



Effectiveness of Kopiko Candy Product Placement Strategy in Korean Drama Doctor Slump: The Role of Product Involvement, Placement Prominence, and Celebrity Endorsement

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Abstract

The product placement strategy is increasingly favored in global marketing, especially through Korean drama streaming services, which are typically produced in series format. Kopiko candy leverages the popularity of Korean dramas by employing product placement in the Korean drama Doctor Slump. This study aims to examine the influence of product involvement, placement prominence, and celebrity endorsement on brand memory and brand attitude. The research involved 157 respondents who are fans of Korean dramas residing in Indonesia, aged 18 and above, who have watched the Doctor Slump series from episodes 1-16 and are aware of the presence of Kopiko candy in the scenes of the drama. The results of this study indicate a positive and significant relationship between the variables of product involvement, placement prominence, and celebrity endorsement on brand memory. Additionally, product involvement and celebrity endorsement also have a positive and significant effect on brand attitude.

Keywords: Product Placement, Product Involvement, Celebrity Endorsement, Brand Attitude, Brand Memory.

1 Introduction

Digitalization and the internet are two examples of the many changes brought about by the extremely quick development of technology, which is consistent with the advancement of science and technology (Putra & Priansa, 2023). The industry players must continuously adapt to current user habits which has created many new platforms and media (Spilker & Colbjørnsen, 2020). According to Nielsen (2022), there are 91,6% of TV viewers skip ads or change channels. Unlike TV ads, product placement in entertainment media cannot be skipped as it is part of the story (Tsai, Liang, & Liu, 2007). According to a study by Grzyb, Dolinski, & Kozłowska (2018), product placement is considered superior to traditional advertising, especially when viewers face high cognitive load. Therefore, product placement is considered more effective than traditional ads as users do not see it as a persuasive message.

There are various forms of product placement, including online forums, movies, novels, and games (Guo, Ye, Hudders, Lv, Li, & Duffy, 2019). Among these formats, online streaming has become the favorite media for marketers in global marketing (Corkindale, Neale, & Bellman, 2023). One of the online streaming that is widely discussed is Korean dramas, which are generally produced in series format and can be accessed through platforms like Netflix, Viki, iQIYI, WeTV, and others. In Korean dramas, product placement has become a common strategy as it is believed to enhance brand value (Chae & Sun, 2013) along with the increasing spread of Korean culture globally.

The Indonesian brand, Kopiko candy, also leverages the popularity of Korean dramas for global marketing strategies. In 2024, Kopiko candy again used product placement in Korean dramas to market its products. The chosen drama is Doctor Slump, which tells the story of a plastic surgeon and an anesthesiologist who reunite as adults. This drama received massive attention from viewers, ranking ninth in Netflix's Global Top 10 TV (Non-English) just two days after its release and receiving warm receptions in 11 countries. The following week, Doctor Slump rose to the first position in that category, topping the charts in nine countries, including South Korea, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam, and made it into the top 10 in a total of 31 countries.

This study was chosen due to the authors' interest in the product placement strategy used by the Kopiko candy brand in Korean dramas, particularly the Doctor Slump series. However, previous research evaluating the effectiveness of product placement strategies is still limited (Russell, 2019), as there are not many studies that can complement the variables related to product placement, such as the information processing, placement cross-cultural influence, effects of product placement, and the effectiveness of product placement on global brands (Chan, 2012). This study is important as product placement strategies are increasingly used by companies, including Kopiko candy, along with the rapid development of internet technology.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) on Product Involvement

The central route and the peripheral route are the two information processing pathways that the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) uses to describe how the degree of product involvement influences brand attitude (Petty, Cacioppo, Schumann, 1983). Customers choose the central route for logical assessment and decide the reaction if they feel the need to comprehend the information in the advertisement and can process it (Luttrell, 2018). On the other hand, consumers who lack motivation or are unable to comprehend the material use the peripheral route and only give it a brief look. According to ELM, product placement that promotes core route processing is associated with high product involvement, whereas peripheral route processing is associated with low product involvement.

