purdie 1993). Despite the variety of entertainment channels, the main purpose of brand placement is the same: generating

additional finance for the author, the medium or the production and creating a platform for the advertiser to introduce brand references into the consumers' experience of the entertainment (Russell and Belch 2005; Lehu and Bressoud 2007). Some interesting definitions of product/brand placement include:

Table 1: Popular definitions of brand/product placement

- “the inclusion of a brand name, product, package, signage or other trademark merchandise within a motion picture, television show, or music video” (Steortz 1987)
- “the planned entries of products into movies or television shows that may influence viewers' product beliefs and/or behaviours favourably” (Balasubramanian 1994)
- “the paid inclusion of branded products or brand identifiers, through audio and/or visual means, within mass media programming” (Karrh1998)
- “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)” (Gupta and Lord 1998)
- “the inclusion of a product ,a brand name, or the name of a firm in a movie or in a television program for promotional purposes”(d'Astous and Chartier 2000)
- “commercial insertions within a particular media program intended to heighten the visibility of a brand, type of product, or service”(La Pastina 2001)
- “the purposeful incorporation of a brand into an entertainment vehicle” (Russell and Belch 2005)

Brand placement can occur in several ways: naturally; mediated as a barter deal; or integrated in lieu of financial compensation. In some cases a brand is integrated into a film to enhance realism. A recognizable brand enhances the audience's connection to the film and makes the film more believable and relatable (Sung and Gregorio, 2008).

However, some directors often use their own invented products as an alternative to placement. Quentin Tarantino created the Big Kahuna Burger, which is a fictional chain of Hawaiian-themed fast food restaurants that appears in his movies: *Death Proof*, *Four*

Rooms, From Dusk Till Dawn, Pulp Fiction and *Reservoir Dogs*. The packaging of the burger was created by Tarantino's friend and a website soon developed that listed outlets, each in a well-known fictional American town. Similarly, film director, Robert Rodriguez developed Chango beer and used it symbolically in his movies *Desperado, From Dusk till Dawn* and *Sin City*. Others developed fictional brands for individual movies like Bonnet baby food in *Capote*, Better Most beans in *Brokeback Mountain*, Hog's Head matchboxes in *Assault on Precinct 13* and so on. However, this is a laborious process and filmmakers often have to choose from already existing brands or show a slew of generic non-labeled products as seen in one scene of *Meet the Fockers* – Ben Stiller opens the refrigerator to find it stocked with generic products with no brand labels.

Mediated brand placements are of two types: ones that are arranged in lieu of additional supply of the brand and ones that are arranged in lieu of financial compensation. In the 1930s, De Beers, for example, instructed its agents to give studio executives sample diamonds to use in roles that showed women being swayed by the gift of a diamond jewel (Epstein, 2006). In *Natural Born Killers* director Oliver Stone and other members of the production got two free pairs of cowboy boots in return for showing the boots' brand name, Abilene, on a truck passing by the open convertible driven by the character Mallory Knox (Juliette Lewis). For placements that involve financial compensation, cash transactions are few. In most cases brands contribute toward either production or marketing costs. The maximum benefit that a film production unit gains for brand placement deals is free products, financial aid for production and

advertising and promotional support. For productions that are usually on a tight budget this can sometimes translate into a substantial cost-savings.

2.2: Types of Brand Placements

Brand placements come in various types. Since many academic papers about product placement have explained placement types in detail, this thesis only focuses on those appearing in the films researched. This chapter will introduce the most frequent placement types.

Product placement can be categorized in various ways, but the most common segmentations are: visual, spoken and usage. Visual product placement occurs when a product, logo and/or brand name can be simply observed or seen in the film. In 1945, Joan Crawford was shown drinking Jack Daniels bourbon whiskey in the movie *Mildred Pierce*. In some cases of visual placement the product is not displayed at all; instead a billboard of the product is shown as the backdrop. In the 1949 film *Love Happy*, Harpo Marx cavorts on a rooftop among billboards depicting various brands. Spoken product placement occurs when the name of a brand, service or a corporation is spoken within the film. In *I-Robot*, the main character played by Will Smith mentions his Converse shoes several times referring to them as “classics.” Usage placement occurs when the actor is shown handling, using or interacting with a product, service or corporation. Usage placement is often combined with spoken and visual placement. A Cadillac was freely used in the film *The Matrix Reloaded*; the car was shown in several scenes and the audience got a feel for how the car drives.

Placements can also be distinguished as product, service or corporate. Though the intention of all three types of placement is to raise brand awareness and recognition, marketers of products in the long term want to increase sales; marketers of services want to increase trial and usage; and corporate marketers want to enhance reputation. Another extension of corporate placement is “image placement,” in which the movie tries to augment the image of an institution, group or profession such as the armed forces, non-profits, FBI, firemen etc. (Hirsch 2009).

Message placement is also a popular in movies. Often films are used to relay important social messages on issues such as health, teenage pregnancy, smoking or gay marriage. Films like *Dead Man Walking*, *Philadelphia*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *American History X*, *Crash*, *Juno* and *Bowling for Columbine* integrate strong messages on socially relevant topics such as capital punishment, AIDS awareness, gender differences, racism, teen pregnancy and teen violence. *The Insider*, which featured unethical conduct by the tobacco industry and information about the negative health effects from smoking, portrayed strong and pervasive negative views of the tobacco industry.

Tourism placement is yet another type that is extremely popular, especially in Bollywood. Popularly known as film tourism, this is a growing phenomenon worldwide, fueled by both the growth of the entertainment industry and the increase in international travel (Hudson and Ritchie 2006). In Bollywood, film tourism was popularized in the 1970s by filmmaker Yash Chopra, who used foreign locales such as Switzerland, Holland and Germany as a backdrop for his movies. He was given an award by the Swiss Government for rediscovering Switzerland. Another popular trend in Bollywood is to use

exotic locations for a song-and-dance sequence. The dreamlike qualities of these sequences, which last for about four to five minutes, allow the filmmaker to showcase major attractions of an exotic location without having to integrate it in the storyline or the plot. Film tourism has been extensively noted in Hollywood. *Braveheart* was shot in Scotland; *The Lord of the Rings* showcased the natural beauty of New Zealand, and *The Beach* exposed audiences to the exoticism of Thailand.

2.3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Brand Placement

Placement deals come in a variety of forms, ranging from spontaneous bartering where no money changes hands but the product is required to strengthen a character's profile or to add richness to the plot – as was the case with BMW's first deal with the *James Bond* franchise – to fully planned placements deals that are exactly stipulated in the script for a fee. In either form, product placement has far-reaching benefits, primarily the opportunity to be presented in a non-commercial context, which aids in creating specific, tailored associations with consumers. Specific benefits derived from product placements are:

Positive brand association: Marketers use carefully chosen images to convey brand attributes, brand audience and brand emotions; if branded products are seamlessly integrated in films they can extend and reinforce these associations. The entertainment industry benefits from this as it wants to add to the realism of its films, and the branded product industry benefits as it wants to be shown in natural and believable environments.

Indirect endorsement: Celebrities have the power to influence consumers; however, with celebrities endorsing multiple products their credibility as spokespersons

has been dwindling and it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between the brands that they promote. Product placement offers the unique opportunity to gain celebrity endorsement in a more individual context where brands are identified with the celebrities and the characters that they play in the films. This has a dual effect: both the value of the character and the celebrity are reflected on the brand.

Break through the clutter: With consumers being bombarded with messages at all times, they often ignore advertisements when they see them in traditional media. Product placement in films help brands rise through the clutter that exists in print, internet and traditional broadcast media. Also, unlike in traditional advertising where consumers can choose to ignore branded messages by changing the channel and not reading the advertisements, films provide a captive audience who have no way to avoid these messages unless they exit the theater.

Longer shelf life: Films have a long life even after their release. Long after their release in movie theaters they are available on prime time television channels, pay-for-view, cable television channels, entertainment websites like Hulu and Youtube, DVD and Blu-Ray.

Inexpensive marketing practice: Product placement is less expensive than traditional advertising. In the 2008 season, many prime-time TV ads cost around six figures, with “*American Idol*” raking in as much as \$1 million for half-minute spots. If a brand bought four spots in every episode, it ended spending \$4 million per episode. A brand would have had to pay \$52 million to be present in all 13 episodes of the season. At the end of it all, the brand would only get 26 minutes of exposure. On the other hand,

Coca-Cola, AT&T and Ford shell out \$30 million each for product integration and TV spots on “*American Idol*,” yielding tremendous exposure over the course of the broadcast season (Shepard 2007). Product placement can therefore be effectively used all-year round to supplement traditional product advertising.

Target specific demographics: Films cater to specific demographics. Romantic comedies appeal to females between the ages of 16-35 years, whereas sci-fi or action movies specifically target males between 16-45 years. Specific genres and individual films cater to specific audiences which, by default, allow brands to target specific consumers. In this way brands can also closely align their messages for the specific consumer group.

In addition to benefits there are several disadvantages of product placements. If placements are not seamlessly integrated into the scene or the plot of the film they can stick out like a sore thumb. This is also true if the placement is not appropriate. Also, negative associations can negatively impact the brand. Anna Danielova, a finance professor from DeGroote School of Business and Michael Wile from Arizona State University, recently studied 126 product placements in 24 motion pictures that were released in 2002. The study indicated that when brands pick the wrong movie with which to integrate, they could “flog” their product. The study found that product placements in violent films negatively affected stock prices. There is a tendency to think the company condones violence or there is a negative association with the product (Danielova and Wiles 2009). Though product placement is possible across all media channels, for the purposes of this thesis product placement will be defined as **paid messages in films that**

showcase or endorse a branded product naturally or overtly with the purpose of influencing the purchasing or behavioral decisions of the viewer. With time the practice of product placement has become increasingly sophisticated. Today, product placement is more "natural" and "organic." In fact, industry experts prefer to call it product integration. It is not so blatantly obvious that it overwhelms the programming, and it is also not so subtle that it is overshadowed by programming (Ulaby 2005). Today, we observe a shift from passive brand placement to active brand integration, with the potential brand benefit exponentially increasing with the depth of integration.

2.4: The Impact of Brand Placement

Movie viewing is a relaxing and entertaining pastime. A viewer in a movie theater does not expect to be exposed to product or brand advertisements; hence brand placements in films have no distracting stimuli. Brands are featured in a natural context and brand messages are readily assimilated by viewers. The captive nature of the audience provides immense communication potential. Brand placements also are less expensive than brand advertising, but accountability and return-on-investments are crucial for a broader adoption of the practice. But, for most part, brand placements remain difficult to quantify or measure. Some brands have been successful at measuring the success of product placements simply because the impact of the placement has been overwhelming. The first corporation to realize the value of in-film marketing was Hershey's Corporation when it recorded a 65% increase in the sale of Reese's Pieces after their inclusion into Steven Spielberg's hit *E.T.* (Karrh 1998). There are numerous similar stories that demonstrate the financial impact of brand placements. Red Stripe beer

was shown in *The Firm* and within a month of the film's release, sales of the Jamaican beer had increased by more than 50% in the U.S., and Guinness Brewing Worldwide acquired a majority stake in the brewery just a few weeks later for \$62 million (Gutnik, Huang, Lin and Schmidt 2007). The BMW Mini ran out of stock in the U.S. after starring in the remake of the hit film *The Italian Job*. The website, BagBorroworSteal.com was mentioned by Jennifer Hudson in the movie *Sex and the City*. Brand officials paid nothing for the placement but the website saw a membership increase of 217 percent with both site views and demand for “borrows” up 300 to 400 percent respectively. The film *Knocked Up* mentioned the nude-actress-chronicler Mr. Skin post after which his website reported a 35 percent jump in traffic. Sales of hamburger phones went up almost 750 percent in the month following *Juno*'s 2007 release. Red Stripe beer sales increased 50 percent after being shown in *The Firm*; *Toy Story* increased Etch-a-Sketch sales by over 4,000 percent (Sauer 2004).

In many cases brand placements do not bring in immediate financial gains; however, they do lead to brand awareness, brand recognition and desire to purchase. Published research has shown an impact of brand placement on recall but not enough research has been done on the impact of brand placement on awareness, perception or preference. Brand placement success is often assessed with case studies and anecdotal evidence. While advertising can be measured on the basis of reach, frequency and awareness, very few placements measure specific communication effects that are associated with brand placement strategies. To quantify the effects on awareness, recognition and desire one has to track the changes in attitude of viewers who have seen

the film. Brands marketers conduct overall research on marketing activities and often balk from spending additional resources on specific research on brand placements in films. But as the practice claims a larger share of the marketing budget marketers would be forced to come up with ways to measure the impacts of this practice.

2.5: The History of Brand Placement

Brands are becoming ubiquitous in real and mediated life. They can be found almost everywhere, appearing on billboards, T-shirts, tattoos, and in unlikely places such as schools, doctors' offices and hotels. Brands placed in entertainment media such as films were originally considered mere movie props and were informally negotiated, often as donations, with film producers as early as the 1890s. Today, studios receive much more for a product appearance; the sums usually are dependent on brand prominence, scripted mentions and actor endorsement.

Sunlight Soap was the first recorded instance of product placement - trundling into view (0 mins 17sec) in 1896 on a wheelbarrow in Girel's *Défilé du 8e Battalion*. The adoption of product placement in American movies started with the close-up of a Hershey bar (1min 46sec) when Gary Cooper tossed it onto the bed in 1927's *Wings* - one of the earliest instances of American product placement (Hoad 2009). The true potential of product placement was realized when undershirt sales plummeted nationwide after matinee idol Clark Gable took off a dress shirt and exposed his bare chest on screen in *It Happened One Night* (1934). That is when corporate America took notice of the new marketing phenomena called product placement (Galician and Bourdeau 2004). In 1939, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer became the first studio in history to open a placement office

(Rothenberg 1991), and Walt Disney Studios began selling plates and glassware depicting images from its popular films in 1929 (“Tie-in Advertising” 1951). Since then, Hollywood films have featured numerous brands either as props or as a part of the script. Product placement expanded slowly until the late-1960s when movies with real-life settings became a relevant platform for including actual brand label products and advertising images (Weisberg 1985). From the 1930s until the 1970s barter-style arrangements were popular, wherein goods and products were exchanged for publicity in films. For example, if a restaurant was featured in a film, the cast and crew of the film would get a complimentary meal at the restaurant. Though directors acknowledged the role of product placements in relieving high production budgets and marketing costs, the true potential of this phenomenon was captured in the 1970s when studios plagued by diminishing ticket sales and skyrocketing film budgets increasingly relied on the product placements as a revenue source (Galician and Bourdeau 2004). The nature of product placement arrangements changed in the mid-1980s when specialized marketing agencies negotiated deals between corporations, brands and film makers (McKechnie and Zhou 2003). Its big start came in the 80s with movies like *Back to the Future* championing a multitude of brands. But it was not until the character E.T. was tempted with Reese’s Pieces in 1982 – a placement credited with causing sales of the candy to leap 65% in three months – that marketers fully understood product placements’ commercial impact. Encouraged by the proof of effect of product placement on sales generation studios began to market films as an advertising vehicle, and brand marketers began to include it in their

media and advertising plans. Gradually, product placement has become a popular component of integrated product marketing and communication strategies.

