

A Comprehensive Bibliometric Study of Product Placement with an Ethical Emphasis

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Abstract: Product placement, also known as brand placement, has become a practice, in forms of media such as movies, music, games, cartoons and even social media. By increasing brand visibility and creating a sense of credibility for consumers it offers an avenue for advertising that doesn't feel like marketing. In this research study we have utilized methodologies to analyze the framework of the research field and the specific issue at hand by employing VoSViewer software. Our analysis focuses on a sample of 409 documents published between 1995 and 2023. The objective is to provide indicators including publication trends, citation patterns, notable authors, influential journals, and significant keywords. Additionally, we explore the reach of product placement research by examining its dispersion. This study contributes to both understanding and practical knowledge about product placements impact on consumer behavior brand management practices and social media platforms. Lastly. Importantly we emphasize the considerations that should be considered when implementing product placement as a marketing strategy, for any company.

Keywords: Product placement, Brand placement, Ethical, Bibliometric

1. Introduction

According to Davtyan and Cunningham (2017), the effectiveness of television ads is decreasing because of several factors, including the persistent increase in the amount of ad clutter, the segmentation of the media, the development of gadgets that allow viewers to skip advertisements, and the continuing increase in the cost of television commercials. The field of marketing has undergone changes due to advancements. Social media has replaced media channels ushering in an era of communication and brand engagement. Moreover, the advent of novel digital media, such as social media platforms, has impacted conventional media by giving rise to online platforms and social media (Alzubi, 2022). In response to the age businesses have adapted their strategies to leverage the opportunities it presents. Digital marketing has emerged as a versatile approach that aims to engage a consumer population. Digital marketing relies on tools and platforms to acquire and retain clients effectively. By utilizing digital channels organizations can tailor their messages for demographics resulting in a personalized and engaging brand experience. Companies are fully harnessing the potential of marketing by integrating their brands into different aspects of consumers lives.

An interesting and attention-grabbing strategy that has been gaining popularity is known as product placement or brand placement. This technique involves incorporating brands into forms of media like movies, music, games, cartoons, and social media. The purpose of product placement is to increase brand visibility and establish a connection with consumers that goes beyond advertising methods. By integrating into mainstream culture, it provides an opportunity to connect with people in an organic and immersive way without relying solely on marketing tactics.

In this study we dive into the framework of the emerging field of product placement using methods and the VoSViewer software to build upon research. We thoroughly examine a collection of 409 documents published between 1995 and 2023 to uncover publication patterns, citation trends, influential authors and journals as significant keywords related to product placement. Additionally, we explore how research on product placement is geographically distributed, shedding light on its reach.

The main objective of this research is to deepen our understanding of how product placement impacts consumer behavior, brand management and the vast landscape of media through more than analysis. As the study progresses it becomes evident that while product placement offers promising marketing opportunities ethical considerations must take precedence in its implementation. The report advocates for an approach that encourages businesses to consider the ethical implications of product placement, as an integral part of their overall marketing strategies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Product Placement Literature Review

Recent technological advancements have had an impact on marketing strategies leading organizations to adapt and adopt approaches to stay competitive (Hair, 2014). Moreover, as the media continues to evolve traditional advertising methods are gradually losing their effectiveness. To tackle this challenge product placement has emerged as a marketing technique that utilizes advertising platforms. Product placement, alternatively known as brand integration involves incorporating branded items or identifiers into media content with objectives in mind (Wiles & Danielova 2009). This could encompass placement in films, TV shows, music videos or video games to capture the attention of consumers and shape their attitudes and behaviors towards the promoted product (Cokki et al., 2023). Despite being more costly compared to advertising methods, product placement has proven effective in establishing positive associations with program attributes enhancing memory retention and building meaningful connections. Given these advantages it offers marketers (Yao & Huang 2017) product placement has become an option, for businesses seeking cost promotional strategies.

