

Product placement in Romanian movies produced after 1989

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Abstract. *This study seeks to draw attention on the product placement phenomenon in Romanian motion pictures and the viewers' attitude towards it. We propose a qualitative approach, utilizing experiments and document analysis as research methods. Our analysis will determine if there is any product placement in Romanian movies, if so, then how visible is it and how is it regarded by the viewers. Also we wanted to see if there is a certain age group that is more likely to notice product placement in comparison to others. The age and gender variables were taken into consideration when talking about the viewer's perception. We will conclude by showing that product placement is starting to be a common practice in Romanian movies and seen by the majority of people, even if they do not fully understand the concept.*

Keywords: *product placement, movies, experiments, document analysis, age and gender*

Due to financial and political impediments, the Romanian film making industry had a rough time in its beginnings. With each move censored, the filmmakers were compelled to praise the Communist Party and Nicolae Ceausescu in their movies. With only few topics left, the majority of movies released before 1990 were based on novels or national history. Therefore, we cannot speak of product placement in movies before this time. The fall of communism in Romania brought the film industry to life and the freedom of speech gave birth to new film ideas. In general, the majority of post-communism movies presented people's lives in the time of and after "the black

era". As a consequence of freedom of speech, it was very easy for product placement to find its place in these movies. Even after obtaining freedom of speech, product placement could not roam free. If in countries like the United States of America, India or Australia there is little control over the practice of product placement, in Europe the situation is quite different. The legislation regarding the appearance of products and the legislation regarding sponsorship have long been taming this practice. Only recently (2010), the European Union has passed a more libertine law regarding this process. This opens the possibility for future research, to see if the increase of product placement in our country grew, stagnated or even if its numbers decreased.

When we talk about product placement in general, we think about products, services or brands being showed and/or referred to during entertainment programs. The Romanian Audiovisual Law defines product placement as any form of commercial audiovisual communication, paid or with benefits, that consists in including or referring to a product, service or brand during a program. Therefore, based on this definition of product placement, our main goals in this study are to verify if there is any product placement in Romanian motion pictures, how the viewers comprehend it and what the effects upon them are. Besides these, we also want to see if there is a certain age group or gender that would be more prone to recognize product placement in movies and, if so, how they perceive it (as being accepted or unaccepted). We have chosen only motion pictures because from previous research we have found that TV programs (series, reality lifestyle shows) and the personalities that star in it are not considered relevant. (Ong, 2004).¹ Although respondents were aware of product placement in both media (TV and mainstream movies), respondents appeared to have less awareness of brand placements in TV shows than in movies². Having a product associated with a movie star has a greater beneficial potential than having a TV star. The explanation is rather simple: movie stars can appear in other films, are more notorious, and usually they have a higher profile than the television stars.

Another key point here is to verify whether product placement is efficient enough to determine the audience to purchase the item or commit to the presented brand or company.

The current study represents two milestones in the research of product placement. The first one is represented by its unique context, more precisely the existence of product placement in Romanian movies. A study of this type has not yet been conducted especially on Romanian motion pictures. Another aspect that gives our study uniqueness is the change of perspective. If the majority of previous studies have focused more on the view of the advertising practitioner, the present paper wishes to shed some light on the viewer's perspective. This perspective is a rather new and innovative one, and gives this paper a new edge when studying product placement.

1 Apud Lees et. al., *Perceptions of product placement practice across Australian and US practitioners.*

2 *Ibidem.*

Karh, a pioneer in the field of product placement, found that “practitioners believe that the best product placement is portraying the product or service in a favorable light”³. His study also showed that this favorable light represents the most important factor when dealing with the practice of product placement. A crucial element that needs to be remembered is that practitioners believe that product placement affects in a positive manner the way in which a product is depicted. This belief represents the ultimate goal set by advertisers and not the wish to increase sales. This element is so important because although it is vital for practitioners, it is misunderstood by a great part of the viewers. 33% of the participants that took part in our experiment stated that product placement has the purpose to increase sales rather than making a brand/product more known.

Out of 64 motion pictures, 20 Romanian movies have been watched and out of these, 10 presented product placement scenes. The movie selection depended on several factors such as the release year, viewers’ rating and critics’ appreciation. Afterwards, a 6 minutes medley with obvious and less obvious product placement was created and prepared to use for the experiments. The experiments were based on a short 13-question questionnaire which helped in creating a thorough and detailed research.

In order to fulfill the research objectives we can state the hypotheses that mark the beginning of this study. A first hypothesis is to verify if there is any obvious product placement within these 20 movies.

H1: Amongst 20 Romanian movies, at least 5 of them contain obvious product placement.

The second hypothesis of this study is that the audience is not disturbed by the presence of product placement in the movies they watch.

H2: The viewers are not offended by product placement scenes in movies.

The third hypothesis stated here is that the products/companies that do not satisfy immediate needs do not have the expected effect on viewers.

H3: The products or companies placed in movies that do not satisfy immediate needs do not have an influence on consumers’ purchase intention.

The fourth and last hypothesis is that parameters such as age and gender have a specific influence over consumers’ attitude toward product placement.

H4: Consumers’ attitude toward product placement depends on parameters of age and gender.

In the following section we will confirm our hypothesis and leave room for future studies and discussions.

3 Margaret Craig-Lees, Jane Scott, Remiko Wong in Marketing Intelligence & Planning, Vol. 26, No. 5, 2008, pp. 521-538, Emerald Group Publishing Ltd., - *Perceptions of product placement practice across Australian and US practitioners.*

Romanian Product Placement Legislation

Taking into consideration the legislation of our country, on the 11th of December 2007 the Directive 2007/65/CE was adopted. This emergency ordinance was a response to the new technological developments. Mainly, the law refers to the lessening of the advertising laws by the admission of some new practices like product placement, shared-screen advertising and digital advertising. In terms of law, product placement is defined like any form of audiovisual communication consisting in the inclusion of a product or service in a program in return for payment or certain benefits.

The 31st article of the mentioned law states that product placement is forbidden except some situations:

- product placement is allowed in films, movies and series within some audiovisual media services, sport and entertainment programs
- in the case when there is no payment but only provision of certain goods or services free of charge, such as production props or prizes.

These exceptions do not apply in the case of children's programs. Also, the law states that the programs that contain product placement must fulfill the following conditions:

- to not directly encourage the purchase or rental of goods or services, in particular by making special promotional references to those goods or services
- to not excessively highlight the products in question
- to contain precise information about their existence, to be properly identified at both the beginning and end and even at return from a commercial break so as to avoid any confusion in the viewer's mind

Theoretical Background

In the context of movies, product placement has been defined as the inclusion of consumer products or services in motion pictures for promotional purposes (Nebenzahl and Secunda, 1993). This conception appears to be limited because seeing the product is not necessary; it may be shown or mentioned only the brand name. Shapiro (1993) distinguishes four types of product placement in the context of motion pictures: one is the one that provides only clear visibility, the second is the one where products are used, the third is about spoken reference, and the fourth is the one that provides hands-on use and is mentioned by a main star.