H1a: Product involvement positively affects brand memory

H1b: Product involvement positively affects brand attitude

2.2 Limited Capacity Perspective on Placement Prominence

According to the Limited Capacity Model of Attention (LCM) theory, people have a limited amount of attentional capacity at any given time (Egeth & Kahneman, 1973). Different aspects of the information compete with one another for our attention when we process it. The processing

of secondary information will receive less attention as primary information will take precedence over it. High placement prominence can therefore improve brand recall and draw in customers (Cowley & Barron, 2008).

H2a: Placement prominence positively affects brand memory

2.3 Persuasion Knowledge Model on Placement Prominence

Consumers will reject marketers' persuasive message as soon as they know they are receiving information on a product or brand. But when a drama incorporates product placement into the narrative, it lessens the impression of manipulative aim and strengthens brand attitude (Eisend & Tarrahi, 2022). According to Zajonc (2001), prominent placement raises brand familiarity, which raises brand liking and attitude. This implies that a brand's familiarity and favorability among the audience increase with the frequency and visibility of its integration into the content. Therefore, it is possible to effectively decrease resistance to persuasive purpose and enhance overall brand perception by including product placement in a way that feels natural and vital to the storyline. According to Saepuloh & Irfan (2019), brand perception positively and significantly affects brand attitude.

H2b: Placement prominence positively affects brand attitude

2.4 Reference Group on Celebrity Endorsement

According to Park & Lessig (1981) reference group theory, reference groups have an impact on an individual's behavior. Research by Salsabila & Mayangsari (2020) showed the reference groups encourages consumers' purchase intention, particularly leading to impulsive buying. Based on social identity and position, these groups are split into membership and non-membership categories. Celebrities and other non-membership groups have a social status advantage over other groups in the marketplace by drawing in non-member customers. Customers' admiration and attention for celebrities will be directed into associated products, enhancing brand attitude and memory as well as the association with the celebrity (Tran et al., 2019).

H3a: Celebrity endorsement positively affects brand memory

H3b: Celebrity endorsement positively affects brand attitude

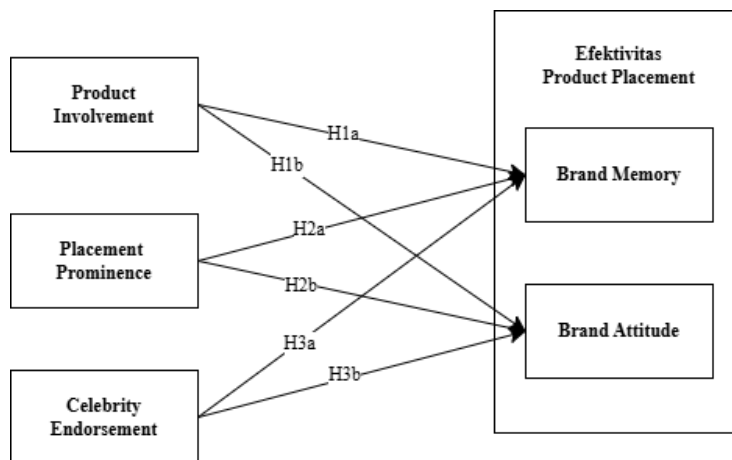


Figure 1: Research Paradigm

3 Research Method

To tailor the language, diction, and context of the study to the intended respondents, face validity was first established in collaboration with five respondents and other authors. The clarity, applicability, and relevance of each item were evaluated by the respondents, who also pointed out any unclear or challenging-to-understand issues. Subsequently, the investigator carried out a preliminary investigation by furnishing questionnaires to thirty participants to assess the accuracy and consistency of the indicators. The researcher then disseminated the surveys to the public via social media platforms like LINE, WhatsApp, Instagram, and X, and was successful in gathering 157 respondents after all indicators were shown to be valid and dependable.

