



IMPACT OF PRODUCT PROMOTIONS THROUGH FILMS/CINEMAS

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Article History

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Abstract: Product promotion through films has emerged as an effective strategy as audiences increasingly avoid traditional advertising due to media clutter. Films provide a platform to integrate brands into storylines, characters, and settings in a subtle and engaging manner.

This study examines the impact of product placement on purchase intention among college students, focusing on its effect on brand awareness, recall, attitudes, and buying behaviour. Primary data was collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire.

The findings indicate that well-integrated and contextually relevant placements enhance brand recall and positively influence consumer perception. While such promotions may not always lead to immediate purchases, they strongly impact the awareness and consideration stages of consumer decision-making. The study offers insights for marketers targeting young consumers through cinema-based promotions.

Keywords: Product Placement, Film Marketing, Cinema Advertising, Brand Recall, Purchase Intention, Consumer Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Traditional advertising methods are increasingly losing their effectiveness in today's media-saturated environment. With the rapid growth of digital platforms, audiences are constantly exposed to a high volume of advertisements across television, social media, websites, and streaming services. This excessive exposure has led to *advertising fatigue*, where consumers either consciously avoid

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ads through tools like ad blockers and premium subscriptions or subconsciously ignore them. As a result, marketers face the challenge of capturing attention in a way that is both impactful and less intrusive.

In response to this shift, companies are adopting alternative promotional strategies that integrate marketing messages more naturally into consumer experiences. One such strategy that has gained significant prominence is product placement in films. Unlike traditional advertisements, product placement involves embedding brands within the storyline, scenes, or character interactions, making them appear as a natural part of the narrative. This subtle integration reduces resistance from viewers and increases the likelihood of message acceptance.

Films, as a medium, hold a unique advantage in influencing audience perceptions. They create strong emotional engagement through storytelling, characters, and visual appeal. When a product is associated with a popular actor, a memorable scene, or a powerful storyline, it benefits from the emotional connection viewers develop with the film. This association enhances brand image, credibility, and recall. Furthermore, with the rise of OTT platforms alongside traditional theatrical releases, films now have an extended lifespan and repeated viewership, which significantly boosts the frequency of brand exposure and reinforces memory retention.

Among different audience segments, college students represent a highly relevant and influential group. They are frequent consumers of films across theatres and digital platforms and are deeply influenced by celebrity culture, fashion trends, and lifestyle portrayals in movies. Their opinions often shape peer behavior and broader consumption patterns. Therefore, understanding how college students perceive and respond to product placements becomes crucial for marketers aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy and optimize their promotional efforts in the entertainment domain.

INSIGHTS FROM PRIOR STUDIES

Product placement is widely recognized as an effective alternative to traditional advertising, as it integrates brands naturally into entertainment content, thereby enhancing brand recall, attitudes, and purchase intention. Studies by Qureshi and Gul (2015) show that realistic and credible placements positively influence students' perceptions and usage, while Preethy Rose and Shanthi

(2024) highlight that repeated exposure significantly improves brand recall. Similarly, Balachandar et al. (2024) found that narrative-based placements increase consumer interest and purchase intention, and Ghanem, Negm, and Arslan (2024) emphasize that factors such as prominence, screen time, and celebrity association strengthen brand recognition.

Overall, these studies confirm that film-based promotions effectively influence consumer awareness and attitudes, particularly when placements are seamlessly integrated into the storyline. However, there remains a lack of comprehensive research that combines awareness, recall, and purchase intention within a single framework, along with limited focus on college students as a distinct and highly exposed audience segment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

With increasing ad avoidance, product placement in films has emerged as an alternative promotional strategy. However, its effectiveness in influencing brand awareness, recall, and purchase intention among college students requires further examination.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine awareness and recall of product placements among college students
- To analyse the impact of product placement on brand perception and buying behaviour
- To study the influence of celebrities on purchase intention

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design to examine the influence of product promotions in films on purchase intention.

