BRAND PLACEMENT - GOING GREEN

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to examine brand placement’s potential as a marketing way for green brands. In order to draw strategy suggestions, the thesis firstly reviews what are the ways and effectiveness of brand placement. Secondly, it glances what characteristics apply to green consumerism and how should green brands be advertised. Thirdly, it goes through case examples of green brand placement acts. Lastly, it suggests strategy options for effectively placing green brands and discusses future research opportunities.

For brand placement industry a literature review is conducted, but for green consumerism a few relevant partitions are highlighted. Brand placement is examined in terms of measurement, ways of conducting it, audience variables and downsides. Most relative to the topic are the conducting ways such as mode, prominence and plot and character connection and how they effect on the audience outcome. Green consumerism is supported through the intention-behavior gap -theory and green consumers' characteristics and marketing ways are reviewed. The case examples embody current the execution of green brand placement.

The strategy suggestions indicate that a subtle background style or cleverly plot and character connected style are the most suitable for placing green brands. This evolves from the recognitions that green advertising should be careful and see-though, and linking the brands to characters is functional. Green advertising is prone to cause irritation and green consumers are skeptic and information seeking. Green purchase intentions have nature of not always turning into behavior and building identity through green purchases plays a major role. These remarks comport with brand placement in which the line between entertainment and advertising is blurred. Subtle and visual placements effect to the implicit memory, meaning that they are not necessarily recognized or recalled right after viewing the production, but they impact later on the buying behavior. Brands that are connected to the story or characters enable the consumers to enhance their own identity through purchases. These brand placement manners support the aims of reducing the intention-behavior – gap, impacting on the identity and overall normalizing green.

The thesis faces limitations in terms of lacking empirical research as well as focusing on certain markets and mediums and having broad definitions. Empirical research should be conducted in order to verify the strategy suggestions for placing green brand. Especially the effects on implicit memory, attitudes and behavior should be studied more and tools for measuring these developed. Through these actions more generalizable implications could be drawn.

Keywords  brand placement, subtle advertising, marketing green, identity building, green consumerism, buying behaviour, intention-behaviour –gap
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1. INTRODUCTION

Ads are everywhere - they interrupt us watching videos in streaming channels, appear between our friends’ social media posts, and are frighteningly accurately customized by our clicks and browser histories. Selling advertising space is the factor that keeps many blogs, music services and apps running, which is understandable. Still, consumers find it increasingly irritating and they can start building a resistance towards prominent and interruptive marketing, making it important for marketers to find other ways to advertise. Interest towards acts such as brand placement has grown rapidly in past decades, because when the line between entertainment and advertising is cleverly blurred, it doesn’t require interrupting or disturbing the consumer. This is good news especially for brands that are prone to cause disruption, such as green brands. This thesis examines the potential of brand placement in marketing green brands.

Mass entertainment media is a large, global vehicle, where commercial content plays an integrated role (Karrh, 1998). Brand placement is the act of including products to the framework of mass entertainment media as a paid form of advertising with aims to influence the audience (Gupta & Lord, 1998). It is most commonly done with movies and TV-shows (Karrh, 1998). Practically any product the characters use, anywhere they go to eat, the cars they drive – if it shows a label, it is an act of brand placement (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998). Brand placement is an important marketing way for advertisers trying to have a global reach (Karrh, 1998). It has ability to increase recall (Delattre & Colovic, 2009; P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998; Lehu & Bressoud, 2008; Reijmersdal, 2009; Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007) change attitudes (Homer, 2009; Reijmersdal, 2009; Russell, 2002; Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007) and have effect on purchase behavior (Karrh, 1998, Russell 1998).

Conscious consumerism is a mounting trend and will without a doubt be a major focus in many business areas in the future as well. This is due to the fact that people are all the time more aware of environmental issues as well their consumption choices’ effects (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009) and buying green can be linked closely to building one’s identity (Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010; Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Luckily, there seems to be products that are sustainably produced or drive otherwise green values coming to the market all the time. Each brand increases the overall visibility of the movement and makes it easier for consumers to choose green. Green products don’t only support good causes, but they are full of growth opportunities businesswise as well, making them an appealing area to concentrate right now (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009).
It is reasonable to look into brand placements opportunities as an advertising channel for green brands. To marketers concern, green brands have a nature which requires carefulness and are even more prone to result irritation than other brands (Kronrod, Grinstein, & Wathieu, 2012). Brand placement as an act ought to be suitable for this type of products, because it can be done less assertively than traditional advertising ways. Also, the fact that consumers are more likely to change their behavior after being merely exposed to products applies even stronger on green brands than conventional products, making advertising green brands with careful and mere exposure worth while (Mazar & Zhong, 2010). This thesis aims to find out

• whether brand placement is suitable for promoting green brands,
• what consumer responses can be achieved through it and
• in which ways should it be conducted.

To best serve this purpose, it is necessary to firstly explore brand placement’s ways and effectiveness throughoutly and secondly examine green consumerism in terms of marketing. Finally, by demonstrating case examples and connecting the suitable practices of brand placement for green brands, it is possible to recommend strategy options. Future research suggestions are provided as well.

It is necessary to define terminology used in this thesis, since there are differing spellings and definitions used about brand placement and green consumerism. Brand placement is often referred also as product placement and both terms can be seen in research widely. Brand placement can though be seen as better representing term, because the urge is often to gain attention for the entire brand (Karrh, 1998). Advertisers want to differentiate their brand, let’s say a car brand from each other, not only promote the fact that people should use more cars, but that people should use specifically their cars. Due to this reason, the term brand placement is used in this thesis. In the case of the term green, John & Tina (1995) consider it as someone who expresses environmental concern. This interpretation is broad, which suits for this thesis as well. Green behavior can imply to consumers who have knowledge about environmental issues and willingness to consume in a sustainable way. Often the intentions and the actual behavior are separated from each other, and the consumers can fall on one side of the line. On a stricter definition, only those who go as far as not just planning their sustainable buying behavior but actually conduct purchase decisions based on environmental and ethical concerns can be considered as green consumers. One example of defining green is this thesis’ case company’s, Green Product Placement’s, conditions on how they choose their clients: product having natural, organic, or local ingredients, produced sustainably or promoting sustainable aims. Since there are
many ways of measuring the effectiveness of brand placement, and buying the product is only one outcome of functional placements, expressing environmental concern applies as a qualification for a green consumer in this thesis as John & Tina (1995) suggest.