Product placements sometimes serve in a fully integrated promotional campaign but they may also supplement public relations efforts, both internally and externally, motivate the sales force and/or dealers, or support new-product introductions or sales promotions. As a communications tool, product placements should serve a specific function in the overall communications program (Russell and Belch 2005).

In addition to obvious reasons such as growing distrust of advertising, the low cost relative to other media, the opportunity to target specific demographics, to break through commercial clutter and the growth of marketing agencies, brand placement was influenced by growing consumerism. The rise of consumerism in the United States has been a steady process through the years, especially since World War I. The 1920s saw the growth of the culture of consumerism: many Americans began to work fewer hours, earn higher salaries, invest in the stock market, and buy everything from washing machines to Model T Fords (Schultz 1999). With consumerism, product promotion gained a fresh lease on life; and agencies and individuals who had used the knowledge of propaganda and promotions to influence public opinion about the War now tuned their expertise to commercial products. After their success in getting support for the government in wartime, agencies began to apply that knowledge in peacetime in the areas of business and commerce. Marketers, urged by marketing and advertising agencies, started spending large amounts of money in advertising in print and radio (and eventually television) yet very few could break through the clutter in the limited media space available. The average 1970s city dweller was exposed to 500 to 2,000 advertising messages a day (Petrecca 2006). Though these numbers may not be overwhelming, given the limited

number of media channels available branded messages actually crowded those channels. Realizing the challenge, marketers began looking for brand exposure in non-commercial contexts – moving away from in-your-face ads, where the product is the star, to vignettes integrated in the real-life scenarios of films. Soon brand marketers found their answer in product placement that was more cost effective than traditional advertising and at the same time allowed brands to reach out to targeted audiences and break out of the commercial clutter.

The present-day American dominance of the film industry began during World War I and was firmly established by World War II. The globalization of the industry continued at a fast pace during the 1920s. Hollywood expanded abroad through vertical integration by setting up distribution networks overseas. At the same time film viewing across the world also increased as a result of development of multiplexes, higher disposable income, penetration of internationally broadcast cable and satellite channels as well as introduction of technology products such as video CD and DVD players and other movie-viewing devices.

India is the largest producer of films in the world. Approximately twenty-three million Indians go to see a film every day (International Indian Film Academy 2009). Since its entrance into the World Trade Organization (WTO), China has wooed global audiences with blockbusters produced by small art house studios, private investors and/or large international studios. Sony is an active foreign player in the film industry in China, internationally distributing a number of films (Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance 2004). Production of home-grown Spanish films also has increased. In addition, the

institution of major American film distributors in Spain and an increase in multiplex cinemas have expanded the entertainment industry. Given the scope and the size of the global market both film makers and marketers saw films as an exciting commercial opportunity and thus began the cross pollination of ideas and concepts like product placement throughout the world. Product placement that was widely practiced in Hollywood soon found its way to films around the globe. Currently product placement seems to have proliferated in films produced in Hollywood and in other international markets. The U.S. is the top country for product placement, followed by Brazil, Mexico, Australia and Japan. China will likely be the fastest growing country for product placement, with a projected growth of 34.5 percent (PQ Media 2007). Product placement reached a new high when Samsung paid a reported \$100 million to associate itself with *The Matrix Reloaded* (Graser 2003). The British *James Bond* franchise was in the limelight for its product placements when 20 companies paid a total of \$70 million to feature their products in *Die Another Day* (Grant 2008). In Bollywood, product placement accounts for approximately 90 percent of the marketing budget. "Usually the producer keeps aside a marketing budget of \$0.3 million to \$0.4 million. The remaining \$1.25 million to \$1.7 million is generated from sponsorship deals and brands which come on board," points Siddharth Roy Kapur, senior vice-president, marketing and communications, at UTV, India's leading production company (Sengupta 2006). Spain has rampant product plugs despite a European Union ban on product placement. "We are a paradise for product placement," says Javier Hoyos, head of ad agency Havas SA's B6 Spain marketing unit (Patrick and Johnson 2007).

Chapter 3: Bollywood

This chapter shall provide a general overview of Bollywood film production and explain why it is attractive to marketers as a product placement vehicle. As this thesis deals with product placement in Bollywood films, it is crucial to discuss the history of Bollywood, the format of Bollywood films and the methods of film production in order to understand how and why products are integrated at all into films. First, the term Bollywood and its conception are explained before describing the typical format of the films, followed by a discussion of how films are produced and distributed. Organization of production in this context is discussed as well.

3.1: The Birth of Indian Cinema and Bollywood

The Indian film industry derived its roots in western influences; over time it formed an integral part of the Indian culture. The birth of the Indian cinema can be traced to the screening of Auguste and Louis Lumière's short films in Bombay's Watson hotel (now Mumbai) on July 7, 1896 (Gokulsing and Dissanayake 1998). Around the same time India was providing an exotic backdrop for movies like *Our Indian Empire* (1897), *Coconut Fair* (1897), *Poona Races '98'* (1898), and *A Panorama of Indian Scenes and Procession* (1898). Inspired by Lumière's moving images and foreign films shot in India, Harischandra S. Bhatvadekar, a photographer by profession, produced two short vignettes. This was followed by F. B. Thanawala's *Splendid New View of Bombay* (1900) and *Taboot Pocession* (1900) two films that generated great interest in short "topical" films very similar to those made by Lumière (Gokulsing and Dissanayake 2004). Despite

the early successes, the foundation of the Indian film industry was laid by photographer and poet Dhundiraj Govind “Dadasaheb” Phalke. He made India’s first feature film, *Rajah Harishchandra* in 1913, thus beginning Indian audiences’ fascination with films. Thematically, most films in the early era focused on mythology; progressing later on to reflect the political, social and cultural environment in India. Indian audiences were drawn to the imagery of national pride, struggle for freedom, and the triumph of good over evil. Cinema became immensely popular with Indian audiences who saw it as an escape from the realities of their life under British rule.

Though Indian films were being made in the late 1800s, the Indian film industry started taking shape after World War I, and by the early 1920s, 66 films were being produced annually and shown in 150 film theatres across the country. Earlier films were both produced and distributed by individuals; however, in the 1930s studios such as Bombay Talkies, Prabhat Film Company, Imperial Film Company, Sagar Film Company, New Theatres, Wadia Movietone and Ranjit Movietone began operating large and integrated film companies somewhat like the major Hollywood studios (Khanna 2003). All leading directors, actors and technicians were associated with one studio or other. India by that time was producing 200 films in a year. The silent era of films soon gave way to the “talkies” – movies with sound – and the next major milestone in Indian cinema history was the release of *Alam Ara (The Light of the World)* in 1931. With its release the characteristic Indian film with its song and dance routines began to take shape. The introduction of sound brought about yet another evolution; in the year 1931 alone, 28 sound films were produced across three different languages – Hindi, Bengali,

and Tamil. The film industry grew to cater to the diversity of the country and within a few years films were being produced in ten different languages in ten different centers across the country (Rajadhyaksha and Willemen 1999). By 1935, the primary centers of film production in India were Bombay (making films in Hindi), Chennai (making films in Tamil), Kolkata (making films in Bengali), and Kolhapur (making films in Marathi) (Datta 2008). The 1940s caused a great shakeout urged for political and regulatory reasons – government regulations, Indian independence and the subsequent partition of India and Pakistan. The 1950s and the 1960s are known as the Golden Years of Cinema in India, replete with popular stars, big banners and box-office successes. Films were shot in color; song and dance sequences had become institutionalized; and Indian films were exported to countries across the globe. The studio systems began breaking down as stars, directors and technicians decided to freelance and charged high fees for their talent and skills. By the 1970s films were being made in eighteen languages. However, with time the industry became concentrated in three locations: Mumbai, which mostly made movies in Hindi; Chennai, where films were made in any of the four South Indian languages; and Calcutta, where films were made in Bengali. However, Mumbai emerged as a leader in filmmaking especially after Hindi was declared the official language of India in 1950. The films made in Mumbai took strides in global recognition; for example, *Awara (The Tramp)* sent the Soviet Union and other Communist bloc countries into frenzy in the 1950s; *Aan* had a French release after its premiere in London. Both films had westernized themes and used advanced filmmaking techniques inspired by Hollywood. The year 1971 was highly significant as India surpassed its film rival, Japan, to finally become the

largest producer of films in the world. India produced 432 films that year (Datta 2008). The film industry in Mumbai was rechristened “Bollywood” in the 1970s, which highlighted Hindi cinema’s premier status in world cinema. The name is a portmanteau of Bombay, the former name of Mumbai, and Hollywood, which is the globally recognized production center of American films. Bollywood films began to represent India in the global arena and became synonymous with Indian cinema. But the fortunes of films declined in the 1970s and 1980s due to the lack of organization in the film industry, increase in piracy, lack of available financing, unstable economic conditions and audience antipathy toward vulgarity and violence commonly depicted in the films of that era.

The 1990s saw a new audience and a fresh approach to film making coupled with an economic upswing. Liberalization also provided new avenues for financing projects and increased marketing platforms. Directors and producers began exploring alternate sources of revenue from overseas distribution, music and television rights; at the same time they sought product placements to help reduce production and marketing costs. By the turn of the twentieth century the Indian film industry became professionalized with publicly listed production companies, institutional financing, transnational audiences, multimedia marketing platforms, global partnerships and sophisticated brand placements.

The Indian film industry remains the world’s largest film industry producing nearly 800 movies in 16 languages every year. Bollywood is considered by many to be the heart of this industry with Hindi movies comprising almost 20% of the total production (Khanna 2003). The film entertainment sector is estimated to have grown at a

compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.7 percent over the past 3 years and is projected to grow at the CAGR of 9.1 percent over the next 5 years (KPMG and FICCI, 2009). Movie exports from Bollywood have grown and are around 60% currently. The USA and Canada are two major destinations accounting for 30 percent of exports followed by the UK with 25% and Mauritius and Dubai with 10% each. Other major markets include South Africa, Russia, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia (Pillania 2008). This thesis solely focuses on the Hindi film industry based in Mumbai and draws conclusions that are applicable only to Bollywood.

3.2: Adoption of Brand Placement by Bollywood

Though India adopted a Hollywood-style studio system as early as the 1920s, product placement evolved much later in the 1990s. Note that the earliest reference of a brand placement comes in the 1940 classic *Chalti Kaa naam Gadi (The Moving Car)* with the brand Coca-Cola (Panda 2004); however, product placement did not evolve as a practice at that time for a number of reasons:

Movie Themes: In the early years films made about mythology, historical tales, religious parables, epic stories and romantic legends precluded any product placement. This was followed by expressed social themes with a leftist slant mainly dealing with working-class urban life in India. Though older themes continued, themes in the '50s and '60s were influenced by the Indian People's Theater Association (IPTA), which started as an anti-fascist movement during the World War II. Historical films containing liberal doses of patriotism became popular along with autobiographical depictions and stories of social justice and change (Malik 2003). An analysis of films made between the 1960s and

the early '70s indicates “no less than five different trends dovetailed into one another. These are meaningful entertainment, mindless formulaic entertainment, which often assumed the form of melodramatic social drama, new wave films, middle-of-the-road cinema, and ... the violent vendetta saga” (Sengupta 2003). What survived late into the seventies was the revenge drama that came with a display of anger and angst. Most of the themes that evolved over the years were not germane to product placement. It was not until the 1990s that Bollywood witnessed the development of big banner films with contemporary themes, designer clothes, exotic locations and elaborate sets – the perfect ingredients for product placement.

Monopolistic Market: Prior to the '90s India had employed a socialist economic model that was embodied in the Monopolistic and Restrictive Trade Practices Act of 1969. Products available in the market were limited and most brands were indigenous. Being a monopoly market brand and product marketers spent very little on marketing as there was little competition among brands to attract consumers. For example, the only cars available in India for decades were the Ambassador, the Premier Padmini and the Fiat. The few well-known brands were Tata, Godrej, Bajaj, Hindustan Lever, Bombay Dyeing and ITC which produced a limited number of basic or functional goods and products. With limited brands in the market product, placement never really took off in India pre-liberalization.

Consumption Patterns: In a country weakened by the two World Wars, ravaged by colonialism and torn by the partition, consumer optimism and consumer confidence was at an all-time low pre-1990s. There was pragmatism in consumption and preference

for "real value" products and services. Excessive spending of products was considered wasteful and saving for a bad day was a virtue extolled by the government, the financial institutions and the people. There was no availability of credit, and readily disposable income that could be spent on consumption was scarce.

Licensed regime: In the late 1950s the Indian government recognized the revenue-earning capacity of the film industry, thereby increasing the subsequent government intervention. This resulted in censorships and heavy taxation, which made film financing difficult. In 1960, the government-regulated Film Finance Corporation was instituted for financing and exporting films. The Film Finance Corporation later formed the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) which regulated the import of foreign films. All foreign films had to be routed through NFDC and had to meet certain regulations before the film could be certified for domestic distribution. This prevented both the commercialization and the westernization of Indian cinema.

The 1990s were a decade of profound change in Indian cinema, the decade that witnessed the rise of product placements. Liberalization of the Indian economy opened the Indian film industry to multinational corporations and foreign investments. This meant that foreign media corporations with product placement experience introduced and practiced the concept and established it as an important aspect of film marketing and promotion. The Indian marketplace was flooded with new products and brands after liberalization. New brands that were previously unknown and untested were introduced in the Indian market and marketers were looking for novel ways to drive sales. Traditionally, the link between movie creators and advertisers was one of surrogate

advertising. Indian brands are shown in the background, usually during songs (the average Bollywood movie has six), which are then replayed as music videos on satellite channels such as India's MTV or Channel V. Within the last few years, however, multinational brands have increasingly looked to films and film celebrities to reach Indians (Kahn 2002). There are quite a few reasons for this:

Rising middle class: High levels of disposable income, opening up of the economies and enhanced income-generation opportunities translated to a surge in the consumption habits and spending power of the Indian middle class. A group that was earlier interested in minimal and basic consumption was suddenly flush with funds, from high-paying jobs and successful entrepreneurial ventures. Seeking international brands, aspiring for a better life and allowing the media to influence buying and lifestyle choices underpinned the actions of the growing middle class (Jaffrelot and van der Veer 2008). The middle class inherited the obsessive desire to become global citizens through conspicuous consumption of branded products.

Targeted audiences: With the launch of cable and satellite, television audiences became fragmented and provided limited reach. Films, on the other hand, created an atmosphere in which the audience was more receptive to embedded messages; the messages lived on for a longer period of time given the longer shelf-life of films and the marketer could create a consumer experience by showing the actor using the product. Thus, product placement in movies could reach a larger audience given the global export of Bollywood films; have a higher impact on a captive audience that is involved in the

movie-watching process; and, build higher recall through repetitive viewing even after the movie stops screening at theaters.

Alternative source of revenue: The filmmaker who popularized product placement and practiced it on a large scale in the 1990s was Subhash Ghai. Bollywood insiders say that Ghai recovered 40 percent of the production costs of his films *Taal* (*Beats*) and *Yadein* (*Memories*) through product placement (Mandal 2008). This occurred at the time when producers were battling with increased production costs and were exploring alternate sources of funding such as television, online, music, international and direct-to-home distribution, digital download and on-demand viewing rights.

