

Brand Placement in Film Content: Insights From Pakistan's Reviving Film Industry

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Abstract

Brand placement has gradually increased in its importance due to the diversity of marketing communication strategies used by the brand leaders. The product manufacturers have developed a strong competition regarding placing their goods in the media text. To understand brand placement techniques, the present study analyzed 16 top-grossing Pakistani films, from 2014 to 2018. The content analysis was used to investigate product categories, brand visibility, visual placement, brand association with characters, context of placement, and integration of brand with the storyline in the film content. The findings revealed fast-food restaurants and banks as brand leaders in the overall data. The visual placements, denoted as seen placement, were abundant, with the placements mostly in neutral scenes. Overall, there was a lack of association of brands with the film characters. Over a period of time, there was an increase in the integration of brand placement to the storyline and central placement was prevalent. Contributing to scarcity of literature on brand placement in Pakistan, the study provided insight from the example of a struggling film industry which started its revival just about 20 years ago.

Keywords: Brand Placement; Top-grossing Films; Lollywood; Pakistani Film Industry

Introduction

During the past few decades, studying brand placement became an essential area for different media contents (Avramova, 2021; Naderer, Matthes, & Spielvogel, 2019; Ozbay, 2017; Sánchez-Olmos, 2020) especially films (Maynard & Scala, 2006; Yee Chan, 2016) of Hollywood and Bollywood (Gokhale, 2010; Natarajan, Stephen, & Inbaraj, 2018). As per Karrh (1998), brand or product placement is a paid introduction of brand name and their products through audio and visual content of entertainment programs. According to Ginosar and Levi (2010) brand placement is a deliberate infusion of commercial content into noncommercial settings which can be called as product plug generation through fusion of

advertising and entertainment. The literature (Kumar & Rani, 2018; Thamaraiselvan, Arasu, Stephen, & Inbaraj, 2017) demonstrated that brand placement holds significance importance for advertisers and production houses. The focus of the existing studies primarily remained on the well-established film industries like Hollywood and Bollywood. Therefore, exploring the concept through a reviving industry would add a new perspective in the literature. With the revival and new wave of Pakistan's cinema from the year 2012, not only the storylines were contextualized in the local context (Inayat & Sadiq, 2020) but the production houses also started to incorporate brand placements to support films budgets. It supported the striving Pakistani film industry, mostly referred to as Lollywood. Evidently, it was crucial to see how the brand placements were being used in Pakistani films. This investigation would not only be helpful for the production houses but also for the advertisers. Further, it also adds to the existing debate on the brand placement from Pakistan's context. It is pertinent to mention that in the absence of any financial support by the government, the sustenance of the Pakistani cinema solely depends on the financial support of the private investors and advertisers. Although some films were sponsored by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) of the Pakistan army. Yet, for obvious reasons, these films were required to align with the state narrative on security and patriotism (Hussain, Bilal, & Chodhry, 2019). Independent filmmakers and private production houses, focusing on different genres and subjects, struggle to get funding for their films.

The current research analyzed the brand placements in Pakistani top-grossing films. The reason for selecting top-grossing films was not just due to on-going practice (Devlin & Combs, 2015; Kumar & Rani, 2018; Yee Chan, 2016) but the fact that these films in Pakistan became a benchmark for the struggling industry. Since the revival of the Pakistan's film industry was very recent, the top-grossing films between 2014-2018 were selected to understand the dynamics of brand placements in the early 5 years of the reviving Pakistani cinema. The present research was focused on understanding the classification and use of brand placement in the selected films. It, further, examined the integration of brand placement with the storyline through characters' interaction with the branded items. The screen placement (central or peripheral) of the brands was also analyzed to get a meaningful insight into brand placement.

Literature Review

Brand placement is the amalgamation of the product or brand in the primary storyline with the principal setting of the program (Zerhouni, Duke, & Flaudius, 2016). In placement, one of the key distinctive features is the direct relation of a product used by the characters and the other is integration with the script (Wang & Wise, 2016). The researchers emphasized that placement should be designed in a way that the viewers of the content can associate it with the performers of the content. Basically, the purpose of placing the items in entertainment content was to increase the sale of brands and to reduce the production cost of the film. It involved some contractual arrangements between filmmakers and sponsors. The audience preferences were central for deciding which type of placement to be incorporated (Akyol & Okan, 2014). The placement of brands in different media is not a recent practice. Positively from the 1930s onwards, filmmakers and brand proprietors effectively occupied product placement bargains (Hudson & Hudson, 2006). The advertisers delivered, supported, and embedded their items in TV programs since the 1950s. For instance, the Colgate Comedy Show (Robert, 2004). The brand placement in non-film media has now turned into a fundamental piece of the business. The songs by Maven and computer games by Massive Company (Sung & Gregorio, 2008) are few such examples. In the late 1980s, the product placement agencies made agreements between suppliers and moviemakers. Since then, the