2. WHAT IS BRAND PLACEMENT?

2.1 BRAND PLACEMENT INDUSTRY

Brand placement origins at the beginning of 1900th century (Karrh, 1998), had it’s blooming prior 1990’s (Gupta & Lord, 1998; Karniouchina, Uslay, & Erenburg, 2011). In 1982 a placement of Reese’s Piece’s in E.T. Extra Terrestrial is considered a break through in the industry (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998) which has continued to grow rapidly since (Karrh, 1998). Product placement started to be a considerable action next to other marketing channels (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998). Through a timespan from mid 1900’s to the 21st century, product placements have become more integrated part of movies and their story, shifting from being just on the background to as parts of the plot and building characters (Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007).

Brand placement happens in co-operation between the brand and the production company, where many roles from directors to designers are involved (Karrh, 1998). Between these two there can be placement agencies used (Gupta & Lord, 1998; Karrh, 1998), which have become more and more popular in past decades. Many traditional advertising agencies conduct brand placement as well (Russell & Belch, 2005). Brands can have long term alliances with production companies and placements can be part of a bigger, integrated marketing tie-in program when they are done with advertising agencies (Karrh, 1998).

There are various ways to conduct brand placement. Russell (1998) uses The Tripartite Typology of Product Placement as a model to display the different dimensions. Brand can be displayed visually, auditorily, or through plot connection. First two mean that the brand is simply demonstrated either on the screen or brought out audibly, but having no further attachment to the occurrences. Using the latter, plot connection, enables the brand to be a part of the storyline or associating to a character. Gupta’s and Lord’s (1998) two-dimensional approach considers the mode of presentation and the level of prominence. The mode means displaying the brand visually, auditory or combining these two. Visual placement can be for example the kind where a character is drinking something, and the
label on the can is shown. An auditory placement is for example when a character says out loud which one their car is. The audiovisual way is combining them, and in the latter example it would be also showing the car logo. The level of prominence means that the brand can be shown in a subtle or intrusive manner. Williams, Petrosky and Hernandez (2011) re-divide the ways similarly to implicit strategy, integrated explicit strategy and non-integrated explicit strategy, of which integrated explicit strategy being the type where the brand is a part of the story. In further research, the division is not so strict, since placements are usually combinations of the dimensions.

It has been hard to examine the value of product placement industry (Balasubramanian et al., 2006; Homer, 2009; Karniouchina et al., 2011; Wiles & Danielova, 2009) although some estimations have been done. Estimated in 1992 by Elliot to be $50 million, and according to PQ Media Global Branded Entertainment Marketing Forecast, the value of placements in 2014 was $10.58 billion. Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen (2007) presented that every marketing medium has its life cycle, because consumer’s attitudes change when they are familiar with the advertising ways and more aware that they are being persuaded. This is also referred as “the U-shape”, meaning the marketing mediums has their growth as well as their decline (Karniouchina et al., 2011). By looking at the the growth on industry values and estimates made for the future – from $6.01 billion in 2014 in the U.S. to over $11 billion by 2019 (PQMedita, 2015) – it can be judged that the industry is nowhere near decline.

2.2. MEASUREMENT OF PLACEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Most used terms of measurement for placements’ effectiveness are brand recognition, brand recall and brand attitude. Effectiveness has multiple smaller details, such as frequency and length of time the brand is included, the style, for example the tone in a voice (Russell, 1998). Brands need to choose which one(s) they want to achieve with product placement and choose the strategy basing on that (Brennan & Babin, 2004; P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998; Wiles & Danielova, 2009; Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez, & Page, 2011). It is notable, that the outcomes are not always coherent – recognizing or recalling having seen a brand doesn’t mean that it has any effect on the attitude towards it (Russell, 2002).

Measuring the effectiveness is hard (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006; Russell & Belch, 2005; Smit, van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2009; Williams et al., n.d.). Tools for measurement need improving (Smit et al., 2009; Williams et al., 2011) and therefore a single placement’s investment value is hard to determine (Wiles & Danielova, 2009). There are though many ways to measure recognition and recall
at the viewing moment and right after it, for example through eye-tracking experiments (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2015). Once going further from the actual viewing experience and examining purchase intentions and behavior, the link is harder to be found (Karrh, 1998).

Effectiveness can be studied in terms of explicit and implicit measures (Law & Braun, 2000; Reijmersdal, 2009; Williams et al., 2011; Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007). Explicit measures study the upper layer of memory which can be measured immediately, such as recognition and recall after seeing a placement. Implicit memory is the bottom layer, it can be unconscious and the consumer is not even aware of it, but in the purchase situation it leads the choice towards the brand. They are often exclusive, meaning that only one applies at a time (Law & Braun, 2000). These measures are not invariably used, but they are of attention in the thesis, since they serve the purpose of the topic well.

2.3. VARIABLES OF BRAND PLACEMENT

2.3.1. MODE

The mode of placement can be visual, audio, or a combination of these two (Gupta & Lord, 1998; Russell, 2002; Russell, 1998). Visual mode is the most common choice (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998). Visual placements can be done subtly showing the brand at the background of a scene, or included in the set (Russell, 1998). Visual placements are not the most ideal in increasing recall (Gupta & Lord, 1998; Russell, 2002; Wilson & Till, 2011; Law & Braun, 2000) but their popularity evolves from the fact that they have the best potential in changing buying behavior (Law & Braun, 2000). Placements don’t necessarily need to be recalled in order to change the attitude towards the brand, when the placement is done simply and subtly (Law & Braun, 2000; Matthes, Schemer, & Wirth, 2007). For example, correctly placed brands could create a similar image as when placed the store shelf and by influencing the implicit memory (Law & Braun, 2000).

