ATTITUDES TOWARDS ETHICAL PROBLEMS IN PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN MASS COMMUNICATION TOOLS•

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Abstract

It is common to include branded products in mass media programming. Previous research has focused more on media attitudes to film and television product placements. The viewer/listener/reader may not be aware that the product, which looks like merely a reflection of ordinary reality as when watching a movie, television show, music video or when playing a video game or even reading a book, is in fact a truly manufactured structure that reflects the exchange of goods and services between the advertiser and the celebrity or the producer and a potential consumer, containing an implicit advertising message. In this study, it was determined to what degree the ethical issues were being observed in product placements by seeing what kind of an attitude was adopted against unethical products in mass media and in product placement activities. As a result, in product placement applications; smoking, alcohol, weapons, obesity-causing foods and drugs were found to be unethical by their nature. It has also been found that those who are more frequently exposed to product placements are more inclined to accept further product placement. It has been determined that the sense of artificial closeness and belonging created by product placement applications also applies to products that are unethical to be advertised on mass media. It may not always be noticed by a consumer that there is a product placement application within his/her attention span. Therefore, it has been determined that people are unconsciously influenced by brands that they are seeing without realizing the harmful effects of the manipulative process.

Keywords: Mass Media, Product Placement, Ethics.

1. Introduction

Changes in communication technologies have caused an increase in alternative mass communication tools which can also be used in blocking and frustrating communication itself. The new media causes changes in the way the mass media affects a population, by making it possible to use multiple media at the same time, as it also causes a change in the general direction the mass media takes.

Media has an undeniably great place in the formation of our personality, after the social environment (Arslan & Bal, 2019). Product placement is the for-use addition of the brand to any mass media (Russell & Belch, 2005). Product placements are defined as paid addition of branded products or brand identifiers to mass media programming by audio and/or visual means (Karrh, 1998). Russell (1998), mentions three types of placements as visual, verbal and plot placement. Visual placement visually integrates the brand into the background, verbal placement means the brand mentioned in the dialogue and plot placement occurs when the product becomes part of the plot, takes an important place in the story line, or creates the personality of a character (Russell, 1998).

Product placement is the placement of a brand in the media of mass media such as a movie, computer, TV programs, blogs, video games, music videos/DVDs, magazines, books, musicals, internet, and mobile phones, etc. (Soba& Aydin, 2013). The use of product placement by advertisers and creative producers to improve the reality of an entertainment environment, whether it's movies or television, music videos or video games, can raise ethical concerns. The theory of social construction of reality advocates that everyone is born in a world where others teach them what reality is. Individuals also learn from mass media. Solomon and Englis (1994), expanded the theory of social construction of reality to include product placement practices, arguing that product placements were a form of reality engineering built by advertisers, and noted that the realities of viewers who saw images of mass media as reflections of reality were in fact designed by marketing people themselves.

While product placement is one of the fastest growing forms of marketing communication, there are questions about both the benefits, disadvantages, and effectiveness of product placement. The aim of this study is to critically discuss the role, benefits and/or disadvantages of product placement in marketing communication strategy by clearly revealing their definitions, objectives, strategies, and effectiveness in creating value compared to other types of communications and promotions. The effectiveness of product placement will be considered a global marketing communication tool by examining a study conducted in the US and relevant regulations in the UK (Soba & Aydin, 2013).

Product placements represent the paid addition of branded products to mass media programming through audio-visual means. Placements reflect a mixed feature that combines key elements of advertising and promotional messages. With the decrease in the effectiveness of traditional advertising, marketing expenditures allocated to product placements are increasing. Product placements are preferred with its expanding scope (TV shows, movies, songs, etc.). Product placements have a strategic advantage over traditional ads because they are embedded in editorial content that audiences are actively looking for (Ferle & Edwards, 2006). In addition, exposure to product placements usually occurs in an environment where there is a prisoner audience (for example, a movie theater). Taken together, they provide ideal conditions for unobtrusively impressing viewers for commercial benefit, using a message format that reflects a non-commercial character. Therefore, audiences are less likely to be aware of the persuasive nature of product placements (Balasubramanian, Pillai, Patwardhan & Zhao, 2019).

