

**The Effect Product Placement in Television Series has on
Millennial's Brand Perception and Buying Behavior.**

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Table of contents

i.	Declaration	Page 5
ii.	Acknowledgements.....	Page 6
iii.	Glossary of terms.....	Page 7
iv.	Abstract.....	Page 8
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION		PAGE 9
1.	Introduction	Page 9
2.	Rationale	Page 11
3.	Problem Statement	Page 12
4.	Purpose Statement	Page 13
5.	Research Questions & Objectives	Page 13
6.	Chapter Outline.....	Page 15
7.	Summary	Page 15
 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....		PAGE 16
8.	Introduction	Page 16
9.	Research Paradigm	Page 16
10.	Theoretical Foundation	Page 17
	a. Product Placement.....	Page 17
	b. Keller's CBBE Model	Page 18
	c. The Balancing Theory.....	Page 25
	d. Modality	Page 27
11.	Summary	Page 29
 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		PAGE 30
12.	Introduction	Page 30
13.	Research Methodology.....	Page 30
14.	Research Design	Page 30
15.	Population.....	Page 31
16.	Sampling technique	Page 32
17.	Data collection	Page 33
18.	Stimuli	Page 35
19.	Data analysis	Page 37
20.	Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness	Page 38
21.	Ethical consideration	Page 39
22.	Summary	Page 40

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	PAGE 41
23. Introduction	Page 41
24. Presentation and discussion of findings	Page 41
25. Summary of product placement in Modern Family and Friends ..	Page 56
26. Concluding remarks	Page 57
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PAGE 59
27. Introduction	Page 59
28. Objective One	Page 59
29. Objective Two	Page 61
30. Objective Three	Page 62
31. Suggestions	Page 63
32. Conclusion	Page 64
33. References	Page 65
34. Annexure A	Page 66
35. Annexure B	Page 69
36. Appendix.....	Page 70

Table of figures

1. Keller's CBBE Model (2008)	Page 21
2. Keller's Brand Value Chain (2008)	Page 23
3. Link between CBBE Model and Brand Value Chain	Page 23
4. Balance Model by Russel and Stern (2006)	Page 26
5. Modality Framework by Russel (1998)	Page 28
6. Data analysis process by Seidel (1998)	Page 37
7. Gender of respondents	Page 41
8. Amount of respondents that watched Friends	Page 42
9. Frequency of respondents watching Friends	Page 42
10. Amount of respondents that remember brands	Page 43
11. Brand awareness in Friends	Page 43
12. Good match between brands and Friends.....	Page 44
13. Television series influence on brand perception.....	Page 45
14. Amount that respondents like Friends actors	Page 46
15. Brand activity of Friends	Page 47
16. Amount of respondents that watched Modern Family	Page 48
17. Frequency of respondents watching Modern Family	Page 48
18. Amount of respondents that remember brands	Page 48
19. Brand awareness in Modern Family	Page 49
20. Good match between brands and Modern Family.....	Page 50
21. Television series influence on brand perception.....	Page 51
22. Amount that respondents like Modern Family actors.....	Page 52
23. Brand activity of Modern Family	Page 53
24. Respondents agreement with product placement	Page 54
25. The influence actors have on brand perception.....	Page 54
26. The extent that product placement is distracting	Page 55
27. Overall brand awareness.....	Page 56
28. Overall brand activity	Page 57

i. DECLARATION

I, Kimberley Tocknell, declare that this dissertation is of my own original work. Any secondary research material that has been used in this dissertation has either been a print source or from the Internet. I am well aware that plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas and work without appropriate and specific acknowledgement. All sources are referenced using the required Harvard way of referencing and can be found at the end of this document.

I hereby declare that this research report is submitted for the BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication degree to the Independent Institute of Education and is my own work and has not been previously submitted to another University of Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Student Number: 13022032

Date 16 October 2017

Signed: K. Tocknell

ii. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to say a big thank you to my mother and father for giving me the opportunity to further my studies and to those who made this research study possible, namely Alec Bozas my navigator and Carolanda Du Toit my supervisor.

iii. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. Product Placement

According to Hardy (2017), it was believed that product placement started with the introduction of motion pictures in the mid 1980s. Product placement is for movie productions and television series to use products from different brands in order to reduce the cost of production and to increase the realism of the story line by adding real life brands (2017, p.1).

2. Brand Equity

Keller (2008) describes brand equity as the value added to a brand through its products and services, and can be seen as indicator of the success of a brand (Keller, 2008, p. 52).

3. Millennial

According to Quad Graphics Consumer Study (2017), Millennial's are the generation currently between the age of 18 and 35. Millennial's have surpassed the baby boomer generation by 7.7 million, reaching a population size of 83.1 million. This generation is the most highly educated generation, but they are economically challenged, balancing high student loans and work. Despite this challenge they have the most spending power, with an estimated increase of \$1.4 trillion annually by 2020 (2017, p.7).

iv. ABSTRACT

This was a small scale dissertation investigating the effect product placement in television series has on millennial's brand perception and buying behaviour. Product placement allows brands to expose their products to the consumer in a more natural and realistic setting, making the chances of a positive brand perception much higher. Simply, it is an advertising technique that subtly promotes a brands product offering in television series. The objective was to gain insights into the effectiveness of product placement by reviewing and exploring previous studies on product placement, in order to identify factors that are considered to effect brand equity. The research employed a qualitative approach where 36 questionnaires were conducted and 1 focus group. Stimuli were provided with video clips from two popular television series, namely Friends and Modern Family, for participants to watch and answer the questions that followed.

It was hypothesised audio product placement would achieve the highest results with viewers having more distractions while watching television such as being on their phone. The findings revealed that duo product placement (both audio and visual together) resulted in higher brand awareness and a positive attitude towards product placement. Familiar brands, especially in the context of South Africa, generated greater attention among viewers, thus positively influenced brand equity. Associations and attitudes were positively influenced with the leveraging of actors interacting with the brand, and the strong relationship between the actor and consumer influenced brand attachment. Even though the research was small-scale and the findings cannot be generalised, it provides insights for brands a step in the right direction towards effective product placement, generating brand equity.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

1. 1. INTRODUCTION

“Chandler: (Entering the coffee shop) Oh, hey. Rachel sweetheart? You have got to tell the post office that you have moved. OK? We are still getting all your bills and stuff. (He hands her all of her bills and junk mail.)

Rachel: Oh – oh. Pottery Barn! (She grabs the Pottery Barn catalog and hands the rest back out to Chandler.) You can throw the rest away.

Chandler: I’m not your garbage man. I’m your mailman.

Rachel: Monica, look! Look – look – look! Here is that table that I ordered. (Rachel shows Monica the picture.)

Monica: You got it from Pottery Barn?

Rachel: Yeah! It’s an apothecary table. Does anyone even know what apothecary is?

Chandler: A pharmacist.

(Russell, 2002. p. 306)

The above may seem to be a script of a television script for the television series, Friends, or a script of a television commercial for retail store, Pottery barn, but it is in fact a scene from the 90’s television show Friends (Russell, 2002). According to Pottery Barn’s executive Patrick Connolly “the phones light up with catalog request every time it airs,” suggesting that the integration of the brand to the episode’s plot has created attention among viewers (2002, p. 306 – 307).

According to Cook (2010), a brand can be defined as a particular and unique construct that generates, communicates and withstands value for its stakeholders through its products and services offered” (2010, p. 12). Kloppe writes (2011), that a brand is a social construct. In other words, brands are

formed by society in all of its spheres. Even though majority of brands are different, they all have one thing in common: the development of a particular and unique meaning that holds value and connects with people in a meaningful way (2011, p. 14).

Fromm (2016) writes, consumers, specifically millennial's, are becoming more educated and knowledgeable when it comes to advertising and the mediums used; therefore they are able to reject certain advertising messages easily (2016, p.1). Consumers are overwhelmed, especially in the last 20 years, with the load of marketing messages that demand their attention and concentration. As a result of this marketers are making a greater effort on differentiating from their competitors in order to break through the clutter and make their brands more memorable (Solomon, Bamossy, Askergaard and Hogg, 2013).

Marketers started to strategically promote their products through product placement, this being appearances in movies and television rather than through traditional methods (radio, print and billboard.) Kamleitner and Joyte (2013) state, "Product placement is as a purposeful incorporation of brands into editorial content" Product placement is one of the most influential advertising strategies used by marketers today." It is the promotion of both products and services within the context of television series rather than in an advertisement (2013, p.633).

The millennial consumers are aged between 18 and 35. According Schawbel (2017), in the US alone, millennial's have an annual buying power of \$200 billion, making them the most profitable market in the world but companies have been struggling to connect and grab attention with this generation through traditional methods of advertising. Like no generation before, millennial's drive when, where and how they want to receive brand messages" (Schawbel, 2017, p.1). The future success of brands will be those that capture the attention and brand loyalty with millennial's today.

Going forward with the dissertation the term actor refers to both male and

female characters in television series unless stated otherwise. According to Primrose (2012), “The word actor refers to a person who acts regardless of gender, while actress refers specifically to a female person who acts” (2012, p.1).

1.2. RATIONALE

From as little as the author can remember, television series were much more entertaining for her as opposed to Barbie dolls and tea parties. As the author got older, it became more obvious that brands were strategically placing their products and services in television series scripts to seamlessly put their products front of mind in the mind of their target consumer. The author, a millennial herself, drew an interest in the topic of product placement to test whether product placement is still relevant with the rise in other technological developments, and if so what type of product placement is resulting in positive brand awareness.

According to Sumerson in the Psychology of Popular Media Culture (2014), product placement can cause self-identification, when you automatically associate yourself with a product. When we watch a character in the show using it we start to identify and almost live the life of that person (Sumerson, 2014, p19). With the rise in product placement in television series, the author wished to research the effectiveness that product placement has on the millennial's brand perception and buying behaviour.

The choice of television series over movies is that viewers are most likely to form a relationship with an actor after a single episode, and begin to form attitudes towards actors after multiple episodes. Movies are only being watched every now and then, but TV shows are aired more frequently, often daily or weekly. Supporting this, Russell and Stern (2006), “with this close relationship with the actor, the viewer sees them as a role model when it comes to product decisions” (2006, p. 20).

The following dissertation can be beneficial to brands across all spectrums, testing the effectiveness of product placement in television series on millennial brand perception and buying behaviour. From previous literature, movies have been the main focus among researchers in measuring the effect on brand equity, thus it gives the opportunity for the author to provide some insight to brands in television series. It can be hypothesised that television series are more effective with the developing relationship between the brand, the actor and the product.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Russell (2002) states, the motivation behind the use of product placement is becoming more apparent as brands are able to expose their products and services to their target consumer in a more indirect manner, thus to some extent avoid the consumer rejecting their message and learned resistance towards traditional advertising. Product placement allows the brand to expose their products to the consumer in a more natural and realistic setting, making the chances of a positive brand perception much higher (2002, p. 306).

The product placement field is rapidly advancing, we can see product placement in almost any filmed production today. But as a student academic research field, it is only around 15 years old (2002, p. 308). A recent research paper measuring the success of audio, visual against duo product placement (audio and visual product placement) has yet to be done, and the current literature measurements methods are suited to traditional advertising measurements as opposed to an untraditional medium.

The particular lack of research on product placement effectiveness and measures have yet to be done on consumers' attention span, especially with cellphones and computers often being used whilst watching television. Are viewers still noticing product placement while they watching television while they scroll through social media on their phones? Thus the following dissertation aims to look at the product placement phenomenon with a modern viewpoint and whether it is still a good investment for brands.

1.4. PURPOSE STATEMENT

Keller (2008) writes, strong brand equity is the result of a marketing activity resulting in more sales and favorable brand perception. By making the brand memorable in the consumers' minds, companies create brand equity. With this, brands need to choose the correct marketing mix for their target consumer, so consumers can have the right perception of the brand in their mind (2008, p. 57).

Schawbel (2015) states, "Millennial's believe that advertising is all spin and not authentic. That's why they use software to skip commercials regularly and avoid banner advertisements on Facebook and various news websites" (2015, p.1). Millennial consumers are becoming more educated and knowledgeable when it comes to advertising and the mediums used; therefore they are able to reject certain advertising messages easier. Brands turned to product placement, a more creative, less costly and untraditional form of advertising. Traditional examples of advertising include radio, television, print and billboards whereas untraditional mediums include product placement, endorsement, sponsorship and social media.

Taking into consideration that product placement is a communication tool and marketing strategy for brands to build brand equity and a positive brand perception, it is appropriate for the author to research to what extent product placement in television series influences brand equity, helping benefit brands across all spectrums.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.5.1. Research goal

With this dissertation the author will showcase the effect product placement has on consumers in relation to awareness, associations, attitudes and activity, the four points of Keller's Brand Equity model. If the product placement has a positive effect, it will result in higher brand equity. With the millions of dollars, rands and euros pumped into product placement, the author wishes to see if this is either a waste or a great investment for a brand.

The author's research goal is ultimately achieve the research objectives mentioned below.

1.5.2. Main question

How does product placement in television series influence brand equity?

1.5.3. Sub-questions

1. What role does the millennial and their brand perception and buying behavior have on the brand's equity?
2. What type of product placement results in higher brand awareness thus high brand equity?
3. What influence does the actor interacting with the brand in the television series have on millennial purchase behavior?

1.5.4. Research objectives

1. Discover how product placement in television series has on millennial's brand awareness, associations, attitudes and activity, resulting in positive brand equity.
2. Compare visual and audio product placement to audio/visual duo product placement to test higher brand awareness, thus clearly showcasing the type of product placement brands should invest in.
3. Understand the relationship between the millennial consumer, actor, and product placement.