Modern themes: Bollywood has traditionally created films that appeal to the masses (Ganti 2004), and has resisted making films that target narrow audiences. However, modern Bollywood may be segregating between what appeals to the rural audience and what is appreciated by the urban and international audiences. The films for urban audiences are often shot in metropolitan cities or locations abroad. The characters, lifestyles, fashion and trends depicted in the movies are in tune with the rest of the world. The themes have a global appeal yet at the same time are relevant to Indians. A large number of movies are centered on young protagonists and deal with themes relevant to urban youth; hence there is tremendous opportunity to place global brands that appeal to the younger generation in films that target Gen Y. The movie *Dil Chahta Hai* (*What The Heart Wants*) is the story of three friends who, as a result of a sudden falling out, are forced to grow up. All of them belong to rich families who live in dream houses, drive

swanky sports cars, wear designer labels, and spend most of their time in nightclubs chasing young girls or holidaying in exotic locations. If taken out of their immediate surroundings these characters can blend in anywhere around the world and the central theme of friendship shown in the film is universal; hence, the film provides the unique placement opportunity for global brands that appeal to youth.

Integrated production companies: After the demise of the integrated studios in the late '40s and until very recently, Bollywood films were being produced, financed, distributed and exhibited through collaboration among small independent producers and distributors, private financiers, and stand-alone cinema operators. Recently a spurt of integrated production companies produce, finance, distribute and market films both domestically and internationally. This horizontal integration provides the advantage of scale and at the same time allows the production company to earn additional revenue through ringtones, downloads, merchandising and so on (Lorenzen and Taeube 2007).

The next section focuses on two important aspects of Bollywood that facilitate product placement: the structure of the film and the structure of the industry. Given the relevance of the two to the topic the segment carries detailed discussions of both.

3.3: Bollywood Films: A Formulaic Approach

Although the format of Bollywood films has changed over the years, a typical film is melodramatic; long (two to three hours); filled with song and dance, elaborate sets, and bright, exquisite costumes; and based on values and emotions such as family, love and religion. Kitschy and colorful with rhythmic melodies, Bollywood films resemble Hollywood musicals to a certain degree. The storyline and the plot of

Bollywood movies follow a predominantly formulaic tradition. At the center of the plot is often a love story, where lovers overcome great odds to be together. A variation on the theme is the “revenge” saga, where a common man wronged by a powerful villain overcomes great odds to take revenge. These central themes are mixed with liberal doses of action, romance, comedy, thrill and suspenseful twists and turns. Most Bollywood films are developed around customary themes of star-crossed lovers, disapproving families, jealous love triangles, corrupt politicians, villainous rogues, dramatic reversals of fortune and unbelievable coincidences. However, recent developments have indicated that some filmmakers are moving away from the formulaic romantic or action movies. They have begun to segment their audiences and are trying to develop formats and themes that fill all niches (Sinha 2009). Indian audiences are now exposed to different genres and styles and have come to expect good scripts ranging across varying storylines. Filmmakers can no longer ignore the diversity of their viewers and are diversifying their product portfolio to reach a greater number of audiences. Formulaic or otherwise, various threads of influence are found in Bollywood films, primarily the-story-within-a-story tradition from Indian epics, the song-and-dance-routine from Hollywood musicals, the village tradition of epic narration and the spectacle and melodrama of Indian theatre. Critics, historians and authors have acknowledged that Bollywood films reflect an assimilation of different influences starting from theatre to Hollywood; however, this same group acknowledges that despite the inspiration, Bollywood films are thematically and structurally distinctive.

Hindi films are more than just Western-inspired products of market manipulation – like their Western counterparts, they represent a continuation of their culture's

pre-cinema dramatic forms and stories, transformed by the capitalist economy of scale and the power of the mass media. Where they differ from their Western counterparts is in the dramatic traditions from which they emerged (Booth 1995).

Bollywood films have come a long way from the Lumière tradition of “placing the world within one’s own reach” to one where the magic of illusion and escapism is lightly draped over the thick fabric of reality. In other words, the Indian film industry enchants viewers by presenting them with a different world from their own. Though Bollywood films are more “exhibitionistic” and less indirect in nature than Hollywood films, Indian audiences watch them to escape the real world. The films of Bollywood typically showcase a world that is fictitious and entertaining but with strong links to emotions and values that are real and palpable (Hirsch 2009). In this context, Bollywood films are basically “hybrid products” where global references have been adapted to a more Indian context (Kavoori and Punathambekar 2008). Halpern refers to a film as being a “dream:” an opening dream establishes the character; a later dream – or series of them – provides viewers with a glimpse of the climax, and a concluding dream ties up loose ends.

In terms of content, films enable fleeting inner emotions with universal appeal to transcend time, place and language through the permanent images of cinematic expression. Although a dream can only be remembered after the fact, a film can be watched over and over on videotape or DVD (Halpern 2003).

This dreamlike nature of films provides filmmakers the creative license to integrate exotic locations, elaborate set designs and sophisticated costumes. It also allows filmmakers to create their own rules of logic to meet a variety of artistic and marketing needs. In this context, the song and dance routines in Bollywood films play a special role in product placement. An example of this can be seen in the box-office hit *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (I Feel Something)*. A total of 144 product placements are featured in the movie, which is an emotional love story set against a college backdrop. The story of the film shows the relationship between three college students and provides the perfect setting for promoting youth brands. The film is replete with fashion brands like Polo Sport, GAP, Speedo and others that target youth, like Pepsi and Nescafe. The first branded attire shown is a DKNY shirt worn by the female protagonist in the 19th minute of the film. In the following ten minutes fifteen different clothing brands are presented on screen. The song “Yeh Ladka Hai Deewana” (This boy is crazy), the first song and dance sequence of the movie, showcases brands like DKNY, GAP, D&G and Pepsi. The song and dance sequence is extraneous to the plot of the film and is a flight of fantasy that allows the director to integrate brands and entertain at the same time. In general, identified clothing labels are predominantly printed or sewn on T-shirts. In addition, brands also occur on sweatshirts and sportswear. This is often presented in scenes illustrating sports and leisure activities. Mostly, people wearing these products are 20 and 30 year old students who have rich parents (enabling them to purchase higher-end designer clothes). For Pepsi, a brand attempting to connect with Gen Y, the movie was a perfect fit. The song that displays the bond and camaraderie between two friends and

reflects the easy-going-air of college life was something to which Pepsi's target audience could relate. This example demonstrates how product placement can be easily integrated into the formulaic nature of the films and their ethereal settings. Given the ease with which products could be placed, financiers, directors and producers alike see product placement as a way of balancing marketing and production costs.

3.4: Bollywood: Production, Financing and Distribution

Approximately 300 films are announced and launched in Bollywood every year out of which only 200 are completed and 150 are released. Fifteen of the released films are blockbusters with popular stars, renowned directors and big production and marketing budgets; around 35 films have a well-known star cast but with smaller production budgets ranging from \$1 million to \$2 million; and around 60 films are made for small towns and villages with production costs of less than \$200,000 (Khanna 2003). All film productions in Bollywood fall into two categories – mainstream, commercial, high-budget films produced by well known and larger production houses; and low-budget, niche films made by a individual producers or smaller and less-known production houses. There is no fixed rule, however, for how the films are made, financed or distributed. In some cases the producer may double as the financier while in other situations the producer may obtain funds from financial institutions; distributors sometimes finance the film for exclusive distribution rights. Corporatization was introduced in the 1990s by companies such as the Plus Channel and ABCL (Amitabh Bacchan Corporation Ltd.). Both companies failed as they met with a lot of resistance within the industry. Plus managed to

make 12 films in two years and ABCL was burdened with debts and had to file for bankruptcy.

Today, however, every single function and activity related to the Indian film business is becoming well defined and systematized. Priya Village Roadshow (PVR) which began as a movie theater in the nation's capital region, expanded into distribution and recently also started dabbling in production and finance. Adlabs, a key Indian film processing company, recently attracted huge investments from India's biggest telecom corporation, Reliance, and moved into production, exhibition, distribution and finance of films. UTV, which started out as a television production company soon moved into film production, marketing and distribution and is currently one of the biggest domestic film distributors (Lorenzen and Taeube, 2007). Percept Picture Company was created by Percept, an advertising agency in a joint venture with the Hindi TV channel and film distributor Sahara One, to tap the potential of in-film marketing and to ensure a constant supply of films and film-related content to Sahara One's TV channel. Sahara One did not succeed in integrating film production in its joint venture with Percept Picture Company, and exited the venture, focusing upon film distribution and finance. Percept now produces, finances and distributes films on a much larger scale. Several film production, distribution and exhibition companies have been listed on the Indian stock exchange and have issued shares to the public. Production companies like Eros, Adlabs, India Film Company, and UTV are also listed on the AIM facility of the London Stock Exchange and financial institutions and foreign investors are willing to invest millions in Indian

film ventures. There is a growing interest by global studios in the Indian film market; these studios are increasingly producing and distributing Bollywood movies.

Walt Disney produced and released its first film in India, *Roadside Romeo*, with the leading Indian film production company Yash Raj films; Warner Bros released its film *Chandni Chowk to China* made in association with Ramesh and Rohan Sippy; Sony Pictures recently co-produced its first-ever Hindi film *Saawariya (Loved One)* (Pillania, 2008); Fox Star Studios-Asia, a pan Asian venture between Twentieth Century Fox and Newscorp's STAR Television, will be financing and distributing India's upcoming blockbuster *My Name is Khan* both domestically and globally (Fox Star Studios 2009) and has also signed a multiple-film exclusive deal with successful director Vipul Amrutlal Shah. Even Indian filmmakers are going global. UTV is collaborating with 20th Century Fox for M. Night Shyamalan's next release *The Happening*. India's Reliance Big Entertainment struck a deal worth \$1.5 billion with Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks SKG to establish a new DreamWorks studio in Los Angeles (Sinha 2009).

Production firms are developing a new, horizontally integrated, and efficient way of financing, distributing and promoting films which distinguish them from small independent distributors. As a result of these changes, international procedures and practices are being adopted in Bollywood. In addition to exports, institutional finance and completion contracts, there has been an increase in focus on sales, marketing and promotion. They are adopting a more integrated approach to marketing and promotion urged by their connections with global studios, the motive is to deliver increased profit and to create buzz among consumers. This provides an excellent environment for brand

associations, co-sponsorships and product placement. These days a big-budget Bollywood film is marketed like any other branded product. The promoters of the film spend time and resources in creating PR buzz, hosting multi-city promotions, co-marketing, co-branding, merchandising and developing special edition products, which open up new opportunities for the brands that are associated with the film. In addition to in-film advertising the brands placed in the film can take advantage of a host of other marketing platforms. Brand marketers are on the lookout for opportunities to associate with films and create a lasting consumer impression; production firms are on the lookout for opportunities to mitigate costs; and distribution and financing companies are seeking opportunities to create hype without spending additional money and product placement provides a win-win situation for all concerned.

Product placement, which has been a mainstay of American entertainment for decades, has become a significant component of entertainment revenues in India. Despite being less than eight years old 2.5% of all television revenues come from the practice. Brand integration (which is strategic product placement in the context and within the creative fabric of an entertainment property) is also on the rise, and together – both the basic visual form of placement and the more strategic initiatives of integration have created, within just the past five years, a real and viable new business and marketing model in India: Branded Entertainment (Menon 2008).

The recent movie *Fashion* is a unique example of how product placement works in an organized environment. *Fashion*, directed by Madhur Bhandarkar was a co-production venture between UTV and Bhandarkar Entertainment. The film received an

“A” rating (equivalent to the NC-17 rating in U.S.A.) which is a cause for concern for any producer as it limits the film’s potential audience. The producers of *Fashion* need not have worried; the film’s \$4.7 million investment has been dwarfed by its profits. It earned as much as \$1.8million from in-film advertisement alone. *Fashion* has six prestigious brand placements - clothing brands Kimaya and Reebok, Lenovo laptop, Sunsilk shampoo, Cellucom and LG Electronics. "The brands have been chosen carefully so they are relevant to the scenes where they will be displayed, without causing a jarring note," said a UTV marketing executive (Thaindianews, 2008).

3.5: Current State of Brand Placement in Bollywood

In the last four to five years, marketers have begun using Bollywood as a primary channel for brand communication. Instead of traditional appearances where a brand’s billboard is shown in the background or its logo captured in a quick pan of the camera, brand appearances in Bollywood films are nowadays loud and clear. Compare the quick scan of the Rajdoot logo (a motorcycle brand) in the 70s cult movie *Bobby* to the most recent product placement of Flyte (a scooter brand) in the *3 Idiots* (2009) where the brand is integrated into the story line and is central to several climactic moments. Flyte is driven by the female lead in the movie and is seen in several scenes, providing increased opportunities for showcasing its logo and including its name in dialogue.

On one hand marketers are using in-film promotions to advertise brands and on the other are leveraging the film marketing tie-ups to promote the brand.

Modern product placement in Bollywood began with the 2001 film, *Yaadein* (Memories). The film failed at the box office but was profitable because of product

placement. However, these placements were so obvious and in some cases so preposterous that many have called *Yaadein* a three-hour commercial. In one scene the protagonist is called upon to sing at his daughter's wedding where he picks up a can of Coke and literally sings an ode to it. In yet another emotion-packed scene, the protagonist's wife is shown dying in a hospital bed. The doctors have told her that she has only a few minutes to live, amidst all this, she somehow manages to hand over a set of keys dangling on a Coke key chain! The director of the film, Subhash Ghai, earned \$730,000 from product placements in *Yaadein*. In addition to Coca Cola other featured brands included Hero cycles and Pass-Pass mints. Product placement in *Yaadein* was considered the worst of its kind in the history of Bollywood, but it is often the best remembered. With *Yaadein*, film makers began to realize the commercial potential of product placement. Director Subhash Ghai earned 20% of the film's production budget from Coke's product placement in *Taal* (Chabria and Himani). Ghai integrates Coke in a scene in which the hero happens to catch a glimpse of his lady love at a wedding party. He cannot bring himself to approach her but watches her every move. At this moment, trays of sodas are passed around and both pick up the Coke bottles. The hero removes the straw and drinks from the bottle with his lips while hiding behind a semi-transparent screen. He puts the bottle back on the tray, and tells the waiter to take the tray to where the heroine is standing with her girlfriends. The waiter offers her the tray; she rejects it. Viewers feel that she probably doesn't realize the significance of it all. But just as her girlfriend reaches for the same bottle, the heroine snatches it away. Coke becomes the

symbol of love and happiness and is the central figure in the budding romance between the two protagonists.