In their study of consumers' attitudes toward product placement in movies, Nebenzahl and Secunda (1993) found that product placements were preferred to commercials.

Using Shapiro's (1993) classification, one could look at the impact of different types of product placement on moviegoers' reactions. A priori, several factors would appear to moderate product placement's effects such as the actor's reputation and sex, the type of the movie, the product category, and so on.

Product placement is a practice that has a great success in some countries and in others this practice is only starting to show its true power. In 2010 in USA there were

7.6 billion dollars invested in product placement followed by Brazil with 285 million dollars. Other countries are starting to become noteworthy players. Countries such as China, India, Vietnam, and Malaysia adopted a minimal regulatory legislation. Due to the reduction of control over these legislations the countries named above are embracing product placement as a viable and efficient way of advertising. (Lees et. Al, 2008). “In contrast product placement in European countries, including UK are developing more slowly, due to strict regulations governing the practice”⁴

When talking about this type of practice we can categorize it into three dimensions that are all related: practitioners’ attitudes, practices regarding product placement and consumer attitudes towards product placement. (Lees et. al., 2008). Although TV remains the most popular medium for product placement – 1.43 billion in the US – studies have found that this is not the most efficient form of product placement, mainly because TV stars do not have such a wide range as movies stars (Ong 2004).

The paper *Perceptions of product placement practice across Australian and US practitioners* showed that there is a need for relevant product placement studies and also there is a need in creating a dialogue between those who use product placement as an advertising tool and the academic community so that the discoveries can be implemented into real life.

Product placement in movies represents an important section of marketing and advertising communication and it has become very popular, effective and widespread in use. On the other hand, product placement is a widely debated subject for it raises controversial ethical issues.

Product placement in movies refers to those brands which are incorporated in movies in return for money or for some other benefits. This practice of inserting products in movies has gradually become a common technique after the classic placement of Hershey’s Reese’s Pieces that appeared in *E.T. the Extra Terrestrial*. Hence forth, the question of ethics in product placement has been raised and it became a controversial topic among all kind of specialists, from psychologists and mass media researchers to film producers and advertisers.

In their study regarding consumer’s perceptions of acceptability of product placement in movies, Pola B. Gupta and Stephen J. Gould discussed the ethics of this practice. The authors considered that the ethical problem of product placement must involve two aspects: “(1) a general ethical concern about product placements in general and (2) a concern about some products as opposed to other products”⁵.

4 Margaret Craig-Lees, Jane Scott, Remiko Wong in *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 26, No. 5, 2008, pp. 521-538, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, - *Perceptions of product placement practice across Australian and US practitioners*, p. 522.

5 Pola B. Gupta, Stephen J. Gould in *Journal of current issues and Research in Advertising*, volume 19, No. 1, Spring 2007, - *Consumers’ perception of the ethics and acceptability of Product Plaxcement in movies: product category and individual differences*, p. 38.

Most of the critical literature focuses on product placement and it highlights the possible negative impact upon the viewers. Previous studies claim that product placements are not perceived as advertisements and therefore they are rather viewed as hidden messages. From a psychological perspective, product placement is thought to be subconsciously perceived by moviegoers and to have a subliminal dimension which influences viewers. Product placement is so subtle that probably the viewers do not realize that they are watching an advertisement. Due to this aspect the practice is supposed to be a real threat.

Another accusation brought to this technique of advertising is that it also has a negative economic impact because “moviegoers will develop a favorable opinion of products that are associated with the glamour of Hollywood and ignore more functional ones.” (Gupta, p. 38).

The second dimension regarding the ethics of product placement refers to the use of specific products in movies, such as alcohol, firearms and cigarettes. These products are thought to be encouraging some unhealthy behaviors and showing them in movies is considered to be harmful and a real threat.

Despite many criticisms and controversies of product placement, our study does not refer to the ethical aspects of using product placement in movies and also it does not rate if placing a product in a scene is unethical or not. Our study focuses just on how people perceive this practice, if they notice the products and if this form of advertising offends them in one way or another. We consider that product placement is not a harmful technique. Furthermore, there are no documented cases showing the detrimental effects of product placement in movies. Product placement in movies should not be considered a form of manipulation, but it should be seen as a strategy of persuasion that is perfectly normal for a capitalist system and also, a strategy which gives the movies the sense of realism and credibility.

For the advertiser it is crucial to understand both the public’s perceptions of such a practice and how the perceptions influence behavior; this sort of facts help advertisers in the development of more effective targeting efforts and provide additional knowledge about the potential success of using this tactics.

The literature regarding product placement has shown generally positive perceptions of this practice, but there are some reserved attitudes toward the insertion of certain ethically charged products. Firearms, tobacco, and alcohol are rated as the most unacceptable products to be placed in movies with particularly youth-oriented content. Studies that provide detailed assessments of demographic differences in attitude towards product placement have been few in number and limited for the most part to gender considerations. The previous studies showed that women are more reserved regarding product placement than men are. In addition they did not agree with this practice especially when dealing with ethically charged products. With regard to the age variable the literature showed that elder consumers were more concerned about the manipulative power of this practice than the young.

In their study, Federico de Gregorio and Yongjun Sung⁶, use a new variable to analyze both product placement attitudes and related behaviors: consumer socialization (CS). “CS provides a systematic and well-established framework by which to analyze how demographic characteristics influence attitudinal and cognitive consumer behavior-oriented outcomes, as well as the influence of socialization agents and processes”. The study uses the concept of consumer socialization as the processes by which young people acquire different skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their role as consumers in the marketplace. The authors claim that there are some agents of socialization that influence people’s attitude and behavior toward product placement. One of these agents is represented by the peers of the consumer which have a significant impact upon one’s own beliefs and actions. Prior studies have also demonstrated that peer interaction regarding consumption-related matters is very influential “in shaping shopping orientations, retail patronage behavior and consumption-oriented decision making”. Based on this, Gregorio affirmed that peer communication about consumption will be positively related to product placement attitudes and behaviors. Another socialization agent is media and the frequency of movie watching which affects both product placement attitudes and behaviors. Last but not least, social structural variables like gender, ethnicity, education level and age, play a significant role in attitudes and behaviors regarding product placements. For example the mentioned study showed that the younger viewers are the most likely to engage in such behaviors as seeking out a brand seen in a movie or looking for additional information about that brand.

