The Effect of Congruity between Product and TV Reality Show on Purchase Intention: The Moderating Role of Consumer Factors

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of congruity between product and TV reality show on purchase intention of Chinese consumers. A total of 110 respondents from Chinese consumers were collected using online surveys. The results were analyzed by SPSS 22.0. Multiple Linear Regression and process analysis were used to test the hypotheses. This article found that congruity between product and TV reality show, attitude toward product placement and recall of product affected consumers' purchase intention. In addition, the frequency of consumer watching TV reality show and familiarity of product moderated the attitude toward product placement and recall of product. This study provides useful implications for sponsors to select product placement as one of their marketing promotion tool.

Keywords: Congruity, Product Placement (PPL), TV Reality Show, Purchase Intention (PI)

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1. Introduction

With the advent of pay TV channel and new medias, the traditional commercial advertising industry has become shrank. Moreover, consumers are well-prepared with smarter ways to avoid traditional advertising messages. Advanced technology, however, enable marketers to create more personalized advertising for consumer, creating various choices on entertainment. Accordingly, commercial advertising need to devise new and fresh idea by technologically advanced tool to deliver wider and deeper information about product to consumers.

Product placement (PPL) has become useful channel to reach potential consumers able to avoid the traditional advertising. Marketers believes that product can be portrayed in a favorable light by effective PPL skill. For television shows with antihero protagonists, for example, products can often end up with a negative association with the negatively behaved characters, which is one of the main reasons brands have been reluctant to sign off on in these types of programs. The ideal product placement situation is win-win-winwin: consumers get to know about new and established products and their benefits, client gets relatively inexpensive branding of their product, media vehicle gets a brand for free or can reduce its production budget, and the product placement agency gets paid for bringing the parties together. In order to understand how to better implement product placement, this study investigate the relationship among congruity of product-TV reality show, attitude toward product placement, recall of product and purchase intention. The theoretical finding of this study would lay the foundation of practical implications for sponsors who wants to make the best of advantage of product placement for their advertising strategy.

2. Literature Review and Theory

2.1 Product Placement

PPL and entertainment media have a long history of sharing, providing income sources for under-funded theater production, props for the TV shows and movies and sponsored by early radio and television program (Turner, 2004). Because of the emergence of branded product placement over the years, they have been several definitions of the term in scholarly literature. One of the most cited definitions is provided by Balasubramanian [1994], who defines brand placement as "a paid product message aimed at influencing movie or television audiences via the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into a movie or television program". Another popular definition is presented by Karrh (1998) who defines brand placement as "a paid inclusion of branded products or branded identifiers, through audio and /or video means, within mass media programming".

In this paper, we suggest that a more appropriate definition for branded PPL is "the intentional appearance of a branded product, service or identified in any form of media (including: broadcast program, movies, novels, video games, music lyrics, and music video), in order to gain exposure for the product or service." In addition, branded entertainment may be further distinguished by the type of placement: visual (background and/or foreground) only branded entertainment: verbal/audio only branded product integration (when the brand is written into the script and

spoken: visual (background and/or foreground) and verbal branded product integration: and digital branded entertainment (post-production of brands into scenes).

2.2 Attitude toward PPL

Consumers have increasingly become distrustful and skeptical of claims made in traditional advertisement (Chen and Leu, 2011). Doubt and distrust on the advertisement leads to negative emotions, which in turn impacts the effectiveness of the persuasive message in the advertisement. The negative emotions decrease the positive attitudes toward the brand and lower viewer's purchase intention. Personal traits, occupation, selfesteem, age, intelligence, product type, advertisement structure and execution factors can all have an impact on consumer trust in the advertisement [Chen and Leu. 2011]. However, researchers have found that audiences generally have positive attitudes toward PPLs [Newell et al., 2009]. PPLs can make a more positive impact than traditional advertisements as they are more likely to affect mood and social judgments through their connections to storyline and characters (Karrh et al., 2003). Movies and television shows also provide a non-threatening, symbolic environment that could render viewers more susceptible to commercial messages (Park and Berger. 2010]. As PPL has become more common. a backlash has started to form against the practice. Some critics of PPL have described the practice as insidious, underhanded and virtually impossible to avoid (Nitins, 2005). Others have described it as a dark practice, particularly the practice of digitally inserting brands into popular television show reruns. Critics slam the subtle nature of PPLs, which prevents viewers from putting up defenses against the persuasive message of the embedded product [Galician, 2004]. According to above, viewers should know that a persuasive attempt exists in the show, so they are more adequately prepared to process the message. Despite these criticism, the practice continues to grow. As marketers and television executive seek new avenues to create new revenue streams, show that have traditionally been rejected for not having the stereotypical likeable hero characters are now being considered for PPLs.