Product placement was stylized and integrated by filmmakers in the last two to three years. Ravi Chopra, the director of the blockbuster movie *Baghban* (The Gardener) admitted that the total benefit from associating with brands was in the range of \$800,000 per film. Brands like ICICI Bank, Ford Ikon, Archies greetings card, Tide and Tata Tea also were placed in this movie. In 2005, *Don (Kingpin)* promoted Tag Heuer watches, Motorola, Garnier, Citibank, Oakley sunglasses as well as Louis Philippe, the men's clothing line. *Dhoom2* promoted Coke, Pennzoil, Pepe, Sony, Disney Channel, Sugar Free, McDonald's, Speed, Suzuki Zeus; and *Lage Raho Munnabhai (Carry on Munnabhai)* featured Worldspace, Indian Oil Corporation, Go Air, MSN, Good Day, Kurkure, Bright Outdoor and Reliance Communications. *Krrish*, on the other hand, prominently featured Singapore Tourism Board, Sony, John Players, Bournvita, Tide, Hero Honda, Boro Plus, Lifebuoy, HP Powe and Lays chips. *Krrish*, in fact, showcased a brand every nine minutes and highlighted 37 brands in the entire movie (Menon 2008). The more obvious product placements were as follows (Razdan 2006):

- The hero was never shown drinking Horlicks but it was mentioned in the dialogue and the jar was shown in the movie several times.
- The hero's mother was shown washing clothes with Tide — she held the Tide packet in camera-friendly angles and, later in the film, the same Tide packet was seen as a prop in the kitchen.
- Young Krrish was shown drawing with Faber-Castel pencil colors.

- One of the protagonists holds a tube of BoroPlus (a face cream) close to her face in one scene.
- Hero Honda (an Indian motor bike company) sponsored the “Bombay Circus” where some crucial action took place.
- Samsung cameras and mobile phones were shown abundantly in the film.
- The most subtle placement was for Himani Navratan Oil, on the hoarding of a phone booth.
- The heroine was shown popping Vicks throat drops.
- Buses with Siyaram’s (a suit brand) advertisements were shown plying the streets of Singapore.
- Rupert Murdoch’s cable television channel Star TV was a part of the story
- The heroine was shown munching Lay’s Chips
- The film was based in Singapore which gave the Singapore Tourism Board ample opportunities to promote the city.

What started as plain vanilla in-film placements then moved on to a commercial-in-a-movie format. The more successful placements are those that are integrated seamlessly in movies. *Dil to Pagal Hai* (My Crazy Heart) shows a young hero waking up in the morning and cleansing his mouth with Pepsi. The scene was done so effortlessly and seemed so natural for the Indian Gen Y that Pepsi soon was branded as the drink for young India. As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, Coca-Cola collaborated with the director of *Rang De Basanti* to launch a new bottle and a new campaign that

paralleled the theme of the movie. Coca Cola further reemphasized its role in the national pride shared by the youth of India. *Phir Hera Pheri* effectively delivered Dominos' consumer promise of "pizza delivery within 30 minutes or free" by creating a comic scene around this notion. The protagonist in the film was a miser but he managed to order Dominos every day. On being asked how he managed this he said that he ordered the pizza and hid himself so that the delivery man couldn't find him and this way he managed to get a free pizza from Dominos every time. The scene not only provided the film with a comic moment but at the same time drove home the unique selling point of the Dominos brand. In the movie *Baghban*, the protagonist essays the role of bank employee who is dedicated to his customers. He is shown serving techno-phobic customers with warmth, comfort and ease, which also forms the core message of the bank's advertising campaign.

From in-film commercial formats brands soon moved to associative marketing which consisted of both in-film placements and a marketing blitz developed around the film. Lenovo used clips from the movie *Corporate* in the form of a commercial. Kotak Life Insurance tied up with the film *Babul* (Father) for an in-film insertion as well as an ad commercial. Soon this was not enough and brand marketers started looking for deeper associations and themes that resonated with their brand positioning. They used this to create a larger-than-life presence across multiple media channels by leveraging their association with the movies. In the movie *Dostana* (Friendship) the female lead is portrayed as the editor of a fashion magazine. Instead of developing an imaginary fashion magazine the filmmaker took the opportunity to place the popular fashion magazine

Verve, which was then undergoing a repositioning exercise. Verve also was launching an international edition at the time of the film's release. The magazine, in turn, helped promote the film. Prior to the release of the film the publisher released a special issue that was dubbed "a *Dostana* special." It contained at least forty pages devoted to the film, including the magazine cover, interviews with the director, fashion shoots on film sets, and fashion and beauty features inspired by the *Dostana* theme. The film also got a special mention in the editor's column.

Next-generation films in Bollywood are taking brand placements to a new level. Brand marketers want to integrate their brands in a more holistic manner and are searching for films that echo their image and positioning. Mountain Dew's tag-line will be integrated into the title of a recently announced film "*Mission Istanbul – Darr ke aagey Jeet hai (Victory comes with fear)*" This is the first time that a brand is incorporated in the film and its tagline incorporated in the film's title. The brand will be integrated in the film and the film will be co-promoted in Mountain Dew advertisements. This indicates a new trend in product placement: co-placement. Another unreleased film, *Bum Bum Bole (Call Out to the Lord)*, revolves around a pair of shoes. The lead character is a small-town boy who bends the rules and wins against all odds — a theme that resonates with Adidas' slogan "Impossible is nothing." Adidas has signed to co-market and co-brand the film and, of course, the shoes central to the film's plot are a pair of Adidas. Tushar Goculdass, director marketing and sales, Adidas India, says: "Our partnership with the film will be promoted with a 360-degree marketing plan. Amongst other things, we plan to organize 'Impossible is Nothing' events and a TVC" (Sindhu

2009). Adidas will be launching some new products during the release. It will have a special “Impossible is Nothing” line of clothing for kids. The range will be showcased in the movie, and a pre-release activity creating a huge buzz on the association will be created” (Sindhu 2009). More and more brands are taking an integrated approach to product placement. Not only are brands shown in films, their advertising contains clips from the movie, and brand promotion events include the cast. As a result there is a blurring of the traditional distinction between entertainment, promotion and advertising. Coke’s Uthale, Dhoom Machale campaign, was created to resonate with the movie *Dhoom 2* which featured Coke’s brand ambassador, Hrithik Roshan in a leading role. In fact, this commercial was shot by the director of the movie, Sanjay Gadhvi. *Don*, which promotes Garnier Naturals, developed a commercial around a song sequence from the movie. Louis Philippe, a clothing line for men associated with the movie *Don*, developed its “*Don* line of clothing” and promoted it with the tagline “inspired by *Don*.” The Louis Philippe collection was, in turn, promoted in the film. *Namaste London*, which revolves around a wedding. The producers brought in Bharatmatrimony.com for associative marketing via a multimedia campaign (Subramanian and Khanna Bose 2007). *Ta Ra Rum Pum*, a film on car racing, sketched brand associations with Goodyear and Castrol. Both associations were relevant to the theme of the movie. After the movie was released Goodyear used a scene to develop a commercial. These co-branded commercials were then run across networks to promote the movie as well as advertise the brand. Advertising rates for these were one-fourth the cost of normal brand advertising as spots

bought by entertainment companies are three to four times cheaper than commercial rates.

The current form of co-placements creates both buzz and impact while being economical. In a slow economy, when brands are looking for cheaper alternatives that provide greater visibility and returns, in-film promotions provide an attractive proposition. Successful placements, therefore, provide brands focused and relevant exposure at minimal cost and at the same time create opportunities for marketing, merchandizing, events and promotions that drive sales and distribution of the branded product. After the release of *Salaam Namaste (Hello)*, which was shot completely in Australia, there was a 50 percent increase in the number of Indian tourists visiting Australia. Placement of Maruti Swift a compact car in the film *Bunty Aur Babli* led to advance bookings that were in excess of its three-month production line. The action film *Dhoom* created such an impact on the Indian youth that motorbike sales increased 300 percent.

Chapter 4: Consumer Attitudes and Brand Placement

Brands now are an integral part of a consumer's life. Brands are so mediated in the regular activities of daily life that it is difficult for consumers to distinguish between their social and commercial environment. Consumers are increasingly becoming familiar with the blurry nuances of brand advertising. This can be presumed from the free use and understanding of terms such as "infomercials," "advertorials," and "brand cameos" by media, marketers, consumers and audiences. This understanding and familiarity are further honed by "consumption constellations" formed by integrated brand and advertising strategies that span across other consumer platforms (Solomon and Englis 1996). Billions of dollars have been spent trying to impress consumers while increasing brand loyalty and recognition. Every day millions of brand messages are relayed in an explicit, implicit or integrated manner through articles that one reads, websites that one visits, billboards one drives past, and conversations one has with friends. This has created an environment where consumers are compelled to process the same brand message over and over again as it is reiterated over a period of time through various media. The repetition of the same brand messages sometimes blurs the distinction between the medium and the message; the message is what remains in the memory as all encompassing. This makes it difficult to determine the effectiveness of each medium in relaying brand messages.

4.1: Popular Studies that Measure Consumer Reaction/Attitudes to Brand Placement

With public relations and marketing practitioners increasingly favoring product placement over traditional advertising, the question of the effectiveness of the medium is becoming critical to the success of the practice. A review of the main areas of research undertaken to date reveals that researchers have focused on a few central themes: consumer/viewer attitude toward product placement, recognition and recall of brands, specific aspects of product placement such as types of product used in placements and the effects of brand placement on consumer behavior. Out of the three themes mentioned there have been very few inquiries as to whether product placements influence trial, usage and purchase of products or brands shown in films. Consumer or viewer research on the subject of product placement in Bollywood is very limited. The two readily available studies were conducted by Tapan Panda (2004) and Nelson and Devanathan (2006) on brand recall. Studies on consumer attitudes toward product placement have often been based on quantitative methods; however, a few are based on qualitative methods such as focus groups, in-depth interviews or a combination of both (e.g., DeLorme and Reid 1999). The majority of these studies indicate positive consumer attitudes toward product placement with some concerns over the ethics of the practice.

The first published study of audience attitudes toward brand placement came from Nebenzahl and Secunda (1993). The authors studied a group of 171 college students and found that the majority preferred brand placement to other types of overt advertising. However, one-fourth of the respondents felt that product placement was unethical and

should be banned. Overall, the majority of the respondents favored most aspects of product placement (Karrh, Frith and Callison 2001). Other studies also have found that prominent product placements aid higher recall. In addition explicit in-film branding seems to get more awareness than subtle product placements (Karrh 1995; Gupta and Lord 1998; Panda 2004). Lehu and Bressoud (2007) found that the more the audience liked the film the better the viewer recalled the brand placements. Studies by Law and Braun found that brand recall from product placement exposures was improved when the placement employed both audio and visual cues. In this context, DeLorme and Reid (1999) found that through brand placements in movies brands create a social connection and produce favorable thoughts and feelings among its consumers. Moviegoers have “interpretive experiences with encountered brand props that extend beyond movie-specific experiences and contexts to consumption-specific situations” (DeLorme & Reid 1999). The study discovered that viewers noticed familiar products and said they enhanced their enjoyment of the film. Three similar studies explored the cross-cultural impact of product placement and found that differences exist between American and non-American consumers when it comes to product placement. American consumers are more open to product placements in films and more willing to try new products that they see in movies than their Chinese, Singaporean, Austrian and French counterparts (Gould, Gupta and Grabner-Kräuter 2000; Karrh, Frith and Callison 2000; McKechnie and Zhou 2003).

Table 2: Studies of the effect of brand/product placement on viewers

Study	Sample	Major Findings
Homer (2009)	108 undergraduate students	For subtle cases of product placement, consumer attitudes are relatively positive and repeated exposures have little incremental impact.
Lehu and Bressoud (2007)	3532 video viewers	Prominent placements are perceived to be more disruptive/ distracting, less realistic, and that they interfere with the plot: These adverse effects escalate with repeated exposures. Respondents who had previously seen the movie in a theater showed more brand recall than respondents who saw it for the first time on DVD. Large dimensions of the screen allow the brand placement to appear significantly bigger in size, and, hence be more effective. A movie fan who prefers a specific director may be more alert to certain details, and thus to various brand placements. The more the viewer liked the movie he has watched, the better he recalled the brand placements.
Nelson and Devanathan (2006)	90 Indian graduate students in the US	Less involvement with the film leads to greater recall of brands shown in the films.
Nelson and Mcleod (2005)	462 adolescents	Adolescents showed high awareness of product placements. Those who were more attuned to brands were more aware of and favorable towards the practice. There were no differences in brand consciousness for gender, age, or ethnicity.
Pokrywczynski (2005)	86 students	Viewers' involvement varies with different movies and by type of involvement considered. Overall, brand recall for a variety of products featured in a film showed a slight edge in high involvement segments.
Panda (2004)	80 graduate students	Viewers were generally positive. However, respondents felt that the creativity of the medium had not been explored. Well-known brands were recalled more than lesser-known brands. Explicit placements score considerably higher than implicit or subtle placements.
McKechnie and Zhou (2003)	108 students between the ages of 18-34 years	Chinese consumers are generally less accepting of product placement than American consumers. Unlike US consumers, male and female Chinese consumers differ little in terms of their attitudes towards ethically-charged products being placed in movies; the frequency of watching movies did not have as strong an influence on the acceptability of product placement in China as it did in the USA.

Table 2, Continued

Study	Sample	Major Findings
Russell (2002)	Pre-tested with 107 students and finally the experiment was conducted with 150 students	Mode of placement and the degree of connection between brand and plot interact to influence memory and attitude change. Product placement situations that maximized memory did not maximize persuasion. Incongruity between modality and plot connection maximized recall; congruency had a positive impact on persuasion.
Karrh, Frith and Callison (2001)	194 US and Singaporean college students	Both sets of respondents pay attention to brands in films and TV; US respondents pay more attention to their social identities; Singaporeans are less likely to perceive brand appearances as paid advertising, are more concerned about ethics of brand placement and more supportive of government restrictions on placement activities.
Gould, Gupta and Grabner-Kräuter (2000)	U.S.: 1012 undergraduates; France: 204 undergraduates; and Austria: 240 undergraduates.	Positive attitudes toward product placement overall lead to greater acceptance of particular products placed. U.S. respondents were more likely than either Austrian or French to claim they would purchase brands they see in movies, as were males overall.
Law and Braun (2000)	111 undergraduate students	Product placements influence recall and recognition and buying measure. Audio-visual placements are best remembered; however, the seen-only products were least recalled but most influential on choice
DeLorme and Reid (1999)	99 non-student movie viewers	Brand placement in movies helps brands create a connection with their consumers. Respondents noticed familiar products; familiar products enhanced movie enjoyment; products could be recognized with or without a logo, commercial advertising, or slogan merely from a company's past advertising.
Gupta and Lord (1998)	274 undergraduate students	Prominent product placements outperform both subtle product placements and advertisements in viewer recall. Product/ brand recall for audio product placement is higher than subtle visual product placements.
Gupta and Gould (1997)	1012 college students	Generally positive attitudes towards practice of brand placement; yet certain product categories such as alcohol, cigarettes and guns are less acceptable; gender, movie-viewing frequency, and attitudes found to affect acceptability of brand placements.

Table 2, Continued

Study	Sample	Major Findings
Karrh (1995)	76 undergraduate students	Prominent product placement can lead to higher recall/recognition.
Nebenzahl and Secunda (1993)	171 undergraduate students	Majority of respondents were positive towards product placement. Only a small proportion of respondents object to product placement on ethical grounds.