1.5.6. Delimitation

Due to time, geographical and budget constraints, there were areas within this research topic that could not be explored. The following dissertation only investigates product placement influence on millennial brand perception and buying behavior in relation to fictional American television shows. The potential influence that product placement has is considered to have on millennial viewers only refers to American productions, as they produce the magnitude of worldwide distribution, thus the use of product placement, to a large extent, covers costs and allows brands to create more brand

awareness. Even though cultural differences may differ from the United States of America to South Africa, these possible differences are not taken into consideration. Brand awareness is measured in terms of recall and recognition regardless of culture in the context of this dissertation.

1.6. CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One: Chapter one introduced the study, highlighting the questions of study and clearly outlining the researching objectives.

Chapter Two: Chapter Two is the literature review specific to the study. Appropriate studies and previous research papers are discussed and relevant findings are discussed.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology in Chapter Three, introduces the research methodology and the adopted research approach and design. The selected target population, sampling size, data collection and ethical considerations are also provided and discussed.

Chapter Four: Chapter Four is the presentation and discussion of findings of this dissertation.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and recommendations are discussed and linked to each objective of this dissertation. Suggestions for further studies have been mentioned too.

1.7. SUMMARY

Product placement is becoming an important communication tool and marketing strategy for brands to build brand equity and a positive brand perception. Chapter one has presented the problem, the suitable research objectives and has stated the purpose of the research. Chapter two introduces relevant studies on product placement and appropriate theories that support the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Maree (2007) writes, "A literature review will normally provide an overview of current, and sometimes not so current yet still sufficiently relevant" (2007, p. 28). It has become apparent over recent years that product placement has become an industry on its own. The review covered past literature that will explore the purpose of product placement and the various aspects of product placement including relationship between actor and consumer.

2.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Maree (2007) "Research is ultimately about understanding the world, and one's understanding is informed by how one views the world, what one thinks understanding is and what one see as the purpose of understanding" (2007, p. 33). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) suggest that there are three significant lenses to examine the practice of research. Ontology, what things are, and epistemology, the way we know things, create a holistic view of how knowledge is viewed and how we see ourselves in relation to this knowledge, and the methodological strategies we use to uncover it (1995, p. 21).

The research is situated in a constructivist perspective. Maree (2007) writes that a constructivist approach, also coined as interpretivism, can strongly be influenced by phenomenology, whereby the author takes the subjective interpretations and perceptions of others as a starting point in understanding social phenomena. As a result of this, constructivists believe that reality is not determined objectively, but rather socially constructed. By studying people in an environment they feel comfortable and natural, there is a greater chance for the author to gain a better understanding of their perceptions.

Following on this, Grey (2013), "Constructivism rejects the view of human knowledge. Truth and meaning do not exist in some external world, but are

rather created by the subjects interactions with the world” (2013, p. 7). As consumers, we construct our own perceptions about brands and their various products and services. We interact, buy, shop, talk and associate with brands differently depending on the meaning that brand brings to our lives. In other words, meaning is constructed rather than discovered. People create their own meaning in different ways even if they are subject to the same thing. People create their own understanding when experiencing things and reflecting on that experience.

Grey (2013), when we encounter something new, we reconcile it with previous ideas and experiences and may change what we believe or disregard it completely. Based on this people will react to product placement in different ways. The author gained information and experiences through extensive secondary research and primary research. Secondary research created a solid foundation on what still what needed to be found, or researched from a different perspective (2013, p.7).

The following theoretical literature guided the dissertation in seeing how past authors have conducted research and the findings developed from their study, and helped the author see what could be done in a different way or a way that confirms past research.

2.3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.3.1. An introduction into Product Placement

In order to understand the research further, the author got a solid foundation on the history and benefits of product placement. Hardy (2017), it was believed that product placement started with the introduction of motion pictures in the mid 1980s. Product placement was for movie productions and television networks to borrow products from different brands in order to reduce the cost of production and to increase the realism of the story line by adding real life brands (2017, p.1).

Price Waterhouse Coopers (2012) stated, product placement started in a

movie about a child-sized alien lost on Earth, E.T the Extra-Terrestrial. In E.T the alien followed a trail of Hershey's Reese's Pieces, peanut butter candy manufactured by Hershey's, to his new home. Not only was the movie a major hit but also the sales in the candy increased by 65%. These positive results spiraled an interest with other brands, and viewers begun to see products used in more television series (2012, p.3-5).

It has been said that product placement in television may have a far greater impact on consumers than movies, as it reaches a far larger number and consumer base. Viewers tend to develop brand loyalty toward the television show as well as different actors in the show in an extended period of time. Pairing product placement with a favoured actor may increase product placement effectiveness, as the actor brings realism to the story line through the product (2012, p. 3-5).

The process of product placement either happens when a brand approaches a television studio and suggest their products or visa versa, or brands go through placement agencies which has become increasingly more frequent. These agencies are seen as a "middleman" between advertisers and producers. The cost of product placement all depends on the amount of visibility. This being said, placements are normally done on a barter base where a product has been traded for more movie exposure (PWC, 2012, p.4). In other words, the more a branded product is shown in a television series, the more money the brand pays into the production of the series. It's a win win situation for both the television producer and brand manager, as the production costs go down and the brand gets more exposure.

2.3.1.1. Types of product placement

There are three different types of product placement, according to Price Waterhouse Coopers (2012), this being visual placement, verbal placement and plot placement. Visual placement is when the placement can merely be seen on the screen as a part of the staging or scenery in the television series. Verbal placement, also called audio placement, this is placement being mentioned verbally during the television series. The last dimension is plot

placement; this is different from the two types previously mentioned as it plays a role in the plot of the production. Plot placement is both verbal and visual (2012, p.6).

2.3.1.2. Benefits of product placement

According to Langer and Nielsen (2010), there are advantages and disadvantages for the advertiser, media producer and the consumer. Media producers get many benefits from product placement including saving on production costs, helps give the plot more meaning and makes it more realistic. This touch of realism in the television series is not only beneficial for the media producer but for the advertiser as well (Langer and Nielsen, 2002, p.244).

Advertisers are ultimately the ones wanting to gain the most benefits from product placement. Advertisers benefits include reach and exposure, frequency, recall, and specialised targeting. Reach is far greater than traditional advertisements such as radio and television, as the consumer cannot switch off the station or fast forward. The consumer can still fast forward on television but they would fast forward through an advertisement and not through the television series otherwise they would lose the storyline. Having the right association with their brand may in turn influence the brand equity in the long term. Marketers have the opportunity to control the way they want their brand to be perceived with product placement, for example if they connect their brand with a dramatic and violent scene or a more caring and loving brand (PWC, 2012, p7-8).

According to Langer and Nielsen (2010), the consumer primarily has the main advantage of product placement. It is apparent that product placement makes the produced media cheaper and consumers are benefitting from this. Consumers are also benefitting from the realistic setting the media producers and advertisers place the product in. The consumer feels as if they buy the whole look they have seen in television series, which in return makes a satisfied consumer (Langer and Nielsen, 2010, p. 244).

2.3.2 KELLER'S CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY MODEL (CBBE MODEL)

Brand awareness has been the main focus of previous product placement research papers. A study conducted by Babin (1996), showed that viewers easily recognised brands through visual product placement. Later, Gupta conducted a study and Lord (1998) where recall amongst brands was measured and tested the effectiveness of product placement compared to advertising strategies. The research showed that audio and visual placements showed more brand recall as opposed to subtle visual placements in film. Russell (2002) showcased a study where people had favorable attitudes towards product placement as it added realism, character development and a sense of attachment to the brand. Consumers aligned their attitude towards product placement in the same way that the actors in the television series did.

The research mentioned, presented aspects of brand equity, (1) recognition\awareness and (2) recall. This introduces the theoretical foundation, brand equity.

Keller (2008) writes, in the 20th century, tangible assets (buildings and machines) were considered the most valuable resources a company had. As time has changed companies have increasingly understood the valuable assets are intangible such as the brand name and their products and services associated with the brand name. In simple terms, a brand is described as the identity of a specific product or service that appears in many forms (name, symbol, slogan) and it used to distinguish the brand from its competitors. To have a strong brand with a positive brand equity is considered beneficial for companies, as they come less vulnerable during crises, such as recession, and competitive marketing (2008, p. 30-31).

According to Aaker (2009), brand equity can be seen as a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol, that can either add or deduct value provided by a product or service to a firm and or to that firm's consumers A firm is an organisation that operates to make a profit by selling goods and services to consumers. These assets and liabilities are composed

of brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand associations (Aaker, 2009, p. 15). Since the study of the dissertation is based on the purchase behavior of consumers, it links back to brand equity.

Furthermore, Keller (2008) describes brand equity as “the added value of products or services and can be seen as an indicator of the success of a brand.” Keller defines brand equity from the perspective of the customer. When the customer is knowledgeable about the brand, the brand holds favorability and unique brand associations. (Keller, 2008, p, 52-53)

Both Keller and Aaker have an extensive understanding of brand equity and both have different models that recognize that added value to the brand through marketing efforts. Both models are primarily based on association, the most prime indicator of brand equity however they come from two different perspectives. Aaker sees the benefits from that of the brand whereas Keller sees it from the consumer. Since the aim of the dissertation is to investigate the effect product placement in television series has on millennial’s brand perception and buying behavior, the main brand equity theoretical framework the author used was Keller’s (2008).

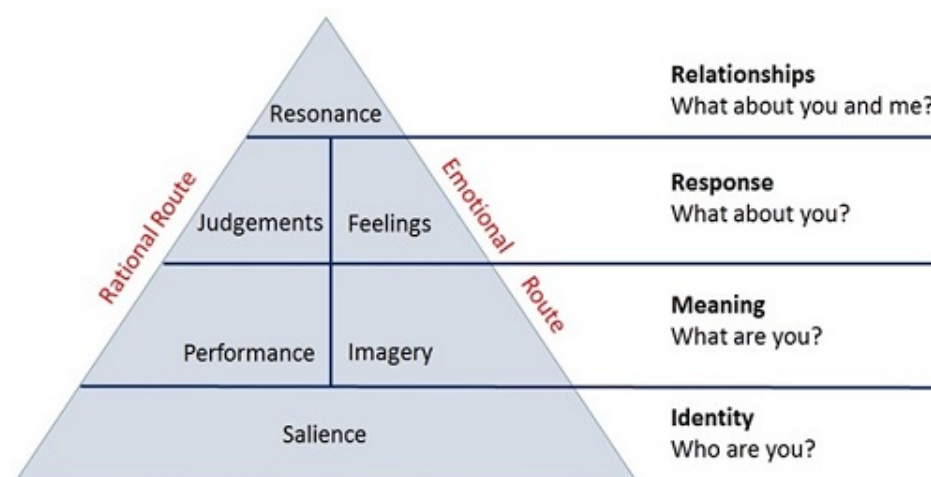


Figure 1: Keller’s CBBE Model (2008)

Figure 1, The CBBE Model (Customer-Based Brand Equity) consists of six brand building blocks. Significant brand equity is only achieved once the

brand reaches the top of the pyramid. “The power of the brand lies in what resides in the minds of the consumers” (Keller, 2008, p. 48).

First, a brand needs to establish brand salience so consumers can identify the brand and associate it with a specific class. It is clearly defined who the brand is and ensures that brand perception is accurate. In the context of product placement, this will come in the appropriate placement of the brand so brand identity is clearly showcased. Secondly, the meaning of the brand is established in the minds of the consumer by linking it to brand associations in performance and imagery. Performance relates how well the brand meets the customers’ needs and imagery is how the brand relates to the consumer on a social and psychological level i.e. how the actor interacts with the brand can effect how the consumer perceives the brand on a psychological level. If an actor in Modern Family uses the product then the consumer feels they should too. Thirdly, consumers develop positive brand attitudes established from their brand associations in judgments and feelings. Lastly consumers convert their positive brand attitudes into a relationship with the brand, often resulting in the consumer going to buy the same product used in the television show.

Following this thought is a clear link to the topic of the dissertation. This model served as an analysis tool. Keller’s Customer-Based Brand Equity model (2008) was used to create a strong foundation in the overall analysis of the dissertation research topic, especially when looking at awareness, associations, attitudes and attachments regarding product placement in television series. Thus leading to Keller’s Brand Value Chain Model. Keller (2008), the Brand Value Chain is a structured method to assessing the sources and outcomes of brand equity and how marketing activities can create brand value (2008, p.108).

Figure 2 shows the Brand Value Chain Model as done by Keller (2008). For the purpose of the dissertation, the author’s main focus will be on step two: customer mind-set. The 5 stages according to Keller (2008) are awareness,

the extent consumers recall and recognize the brand and recall products associated with the brand; associations, the favorability and unique perceived attributes of the brand by consumers, which is a great source of brand value as it shows their needs being satisfied; brand attitude, relates to quality and satisfaction; attachment, the degree of brand loyalty from consumers; and brand activity, relating to how consumers talk brand, promote and use the brand. (Keller, p. 128)

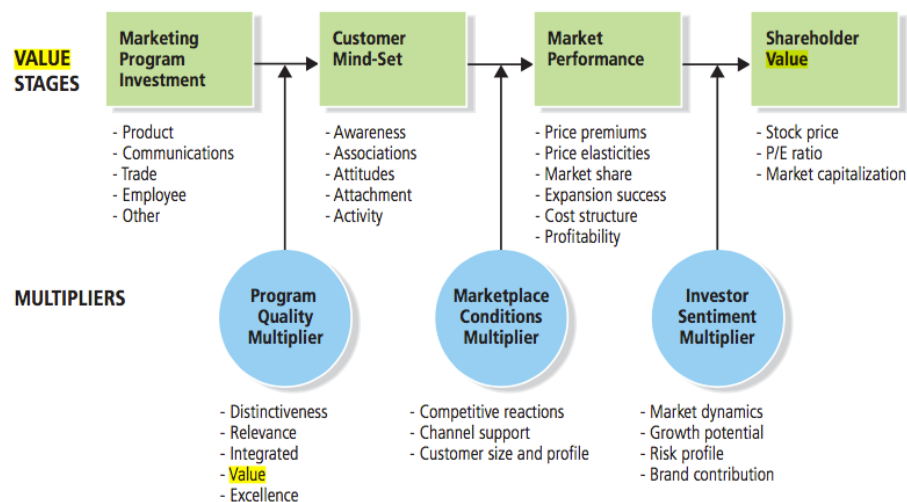


Figure 2: Brand Value Chain by Keller (2008)

According to Keller, these five dimensions are easily linked back to the five dimensions of the CBBE Model. Figure 3 shows the link between the two as inspired by Keller (2008). Linking this to the dissertation, if the product placement in television series is seen as positive it should touch base with all five dimensions.