During the last few years we have assisted to the blow of the global market of product placement, which means that companies have to pay for the placement of branded products. “The global market for product placement, the practice in which firms pay to place branded products (e.g., brand name/logo, package, signage, other trademarks) in the content of mass media programming, exploded to an estimated \$7.5 billion in 2006 and is forecasted to reach \$14 billion by 2010 (Graser and Stanley 2006).”

The increase of product placements in both television and movies has been noted in the popular press and the academic literature (e.g., Auty and Lewis 2004; Balasubramanian, Karrh, and Patwardhan 2006; d’Astous and Chartier 2000; Karrh 1998a, 1998b; La Ferle and Edwards 2006; Law and Braun 2000; McKechnie and Zhou 2003; Samuel 2004).

We also notice that nowadays product placements are no longer considered a new marketing tactic; not only the marketers are spending large amounts of their promotional budgets on these types of efforts, but production studios rely on such deals as a major source of funds (e.g., Bensinger 2008). Studies based on the efficacy

6 Federico de Gregorio; Yongjun Sung in *Journal of Advertising*; Spring 2010; 39, 1; Academic Research Library - *Understanding attitudes toward and behaviors in response to product placement*.

of placements in movies and television programming tend to be mixed, while initial efforts document that consumers recall and recognize brands featured in television and film (e.g., Auty and Lewis 2004; Babin and Carder 1996b; d'Astous and Chartier 2000; d'Astous and Seguin 1999; Gupta and Lord 1998; Sabherwal, Pokrywczynski, and Griffin 1994).

Industry and various academic studies acknowledge the importance of capturing a visual image of the placed product on screen, mentioning the brand in the dialogue, and integrating the brand into the plot of the story (Panda 2004; Russell 1998, 2002). Specifically, the (subtle/prominent) *type of placement* and *placement repetition* are expected to interact in order to impact audience/consumer attitudes. A review of experimental studies based on placement effects (many compare exposure to control) reports mild effects on audience memory for placed brands and there is no evidence of attitude change (Karh 1998b, pp. 40-41).

Apart from the evident promotional aspects, product placements are also potential carriers of social information. For example, brand placements have been proven to be more effective when the featured brand is paired with a character who displays one or more desirable traits (Karrh 1998b).

Data content methodology

The first step in offering a solution to our hypothesis was to create a database with all the Romanian movies that fit into the pre-set time frame. We have chosen only those movies that were produced between 1989 and 2010. There are two reasons in choosing this period of time. The year 1989 marks the end of communism and thus it was the incipient form of a free market and free expression. The second date, 2010, is directly linked to the first reason. All the products that appeared in movies produced in the communist era are hard to categorize. The line between product placement and prop is very fine and so it is difficult to decide what product/brand belongs to a certain category. Even more, there is the subject of a singular brand. If in a movie from that époque we see a car, and that car is clearly a Dacia, it does not mean that we are witnessing product placement. Instead we are seeing the “people’s car” of that time.

The database created consisted of 64 movies, of which we have chosen 22. These were selected according to three variables: the budget of the movies (if such data could be found), the nominations earned and the ratings of the movies on IMDB. We took into account the ratings because they represent the level of awareness and the success that a movie has amongst moviegoers. From the 64 movies we have cut out those that are historical and clearly could not contain product placement. From the 20 movies chosen for viewing, 10 were from the top of the list (the best movies, with the most wins, nominations) and 10 that were placed at the bottom of the list. Using this division we hoped that we could give a general view of the usage of product placement in the Romanian movie industry. After having chosen the movies that were to be analyzed, an observation list was compiled. Thus during a screening of a movie we would follow the appearance of brands, products, for how many seconds

they stay on screen, if the brands' name is mentioned as well as shown and also if a product or a brand appears repeatedly.

From this grid the basis of the medley was conceived. We created a compilation of various clips from movies in which we have found product placement. The clips were carefully selected so that they would contain product placement. Also the scenes were long enough so that the viewer would not immediately realize the purpose of the medley. In addition, the mix contained the appearance of products that are not named (the brand is not shown, the name is not stated), but their shape, size and color made the product easily recognized. Although we do not consider this to be product placement, we wished to see if people would react to them and would consider them to be so. The medley contained 8 clear and very visible product placements (Toblerone, Germanos, Rodipet, Panasonic, Sony, Uncle Ben's, Kent, Viceroy), 2 control products – the shape, and color make the product identifiable but it is not named, (Borsec, Hubba Buba) and another 2 product placements that are placed in the control group. One of them it is represented by a scene filmed in a McDonald's restaurant. The setting is clear, the products are visible instead the purpose is not clear. Although we consider this to be an advertisement as well, we wished to reveal the opinion of our respondents. Do they believe that this is a commercial, or it is the wish of the director to underline the condition of Romanian society? The other product that is in this control group is the appearance of a bottle labeled *Ursul* (similarity with the real Romanian brand *Ursus*). Yet again we wanted to see if the participants would realize that it is not the brand they are used to. If they would realize the difference, then would they consider it to be just a wish in order to give the movie more credibility or simply an explicit intent of advertising?

Experiment methodology

The second part of our study consisted in some experiments conducted on 50 people aged 20-70. The experiment consisted in showing the participants a short medley with some movie scenes in which different products and brands were placed. The medley lasted 7 minutes and it contained scenes from three different movies that we had randomly selected from the list of films used for the content analysis (*Occident*, *Cum mi-am petrecut sfârșitul lumii*, and *După amiaza unui torționar*). The movie scenes contained three kinds of product placement that we have graded on a scale of visibility and obviousness: very obvious (the product is clearly shown and it lasts more than 5 seconds on the screen), obvious (the product is showed 3-5 seconds on the screen) and less obvious (the product is shown fugitive on the screen, 1-2 seconds). The purpose of this scale was to find out what kind of placement is noticed more by the respondents and to see if they notice even those products that are shown for a few seconds, in a fugitive way. The short medley was shown to the participants and after viewing the movie scenes they were asked to answer some questions. This experiment was divided into two parts. For the first part of our experiment we used

people that are not extremely familiar with the concept of our paper and such they could not give a professional opinion. In the second part we used students that were familiarized with the term of *product placement* and had some knowledge about it.

The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions about product placement in general and about the product placement seen previously in the short movie. Our purpose was to discover and to analyze what the participants' opinions and attitudes towards this advertising practice are: if they noticed it, if they are offended by this technique, what is the purpose of product placement and so on.