D'Astous and Chartier (2000) suggested that the impact on consumer memory was improved when a principal character endorsed or used the product in a positive manner. Russell (2002) found that brand recall did not necessarily influence attitudes towards a brand or persuade consumers to use the brand. However, he did find that there was a link between congruency and persuasiveness. While incongruency improved recall, congruency improved persuasion. A product placement that was prominent in size or central to the film could improve brand recall (Gupta and Lord, 1998), but it was uncertain whether these recall effects could create a change in attitudes or purchase intentions. Vollmer and Mizerski (1994) found that placement recall was independent of placement evaluation and attitude. However, Nelson (2002) argued that memory-based evaluation was an appropriate way of testing the effectiveness of product placement because the increased brand awareness is (ostensibly) the primary goal of product placement practice. Morton and Friedman (2002) found that product placement can have a salient effect on recall and purchase intention.

In general, we can see that many researchers have grappled with the question of promotional effectiveness of product placement. Though product placements have

become an integral part of product marketing, it has proven difficult to evaluate whether they influence consumer attitude, brand awareness or brand purchase. The majority of global research measures the effectiveness of product placement through recall presuming that higher recall will lead to a change in attitude toward the brand. However, persuasion literature has not yet found a direct correlation between memory and attitude. Thus, it is important to gauge placement effectiveness through both recall and attitude. In addition, multiple factors impact both recall and attitude and, therefore, should be taken into consideration while measuring placement effectiveness: gender, income, geographical region and brand awareness. The US market is rife with product placement research where researchers continually attempt to find the connection between the various aspects of product placement such as modality, prominence, congruence and brand recall, attitude, persuasion and purchase. However, very few focus on the finer nuances that can have far-reaching impact on the effectiveness of product placement.

The situation is very different in an emerging market like India. Marketers of brands in India are exploring many ways of advertising and promoting products and are increasingly investing in the clutter-free medium of in-film advertising. However, the market is strangely free of research that evaluates the impact of product placement on Indian consumers. With receding marketing dollars and increasing media opportunities both marketers and film makers need to demonstrate that product placement in films benefits brands.

4.2: The Indian Consumer Overview

India is undeniably an important future growth market of the world: it has the 4th largest gross domestic product in the world in purchasing power parity; it is young, with 450 million people below the age of 21; and it is just beginning its consumption journey. Consumer India is a market where average per capita incomes have increased more than five times since 1991. The market is high on consumer confidence and aspiration and consumer spending is high on the hopes of a sustainable and improved tomorrow. High levels of disposable income, privatization, globalization, successful entrepreneurial ventures, high paying jobs, high salary increases (corporations in India awarded average salary increases of 14%-15% over the last six years whereas average salary increases in the US ranged from 2%-3%) have translated into a surge in spending patterns of a middle class that is suddenly flush with funds. In addition, the media provided a cross-cultural education in consumerism and a heightened sense of awareness of global brands that led to a sudden spike in lifestyle aspirations. The National Council of Applied Economic Research has clustered Consumer India into five types of consumer groups: the rich, the consuming class, the climbers, the aspirants and the destitute.

An estimated 1.2 million affluent households sit atop the Indian income and consumption pyramid. These consumers buy branded products and behave like their counterparts in developed markets. Moreover, they are largely concentrated in the top eight cities. At the bottom of the pyramid are the large but poor segments. Struggling households number more than 100 million, followed by 40 million destitute households that are poorer still. The real drivers of the growing consumer goods market occupy the center of the pyramid -- India's 40 million middle-income households, which purchase more than just the basics (India Knowledge@Wharton 2008).

As Indian incomes rise, Indians will move from eking out livelihoods to a more sustainable life, adding a number of first-time consumers to the market. There is constant value growth since there is an upward spiral of demand as each class graduates into the next (Bijapurkar 2007). This is especially significant for India because of its population. A large mass of people moving into the next consumption class with a very small acceleration unleashes a large force of change. Connectivity, communication and literacy have been major drivers of aspiration and consumerism aided by word-of-mouth, observations and the media. Indian consumers now can visualize and often demand a better life. The demand for a better life often translates to higher demand for newer brands; brands that are relevant to their aspiration and experience and yet reflect local preferences. The population's demographic profile also plays an important role in the heightened consumerism. India houses one of the youngest nations in the world and consists of a large group of consumers who are curious about popular culture outside their own country. They have high disposable incomes, live beyond their means, are on the lookout for ways to enhance their lifestyle and status, and are willing to experiment with brands as long as they fit into their idea of “a good life.”

Sensing the country's consumptive potential, brand leaders throughout the world are now looking toward India as a potential growth market. The last few years have seen the Indian consumer emerge as a highly significant audience base for several brands. Understanding India – its aspirations, attitudes towards brands, spending patterns, and media consumption – is becoming more and more important to global brands and their marketers. But what is more important for marketers to know is how to reach this

growing population of consumers with varying interests, habits and tastes. Brands have been reaching Indian audiences through traditional advertising for decades. Now, however, as marketers struggle to engage the attention of today's growing consumer base, they are looking with renewed interest at the placement of brands in various other genres. Consumers, on the other hand, are hungry for new brand knowledge and are demanding new, less obvious and more entertaining representations of brand advertising. This has provided the opportunity for more calculated depiction of branded goods not only in the background of particular scenes but also within the foreground of storylines.

Consumer diversity is the other important factor that has driven brands to adopt in-film placements as one of their key marketing vehicle. India, with an estimated one billion people, is a country of striking contrasts and enormous ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity which manifests itself in varying lifestyles, brand preferences and media habits. When it comes to lifestyles and brand preferences, Indian consumers reflect behaviors ranging from price sensitivity to high levels of indulgence. When it comes to media consumption, Indian consumers can choose from a large menu of regional, local and national media. Hence, finding a common and effective way of reaching this diverse audience with a brand offering that is attractive to the population at large is a difficult task. Marketers are on the lookout for the Holy Grail that will cut across the diversity in age, gender, geographic location, spending power and literacy levels, and have mass appeal. Cricket and films form a common ground among Indian consumers despite the diversity. Hence, it is not surprising that both consumers and marketers would exploit these two media to promote brands and learn about brands respectively. This

phenomenon of using cricket and films as brand promotion platforms manifests itself in in-film placements, on-ground advertising, team sponsorship and use of celebrity cricketers and film personalities for endorsements.

Marketers have chosen the common thread that binds and emotionally connects the majority of constituents of India – Bollywood films – in a bid to reach their consumers. However, to integrate brands into the lives of the consumers, marketers need to be more targeted and informed about the practice.

Chapter 5: Thesis Research and Analysis

5.1: Research Questions

The above literature review indicates that there is considerable research that tries to measure the impact of brand placement in Hollywood. However, similar research is conspicuous by its absence in Bollywood. With marketers increasingly leaning toward Bollywood films to increase brand recall and awareness, it will be a matter of time before advertisers and marketers ask for quantitative proof of the effectiveness of this medium. An online quantitative study was conducted to capture the reaction and attitude of Indian viewers to brand placement in Bollywood, assess the impact of brand placement on buying habits, gauge the influence of product placement characteristics and test certain other variables that can predict consumer behavioral outcomes. The fundamental goal of the present study was to explore viewers' acceptability of product placement and their proclivity to buy or use the brands shown in Bollywood films. This would ultimately inform the strategy that needs to be adopted in order to make this practice more effective and successful. The justification for this study came from the recognition that this would be the first study to replicate both attitudinal and behavioral measures in India.

Since brand placement is less mature in India, Indian consumers are less familiar with different promotional tools. Findings by Panda (2004) indicated that well-known brands were recalled more than lesser-known brands. It is, therefore, believed that awareness and exposure to branded products has an impact on the effectiveness of brand placement. This survey tries to find out whether brand consciousness influences awareness and liking of product placement. Gupta and Gould (1997) found that

consumers' movie-watching frequency, together with their attitudes toward product placement in general, had an impact on product placement acceptability. This study also questions whether the same would hold for Indian consumers and whether both exposure and awareness of product placement could affect consumer behavior. Nelson and Mcleod (2005) measured the impact of age, gender and ethnicity on brand consciousness. Just as demographic differences can influence how an individual reacts to brands, they also can influence how an individual reacts to brand placements. This study investigates whether both brand placement and consumer behavior is a function of key demographics such as gender, age and income earned. The present study questions the impacts of gender, age group, geographic location and income on attitude toward brand placement acceptability.

The study examines the following questions on awareness and liking of brand placement and brands:

RQ1A: Do highly brand-aware individuals indicate greater awareness of brand placement practices than low brand-aware individuals?

RQ1B: Do highly brand-aware individuals indicate greater liking of brand placement practices than low brand-aware individuals?

RQ1C: Do highly brand-aware individuals indicate a more positive attitude toward brand placement practices than low brand-aware individuals?

RQ2A: Do highly engaged film viewers display greater awareness of brand placement practices?

RQ2B: Do highly engaged film viewers report a greater liking toward brand placements shown in Bollywood films?

RQ2C: Do highly engaged film viewers report a more positive attitude toward brand placements shown in Bollywood films?

RQ3A: Do age, gender, income and geographic location influence attitudes toward brand placement?

The next set of questions flows from the previous group and extends the same constructs to brand adoption:

RQ4A: Are highly brand-aware individuals more likely to adopt brands placed in Bollywood films than low brand-aware individuals?

RQ4B: Are highly engaged film viewers more likely to adopt brands placed in Bollywood films?

RQ4C: Do age, gender, income and geographic location influence adoption of brands placed in Bollywood?

According to Kripalani (2006) marketers and film creative teams seek synergy while promoting brands through in-film advertising. To create high levels of synergy marketers try to create associative memories between the brand and the film in many ways: the brand is shown in subsequent scenes, the brand is mentioned in the dialogue, press and other media campaigns are created to promote the brand placement, endorsers of the brand appear in short cameos in the film, etc. Given that brand marketers pay

attention to the various aspects of placement such as type, frequency, subtlety, the question is:

RQ5: How do brand placement characteristics influence brand adoption?

5.2 Methodology

Study sample

The population of interest in this study is specified as movie-going adults aged between 21 and 40 years who are citizens of India. One hundred and fifty respondents participated in the study, of whom 65 were females and 79 were males. Six respondents chose not to disclose their gender. A multi-stage convenience sampling procedure was used to target respondents that included: personal contacts, referrals of friends and relatives and mailing lists acquired from the Indian Student Association at University of Southern California. The age range sampled was intended to provide the basis for comparison with Gupta was intended to reflect a representative cross-section of a major group of movie-goers.

Table 3: Breakdown of sample

<i>Sample Profile</i>	<i>Number or Percentage</i>
Total Respondents	150
Male	79
Female	65
Undisclosed	6
21-25 years	14%
26-30 years	41%

Table 3, Continued

<i>Sample Profile</i>	<i>Number or Percentage</i>
31-35 years	34%
36+ years	16%

Study Procedure

Launched on December 1, 2009, the survey was open for more than one and a half months. The study was administered in English and respondents, contacted through e-mail and Facebook, completed the survey online. The data collection was managed individually and quality control was ensured through an internal audit.

Study Questionnaire

The study consisted of 20 questions and covered areas such as brand recognition, brand awareness, preference for branded products, frequency of movie viewing, familiarity with the practice of brand placement, influence of brand placement over buying habits and the attitude of viewers towards brand placement. The questions were divided into four parts, of which the first captures demographic details, the second gauges brand awareness, the third measures exposure to Bollywood and brand placement in Bollywood, and the fourth captures attitude toward the practice of brand placement. All questions had either multiple choice or rating scale answers. Some questions allowed respondents to check more than one answer, whereas other questions restricted the choice to one answer. In addition, respondents also were provided the freedom to skip questions or leave out parts of the questionnaire.

Measures

The key constructs of interest in the present analysis are described in detail below:

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is measured by a mix of multiple choice and Likert scale questions. Awareness of brands is measured by four questions. The first one asks respondents how important are brands to them. The options identified are: buys branded products at all times; buys branded products most of the times; buys a branded product sometimes; never buys branded products. The second question asks respondents whether they recognize brand names by their logos. The options provided are: at all times, most of the times; sometimes; and never. The third question asks respondents to rate their awareness of brands on a scale of one to five, where one meant “a very high awareness” and five meant “very low awareness.” The fourth question asks respondents to rate the extent to which they notice when brand names or branded products appear in movies/TV shows.

Exposure to Bollywood Films and Brand Placement

Exposure to Bollywood films is measured by three questions. The first measures how frequently respondents watch Bollywood movies, the second measures the extent to which they enjoy Bollywood movies and the last measures how attentive they are to brand placements in Bollywood movies.

Attitude toward Brand Placement

Attitude toward brand placement is measured by three questions. The first one asks whether respondents think that brand/product placement is a good way of being informed about products and services. The second question asks respondents whether they think that brand placement is unethical. The third question asks whether they learn about brands from films.

Liking of Brand Placement

Liking of brand placement is gauged by asking whether respondents like or dislike seeing branded products in films.

Adoption of Branded Products

The likelihood of viewers adopting branded products after seeing them in films was measured by one question. The question asks respondents to check what they would do after seeing a branded product in a film. The options indicated are: do nothing' talk about it to friends, research about it, look for the brand in the market, buy the brand and stop buying the brand.

Demographics

The first section of the survey gathered demographic information such as gender, age, educational qualification and annual income. This is mainly for classification purposes and to gauge whether demographics have any influence on brand placement.

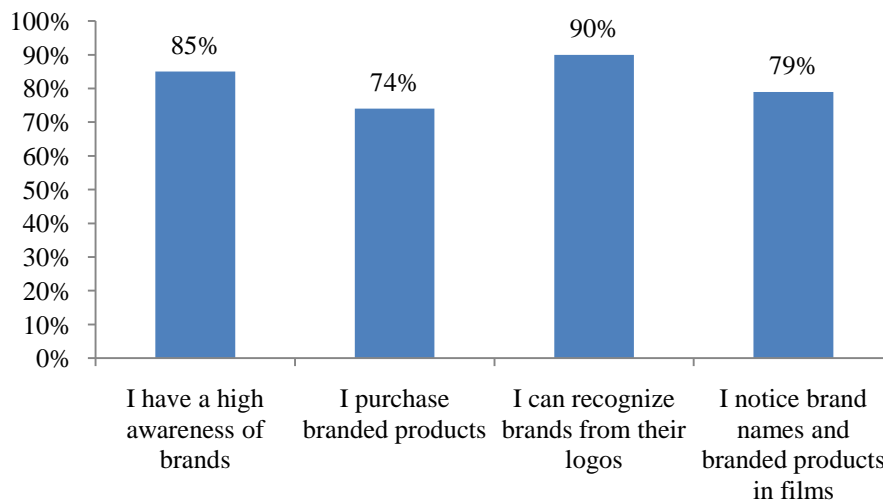
5.3: Results

Analyses of the individual questions were combined with statistical co-relations within each question cluster, which were then used to indicate the effectiveness of brand placement in Bollywood films.

RQ1A: Do highly brand-aware individuals indicate greater awareness of brand placement practices than low brand-aware individuals?