Product placement is regarded as a strategy that influences consumers purchase intentions by showcasing advertisements in locations that attract customers attention (Advincula et al., 2021). In a study conducted by Melati and Abdurachman in 2021 the primary aim of this platform is to assist publishers in generating profits. Additionally, it serves as a platform where marketers can promote their products through books. Moreover, product placement is acknowledged as an advertising strategy, in music videos. Is widely utilized in campaigns (Piazzolla et al., 2021). Product placement is renowned for its ability to influence people's perception of brands thus gaining endorsements and maximizing the advantages of featuring products on listing sites (Boeing et al., 2013).

2.2 Bibliometric

2.2.1 Bibliometric analysis

The term "bibliometric analysis" refers to a technique used for reviewing and analyzing a collection of books, in a field of study. When studying the development of knowledge over time it is important to recognize the contributions made by researchers and identify areas where significant advancements have taken place (Hossain, 2020). By adopting this approach researchers can gain insights from studies that focus on the theories related to a research issue. Also suggest avenues for exploration (Ellili, 2022). Ellili is credited with developing this approach. Ahmad et al. (2019) state that bibliometric analysis offers methods to examine research outcomes and quantify efforts in tracking the evolution of knowledge across sectors over time. Academics, such as Winkowska and colleagues (2019) also utilize this method to create representations that illustrate connections and overlaps between areas of study.

Bibliometric analysis has gained recognition for its effectiveness in classifying materials showcasing networks of research contributions and mapping studies within literature fields (Gzahli et al., 2022). This additional aspect has garnered admiration among researchers. They find analysis as a tool for examining research data, especially citations and information found in journals and publications (Ananda & Nandiyanto 2022). It is widely acknowledged for enhancing the quality of research (Ragadhita & Nandiyanto 2021). Researchers have been using analysis to help marketers identify areas and emerging trends, in different fields of study (Chen et al., 2022).

2.2.2 Bibliometric analysis in digital marketing

In the field of marketing bibliometric analysis involves the study and representation of published research papers. This approach assists researchers in exploring research networks identifying patterns and systematically evaluating advancements in marketing research. As mentioned by Amiri et al. (2023) this method provides insights into both the quantity and quality of research networks that focus on marketing subjects.

Researchers employing this methodology analyze publications, authors, and research paths to develop an understanding of the marketing landscape (Pham et al., 2022; Wani, 2023). Furthermore, bibliometric analysis aids in identifying emerging trends and potential opportunities within the realm of marketing for enterprises (SMEs) (Amiri et al., 2023). It also facilitates the exploration of topics of interest and visualization of collaboration networks within the field (Inan, 2023; Sharma et al., 2022). This method empowers us to examine publishing patterns, citation networks and keyword trends to gain insights into marketing resources. Such studies hold value in assessing the importance and impact of marketing research endeavors (Amiri et al., 2023; Gao et al.,

2021; Pham et al., 2022). Jain et al. (2021) emphasized the effectiveness of this method in enhancing our comprehension of the patterns and trends found in publications regarding this matter. Thus, it empowers us to pinpoint areas for investigation and develop a research plan for studies.

3. Method

In order to find scholarly material that was pertinent to the topic at hand, a search was carried out using the phrase "product placement." There are a total of 8639 documents. In the following stage, we will determine the period that spans from 1995 to 2023 and restrict it to two distinct subject areas, namely business management & accounting, and social science. In a consistent manner, we are specifically focused on documenting different sorts of articles (1075) and conference papers (124). We are choosing a filter by 28 key word (product placement, advertising, marketing, commerce, brand placement, television, decision-making, advertising, social media, Internet, content analysis, placement, branding, movies, brand recall, promotion, brands, advertising effectiveness, purchase intention, product placement, brand attitude, purchasing, influencer marketing, consumer behavior, advertising, and promotion, in-game advertising, customer satisfaction, brand awareness). The countries, affiliations, countries, and sorts of sources that we do not disclose are not specified. The non-English article was eliminated from this study. This is because publications written in English have the potential to assist in the compilation of an exhaustive list of all pertinent academic resources, include journals with a high influence, and offer a wide variety of research. After applying filters to the data collection, about 439 documents were discovered. On the other hand, we go through and thoroughly examine 439 papers to eliminate those that are not relevant. In the end, we discovered 408 documents that were pertinent to the scope and purpose of our project.