The ability of independent factors to explain dependent variables and the degree to which they influence dependent variables will be assessed in this study using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and effect size (F^2) tests. For each of the three levels of significance, a one-tailed test was also used to evaluate the hypothesis. The SmartPLS 4 software will be used for all the study's tests.

Table 1: Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Item	Source	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Product Involvement	Kopiko candy is a product that meets my daily needs.	Zaichkowsky (1994)	0,928
	Kopiko candy is an essential need in my daily life.		
	I feel enthusiastic when I hear, see, or think about Kopiko candy.		
Placement Prominence	Kopiko candy is displayed prominently in several scenes in Doctor Slump.	Russell (2002)	0,880
	Kopiko candy appears for a long time (more than 10 seconds) in several scenes in Doctor Slump.		
	I realize Kopiko candy is mentioned and held by the main and supporting characters in Doctor Slump.		
	Kopiko candy appears in the center of the screen in several scenes in Doctor Slump.		
Celebrity Endorsement	I realize that celebrities involved in Doctor Slump are often seen consuming Kopiko candy.	McClung & Cleophas (2008)	0,852
	Main characters have verbal and physical interaction with Kopiko candy.		
	Kopiko candy shapes the personality of the characters.		
Brand Memory	If you are purchasing a candy, would you choose Kopiko candy based on your recognition of the brand if every candy has the same-price performance ratio?	Lee & Faber (2007); van Reijmersdal (2009)	0,871
	I noticed Kopiko candy is embedded in Doctor Slump scene.		

Brand Attitude	The level of risk associated with purchasing Kopiko Candy is low. The information that Kopiko Candy conveys in the drama is trustworthy. I find Kopiko candy to be favorable.	Spears & Singh (2004); (Wise et al., 2008)	0,832
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4 Results

An interval of 0.85 was obtained for each category in the descriptive analysis that the researchers performed using a 1–7 Likert scale and the formula $(n-1)/n$, where n is the highest value minus the lowest value divided by the highest value. 1–1.85 (Very Low), 1.86–2.71 (Low), 2.72–3.57 (Somewhat Low), 3.58–4.43 (Moderate), 4.44–5.29 (Somewhat High), 5.30–6.15 (High), and 6.16–7.00 (Very High) are the range of values used in this investigation.

Table 2: Results of Descriptive Analysis

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Stdv	Mean	Total Mean
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree			
PI1	3,8%	3,2%	12,1%	13,4%	28,7%	24,8%	14,0%	1,522	4,904	4,701
PI2	10,2%	8,9%	13,4%	17,2%	22,3%	17,2%	10,8%	1,794	4,274	
PI3	1,3%	5,7%	9,6%	22,3%	21,7%	22,9%	16,6%	1,487	4,924	
PP1	0%	0,6%	1,9%	7,0%	22,9%	42,7%	24,8%	0,995	5,796	5,922
PP2	0%	0%	5,1%	9,6%	22,9%	33,8%	28,7%	1,129	5,713	
PP3	0%	0%	1,3%	1,9%	14,0%	31,2%	51,6%	0,870	6,299	
PP4	0%	0%	3,8%	5,1%	19,7%	42%	29,3%	1,012	5,879	
CE1	0%	0%	1,9%	7,0%	19,1%	30,6%	41,4%	1,028	6,025	6,669
CE2	0%	0%	0,6%	7,0%	17,2%	35,0%	40,1%	0,952	6,070	
CE3	3,8%	7,0%	9,6%	12,7%	22,9%	28,7%	15,3%	1,625	4,911	
BM1	0%	0,6%	3,2%	6,4%	23,6%	37,6%	28,7%	1,061	5,803	5,934
BM2	0,6%	2,5%	1,3%	6,4%	12,1%	28,7%	48,4%	1,240	6,064	
BA1	0,6%	0%	1,3%	12,7%	22,3%	31,2%	31,8%	1,128	5,771	
BA2	0%	0%	0,6%	0,6%	10,2%	27,4%	61,1%	0,754	6,478	6,019
BA3	0%	0%	0,6%	12,7%	22,9%	32,5%	31,2%	1,035	5,809	