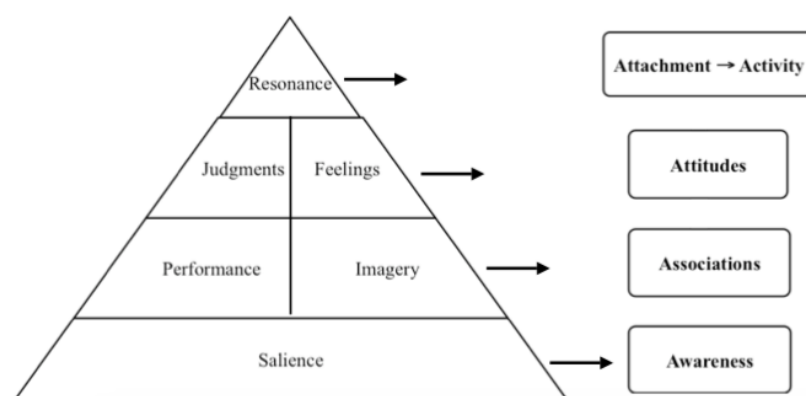


Figure 3: Link between CBBE Model and BVC Model inspired by Keller (2008)

(1) Brand awareness explored whether the respondents remember seeing or hearing brands that were shown in the television clips presented to them. However, aided recall was given to the respondents in the questionnaire where a list was provided to them and they were to tick the brands they remember hearing or seeing. Unaided recall was used in the focus group where no brands were given to them, the brands were discussed amongst the participants.

(2) Brand associations investigated whether the placed brands in the television series, Friends and Modern Family, had an influence on the respondents' already established brand association or whether their perception changed, and whether the actor using the brand changed perception. (3) Brand attitudes tests the respondents' overall evaluation of the brand, how they feel and think about the brand. It was hypothesised that if the respondent had a positive attitude towards the actor in the television series, there would be a positive attitude about the brand would be created.

(4) Brand attachment and activity tests the degree of loyalty and attachment towards the brand. Would the consumer go out and buy the brand after seeing it placed in the television series? It was hypothesised that if the respondent identified themselves with the characters in the television series, they would identify themselves with the brand. (5) Brand activity investigates how respondents will use, or talk to others about the brand.

As seen in figure 3, the model was adapted from two models presented by Keller, The Brand Value Chain (2008) and CBBE Model (2008) to aid the investigation concerning the extent product placement influences brand equity. An overall emphasis was placed on the attitude and awareness towards product placement as a whole and not analysed separately. Motivation for brands to firstly partake in a product placement strategy is to create brand awareness. Secondly, to leverage brand association, especially when being shown with association with an actor, this becomes beneficial for

the viewer and the brand, if more associations are held, the more likely the viewer will recall the brand. Thirdly, product placement using an actor can influence the viewer's attitudes towards the brand and lastly most viewers develop a relationship with the brand and a Parasocial relationship with the actor (2008, p.128).

For the purpose of this research, product placement was investigated as an isolated marketing activity and not part of a marketing campaign, thus the exposure alone may not be sufficient to create a lifelong connection between the respondent and the brand. The respondents were all different, and the extent to which they involve themselves within a television series and grow an attachment towards actors varies. In addition to Keller's CBBE Model (2008), used as the foundation for the research, supporting theories were used to show an influence on product placement effectiveness in television series.

2.3.3. THE BALANCING THEORY

The balancing theory suggests that a branded product may not be the only influence towards the consumers buying behavior; the way the actors and actresses interact with the product may also play a major role. Viewers alter their liking when it comes to characters in the television series. According to Russell and Stern (2006), "Each triad contains a person and his or her perception of an attitude object, and other person or object (2006, p.8)."

The theory suggests that an individual holds a relationship between three elements that he or she perceives as connected, which make the triad, see figure 4 below. Based on these three elements, the product, the consumer and the actor (character), individuals maintain a balance of the triad. If inconsistently or negative brand perception occurs, a state of tension will exist until individuals change their perception and restore the balance. This is done when the individual adjusts their attitudes toward the product and perceives it in the same way the actor perceives the brand (2006, p.9).

FIGURE 1
Balance Model of Product Placement Effects

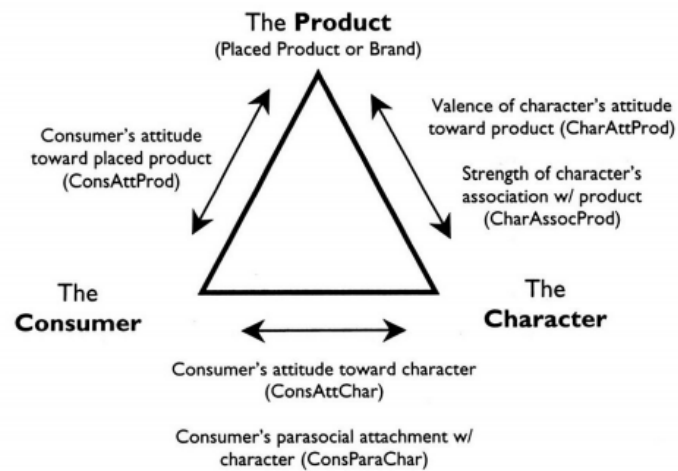


Figure 4: Balance Model by Russell and Stern (2006)

Figure 4, shows an act of balancing, creating a basis for celebrity “endorsement”. Marketers hope to transfer the actor’s popularity to their products in order to change the millennial consumer’s attitude. However just like product placement, this can also have risk especially if the actor’s public opinion shifts from “hero to zero.” According to Russell and Stern (2006), actors that match the attributes of the placed product tend to be much more successful (2006, p.8).

Russell and Stern write, Horton and Whol (1956) introduced a similar in theory, namely the Parasocial Theory, in the 1950’s. Viewers tend to get more attached to fictional characters they perceive as real. Parasocial Relationships understands how viewers began to talk about, care about, and interact with actors in the television series as if they were a real person. Parasocial relationships are one-sided, where one person has an emotional attachment and dedicates time and interest, and the other person/ persona is completely oblivious. This is normally due to a relief from a failed relationship in real life (2006, p.9-10).

Although this theory may be helpful in the dissertation, the Balancing Theory deemed more effective through its use of showing how each element

balances each other out. In other words, how the product, the consumer and the character all play a role in the mind of the consumer.

The Balancing Theory helps create valuable information in measuring the extent product placement has on brand equity, which is ultimately influenced by millennial purchasing behavior. The Balancing Theory helps assess whether viewers are forming a relationship with the actor due the television show being regularly aired and tests if the actor plays a major role in millennial brand perception and buying behavior. This theory may also help with a research objective, understanding if hearing the brand name being said by the actor while they hold the product makes an impact in buying behavior as opposed to just seeing the product. Consumers may not know what the brand is unless it is said. It was tested through qualitative research and focus groups. In the focus group a variety of television series scenes were played and the author made observations based upon reactions and opinions.

2.3.4 THEORY OF MODALITY

Modality is a theory introduced by Gupta and Lord (1998). Modality represents different types of product placement, each shows the brand in a different way hence it determines how the placement is transmitted to the viewer, which therefore has an influence on how the brand message is perceived by the respondent (1998, p. 47). The types of product placement introduced by Russell (2002) are as follows:

Visual product placement: Visual placement solely shows the product or brand, meaning there is no audio supporting the visual placement.

Audio product placement: Audio placement mentions the brand name or product. The brand is written into the television series script and is solely only audio, and is not supported by visual representation. The author hypothesised this to be the most effective

Duo (audio and visual) product placement: Duo placement is a combination of audio and visual product placement. The product of

brand is shown visually on the screen, while at the same time is also verbally mentioned.

Figure 5 is the three-dimensional construct of Modality according to Russell (2002). One end is prominent and the other is subtle. The prominent placement represents a product placement that highly noticeable, this may be done through a long pause on the product or the main focus of the entire television series. Whereas subtle placement has lower exposure where the product has most likely been used as a prop. This was an area of interest as people have different processing styles. Whether one sees audio being more effective over visual or visa versa was tested. Modality will directly influence brand equity results (2002, p.244).

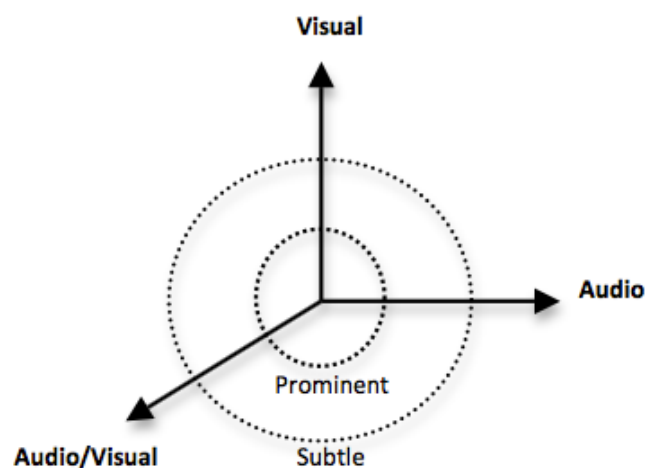


Figure 5: Modality framework proposed by Russell (1998)

According to Russell (2002), “An audio product placement is therefore only stored in the verbal memory and a visual product placement is only saved in the imagery memory and audio/visual product placement is easier to retrieve from memory, due to the placement being stored in both verbal and imagery memory.” (Russell, 2002, p. 244)

Theoretically the author explored this theory, as product placement in television series should be more effective in creating brand awareness if

recall is more effective with both duo (visual and verbal) placements. These findings may be rather biased; as people have different processing styles, which means perception, varies from person to person.

Based on Russell's argumentation (1998), it is not possible to generalise, as things have become more digital and advanced since then. I would like to take Russell's' argument and use the Modality model to compare whether perceptions have changed since 1998. It was investigated whether audio/visual placement is more effective than visual and audio placements.

2.4. SUMMARY

The literature reviewed above is relevant to the dissertation topic and research objectives of the study. The literature have been critical in building a strong foundation of knowledge that has guided this study, as it broadened the author's knowledge on the theoretical framework in relation to product placement. Chapter three introduces the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The following chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the research methodology conducted by the author, in order to achieve the research objectives. The research design, research approach, target population, the sample size, data collection method, data analysis method, interview guide, validity, reliability and trustworthiness and ethical considerations are discussed in detail below.

From the data gathered the author was able to generate meaning from different perspectives of various millennial's, in the context of product placement in television series, which in turn yields insights and understandings through various experiences. These insights helped guild the author's dissertation and provide a clear path to formulate a constructive conclusion answering the research objectives.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The overall research question of the dissertation was to investigate to what extent product placement in television series has on millennial consumer brand perception and buying behavior. The objectives are therefore to (1) discover how product placement in television series has on millennial's brand awareness, associations, attitudes and activity, resulting in positive brand equity; (2) compare visual and audio product placement to audio/visual duo product placement to test higher brand awareness, thus clearly showcasing the type of product placement brands should invest in and (3) understand the relationship between the millennial consumer, actor, and product placement.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

To provide a solid foundation for data collection, qualitative research was chosen. The qualitative research conducted seeks to find an understanding of subjective perception and opinions, thus giving the advantage of collecting data that is individually experienced (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Qualitative

research was used to investigate the statements provided from participants to answer the research questions and objectives, as it gave the author the opportunity to identify individual perceptions and opinions held towards product placements in television series. The disadvantage of qualitative research is that it is often time consuming and often the author's own opinions may influence the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

According to Maree (2007), "The distinguishing features of qualitative research are that it relies on words as opposed to numerical data, and employs a meaning-based rather than statistical forms of data-analysis" (2007, p. 53). In this same regard, Berg (2007) points out that qualitative data properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and those who inhabit that setting (2007, p. 7). In other words, qualitative data is interested in how one arrange themselves in a social setting and how one makes sense of their setting through symbols, rituals, social structures and roles.

In the context of a constructivist research paradigm, the author maintained the understanding that knowledge must emerge from the context of the participant, taking into account what is being said, done and felt and how they make meaning of the phenomenon being researched (Maree, p. 67). The author understood real-life situations from the point of view of the participant, and how they see things from within, as opposed to the author's perspective.

Through qualitative research, data was gathered to understand the desired research questions and objectives of the study and the author captured findings. Qualitative research was most effective as it gave the author the opportunity to ask "what" questions subjective to individuals perceptions in relation to brands seen and heard in the television series.

3.4. POPULATION

The population subject to this dissertation was millennial's, being males and females between the age 18 and 35. According to Quad Graphics Consumer Study (2017), Millennial's are the generation currently between the age of 18

and 35. Millennial's have surpassed the baby boomer generation by 7.7 million, reaching a population size of 83.1 million. This generation is the most highly educated generation, but they are economically challenged, balancing high student loans and work. Despite this challenge they have the most spending power, with an estimated increase of \$1.4 trillion annually by 2020 (2017, p.7).