2.3 Purchase Intention

Purchase intentions are personal action tendencies relating to the brand (Bagozzi et al., 1979). Intentions are distinct from attitudes. Whereas attitudes are summary evaluations, intentions represent "the person's motivation in the sense of his or her conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a behavior" (Eagly and Chainken, 1993, p. 168). Previous studies have examined the impact of PPL on consumers' intentions for purchasing the placed products (Morton and Friedman, 2002). Thus, consumers' purchase intentions for placed products are influenced by various types of PPL strategies. And the effects of PPL on consumers' purchase intentions are some of the most important ones for advertisers and marketers. However, a number of issues are still unanswered. Thus, in this paper we will use a concise definition of purchase intentions may be as follows: purchase intentions are an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand or product.

2.4 Product-TV Reality Show Congruity

Congruity has been a popular topic in

communication research for many years now due to its connection to key measures of advertiser success, including purchase intentions, attitude toward the advertisement, attitude toward the product/brand, and brand recall. Some sponsors choose to advertise their products in TV reality show. Some of them seem to match with each other very well, and on the other hand, part of them may place their products in unrelated TV reality shows. The relationship here also can be called as Product-TV reality show congruity. Congruity has been defined by multiple ways in literatures such as the relationship between the visual and verbal elements of the advertisement (Heckler and Childers, 1992); the advertisement and the scene which branded product placed; Program-advertisement congruity refers to the "match" between the content of an advertisement and the program containing the advertisement (Bello et al., 1983) and so on.

2.5 Schema Theory

A schema is organized prior knowledge related to a category that is used in evaluations. Literature on cognitive psychology suggests that people attempt to group concepts or objects into a memory category based on associations with relevant concepts representing the category [Srull and Wyer. 1980). It is assumed that people used these categorical rules or scripts, called schemas, when they process or interpret new information. A schema contains both the attributes of the concept and relationship among the attributes. And it is developed through interaction with the environment (Mandler, 1982). Schemas play a crucial role in shaping how information will be dealt with, stored and

retrieved (Taylor and Crocker, 1981). When people get new information, schemas will help people to match up the new information with previous knowledge that stored in memory. This process helps people interpret new information more efficiently. Consumers accumulate their knowledge about products or brands when they receive information about brand, such as advertising, packaging of product, samples they could get, and occasional chance to try out something. As brands become increasingly familiar to consumers, their brand knowledge and brand perceptions build a stable memory structure, or it can be called as brand schema. The brand schema could be considered as a kind of investment: it is a final result or summary of all previous accumulating knowledge about a brand. When they meet same brand again, they will reduce their efforts on processing and memory the new information about brand benefit by activating the brand schema. Brand schema guides consumers to match up new knowledge about brand with the knowledge already stored in memory. The brand schema also forms expectations about where and how the brand will be encountered in the future (Alden et al., 2000) When brand information according with expectations, there is little need to process the information in-depth to relate it to the previous brand schema. By comparison, information that against the expectation will require more attention paid to understand information and push consumers to think about them. Schema theory offers a possibility to understand how social reality is turned into mental models. It is proposed that when interpreting television, the viewer uses cognitive schemas from different spheres of life in a flexible and dynamic way.