Auditory placements are conducted by mentioning the brand in a scene (Russell, 1998). They are often better remembered than similar visual placements (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998; Russell, 2002; Wilson & Till, 2011), and it is proven in cognitive research that spoken placements gain more stimulus in memory than subtle visual appearances (Russell 2002). It is notable though, that verbal references are often integrated to the plot more easily, and can therefore be more successful in terms of recall (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998; Russell, 2002), which is discussed more later on. Prevalence is
important in audio placements, because having minimum of two verbal mentions of the brand creates almost 40% better recall than having no mention or only one (Wilson & Till, 2011).

Using audiovisual combination is not as popular as using only one mode (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006) but many research reveal that combining audio and visual methods in placements is functional for increasing brand recall (Brennan & Babin, 2004; Law & Braun, 2000; Wilson & Till, 2011). Still though, when already having a visual placement, the addition of an auditory reference doesn’t in many research improve the results (Brennan & Babin, 2004; P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998; Russell, 2002).

23.2 PROMINENCE

The level of a placement’s prominence depends on the visibility and vividness of the placement and how much it takes space and draws attention on the screen. It can be enhanced with large size, high occurrence and display time and attachment to the ongoing events. The opposite of prominent is subtle, which means placements that are not shown with great attention but are rather small on the background. (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998). Prominence increases brand recall (Reijmersdal, 2009), in fact by over 20% than having a subtle placement. (Wilson & Till, 2011). Also Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen (2007) study with the help of the landscape model, that the memory process is different with different stages of activation and prominence. The explicit memory is best activated if the brand plays a vital role for the story to continue, such as in Picture 2.3.2. They divide the levels of prominence to story connection, used by character and background, story connected placements being most effective in terms of explicit memory and background placements least.

![Image](image.png)

Picture 2.3.2 Visual placement used by the main character: James Bond with Sony Vaio laptop in *Quantum of Solace* (2008).
Prominence has too sides and requires carefulness, because it can affect negatively on the attitude towards the brand (Dens, Pelsmacker, Wouters, & Purnawirawan, 2012; Homer, 2009; Reijmersdal, 2009). It can cause irritation and create a reverse effect (Dens et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2011), because in a way, explicit and implicit memory can be a block for each other (Law & Braun, 2000). This means that even though prominence increases recall, the attitude is not necessarily in line with it (Dens et al., 2012). The viewers can perceive the brand distracting and notice the aim for persuasion (Homer, 2009). It is hard to define the correct level of prominence, since there are any variables in the audience as well. For example, high attachment to the show often creates positive evaluations of the brand, no matter how prominent the placement is (Law & Braun, 2000).

Many aspects effect on building the prominence, of which most research concerns the prevalence and exposure time. Prevalence means how often the product is seen on the screen (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006; Wiles & Danielova, 2009). In TV-shows there is a brand appearing approximately between every 3 minutes (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006), which means brands are competing of occurrences. Most of them are neutrally and quickly shown though (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006). From the brand’s perspective, prevalence can turn into negative outcomes if the frequency is too big (Karniouchina et al., 2011; Wiles & Danielova, 2009) creating a saturation effect (Wiles & Danielova, 2009) and irritation (Russell, 2002). Repetition ought to be more beneficial when done with subtle placements, but has this downside with prominent placements (Homer, 2009). This applies to verbal mentions as well and it has effect whether the brand is pronounced and how many times. In songs, it is proven best to show a certain brand twice and not too fast, because then it doesn’t take too much space but has memory effects (Delattre & Colovic, 2009). The exposure time is not as notable factor as prevalence (Brennan, Dubas, & Babin, 1999; Wilson & Till, 2011). With plot-connected placements, the recognition improves when shown for longer, but still less than ten seconds, but same factor doesn’t apply to background placements (Brennan et al., 1999). There can be other aspects than prevalence and time found as well, such as early display affects positively on the recall (P. B. Gupta & Gould, 2007; Romaniuk, 2009), but haven’t been studied more accurately.

2.3.3 Plot Connection

When a brand is included in the story or associated in a character, it is referred as the term plot connection (Russell, 1998). It is proven in multiple research that plot and character connection have effect on the brand recall and attitudes (Dens et al., 2012; Law & Braun, 2000; Russell, 2002). When
brands are connected to the plot, they succeed to activate viewers better than when showed in the background and make them better recognized. (Dens et al., 2012; Law & Braun, 2000; Russell, 2002) The effect is strongest in particular when attached to the storyline, because background placements, even used by the main characters, create less recall (Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007). Prominence and plot connection often work as supporting elements for each other as well (Dens et al., 2012).

Within the plot, there is a difference how the brand is connected. Brands attached to the main character gain likely more positive response from consumers than being part of the plot in other manner (Wilson & Till, 2011; Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007). Using characters as product users aims to influence viewers’ urges to built their identity (Karrh, 1998). Karrh (1998) uses an example of Tom Cruise in *Top Gun*, the main character being the identity perceiver, the movie being the identity representer and the viewer being the identity desirer.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 2.3.3.** Building audience identity through associating a brand to a character (Karrh, 1998, p.45).
Also, characters’ attitudes towards the product help direct consumers’ attitudes to the same direction, depending on the strength of the connection (Delattre & Colovic, 2009; Russell, 2002; Russell & Stern, 2006; Wiles & Danielova, 2009). Through testing balance theory where consumer-character attachments are examined, the findings suggest that the consumer’s attachment to the character make them feel similarly about the product that the character likes. (Russell & Stern, 2006). Positive attitudes towards also the director increase the attitude towards the brands in it as well (Lehu & Bressoud, 2008).

As Russell referred in The Tripartite Typology of Product Placement, plot connection and modality together define a great deal of the outcome. Congruence between plot connection and the mode is a key factor, for example visual placements that are plot connected don’t create the as strong recall as similar audio placement (Figure 2.3.3(2)). Auditory placements are also easier to integrate to characters’ talk and therefore to the plot (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998; Russell, 2002).

![Figure 1](image1.png)  
**FIGURE 1** Recognition scores with the SPSS GLM repeated measures procedure. Auditory placements were better recalled on both higher and lower plot connection. (Russell, 2002, p. 131).