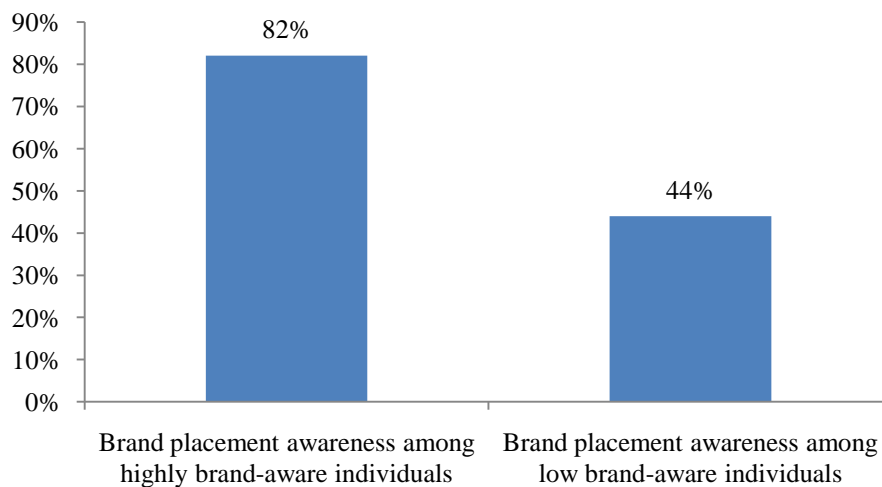
Overall, the respondents of the study indicate a high level of brand awareness. Out of the total respondents 85% indicate that they have a high awareness of brands; 74% indicate that brands are important to them and 90% can recognize brands from their logos. The study records a brand-name awareness of 4.13 out of 5 and a brand placement awareness of 4.02 out of 5. The study suggests that individuals who are highly brand-aware have greater awareness of brand placements.

Figure 1: Awareness of brands



Out of the 116 respondents who indicate that they have high brand awareness 80% indicate that they are aware of the practice of brand placement in Bollywood. Of the 109 respondents who notice brands in a mediated environment, 83% are also aware of brand placements. Of the 105 respondents who indicate that brands are important to them, 84% are aware of brand placements in Bollywood films. 81% of those who recognize brands by seeing their logos are aware of the practice.

Figure 2: Awareness of placements vis-a-vis awareness of brands

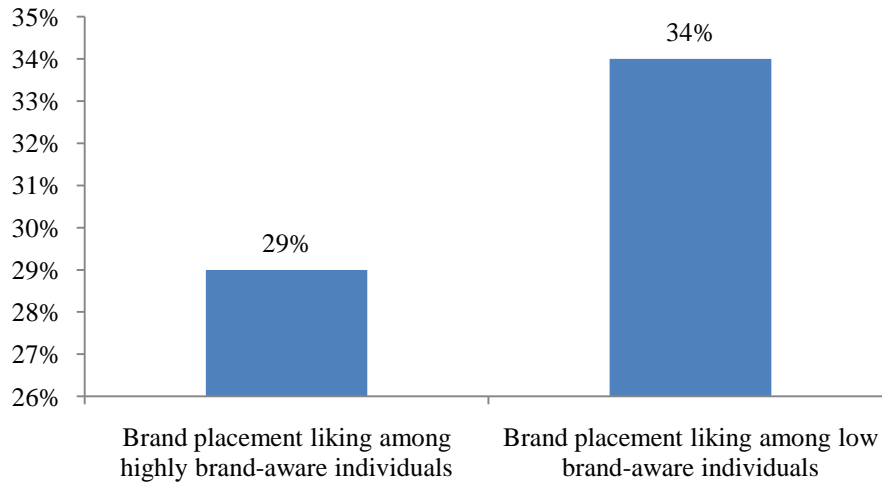


RQ1B: Do highly brand-aware individuals indicate greater liking of brand placement practices than low brand-aware individuals?

Out of the 116 respondents who indicate that they have high brand awareness 44% dislike brands being shown in films. Of the 109 respondents who notice brands in a mediated environment, 43% indicate that they dislike the practice of brand placement. Of the 105 respondents who indicate that brands are important to them, 40% indicate that they dislike the practice of brand placement. Of the 116 respondents who recognize

brands by seeing their logos, 44% indicate that they dislike the practice of brand placement.

Figure 3: Liking of placements vis-a-vis awareness of brands



In this case, low brand-aware individuals have a greater liking for brand placements than highly brand-aware individuals.

RQ1C: Do highly brand-aware individuals indicate a more positive attitude toward brand placement practices than low brand-aware individuals?

Out of the 116 respondents who indicate that they have high brand awareness 52% indicate that in-film placement is a good information source about brands, but only 7% indicate that they learn about new brands from films. Of the 109 respondents who notice brands in a mediated environment, 55% think brand placements are good sources for brand information, but 43% indicate that they dislike the practice of brand placement. Of the 105 respondents who indicate that brands are important to them, 52% state that films are a good source of brand information, but only 6% indicate that they learn about brands

from in-film placements. 54% of those who recognize brands by seeing their logos feel that this is a good information source, but 44% indicate that they dislike the practice of brand placement. Majority respondents do not claim that brand placement is an unethical practice.

Figure 4: Attitude toward brand placement among highly brand-aware individuals

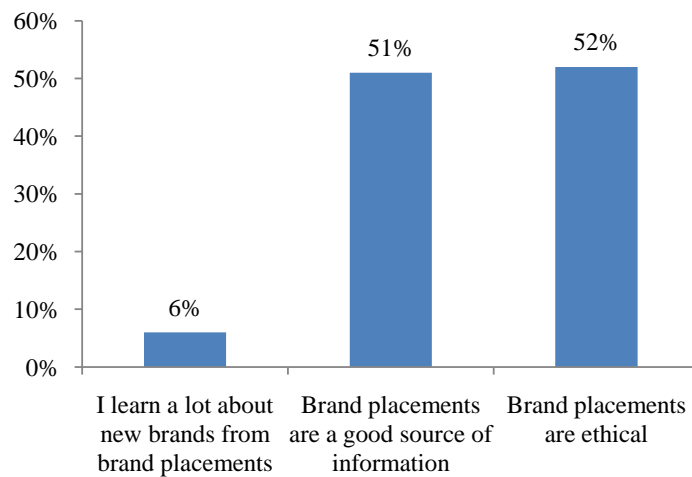
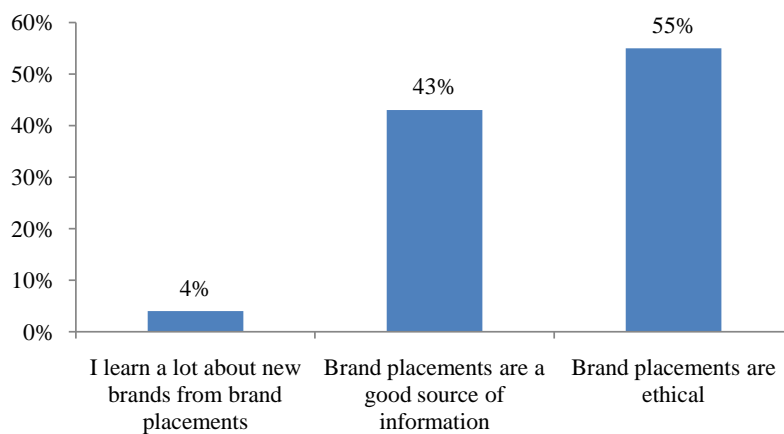


Figure 5: Attitude toward brand placement among low brand-aware individuals



RQ2A: Do highly engaged film viewers display greater awareness of brand placement practices?

Of the 141 people who responded to the survey, 26% watch indicated that they watched Bollywood films frequently and 55% indicated that they enjoyed watching Bollywood films. 95% of those who watched Bollywood movies frequently indicated that they were aware of brand placements in Bollywood movies. 90% of those who enjoyed Bollywood movies were also aware of brand placements.

Figure 6: Awareness of brand placement vis-à-vis movie watching frequency

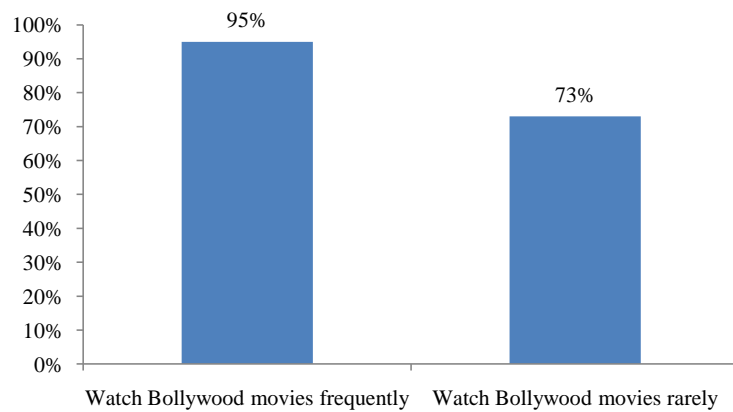
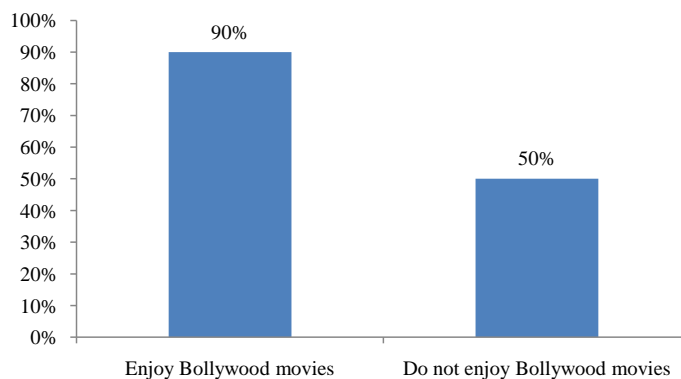


Figure 7: Awareness among those who enjoy/don't enjoy Bollywood films



It seems clear that awareness of brand placement is higher among respondents who watch Bollywood films frequently and enjoy Bollywood films.

RQ2B: Do highly engaged film viewers report a greater liking toward brand placements shown in Bollywood films?

Of the 72 respondents who enjoy Bollywood movies, only 25% like brand placements in films. Among frequent movie viewers, only 50% like brand placements in movies. These percentages are similar to those reported by respondents who watch films rarely and don't enjoy watching Bollywood films. This indicates that engaged film viewers do not report a greater liking toward brand placements than disengaged film viewers.

Figure 8: Frequency of movie viewing vis-à-vis liking of brand placement

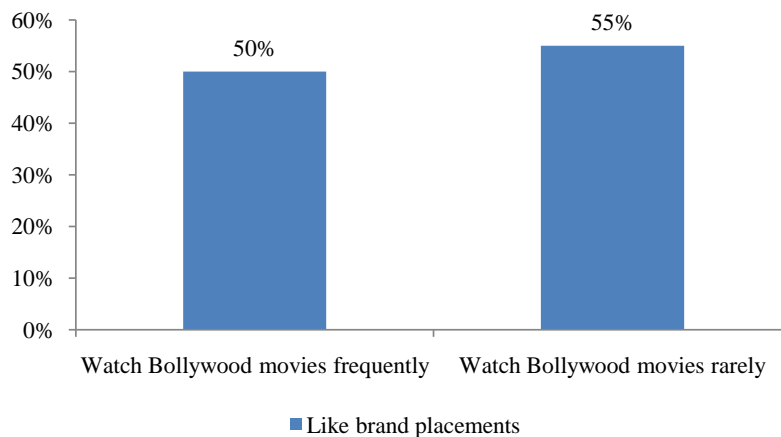
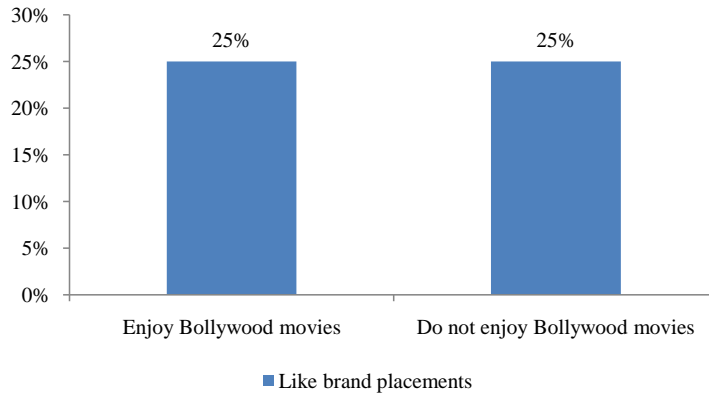


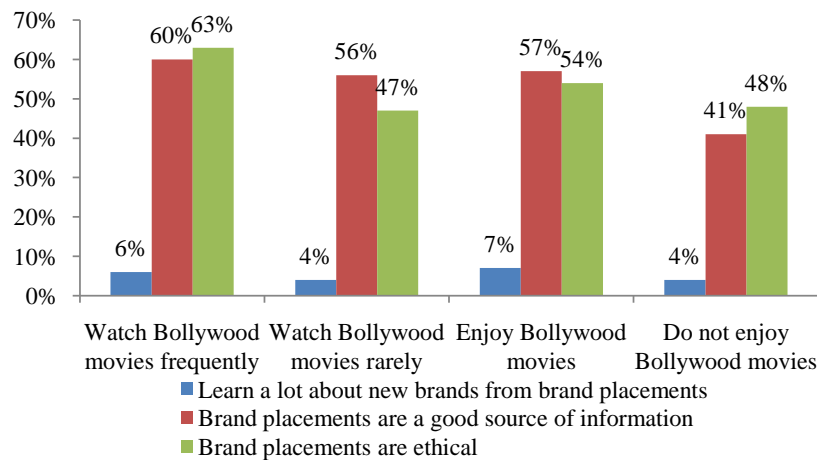
Figure 9: Enjoyment of films vis-à-vis liking of brand placement



RQ2C: Do highly engaged film viewers report a more positive attitude toward brand placements shown in Bollywood films?

There is very little difference in attitude towards brand placement between those who watch Bollywood film frequently and those who watch them rarely. Similarly, there is little difference in attitude between those who enjoy Bollywood films and those who don't.

Figure 10: Attitude toward brand placement vis-à-vis frequency and enjoyment



RQ3A: Do age, gender, income and geographic location influence awareness, liking and attitudes toward brand placement?

The study suggests that attitude toward brand placement differs by gender, age group, income levels and geographic locations. 76% of male respondents are aware of brand placements while 82% of female respondents are aware of the practice. 48% of male respondents think in-film placements are a good source of information while 57% of female respondents think the same. 39% of male respondents and 43% of females dislike brands being shown in films. 67% of respondents in the age group 21-25 years are aware of brand placements while only 38% state that it is a good way of being informed about products. 70% of the respondents in the age group 26-30 years and 84% of respondents in the age group 31-35 years are aware of the brand placement practice. 46% of respondents in the age group 26-30 years and 41% of respondents in the age group 31-35 years claim that in-film placement is an effective source of brand information. 38% of respondents in the age group 21-25 years, 26% of respondents in the age group 26-30 years and 37% of respondents in the age group 31-35 years say they dislike brands being placed in films for commercial purposes. More respondents in the age groups 31-35 years and 36 years and older indicate that they learn about new brands when they are shown in films.