Balasubramanian (1994) conceptualizes product placement as a mixed message that combines the basic characteristics of advertising and promotional messages. Product placements are often seen in television shows, movies, songs, music videos, video games, blogs, and novels. Product placement can be classified according to various criteria. Product placement is available in many audio-visual formats that affect customers today (Brennan, 2011; De Gregorio and Sung, 2010; Lehu, 2007). Newell, Salmon and Chang (2006) claim that product placements have an important history that enriches and informs existing applications. When product placement is applied correctly, it is a global marketing strategy that offers great benefits and a wide audience for brands. Despite restrictions on advertising of unethical products such as tobacco, alcohol, cigarettes, and weapons, it has become possible to market these products, albeit in secret, thanks to the increasing alternatives in mass media.

While there are warnings and controls about product placement in traditional mass media, there are deficits in the new media as well. When product placement is done naturally, it may not be perceived as advertising because it does not disturb the integrity of the content and is not very noticeable at all. At this point, it is important to take attitudes towards ethical problems in product placement encountered in mass media. The attitude is used to refer to a general and persistent positive or negative feeling about a person, object, or matter (Petty, Cacioppo & Goldman, 1981). According to Moriarty, Mitchell, and William (2014), advertisers are particularly interested in attitudes, trying to understand how attitude arise or change, as they provide information about how consumers evaluate products and advertising. Advertisers produce messages and contents to change consumer attitudes by taking advantage of the structure of their attitudes

that can be learned, created, changed, reinforced, or replaced with new ones. Viewers' belief in a product or consumer behavior can be positively affected through product placement (Hudson & Hudson, 2006). Ansons and Leboe (2011) observed the effects of product placement on human behavior and its impact on human behavior and decision-making. From this point of view, the cognitive (epistemic), emotional (emotional) and conative (active, involuntary) process of human behavior may be affected by product placement (Balasubramanian, Karrh & Patwardhan, 2006).

According to Gupta and Gould (1997), product placement is an important and emerging area of marketing communication but on the other hand, it raises ethical issues that are ripe for contemplation as well. Product placement can be handled in two ethical ways. Research conducted to determine the effectiveness of product placements in television programs, movies and music and similar entertainment media shows similar results regarding consumer and audience attitudes (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993; Ong &Meri, 1994). Many research fear that product placement will generally not be recognized as advertising due to its specific form and therefore unconsciously affects against their will (Balasubramanian, 1994; D'Astous & Chartier, 2000; D'Astous & Séguin, 1999; Gupta & Balasubramanian 2000; Gupta & Gould 1997; Morton & Friedman, 2002). These concerns are especially raised when it comes to children and young adults who are considered particularly vulnerable to persuasive communication (Banerjee, 2004; Auty & Lewis, 2004; Tiwsakul &Hackley, 2007). This is due to the over the time construction of information on what tactics to influence advertising (Gunter, Oates, Blades, 2005; Macklin, 1985; Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2007; Moschis, 1987). The fact that the ad can be presented naturally in the context of product placement means less defensive reaction by consumers (D'Astous &Chartier, 2000). Since the placement is often not processed consciously, it can be defined as subconscious targeting advertising (Auty & Lewis, 2004; Balasubramanian, 1994). In general, product placement is difficult to evaluate ethically due to strong implicit effects (Hackley, Tiwsakul & Preus, 2008).

2. Method

In this study, the ethical acceptability of product placement was evaluated in mass media. Accordingly, the findings and managerial effects of possible concerns about ethically problematic product placements were investigated and a relevant survey was conducted based on the work of Hackley and Tiwsakul (2005) and Gupta and Gould (1997).

Twenty-six products of Hackley and Tiwsakul (2005) on product placement (weapons, tobacco, alcohol, soft drinks, books, cameras, sugar/fatty foods, automobiles, computers, cosmetics, medicines, food, jewelry, clothing, magazines, motorcycles, movies, musical instruments, music, telephones, televisions, sports products, sunglasses, toys, watches, and household appliances) from the category of weapons, tobacco, soft drinks, drug and various obesity-causing foods harmful to human health. Afterwards, the attitudes of the participants were measured with a 5-point Likert Scale.

Arnett stated that identity formation continues between the ages of 18 and 25. In this period, which is considered as the transition to adult life with the late period of youth, individuals seek identity, become unstable and experience the age in which they are most focused on themselves. This age period is an emotional transition period, neither adolescent nor adult (Tanner & Arnett, 2009). In this context, simple incidental sampling method was used in research. For these reasons, the universe of my research was made up of 300 university students between the ages of 18 and 25.

The data obtained in the study were analyzed using SPSS 21.0 program. Descriptive statistical methods were used when evaluating the data. The obtained findings were evaluated at 95% confidence interval and 5% significance level.