The results showed that product involvement has a high mean value, indicating a high level of consumer involvement with the Kopiko candy product. Most respondents felt that this candy suited their daily needs and felt enthusiastic when thinking about Kopiko candy, although some respondents did not consider it an essential need. Placement prominence recorded a high value, indicating that the placement of Kopiko in Doctor Slump was very prominent. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Kopiko was clearly visible in important scenes, with almost no respondents disagreeing with the statements. Celebrity endorsement received a very high value, indicating that celebrity endorsement in the drama effectively influenced consumers' perception and memory of Kopiko. Respondents generally felt that Kopiko influenced the characters in the drama, although there was some disagreement.

Brand attitude also showed a high value, indicating a positive consumer attitude towards the Kopiko brand after watching the drama. Respondents tended to have increased liking, trust, and interest in this brand. Finally, the brand memory variable had a high value, indicating that product placement in the drama successfully increased brand awareness. Most respondents could recall Kopiko after watching the drama and were aware of its presence in the scenes.

In the coefficient of determination (R^2) test, the brand memory variable was explained by the independent variables by 58%, indicating a moderate relationship, while brand attitude was

explained by 45.8%. The effect size test results showed that product involvement had a strong influence on brand memory but only moderate on brand attitude, indicating more cognitive than affective consumer association. Placement prominence and celebrity endorsement had a very weak relationship with brand attitude and brand memory, indicating less effective marketing strategy or other dominant factors. Therefore, further evaluation of placement prominence and celebrity endorsement is needed, as well as further research to identify other factors influencing the effectiveness of product placement strategies in Korean dramas.

Table 3: Effect Size Test Result

	BA	BM
PI	0,106	0,733
PP	0,032	0,010
CE	0,137	0,041

Nearly all the hypotheses have a significant and positive effect, according to the significant test results based on Table 4. The impacts of product involvement on brand memory and brand attitude are tested by hypotheses H1a and H1b, which demonstrate significant, positive effects at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels. This implies that viewers of Doctor Slump have a stronger brand recall and brand attitude the more involved they are with the product. Placement prominence has a favorable effect at the 5% and 10% levels (p-value < 0.05 but > 0.01) in H2b, indicating a positive effect on brand attitude, but in H2a it has no significant effect on brand memory (p-value > 0.10). At the 5% and 10% significance levels, hypotheses H3a and H3b demonstrate the significant and positive impacts of celebrity endorsement on brand memory and brand attitude, whereas H3b demonstrates significant effects at all significance levels. These findings suggest that celebrity endorsement improves viewers of Doctor Slump's brand attitude and memory.

Table 4: Significance Test Result

	Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Conclusion
H1a	PI -> BM	0,620	0,620	0,065	9,469	0,000	Significant and positive
H1b	PI -> BA	0,268	0,272	0,079	3,397	0,000	Significant and positive
H2a	PP ->BM	0,088	0,093	0,089	0,989	0,161	Not significant
H2b	PP -> BA	0,182	0,187	0,097	1,889	0,029	Significant and positive
H3a	CE -> BM	0,181	0,179	0,085	2,216	0,017	Significant and positive
H3b	CE -> BA	0,377	0,374	0,093	4,072	0,000	Significant and positive

Table 5 shows that brand memory and brand attitude are significantly and favorably impacted by product involvement. This is in line with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which describes how brand attitude is influenced by the degree of product participation through both central and peripheral pathways. According to ELM, high levels of product involvement in product placement tend to stimulate processing via the central route, whereas low levels of product involvement tend to encourage processing via the peripheral route. Customers employ the central route to act and process information when they feel compelled to comprehend advertising and can do so. Consequently, heightened product involvement heightens brand

attitude and recall. These findings are consistent with Li (2023) study, which demonstrates that product involvement has a major impact on brand attitude and memory.