The people involved in the first phase of the experiment were divided into five age groups and they participated voluntarily without financial motivations. The age groups were: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, and older than 55 years. We chose such a large segment of individuals in order to see if there are any differences regarding product placement conceptions and attitudes of the different age groups. To avoid all possible misunderstandings, the questionnaire was applied by our operators. After answering the questions they have been asked to watch the movie scenes again. When a product appeared in the medley, it was paused and the operator started a discussion with the participants based on the specific scene. The purpose of this discussion was to show the participants all the products placed in the short film. The reasoning of this explanation is based on the assumption that not all the persons would notice or remember all the products that appeared. Taking things even further we wished to make this practice more clear and see where misconceptions appeared. This strategy allowed us to find out, beside the results of the questionnaire, more information about the perceptions and the attitudes of the participants regarding product placement, and to make sure they fully understand this concept.

The second phase of the experiment consisted in showing the same medley to individuals that are aware and familiar with this concept. Therefore, we chose a class of students that are sophomores in Communication and Public Relations, aged 20-24. The students were exposed to the movie scenes containing product placement and of course, after the medley ended, the participants were asked to answer the same questionnaire. If for the other people that participated in our experiment we considered useful and necessary to show them twice the montage and to discuss and explain the concept of product placement, in the case of students this was not imperative and needed. We considered that the students have the theoretical background about product placement and all that it involves so it was not necessary to discuss with them more about this subject.

There were various types of products appearing in the short clip: chewing gum (Hubba Bubba), chocolate (Toblerone), cigarettes (Kent, Viceroy), sodas (Coca-Cola, Pepsi), fast-food (McDonald's), mobile phone traders (Germanos), audio equipment (Sony) and so on.

Questionnaire Format

The questionnaire contained 13 questions out of which 4 are open questions and 9 are closed ones. To begin with, the subjects of the experiment were asked if they are aware of the concept of product placement and if their answer was negative they were asked to write what they believe that product placement means. In this way we wanted to see how close or how far from the correct answer are those who never heard of this concept. Afterwards, the individuals were asked if they noticed any product placed in the scenes previously seen. The questions that followed focused on what people think about the intentionality aspect of product placement and what is the purpose of this form of advertising (increasing sales, increasing product awareness or hidden publicity). Then, the participants were asked if they feel offended by this kind of practice and if they have ever intended to buy or have bought a product after they have seen it placed in a movie. After that, the individuals were asked to specify some products/brands they remember from the medley and to say whether a product from those placed in the movies' scenes determines them want to buy it. At the end, the respondents were asked to state their age and gender.

Once people were questioned, the results were centralized in a SPSS database and afterwards the responses were analyzed.

Results and discussion

The content analysis is based on 22 movies out of which 17 contained various forms of product placement. We analyzed these movies by following certain aspects: name of the movies, release date, IMDB rating, the existence of product placement, the types of products placed, the occurrence of the products, how obvious was the placement, and the total number of products that appeared.

After this analysis we noticed that there is an increase in the usage of this practice. In the early 90s the products placed were scarce (in *Balanta* – 1992, there were only 4 products shown) in contrast to recent years when we can find an abundance of products (in *Legaturi Bolnavicioase* – 2006, 13 different products). Among the products that appear the most were: cigarettes (12 scenes), soda & water (19), beer (7), cars (12), alcoholic beverages (2), cell phones & electronics (8), beauty products (7), clothes (3), taxis (3), food (12). The most recurrent brands are: Kent, Coca-Cola & co., Marlboro, Pepsi & co., Dorna. The appearance of these brands shows that Romanian movies tend to adopt a Hollywood model, in which we can find an abundance of tobacco products, fast food and sodas.

An interesting fact is that in the short period after the revolution we can find a great number of products that were previously forbidden or very hard to find. A famous scene is from the movie *Balanta*, in which the main character shows in center stage a bag with Marlboro's logo printed on, a jar of Nescafé, and Kent cigarettes. The scene is famous because it lasts more than 5 seconds and also they were symbols of prosperity, of what people longed for.

As a qualitative research method we used an experiment that combined both focus-group format and a questionnaire, so that we could highlight the viewer's opinion. This experiment gathered 75 persons out of which 56 were women and 19 were men. The ratio is not equal due to limited resources in both participants and time. The vast majority of the respondents were aged between 18 and 25 (62,7%) followed by people over the age of 55 (18,7 %) – Annex 2.

A total of 62 persons have heard about the concept of product placement. The age variable did not influence the degree of knowledge in the first four groups. The only exceptions were the ones that fit into the age group that was over 55, 8 persons admitted that they did not know at all the concept and the other 6 stated that they were aware of this practice – Annex 3.

When asked what product placement is for them, a staggering number of 35 persons gave definitions which are partly correct but not totally accurate. Some examples of these explanations include: *a practice with benefits for the products, placing products in movies in exchange for a sum of money, a form of advertising for products and services, a marketing strategy, a product is shown in movie for several minutes, the placement of products and brands in movies, music videos, books, magazines and cinemas.*

Most of the questioned people think of product placement as hidden publicity. This depiction of the term is erroneous and such conceptions should be mended, mainly because this practice is by definition a legal and declared form of advertising. The vast majority of the elderly respondents stated that product placement refers to a form of commerce and even more that it is the place where the products/brands are distributed (shelves in stores, shops, and also distributors).

The most surprising fact was that even some of the students that took part in our experiment had trouble in defining product placement: *the placement of a product in the consumer's mind using different tactics (ATL, BTL), the place where the products are put, the place on shelves, the place where the product is distributed, the distribution of products by the intermediaries, hidden publicity with the purpose of influencing the consumer's mind, hidden publicity, showing products in movies and associate them with the actors because they use them* – Annex 4.

When putting the gender variable into discussion and the ability to notice product placement, there were no significant differences between men and women – Annex 5. The graphic shows a great difference between the number of men and women that noticed product placement. This unevenness is based on the fact that there were almost three times more women than men but if we consider the proportions we can see that there are no notable differences. The same lack of difference appears when talking about the age variable. It is interesting to notice that even the elderly spot product placement in movies even if afterwards they do not fully remember the brand they saw – Annex 6.

Out of a total of 75 respondents only 3 are deeply offended by the occurrence of products in movies, and 33 are not at all offended by this phenomenon. Most of the

participants were only slightly and not offended by this practice – Annex 7. Regarding the gender variable women tend to be more offended by seeing products in a motion picture. This being said we cannot generalize this statistic due to the fact that there were fewer men that took part in our experiment – Annex 8.

These findings support our second hypothesis that states that *the viewers are not offended by product placement scenes in movies*. Also, our last hypothesis H4: *Consumers' attitude toward product placement depends on parameters of age and gender*, is therefore partially infirmed. The age and gender variables do not influence the way product placement is perceived and noticed, but there is a difference between the young and the old (over 55) regarding the correct understanding of product placement.