![Figure 2](image2.png)  
**FIGURE 2** Attitude change scores with the SPSS GLM repeated measures procedure. Visual placements had more impact on attitude in lower plot connection and auditory placements in higher plot connection. (Russell, 2002, p. 131).

But on the other hand, it also increases the positive attitude towards the brand if a plot connection is done subtly (Dens et al., 2012).
Brand placement can be done in various medium, such as movies, tv-shows, theater shows, songs, music videos and games. There are notable differences in which medium the placements are done (Wilson & Till, 2011). For example, watching the movie on cinema theater or in a big cinema screen at home will likely result in better recall than many other mediums (Lehu & Bressoud, 2008). Still, theaters are not optimal for visual placements, since the visibility to the stage is not as accurate as in screen (Wilson & Till, 2011).

Genre can effect on how a placement is perceived (Jin & Villegas, 2007; Karniouchina et al., 2011; Karrh, 1998; Park & Berger, 2010). Out of all genres, drama films have the best opportunities to increase brand recognition (Park & Berger, 2010), as well in other types of advertising the audience can get drawn into the story and feel emotionally attached to it through drama (Karrh, 1998). Placements linked with humorous scenes are likely to create positive associations and emotions (Jin & Villegas, 2007). However, the adequacy of the genre and the placement style should be considered. For example emotionally strong movies, such as romantic movies, are not ideal for prominent brand placements, because they can be too disruptive (Karniouchina et al., 2011).

Songs are not as popular as some other mediums and they lack most of research. However, some research has been conducted and revealed that songs have their own advantages, such as identity links. Placements in songs attach the brand into the certain celebrity, making the listener feel identified to the singer when using the product. There is variation in song genre as well, for example rap songs create lower rate of recognition than other genres (Delattre & Colovic, 2009). Naturally, songs are suitable for auditory placements only, but visual placements are used in their music videos, creating similar identity link. Picture 2.3.4 demonstrates a link to Lady Gaga’s essence – by smoking cigarettes and drinking Diet Coke, you can be a skinny and fierce female as well.
The overall popularity or rank doesn’t impact on the attitude towards the brand. Highly ranked movies and shows do get more viewers, which is beneficial in terms of wide exposure (Dens et al., 2012) and are therefore desirable targets for brand placement. Nevertheless, how an individual perceives a movie has impact on how they perceive the brands, meaning that a movie that raises certain feeling can reflect the same feeling towards the brand (Karrh, 1998).

2.4. AUDIENCE VARIABLES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS BRAND PLACEMENT

Audience demographics, previous attitudes, and previous familiarity with a brand can alter the effectiveness of product placement (de Gregorio & Sung, 2010; P. B. Gupta & Gould, 1997; Park & Berger, 2010). This means, that not all things can be controlled when planning brand placements. Demographics have some effects on the way people view and get affected by brand placement, but these findings are minimal. For example the level of income makes no difference (de Gregorio & Sung, 2010). Gender doesn’t have significant effect on the recognition (Park & Berger, 2010) but it is found that males are more prone to change their behavior due to brand placement than female (de Gregorio & Sung, 2010). Male are also more accepting in terms of ethically charged products (P. B. Gupta & Gould, 1997). Brand placement actions have better impact when the target audience is correctly defined, and therefore a brand might need assistance from other functions, such as research and development department beforehand (Boeing, Gentry, Urdan 2012).

There are differing results about the effect of previous familiarity to perceiving the placed brands. Familiar brands are naturally recognized better (Brennan & Babin, 2004) but it doesn’t make a difference on recalling the brands better, if the viewer has seen the brand before (Law & Braun, 2000; Park & Berger, 2010). Prior familiarity is found to have significant effects on the purchase behavior in only cases where an certain image has already been formatted (Jin & Villegas, 2007).

Consumers generally have neutral attitudes towards brand placement and they don’t find it offending or negative (P. B. Gupta & Gould, 1997). However, when products are ethically-charged, such as cigarettes or guns, the attitudes can be very varying and negative (P. B. Gupta & Gould, 1997). Consumers who watch movies are more accepting towards product placement, and those who are not so content with watching movies have more hesitations (P. B. Gupta & Gould, 1997) and elderly
people have most negative attitudes to product placement (de Gregorio & Sung, 2010). Movies being a social scene, peer communication plays a part on recognition and attitude, meaning that discussions and communication in consumption lead attitudes in those situations (de Gregorio & Sung, 2010). Boerman’s, Reijsmersdal’s and Neijens’ (2015) eye tracking experiment revealed that placing a text notification on for example on the beginning about the brand placement makes the viewers pay attention to the placements. It increases their recognition compared to placing only the logo with no mention of brand placement, thus that the brand is actively advertising and trying to persuade can affect negatively on the brand attitude (Boerman et al., 2015).

2.5. COSTS AND DOWNSIDES OF PLACEMENTS

The cost of a placement depends greatly on the prominence and mode of the placement (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998). Companies like Cinemastone in movies and Nielsen ratings in TV-shows have developed systems to consider the demographic factors of viewers and their degree of recall in order to define the cost of a placement (P. B. Gupta & Lord, 1998). Defining the cost for a placement is usually difficult (Karrh, 1998; Williams et al., 2011) most likely having to do with the fact that ways to measure the effectiveness still need developing (Russell & Belch, 2005).

Overall, if wanting to place products in successful films in a way that they have significant effect, it is expensive. High costs of brand placements can be a reason for obtaining from them (Russell & Belch, 2005). All advertising channels have the tendency to become more expensive when proven efficient (Karrh, 1998; Russell & Belch, 2005). After brand placement blooming’s kick-start in E.T. – The Extra-Terrestrial (1977), placement costs varied from $10000 to $50000. In 007 Skyfall (2012), it cost $45 million to have James Bond drink Dutch beer (O’Reilly, 2015). This demonstrates well how the placement industry has become something that not many brands can afford (Russell & Belch, 2005). On the production companies’ side, brand placement is an opportunity to cut production costs (Homer, 2009; Karrh, 1998; Russell & Belch, 2005).