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. A total of 60 responses were obtained from undergraduate and postgraduate students using convenience sampling.

Variables Measured

- Frequency of watching movies
- Awareness of product placements

- Brand recall
- Influence of celebrity endorsement
- Perceived realism and relevance

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

How often do you watch movies (in theatres or OTT)?
60 responses

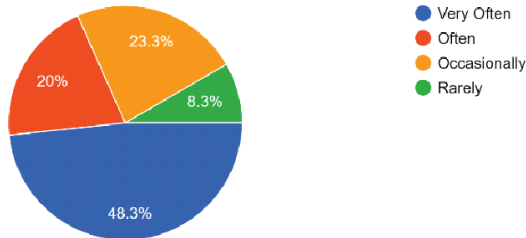


Figure 1: Frequency of Watching Movies (Theatres or OTT)
Variable Measured: Movie watching frequency

The analysis indicates that a majority of respondents are frequent movie watchers. Nearly half (48.3%) watch movies very often, while another 20% watch them often. This shows that movies—both in theatres and on OTT platforms—are a regular form of entertainment, making them an effective medium for repeated brand exposure.

Have you noticed product promotions or brand placements in movies?
60 responses

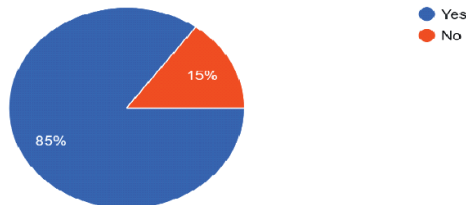


Figure 2: Awareness of Product Promotions or Brand Placements in Movies
Variable Measured: Awareness of brand placement

A large majority (85%) of respondents have noticed product promotions or brand placements in movies. This indicates that such promotional strategies are highly visible and audiences actively recognize commercial elements within films.

Where do you mostly notice product promotions?
60 responses

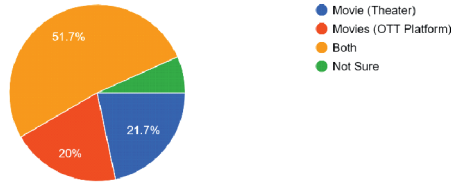


Figure 3: Platform Where Product Promotions Are Mostly Noticed
Variable Measured: Medium of exposure

More than half of the respondents (51.7%) notice product promotions on both theatres and OTT platforms. This suggests that an integrated promotional strategy across multiple viewing platforms enhances reach and effectiveness.

Which type of product promotion in films do you notice the most?
60 responses

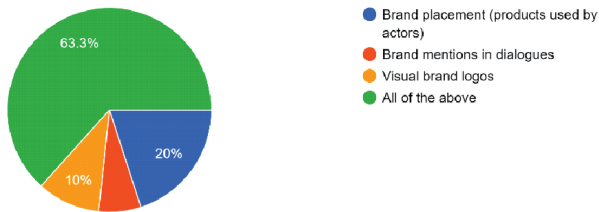


Figure 4: Type of Product Promotion Noticed the Most
Variable Measured: Form of product placement

The majority of respondents (63.3%) notice all forms of product promotions. This indicates that a combination of visual, verbal, and usage-based placements is more effective than relying on a single method.

Do you feel product promotions in movies grab your attention?
60 responses

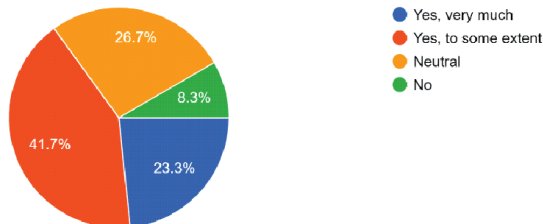


Figure 5: Attention Grabbed by Product Promotions in Movies
Variable Measured: Level of attention

A combined 65% of respondents state that product promotions grab their attention either very much or to some extent. This shows that such placements are effective in attracting attention without being overly intrusive.

