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A CASE STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN ENTERTAINMENT PROGAMME ON CHINESE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

Various advertisements emerge in the market. As one of the innovative forms, product placement is a marketing strategy to promote products. The acceptance of product placement in Chinese TV programmes would have valid research value. The effectiveness of product placement towards consumer behaviour also have significance to marketers.

The objective of this thesis is to investigate the acceptance of product placement and dominant product placement modalities in Chinese recreational TV programmes and examine the significant differences of consumer influential variables towards product placement.

The research conducted a case study, taking Chinese music talent show *Sing! China* as an example*,* to specify the relations between product placement and consumer behaviour. Self-completed online questionnaires were completed by 138 qualified respondents within 9 releasing days. SPSS analysis method was applied in this thesis.

Data reveal that Chinese audiences have low acceptance rate of product placement. Visual placement is an efficient way to arise brand awareness. Besides, age and family structures have significant differences in terms of the effectiveness of product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme. There are some suggestions for marketers about efficient product placement modalities and products.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
LSD	The least-significant difference
Sig.	Significance
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nowadays, advertisements have gone through a major transformation. Although the traditional advertising methods are still applicable, a growing number of innovative approaches are widely used in social media (Brewster, 2014). Product placement or brand placement is a marketing strategy for a specific product or brand in representational visual image fuse to movies, television series and television programs, with the aim to impress audiences of the product or brand. Hence, advertisers and sponsor product placement as a modern marketing tool to promote the product or brand (Falkow, 2000). Brand placement first emerged in 1896 in European Lumiere films. (Newell, 2006) With further advancement, product placement gradually appeared on television, newspaper, magazine, broadcast, text message, blog, online game, novels and music (Liew and Elizabeth, 2014).

In Chinese entertainment programmes, exclusive title sponsor see (picture 1), with the brand information frequently placed next to the programme name, is one prominent form of product placement. Furthermore, implanting brand or specific product in host's advertising message is another method to achieve effective promotional results, as host controls the progress of the programme and attracts audiences' attention. Meanwhile, there is a relatively milder product placement in recreational TV programmes, in which sponsored products as game properties are to increase the exposure of the brand in order to enhance brand recall and brand awareness (Wei, 2015).

Picture 1 exclusive title of *Sing! China 2016*

Consumer behaviour is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. Decision making involves in this process in order to solve problems, typically including five steps: need recognition, information search (pre-purchase search), evaluation of alternatives, product choice (purchase), and decision outcomes (post-purchase evaluation). (Solomon. et al, 2006) Specifically, consumers define the problem or a need of themselves, then search their database for suitable one to make a reasonable decision with internal or external research and dedicated or accidental research. Eventually, consumers make choices from alternative products in evaluative criteria and determinant attributes are the primary elements of the decision. After that, consumer may repeat purchase behaviour or regret of buying (Solomon. et al, 2006).

Since product placement has been widely used in Chinese recreational TV programmes, its effect on consumer buying behaviour has attracted a great amount of academic attention (Dudovskiy, 2012). As one representative Chinese recreational television programme, *Sing! China* is a popular music talent show held by Zhejiang TV. In 2016, there were 7 brands or products placed in the programme and 6 different types of product placements, namely, exclusive title, close-up view of products or brands, host's script,

brands on the top right of the screen, programme props and products or brands at the end of programme (YouTube, 2016). The thesis will conduct the popular Chinese entertainment programme, *Sing! China,* as a case study to identify the relations between product placement and consumer behaviour.

1.2 Motivation of the Topic

The motivation comes from author's personal interest and experience in analysing television series, movies and recreational shows. Based on the writer's personal knowledge in integrated marketing communications, advertisements are the primary channel to increase the brand awareness to influence consumer behaviour. When I was watching different programs or films, some of the product placement, left positive impression on me while others generated negative feelings. When I watched *Sing! China*, a musical talent show, the host read advertising commentary with so fast tempo that I had difficulties understanding the contents. After following some news on the internet, I was intrigued to find that the host spoke 10 words per second, which further aroused my interest to figure out the forms and effectiveness of product placement (China Southern Daily, 2012). Personally, I had neutral attitude to the product placement in the show but I was not motivated to purchase the products. I was then inspired to examine others' opinions towards product placement and explore the influence on purchase decision.

1.3 Objectives and Research Questions

The objective of this thesis is to explore the relations between product placement and consumer behaviour in Chinese entertainment programme by taking Sing! China talent show for the case analysis.

The present study is expected to investigate the following research questions:

1. What is the acceptance ratio of Chinese audience towards product placement in recreational TV programme?
2. Which dominant product placement modalities in Chinese recreational TV programme have influence on consumer behaviour?
3. Which dominant factors in consumer influential variables have significant difference in the effectiveness of product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme?

1.4 Thesis Structure

The next chapter literature review, empirical studies about product placement and consumer behaviour will be summarized. On the one hand, the definition of product placement will be clarified, followed by two classifications in product placement information modalities. Then, the goal of product placement, to get the information across to the audience in general, will be clarified in separate parts. On the other hand, efforts will be given to the analysis of consumer behavior, including the definition self image congruence model and its six influential elements.

As for the research methodology, quantitative method of questionnaire was applied into data collection. Furthermore, data collection and analysis method was introduced at the end of this chapter.

In the chapter of data analysis, reliability test was involved to test internal consistency of Likert scale questions. Ratio and SPSS was conducted to analyse questionnaire data. The last part is suggestions for future study.