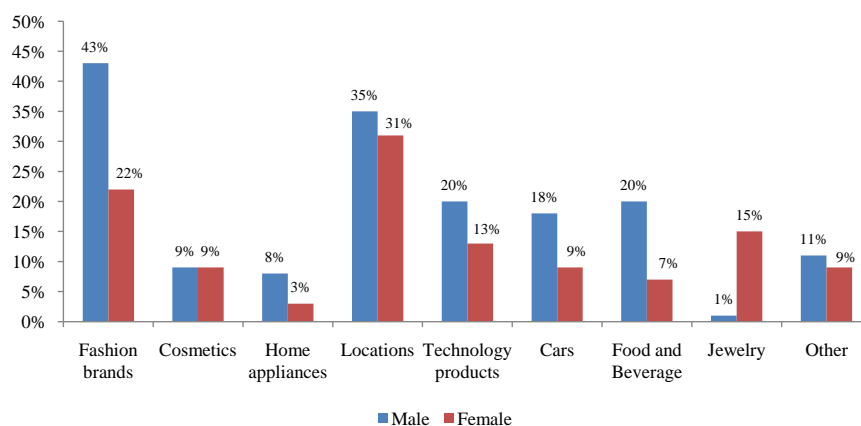
The income groups reported in the study were divided into three segments low income group (\$0-\$14,999), middle income group (\$15,000-\$34,999) and high income group (\$35,000 and above). This segmentation is not representative of the segmentation used in the Indian census study but has been developed specifically for this study to make

the analysis convenient. 85% of respondents in the low and middle income group claim to be aware of brand placements while 79% of the respondents in the higher income are aware of this practice. Over 60% of respondents in the lower and middle income group say that in-film placement is a good way of being informed about brands while 43% of respondents in the high income group state the same. 33% of low income respondents, 56% of middle income respondents and 45% of high income respondents say they dislike the act of placing brands in films for commercial purposes.

RQ4C: Do age, gender, income and geographic location influence adoption of brands placed in Bollywood?

The study indicates that consumer action is a function of key demographics. Male respondents indicated that they are most likely to purchase fashion brands, visit new places or locations and try new technology brands after placement, while female respondents indicated that they are most likely to visit new places of interest and purchase fashion and jewelry brands after placement.

Figure 11: Purchase decisions: male vs. female



40% of the female respondents and 52% of the male respondents said that they would take no action after learning about a brand from in-film placement. 19% male respondents indicated that they would find out more about the brand and 15% indicated they would look for the brand. Among female respondents 9% indicated they would find out more about the brand; however, 21% indicated they would talk to their friends about the brand. The study also indicates that while male consumers are more receptive to brands that are shown in use, shown in a favorable light and shown in familiar situations, female consumers are more receptive to brand placements if the brands are shown in use are new, and the placement is supplemented by promotions in other media.

Figure 12: Consumer actions: male vs. female

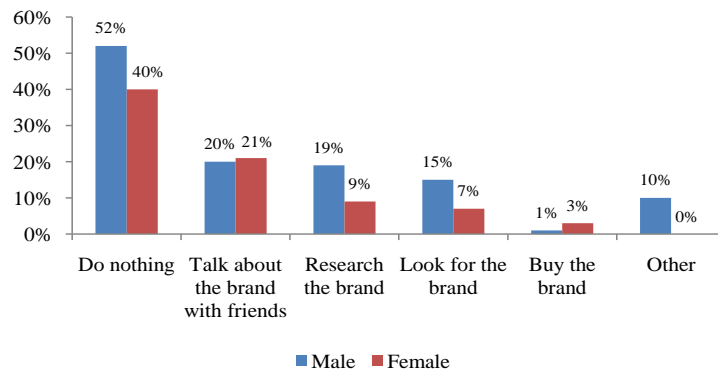


Table 4: Placement characteristic preference: male vs. female

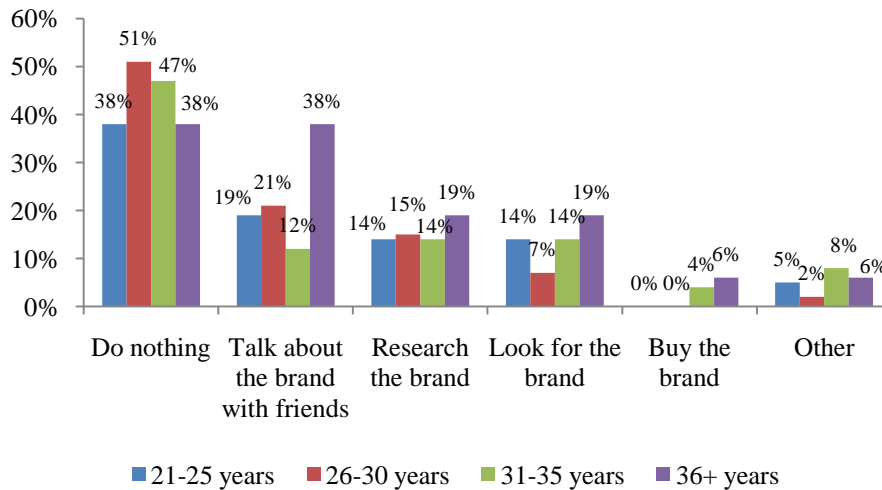
	Characteristic 1	Characteristic 2	Characteristic 3
Male	Shown in use	Shown in favorable light	Shown in familiar situations
Female	Shown in use	Product is new	Placement supplemented by media promotion

Respondents across all age groups indicate that they are most likely to buy fashion brands shown in films. Respondents across most age groups (except 36+ years) also are motivated to visit the exotic locations shown in films. Cars appear in the “most-likely-to-buy” list for respondents who are 36 years and older. Food and beverages appear in the same list for respondents belonging to the age group 26-30 years. Most respondents said they would do nothing with the information about brands that they receive through films. Respondents in the age groups 26-30 years and 36+ years are more likely to talk to their friends about product placement than respondents in other age groups. 19% of respondents in the age group 36+ years said they would look for the brands while only 7% of respondents in the age group 26-30 years indicated that they would look for the brands. 4% of respondents in the age group 31-35 years and 6% of respondents from the age group 36+ years said they would buy the brands. None of the respondents in the other age group indicated that they would buy the brands seen in films. Respondents also indicate a preference toward placement characteristics. Respondents across all age groups indicate that they would like the brands to be shown in use. However, those in the age group 36+ years also prefer if the placement is promoted through associative marketing activities like branded film trailers, movie merchandise and event promotions. Respondents in the age group 26-30 years indicated that they would be more receptive to the brand if it is new and also promoted through other media. Respondents in the age group 31-35 years would also be more receptive to new brands.

Table 5: Top three product categories

	Brand 1	Brand 2	Brand 3
21-25 years	Fashion	Locations	Technology
26-30 years	Fashion	Locations	Food and Beverage
31-35 years	Locations	Fashion	Technology
36+ years	Fashion	Technology	Cars

Figure 13: Consumer action by age group



Analysis of income groups reveals that fashion brands and locations appear in the “most-likely-to buy lists” across income groups. Home appliances and jewelry are the least favored product groups among respondents across all income levels. 51% of respondents in the low income group stated they would do nothing, 26% would talk about it with friends, while 15% would research the brand further. Among respondents in the

high income group 55% said they would do nothing while 24% would talk about it with friends and research the brand further. Most respondents indicated that they would not purchase a brand or look for a brand just because it was shown in a film.

Figure 14: Purchase decisions across income groups

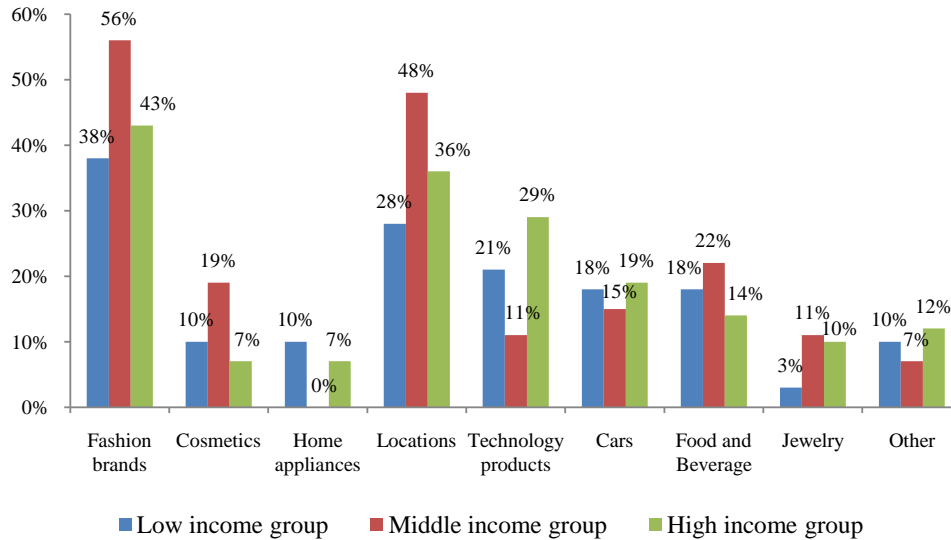


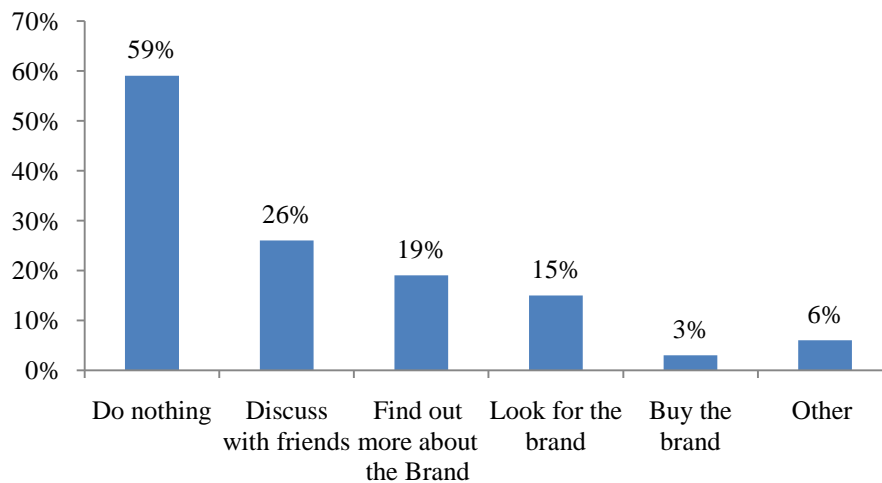
Table 6: Top three consumer actions across income groups

	Action 1	Action 2	Action 3
Low income group	Do nothing	Talk with friends	Research the brand
Middle income group	Do nothing	Talk with friends	Research the brand
High income group	Do nothing	Talk with friends	Research the brand

RQ4A: Would highly brand-aware individuals adopt brands placed in Bollywood films?

The study does not support this hypothesis. It suggests that brand adoption post brand placement exposure is low even for highly brand-aware respondents. Out of the total respondents who took the survey 59% said they would do nothing after viewing an in-film placement while 26% indicated that they might discuss it with friends.

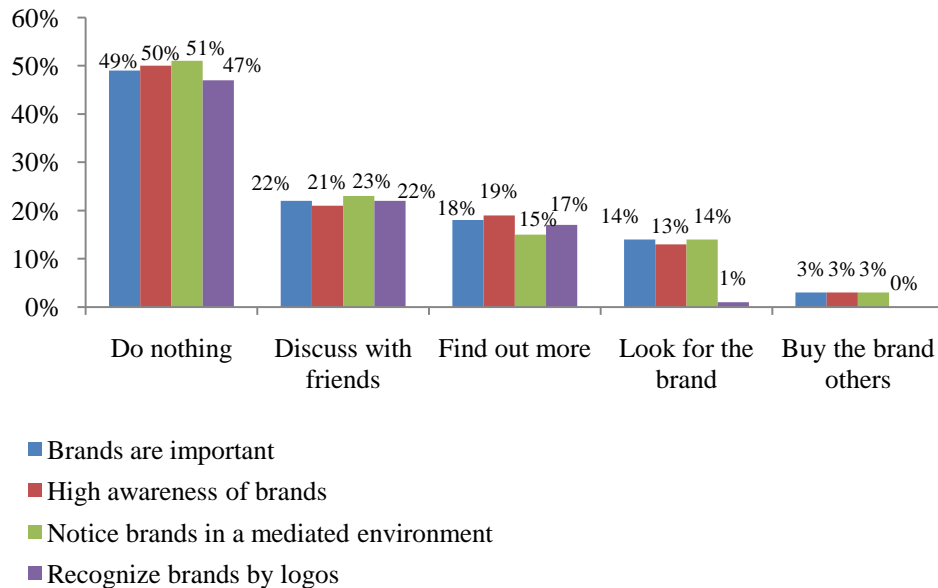
Figure 15: Respondent actions post viewing of in-film placement of brands



The results were not too different for respondents with high brand awareness. Out of the 107 respondents who said that brands were important to them 49% indicated that after seeing a brand in a movie they would do nothing, 22% said they would talk about the brands with their friends, 18% said that they would find out more about the product, 14% would look up the product and a negligible 3% said they would buy the product. Of the people who indicated high awareness of brands 50% said they would do nothing after seeing a brand in a movie, while only 3% said they would buy the product. Out of the 109

people who said that they notice brands in a mediate environment 51% said they would do nothing, while a mere 3% said they would buy the brand.

Figure 16: Behavior of highly brand-aware individuals

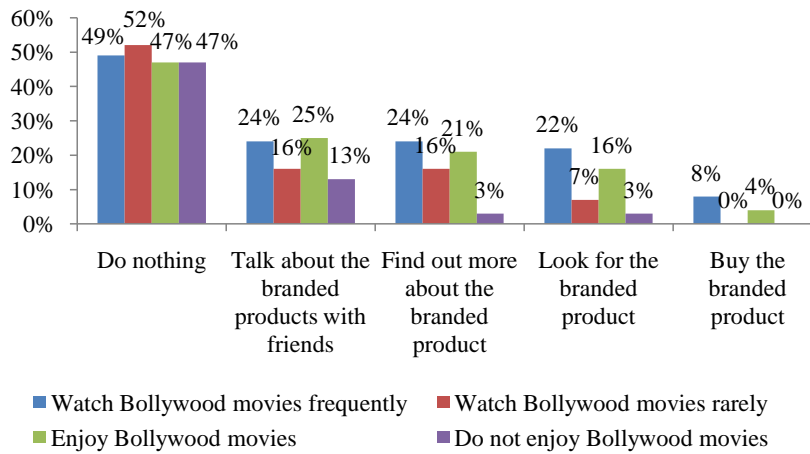


RQ4B: Are highly engaged film viewers more likely to adopt brands placed in Bollywood films?

A majority of respondents indicated they would do nothing after viewing a brand placement. Though viewers do not make purchase decisions based on brand placements, they do research and find out more about the brands. They are also inclined to discuss and talk about them with friends. The study indicates a difference in actions between engaged and disengaged viewers of Bollywood films. It reveals that respondents who watch Bollywood films frequently and enjoy watching them are more likely to talk about

the branded product, research more about the product and find out more about the product.