Does seeing a product in a movie make you remember the brand?
60 responses

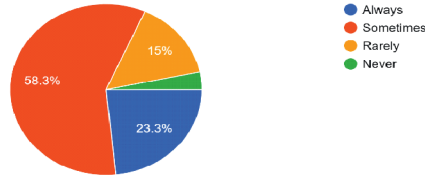


Figure 6: Brand Recall After Seeing Products in Movies
Variable Measured: Brand recall

A significant 81.6% of respondents recall brands either always or sometimes after seeing them in movies. This indicates that films play a strong role in enhancing brand recall.

Do you think celebrity usage of a product in films influences you?
60 responses

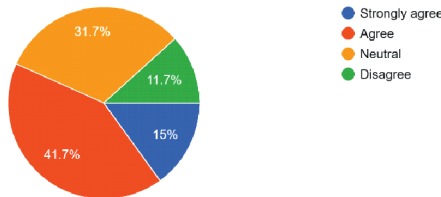


Figure 7: Influence of Celebrity Usage of Products
Variable Measured: Celebrity influence

More than half of the respondents (56.7%) agree that celebrity usage of products in films influences them. This highlights the importance of celebrity-product association in shaping consumer perception.

Have you ever searched for a product after seeing it in a movie?
60 responses

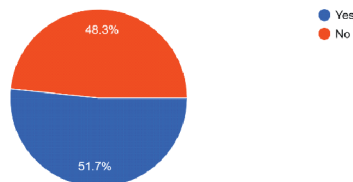


Figure 8: Search Behaviour After Seeing a Product in a Movie
Variable Measured: Post-exposure action

More than half of the respondents (51.7%) have searched for a product after seeing it in a movie. This demonstrates that product placements can drive active consumer engagement.

Have you ever purchased a product after seeing it promoted in a film?
60 responses

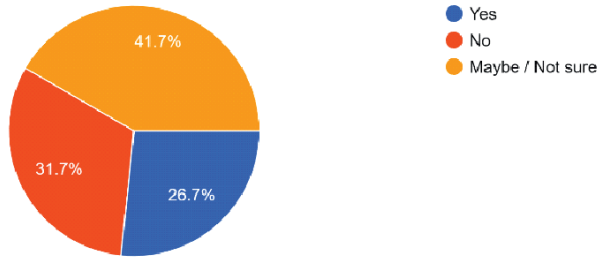


Figure 9: Purchase of Product After Seeing It Promoted in a Film
Variable Measured: Purchase behaviour influenced by film promotions

While 26.7% of respondents have purchased a product after seeing it in a film, a large proportion remains unsure. This suggests that movie promotions primarily influence awareness and interest rather than immediate purchase decisions.

Which product category is most effective when promoted through films?
60 responses

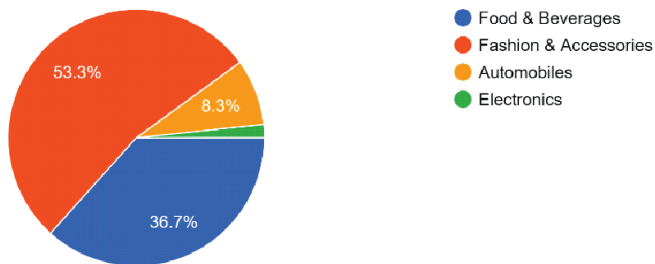


Figure 10: Most Effective Product Category for Film-Based Promotion
Variable Measured: Product category effectiveness

Fashion and accessories emerge as the most effective category, followed by food and beverages. This indicates that visually appealing and lifestyle-oriented products benefit more from cinematic exposure.

Do you feel product promotions in movies are more effective than TV ads?
60 responses

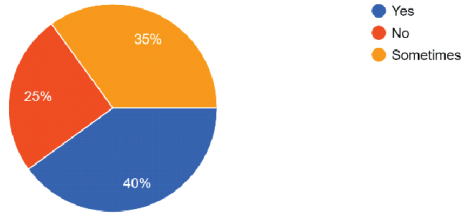


Figure 11: Effectiveness of Movie Promotions Compared to TV Advertisements
Variable Measured: Comparative effectiveness of promotional media

A considerable portion of respondents believe that movie promotions are more effective than TV advertisements, suggesting stronger emotional and contextual impact.