In the final chapter of thesis, conclusions were drawn based on research questions and empirical data. In addition, a few suggestions for marketer were presented.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Definition of Product Placement

Product placement indicates the usage of motion pictures in television programs, films or videos that includes brand name, trademark, image, signage, package or other related aspects of certain products (Steortz, 1987). Law and Braun-LaTour (2004) echoed this idea by emphasizing that the fundamental goal of the deliberate insertion of products into entrainment programs is to influence the audience attitude and consumption toward the products. According to Newell and Chang (2006), product placement was initiated in the movie industry and gradually applied into a wide range of social media. Later, combined with celebrity endorsement, public relation and sponsors, it has developed into a business promotion strategy to deepen the audience' impression of certain brands (Tiwsakul et al., 2005). Compared with traditional advertising, product placement industry has proven to be efficient in the evasion of problematic issues such as audience fragmentation, rising rate cards, and cynicism (Russell, 1998) and therefore, gained momentum in its development.

2.2 Product Placement Modalities

Based on the information modalities, Russell (1998) has proposed a three-dimensional framework of product placement, including visual or screen placement, verbal or auditory placement and plot placement. To begin with, visual placement mainly contains two forms, "creative placement and on-set placement" (Russell, 1998, p. 357). For instance, in a film, the former placement refers to the advertisement integrated into the background scenes while the products directly positioned on the film set are in line with the latter. As

for the auditory dimension, the advertisements normally appear in the conversation or dialogue, with the aim to make the audience hear the brands. In the study conducted by Brennan and Babin (2004), audio-visual product placement outperformed the visual or audio only placement with respect to brand recognition. Furthermore, the plot placement indicates any form of combination of the product and plot. It can be purely visual, verbal or the dual application of both (Russell, 1998). For example, the brand name can be mentioned in the script (verbal) simultaneously with the product image (visual) on the screen.

Scholar have other classifications of the product placement categories. Tiwsakul, Hackley, and Szmigin (2005) summarized the previous studies and divided the product placement into another three components, namely, "implicit product placement", "integrated explicit product placement" and "non-integrated explicit product placement" (2005, 99). Firstly, implicit product placement involves informal expressions of products in television programs with no clear reference to the sponsors, which conveys contextual message in a passive way. The appearance of the products is to serve the content development of the program or films. For instance, in the U.S television series Play of Cards, there was a scene where Claire flew to another city in an American Airlines plane but neither direct or indirect implication was given to the name of the airline company. By contrast, in the integrated explicit product placement, products that are formally identified with explicit explanations to its advantages and attributes (Tiwsakul et al., 2005). Usually the promotion of products is combined with the content and context. Compared with the implicit placement, it plays an active role in informing viewers of the product information. A representative example is the characters in TV series usually have the preference for certain brands, such as biscuits, clothing, shoes, etc. and constantly mention these items in their scripts. Furthermore, for non-integrated explicit product placement, although there is the clear clue to the product information, it is not combined

with the content of the program. For example, in the Chinese talent show *Sing! China*, before and after every break for advertisement, the host read promotional scripts of the products while the producer information will appear on screen at the same time (YouTube, 2016).

2.3 The Goal of Product Placement

In addition, the primary goal of product placement is to get the information across to the audience, namely, the message receptivity (Panda, 2004). Based on the messages recognized by the viewers, they then make decisions whether to buy it or not. More specifically, the visibility of the products is tightly connected with the attention and interest of viewers (Williams, 2011). With the higher level of the brand awareness and recall rate, the more favorable attitude to the products will be built up among the recipients. Consequently, they have the motivation to follow the instruction of the advertisements and eventually purchase certain products. Furthermore, both Panda (2004) and Williams (2011) have demonstrate that product placement can yield the immediate recognition of the brand at the exact point of buying. In fact, once consumers develop a high level of brand familiarity, they incline to choose the brand products based on their recognition (Brennan and Babin, 2004). With the increase of exposure to the products, the overall image of the brand will be shaped and incrementally underpinned.

2.4 The Influence of Product Placement

Due to the increasing development of product placement industry, previous studies have accumulated some insights into the field of product placement. To date, former studies mainly focused on the brand recall and recognition while less academic attention was given to the placement effects in marketing (Law and Braun-LaTour, 2004). Brennan,

Dubas and Babin (1999) illustrated that product placement can generate mixed results in terms of brand awareness. On the one hand, promotional results can vary because of different placement types. For instance, in the case study to examine the effect of promotion of audience cognition, Gupta and Lord (1998) concluded that the explicit presentation of a brand through audio placement, such as the emphasis in tone and the central placement in the sentence, exceeds the subtle screen placement. On the other hand, the product placement duration as well influences the promotional effect. Brennan, Dubas and Babin (1999) explained that the advertisement time should be carefully measured to avoid negative adjudegment from the audience. Besides, the research (Brennan at al., 1999) also came to the conclusion that placement types exerts a greater influence on the variations of audience cognition than the placement exposure time. Ultimately, however, the placement types and duration collectively exert influence, to different degrees, on the audience.

As for the positive side, Russell (1998) argued that as effective product placement can enhance the favorable impression of the products, audience incline to glorify the products to match the experience described in the television programs or movies, which will consequently increase sale and facilitate the marketing of the brand. On the other hand, Homer (2009) criticized that the high frequency of products will yield the negative attitudes among respondents. That is to say, customers will consider the product placements as the intrusion of the television program or film content and such interference will arouse disturbing feedback. Moreover, Homer (2009) explained that negative effects will continue to increase if exposures repeat. He further indicated that subtle product placement generally leads to a relatively positive impression. In other words, audience will remain positive toward the products if the exposures are deliberately controlled.