2.6 The Limited-Capacity Attention Model

The limited-capacity model of attention assumes that one's total attention capacity at any one point in time is limited. The total capacity allocated to process all activities can be divided into two parts: capacity devoted to the primary task and spare capacity. Spare capacity is devoted to secondary task and other surrounding. Therefore, the more capacity being used for the primary task, the less a person have available to accomplish any secondary task. Primary task capacity and spare capacity are important in understanding the effects of PPL in watching TV reality shows. Watching the TV reality shows is the primary task for audiences, whereas processing PPL in the TV reality shows is the secondary task. The more attention paid to TV reality shows, the less will be available for processing PPL.

3. Hypothesis and Research Model

3.1 Hypothesis Development

PPLs can lead to more positive impact than traditional advertising as they are more likely to affect mood and social judgment through their connections to plot and actors. Movie and television shows provide a non-threatening, symbolic, mild environment that could render viewers more susceptible to commercial message. Several studies have shown the importance of a strong link between the sponsor and the sponsored event or entity: the stronger that link, the greater the impact on the sponsor's image and the attitudes toward the sponsoring itself. Extending this basic finding, a strong program congruity implies that the sponsor's products and activities are

clearly related to the contents of the program. In this case, the PPL is likely to be natural and consistent with the context of the program. When the sponsor-program congruity is weak, the PPL may be perceived as inconsistent and not credible. Thus, we develop Hypothesis1 and Hypothesis 2 as below:

H1: Congruity of product-TV reality show will have positive effect on attitude toward PPL.

H2: Attitude toward PPL will have positive effect on purchase intention.

Advertisements placed in congruity context are susceptible meltdown into surrounding, a process whereby memory traces of an advertised brand fuse with surrounding program content and make it more difficult to distinguish the advertisement from the program. During dealing with the information that received from advertisement, incongruent information is particularly novel, distinctive and prominent. It is likely to gain more attention. And this will lead a better recall of product. Based on the reason above, we come up with Hypothesis3 and Hypothesis 4 as below:

H3: Congruity of product-TV reality show will have negative effect on attitude toward recall of product.

H4: Recall of product will have positive effect on purchase intention.

Frequency of watching TV is significant related to the exposure of PPL. More exposure of PPL will make more attention to the product. As discussed above, PPL usually may lead to positive attitude to commercial. Therefor we believe that frequency of watching TV reality show will enhance this positive attitude. And more exposure of PPL, more

product information can be delivered to consumers. This process may enhance the recall of product. Accordingly, we proposed Hypothesis5a and Hypothesis6a as below:

H5a: Frequency of watching TV reality show will enhance the effect of Congruity of Product-TV Reality Show on Attitude toward PPL

H6a: Frequency of watching TV reality show will enhance the effect of Congruity of Product-TV Reality Show on recall of product.

According to capacity-limited attention theory, it is clear that when audiences pay more attention to their primary task, they will pay less attention to their secondary task. Thus, they will receive more influence from the primary task and enhance the positive attitude to PPL. Due to less attention to their secondary task to notice the product embedded in the TV reality show, audience may neglect the information of PPL's delivered message. Thus, Hypothesis 5b and Hypothesis 6b are suggested as below:

H5b: Attention to TV reality show will enhance the effect of Congruity of Product-TV Reality Show on Attitude toward PPL.

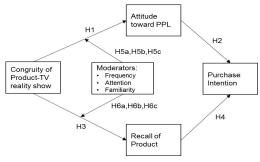
H6b: Attention to TV reality show will reduce the effect of Congruity of Product-TV Reality Show on Recall of product.

When people get new information, schemas will help people to match up with the new information using previous knowledge in memory. This process helps people interpret new information more efficiently. When consumers are familiarity with product, the prior attitude and knowledge of this product

will evoke the schema of this product. It enhances consumers' attitude toward PPL and recall of product. Therefore, we propose Hypothesis 5c and Hypothesis 6c as below:

H5c: Familiarity of product/brand will enhance the effect of Congruity of Product-TV Reality Show on Attitude toward PPL.