There are other downsides having to do with brand placement as well. Placements might turn out to be difficult to control (Jin & Villegas, 2007) and there is a thin line between not getting enough exposure to be memorized and irritating the viewer by too much display (Williams et al., 2011). When aiming for brand recall, prominent way are suitable (Dens et al., 2012; van Reijsmersdal, Neijens, & Smit, 2009; Wilson & Till, 2011) but this doesn’t necessarily serve the purpose of the business, making people purchase the brand (Dens et al., 2012; Homer, 2009; Law & Braun, 2000; Williams
et al., 2011). Although associating the products with main characters being likely to increase positive attitudes towards the brand (Russell, 2002; Wilson & Till, 2011; Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007) can work also the other way around, leading towards a negative association to the brands through the disliked character (Williams et al., 2011).

Brand placement’s negative effect on the creativity of movie making has been of concern (Karrh, 1998; Russell & Belch, 2005). This has to do with the fact that especially large movie offices judge scripts somewhat on the basis that how many potential spots there are for brand placement, which makes it a must to incorporate commercial thinking next to creativity. Production companies also wish to include placement that suit for their plot, style and values, but might have to compromise on these (Russell & Belch, 2005).

Especially prior 2000’s, there was a lot of worry about the ethics of brand placement (Karrh, 1998), due to the fact that viewers get hiddenly exposed to advertising (P. B. Gupta & Gould, 1997). This concern has been towards the entire industry, but mainly about products that are ethically charged, such as cigarettes and alcohol (P. B. Gupta & Gould, 1997) and groups that are easily influenced, such as kids (P. B. Gupta & Gould, 1997; Law & Braun, 2000). In terms of implicit effectiveness, the effects on behavior can be unwanted from public perspective and can be bigger with young people who adapt influences easily (Law & Braun, 2000).

2.6. SUMMARY OF BRAND PLACEMENT THEORIES

Brand placement is the act of including brands in the framework of mass entertainment media, happening in co-operation with the brand, the production company and more commonly a placement agency. Brand placement evolved from the beginning of 1900’th century, and on it’s latter half developed as more intergraded part of the storyline and gained massive popularity. The reason for brand placement’ popularity of most probably the fact that it incorporates advertising with entertainment. (Gupta & Lord, 1998; Karrh, 1998).

Ways of conducting brand placement are varied with the mode and prominence. Most research addresses placement that are displayed visually, auditorily, audiovisually, either on the background or connected to the plot and characters (Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007), and they can be subtle or prominent. Different styles in mode and prominence lead to different outcomes, which are usually stated as recognition, recall, attitude and buying behavior towards the brand. Also often used
measures are implicit and explicit memory. In general, visual placements are used the most and they have effect on the implicit memory and therefore buying behavior (Law & Braun, 2000; Russell, 2002). They don’t result the best recall, which is better with audio placements (Brennan & Babin, 2004; Delattre & Colovic, 2009; Gupta & Lord, 1998). Recognition and recall are resulted effectively with a very prominent style, but then there are changes for the attitudes to turn negative. Subtle style results often better attitudes and buying behavior, but is not recalled that well. Plot connection and character use result the kind of attitudes that are often in line with the attitudes towards the film and character (Dens et al., 2012; Homer, 2009). Medium defines how the brand can be integrated, which is obviously different in for example songs, and the genre has impact on how placements are perceived, if the scenes are very emotional of humorous (Jin & Villegas, 2007; Wilson & Till, 2011).

**Brand placement’s ways and effectiveness**

![Diagram](image.png)

Figure 2.6. Previous research on brand placement’s ways and effectiveness.

Brand placement has downsides and further development as well. Not all things can be controlled, and the results depend partly on the audience demographics, previous familiarity and attitudes. The popularity has resulted its costs to be high, depending on the popularity of the production as well as the mode and prominence of the placement. Placements can also be hard to control, there is concern if they hinder the movie making creativity and are unethical in term of hiddenly exposing the audience. (Jin & Villegas, 2007, Homer, 2009; Russell & Belch, 2005). There are many aspects that are more to examine, in terms of measurement tools for the effectiveness and defining the cost, as well as studying the effects more detail oriented in more mediums and contexts.
3. WHAT IS GREEN CONSUMERISM?

3.1. GREEN MOVEMENT

Conscious consumption raises interest all the time and is evolving quickly (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Szmigin, Carrigan, & McEachern, 2009). Consumers are more and more informed and concerned about the influences of the products they use, which brings environmentally friendly products competitive advantage (Follows & Jobber, 2000; S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009). In fact, the value of green consumer product industry in 2006 was $200 billion (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Consumers find green products of more social and moral value compared to conventional products and have an implicit need to act morally and as well as built identity through it (Mazar & Zhong, 2010). Therefore, green brands have huge potential businesswise and the most suitable ways to advertise them are of interest.

Green research in marketing is usually done consumer-based or ad-based, of which the prior means studying consumer’s attitudes and behavior in terms of environmental concern, and the latter analyzing ways of marketing green (Shrum, Mccarty, & Lowrey, 1995). This thesis draws information from both research styles, because understanding consumers’ attitudes is vital for determining green consumers’ mindset, consumers’ overall attitudes towards green advertising attempts, and on the other hand understanding ways that green marketing is done. Both sides ought to be beneficial when utilizing this information in finding strategies for marketing green brands through brand placement.

When marketing green brands, there are certain aspect to consider. Consumers’ previous familiarity of environmental issues has a great effect on how they perceive green advertising efforts. Green consumers, who are environmentally concerned and indicate it in their buying behavior (Shrum et al., 1995), are useful to examine in terms of what factors drive their behavior. Consumers valuate their green consumption having emphasis equally on a bigger picture of sustainability and individual benefits (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010; Follows & Jobber, 2000) and more closely, through many social and economical variables, such as how they perceive the price and convenience and how their families oppose green consumption (Szmigin et al., 2009). If these factors are not in balance, for example the individual benefit is perceived too low, the overall consideration of the purchase is not positive and behavior doesn’t happen (Carrington et al., 2010; Szmigin et al., 2009). There is a
strong situational and individual flexibility as well (Szmigin et al., 2009).