2.5 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior not only involves the engagement of both consumers and producers at the time of buying but wholes procedures of comparing, purchasing, or using goods, services or ideas to satisfy needs and desires of the consumers (Solomon et al., 2012). That is to say, consumer behaviour includes every part of the process, before, during and after the consumption. They also illustrated that consumers can take the form of individuals or groups and vary from multiple factors including age, gender, income, etc (Solomon et al., 2012). Therefore, product placement marketing strategies should be based on the analysis of the consumer group. Solomon et al. (2012) highlights six influential variables, age, gender, family structure, social class and income, ethnicity and geography are initiated. Although other factors such as lifestyles, personal preference for taste and texture also significantly affect the product purchase, they cannot be objectively measured through scientific analysis and therefore, are not included in this research.

2.5.1 Self-image Congruence Model

The importance of self-image congruence model indicate that consumers purchase specific products due to the satisfaction they gain from the products attributes (Solomon et al., 2012). When these attributes and the consumer's self-image reach a consensus cognitively, there will be a purchase behaviour.

Self-concept is the totality of the perceptions, feelings and thoughts that individual has to himself or herself as an object (Solomon et al., 2012). It consists of multidimensional characteristics. In specific, individuals may have differences in gender, a male or a female, or in age, adolescent or seniors, etc. George and Jae (1991) explained that self-

concept is not only a conglomeration or addition of isolated concepts of self, but a patterned interrelationship of all these.

According to the summary of Moghimi (2014), following framework presents the relation between product usage and self-image. However, self-identity is affected by a variety of factors. In this thesis, consumer influential variables, namely, age, gender, family structure, social class and income, ethnicity and geography, are discussed and compared with respect to their differences.

Figure 1 Self-image Congruence Model
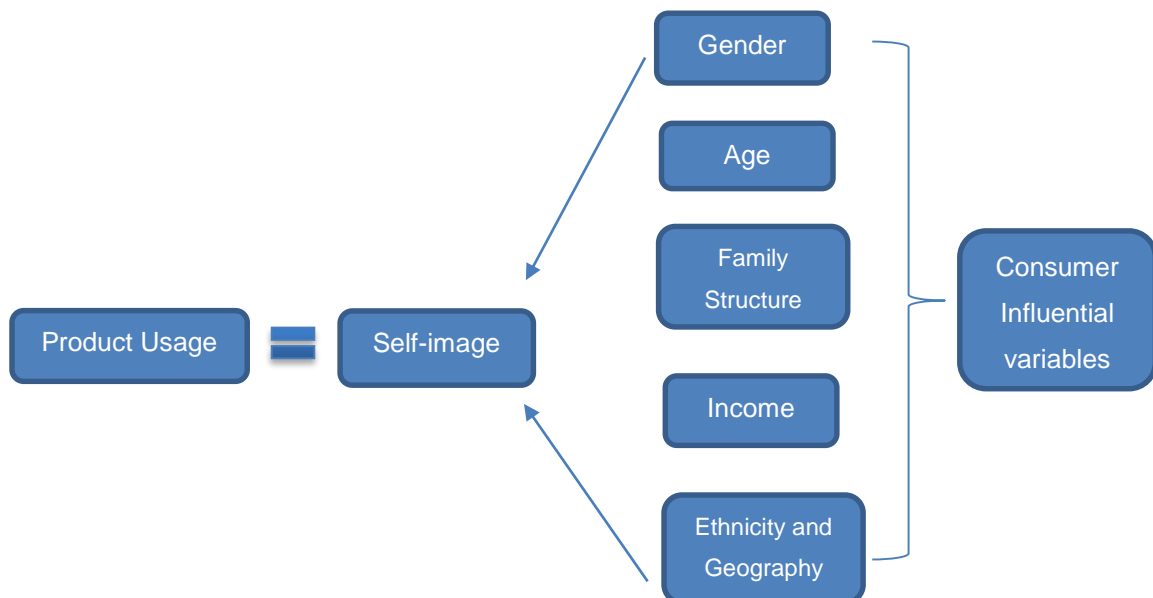
2.5.2 Age

Consumers of similar age group normally share a set of values and cultural perceptions and tend to develop common interest for some products and brands (Gregorio and Sung, 2010). Take promotion tactic of the drink Red Bull as an example. As it is targeted at the younger generation, the producer widely introduced Red Bull into places where young people prefer to go, including bars and clubs. In a former study in the U.S., audience between fifteen to thirty-five years old were most tolerant to product placement in movies or televisions (Gregorio and Sung, 2010). Statistics also showcase that they are more sensitive to detect the existences the products placement. On the contrary, the elder customers (over fifty-five years old) prove to be most unacceptable of product placement, regarding it as factitious design with little preference. On the other hand, researchers (Freedman and Goldstein, 1999) have argued that the media exposure habits of different age groups may lead to the different degress of acceptability of product placements.