The population falls in the middle to upper class category, where they own technology devices such as a cell-phone, television and or computer. Participants had to own a computer or television, as the main research question looked at product placement in television series aired on popular DSTV channels MNET and Comedy Central thus participants had to have access to a television. The population was also required to access the Internet to answer the questionnaire thus, access to a computer and Internet was important.

3.5. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Stanton (2005), states that it is impossible for the author to collect or analyze all the data available owing to restriction of time, money and access to relevant respondents and information. Sampling techniques provide an array of methods that enable the author to consider data from a select sub-group as opposed to all possible cases (2005, p. 89)

A sampling strategy is used to reduce the amount of data by considering data from a chosen sub-group as opposed to all cases. Stanton (2005) recognizes that there are two types of sampling techniques: non-probability and probability sampling techniques. Probability sampling is a concept of random selection, allowing for statistical inferences and the use of statistical tests whereas non-probability sampling is subjective, and techniques range from those that represent the total population based on the need to obtain quick responses with no control over the content (2005, p. 90).

For this dissertation, non-probability sampling was chosen. There are a number of types of non-probability sampling; of this the author will be using

purposive (also known as judgmental) sampling and snowball sampling. Stanton (2005) states that purposive sampling is using the author's judgment to select participants that will best enable the author to answer the research questions and meet objectives. Participants are selected according to certain variables being age, gender, class and lifestyle.

Stanton then goes on to say that snowballing technique is when the author allows a case to identify their desire to take part in the research. The author contacted one or two participants and asks those to identify even more participants. Participants are likely to identify others that are similar to them (2005, p.95). A manageable number of 42 individuals participated in this study. Taking into consideration that this was a qualitative study, 42 is a sufficient number of respondents as the intention was to investigate the effect of product placement in television series on brand equity. Had this been a quantitative study, a larger number of participants would've been required.

3.6. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

According to Maree (2007) there are two types of data, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data is data that has been collected in response to specific questions and that has been obtained for a specific purpose. Secondary data has been collected for another purpose and has already been processed (2007, p. 54).

Secondary research provided a solid foundation on which this research was based. Secondary research made it evident on what has not yet been discovered. For primary research the author made use of qualitative research tools, questionnaires and focus groups.

3.6.1. Questionnaire

According to Maree (2007), a questionnaire is where each participant is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order.

The author created a questionnaire that answers directly to the main question at hand. The questionnaire was designed through Google Forms and then

distributed via social media within a time frame of a month, due to time and budget constraints. The purpose of the research was explained however the concept of product placement was left out otherwise answers would've become obvious. If the obvious reasons for the research were stated in the beginning, the respondents would've known what to look for whilst looking at the clips.

The participant was asked to use the provided URL link on the survey, created by the author, to watch a range of clips from the television series Modern Family and Friends. Each clip was long enough so that the product placement was not obvious; otherwise it can be assumed that the respondents will pay more attention to the inserted brands consequently showing bias results, especially in the questions relating to brand awareness.

The types of questions asked were closed-ended questions making it less time consuming and easier to make comparisons when analysing data. The questionnaire was pre-tested by 5 people, who wanted to remain anonymous, to ensure that the questions were easy to understand and instructions were clear. Questions were simple category scale and multiple-choice single response scales, before turning to more complex questions related to the research objectives.

The survey can be found on this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxhUFPgpggo_-giGT4YrRCvfSdd_T24OMcoPskvoAnsLT-MKA/viewform?usp=fb_send_fb.

And the URL link to the YouTube channel is as follows:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnXWkMgGI5RbJZawSsWuKNTnRcmNpLzMx>

3.6.2. Focus group

According to Maree (2007), a focus group is conducted to get a range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience and provide in-depth data that is hard to get from other research methods. Often researchers get confused with a focus group and a group interview. In a group interview, a

group is asked a set of semi-structured questions without debating the answers whereas a focus group is more of a discussion (2007, p. 95).

Focus groups were conducted which enabled the author to gather rich and detailed data in an hour time frame. Maree (2007) states that a focus group is personal interviewing 6 to 10 participants, carefully selected according to demographics, to talk about a product or phenomenon. A focus group strategy is based on the idea that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses, and produce rich in detail data that is difficult to achieve with other research methods (2007, p. 95 – 96). There were a total of 6 participants of the focus group. The participants were invited to the author's home to watch the same clips used in the questionnaire. The author, being the focus group modulator, started the discussion to gain perspectives and attitudes. These will be further discussed in chapter four.

3.7. STIMULI

It was necessary to show participants visual examples of television series containing the three product placement types: visual, audio and duo (audio/visual). A normal television series episode is approximately 20-40 minutes depending on the type of show. The author decided to choose two shows, view myriad of episodes, detect different types of product placements and cut diverse scenes into a different clips instead of making the respondent view the entire episode. Although the television episode will be cut, the clip showed the importance of characters and how they interact with products. For the online questionnaire, participants were given a YouTube link to find all the clips before answering the questionnaire.

According to Tony Maglio (2016), The most common broadcasted television series among adults ranging from 18 to 35 are 13 Reasons Why, Big Bang Theory, This Is Us, Orange is the new Black, Grey's Anatomy, Modern Family, Family Guy, Friends and How to get away with Murder (2016, p. 1). The author selected Big Bang Theory, 13 Reasons Why, Friends and Modern Family. A test focus group was done and participants were getting agitated with the number of clips they had to watch before even starting the debate.

Thus the author decided to do 2 television shows.

With a deep regard for view censorship and sensitivity, the author researched into the top programs mentioned and chose two programs that were harmless and not insensitive in any way. It was decided to create clips of an array of episodes of Modern Family and Friends, both light hearted television series that most respondents will be able to relate to. Both television series have a lot of product placement with mixed genres and provide a good opportunity for data collection. The following below is a description of each show.

3.7.1. Modern family

According to ABC.com (2009), “Jay recently married Gloria. Now Jay is trying hard to keep up with his much younger and hotter Colombian wife, along with her passionate pre-teen son, Manny. Claire is having a hard time raising her own family. Her husband, Phil is great, except that he thinks he’s “down” with the three kids, much to their embarrassment. And, Mitchell and his enthusiastic partner Cameron have just made a major life change by adopting a Vietnamese baby named Lily” (2009, p.1).

3.7.2. Friends

According to IMDB (1994), “Rachel Green, Ross Geller, Monica Geller, Joey Tribbiani, Chandler Bing and Phoebe Buffay are all friends living close to one another in the heart of New York City. Over the course of ten years, this average group of buddies goes through massive mayhem, family trouble, past and future romances, fights, laughs and tears as they learn what it really means to be a friend” (1994, p. 1).

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS

According to Maree (2007), “Qualitative data-analysis tends to be an ongoing and iterative process, implying that data collection, processing and analysis and reporting are intertwined and not merely a number of successive steps (2007, p. 109). Researchers often find it necessary to go back to the original filed notes to verify or get feedback from participants. Seidel (1998) has developed a model to explain this iterative process. (See Figure 6)

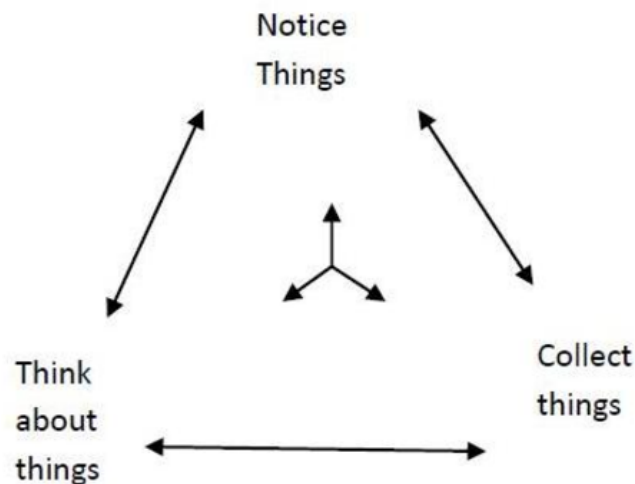


Figure 6: the data-analysis process proposed by Seidel (1998)

The author noticed interesting insights in the research and coded them, which essentially broke the data into segments. When analysing the data, the goal was to summarise what the common words and phrases were and make sense of what was emerging from the data.

According to Maree (2007), “Van Manen claims that phenomenology is focused on the sober reflection on the lived experience of human existence. It is driven by a fascination with meaning.” Data analysis in phenomenology focuses on how individuals experience the world in which they live (2007, p. 105). Phenomenology data-analysis initially follows the same procedures as many other data-analysis studies. It consists of a basic process that begins with a clear and basic description and moves to conceptual ordering and then on to theorizing. Data-analysis is accomplished through an elaborate coding process. Coding is the process of reading carefully through transcribed data,

line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytical units (Maree, p.106-107).

In the context of the questionnaire, Google Forms, where the questionnaire was developed and distributed via social media, offers a coding process incorporated into the design of the questionnaire. Open-ended questions in the questionnaire were then coded manually and put into graphs. The focus group was transcribed into word documents and important quotes are discussed further in chapter four and quotes are made to showcase main themes that came across.

3.9. VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

In order to determine the quality of the research validity and reliability will be addressed. According to Maree (2007), “for the results of an research to be trustworthy, the research should have a high degree of internal and external validity” (2007, p. 169).

Internal validity refers to the internal control over variables. Since the main objective of this study was to research whether association is apparent between certain variables, no experiment manipulation occurred. External validity refers to the degree to which results can be generalized to an entire population. With the use of non-probability sampling, the researcher cannot make assumptions whether the sample is representative of an entire population, which ultimately puts the validity into question. Due to time constraints and fees, the snowball sampling technique was seen as the best alternative to reach as many respondents as possible, in the hope of representing the population to a certain degree. Despite this, the research should be able to give brands insight into how to build brand association with product placements to enhance brand equity.

Reliability is another important factor that needs to be considered when the author is conducting research. According to Maree (2007), “When we speak of reliability of a instrument we mean that the same instrument is used at different times or administered to different respondents from the same population, the findings should be the same (2007, p. 238). In other words,

reliability is the extent to which a measuring instrument is the same throughout. Why use one instrument if it gives one answer today and another for tomorrow?

In order to achieve great internal reliability, as previously mentioned, the questionnaire and focus group were tested beforehand enabling the author to believe that the questions were understandable and measurable. External reliability refers to the degree whether or not a measure is stable over time (Maree, p. 239). To overcome such a problem, the author can conduct test-retest reliability, which allows people from a pre-defined sample to answer the same question twice, but under two different occasions. This is used to see if the answers can be relied upon. Such a reliability test was not conducted in the author's dissertation. Due to a limited time frame there was no time to test and retest results and can be assumed that participants would remember their answers and brands seen in the television series leading results to become biased.

3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

According to Saunders (2009), data collection is associated with a range of ethical issues (2009, p. 193). Considerations need to be made ensure that the research was conducted ethically to protect the respondents of the questionnaires and focus groups. Before respondents took the questionnaire, they were told, briefly, what the questionnaire is about and will remain completely anonymous. Focus group participants were informed what should be discussed and how the session will be conducted before they agreed to participate. Furthermore the author requested to record the focus group, where a number of members declined as they wanted their full identity to remain confidential. Respecting their wishes, the focus group was not interviewed and a rough transcript was made to cover the main points of the focus group.

The following procedures are made out of respect of the participants and respondents to make themselves feel confident in what they say.

1. The researcher was transparent with all participants by informing them on the purpose and objectives of the study. All participants of the focus group signed a participation consent form (Annexure A). With the online questionnaire, respondents were informed online that their information will remain confident and by filling in the questionnaire they agree to being a part of the dissertation study. No harm is caused to the participant
2. The author ensured no harm came to the participants during research; this was both physically and psychologically. The author chose television series that were harmless and unbiased.
3. The author ensured confidentiality and anonymity, and no data would be linked to their name unless they stated otherwise.
4. Participants were advised, by the author, that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any point they felt uncomfortable.
5. Compliance with the IIE research guidelines was ensured and submission of all necessary documents of the study through 'Turnitin' was conducted to ensure authenticity. The ethical clearance, provided by the IIE, was signed by Navigator, Alec Bozas, and Supervisor, Carolanda Du Toit (See Annexure B).

3.11. SUMMARY

Chapter Three has presented a clear research design and approach. Qualitative research was selected as it allowed the author to capture perceptions and opinions based on product placement in television series. An appropriate target population was chosen with a manageable sample size and clear data collections and analysis were discussed. Validity, reliability and trustworthiness were presented and deeply acknowledged ensuring credibility of research, and ethical considerations were acknowledged when doing the research. Chapter Four introduces the findings of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the presentation and discussion of the data collected through the questionnaires and focus group. The data is tabulated, discussed and represented in graphs and pie charts for ease of interpretation and understanding of the data. It is important to note that this was a small-scale qualitative research thus not statistically sound and results are not generalised.

4.2. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Graphs and pie charts have been presented based on the research findings, particularly to showcase the most effective type of product placement. The findings are presented as to how the questions and objectives relate to one another. It is important to note that although the data appears to be represented in a quantitative (statistical) aspect, graphs and pie charts have a qualitative approach and help identify themes and patterns that developed.

4.2.1. Demographics of respondents

The respondents were males and females between the age of 18 and 35. Below, a pie chart represents the gender of the respondents who participated in this study, where most were **female**.

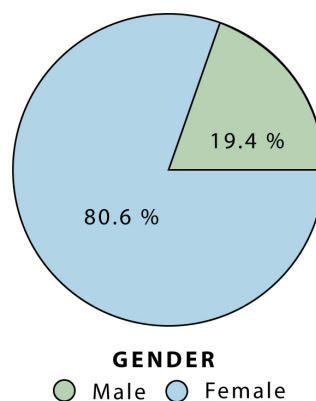


Figure 7: The gender of respondents

4.2.2. Results and discussion of product placement

Below is a presentation of the results captured from the respondents who participated in the questionnaire. The results have been presented in table and pie chart format, and have been discussed below each presentation. Although it is presented in a qualitative approach, showcasing percentages, results are discussed in a qualitative approach where themes and patterns have been identified. Further explanations and insights are quoted from the focus group. The questionnaire brought the author most insights into themes and patterns, and the focus group gave the author in-depth experiences.