3.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF GREEN CONSUMER

Consumers have very different stages of consciousness about the environment. When consumers already express concern for environmental issues and hence this in their purchase choices, they can be referred to as green consumers (Shrum et al., 1995). They are an important and growing group of consumers, which still needs more examination (Szmigin et al., 2009). Characteristics have still somewhat been drawn.

There are many characteristics associated with green consumers making them differ from others. They tend to think of advertising more skeptical and show attention to details and claims and be more sensitive to advertising they dislike than other consumers. The information search process is more in-depth and information exchange with others is more common, meaning that they are eager spreaders of word-of-mouth, whether it is positive or negative. Purchase decisions rather carefully thought than impulsive, with price sensitivity (Shrum et al., 1995), but this description is only applicable in situations where green consumers follow their ethical aims (Szmigin et al., 2009). It is to be highlighted that when it comes to green consumers the behavior is very context- and person-dependent, meaning that a range of variables impact on their behavior in different situations and the description doesn’t always apply (Szmigin et al., 2009). Green consumers feel themselves as opinion leaders and show interest to new products easily. The active search of information allows them to also find the newest product and change their habits easily. Due to this, brand loyalty with them could be harder to achieve (Shrum et al., 1995).

Even though there are theories and descriptions of green consumption and consumers, there are many situational and individual variables having to do with them. Flexibility in consumption describes the behavior of most green consumers (Szmigin et al., 2009) since the individual utility is prioritized side to side with the environmental good (Carrington et al., 2010; Szmigin et al., 2009). Flexibility means that even though the consumer would perceive themselves as green, they don’t necessarily indicate this in their behavior in certain situations. As an example Szmigin et al. (2009) use a situation where a consumers has to make choices based on the whole family’s budget and preferences but also his/her own environmental concern. Products that fit both frames are not on the edge of ending up as just an intention, such as “the Co-op only selling fairtrade chocolate allows consumers to make the ‘right’ decisions with minimal involvement.” (Szmigin et al., 2009). The brands whose products are of
minimal involvement are in a better position in terms of this, as where the others might suffer of consumer intentions not turning into behavior.

3.3. INTENTION - BEHAVIOR GAP

It is described as intention-behavior gap in social psychology, when consumers plan to act certain way, but don’t change their behavior when it comes to the purchase situation (Carrington et al., 2010; S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Green behavior is an outcome of different social and economic factors (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Szmigin et al., 2009) and intentions are formed on the basis of understanding the issue, being aware of the consequences of one’s behavior, and planning to change it towards a more sustainable manner. The implementation intentions can be as specific as when and where the purchase is going to be made (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2012).

Figure 3.3. Core motivational hierarchy. Describes the formation of factors that lead to green buying behavior (Carrington et al., 2012)

Carrington et al’ studied the intention behavior gap and the factors leading to ethical purchase behavior are presented Figure 3. These factors evolve from how consumers prioritize their ethical concerns, meaning that they are more likely to develop habits and make sacrifices if they perceive ethical concerns as primary values. These leads to creation of shopping modes and eventually the green behavior is a habit and doesn’t take time or effort. Intentions prevent from turning into behavior if the issue doesn’t support other values or if lacking the willingness to make the effort to search for information, make plans and sacrifices or the situation is just somehow not supportive (Carrington et al., 2012).
Carringtons et al. suggest that the gap could be reduced through marketing actions. This means assisting consumers to implement their intentions, for example with multiple mediums and reminders in purchase environment. The focus could be either on the formation phase, so the expectations could be realistic, or on the actual decision making phase and encourage maintaining the planned behavior. As one example, Carrington refers to the price. Green costs usually more, and in the purchase environment consumers evaluate the cheapest option. By forming a realistic image of the price and worth, consumer could accept paying more before going to the store. (Carrington et al., 2012).

### 3.4. Ways of Marketing Green

Merely exposing consumers to products creates even better results to buying behavior with green products than conventional products (Mazar & Zhong, 2010). However, the level of prominence in green marketing should be carefully thought through (Chingching, 2015; Kronrod et al., 2012; Mazar & Zhong, 2010; Szmigin et al., 2009). Green advertising can be of low, moderate or high effort and the effort level should depend on the consumers and desired outcome (Chingching, 2015). Depending on the ambivalence of consumers, too high efforts can be attacking, resulting to create unpleasant feeling and negative attitudes (Chingching, 2015). There can be skepticism towards green attempts already, and the prominent advertising efforts result the consumer to evaluate the attempts even more and doubt their believability (Chingching, 2015; Mazar & Zhong, 2010; Shrum et al., 1995). For those who don’t have great level of previous concern, negative attitudes can be avoided by using moderate and lower effort messages (Chingching, 2015) and the issue should be presented clearly before giving instruction on acting (Kronrod et al., 2012).

When the issue is already important, it’s proven more effective to be assertive (Kronrod et al., 2012). This is of debate, because when considering the nature of green consumers - being skeptical towards advertising (Shrum et al., 1995) - the assertive and high-effort advertising should still remain careful. Carefulness with advertising, see-through actions and honesty in communication suits for developing loyalty with green consumers (Shrum et al., 1995). Uncertainty of whether to be assertive to those who are already familiar with thinking green is not of importance in this thesis, because advertising through mass entertainment media has often a wide and heterogeneous audience.

Consumers often build their own persona with their buying behavior and green purchases are great examples of this (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Linking a brand to a character or a celebrity is functional.
when marketing green (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009). The character can be seen as a role model to which an individual wants to identify to (Carrington et al., 2012; S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009). This has an impact on buying behavior because the individual will want to purchase the same brand that the character uses (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009).

3.5. SUMMARY OF GREEN CONSUMERISM THEORIES

Consumers valuate their green consumption having emphasis equally on a bigger picture of sustainability and individual benefits (Carrington et al., 2010; Follows & Jobber, 2000). Consuming in a green way has many situational and individual variables, making the intentions sometimes prevent from turning into actions. The formation of behavior is dependent on how high priority the consumer perceives the issue ethically and other priorities might prevent the behavior from happening (Carrington et al., 2010; Szmigin et al., 2009). With advertising actions, the gap can be reduced (Carrington et al., 2010, 2012).