2.5.3 Gender

Gender fundamentally forms one's identity. Consumers have the tendency to choose products that are mostly suitable for their femininity or masculinity (Solomon et al., 2012). For instance, the nappies for little babies have colors that indicate their gender identities. It is perceived as common and natural to choose pink nappies for girls while blue ones for boys. By examining the gender differences in the reaction to product placement, Belch and Willis (2002) summarized that wives have gain more power in decision-making for purchasing. Salmon et. al (2012) further pointed out that female reviewers demonstrate more tolerant and favorable attitudes than their counterparts in general but male audience are more inclined to buy products placed in films than female.

2.5.4 Family Structure

The family structure and marital status is another important aspect for consumption behaviors. On the one hand, the number of family members will be connected with the quantity of purchasing (Belch and Willis, 2002). A household of five is expected to consume more daily necessities than that of two. On the other hand, compared to bachelors, family with children will spend more money on children education and toys. It is further explained that young bachelors are more motivated to buy products embedded in the films or programs than couples with children (Gregorio and Sung, 2010).

2.5.5 Income

Income and social class plays a vital role in the interaction between product placement and consumer behaviours. Different occupations vary in incomes and social status, which are tightly connected with the consumption capacity and attitudes toward product placement (Solomon et al., 2012). In the American society, consumers with lower incomes or African-American origins hold more positive attitude to the product placement (Gregorio and Sung, 2010). One underlying reason is that discount information can be disclosed in the promotional placement, which accommodates the desire for lower prices. Meanwhile, Wang, Yu and Wei (2012) identified the positive correlations of peer communication in the attitude toward product placement and the following purchase behaviour. In other words, people from the similar social class will influence others' perception toward product placement through communication.

2.5.6 Ethnicity and Geography

Besides, ethnicity is an essential consideration for product placement, especially in the multicultural society. It is important to take account of the racial or ethnic icons or expressions that may arouse negative feedback in product placement (Solomon, et al, 2012). Furthermore, product placement should change accordingly on the basis of the location of consumers, namely, geography. McKechnie and Zhou (2003) argued that consumers from different geographical districts give response to marketing communication information in line with their cultural values and social customs. In their comparison study of the acceptability of product placement between Chinese and American consumers, it is concluded that Chinese consumers are, in general, less accepting of product placement than their American counterparts. Therefore, the products placed in a Chinese program should be tailored to meet the values and customs of the Chinese society.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

There are two main research methods in social science studies, quantitative method and qualitative method (Saunders et al, 2012). Quantitative method gets general ideas through a large amount of data. It is a logical and data-led approach which provides a measure of what people think from a statistical and numerical point of view (British Library, n.d). As the objective of this thesis is to explore the relations between product placement and consumer behaviour in talent show *Sing! China*, it is therefore of vital importance to examine he consumers' perception of product placement. Accordingly, quantitative method of questionnaire including 11 questions will be effective in gathering data from the audience.

Qualitative research is more focused on how people feel, what they think and why they make certain choices (British Library, n.d). Descriptive data or nominal data usually obtained from qualitative method, which is impossible to define the category numerically but can lead conclude depth analysis of a new theory or phenomenon (Bricki. and Green, 2007). While quantitative research is a deductive way to text the relations between variables, qualitative research is an inductive method to improve theories with precise questions in the interviews (Saunders et al, 2012). Due to time constrain and research aim, qualitative research method of interview would not be included in this thesis.

In the current study, quantitative approach of questionnaire including multiple choices were utilized for data collection. Collecting descriptive and explanatory data can ensure research findings are more reliable and accurate. Questionnaire at a descriptive stage mainly focuses on studying general numerical results of consumers' preference in

different product placement. Likert scale questions are expected to concentrate on the exploratory analysis on consumer buying behaviour towards real purchase (Saunders et al. 2009).

3.2 Questionnaire Design

Questionnaires were employed to test the relations between four major consumer behavior influential variables and product placement. Another factor, ethnicity and geography, was automatically not included in the current study as all the participants were from China and currently live in China.

The self-completed questionnaire was administered through the internet with two kinds of languages, Chinese and English (appendix 2). As all the participants were Chinese, the primary language of the questionnaire was Chinese. English version was the translated version for the references of this thesis.

The questionnaire included three parts, background information, Likert scale questions and multiple choice questions. In the beginning part, the definition of product placement was present to explain terms to the participants. In addition, following questions were designed on the basis of the four influential variables in consumer behavior, namely, age, gender, family structure and income. Participants were expected to fill out the above information anonymously to ensure the confidentiality of the research. Furthermore, one scale question was related to the acceptance of product placement in recreational programme and there were three scale questions related to the effectiveness of consumers towards product placement in *Sing! China* to obtain consumer buying behavior after watching the programme. Specifically, three questions correlated with the influence level of consumers. For example, one sample question was to explore to what extend consumers agreed or disagreed that they were influenced by brand placement in

the TV programme. Besides, through reviewing *Sing! China* 2016, all brands included were named in a multiple-choice question to help consumers recall advertisements, serving as a transitional question to product placement types. And six specific product placement modalities were listed in the multiple choice questions to enhance understanding of the success of product placement. The estimated time of filling out the questionnaire was around 60 seconds, which is one standard to examine the qualified response.

3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

Non-probability convenience sampling method was used for this thesis. It was one of the most efficient method that selected samples haphazardly in order to reach certain quantity of data. However, bias may arise and influences beyond control, as the samples are obtained at random. (Saunders et al. 2009). In the meantime, as the research was a case study centring on the product placement in *Sing! China,* all samples must be individuals who had experience of watching this recreational programme. As the programme ranked the first in audience rate within the period of research, it had a wide coverage of audience in China and all participants included in this study have watched this programme (appendix 1).