H6c: Familiarity of product/brand will enhance the effect of Congruity of Product-TV Reality Show on Recall of product.



⟨Figure 1⟩ Research Model

4. Method

The questionnaires for this study were randomly sent to Chinese consumers. Questionnaires were sent to 120 and 110 of them are valid through basic check. Therefore, the sample was made up for 110 participants (male=12.7%, female=87.3%) between ages from below 18 to 60. Over 70% of the participants are aged from 18 to 40.

Before answering the questionnaire, participants were not told the purpose of this survey and just asked to watch a 2-minute video first which including the PPL in TV reality show. And then they would answer the first part of questionnaire about how much attention they paid to video when they were watching video and how frequently they watch TV reality show per week as usual.

⟨Table 1⟩ Demographic Characteristics

		Frequency	Percent	
Gender	Male	14	12.7	
	Female	96	87.3	
	Under 18	2	1.8	
	18~25	13	11.8	
Λ σ ο	26~30	34	30.9	
Age	31~40	35	31.8	
	41~50	17	15.5	
	50~61	9	8.2	
Consumption (RMB/ month)	Under 800	6	5.5	
	800~1600	14	12.7	
	1600~2400	32	29.1	
	2400~3200	27	24.5	
	more than 3200	31	28.2	

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Reliability Test and Factors Analysis

Prior to hypotheses validation, the factor analysis for reliability and validity of measurement analysis were completed as in $\langle \text{Table } 2 \rangle$. The internal consistency of each construct item estimated with Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.719 and 0.809, which explained that the specific samples has a good level of internal consistency (reliable).

5.2 Mediating Effect

In order to test the conceptual model, we

⟨Table 2⟩ Factor Analysis

	Component					Cuanhash's Almha			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cronbach's Alpha	
Frequency_1						.864		0.809	
Frequency_2						.841		0.809	
Attention_1					.826				
Attention_2					.809			0.767	
Attention_3					.563				
Familiarity_1		.967							
Familiarity_2		.931						0.738	
Familiarity_3		.920							
Recall_1			.660						
Recall_2			.892					0.769	
Recall_3			.891						
Congruity_1							.842		
Congruity_2							.884		
Congruity_3							.874	0.719	
Congruity_4							.857		
Congruity_5							.903		
Attitude_1	.840								
Attitude_2	.903							0.720	
Attitude_3	.895								
Attitude_4	.866								
Attitude_5	.885							0.727	
Attitude_6	.865								
PI_2				.828					
PI_3				.589				0.721	
PI_4				.829					

tested, first, the mediation effect between congruity of product-TV reality show and purchase intention mediating by attitude toward PPL and mediation effect between congruity of product-TV reality show and purchase intention mediating by recall of brand separately. There are formulas for testing mediating effect with variables listed as followed below:

Formula 1: $Y=cX+e_1$ Formula 2: $M_1=aX+e_2$ Formula 3: $Y=c'X+bM_2+e_3$

X: Congruity (congruity of product-TV reality show)

Y: PI (Purchase Intention)

M₁: Attitude (Attitude toward PPL)

M₂: Recall (Recall of Brand)

After calculating, C=0.7030, p=0.000.05, formula 1 is statistically significant, and formula 2 and 3 are shown as below.

⟨Table 3⟩ Coefficient for Formula 2 and Formula 3

	F	ormula	2	Formula 3			
	a	a p c		р	b	р	
M1	.915	.000	.255	.002	.489	.000	
M2	.329	.000	.665	.000	.117	.001	

As $C'=0.255\rangle0$, $p=0.002\langle0.05.$, C' is significant. The mediating effect of Attitude toward PPL between Congruity of product-TV reality show and Purchase Intention is partially significant.

As showed in $\langle \text{Table } 3 \rangle$, with mediator of recall of brand, $a=0.329\rangle0$, $p=0.000\langle0.05$, thus formula 2 is statistically significant. The result of $a=0.329\rangle0$ means Congruity of Product-TV reality Show have a positive effect on Recall of Product, thus Hypothesis 3 is not

supported. In constrat to our original hypothesis, a cognitive priming theory is used to explain why the introduction of information that was highly congruent with the schema made schematic information more memorable. If an advertisement is placed in a programme of similar nature or content, it will be remembered better than if it is placed in a programme with wholly dissimilar content.