The results of this study refute hypothesis H2a, which holds that location prominence improves brand recall. Human attention capacity is restricted, as explained by the restricted Capacity Model of Attention (LCM) theory. Many tasks compete for our attention while we process information, with primary tasks frequently taking precedence over secondary tasks, causing us to pay less attention to secondary tasks (Chebat & Michon, 2003). The researchers believe that viewers are overly preoccupied with the drama tale and are not paying particular attention to placement prominence, classifying it as a secondary activity.

On the other hand, hypothesis H2b is accepted, suggesting that placement prominence influences brand attitude in a favorable way. This might be because of product placement becoming more prominent in the Korean drama Doctor Slump, either through increasing frequency or exposure duration, which raises consumer knowledge of the brand (Zajonc, 2001). A compelling relationship is created between the product placement and the primary characters, which lessens the commercial aspect of the placement and makes it easier for customers to accept marketing messages in a laid-back and less defensive manner. This improves brand attitude and lessens the impression of persuasive intent (Eisend & Tarrahi, 2022).

According to this study, brand attitude and brand memory are positively and significantly impacted by celebrity endorsement. According to earlier studies, product placement strategy is significantly influenced by the empathy effect of celebrity endorsement (Shi, Lu, Xhou, Sun, Wang, & Geng, 2021). When a celebrity plays the lead role in a Korean drama like Doctor Slump, the public tends to identify with them and grow to love them. Their favorable perceptions of the celebrity are subsequently extended to the goods and companies that feature in the drama (Burnasheva & Suh, 2021). Put differently, the emotional bond that exists between the public and the celebrity shapes their perception of the endorsed brand, helps them remember it, and enhances their attitude toward it. This suggests that celebrity endorsement improves brand memory and attitude by strengthening the emotional bond between customers and the brand and raising brand awareness.

Table 5: Summary of Research Results

Hypothesis	Statement	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Conclusion
H1a	Product involvement positively affects brand memory	9,469	0,000	Data supports the hypothesis
H1b	Product involvement positively affects brand attitude	3,397	0,000	Data supports the hypothesis
H2a	Placement prominence positively affects brand memory	0,989	0,161	Data does not support the hypothesis
H2b	Placement prominence positively affects brand attitude	1,889	0,029	Data supports the hypothesis
H3a	Celebrity endorsement positively affects brand memory	2,216	0,017	Data supports the hypothesis
H3b	Celebrity endorsement positively affects brand attitude	4,072	0,000	Data supports the hypothesis

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study's findings show that product involvement has a positive and significant impact on brand attitude and memory. While there is no obvious effect on brand memory, the placement prominence variable has a positive and significant effect on brand attitude. In the meantime, both the dependent variables, brand attitude and brand memory, benefit significantly from celebrity endorsement.

When putting product placement techniques into practice, practitioners must carefully integrate products into high-quality content. Reputable actors and captivating stories are essential for drawing viewers in, as consumers' ability to evaluate the quality of information is advancing. The interaction between the product and the main characters ought to strengthen persuasive messaging by associating the benefits of the product with a story that deepens the bond between the audience and the actors. To have a favorable effect on brand attitude and brand memory, the product must be in harmony with the plot and the main characters. The study's findings also suggest that screen ratio or exposure duration alone are less efficient. To significantly influence consumer memory and attitude toward the brand, practitioners must improve the relevance and clarity of product placement by selecting appropriate product involvement and connecting the product with the drama's narrative. They must also make sure the product is not only visible but also relevant and closely related to the story.

It is advised that more journal references be included in future studies to create indicators and enhance variables like customer satisfaction, purchase intention, and brand loyalty. To improve the link between independent and dependent variables and prevent significant correlations among indicators, it is also crucial to review the variable items. Subsequent studies may broaden their geographical focus to examine the efficacy of product placement across several regions, including Southeast Asia and Europe, and concentrate on target marketing nations like Vietnam and the Philippines. To increase data accuracy, researchers should also perform studies as soon as the drama airs, balance the sample proportion, especially among men, and enhance respondent profiles with more detailed questions.

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