Consumer perceive green advertising differently depending on their previous familiarity to green issues, (Shrum, Mccarty, & Lowrey, 1995) and too prominent advertising can easily lead to negative attitudes. Green consumers being skeptical, information-seeking, easily excited of new products and experience-sharing by nature (Shrum et al., 1995), they value honesty and subtleness in advertising. Green purchases are also often an addition to a consumer’s identity (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Therefore, subtle and see-through advertising actions are best for green consumers as well as masses and it linking products to celebrities can be functional.

4. GREEN BRAND PLACEMENT CASES

4.1. FORERUNNER OF GREEN PLACEMENTS

Green Product Placement is an agency focused purely on promoting brands that are sustainable and ethical in their agenda. The promotion is done by integrating the brands as seamlessly as possible to entertainment medias, mostly movies and TV-shows. The goal is to therefore promote these eco-, local or otherwise green brands and help them gain more recognition, positive attitudes and sales. In addition, the overall goal of the business is to change mass consumers’ buying habits towards a more sustainable lifestyle or “normalizing green” as Beth Bell, the founder of the company refers.
Noticeable is that in the case of green brands the easiest way to gain recognition is with products that are suitable for use, such as food and drinks, health and beauty, clothing, cars and so on. That way they can be placed more than one time and integrate subtly into situations where they can be of use. Green Product Placement’s placements are demonstrated in the background or in characters’ use in most situations. The references are quite subtle, and the products seem a part of the characters’ automatic everyday actions, with incongruent attention. (greenfilmshooting.net).

![Image of TV show with products placed in the background.](image1.jpg)


![Image of movie scene with products placed in the background.](image2.jpg)

The products also work as supporting elements for the style of the production. For instance, if a movie would be located in a small, urban neighborhood and the main character is an indie artist who supports animal rights, eats tofu and uses organic cosmetics, having her use conscious brand and small producers in that area builds the scene and character more genuine. (good.is). Still the most placements are done with characters that don’t demonstrate the usual greenie –style, in order to fulfill the overall mission of making green more normal for masses. (fromthegrapevine.com). A great example of this is Picture 4(3) of TV-series *House of Cards*, where the main character Francis Underwood, who is not the first one to be associated as green, but rather a rational, cold, busy congressman, carries a Repurpose Compostable –cup. The placement links the product to the character in a clever way, displaying that not only certain type of people behave green.


### 4.2. Differing Green Placements

In addition to Green Product Placement’s case, it is useful to demonstrate other kinds of brand placement with green brands. Highly differing case is a long-term co-operation with the cooking contest TV-series *Top Chef* and Whole Foods, a natural and organic food market in the US. The co-operation functioned in a way, that the contestants got to choose the ingredients they used for making plates from Whole Foods. This is an example, that not all placement alliances function through monetary refund, but simply as an exchange of services (Karrh, 1998). The frequency Whole Foods was shown was high and it could not be left unnoticed, which could be without a doubt considered
very prominent way. As can be seen in Pictures 4(4) and 4(5), Whole Foods was placed in a way, that it takes the entire space of the screen. It also played a major role in the plot and attached to the characters. Because Top Chef represents a highly professional level of cooking, it promoted Whole Foods’ quality in ingredients as well as a place, where you can find anything you need even though it is a local and organic market place. This example is more of an exception than rule, because the co-operation is part of a long-term agreement and very cleverly integrated. It is not certain that it was functional, because the effects on buying behavior and attitudes towards Whole Foods need more examination.

![Picture 4(4). Whole Foods displayed in TV-series Top Chef.](image1)
![Picture 4(5). Top Chef -contestant choosing ingredients from Whole Foods.](image2)

### 4.3. SUMMARY OF THE CASE

By integrating green brands to mass medias as Green Product Placement does, the attempt is to help green brands gain market share as well as make green consumerism normal for mass consumers. The brands are usually displayed visually, subtly and on the background (greenfilmshooting.net). Less common, prominent and plot connected ways, are found as well but need more research. (fromthegrapevine.com). Green brands can strengthen the style and authenticity of the production and characters, but also work the other way around, associating green brands to the type of characters that are not perceived green otherwise (good.is).

### 5. HOW TO PLACE GREEN BRANDS EFFECTIVELY?

Choosing a strategy depends on the nature of the brand and the desired outcome. No method has proven as generally the most functional one (Dens et al., 2012), but there are many pinpoints drawn
on how mode, prominence, plot connection and medium and genre can affect on the outcome. These can be inferred to apply to green brands when knowing the aspect of green consumers, intention-behavior -gap and how to advertise green to masses.

Like any advertising, especially when concerning green brands, it should be done with carefulness because it might end up causing disruption and negative attitudes in consumers (Dens et al., 2012; Homer, 2009; Williams et al., n.d.). Therefore, high level of prominence ought to not be suitable for green brands. As brand placement has potential to effect buying behavior through the implicit memory (Law & Braun, 2000), it can be used in reducing the intention-behavior gap. Green consumption tending to be flexible and lead by situational factors, brands that make the green choice task of minimal involvement for consumers are easiest for green consumers to adapt to (Szmigin et al., 2009). Therefore brand placement ought to aid brands that don’t enjoy being an easy green choice. Placements can have successful implicit effect even when the consumer is not aware of it (Law & Braun, 2000), because through implicit memory results a familiar and warm feeling when seeing the brand later on the store and that way effect on the choice (Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007). This way, sending subtle and careful messages through placing green brands can enhance the non-conscious buying behavior and lead to a change of habits, without irritation and the feeling of being persuaded.