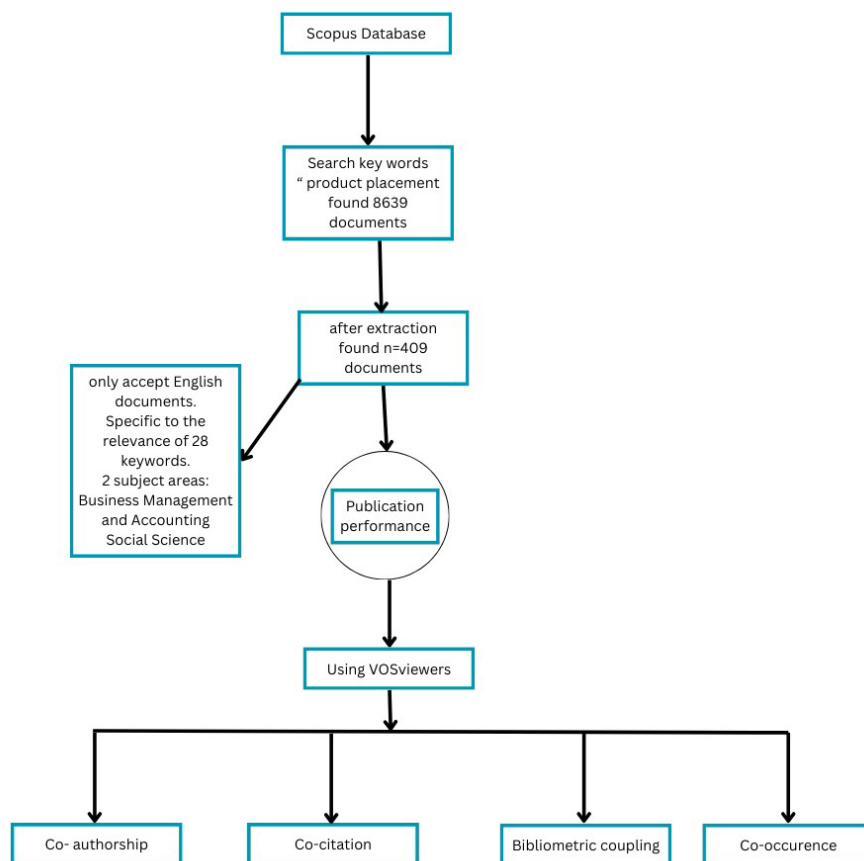


Figure1: Research design

4. Results

4.1 Publication Performance

Between the years 1995 and 2023, a total of 409 research articles were published through various institutions. Since the initial research on product placement was conducted in the late 1990s, we decided to focus on the years 1995–2023 as our time frame. A substantial rise in the amount of research conducted on product placement can be traced back to the years 1995–2016. On the other hand, after the year 2016, it appears that the topic has become slightly less prevalent (Figure 2).