4.2.2.1 Question 1 & 2: Have the respondents watched friends before? If so, how often have they watched the television series?

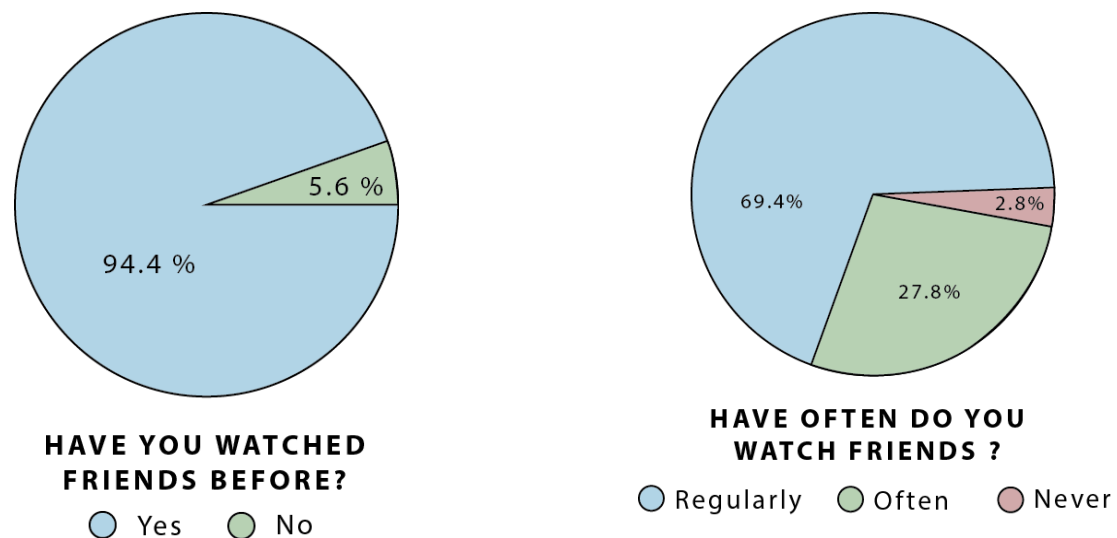


Figure 8: The amount of respondents that have watched friends.

Figure 9: The frequency the respondents have watched friends.

The first few questions related just to the television series, Friends. The first and second questions asked the respondent's whether they had watched the television series before, and how often. A common number of respondents **had watched the television series**. Most of the respondents were regular watches of the television series, Friends.

4.2.2.2 Question 3: Did the respondents remember hearing or seeing any brands?

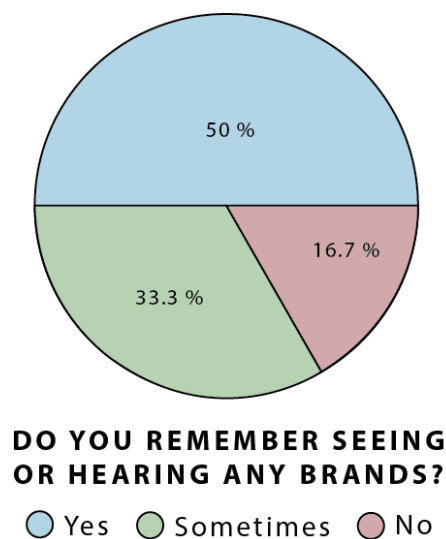
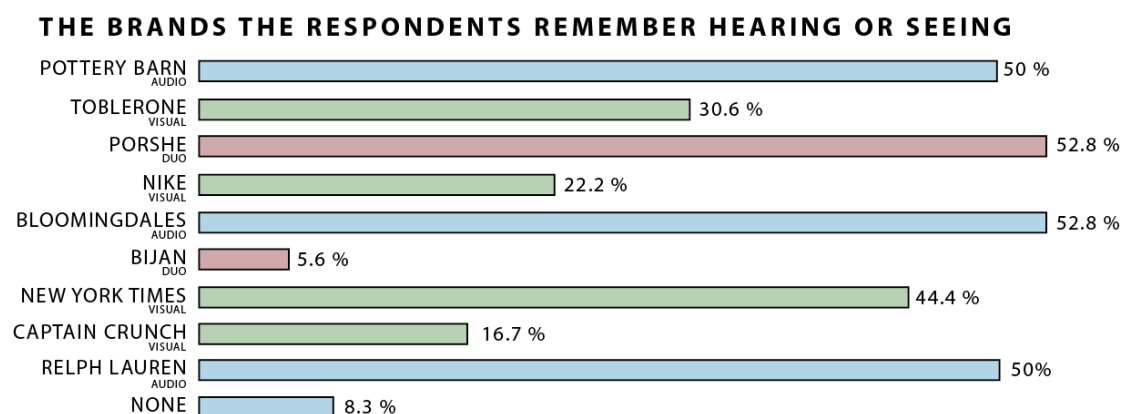


Figure 10: Figure showing the amount the respondents remember hearing or seeing any brands

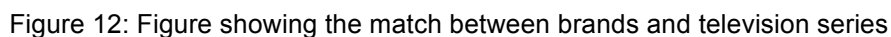
The following question tested brand awareness of Keller's Brand Equity Model (2008), and asked the respondents if they remember seeing or hearing any brands in the television clips of Friends. There was a common theme that most respondents **had remembered seeing or hearing brands**, with sometimes coming in the next highest response. With an overall common thread of respondents saying they did see or hear brands, points at a positive investment in product placement for the select brands.

4.2.2.3 Question 4: What brands did the respondents remember hearing or seeing?



The following question still looked at the effectiveness of brand awareness and recall of Keller's Brand Equity Model (2008), where respondents had to tick the brand they remembered seeing or hearing. It can be seen that majority of the respondents remembered Bloomingdales (audio placement), Porsche (duo placement), Pottery Barn (audio placement) and Ralph Lauren (audio placement) the most. The common thread can be seen that **audio product placement was the most effective** in the television clips of Friends.

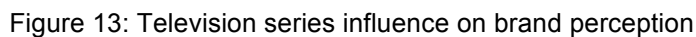
DID THE RESPONDENTS FEEL THERE WAS A GOOD MATCH BETWEEN THE BRANDS AND FRIENDS?



"I feel Pottery Barn is a good match because a lot of the episodes happen in the apartments of all the characters where we see them using or sitting on most of their furniture, which makes me want to go get Pottery Barn items. I don't think that Captain Crunch was necessary because isn't it seen as a

“Hmmm... I wasn’t sure about the inclusion of Nike? We hardly see the actors being active in the television series? I know that there are some scenes of them running but that is only because I watch the show on a regular basis but I feel Nike wasn’t a good product placement since it is an active brand and they aren’t really about the fitness lifestyle in Friends, I mean Joey orders a pizza almost every episode!”

HOW DID THE CLIPS INFLUENCE THE RESPONDENTS PERCEPTION OF THE BRANDS?



“It’s weird that I still want to go buy Pottery Barn furniture even though Monica says Phoebe doesn’t like Pottery Barn because it’s all mass produced items, and everyone ends up having the same thing. I would think I would want my own things that nobody else has, but I mean if Rachel likes it I guess I do! (Chuckles) She is my favourite!”

45

those because most people get them from there anyway! It was a clever incorporation of the brand. It makes me want to go travel now (Chuckles). It was done in a very obvious way, but it was a clever placement, especially with Joey and his love for food.”

The respondents made direct links to the actors interacting with the products showing a strong brand association.

4.2.2.6 Question 7: To what extent do the respondents like the actors of Friends?

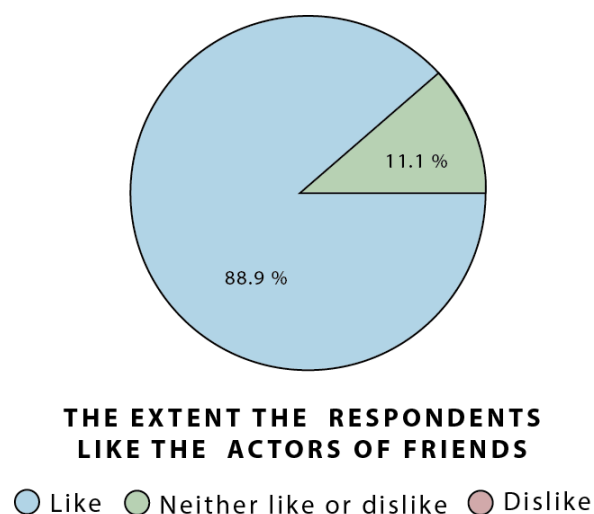


Figure 14: The extent respondents like the actors of Friends

It was common answer that most of the respondents **like the actors of friends**. Supporting this pie chart is quotes from the focus group:

“Like I said before, I love Rachel. I can relate to her in so many ways, with the spoilt sisters (Chuckles), the love for fashion, and the bad luck with dating! I feel like we can all relate to a character one way or another.”

“Oh my goodness I am a full on Monica. I am very OCD, maybe not in the way she is but I do like things to be in order and clean. But I do know some people that don’t relate to actors in shows, they see it as purely fictional. I do think that television series often do tell the truth, that’s what makes them so successful.”

“Yes I am one of those people, I do most actors as fictional. They’ve been

given a script to read off, how can you relate to someone that has been told what to say?”

4.2.2.7 Question 8: Would the respondents go and buy the products after seeing them in Friends?

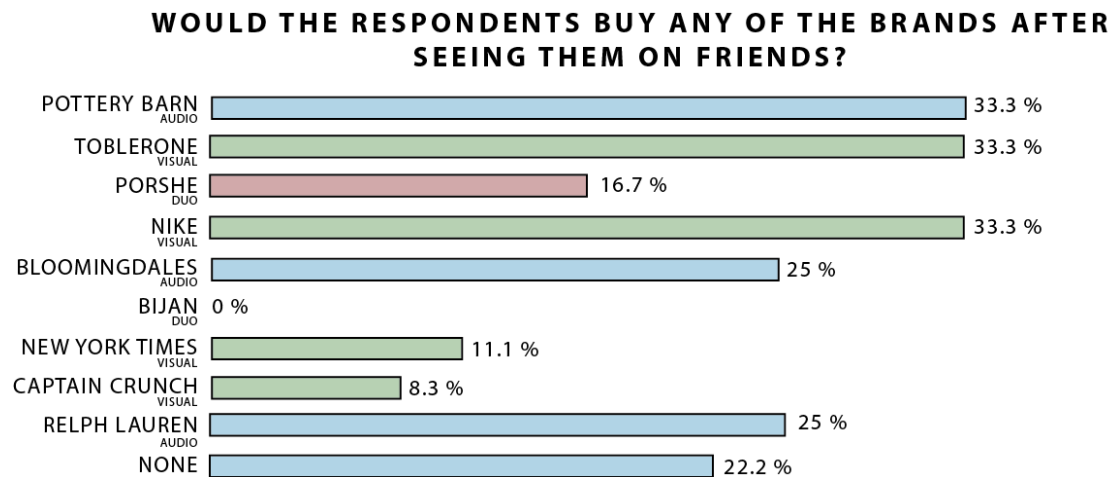
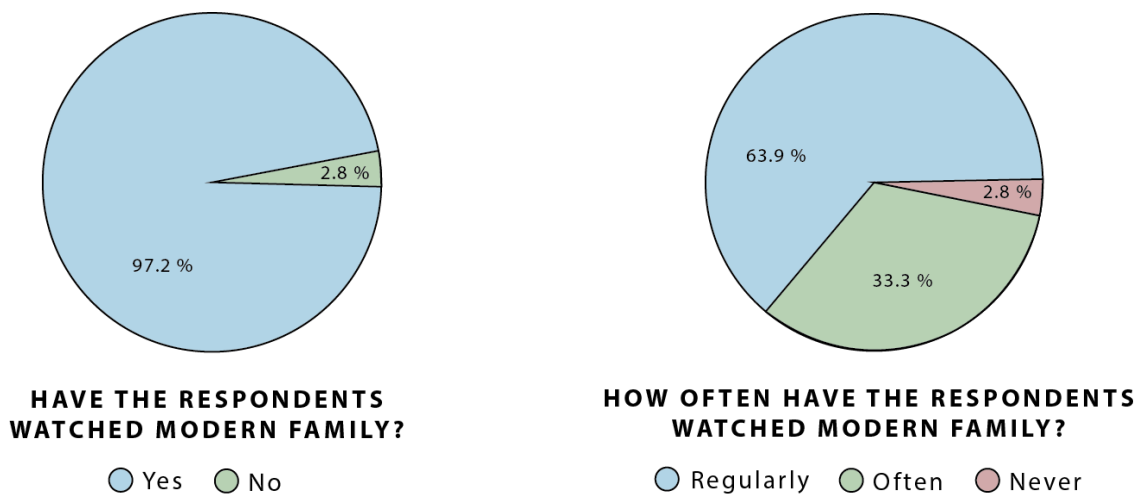


Figure 15: Brand activity after seeing and hearing the brand in Friends

There was a common thread that most of the respondents would go buy the brands after it's been in the television series, Friends. Pottery Barn (audio placement), Toblerone (visual placement) and Nike (visual placement) having the majority of the votes. This was interesting to note from the author as audio placement created the most brand awareness but **visual placement resulted in the highest brand activity**, meaning the respondent would do buy the brand. Brand activity/attachment is the last point in Keller's Brand Equity Model (2008).