The questionnaire was administered online and shared by the link through various forms of social media since Internet is the most effective way to involve a large number of samples. For example, Tencent QQ, WeChat and Weibo. The distribution period of collecting data was from 20th November to 29th November.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

Since the research focused on the relation between product placement and consumer behaviour as a case study on the recreational programme *Sing! China*, the results have relatively high validity in Chinese entertainment television programme. By contrast, it has less validity in other types of TV programmes.

With respect to the validity and reliability of the data, the questionnaire began with explanation of terms so as to avoid any misunderstanding. In addition, questionnaire was anonymous, which was notified in the message when distributed. A total of 167 respondents were involved in the survey and 138 valid feedbacks were collected. Due to the time of filling out the questionnaire within 60 seconds, 29 questionnaires were inefficient. The thesis conducted SPSS methods to analyze the reliability of result.

3.5 Analysis Method

IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a computer application that supports statistical analysis of data, generating tabulated reports, charts, and plots of distributions and trends, descriptive statistics, and complex statistical analysis. There is quantity of functions provided in SPSS, three types of methods conducted in this thesis, reliability tests, independent t-test and one-way ANOVA (Analysis of variance). (Chandler, n,d)

Reliability test involves Cronbach's alpha to measure the consistency of a questionnaire, majorly demonstrated by Likert scale questions. According to Laerd Statistics (2013), "Cronbach's alpha is the most common measure of internal consistency ("reliability"). It is most commonly used when there are multiple Likert questions in a questionnaire that forms a scale and researchers wish to determine if the scale is reliable. Cronbach's alpha

is expressed as a number between 0 and 1 (Table 1). Internal consistency describes the extent to which all the items in a survey measure the same concept and hence it is connected to the inter-relatedness of the items within the survey (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). There were 4 Likert scale questions in this questionnaire, which was divided into two parts. One was about acceptance of product placement with 1 statement and the other investigated the effectiveness of product placement with 3 statements. In order to generate trustworthy results, reliability test was included in data analysis.

Table 1 Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Laerd Statistics (2013) stated that "the independent t-test compares the means between two unrelated groups on the same continuous and dependent variable." In the case of this thesis, effectiveness of product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme differed based on consumer influential variables (gender, age, family structure and income). Dependent variable would be "effectiveness of product placement" and independent variables would be "gender (male or female)" or "family structure (have children or have no child)".

Laerd Statistics (2013) claimed that "the one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of three or more independent (unrelated) groups." In order to understand whether effectiveness of

product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme differed based on consumer influential variables (gender, age, family structure and income), independent variables would be "age (divided to below 20, 20-30, 31-40, 41-50 and above 50)" or "income (above 15,000 yuan, 8,000-15,000 yuan, 4,500-8,000 yuan, 2,000-4,500 yuan and below 2,000 yuan)"

The one-way ANOVA is an omnibus test, indicating at least two groups were different. Since there are three, four, five or more groups in study design, determining which of these groups differ from each other is also important. Thus, post hoc test presented the specific groups that were statistically significantly different from each other. Among several options in post hoc test, the thesis involved LSD (The least-significant difference). LSD consisted of pairwise comparisons that were designed to compare all different combinations of the independent variables and was equivalent to performing multiple t-tests on the data. The only difference was that the LSD required the overall ANOVA to be significant. (Field, 2009)

Sig.(Significance) or P value is the error probability of the scientific hypothesis that relative to null hypothesis (Field, 2009).

4 DATA ANALYSIS

There are three research questions in this thesis.

1. What is the acceptance ratio of Chinese audience towards product placement in recreational TV programme?

2. Which dominant product placement modalities in Chinese recreational TV programme have influence on consumer behaviour?

3. Which dominant factor in consumer influential variables has significant difference in the effectiveness of product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme?

The answer of first question was related to question 6 in the questionnaire, which was presented by ratio. The question 11 in questionnaire was designed to answer research question 3, and the data was also analysed by ratio.

4.1 Reliability of Data

Reliability test including Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient tool to measure the internal concept consistency of Likert scale question, examining the reliability of all the statements in scaled questions (Goforth, 2015). The data result was presented in table 1, which was the reliability of 3 Likert scale questions.

Table 2 reliability test of Likert scale questions

Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.830	3

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 3 Likert scale questions was .830, suggest that the 3 items have relatively "good" internal consistency (more information in chapter 3.5). In other words, the 3 questions conducted effectiveness of product placement after consumers watched the TV programme. According to the result, the samples had a good reliability and internal consistency.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

According to Figure 2, research question 1 examined the acceptance ratio of Chinese audience towards product placement in recreational TV programme by the pie chart below. In figure 2, the conclusion can be drawn that only 16% Chinese audience enjoy product placement, while the majority audience (84%) reject product placement during watching recreational TV programme.

Figure 2 The ratio of acceptance in question 6

Q6 I like product plaements during I am watching *Sing! China*.

agree 16%

disagree 84%
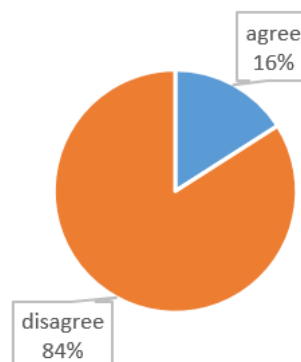
As question 11 in questionnaire is a multiple choice with more than one answer, one respondent could choose two or three even all the options. The calculation formula is explained as follow:

The ratio of multiple choice with more than one answer = number of times this option has been selected ÷ valid number of samples

The meaning of the formula is to calculate the proportion of the times of each option has been selected occupied in total respondents. Thus, the percentage sum of individual option will not equal to 100 percent. Specifically, the sum is large than 100 percentages and the result was presented in histogram rather than the pie chart.