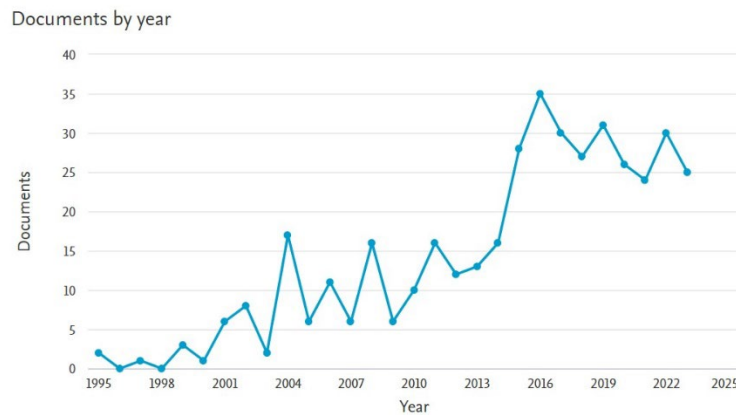


Figure 2: Publications by years (Scopus Data Base)

The Scopus database contains a wide variety of document formats, including but not limited to articles, conference papers, conference reviews, book chapters, and article reviews. Articles are the most common sort of document that are produced, accounting for 78.7% of all documents, as seen in figure 3. When it comes to bibliometrics, we only concentrate on the types of articles and conference papers because these types of papers frequently provide unique contributions to the body of academic and scientific knowledge.

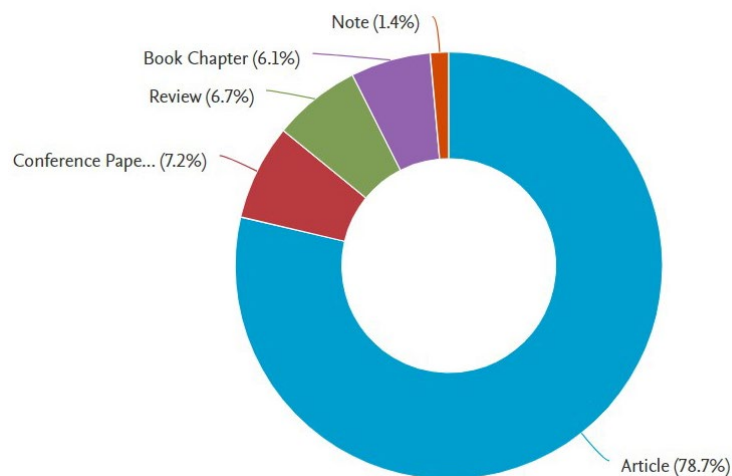


Figure 3: Documents by type (Scopus Data Base)

The percentage of research conducted in each subject area is displayed in the figure below. It is the field of business management that accounts for 37.5% of all work, with the social sciences coming in second with 25.3% of all labor. Some of the fields that do not have a significant amount of study focus on product placement include medicine (6.2%), economics, econometrics, and finance (5.1%), computer science (4.9%), and arts and humanities (4.5%). In a nutshell, there are just two subject areas that we concentrate on in our bibliometric study. These subject areas are business management and social sciences.

Documents by subject area

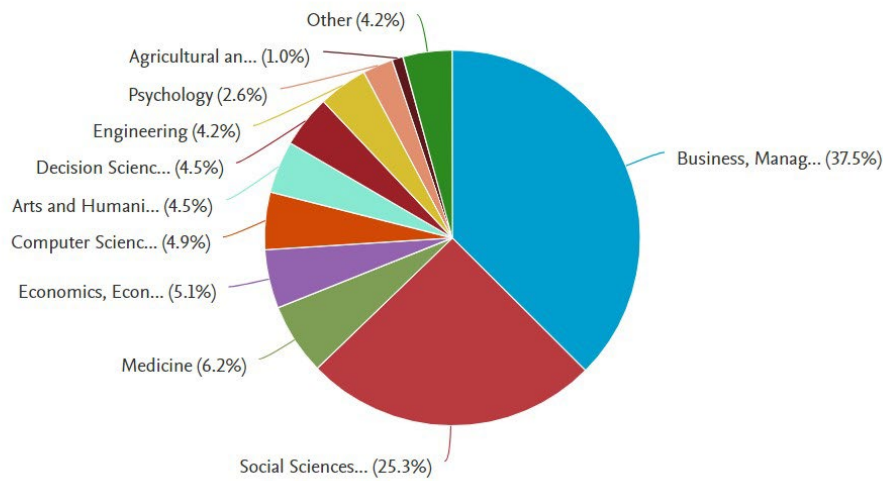


Figure 4: Documents by subject area (Scopus Data Base)

4.2 Core Clusters of Intellectual Property

According to Zhang et al. (2013), co-authorship plays a particularly important role in the process of constructing and enhancing professional networks both within and between academic institutions, fields of study, and geographical locations. Researchers could communicate their discoveries with a more extensive audience through the process of co-authorship, which in turn increases the exposure and influence of their work (Hammad et al., 2021).