3. Results

Table 1. Demographic Data in the Context of Frequency Analysis

Gender	Female	176	58,7
	Male	124	41,3
	Total	300	100,0

In Table 1, according to the gender variable, 176 (58.7%) are female and 124 (41.3%) are male.

Table 2. Frequency Analysis for Acceptability of Products Used in Product Placement

Variables	Groups	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Weapons	Unacceptable	279	93,0
	I have no idea.	12	4,0
	Acceptable	9	3,0
	Total	300	100,0
Tobacco	Unacceptable	232	77,3
	I have no idea.	24	8,0
	Acceptable	44	14,7
	Total	300	100,0
Alcohol	Unacceptable	187	62,3
	I have no idea.	31	10,3
	Acceptable	82	27,3
	Total	300	100,0
Soft Drinks	Unacceptable	125	41,7
	I have no idea.	34	11,3
	Acceptable	141	47,0
	Total	300	100,0
Sugar Snacks Fatty Foods	Unacceptable	181	60,3
	I have no idea.	55	18,3
	Acceptable	64	21,3
	Total	300	100,0
Drug	Unacceptable	191	63,7
	I have no idea.	55	18,3
	Acceptable	54	18,0
	Total	300	100,0
Food	Unacceptable	38	12,7
	I have no idea.	27	9,0
	Acceptable	235	78,3
	Total	300	100,0

In Table 2, according to the weapons variable, 279 (93.0%) are unacceptable, 12 (4.0%) have no idea, 9 (3.0%) are dispersed as acceptable. According to the tobacco variable of the participants, 232 (77.3%) are unacceptable, 24 (8.0%) have no idea, 44 (14.7%) are dispersed as acceptable. According to the alcohol variable, 187 (62.3%) of the participants are unacceptable, 31 (10.3%) have no idea, 82 (27.3%) are dispersed as acceptable. According to the soft drink's variable, 125 (41.7%) of respondents are unacceptable, 34 (11.3%) have no idea, 141 (47.0%) are dispersed as acceptable. According to the sugar/snacks/fatty foods variable of participants, 181 (60.3%) are unacceptable, 55 (18.3%) have no idea, 64 (21.3%) are dispersed as acceptable. According to the drug variable, 191 (63.7%) of the participants are unacceptable, 55 (18.3%) have no idea, 54 (18.0%) are dispersed as acceptable. According to the food variable, 38 (12.7%) of the participants are unacceptable, 27 (9.0%) have no idea, 235 (78.3%) are dispersed as acceptable.

Table 3. Attitude, Acceptable Levels of Unethical and Neutral Products

	n	mean	ss	min.	max.
Attitude	300	3,384	0,330	1,850	5,000
Acceptance of Unethical Products Availability	300	3,330	3,238	0,000	12,000
Acceptability of neutral products	300	38,717	4,956	15,000	42,000

In Table 3, the attitude level of the participants participating in the research is medium (3,384 ± 0,330); The 'acceptability of unethical products' level (3,330 ± 3,238); 'Acceptability of neutral products' level (38.717 ± 4.956); was determined as. Accordingly, it was determined that unethical (weapons, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, obesity-causing foods) were unacceptable, while neutral products (cars, computers, etc.) were acceptable by the participants.

Table 4. Distributions of Attitude Data on Ethical Problems Encountered in Product Placement