Formula 3, $b=0.117\rangle0$, $p=0.001\langle0.05$, was statistically significant. Due to $b=0.117\rangle0$, Recall of Product has a positive effect on Purchase Intention, thus hypothesis 4 is supported.

With the result of C'=0.665 > 0, p=0.000 < 0.05, C' is significant. This mediating effect of Recall of product on Congruity of product-TV reality show and Purchase Intention is partially significant.

5.3 Moderation Effect

When Y=f(X, M) +e is significant, the effect of M on X and Y can be called moderation effect. Also because all variables in this model are continuous variables, next formulas will be applied to test moderation effect with variables listed as below:

Formula 1: $Y_1=aX+bM_1+e_1$ Formula 2: $Y_2=aX+bM_2+cXM_3+e_2$

X: Congruity (Congruity of Product-TV Reality Show)

Y₁: Attitude (Attitude toward PPL)

Y₂: Recall (Recall of Product)

M₁: Frequency (Frequency of watching reality show)

M₂: Attention (Attention paid to TV reality show)

M₃: Familiarity (Familiarity with product)

⟨Table 4⟩ Coefficient of formula 1

Formula	Y1: Attitude				Y2: Recall				
1	a	р	b	р	a	p	b	р	
M1	.721	.000	081	.014	.565	.000	001	.976	
M2	.717	.000	.048	.152	.566	.000	037	.353	
М3	.663	.000	.119	.001	.509	.000	.122	.006	

⟨Table 5⟩ Coefficient of formula 2

Formula		Y1: Attitude							
2	а	a p b p c							
M1	.384	.000	786	.000	.877	.000			
M2	.853	.000	.149	.040	179	.117			
М3	.338	.000	610	.000	.997	.000			

⟨Table 6⟩ Coefficient of formula 3

Formula	Y2: Recall						
3	a	Р					
M1	.675	.000	.229	.005	287	.002	
M2	.541	.000	055	.523	.033	.810	
М3	.661	.000	.465	.000	468	.000	

As showed in $\langle \text{Table 5} \rangle$ and $\langle \text{Table 6} \rangle$, when moderator is Frequency of watching TV reality show and dependent variable is Attitude toward PPL, $c=.0877\rangle 0$, $p=0.000\langle 0.05$, so the effects of Frequency of watching TV reality show on Attitude toward PPL is not only significant, but also positive. Frequency of watching TV reality show enhances the effect of Congruity of Product-TV reality show on Attitude toward PPL, thus hypothesis 5a is supported.

When moderator is Frequency of watching TV reality show and dependent variable is Recall of Product, $c=-0.287\langle 0, p=0.002\langle 0.05,$ so the effects of Frequency of watching TV reality show on Recall of Product is significant but negative. Frequency of watching TV reality show reduces the effect of Congruity of Product-TV reality show on Recall of brand.

Hypothesis6a is not supported.

When moderator is Attention to TV reality show and dependent variables are Attitude toward PPL and Recall of Product, p=0.117 0.05, p=0.810 0.005, so the effects of Frequency of watching TV reality show on both Attitude toward PPL and Recall of Product is not significant. Attention to TV reality show do not moderate the effects of Frequency of watching TV reality show on both Attitude toward PPL and Recall of Product. This result does not support either Hypothesis 5b or Hypothesis 6b.

When moderator is Familiarity of product and dependent variable is Attitude toward PPL, c=0.99700, p=0.00000.05, so the effects of Familiarity of product on Attitude toward PPL is significant and positive. Familiarity of product enhances the effect of Congruity of Product-TV reality show on Attitude toward PPL, thus hypothesis5c is supported.