Of the 63 countries that contributed to the literature, 25 of them produced at least five papers; 22 of these countries are related to one another. Each node in the network represents a different nation, and the connection between two nodes indicates the degree to which the writer collaborated on the project (Leung & Bai 2017).

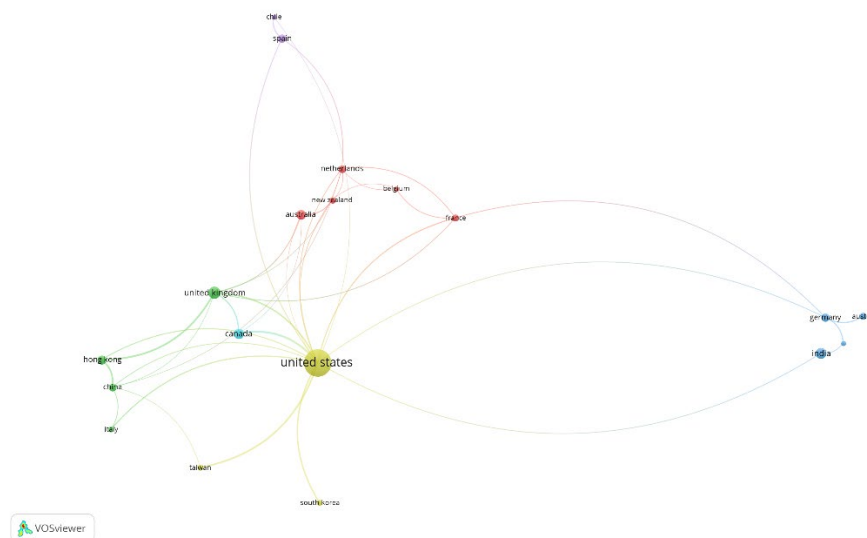


Figure 5: Visualized co-authorship network by countries.

Among the 741 organizations, the minimum number of documents that can be associated with each organization is two, and the maximum number of organizations that can be included in a single document is 25. A calculation will be made to determine the overall strength of the co-authorship relationships with other organizations for each of the seventeen participating organizations. Those organizations that have the highest total link strength will be chosen for this selection. The total number of organizations that will be chosen is seventeen. As a consequence of this, there is a slight connection between Texas Tech University, the Public Health School, and

Table 1: Top 10 authors for bibliometric coupling based on numbers of links

Author	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
Chan F.F	3	24	39.83
Chan;Lowe;Petrovici	2	40	39.21
Redondo	3	90	29.00
Srivastava	3	32	17.50
Chen	3	16	15.21
Kaur; Sharma; Bakshi	2	3	15.05
Spielvogel	2	28	13.93
Uribe; Fuentes	2	13	12.00
Kramolis	2	1	2.67
Lubbers; Adams	2	13	0.00

Table 2: Top 10 countries for bibliometric coupling based on numbers link

Country	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
United States	155	3505	1684.32
United Kingdom	31	684	953.09
Hong Kong	17	124	806.60
Canada	21	852	607.08
China	12	68	443.78
France	11	208	408.63
Germany	16	174	321.32
Spain	16	266	301.38
India	26	239	251.34
Netherlands	13	400	250.99