The following can be summarised on product placement in Friends. Audio product placement showed the most brand awareness but visual product placement resulted in the most brand activity and attachment. Respondents liked the actors of friends and could relate to the actors in one-way or another. The brands placed in the television series had a positive influence on how the respondents perceived the brands. The questions that follow all relate to the second television series, Modern Family.

4.2.2.8 Question 8 & 9: How many respondents have watched Modern Family? If so, how often do they watch the television series?



The first and second questions asked in relation to Modern Family, was if the respondents had watched the television series before, and how often. A common number of respondents **had watched the television series**. Most of the respondents were regular watches of the television series, Modern Family.

Figure 16: The amount of respondents that have watched Modern Family.

Figure 17: The frequency the respondents have watched Modern Family.

4.2.2.9 Question 10: Did the respondents remember seeing or hearing any brands in the television series?

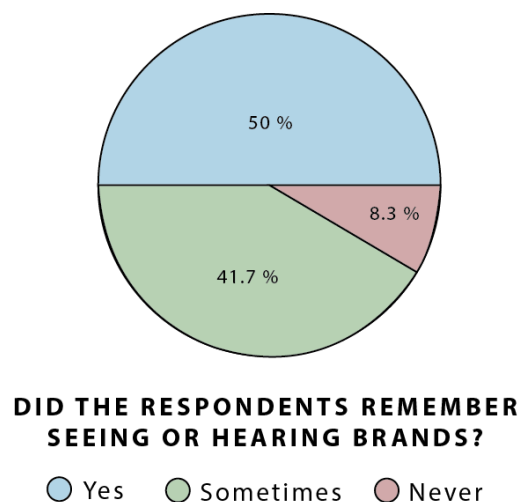


Figure 18: The amount respondents remember seeing or hearing brands

The following question tested brand awareness of Keller's Brand Equity Model (2008), and asked the respondents if they remember seeing or hearing any brands in the television clips of Modern Family. There was a common theme that most respondents **had remembered seeing or hearing brands**, with sometimes coming in the next highest response. With an overall common thread of respondents saying they did see or hear brands, points at a positive investment in product placement for the select brands.

4.2.2.10 Question 11: What brands did the respondents remember seeing or hearing?

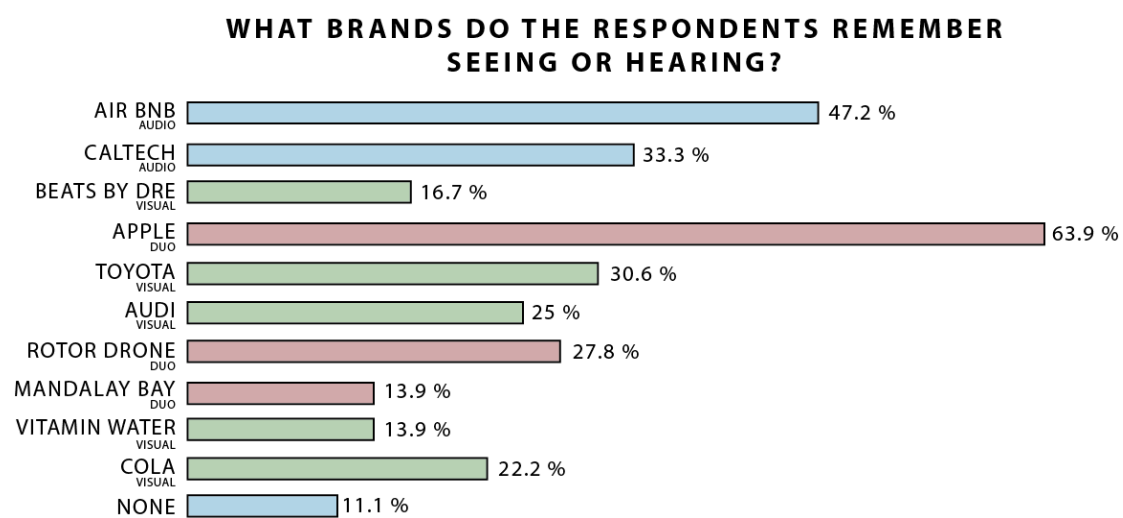


Figure 19: Brand awareness in Modern Family

The following question still looked at the effectiveness of brand awareness and recall of Keller's Brand Equity Model (2008), where respondents had to tick the brand they remembered seeing or hearing. It can be seen that majority of the respondents remembered Apple (duo placement), Air BNB (audio placement), Caltech (audio placement) and Toyota (visual placement). The common thread can be seen that **audio product placement was the most effective** in the television clips of Modern Family. The same result reflecting from Friends product placement.

4.2.2.11 Question 12: Did the respondents feel there was a good match between the placed brands and the storyline of Modern Family?

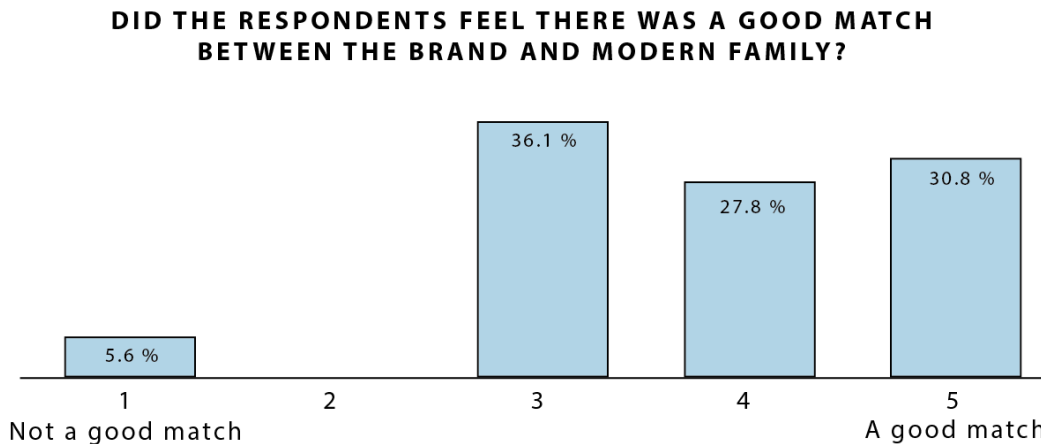


Figure 20: Link between brands and Modern Family

Although there was a common thread that highlighted that the brands in the television series and the overall storyline of friends do link, the majority said the placements were **neither a good match nor a bad match**. The following quotes are taken from the focus group discussion.

“I feel like Apple is a good fit for Modern Family especially with the teenagers like Alex, Luke and Hayley and even Phil. Hayley is very fashionable and I could only picture her using Apple products as Apple is the best isn’t it? Phil is also into the newest technological developments, especially with games, so Apple is an innovative brand, so I feel it really helps showcase the brands great products.

“Air BNB was a clever incorporation into the script as it is a new development and Mitchell and Cam do rent their apartment upstairs. So instead of just saying they renting their apartment, they subtly used the brand name, Air BNB, in there.”

“I am not too sure how necessary it is to use beverage brands in product placement? Seeing Cola and Vitamin Water in the series didn’t make me want to go get one. Why can’t they just drink water?”

4.2.2.12 Question 13: How did the clips influence the way the respondents perceived the brands?

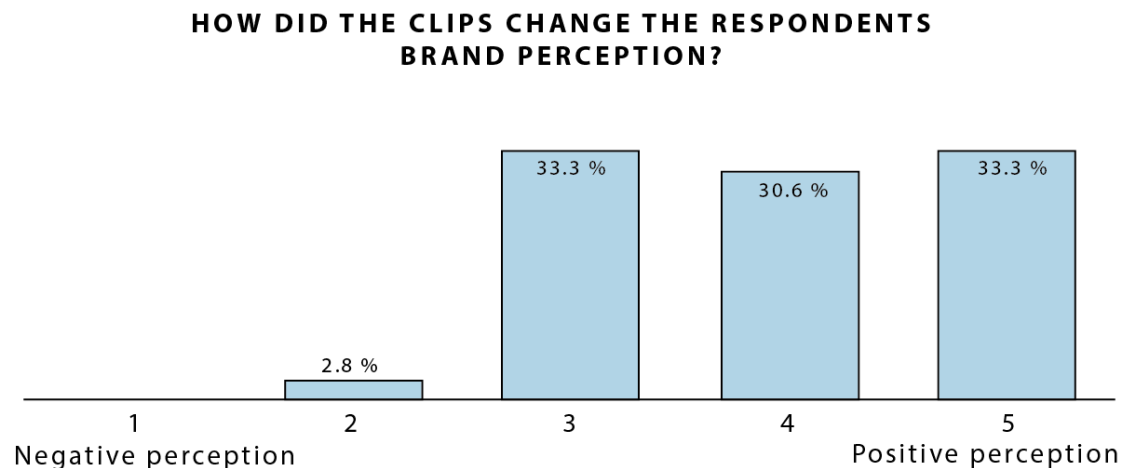


Figure 21: Television series influence on brand perception

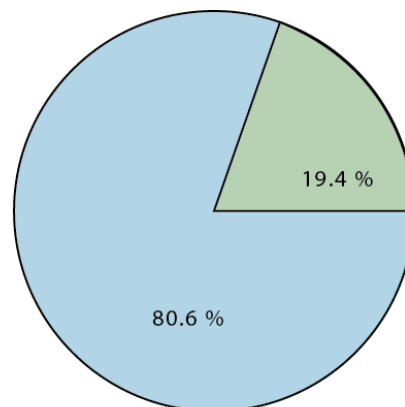
The following question looks at the associations of Keller's Brand Equity Model (2008). How does performance and imagery play a role in the association of the brand? There was an overall **positive perception of the brands** used in the television series, Modern Family. Supporting this table is quotes from the focus group:

"I love Apple products. Throughout Modern Family you can hear notification sounds of Apple products, sometimes people don't even recognize it but I think cause I have a product I think it's me getting a text, but it seldom is I am not as popular as Hayley (Chuckles)."

"I wish my dad let me have a driving lesson in his Audi! Manny is one lucky kid. Did you see how fast the car went from like 0km to 100km"

"Rotor Drones are a new technological development, and again we see it with Phil so we associate new developments with him. It's clever! The way they used the drone is also humorous, it is spying on Gloria while she suntans. It made the brand very realistic and it was that it was done in a humorous way."

4.2.2.13 Question 14: To what extent did the respondents like the actors of Modern Family?



TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE RESPONDENTS LIKE THE ACTORS?

● Like ● Neither like or dislike ● Dislike

Figure 22: The amount of respondents that like the actors of Modern Family

It was common answer that most of the respondents **like the actors of Modern Family**. Supporting this pie chart is quotes from the focus group:

“Phil is definitely my favorite. I wish he were my uncle or something! Not my dad, my dad is the bomb but like he could be a family member. There isn’t a single episode where he hasn’t made me laugh.”

“I like that the show is so real. I love that Mitchell and Cam are gay and adopt a baby. I love that Jay is married to a younger woman. Jay reminds me a lot of my Papa. He is to the point and takes no nonsense, but is a real softy in the inside! I think what makes Modern Family so successful is that its so real. Every family in some way or another can relate to an actor in the show.”

“I love Hayley. I follow her on Instagram; I am obsessed with her fashion sense. I think she is the big sister most of us have. She always judges you but also wants the best for you. I really agree with (anonymous) in saying the actors feel real. It doesn’t feel like they reading off a script.

4.2.2.14 Question 15: What brands will they respondents go and buy after seeing it in Modern Family?

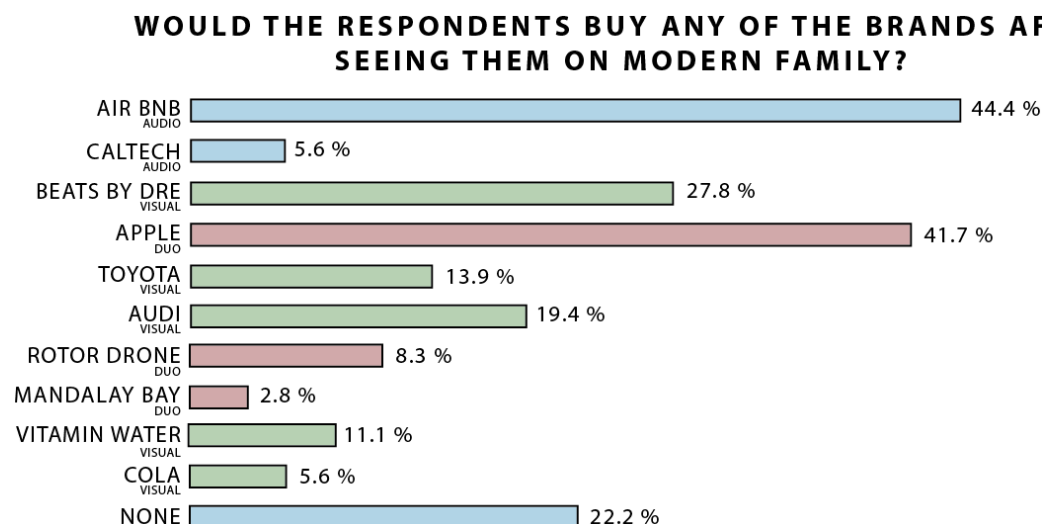


Figure 23: Brand activity in Modern Family

There was a common thread that most of the respondents would go buy the brands after it's been in the television series, Modern Family. Air BNB (audio placement), Apple (duo placement), Beats by Dre (visual placement) and Toyota (visual placement) having the majority of the votes. This was interesting to note from the author as audio placement created the most brand awareness but **visual placement resulted in the highest brand activity**, meaning the respondent would do buy the brand. The same results were shown in Friends.

To summarise the findings of product placement in Modern Family, the author notes that respondents enjoy the actors of the television series as they see them as real, they can relate to them. Audio product placement created the most brand awareness but visual placement resulted in the highest brand activity, meaning the respondent will go out and buy the product. The following questions relate to both television series, Modern Family and Friends.