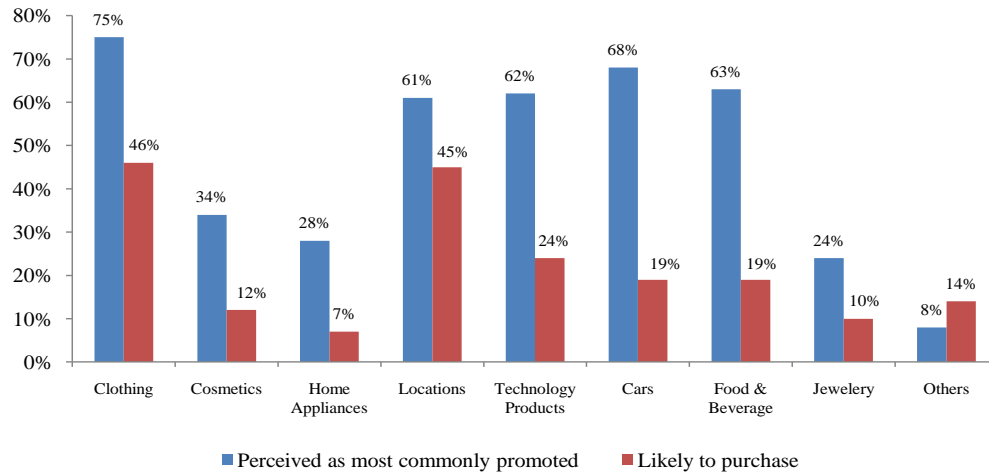
Figure 17: Behavior of engaged and disengaged Bollywood viewers



RQ5: How do brand placement characteristics influence brand adoption?

The study results show a gap between products that are perceived as most promoted versus those that viewers are most likely to buy. 68% of respondents claim that cars are the most commonly promoted product in movies whereas 19% indicate that they are most likely to be influenced by a car placement and buy the product. Similarly, 63% of respondents state that food and beverage brands are most commonly promoted in films, while 19% indicate that they would buy the food or beverage brand shown in films. Location placement is by far the most popular placement with respondents indicating that they would be most likely to visit a place after watching a location placement.

Figure 18: Brand placements that are likely to lead to sales



The study also shows that the type of placement has an impact on purchase behavior. 47% of respondents indicate that they would buy a brand if it was well integrated into the storyline, while 25% claim that they would buy a brand if it was highlighted in a scene. 16% indicate that they would buy a brand if endorsed by a male actor and 14% indicate that they would buy a brand if it was endorsed by a female actor. Placement characteristics also influence purchase motivations in varying degrees. Branded products shown in use, shown in a favorable light and shown in familiar situations are important motivators to consumer purchasing decisions. Respondents indicate that they do not consider characteristics such as brand ambassador endorsement, box office success and integration of brand name into dialogue while making a purchase decision.

Table 7: Influence of brand placement characteristics on purchase decision

Brand Placement Characteristic	Mean
The branded product is portrayed in a favored light	3.02
The branded product is shown in use	3.25
The brand product is mentioned in the dialogue	2.24
The branded product is new	2.91
The association between the branded product and the movie is promoted through other media (e.g., events, promotions, advertising etc.)	2.70
The branded product is in the news as a result of its placement in the movie	2.82
The movie earns box-office success	2.17
The lead actor of the movie is the brand ambassador	2.14
The movie placement repeats themes from the branded product's advertising campaign	2.44
The branded product is shown in familiar situations	2.99
The branded product is shown for a long period of time	2.30

5.4: Discussion: Three Cs of Brand Placement

Study results indicate that though the majority of respondents are aware of brand placements, their attitudes toward brand placements are mildly positive. Highly brand-aware respondents may have a high awareness of brands and marketing concepts such as brand placement, however, they don't indicate either a more positive attitude or an

increased willingness to purchase the brand. In fact, low brand-aware individuals have a greater liking for brand placement than highly brand-aware individuals. Also, a negligible percentage of highly-brand aware individuals indicate that they learn about new brands through brand placement. However, they do feel that brand placement is an ethical practice and is a good source of brand information. Awareness of brand placement is higher among respondents who watch Bollywood films frequently and enjoy Bollywood films; however, none of the two groups indicate a greater liking for the practice. Both engaged and disengaged viewers display similar attitudes toward the practice of brand placement.

This being said, audiences are open to brand placements and do pick up brand *cues* from films; however, these cues are often influenced by demographics such as gender, age, income and geographic location. Brand and placement characteristics also have considerable influence over an individual's decision to purchase, try or recommend a brand. Individuals are more receptive to certain type of placements over others; for example respondents are most receptive to fashion brands and tourist locations and indicate that they would be most likely to buy, try, visit and find out more about these products and services. Audiences are most likely to follow fashion cues and travel tips provided in the films. Hence, they are most likely to buy fashion brands and visit interesting locations shown in films. However, overall, the natural instinct of the viewer is to take no action after being exposed to a brand placement. Nearly all respondents indicated that they would certainly not buy a brand that they see in a film; a considerable number of respondents however said that they would research the brand or look for the

brand. The overall analysis indicates that though paying attention to certain factors while integrating brands in films does yield a positive brand placement experience, it does not necessarily yield positive consumer action such as referral, research, usage, trial and purchase. The result of the study implies that brand placement is not an effective strategy to adopt if the goal is to either influence consumer purchase decisions or achieve sales targets. As earlier studies have shown (Section 4.1) this practice may be more effective in creating brand awareness and recall. Though the study results may have proved that there is no link between purchase decisions and brand placements, it brings to light certain current practices that can be effective in the overall success of brand placement. Study results have been used to craft the three Cs of brand placement: category, character and consumer. These are the three factors that marketers need to give special attention to while developing a brand placement strategy. The idea of the 3Cs model of brand placement is based on business and corporate strategist, Kenichi Ohmae's 3Cs of business strategy. The model indicates that businesses can gain sustained competitive advantage by strategically focusing on three factors: corporation, customer and competitors.

Indian consumers are rapidly changing their media consumption patterns. They are increasingly dividing their time across a fragmented media landscape. 83% of respondents indicate that they learn about brands from traditional advertising, 74% say that they learn about brands from articles and features in newspapers and magazines, 68% learn from word-of-mouth or referrals, 52% from internet searches and 26% from social media. All of the respondents said that they refer to at least three sources of information.

With increased media platforms vying for consumer attention, consumers now move quickly between the entertainment and information that they seek, ignoring brand messages in which they have no interest. Hence, marketers have to find cost-effective ways to stay relevant and engage their target audience across film, television, and new media. Brand integration, which encompasses everything from traditional product placement to the creation of original branded content, is fast becoming an indispensable part of the marketing mix. From marketing promotions, screenings, and premiere parties to licensing and merchandising opportunities, brands now have a variety of ways to extend and activate their involvement with a film.

Brands that enter the field of brand placement often play a follower role. They jump on the placement bandwagon choosing to replicate what competitors are doing without research that supports action. The consumer study conducted for this thesis highlights certain key factors that brand officials should be aware of before including brand placement in their overall marketing mix.

Category

Brand marketers in various product categories are increasingly adding brand placement to their marketing mix. The study proves that different categories of products require distinct and customized brand placement strategies. Also, different categories require different measurement methods in order to gauge the success of their brand placement strategy. The most popular product or service categories that appear in movies are financial services, airlines, tourist spots, clothing, technology products, cosmetics, cars, jewelry, packaged food and beverage, home appliances etc. Out of these,

consumers are most receptive to fashion brands and tourist locations shown in films. 40% of viewers indicate that they would most likely buy clothing or visit a location after seeing it in a film. Bollywood movies have been trendsetters in India as far as fashion is concerned.

Most lead actors have personal fashion designers and stylists working with them in different movies. These designers who boast their own fashion lines introduce new fashion trends every season and their work is keenly followed by the Indian audience. Therefore, it is not surprising that viewers pick up fashion tips from films and are receptive to fashion brands shown in films. This is helped by the fact that Bollywood actors are considered fashion icons and set individual trends that are then emulated by the general public. The other popularly accepted placement type is “location placement.” Bollywood films are often set in exotic locations such as Switzerland, Singapore, Bali, London, Sydney and New York. The three-hour format and the song and dance sequences provide opportunity to showcase the location as a prime tourist spot. The study also indicates that viewers are not too receptive to cars, home appliance, jewelry, and food and beverage brands. Only 7% are likely to buy home appliances if promoted in Bollywood movies. Similarly 10% are likely to buy jewelry, 12% cosmetics and 19% are cars and food and beverage. The majority of product placements in Bollywood are sponsored by companies like Maruti (car brand), Chevrolet, Pepsi, Coke, Frito Lays and Café Coffee Day which signifies that these companies may not be using their marketing budgets effectively.

Brand placements should be an integral part of the marketing plan for fashion brands and tourist locations as placements in this category have the potential to aid awareness and recall and also motivate consumer trial. On the other hand marketing dollars spent on brand placement in product categories such as jewelry, cosmetics, cars and food and beverage should be measured and should be closely linked to the marketing goals of the brand. Brand placements in these categories would be a fitting marketing tool if the brand is looking to build awareness or recall, but if the brand is looking to push sales, brand placement would be an incorrect tactic to adopt. Brand strategists also should take different approaches when it comes to measuring the success of a brand placement strategy. Measurement of recall and awareness through qualitative research is a better approach since prior research has shown that brand placements aid recall and awareness. It would be inaccurate to measure the effectiveness of the practice through quantitative methods such as sales measurement.

Character

Current trends in Bollywood show that more than looking into scripts and turning attention to creative details like integration, brand marketers consider factors like potential for box-office success, lead actors, frequency of placements, length of placements, and so on. However, the study suggests that viewers give little consideration to whether the lead actor is the brand ambassador for the product, the movie earns box-office success, the brand is mentioned in the dialogue and the product is shown frequently and/or for a long period of time. Though the above-mentioned factors are deemed inconsequential by viewers, the study suggests that there are certain other key

placement characteristics such as integration, usage and familiarity that are play a role in influencing purchase decisions.

Nearly half of the respondents indicate that they would react favorably to a brand if it is well integrated in the movie, whereas only 23% of respondents indicated that they would prefer if the brand was highlighted in the scene. This supports the efforts that marketers and creative professionals often take to integrate brands into the story and plot of the films. In fact 38% of respondents indicate that they would notice a brand only if it was integrated into the storyline seamlessly. Consider the movie where the hipster hero wakes up in the morning and gargles with Pepsi. The placement of the brand is so seamless that the viewer does not question it. What the director does is portray a lifestyle that is young, urban, cool yet irreverent; a tone that is carried out throughout the movie. This tone echoes the brand image of Pepsi; hence the placement seems even more seamless. Additionally, viewers also want to see brands in a more dynamic environment where it is used and tried by characters in films. Static brand displays such as billboards in the background, brand labels on products that is a part of the set décor and a mere mention of the brand name in the dialogue does not create positive consumer impact. The study indicates that it is important for brands to be shown in familiar situations, in which case brand marketers have to identify scripts and characters that their target customers can relate to. The study also found that it is equally important for brands to be shown in use. Hence, it is important to make sure that the scene that contains the placement is realistic and that the viewer can find a point of reference with his or her own life. This is possible only when the film reflects viewer life experiences. Therefore, reality-based

films form a more effective medium than films that are far removed from reality like those dealing with the future or super heroes.

In-film brand placement is a high-risk model in the sense that placements have to be thought through right from the script stage, the core idea of the brand and the film has to be well integrated and then one has to wait for weeks after the film is released or longer to realize its potential. There is a chance that the brand placement does not create the desired impact and to prevent such failures marketers should go all out to promote the film and the placement. The survey suggests that viewers in India still rely on traditional advertising and promotions to learn about product placements. In fact, viewers indicate that they are motivated to buy the brand if brand placements are supplemented by articles and features in traditional media that talk about these placements. Going forward, in-film placement combined with associative marketing will be a more comprehensive marketing solution than simple brand placement.

Consumer

Micro-targeting is used by political candidates in election campaigns. This involves using voter demographics, behavior and attitude insights to develop predictive market segmentation. There is enough evidence to indicate that micro-targeting viewers could be an effective strategy for brands pursuing in-film placement strategies. The study shows that demographics have an influence on how brand placements are viewed by consumers and how these same placements influence consumer behavior. Micro-targeting consumers through a carefully developed brand placement plan would be an effective predictive marketing tool. As per the survey, different audience segments display

different attitudinal and behavioral reactions towards brand placements. Marketers should avoid the one-size-fits-all brand placement strategy and adopt a differentiated approach in order to influence consumer attitude and behavior. Two such examples are illustrated below.

The survey shows that male consumers would be most likely to visit new places and buy fashion brands, technology products and food and beverage after viewing a brand placement in that product category. It would, therefore, be more effective if marketers placed brands in those categories in movies with male themes such as action, thrillers and sports. Again, males are more receptive to food and beverage placements than women, which means that it would be easier to motivate men to buy food and beverage products through brand placement than women. Research also shows that more men are likely to research a brand and look for a brand that they have seen in a movie than women, which means that brands would have to supplement brand placement with special marketing and communication activities directed specifically toward their female audiences. While men are more receptive to brand placement and likely to purchase brands if they are shown in use, shown in familiar situations and placed in a positive light, women are motivated if brands are shown in use, they are new brands and brand placements are supplemented by news about the brand in other media. Given these facts brands that are geared toward women have to adopt a very different placement strategy than those brands marketed to men.

Differences are indicated among viewers of different age groups. Location and fashion brands are the top two placements across all age groups. In addition, viewers in

the age group 36+ years are open to car placements, those that are young and fall in the age group 21-25 years are open to technology placement and those in the age group 26-30 years are open to food and beverage placement. In India most high-end car buyers are 35 years and older. For marketers trying to sell high-end car brands in-film placement is a good strategy even though car placement overall has very few takers. Also this age group (36+ years) is more likely than other age groups to talk about the placements with friends, research about the brand and look for the brand, which makes car placement seem even more effective. Similarly, results show that technology brand placements are more popular with a students and mid professionals (21-25 years and 31-35 years) who both adopt and adapt to new technologies more readily or use technology as a status symbol. Hence, marketers promoting technology brands need to promote them to these two audience groups while being mindful of the type of movies that they enjoy, the category of placements that they are receptive to and the type of character that they can believe in. While to motivate audiences in the 21-25 year age group the technology brands need to be new and shown in use, for audiences in the 31-35 year age group the same brands need to be shown in use and shown in a positive light. This matches the separate needs of these two groups. Mid-level professionals look for technology products to enhance their status and lifestyle; hence, showing the brand in a positive light by highlighting its status and value indicators would make the brand more appealing to this group. On the other hand a younger group are looking for the newest and the hottest technology trend; hence, placing a brand that is new and trendy and showing-off its features would make the brand more appealing to this group.

5.5: Conclusion

This study contradicts to some degree practitioner beliefs in the efficacy of product placement. Product or brand placement as a marketing and communication tool is compelling, yet unsubstantial. It can generate recall and reinforce brand messaging; however, to affect purchase behavior and generate sales, brand placements need to be supplemented by other marketing and advertising activities. To create the desired impact within the overall marketing mix, brands need to pay close attention to the three C's of brand placement as outlined in the thesis. Though the conclusions outlined have been based on a small sample size of possibly similar-thinking individuals, there is some indication that category, consumer and character are the most important elements in a product placement initiative. Clearly, more work needs to be done to understand how brand placement can impact the overall reputation and success of a brand if this field is going to develop in a systematic manner. The study does not take into account the diversity of the Hindi film audiences and the Indian consumer. This opens up the possibility of extending this research among a wider and more diverse respondent group. A more complete understanding of product placement effectiveness will require collecting expert knowledge, conducting controlled qualitative study and expanding the base of respondents.

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