From an intentionality perspective regarding product placement, 96% of the respondents are convinced that this form of advertising is intentional and that they have a very specific purpose. In addition, when asked about the purpose of product placement 33% agreed that the main role of this practice is to increase sales and for 41, 3 % it represents the way of raising products' awareness. 21,3% believe that product placement is hidden publicity – Annex 9 and 10.

Another aspect of this research was to see if the viewers are willing to buy products that appear in movies. As expected, the respondents are more likely to purchase items that they see in movies. The questionnaire revealed that the majority (54,7%) of the participants had bought or wanted to buy a product after they had seen it in a movie. Among the products they desired/bought are: food and drinks (15), clothes, shoes & accessories (6 persons), cell phones (9 persons), cars (4), beer (3), fast-food (6) – Annex 11.

Another point of research was to verify if there was any product in the medley that awakened the viewers' purchase intention. As predicted (annex 12), most of them (76%) were not determined to buy the products, but those who gave a positive answer (24%) would have bought only the products that were satisfying their immediate needs: fast-food (McDonald's), drinks (Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Borsec), chocolate (Toblerone) and cigarettes – Annex 14. Therefore our third hypothesis was confirmed: *The products or companies placed in movies that do not satisfy immediate needs do not have an influence on consumers' purchase intention*.

The most noticed products in the medley were Viceroy (25 persons), McDonalds (24), Germanos (26), Ursus (18), Kent (16), Toblerone (10), Sony (9), Panasonic (9), Coca-Cola (7), Borsec (6), Pepsi (6), Hubba-Bubba (2), Rodipet (4).

What can be noticed here is the fact that while the younger respondents (18-35), can remember exactly the name of the products, the elderly seem to have trouble in remembering the specific product name. The ones that recalled the type of product said that they saw the following: gum, cigarettes, cell phones, chocolates, sodas and mineral water. There were some that even though they admitted to see a product they could not remember a precise one (6 persons).

In our experiment we used 2 control scenes to see how our respondents would react. The first scene *Ursus vs. Ursul* was perceived by most participants as a product placement, not realizing that it was not the brand they know. It was enough for them to see the first 2 letters to immediately think that it was the well-known brand. The second control scene was the one that showed the actors in McDonalds. When asked if this was product placement the opinions were divided. Some of them said that “if you can see the brand then it is product placement” and some stated that “the brand is too notorious to be considered product placement”. They also said that the purpose of showing *McDonalds* is that it is the vision of the director, the desire to show the condition, the social- status of the characters.

As a conclusion to our experiment we can say that gender and age partially influence the way in which product placement is perceived (whether product placement is intended or not, and also the purpose of this practice) and it also influences the degree of acceptance.

Limitations

Due to the fact that our research method is an experiment and because the number of women was not equal or almost equal to the number of men we cannot generalize the obtained data. This difference in numbers (the number of women vs. the number of men, the number of people aged over 55 vs. the younger groups) makes these variables require future studies. More studies are required in order to show if there is a link between the age, and sex variables and the way product placement is being perceived.

Another impediment we came across in this study was the incomplete data about Romanian movies: the budget of the movies that formed the database, the lack of a clear statement that shows if a brand or product has sponsored a movie or not, the unclear line between prop and advertising, and the existence of specific Romanian products that were very popular in a certain period of time and that are almost unknown today.

Taking time into consideration, one of the greatest limitations might be the small amount of movies that were chosen to be viewed and analyzed. This fact directly influenced the length of the medley and the number of products that appeared in it.

Future research

In future studies, researchers might determine which audio or visual product placement is more effective, or they can use other movies (for example communist movies to see the differences between these two categories). Future research in this area should consider using this study as stimulus material in order to see if the results presented in this paper can be generalized.

These are interesting and important topics to be approached by future research. We hope that this study will encourage researchers to get involved in this interesting research area. Also it is possible to see how a study like this is conducted in other countries where the practice is seen as hidden advertising.

Conclusions

To summarize, we may say that, even if it is hard to define practice, product placement is frequently met in Romanian movies. This form of advertising has different shapes, from an entire scene of a Kent billboard to a scene of a nano-second (a short glance of an Axion bottle). In the last 20 years we can observe that product placement is a growing technique, used both in movies and TV shows. At least one in five contemporary motion pictures -films that do not treat historical subjects, movies that present the communist era and also book screenings – contain different product placement scenes. The results of the experiment underline that this type of practice does not seem to offend the audience no matter the viewers' age or gender. The most efficient product placement appears to be the one that targets basic needs (food, water & drinks, cigarettes). These products awaken the desire of the viewer to purchase them, after seeing the specific scene in a movie in which such a product is presented. Our study also emphasizes the need of a better and more organized database of Romanian movies that should include the exact number of awards won, the budget, the sponsors and other general facts (box-office earnings, cast) so that future research could give a more detailed view over the evolution of product placement in our country.

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Annex 1 – content analysis

<i>Movie</i>	<i>Date release</i>	<i>Rating on imdb</i>	<i>Product placement</i>	<i>The placed product</i>	<i>How many times is the product repeated?</i>	<i>How obvious is the product placement?</i>	<i>Total number of placed products</i>
Balanța	1992	8/10	Yes	Kent (cigarettes)	7	Very obvious	4
				Button (photo camera)	12	Very obvious	
				Marlboro (cigarettes - logo printed on a bag)	4	Very obvious	
				Nescafe (coffee - the box of the coffee)	6	Very obvious	
Legături bolnavicioase	2006	9/10	Yes	Chio Chips (chips - logo printed on a car)	1	Obvious	13
				Fanta (juice - empty bottles)	1	Less obvious	
				Bergembier (beer -logo printed on a bag)	1	Very obvious	
				Femeia magazine (audio placement)	1	Obvious	
				Meli-Melo (the shop)	1	Very obvious	
				Coca-Cola	2	Obvious	
				Nokia (phone)	1	Very obvious	
				CrisTaxi (taxi)	2	Very obvious	
				Becks (beer - audio and video placement)	2	Very obvious	
				Fiat (car)	3	Very obvious	
				Alfa Romeo (car)	3	Very obvious	
				Snagov (cigarettes - audio placement)	2	Very obvious	
				Carpați (cigarettes audio placement)	2	Very obvious	
Marilena de la P7	2006	8,2/10	Yes	Moana (icecream)	1	Less obvious	5
				Bergembier (beer - logo printed on a beer crate)	2	Less obvious	
				Ursus (beer - logo printed on a crate)	1	Less obvious	
				Mercedes (car –audio and video placement)	3	Very obvious	
				Prigat (juice)	1	Less obvious	