As figure 3 revealed, the dominant product placement modalities in recreational TV programme were exclusive title (71.01%), host's script (68.12%), and close-up view of products or brands (54.35%). All these options have been chosen by more than half of the respondents.

Figure 3 The histogram of product placement modalities

Q11 What product placement modalities have you found in *Sing! China* 2016 ?
(there could be more than one answer)
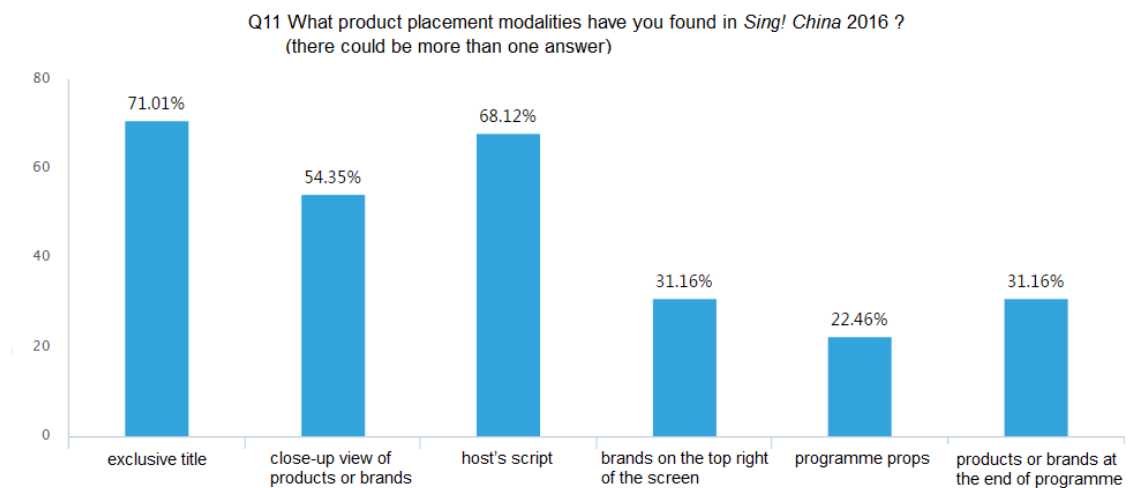
4.3 SPSS Data Testing

In the following part, there are test results of how effectiveness of product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme differed based on consumer influential variables (gender, age, family structure and income). The "effectiveness" in the table is the mean result of Likert scale question 7, 8 and 9.

The author assumes that each variable (gender, age, family structure and income) has significant difference in the effectiveness of product placement. And Sig. or P value is the error probability of the scientific hypothesis that relative to null hypothesis. Thus, P value is the determinant factor to examine the authenticity of the assumptions, and the higher of the P value, the lower reliable of the hypothesis. Specifically, if $0.01 <P <0.05$, the difference is significant, if $P <0.01$, the difference is extremely significant, if $P>0.05$, there is no significant difference. (Field, 2009) Therefore, if there is significant difference, then compare each variable's mean within the groups, analysing the exact differences.

The first factor was gender, based on the result presented in table 3, P value was not in the interval 0.01-0.05, which means different genders have no significant difference in with respect to the perception of product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme.

Table 3 T-test of **gender** have significant difference in effectiveness of product placement

	T	P	Male (mean)	Female (mean)
effectiveness	-1.299	.196	2.6667	2.8878

* If 0.01 <P <0.05, the difference is significant, if P <0.01, the difference is extremely significant

The second factor was age. As there was no respondent is below 20, data analysis automatically begins with age group over 20. As shown in table 4 that various ages have significant differences(P=0.002<0.05) in the effectiveness of product placement in Chinese entertainment show. In addition, after Post Hoc test, pairwise comparisons in four groups (20-30, 31-40, 41-50, above 50), age group 41-50 and above 50 had more significant difference than age group 20-30 and 31-40. According to the statistics, above 41-year-old consumers were inclined to agree that they were influenced by brand placement, while 20-40 years old consumer denied product placement influence their purchase behavior.

Table 4 ANOVA of **age** have significant difference in effectiveness of product placement

	F	P	20-30 (mean)	31-40 (mean)	41-50 (mean)	Above 50 (mean)
effectiveness	5.199	.002	2.7302	2.4000	3.1250	3.3333

* If 0.01 <P <0.05, the difference is significant, if P <0.01, the difference is extremely significant

The third factor was the family structure, mainly considering whether the family have child or not in this case. The shown results in table 5 stated that different family structure have major influence on the effectiveness of product placement. Based on the data, participants with the family structure of no child (2.5736) had the tendency to disagree that they were influenced by brand placement. Meanwhile, in the family with child (2.9439), they maintained neutral attitude towards product placement.

Table 5 T-test of **family structure** have significant difference in effectiveness of product placement

	T	P	Child (mean)	No child(mean)
effectiveness	2.303	.023	2.9439	2.5736

* If 0.01 <P <0.05, the difference is significant, if P <0.01, the difference is extremely significant

The fourth factor, income have no significant effect on the effectiveness of product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme. The result was shown in the table 6 below.