Plot and character connection is beneficial for green brands if done cleverly. They are most certain choice when trying to create positive brand attitudes (Dens et al., 2012). In the case of Top Chef and Whole Foods the plot connection is done very cleverly, genuinely and see-through. However, it was conducted prominently and it is hard to examine whether the collaboration affected buying behavior or caused irritation. When seeking for a generalizable strategy, it is more certain to recommend subtle plot connections. Using same products as identity perceiver allows the viewer to adapt that part of the character’s persona, as an extended self (Karrh, 1998). There is a strong identity link in green consumerism (Carrington et al., 2012, S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009), which can be impacted with placements used by characters that consumers would want to identify to. Beth Bell states as well that brand placement is great method for creating emotional attachment to the products and making green consumerism a normal for normal mass consumers as well (Holtman, 2014). In Figure 5. it is demonstrated how building identity works when placing green brands. In the scenario the audience member perceives the character as being trendy and self-confident, someone who walks his own path but is social and successful. The character wears eco-frienly TOMS –shoes which indicates he cares
about sustainability and is therefore considered trendy as well. The audience member desires a part of this identity and buys the same shoes.

![Identity Perceived in Program Character ("trendy, confident, distinctive persona")](image)

![Identity Represented through Brand Placement (trendy character uses eco-friendly shoes)](image)

![Identity Desired by Audience Member ("trendy, confident, distinctive persona")](image)

Figure 5. Building identity through green buying behavior. Associating green TOMS—shoes to a character who perceives desired identity. After Karrh, 1998.

Brand placement alliances are usually with large brands that can handle brand placement’s costly nature and as unfortunate it is, many smaller, green brands can’t afford similar investments. (Hess, 2012). It is therefore a positive connection, that non-integrated placement are often the choice when having a smaller budget and looking for a subtle, non-insulting way of gaining screen time (Russell, 2002). These subtle, not overly frequent, and less expensive placements are likely more profitable as well, because enhance attitude and purchase behavior well (Karniouchina et al., 2011).

6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

6.1. CONCLUSION

This thesis examined how can brand placement be utilized in marketing green brands and in which ways should it be conducted. To form strategy suggestions for this aim, the examination happened followingly: the ways and effectiveness of brand placement were reviewed throughout, the aspects of green consumerism and marketing green were identified and case examples of green brand
There are many links in brand placement’s effectiveness and the ways that green brands’ nature requires them to be advertised. Very prominent product placement shouldn’t be used when trying to address the attitudes of green consumers. Subtle, visual placement style to enhance implicit memory suits for leading mass consumers towards greener behavior. When trying to address the kind of viewers that already have an adequate level of understanding about environmental issues and have willingness to make changes, green consumers, prominent and high-effort advertising is more efficient (Kronrod et al., 2012), but it should be considered that green consumers tend to appreciate see-through and honest advertising attempts (Shrum et al., 1995). Green consumption has a tight role in building identity (S. Gupta & Ogden, 2009), and brand placement provides an opportunity to link a brand to a character whose identity the audience desires (Karrh, 1998). For managerial use it is vital to note that brand placement

• enables green brands to reduce the intention-behavior –gap of green consumerism,
• impact on building the consumer’s identity and
• normalize green consumerism for masses.

To answer the research question, best manners to conduct brand placement for green brands are subtle and cleverly plot and character connected. This should be suggested for a strategy when placing green brands.

6.2. FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

There are several aspects in need of further research which would reinforce the strategy recommendations in this thesis. Firstly, there is overall a research gap in the effects of placing green brands. More specifically, subtle and cleverly plot connected brand placement conducted with green brands should be researched more. The focus should be on what kind of implicit reactions they result. In terms of attitudes it is important to discover which level of prominence is low enough, and in terms of behavior it is of interest that how they affect the intention behavior gap and purchase decisions.

Secondly, the tools for measuring brand placement effectiveness should be developed further. Tools that measure recognition and recall are more simple to develop and therefore are utilized well. The aim should be at measuring the attitudes and buying behavior more carefully, since they are generally the desired outcomes of green brands.
Thirdly, evolving mediums should be researched more. Most of the conducted research focuses on movies and TV-series, which is is understandable because they are the most used mediums for brand placement. However, different online mediums and platforms that include placements are of increasing growth, creating more opportunities. There is no certainty whether similar placement principles apply to them and to which of them green brands are suitable.

6.3 LIMITATIONS

This thesis faces some limitations. The strategy suggestions for placing green brands are based on pinpoints drawn on former literature and research and they lack empirical research. The former research of brand placement is limited to certain markets and mediums. The findings in different markets don’t have much variation though, but mediums create more diverse results. Also, the definition of green can vary from research to another creating differing interpretations. In the near future the issue of green brand placement is hopefully researched empirically more closely.

7. REFERENCES


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7.1. FIGURES


Figure 2.3.3(2). Russell, C. A. (2002). Investigating the Effectiveness of Product Placements in Television Shows: The Role of Modality and Plot Connection Congruence on Brand Memory and Attitude. *Journal of Consumer Research, 29*(3), 313. https://doi.org/10.1086/344432
Figure 2.3.3(3). Russell, C. A. (2002). Investigating the Effectiveness of Product Placements in Television Shows: The Role of Modality and Plot Connection Congruence on Brand Memory and Attitude. *Journal of Consumer Research, 29*(3), 313. https://doi.org/10.1086/344432

Figure 2.6. Self-drawn figure on previous research of brand placement’s ways and effectiveness.


7.2. ONLINE SOURCES AND PICTURES

http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/8178/volumes/v25/NA-25


http://www.greenfilmshtooting.net/blog/en/2015/05/19/green-product-placement/


http://www.greenfilmmaking.com/whos-who-beth-bell-usa/#more


http://www.toms.com/about-toms#corporateResponsibility


Picture 2.3.4. Self-taken clip from music video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVBsypHzF3U


Pics in Figure 5. https://unsplash.com/search/photos/guy?photo=MjVfs51_wBA; self-took clip from http://www.toms.com/

8. APPENDICES

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<th>Mode</th>
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Appendix 1. Previous research on brand placement’s ways and effects. It demonstrates what the research has examined and what effects has been found. In addition, causal connection between elements and effects are clarified in Figure 2.6.

**Brand placement’s ways and effectiveness**

**Mode**
- Visual
- Auditory
- Audiovisual

**Prominence**
- Prominent
- Subtle

**Plot connection**
- Plot and character connected

**Implicit memory**
- Recognition
- Recall

**Explicit memory**
- Attitude
- Behavior

Figure 2.6. Self-drawn figure on previous research of brand placement’s ways and effectiveness.