When moderator is Familiarity of product and dependent variable is Recall of product, $c=-0.486\langle 0, p=0.000\langle 0.05, so the effects of Familiarity of product on Recall of product is significant but negative. Familiarity of product reduces the effect of Congruity of Product-TV reality show on Recall of product, thus hypothesis 6c is not supported.$

6. Discussion

6.1 Discussion

The results for study could explained by Schema Theory and Limited-capacity Attention Theory. For H5c, Familiarity of product will enhance the effect of Congruity of Product-TV Reality Show on Attitude toward PPL. When people are very familiar with the product or brand, they will carry with high schema of

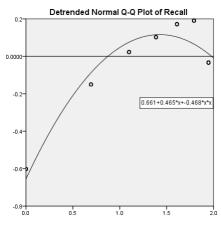
this product. As mentioned earlier, schema is a cognitive structure that represents organized knowledge about a given concept or type of stimulus. It contains both the attributes of the concept and relationship among the contributes, being developed through interaction with the environment.

H6c was not support by the result. Because coefficient "c" is minus. Familiarity of product will reduce the effect of Congruity of Product-TV Reality Show on Recall of product. = (a+cM)X, in fact, for moderating effect, the coefficient of X is "a+cM". Therefore, it can be speculated that when "M" is big enough, X will have a negative correlation with Y. That means, if consumers are familiar enough with the product, the higher the congruity of product-TV reality show, the lower the recall of product will be.

When a+cM=0, M=1.4124. When moderator is Familiarity of product, M stands for the value of centralized Mean of Familiarity, so Familiarity = M + Mean (Familiarity) = 1.4124 +3.7136 = 5.126. This can be explained that, when Familiarity of product is less than 5.126,a+cM0, the relationship between Congruity of product-TV reality show and Recall of product is positive. If Familiarity of product is more than 5.126,a+cM\0,the relationship between Congruity of product-TV reality show and Recall of product will show negative. The line of this moderation effect will show a curve line as in Figure 5. In our study, when confidence interval for mean is 95%, the upper bound of mean = $3.9406\langle 5.126$, a+cM\dangle0. Therefore, Congruity of Product-TV reality showed a positive correlation with Recall of brand.

Because the consumers are already familiar with the product embedded in the TV reality show, when they see them again on TV, it will

not take much attention from consumers. Moreover, when the product is very well matched up with the TV reality show, which means the product was used naturally in the TV reality show, or at the right position, the good-congruity PPL did not bother the consumers when they were enjoying the TV reality show. So the consumers will not pay much attention to think why this product appeared here.



⟨Figure 2⟩ Moderation Effect Curve

As explained above, our findings would provide some useful advices for sponsors when they choose the PPL as a way to promote product. If the product that sponsor is going to place in TV reality show is a new product, much familiar with consumers, it will have a better efficiency to do a congruent PPL. The congruent PPL will delivery message to consumers more efficiently and gain a better attitude toward product. If the sponsor is going to expand existing market, an incongruent PPL will perform better.

6.2 Limitation and Future Research

As with any research, there are limitations to our study.

First, while many previous researches used demographic as moderators, this study did not investigated the effect of demographic but analyzed the effects between variables.

Second, The video shoot for the survey lasted only two minutes. Even though it can be considered long enough to contain a complete clip of PPL, there are still many other longer PPL to be examined in TV reality show. In addition, Usually, one episode of TV reality show would last more than 60 minutes and less than 90 minutes. During such a "long" time, it would be challenging for people to pay consistent attention to the TV reality show. If the filming time is short, consumers tend to focus more on the video. This may affect our result of the hypothesis on moderating effect of attention to TV reality show, because two-minute is not enough time to convey a complete plot. Third, there are also other important factors that may impact the efficiency of PPL, such as the attitude toward the TV reality show or the effect of actor and actress in the TV reality show. The result of existing research supported the claim that the attitude toward actors have a significant effect on recall of product and purchase intention. In the future work, it would be meaningful ill delivery message to consumers more efficiently and gain a better attitude toward product. If the sponsor is going to expand existing market, an incongruent PPL will perform better.

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