Table 6 ANOVA of **income** have significant difference in effectiveness of product placement

	F	P
effectiveness	.269	.898

* If 0.01 <P <0.05, the difference is significant, if P <0.01, the difference is extremely significant

4.4 Discussion of Findings

1. What is the acceptance ratio of Chinese audience towards product placement in recreational TV programme?

Law and Braun-LaTour (2004) indicates that audience attitude will be influenced by deliberate insertion of products. From the research result, Chinese audiences have the relatively low acceptance ratio (16%) towards product placement in recreational TV programme at the moment. In general, the majority audience reject to watch product placement.

2. Which dominant product placement modalities in Chinese recreational TV programme have influence on consumer behaviour?
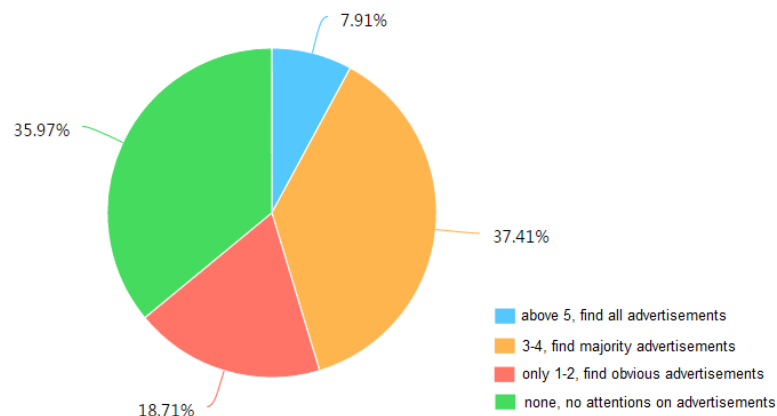
According to Brennan, Dubas and Babin (1999) that brand awareness is influenced by various product placement categories. As the result shown in figure 3, most audience (64.03%) have found advertisements in entertainment show to some degree, which in turn proves the reliability of statistics in product placement modalities.

Figure 4 pie chart of numbers of advertisements were found in *Sing! China*

Q10 How many brands or product have you found in *Sing! China* 2016?

Brands and products in *Sing! China* (Car: Qirui, mobile phone: oppo, Weijing television, cosmetics: Franic, application：3D dongdong, social media: Sina Weibo and insurance: China Life)

7.91%

35.97%

37.41%

18.71%

■ above 5, find all advertisements
■ 3-4, find majority advertisements
■ only 1-2, find obvious advertisements
■ none, no attentions on advertisements

In various product placement modalities in *Sing! China*, exclusive title (71.01%) ranked the top, as the most influential modality. Based on the dimensional framework of Russell (1998), it is a typical visual placement attracting consumer's attention. The host's script (68.12%), as a verbal placement, ranked the second. The following is visual placement, by close-up view of products or brands (54.35%). Brands on the top right of the screen and products or brands at the end of programme share the fourth position with 31.16%, both belong to visual placement. The last one is programme props (22.46%), which falls into the category of the plot placement.

In conclusion, visual or screen placement is the dominant product placement modality in Chinese recreational TV programme and exerts the most influential results in consumer behaviour.

3. Which dominant factor in consumer influential variables has significant differences in the effectiveness of product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme?

Data (table 4) indicated that different age groups vary significantly in terms of the effectiveness of product placement. According to Gregorio and Sung (2010), young people have high tolerance to product placement in television and they are relatively more accessible. In the context of Chinese recreational TV programme, however, viewers aged above 41 are more accessible than other age groups.

Furthermore, family structure proves to be another fundamental factor in the interpretation of product placement. Compared to family with no child, those with children have higher expenditure on consumption goods (Gregorio and Sung, 2010). This research comes to the similar conclusion that families with child can be more easily influenced by product placement and eventually make the purchase than bachelors or no child family.

4.5 Future Research Suggestions

For future study suggestion, there could be more participants involve in the research since China has huge quantity of population. According to literature review, other classification of product placement defined, which not appeared in this case. For example, there are more research value to analyse about plot placement in different programmes or television series.

The acceptance and effectiveness of product placement also influenced by exposure time and repeated times which could be variables in the future research.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This thesis studies the acceptance of product placement and dominant product placement modalities in the representative Chinese recreational TV programme, *Sing! China*. Meanwhile, it also investigates the effectiveness of product placement in Chinese recreational TV programme differed by analysing four major consumer influential variables, namely, gender, age, family structure and income.

At the present stage, only a small part of Chinese audiences accepts product placement, with visual placement as the most influential modality, followed by verbal placement. Thus, audio-visual product placement is the most effective method for sponsors to insert brands or products targeted at the Chinese market.

In four consumer influential variables, two factors, age and family structure, are closely connected with and influenced by product placement in Chinese entertainment show. Besides, elder audiences demonstrate more favorable attitude toward product placement, which means they are accessible to inserted products or brands. At the same time, family with children have higher possibility to be affected by the implantation of advertisements and to buy those products.

There are some recommendations for advertisement sponsors who intend to place brands or products in Chinese recreational TV programme. To begin with, although the acceptance rate of Chinese audience is relatively low, visual placement is the most productive method in enhancing the brand awareness of consumers. Specifically, exclusive title is the most effective product placement method to increase the brand publicity. Besides, compared with single placement, audio-visual product placement leads to higher brand recognition.