Movie	Date release	Rating on imdb	Product placement	The placed product	How many times is the product repeated?	How obvious is the product placement?	Total number of placed products
Asfalt Tango	1995	8/10	Yes	Dorna (water - logo printed on the bus and on a gas station)	3	Very obvious	8
				Pepsi (logo printed on a gas station)	3	Less obvious	
				Mirinda (logo printed on a gas station)	1	Less obvious	
				Tutti Frutti (juice and logo on an umbrella)	2	Obvious	
				Vodka Scandic Pop (vodka)	2	Very obvious	
				Volkswagen (car –audio placement)	1	Obvious	
				Pedigree (logo printed on a gas station)	1	Obvious	
				Sprint Taxi (taxi)	14	Very obvious	
California Dreamin'	2007	8/10	Yes	Lucky Strike (cigarettes)	1	Less obvious	5
				Mercedes (car)	1	Less obvious	
				Pepsi (written on a bar)	1	Less obvious	
				Fanta (written on a bar)	1	Less obvious	
				Motorola (phone)	2	Very obvious	
După amiaza unui torționar	2001	7,1/10	Yes	Borsec (water)	2	Obvious	4
				Sony (audio recorder)	2	Very obvious	
				Axion (dish washer)	3	Very obvious	
				Viceroy (cigarettes)	3	Very obvious	
4 luni, 3 saptamani și 2 zile	2007	7,9 10	Yes	Malboro (cigarettes)	2	Very obvious	9
				Doina (cream)	1	Obvious	
				Amo (soap)	1	Very obvious	
				Lux (soap)	1	Very obvious	
				Impulse (spray)	1	obvious	
				Asos (cigarettes)	1	obvious	
				Kent	3	Very obvious	
				Tic-tac	1	Very obvious	
				Rexona	1	Obvious	
A fost sau n-a fost?	2006	7,2	Yes	VW passat (car)	1	Very obvious	2
				Logan (car)	1	obvious	
Amintiri din Epoca de Aur	2009	8	Yes	Salam de Sibiu (salami)	1	Very obvious	2
				Purfix (glue)	1	Obvious	

<i>Movie</i>	<i>Date release</i>	<i>Rating on imdb</i>	<i>Product placement</i>	<i>The placed product</i>	<i>How many times is the product repeated?</i>	<i>How obvious is the product placement?</i>	<i>Total number of placed products</i>
Furia	2002	7.4	Yes	Fanta (juice)	1	Obvious	9
				Cappy (juice)	1	Obvious	
				Audi TT (car)	1	Very obvious	
				Adidas	1	Obvious	
				Ursus	1	Obvious	
				Nike	1	Obvious	
				Kenvelo	2	Very obvious	
				Malboro (cigarettes)	1	Obvious	
				Leonardo	1	Very obvious	
Francesca	2009	7.1	yes	Steaua	2	Obvious	4
				Ursus	2	Obvious	
				Audi	1	Obvious	
				Heineken (beer)	1	Obvious	
Hartia va fi albastra	2006	7,9	yes	Impulse	1	Obvious	9
Occident	2002	7,8	Yes	Panasonic Rodipet (stores)	1	Obvious	
				Germanos	2	Very obvious	
				Uncle Ben's	2	Very obvious	
				Coca-Cola, Pepsi	1	Obvious	
				McDonald's (filmed in, showed and referred to)		Very obvious	
				Femeia (magazine)	1	Very obvious	
				Kent (billboard)	1	Very obvious	
				Coca-Cola (refrigerator)	1	Obvious	
Filantropica	2002	7,8	Yes	FHM (magazine)	1	Very obvious	6
				Nova Brazilia (café)	1	Obvious	
				Why Not (disco-teque – banner)	2	Very obvious	
				Fanta	2	Less obvious	
				CrisTaxi (showed and referred to)	1	Obvious	
				LG (TV set)	1	Very obvious	
Cum mi-am petrecut sfârșitul lumii	2006	7,2	Yes	Toblerone (chocolate)	1	Obvious	2
				Hubba Bubba (chewing gum)	1	Less obvious	

Movie	Date release	Rating on imdb	Product placement	The placed product	How many times is the product repeated?	How obvious is the product placement?	Total number of placed products
Boogie	2008	7,5/10	Yes	Parlament - audio (cigarettes)	1	Very obvious	2
				Murfatlar wine audio+video	1	Very obvious	
				Dorna (water)	3	Less obvious	
				Effect – audio+ video (energy drink)	1	Very obvious	
				Cola, Fanta – audio	1	Very obvious	
Poveste de cartier	2008	2,5/10	Yes	BMW	1	Less obvious	
				Mercedes	1	Less obvious	
				Volkswagen	1	Less obvious	
				Panasonic	1	Less obvious	

Annex 2

age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	47	62,7	62,7	62,7
	26-35	7	9,3	9,3	72,0
	36-45	1	1,3	1,3	73,3
	46-55	6	8,0	8,0	81,3
	>55	14	18,7	18,7	100,0
	Total	75	100,0	100,0	

gender

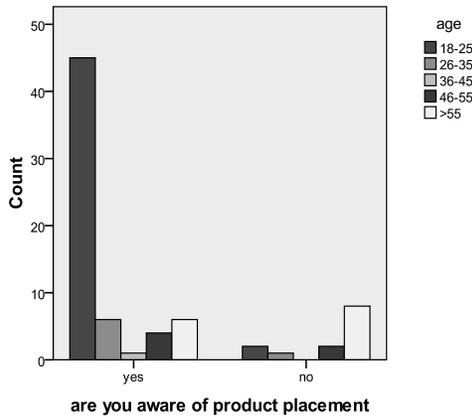
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	F	56	74,7	74,7	74,7
	M	19	25,3	25,3	100,0
	Total	75	100,0	100,0	

Annex 3

are you aware of product placement * age Crosstabulation

			age					Total
			18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	>55	
are you aware of product placement	yes	Count	45	6	1	4	6	62
		% of Total	60,0%	8,0%	1,3%	5,3%	8,0%	82,7%
	no	Count	2	1	0	2	8	13
		% of Total	2,7%	1,3%	0,0%	2,7%	10,7%	17,3%
Total		Count	47	7	1	6	14	75
		% of Total	62,7%	9,3%	1,3%	8,0%	18,7%	100,0%