	I totally disagree.		I don't agree with that.		Neither Agree nor Agree		Agree		I totally agree.		mean	ss
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Affected by unethical products (smoking, alcohol, firearms, obesity-making foods, medicines, etc.) in product placement application with frequency of use in mass media used in product placement (cinema, television, games, books, etc.) there is a connection between the two.	10	3,3	5	1,7	11	3,7	119	39,7	155	51,7	4,350	0,896
In product placement applications, the use of the product is mostly flawless characters, creating a positive image for the brand.	26	8,7	0	0,0	8	2,7	116	38,7	150	50,0	4,213	1,125
In product placement applications, it makes you want to buy even if the placed product is found to be harmful.	22	7,3	6	2,0	19	6,3	112	37,3	141	47,0	4,147	1,121
In product placement applications, I'm interested in all kinds of products that my favorite character uses.	28	9,3	10	3,3	19	6,3	97	32,3	146	48,7	4,077	1,234
The sense of closeness and belonging created by product placement applications also applies to products that are unethical to advertise.	21	7,0	4	1,3	20	6,7	94	31,3	161	53,7	4,233	1,112
The reaction of men and women is different in the placement of products that are unethical to advertise, such as weapons.	28	9,3	5	1,7	32	10,7	94	31,3	141	47,0	4,050	1,219
The insistence of children on the products they see in the placement of products is a problem in their relationship with their families.	27	9,0	3	1,0	4	1,3	129	43,0	137	45,7	4,153	1,141
In product placement applications, by brands that we see without our subconscious realizing the effect.	28	9,3	0	0,0	6	2,0	125	41,7	141	47,0	4,170	1,143
It may not always be noticed that there is a product placement application.	23	7,7	3	1,0	14	4,7	96	32,0	164	54,7	4,250	1,125
Real brands with product placement make movies, etc. more realistic than fictional (imaginary) brands.	9	3,0	5	1,7	37	12,3	128	42,7	121	40,3	4,157	0,917
I don't mind seeing product placement unless it's seen as unethical	16	5,3	15	5,0	60	20,0	106	35,3	103	34,3	3,883	1,102
I don't want brands to be planted for commercial reasons when products can be put into place as fictional (imaginary).	22	7,3	13	4,3	32	10,7	135	45,0	98	32,7	3,913	1,124
Product placement provides sympathy for the brand.	0	0,0	12	4,0	15	5,0	118	39,3	155	51,7	4,387	0,761

In Table 4, participants say, "There is a link between the frequency of use in mass media used in the placement of meds (cinema, television, games, books, etc.) and the impact of unethical products (smoking, alcohol, firearms, obesity-causing foods, medicines, etc.) in the application of product placement.' 3.3% (n=10) absolutely disagree, 1.7% (n=5) disagree, 3.7% (n=11) disagree, 39.7% (n=119) agree, 51.7% (n=155) definitely agree. Participants were found to have attended a remarkably high level (4,350 ± 0,896) to the statement that 'There is a link between the frequency of use in mass media used in product placement (cinema, television, games, books, etc.) and the impact on unethical products (cigarettes, alcohol, firearms, obesity-making foods, medicines, etc.) in product placement application.

In product placement applications, 8.7% (n=26) of respondents strongly disagree, 2.7% agree with (n=8) 38.7% agree (n=116), 50.0% (n=150) agree. Participants were found to have joined the expression 'In product placement applications, the use of the product is mostly flawless characters, creating a positive image for the brand', at a remarkably high level (4,213 ± 1,125).

In product placement applications, it makes you want to buy even if the placed product is found to be harmful.' 7.3% (n=22) absolutely disagree, 2.0% (n=6) disagree, 6.3% (n=19) disagree neither agree nor agree, 37.3% (n=112) agree, 47.0% (n=141) have said they agree. Participants were found to have attended a high (4,147 ± 1,121) statement that 'In product placement applications, it makes you want to buy even if the placed product is found to be harmful.

In product placement applications, I am interested in any product that the character I like uses. 9.3% (n=28) absolutely disagree, 3.3% (n=10) disagree, 6.3% (n=19) disagree, 32.3% (n=97) agree, 48.7% (n=146) have said they agree. Participants were found to have attended a high (4,077 ± 1,234) statement that 'In product placement applications, I'm interested in any product that the character I like uses.

The sense of closeness and belonging created by product placement practices also applies to products that are unethical to advertise." 7.0% (n=21) absolutely disagree, 1.3% (n=4) disagree, 6.7% (n=20) disagree, 31.3% (n=94) agree, 53.7% (n=161) have said they agree. Participants were found to have joined the statement 'The sense of closeness and belonging created by product placement applications also applies to products unethical to advertise at a remarkably high level (4,233 ± 1,112).

The reaction of men and women is different in the placement of products that are unethical to advertise, such as weapons." 9.3% (n=28) absolutely disagree, 1.7% (n=5) disagree, 10.7% (n=32) disagree neither agree nor agree, 31.3% (n=94) agree, 47.0% (n=141) have said they agree. Participants were found to have attended a high (4,050 to 1,219) statement that 'The reaction of men and women is different ± in placing products that are unethical to advertise, such as weapons.

The insistence of children on the products they see in the placement of products is a problem in their relationship with their families." 9.0% (n=27) I absolutely disagree, 1.0% (n=3) disagree, 1.1%(n=4) neither agree nor disagree, 43.0% (n=129) agree, 45.7% (n=137) have definitely said they agree. . Participants were found to have attended a high (4,153 ± 1,141) statement that 'Children persistently want the products they see in product placement, creating problems in their relationship with their families.'