Table 3: Top 10 journals for bibliometric coupling based on numbers of links

Source	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
Journal of promotion management	39	563	293.94
International journal of advertising	19	430	257.55
Journal of marketing communications	13	273	155.18
European journal of marketing	7	276	153.13
Journal of product and brand management	4	53	98.32
Journal of international consumer management	8	181	75.27
Marketing intelligence and planning	4	33	68.00
Journal of brand and management	4	55	54.58
Business Horizons	4	107	29.95
Marketing Science	4	44	14.00

According to Müller and Mancuso (2008), co-occurrence analysis is a useful technique for obtaining significant insights from huge datasets, recognizing implicit connections among entities, and assisting with tasks like content analysis, pattern identification, and feature extraction. Out of the 2130 terms examined 110 were discovered to occur five times as, per the studies. This matrix shows the frequency of keywords in the dataset and their interconnections. The notion of product placement is associated with research topics. In the domain of product placement related high frequency keywords include advertising (represented by a node) marketing (represented by a green node) and decision making (represented by a red node). These relationships exemplify how these concepts are interconnected.

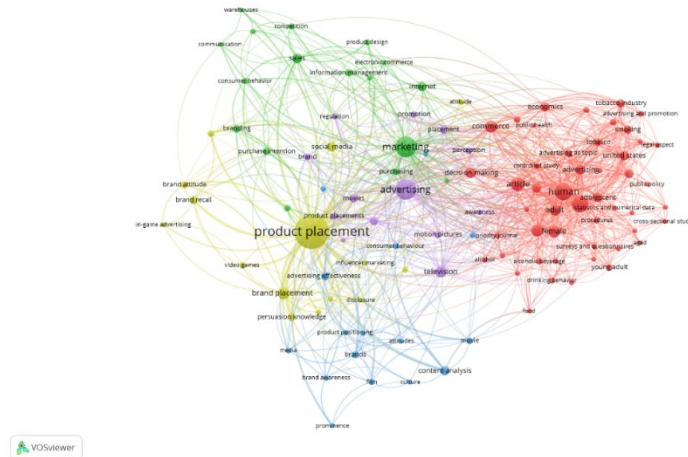


Figure 8: Visualized co-occurrences network all keywords

4.3 Content Analysis of Thematic Cluster

In a study conducted by Cobo et al. (2011) they mentioned that when it comes to research thematic cluster content analysis involves mapping and performance assessment to measure a study area, its subfields (clusters) and how it has evolved over time. This analysis also utilizes methods, like co analysis, co citation network evaluation and thematic analysis to identify potential themes within research areas (Shroff et al., 2022). Moreover, in the field of bibliometrics the clustering methodology relies on a normalized term co matrix and a similarity metric that quantifies the connection between terms or author networks (Kokol et al., 2018).

We were able to identify three groups of decision-making processes that're equally prevalent in small businesses. To do this we used form analysis which involved examining how sectors of advertising use product placement on media and television through measures like co-occurrence, co citation and bibliometric coupling. Our findings can be categorized into two clusters; (1) product placement in television shows and movies; and (2) product placement, on social media platforms.

Cluster 1: Product placement on television and movies

This section explores the study of how product placement's incorporated into movies and advertising for a brand of product or service. It is evident that there has been an increase in the occurrence of product placements (PP), in television broadcasts as embedded brands are now being given importance alongside traditional commercials (Newell, Blevins and Bugeja 2009). Balasubramanian & Gistri (2021) explain the impact of media and ad priming on recall in movie placements. Results show that both media priming and ad priming enhance recall for subtle placements, while no difference exists for prominent placements. (Natarajan et al., 2021) focus on the study about brand placement in reality show in India. The finding shows that product placement in realism produces superior results compared to other media platforms. This study from Chan (2019) investigates the correlation between product placement techniques and product qualities. Consumers searched more frequently for products utilizing product placement marketing compared to products without marketing using the product placement method, as indicated by the findings. (Sánchez-Olmos & Castelló-Martínez, 2020) investigates the utilization of product placement in music, revealing that Adidas, Nike, and Chevrolet are the most prominently featured companies in adopting product placement. Srivastava (2020) found that including the brand name in the movie song positively influences brand personality, equity, customer attitude, and purchase intention. Naderer et al. (2017a) found that at least one instance of brand placement occurred in 64.4% of children's movies released between 1991 and 2015. Comedies and US films exhibited a greater frequency of placements,