Bar Chart



Annex 4

what do you think product placement means?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
a practice with benefits for the products	1	1,3	1,3	1,3
placing products in movies in exchange for a sum of money	1	1,3	1,3	2,7
the place where are distributed the products to capture the attention of buyers	1	1,3	1,3	4,0
a brand placed in a movie	1	1,3	1,3	5,3
a form of advertising for products and services	1	1,3	1,3	6,7
a form of trade	4	5,3	5,3	12,0
a marketing strategy	1	1,3	1,3	13,3
a practice for increasing sales and make a product known	1	1,3	1,3	14,7
a product is shown in a movie for several minutes	1	1,3	1,3	16,0
advertising	6	8,0	8,0	24,0
advertising for a product	2	2,7	2,7	26,7
hidden publicity	6	8,0	8,0	34,7
hidden publicity (products placed in movies or books)	1	1,3	1,3	36,0
hidden publicity in a movie	1	1,3	1,3	37,3
hidden publicity with the purpose of influencing consumer's mind	1	1,3	1,3	38,7
hidden publicity, showing products in movies and associating them with the actors because they use them	1	1,3	1,3	40,0
I can't tell	1	1,3	1,3	41,3
I don't know	6	8,0	8,0	49,3
it was considered hidden publicity but now it's a form of increasing product's awareness	1	1,3	1,3	50,7
marketing strategy	1	1,3	1,3	52,0
method of promotion for product- advertising	1	1,3	1,3	53,3

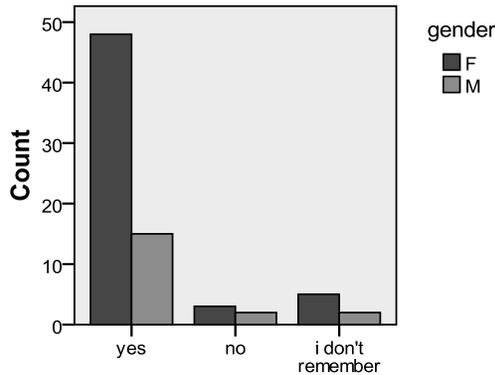
Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
occurrence of products in different movies, tv shows, music videos	1	1,3	1,3	54,7
products offering	1	1,3	1,3	56,0
products placed in movies or tvshows	1	1,3	1,3	57,3
products/brands placed in movies/videos	1	1,3	1,3	58,7
showing a product in a movie or tvshow	1	1,3	1,3	60,0
showing a product in movies	1	1,3	1,3	61,3
showing products in movies and tv shows	1	1,3	1,3	62,7
showing products in movies, tvshows	1	1,3	1,3	64,0
showing subtly products in movies	1	1,3	1,3	65,3
showing the name of the company or the product	1	1,3	1,3	66,7
showing the product in a commercial	1	1,3	1,3	68,0
the distribution of products at the intermediaries	1	1,3	1,3	69,3
the intentional placement of brands in movies	1	1,3	1,3	70,7
the intentional placement of brands with the purpose of making hidden publicity and making products known	1	1,3	1,3	72,0
the intentional placement of products in movies	1	1,3	1,3	73,3
the place where are distributed the products	1	1,3	1,3	74,7
the place where are distributed products	1	1,3	1,3	76,0
the place where the products are put. the place on shelves	1	1,3	1,3	77,3
the place where the product is distributed	1	1,3	1,3	78,7
the placement of a product in consumer's mind using different tactics (ATL, BTL)	1	1,3	1,3	80,0
the placement of brands in movies	1	1,3	1,3	81,3
the placement of brands in movies, music videos, books	1	1,3	1,3	82,7
the placement of famous products in movies	1	1,3	1,3	84,0
the placement of products and brands in movies, music videos, books, magazines, cinemas	1	1,3	1,3	85,3
the placement of products in commercials, movies, videos with the purpose of making known the product	1	1,3	1,3	86,7
the placement of products in movies	1	1,3	1,3	88,0
the placement of products in movies, music	1	1,3	1,3	89,3
the placement of products in tv shows and movies with the purpose of increasing the product's awareness	1	1,3	1,3	90,7
the placement of the name, logo or other specific elements of a product in movies, music videos	1	1,3	1,3	92,0
the promotion of a product	2	2,7	2,7	94,7
the promotion of brands in different music or video materials	1	1,3	1,3	96,0
to sale products	1	1,3	1,3	97,3
unconventional advertising	1	1,3	1,3	98,7
when you see a product at tv	1	1,3	1,3	100,0
Total	75	100,0	100,0	

Annex 5

have you noticed any product placement in the medley? * gender Crosstabulation

			gender		Total
			F	M	
have you noticed any product placement in the montage?	yes	Count	48	15	63
		% of Total	64,0%	20,0%	84,0%
	no	Count	3	2	5
		% of Total	4,0%	2,7%	6,7%
	I don't remember	Count	5	2	7
		% of Total	6,7%	2,7%	9,3%
Total	Count	56	19	75	
	% of Total	74,7%	25,3%	100,0%	

Bar Chart

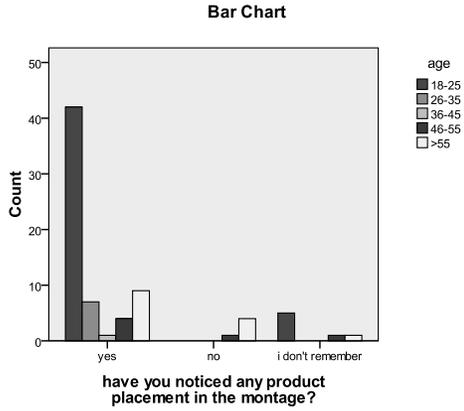


have you noticed any product placement in the montage?

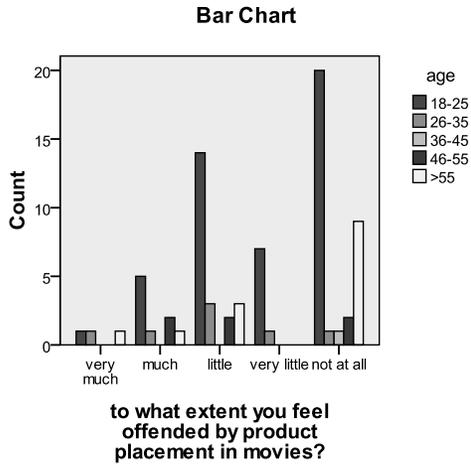
Annex 6

have you noticed any product placement in the medley? * age Crosstabulation

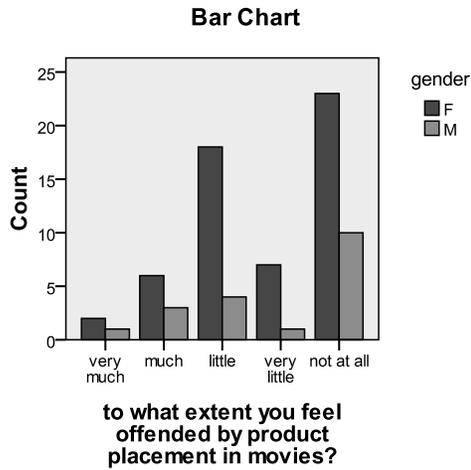
			age					Total
			18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	>55	
have you noticed any product placement in the montage?	yes	Count	42	7	1	4	9	63
		% of Total	56,0%	9,3%	1,3%	5,3%	12,0%	84,0%
	no	Count	0	0	0	1	4	5
		% of Total	,0%	,0%	,0%	1,3%	5,3%	6,7%
	I don't remember	Count	5	0	0	1	1	7
		% of Total	6,7%	,0%	,0%	1,3%	1,3%	9,3%
Total	Count	47	7	1	6	14	75	
	% of Total	62,7%	9,3%	1,3%	8,0%	18,7%	100,0%	