The popular form could be brand name mentioned by host in the script simultaneously with the product image displayed on the screen. Furthermore, as for types of advertisement placed in recreational TV programme, advertisement sponsors should put more emphasis on products or brands aimed at elder consumers, such as health products and nutritious foods. Meanwhile, children's products are the other choices.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 audience rating of individual episode of *Sing! China*

CSM52 ratings

	Episode	Original airdate	Production	Time slot (UTC+8)	Rating	Share	Ranking
1	"The Blind Auditions Premiere"	15 July 2016	101	Friday 9:10 p.m.	3.843	12.72	1
2	"The Blind Auditions, Part 2"	22 July 2016	102	Friday 9:10 p.m.	3.220	11.04	1
3	"The Blind Auditions, Part 3"	29 July 2016	103	Friday 9:10 p.m.	3.413	12.44	1
4	"The Blind Auditions, Part 4"	5 August 2016	104	Friday 9:10 p.m.	3.554	13.01	1
5	"The Blind Auditions End"	12 August 2016	105	Friday 9:10 p.m.	3.334	11.78	1
6	"The Fightings - Team Wang Feng"	19 August 2016	106	Friday 9:10 p.m.	2.832	9.81	1
7	"The Fightings - Team Jay"	26 August 2016	107	Friday 9:10 p.m.	3.238	11.82	1
8	"The Fightings - Team Harlem"	2 September 2016	108	Friday 9:10 p.m.	2.859	10.08	1
9	"The Fightings - Team Na Ying"	9 September 2016	109	Friday 9:10 p.m.	2.661	10.13	1
10	"The Mid-Autumn Special"	15 September 2016	110	Thursday 9:10 p.m.	1.210	4.06	2
11	"The Cross Fightings - Team Jay & Team Wang Feng"	16 September 2016	111	Friday 9:10 p.m.	2.422	9.17	1
12	"The Cross Fightings - Team Na Ying & Team Harlem"	23 September 2016	112	Friday 9:10 p.m.	2.757	10.68	1
13	"The Top 12 Playoffs"	30 September 2016	113	Friday 9:10 p.m.	2.611	9.37	1
14	"The National Day Special"	3 October 2016	114	Monday 9:10 p.m.	0.981	4.21	1
15	"The Live Finals, Prelude"	7 October 2016	115	Friday 8:00 p.m.	0.924	2.61	5
	"The Live Finals, Round 1"				3.225	9.34	2
	"The Live Finals, Round 2"				3.956	16.05	1

Appendix 2 questionnaire

Product placement influence consumer behaviour in Chinese entertainment programme

This questionnaire is anonymous and only used for data collection.

Product placement indicates the usage of motion pictures in television programs, films or videos that includes brand name, trademark, image, signage, package or other related aspects of certain products. (Steortz, 1987)

Part 1 Background information

1. Your gender

○Male

○Female

2. Your age

○below 20

○20-30

○31-40

○41-50

○above 50

3. Do you have child?

○Yes

○No

4. Your occupation status

○Students

○At work

○Not at work

○Retired

5. Your income

○Above 15,000 yuan

○8,000-15,000 yuan

○4,500-8,000 yuan

○2,000-4,500 yuan

○Below 2,000 yuan

Part 2 Likert scale question

Number 1-5 indicates your attitude. Number 1 refers to "strongly disagree"; Number 5 refers to "strongly agree". Please tick the appropriate box.

6.I like the product placements during I watched *Sing! China.*

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neutral	4 agree	5 strongly agree

6. After I finish watching *Sing! China*, I have awareness of those product placements.

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neutral	4 agree	5 strongly agree

8. After I watched *Sing! China*, I would like to know further details of those products or brand.

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neutral	4 agree	5 strongly agree

9. After I watched *Sing! China*, I am easily influenced by those product placements and purchase them.

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neutral	4 agree	5 strongly agree

Part 3 Multiple choice

10.How many brands or product have you found in *Sing! China* 2016?

Brands and products in *Sing! China* (Car: Qirui, mobile phone: oppo, Weijing television, cosmetics: Franic, application：3D dongdong, social media: Sina Weibo and insurance: China Life)

○ Above 5, find all advertisements

○ 3-4, find majority advertisements

○ only 1-2, find obvious advertisements

○ none, no attentions on advertisements

11.what product placement modalities have you found in *Sing! China 2016*? (there could be more than one answer)

○ exclusive title

○ close-up view of products or brands

○ host's script

○ brands on the top right of the screen

○ programme props

○ products or brands at the end of programme

Appendix 3 Post Hoc test of four age groups

Multiple Comparisons

LSD

Dependent Variable	(I) age	(J) age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
effectiveness	20-30	31-40	.33016	.20089	.103	-.0672	.7275
		41-50	-.39484*	.17182	.023	-.7347	-.0550
		above 50	-.60317*	.28930	.039	-1.1754	-.0310
	31-40	20-30	-.33016	.20089	.103	-.7275	.0672
		41-50	-.72500*	.21668	.001	-1.1536	-.2964
		above 50	-.93333*	.31800	.004	-1.5623	-.3044
	41-50	20-30	.39484*	.17182	.023	.0550	.7347
		31-40	.72500*	.21668	.001	.2964	1.1536
		above 50	-.20833	.30048	.489	-.8026	.3860
	above 50	20-30	.60317*	.28930	.039	.0310	1.1754
		31-40	.93333*	.31800	.004	.3044	1.5623
		41-50	.20833	.30048	.489	-.3860	.8026

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.