4.2.2.15. Question 16: Did the respondents agree with the use of product placement in the television series?

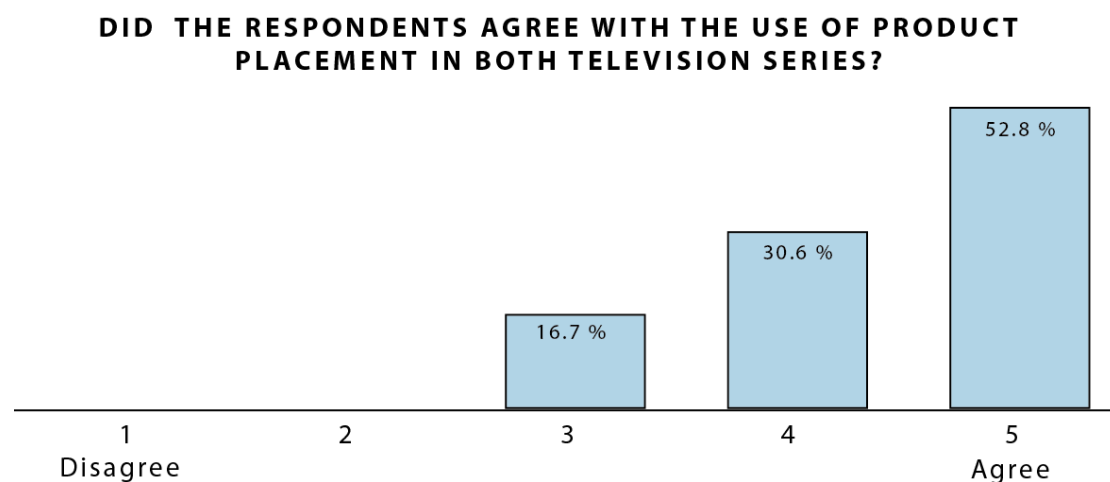


Figure 24: Link between brand and television series

It is common theme that most respondents **agree with the use of product placement**. To support this are quotes from the focus group:

“Sometimes I do find product placement distracting but often not! If product placement reduces the cost of production then I say keep doing it! If it’s bringing me good entertainment on a Sunday evening, then keep doing it.”

“What I enjoy about product placement is that it often reminds me of brands that I might have forgotten or showcases new product developments. And I agree with (anonymous), if its bringing good television series and movies because it keeps the production costs low, then why not keep doing it?”

4.2.2.16 Question 17: Do the respondents feel actors play a big role in brand perception?

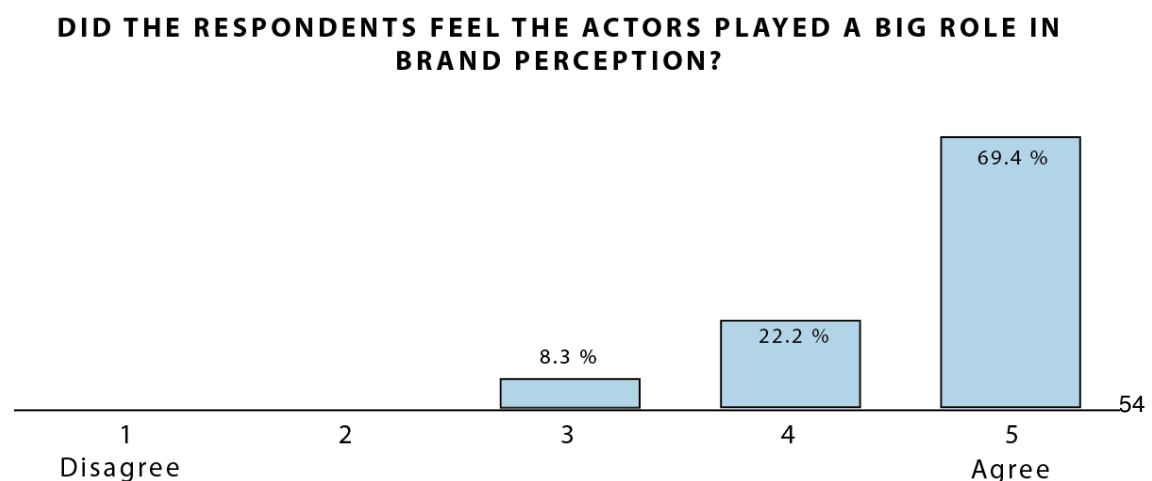


Figure 25: Actors influence on brand perception

It wasn't surprising to author when majority of respondents **agreed that the actors play a big role in brand perception**. From quotes mentioned above from the focus group, it can clearly be seen that actors identify themselves with the actors and often want to use the brands they use.

4.2.2.17 Question 18: Did the respondents feel product placement was distracting?

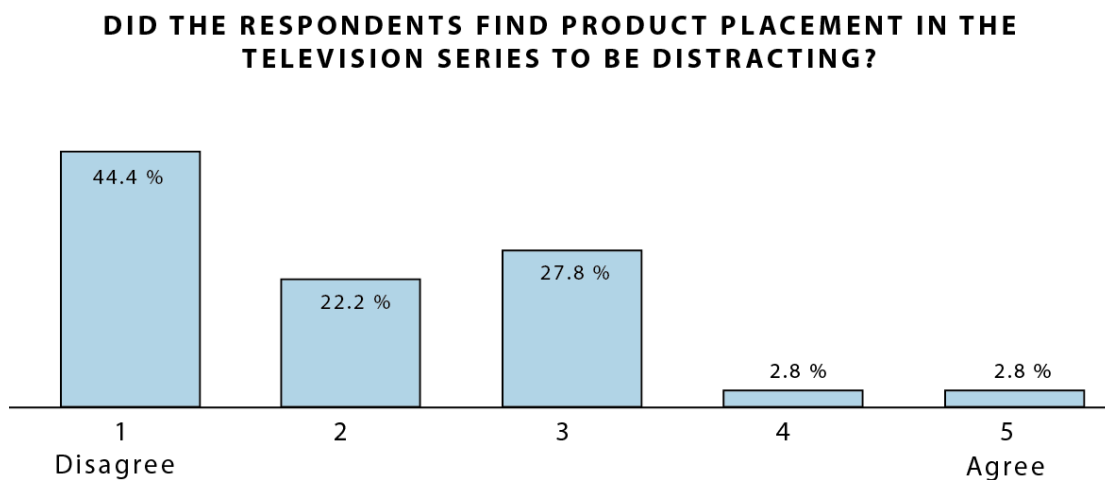


Figure 26: The amount of respondents that feel product placement is distracting

The common theme was that respondents **didn't feel that product placement was distracting**. To support this is quotes from the focus group:

"I don't find product placement to be distracting, it just annoys me if it used in an obvious way. The James Bond movies are bad like that! I enjoy product placement if it is done in a clever way, like Phil and the drone."

"I do find product placement distracting, especially if it looks like the actor is concentrating on holding the product the right way. For example, when they drink something! They always hold the can so that we can see the logo or place it on the table the right way."

"I really don't find it distracting, I often find it interesting to see how they incorporate brands, if they do it in an interesting way it makes me enjoy the

brand even more!”

4.3 A SUMMARY OF PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN TELEVISION SERIES, FRIENDS AND MODERN FAMILY

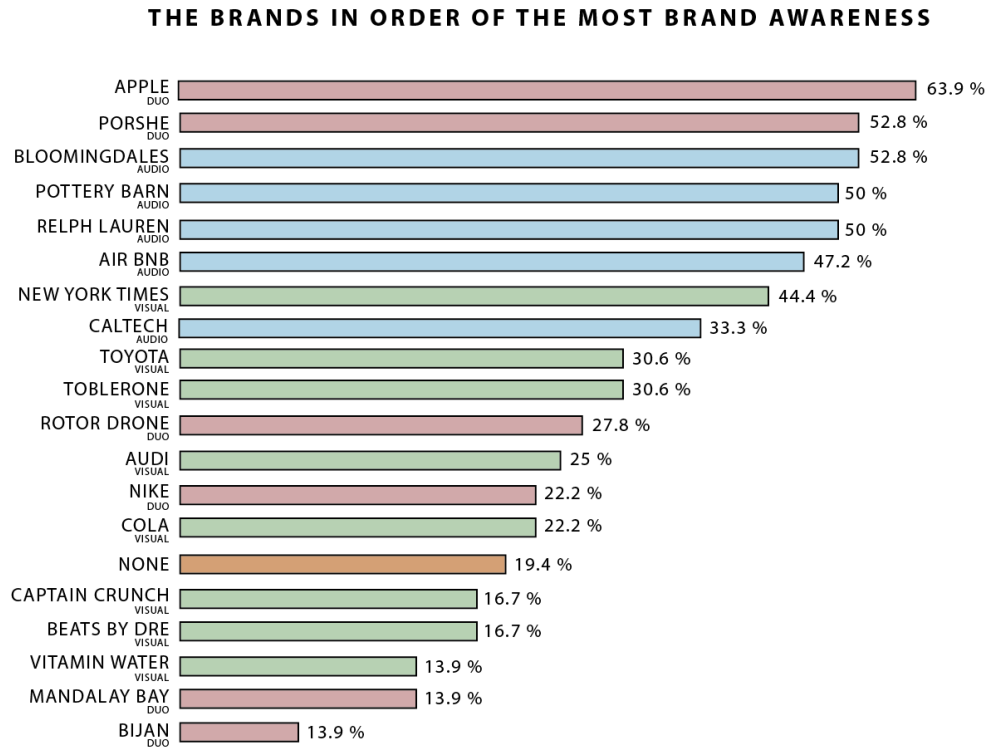


Figure 27: Figure showcasing the brands with the most brand awareness

The following graph showcases which type of product placement is the most effective. Apple had the highest brand awareness, with duo product placement in Modern Family, and second was Porsche with a duo product placement in friends. The next highest type of product was product placement with audio product placement of Bloomingdales, Relph Lauren and Pottery Barn in Friends and Air BNB in Modern Family. Visual product placement doesn't make it into the top majority of product placement awareness.

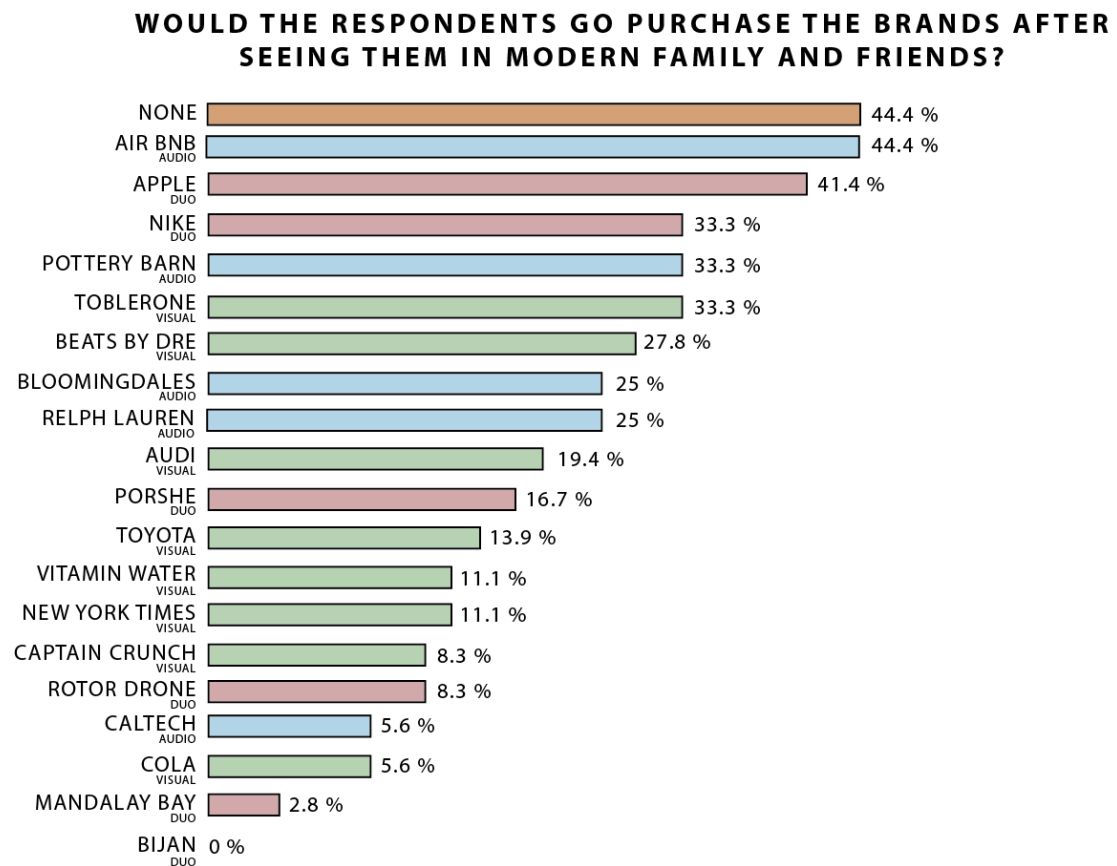


Figure 28: Brands with the highest brand activity

The following graph showcases which type of product placement resulted in the respondents wanting to go and buy the product. Surprisingly no brand activity came out with majority of votes, in tie with Air BNB with audio placement. Apple and Nike, duo product placements, both come in next with majority of votes and next with Pottery Barn with audio product placement.