Annex 7



Annex 8

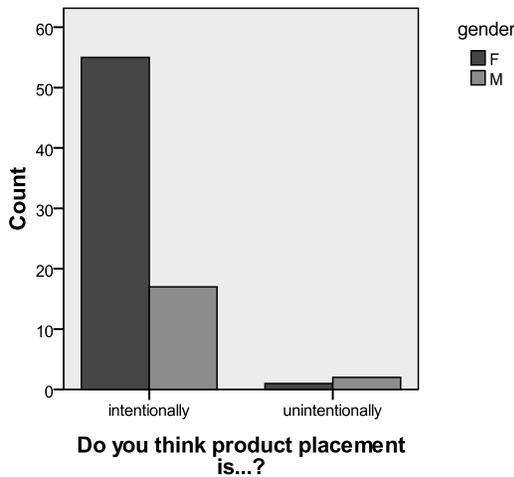


Annex 9

Do you think that the product placement practice is...? * gender Crosstabulation

			gender		Total
			F	M	
Do you think product placement is...?	intentional	Count	55	17	72
		% of Total	73,3%	22,7%	96,0%
	unintentional	Count	1	2	3
		% of Total	1,3%	2,7%	4,0%
Total	Count	56	19	75	
	% of Total	74,7%	25,3%	100,0%	

Bar Chart

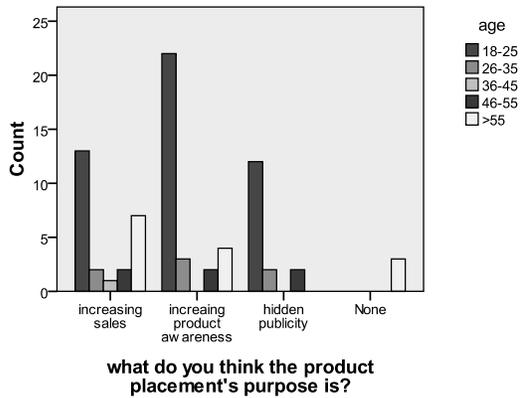


Annex 10

what do you think the product placement's purpose is? * age Crosstabulation

			age					Total
			18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	>55	
what do you think the product placement's purpose is?	increasing sales	Count	13	2	1	2	7	25
		% of Total	17,3%	2,7%	1,3%	2,7%	9,3%	33,3%
	increasing product awareness	Count	22	3	0	2	4	31
		% of Total	29,3%	4,0%	,0%	2,7%	5,3%	41,3%
	hidden publicity	Count	12	2	0	2	0	16
		% of Total	16,0%	2,7%	,0%	2,7%	,0%	21,3%
	None	Count	0	0	0	0	3	3
		% of Total	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	4,0%	4,0%
Total	Count	47	7	1	6	14	75	
	% of Total	62,7%	9,3%	1,3%	8,0%	18,7%	100,0%	

Bar Chart



Annex 11

have you ever bought or intended to buy a product after seeing it in a movie

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	41	54,7	54,7	54,7
	no	34	45,3	45,3	100,0
	Total	75	100,0	100,0	

Annex 12

Did any product from the montage determine you to buy it?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	18	24,0	24,0	24,0
	no	57	76,0	76,0	100,0
	Total	75	100,0	100,0	

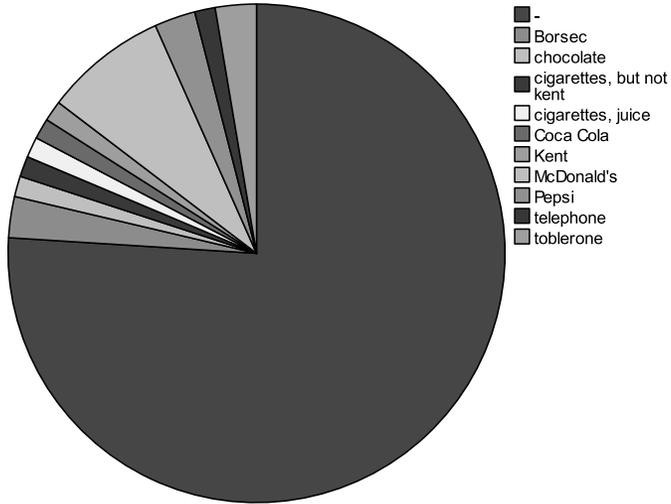
Annex 13

What products did you want to buy?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	-	57	76,0	76,0	76,0
	Borsec	2	2,7	2,7	78,7
	chocolate	1	1,3	1,3	80,0
	cigarettes, except for Kent	1	1,3	1,3	81,3
	cigarettes, juice	1	1,3	1,3	82,7
	Coca Cola	1	1,3	1,3	84,0
	Kent	1	1,3	1,3	85,3
	McDonald's	6	8,0	8,0	93,3
	Pepsi	2	2,7	2,7	96,0
	telephone	1	1,3	1,3	97,3
	Toblerone	2	2,7	2,7	100,0
	Total	75	100,0	100,0	

Annex 14

What products do you want to buy?



Questionnaire

1. Are you aware of the concept of product placement?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

2. What do you think that product placement means?
.....

3. In the movie scenes you have just seen, did you notice any product placement?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) I don't remember

4. Do you think that product placement in movies is:
 - a) Intentional
 - b) Unintentional

5. What purpose do you think product placement has in movies?
 - a) To increase sales
 - b) To increase the product awareness
 - c) Hidden advertising
 - d) It has no purpose
 - e) I don't know/ No answer

6. To what extent do you feel offended, in general, about product placement in movies?
 - a) Very much
 - b) Much
 - c) A little
 - d) Very little
 - e) Not at all

7. Have you ever bought or intended to buy a product after you have seen it in a movie?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

8. If your answer was yes, what was/were that product/products?
.....

9. Enumerate some products/brands you have seen in the previous scenes:
.....

10. Did these movie scenes make you want to buy any of the products you have seen?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

11. If your answer was yes, what product do you want to buy?

12. Age

- a) 18-25
- b) 26-35
- c) 36-45
- d) 46-55
- e) > 55

13. Gender:

- a) Female
- b) Male

Thank you!