Does excessive product promotion in movies annoy you?
60 responses

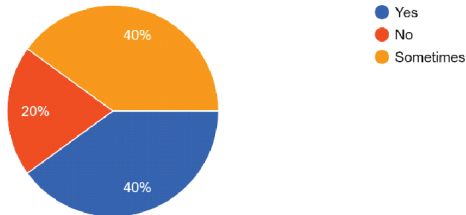


Figure 12: Annoyance Caused by Excessive Product Promotion
Variable Measured: Viewer irritation level

A majority of respondents experience some level of annoyance due to excessive product promotion. This highlights the need for subtle integration within movie content.

Do you think product placement affects the realism of movies?
60 responses

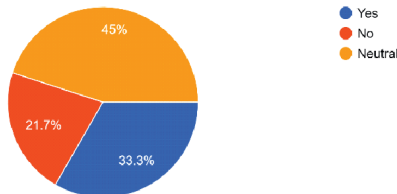


Figure 13: Impact of Product Placement on Movie Realism
Variable Measured: Perceived realism of movies

Most respondents remain neutral, suggesting that moderate product placement does not significantly affect movie realism.

Overall, how effective are films/cinemas for product promotion?
60 responses

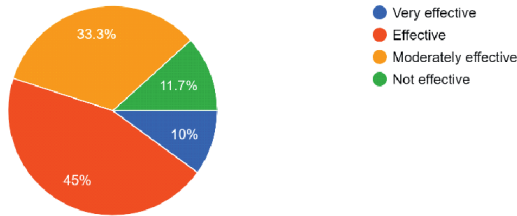


Figure 14: Overall Effectiveness of Films/Cinemas for Product Promotion
Variable Measured: Overall promotional effectiveness

A strong majority perceive films as at least moderately effective for product promotion, reinforcing their importance as a marketing medium.

Would you recommend brands to use films as a promotion medium?
60 responses

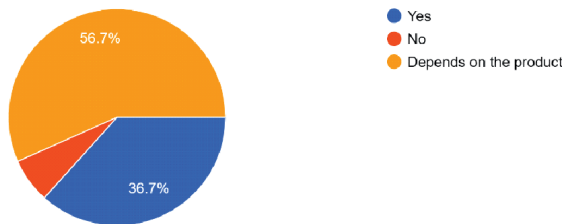


Figure 15: Recommendation of Films as a Promotional Medium
Variable Measured: Willingness to recommend film-based promotion

More than half of the respondents believe that the effectiveness of films as a promotional medium depends on the product type, indicating the importance of strategic alignment.

FINDINGS

- High exposure to films (Table 1) indicates that most respondents frequently watch movies via theatres or OTT, increasing the effectiveness of product placement as a marketing tool.
- Strong awareness of placements (Table 2) shows that viewers can clearly identify branded products, confirming their visibility.

- Cross-platform exposure enhances reach (Table 3) suggests that exposure across theatres, OTT, and social media improves overall brand recall.
- Integrated promotional formats are most effective (Table 4) as combining placements with other marketing efforts creates a stronger brand impact.
- Product placements capture attention (Table 5) and improve recall (Table 6), showing they attract viewers and remain memorable.
- Celebrity influence plays a significant role (Table 7) by enhancing brand perception through association with actors.
- Consumers actively engage through search behaviour (Table 8), indicating curiosity and deeper interaction beyond viewing.
- Influence is stronger in consideration than purchase stage (Table 9), shaping interest more than immediate buying decisions.
- Lifestyle products benefit the most (Table 10) as they integrate naturally into film narratives.
- Films outperform traditional advertisements in engagement (Table 11) due to their organic and less intrusive nature.

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