4.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Brand equity is measured when the brand passes through all stages of Keller's Brand Equity Model (2008). With audio product placement generating the most awareness for both television series and a tie between audio and duo placement for brand activity and attachment. It is to author's understanding that if the placement has audio in it, it will be effective. When the respondents were in a unrealistic environment, an environment they weren't comfortable like their own sofa, there answers more focused as they

were being watched as they watched the television clips making duo product placement more effective for them. Whereas the respondents answering the questionnaire in their own space may have been distracted by their cellphones or pop-up banners etc. and not concentrating on the clips, making audio placement more effective for them. It was hypothesised by the author that audio placement would be the most effective with millennial's most likely being on their phone while watching television.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The conclusions and recommendations of the research are presented in relation to each research objective. Findings are presented, which are followed by a conclusion and recommendation for each objective. To conclude, further research has been made and a closing comment ends the chapter.

5.2 OBJECTIVE ONE

Discover how product placement in television series has on millennial's brand awareness, associations, attitudes and activity, resulting in positive brand equity.

5.2.1 Findings from the literature

It was previously mentioned, if the product placement in television series is seen as positive it should touch base with all five dimensions.

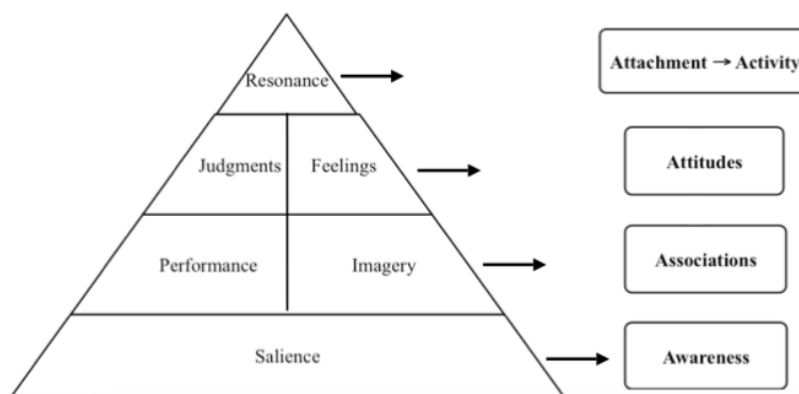


Figure 3: Link between CBBE Model and BVC Model inspired by Keller (2008)

- (1) Brand awareness explored whether the respondents remember seeing or hearing brands that were shown in the television clips presented to them.
- (2) Brand associations investigated whether the placed brands in the

television series, Friends and Modern Family, had an influence on the respondents' already established brand association or whether their perception changed, and whether the actor using the brand changed perception. (3) Brand attitudes tests the respondents' overall evaluation of the brand, how they feel and think about the brand. (4) Brand attachment and activity tests the degree of loyalty and attachment towards the brand. (5) Brand activity investigates how respondents will go buy, use, or talk to others about the brand.

A previous study done by Kjærnested and Nielsen (2012), on the effect of product placement in television series, Gossip Girl and Big Bang Theory, showed a positive influence on brand equity. The findings revealed that the factors; modality, brand familiarity, placement fit, character liking, viewer-character relationship, program involvement and attitudes toward placements in general affected brand equity at all levels. Brands that suited the television show resulted in higher brand awareness and activity. The study concluded that duo product placement was the most effective (2012, p. 107).

5.2.2 Findings from research

Results indicated that several factors influence brand equity. Familiar brands and brands that suit the television series and placements that are done in a clever manner generate the most attention amongst viewers thus affecting brand awareness, the lowest level of Keller's Brand Equity Model (2008). This was clear in the focus group where participants made reference to Apple with Phil and Rachel with Pottery Barn.

The leverage of actors association with the brand contributes to a positive perception about the brand, and generates brand associations, the second level of Keller's Brand Equity Model. This was evident with Phil and Rotor Drones and Toblerone with Joey. With the strong associations with the brand and the actor, positive attitudes are felt about the brand, the third level of Kellers's Brand Equity Model (2008).

There was a common theme amongst respondents that they would go buy the products seen in the television series, Air BNB, Apple, and Pottery Barn. Product placement went through all stages of the brand equity model thus having a positive influence on brand equity.

5.2.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, product placement can be seen to have an effect on brand equity if the brand is suitable for the television series. A common theme found was that participants felt negative towards beverage product placement when it is too staged. The most positive feelings towards product placement was when it was skillfully incorporated into the script to suit the actors role.

5.2.4 Recommendations

This was a small-scale study; it is recommended that marketers do a large-scale study testing the effect of each brand or brand category (e.g. clothing) on brand equity. As it was seen in the author's findings that respondents felt negative towards a specific brand category placement.

5.3 OBJECTIVE TWO

Compare visual and audio product placement to audio/visual duo product placement to test higher brand awareness, thus clearly showcasing the type of product placement brands should invest in.

5.3.1 Findings from the literature

Gupta and Lord (1998) introduced the theory Modality, where their results showed that duo product placement was most effective. Theoretically the author explored this theory, as product placement in television series should be more effective in creating brand awareness if recall is more effective with both duo (visual and verbal) placements.

5.3.2 Findings from research

The findings from the research showed that audio product placement was most effective in generating brand awareness but there was a common thread between audio product placement and duo product placement in brand activity. The author then concluded that product placement with audio deems effective.

5.3.3 Conclusion

It can be assumed that millennial's are looking at their phones while the television is on, and hears the brand but doesn't see it, but when looking at the screen will notice both. Thus audio product placement is seen as the most effective type of product placement.

5.3.4 Recommendations

In order to affirm and refine the research results, further research should be conducted. Through a longitudinal study and repeated observation of the same factors over longer period of time, it should be possible to shed a more affirming light into how effective each type of product placement is. This should be undertaken with a bigger range of stimuli, such as different types of television series where viewers are exposed to the placed brands in a natural environment.

5.4 OBJECTIVE THREE

Understand the relationship between the millennial consumer, actor, and product placement.

5.4.1 Findings from the literature

Russell and Stern introduced The Balancing Theory showcasing the balanced triad between the consumer, the product and the actor. According to Russell and Stern (2006), actors that match the attributes of the placed product tend to be much more successful. When brands suit the actors role, there is

balance in the triad but when there is a negative association, there is an imbalance in the triad (2006, p.8).

5.4.2 Findings from research

Such findings mentioned from the literature above were found in the research. There was a common theme found across both television series that respondents liked the actors of the series, especially Modern Family. Respondents enjoyed that they could relate to certain actors, and felt the actors played a big role in their brand perception.

5.4.3 Conclusion

Product placement is most effective when it associated with an appropriate actor. When the brand links to the actor's role there is a balance in the triad between the product, the actor and the consumer. This was clear especially in Modern Family with Phil Dunphy. Respondents enjoyed it when Phil was linked with technology, as that is how they know Phil.

5.3.4 Recommendations

Recommendations going forward, the author suggests brands look at sponsoring that actor in real life too. If consumers have an attachment to the actor, it is highly likely that they are following them on social media pages. The brand should see it as an opportunity to expose their brand outside of the series but still have a connection to the series.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research conducted highlighted various factors that are important to consider before investing in product placement as a marketing tool. Since the study was a small-scale study, respondents were exposed to a little amount of stimuli in an environment that did not represent a real life television series experience. The long term-effects of findings are still unknown thus recommended brands undertake a large-scale study to investigate the effect product placement has on brand equity on a longer time frame.

Product placement in television series is only one aspect of product placement. In recent years, many forms of product placement have evolved. An interesting study could be on the study of the effect of product placement in games in comparison to product placement in television series; or the effect of product placement in television series versus product placement in movies.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

There is no apparent modern framework based on product placement, this leaves marketers in the blind when they have to make product placement investment decisions. For that reason, the dissertation sought to answer the question, to what extent does product placement in television series have on millennial brand perception and buying behaviour? A qualitative research design using questionnaires and a focus group enabled the investigation of whether the literature found influenced brand equity.

The findings revealed that audio product placement generated the highest brand awareness, and audio placement and duo placement resulted in the highest brand activity and attachment. It can be concluded that audio placement is the most effective type of product placement. Familiar brands and brands that fit well, generated greater attention and influenced brand awareness and brand associations. This enables marketers to strengthen their products brand awareness even more, with hope of influencing the creation of strong, favorable associations in the consumer's memory.

The author thoroughly enjoyed doing this dissertation, it is something the author has grown to love and developed an interest in. The outcomes were not as hypothesised, which made the research that much more exciting. Even though the research cannot be fully generalised, it provides useful insights for brands in taking the right step in effective product placement resulting in high brand equity.

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Annexure A

The following documents attached are the participant consent forms for the focus group. The participants could choose whether they wanted their information to remain confidential or not.

Annexure B

The following document attached is the ethical clearance as provided by the IIE. The document was signed by Navigator, Alec Bozas and Supervisor, Carolanda Du Toit.

APPENDIX

The series, the actor and the product.

For my honours dissertation, I am researching the effect of brands in television series. It would be greatly appreciated if you could take the time and watch a couple of clips here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnXWkMgGI5RbJZawSsWuKNTnRcmNpLzMX> and answer the questions that follow. Please do not read the questions before watching the clips as it will result in your answers being bias. By answering this survey, you have given consent to anonymously contribute to my research dissertation.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM:

Vega School of Brand Leadership
BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communications
Researcher: Kimberley Tocknell, to be contacted at kimtocknell@gmail.com for further questions.
Supervisor: Carolanda Du Toit

Image 1: The introduction to the online questionnaire.

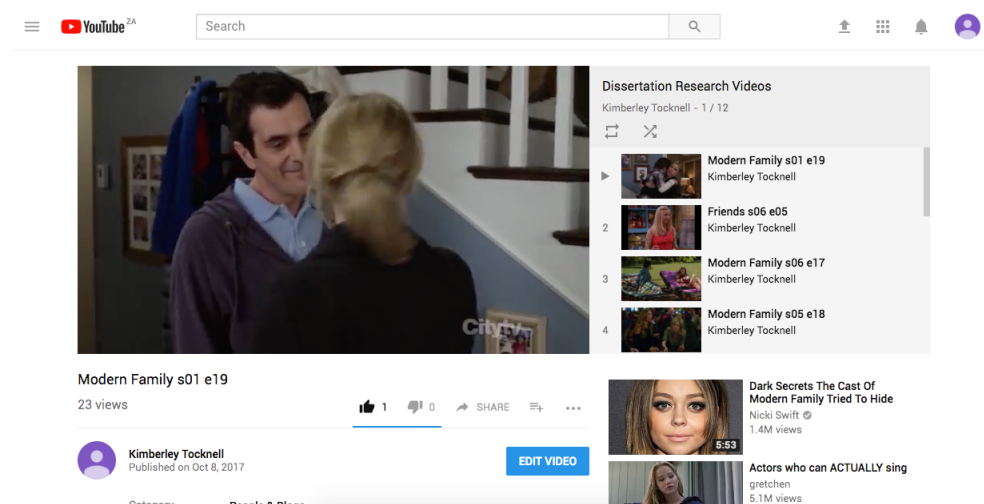


Image 2: The YouTube folder where the clips could be found

1. Gender
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Male
2. Have you ever watched Friends before?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
3. How often have you watched the show? *
 - ☐ Never
 - ☐ Only a couple of times
 - ☐ On a regular basis

4. Do you remember seeing or hearing any brands while you watching the clips?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Yes

5. Please tick the brands you remember seeing or hearing.

- ☐ Pottery Barn
- ☐ Toblerone
- ☐ Porsche
- ☐ Nike
- ☐ Bloomingdale's
- ☐ Bijan
- ☐ New York Times
- ☐ Captain Crunch
- ☐ Ralph Lauren
- ☐ None

6. Based on your knowledge of Friends and the brands listed above, do you feel there is a good match between the brands and the television series?

1 - Not a good match

2

3

4

5 – A good match

7. How did the clips influence how you perceive the brands?

1 - A negative influence

1

2

3

4

5 - A positive influence

8. To what extent do you like the characters of Friends?

- ☐ Like
- ☐ Neither like nor dislike
- ☐ Dislike

9. To what extent do you identify yourself with the characters in Friends? *

1 - Not really

2

3

4

5 - A lot

10. After watching the clips, would you consider buying any of the following brands even more?

- ☐ Pottery Barn
- ☐ Toblerone
- ☐ Porsche
- ☐ Nike
- ☐ Bloomingdale's
- ☐ Bijan
- ☐ New York Times
- ☐ Captain Crunch
- ☐ Ralph Lauren
- ☐ None

11. Have you ever watched Modern Family before? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. How often have you watched the show? *

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Only a couple of times
- ☐ On a regular basis

13. Do you remember seeing or hearing any brands while you watching the clips?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Yes

14. Please tick the brands you remember seeing or hearing.

- ☐ Airbnb
- ☐ Caltech
- ☐ Beats by Dre
- ☐ Apple
- ☐ Toyota
- ☐ Audi
- ☐ Rotor drone
- ☐ Mandalay Bay
- ☐ Vitamin Water
- ☐ Cola
- ☐ Netflix

- None

15. Based on your knowledge of Modern Family and the brands listed above, do you feel there is a good match between the brands and the television series?

1- Not a good match

2

3

4

5 - A good match

16. How did the clips influence how you perceive the brands?

1 - A negative influence

1

2

3

4

5 - A positive influence

17. To what extent do you like the characters of Modern Family?

- Like
- Neither like nor dislike
- Dislike

18. After watching the clips, would you consider buying any of the following brands even more?

- Air bnb
- Caltech
- Beats by Dre
- Apple
- Toyota
- Audi
- Rotor drone
- Mandalay Bay
- Vitamin Water
- Cola
- Netflix
- None

19. Do you agree with the use of product placement in television series *

1 - Disagree

2

3

4

5 – Agree

20. Do you feel the actors in the television series play a big role in brand perception?

1 - Disagree

2

3

4

5 - Agree

21. Do you find product placement to be distracting?

1 - Disagree

1

2

3

4

5 - Agree

Image 3: The online questionnaire (Note, some questions don't appear the same as they did online)