'In product placement applications, our subconscious is influenced by brands that we see without realizing it.' 9.3% (n=28) of respondents said they absolutely disagreed, 2.0% (n=6) disagreed with neither agree nor disagreed, 41.7% (n=125) agreed, and 47.0% (n=141) agreed. Participants were found to have attended a high level (4,170 ± 1,143) in product placement applications, which we saw without realizing the effect on our subconscious.

It may not always be noticed that there is a product placement application." 7.7% (n=23) absolutely disagree, 1.0% (n=3) disagree, 4.7% (n=14) disagree, 32.0% (n=96) agree, 54.7% (n=164) have said they agree.

Participants were found to have attended the phrase 'Product placement application may not always be noticed.' at a remarkably high level (4,250 ± 1,125).

Real brands where products are placed make movies, etc., more realistic than fictional (imaginary) brands.". 3.0% (n=9) absolutely disagree, 1.7% (n=5) disagree, 12.3% (n=37) disagree, 42.7% (n=128) agree, 40.3% (n=121) agree. Participants were found to have attended a high (4,157 ± 0,917) level of 'Real brands placed in products make movies, etc., more realistic than fictional (imaginary) brands.

5.3% (n=16) of respondents disagreed with the phrase 'I don't mind seeing product placement unless it seems unreal,' 5.0% (n=15) disagree, 20.0% (n=60) disagree, 35.3% agree (n=106), 34.3% (n=103) have said they agree. Participants were found to have attended a high (3,883 ± 1,102) statement: 'I don't mind seeing product placement unless it seems unreal.'

7.3% (n=22) of respondents disagreed with the statement that 'I do not want brands to be planted for commercial reasons when products can be made fictionally (imaginary),' 4.3% (n=13) disagree, 10.7% (n=32) disagree neither agree nor disagree, 45.0% (n=135) agree, and 32.7% (n=98) have said they agree. Participants were found to have attended a high (3,913 ± 1,124) statement that 'I do not want brands to be planted for commercial reasons when products can be made as fictional (imaginary).

4.0% (n=12) of respondents disagreed with the statement 'Product placement provides sympathy for the brand', 5.0% (n=15) disagreed neither agree with nor disagree, 39.3% (n=118) and 51.7% (n=155) agreed. Participants were asked, 'Product placement provides sympathy for the brand.

Table 5. T-Test Analysis of Attitudes to Ethical Problems in Product Placement Encountered in Mass Media

	group	n	mean	ss	t	p
There is a link between the frequency of use in mass media used in product placement (cinema, television, games, books, etc.) and the impact on unethical products (smoking, alcohol, firearms, obesity causing foods, medicines, etc.) in product placement application.	Yes	275	3,510	0,600	4,499	0,004
	No	25	2,920	0,909		
In product placement applications, our subconscious is affected by brands that we see without realizing it.	Yes	275	3,506	0,529	2,012	0,045
	No	25	3,280	0,614		
It may not always be noticed that there is a product placement application.	Yes	275	3,556	0,592	3,660	0,016
	No	25	3,080	0,909		
Product placement provides sympathy for the brand.	Yes	275	3,429	0,723	3,254	0,001
	No	25	2,920	0,997		
Attitude	Yes	275	3,404	0,305	3,658	0,019
	No	25	3,157	0,485		

In Table 5, participants who participated in the research said, 'There   is a link between the frequency of use in mass media used in product placement (cinema, television, games, books, etc.) and the impact on unethical products in product placement application (smoking, alcohol, firearms, obesity-making foods, medicines, etc.). As a result of the t-test conducted to determine whether the means of the scores differed significantly according to the variable of thinking that it was an ethical problem, the difference between the group averages was statistically significant (t=4,499; p=0.004<0.05). Those who think that there are ethical problems with product placement practices encountered in communication tools will be told that 'In the mass media used in product placement (cinema, there is a link between the frequency of use of televisions, games, books, etc.) and the influence with unethical products (smoking, alcohol, firearms, obesity-making foods, medicines, etc.) in product placement practice. Scores (x=3,510)   were found to be higher than those who thought there were no ethical issues with product placement practices encountered in mass media (x=2,920).