but animation and movies featuring nature or fantasy settings had a lower frequency. Naderer et al. (2017 b) demonstrated that product placement consistently influences cognitive and conative brand outcomes, regardless of participants' age or prior knowledge about the movie.

Cluster 2: Product placement on social media

The expansion of social marketing is also occurring because of the growth of the internet. Spielvogel et al. (2020) conduct a study on the disclosure policies of the European Union regarding product placement. This research adds to the existing body of knowledge on blog advertising and native advertising. It assists in highlighting the disparity between legal practice and empirical research about the execution of product placement disclosure on media platforms. Consumer materialism influences the acceptability of product placement on social networking sites, with materialism partially mediating the relationship between usage frequency and product placement acceptance. (Wijesundara & Kumara, 2022). Koo's study discovered that product placements on YouTube significantly influence the likelihood of making a purchase. Factors such as the relevance of the product to the content of the YouTuber, the perceived trustworthiness of the YouTuber, and the favorability of the community surrounding the YouTuber determine this effect (Koo, 2023).

5. Ethical Consideration

Marketers employ product placement, a strategic advertising technique known as "hidden marketing." Nevertheless, the primary focus of this matter remains the necessity for marketers to exercise caution and deliberation prior to promoting the product. Research has indicated that ethical concerns regarding product placement can differ depending on the type of product. There tends to be greater concerns expressed when it comes to ethically controversial products like alcohol, guns, and tobacco (McKechnie & Zhou, 2003; Gupta & Gould, 1997; Kim & McClung, 2010). Some people disapprove of these products because they include 'subliminal' promotional impacts and may use misleading methods, which can influence purchasing decisions without conscious awareness (Gupta & Gould, 1997). Researchers generally agree that children are particularly sensitive to product placement. According to Avery and Ferraro (2000), this is because they have not yet developed sensitivity to this kind of subtle advertising tactic. According to Gupta et al. (2000) and Gunter et al. (2005), it is generally considered that children do not become aware of the commercial motivation behind conventional advertising until they are approximately ten years old. In 1991, the Federal Communications Commission (FCT) was examining whether the practice of featuring cigarette placements in televised movies should necessitate the inclusion of a health advisory. As a result, the tobacco industry stopped engaging in the product placement of cigarettes in movies.

The ethical concerns related to product placement are complex. Influenced by factors, including the product category, the subtle nature of the placement and customer beliefs. To ensure that product placements meet standards and do not unduly influence consumers it is important for lawmakers and marketers to understand these issues.

6. Implication

Analyzing data on product placement offers insights for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. The main objective is to identify contributors, track research trends and provide guidance for investigations. This study presents an analysis of product placement in industries such as music, movies, games, and social media. It contributes significantly to understanding of product placement studies. Furthermore, these findings support the development of curricula, open opportunities for international collaboration. Ultimately, this research addresses considerations that help marketers understand consumer behavior from a standpoint so that they can adapt their marketing strategies accordingly.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion this study was carried out by analyzing a total of 409 papers obtained from the Scopus database focusing on a topic from 1995 to 2023. By conducting an analysis on product placement, we gained insights into the changing research landscape in this dynamic field. Through an examination of publishing patterns, influential authors, and thematic shifts over time we have deepened our understanding of activity surrounding product placement. The identification of authors, institutions and journals also fosters collaboration. Cultivates a sense of community in academic research. Moreover, this research sheds light on the dimensions of product placement contributing to both knowledge and societal values.

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