Participants in the study said, 'In product placement applications, our subconscious is influenced by brands that we see without realizing it'. As a result of the t-test conducted to determine whether the means of the scores showed a significant difference according to the variable of thinking it was an ethical problem, the difference between the group means was statistically significant (t=2,012; p=0.045<0.05). Those who think that there is an ethical problem with product placement practices encountered in mass communication tools 'In product placement applications, our subconscious is influenced by brands that we see without realizing it.' scores (x=3,506)   were found to be higher than those who thought there were no ethical problems with product placement practices encountered in mass media (x=3,280).

Participants in the study said, 'It may not always be noticed that it is a product placement application'. As a result of the t-test conducted to determine whether the means of the scores showed a significant difference according to the variable of thinking it was an ethical problem, the difference between the group averages was statistically significant (t=3,660; p=0.016<0.05). Those who think that there is an ethical problem with product placement applications encountered in mass communication tools may not always be noticed as 'Product placement application.' (x=3,556)   were found to be higher than those who thought there were no ethical problems with product placement practices encountered in mass media (x=3,080).

Participants in the study said, 'Product placement provides sympathy for the brand'. As a result of the t-test conducted to determine whether the means of the scores showed a significant difference according to the variable of thinking it was an ethical problem, the difference between the group averages was statistically significant (t=3,254; p=0.001<0.05). Those who thought there was an ethical problem with product placement practices encountered in mass communication tools had higher scores (x=3,429) than those   who thought there were no ethical problems with product placement practices encountered in mass media (x=2,920).

As a result of the t-test conducted to determine whether the average attitude scores of the participants in the study showed a significant difference according to the variable of thinking that the ethical problem was an ethical problem, the difference between the group means was statistically significant

(t=3,658; p=0.019<0.05). Attitude scores (x=3,404) of those who thought there was an ethical problem with product placement practices encountered in mass communication tools were found to be higher than the attitude scores (x=3,157) of those who thought there were no ethical problems with product placement practices encountered in mass media.

3. Conclusion

When the attitudes of the participants for ethical problems encountered in product placement were examined, it was determined that the participants had a connection between the frequency of use of mass media used in product placement (cinema, television, games, books, etc.) and the influence of unethical products in product placement applications (smoking, alcohol, firearms, obesity-making foods, medicines, etc.) and that in product placement applications, the product placed created a desire and made them want to buy the product even if it was noticed that it was harmful. Concerning the smoking, alcohol, firearms, obesity-causing foods, and drugs, product placements were found to be ethically unacceptable. In other studies, it is also seen that they are clearly supporting the results of our research.

Gupta and Gould (1997) investigated consumer ethical perceptions and the acceptability of product placement in films, product category and individual differences. As a result, while there are generally positive attitudes towards product placement, unethical products such as alcohol, cigarettes and weapons are perceived as less acceptable than others.

Hackley and Tiwsakul (2005) studied consumers' ethical perceptions on television shows. Ethical concerns are focused on products that are ethically problematic and a hidden promotion of product placement. The ethical concerns related to product placement depend on how it is included in mass media in terms of content and targeting. There are concerns about the placement of unhealthy and potentially dangerous products, including beverages, tobacco, and weapons, for advertising purposes in mass media. One of the most important ethical concerns is about the impact of the effect of the brands on the potential consumer's vulnerable unconscious.

It has been determined that there is, most of the time, a product placement application in mass media and that the consumers can be affected unconsciously by brands that we see in product placement applications without any conscious realization of the consumer him/herself. The effect of product placement on the subconscious can create ethical problems.

Those who think that there are ethical problems with product placement practices encountered in mass media have a link between the frequency of use in mass media used in product placement (cinema, television, games, books, etc.) and the unethical products in product placement applications (smoking, alcohol, firearms, obesity-making foods, medicines, etc.). Product placement practices are naively thought to provide sympathy for any particular brand. In product placement applications, it has been determined that we are unconsciously influenced by the brands that we see, without realizing the manipulative process in action.

As a result, it is found that these commercial practices are ethically inconvenient and as being generating serious health risk by promoting products that may be containing life-threatening risk factors such as cigarettes, alcohol, firearms, obesity-causing foods, medicines, and other medical products that are able to affect the subconscious by creating a sense of affinity and belonging with product placement practices. Especially vulnerable groups (children, adolescents, elderly, etc.) there have no opinions whatsoever about the lack of ethics of product placement practices, should be protected by legal measures and those unethical products should be banned from placement. Despite the legal regulations, legal gaps can still be found due to the structure of the new media corporations and similar mass media applications. Media literacy is an important factor in the ability of the viewer, listener and the reader to protect themselves against these harmful messages in mass media.

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