placement of products in films became an important element of consumer marketing programs (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004). With the development and progressively organized types of brand placement, the overall frequency of brand introduction inside the content of media has increased which led to a periodically expanding flow of brand show reel. The production companies and product manufacturers realized that film is the most effective medium to incorporate their products. The products are integrated into the storyline and produce a long-lasting effect on the viewers (Segrave, 2004). Therefore, it showed the attitude change among the American audience and they accepted and admired the product i.e. Budweiser Beer appeared in different films like *Honeysuckle* and *Urban Cowboy* in 1980, while Wheaties and Cheerios in *Rocky 3* and *Honky Tonk Freeway* respectively in 1982 (Segrave, 2004). From that point forward, the placement in the motion pictures has increasingly expanded. Being inspired by Hollywood, Bollywood cinema follows the same steps. Bollywood has a big market that released around 300 films every year (Geetha, 2003).

The practice of paid brand placement in Bollywood cinema started in the 1990s (Kriplani, 2006). The Yash Chopra's film '*Dil to Pagal Ha*' highlighted various products such as Killer Jeans, Levi's and Pepsi. Salman Khan starrer film *Bandhan* (1998) included a whole scene on a conversation around Pepsi. The film '*Taal*' showed the same placement of brand in regarding featuring of coke (Gokhale, 2010). Likewise, Hollywood and Bollywood industry has adopted product placement in the storylines of their films. The TATA Motors paid 12.5 million rupees for the film in 2002, named *Road*, where the story of the film revolves around the related product usage (Kriplani, 2006). In 2010, Bollywood high grossed films incorporated branded products that were tangible in nature. Interestingly, high grossing films that were produced inside India have more tangible product placement as compared to those films that are being shot outside the country. In films like *DABANG*, the product placement of Ray-Ban glasses was incorporated. ZANDU Balm was, also, used in a song. In *Golmaal 3*, main characters used many low involvement products in their dialogues like *Pan Prague*, *ZANDU Balm*, *Café Barista* etc. In the category of high involvement brands, *SpiceJet* and *Brand Aircraft* were shown at the end of the film. In short, in these films, tangible products that were placed verbally and visually included automobiles, food chains, and the aviation sector (Vaghela, 2013).

As far as the effectiveness of the placement is concerned, it is another big indicator of successful advertisement in entertainment content. Russel and Blech (2005) proposed a model to categorize the value of placement. The value of placement is the most important factor towards the advancement of the branded entertainment. This model proposed the three characteristics i.e. placement characteristics, contextual characteristics, and audience characteristics. The brand inclusion in the mature form of insertion has shown an effect on brand identity and goodwill. These placed brands become part of the story to make them more believable. The realism is the key factor in audience engagement in films and association of any product use. It creates a subtle association in their real life. In this regard, the most important thing is the positive portrayal of that brand to the situation (Natharius, 2004). Walton (2010) conducted research on brand placement of Hollywood films of nine decades regarding the value and frequency of brand placement. This research provided limited data but it authenticated the evolution process of brand placement. The number of placements that were based on the brand logo shown in every placement increased through the decade. However, brand placement prominence has been discussed by the researchers and two concepts have been derived. The first one is that brand placement prominence has a positive impact on brand memory. The second one is that brand placement can affect attitude and behavior without memory of placements (Van Reijmersdal, 2009). The creative brand agencies are now involved in maximizing the content advertisement. There are many types of

placement which are practically being used but very few quantitative methods are available to know how much effectiveness existed in any placement in digital and film content (Fulgoni, Pettit, & Lipsman, 2016).

Types of Brand Placement

Oliver (1986) described two types of placements: a) creative and b) on-set placements. The creative placements are those which are initiated by the marketers to insert the brands into the entertainment content. These types of placement are negotiated before the script is finalized. In the on-set placement, the directors and filmmakers decide to incorporate the brand in the set design to show the realism factor. On-set placement is pursued by production companies to place the brand and create visual realism. In all films, placement occurs in three dimensions regardless of business agreements: namely, visual, audio and audiovisual. The visual modality is further classified in terms of prominence depending on where the brand is placed in the frame: foreground, background, and periphery. The visual only placement is the key type among product placement. In this type, mostly brand name, logo, or product itself is induced in film scenes. Instead of any visual showcasing, audio only refers to the mention of product name or tagline through any character of the film. The last type, audio-visual, is more diversified where character induces name of a certain brand and also uses that same product (Devlin & Combs, 2015).

According to prior researches, the modalities of placements were related to the effectiveness of placement. This included the purchase intention of that brand recalling, and recognition. As per Brennen, Dubas, Babin (1999), within visual placement, on-set placement was more effective than creative visual placement. Conversely, Yang, Roskos, Ewoldsen (2007) found that visual-only placement was higher when the product was used by the character rather placed in the background. The effectiveness of brand placement became more complicated as character interaction highly affects brand effectiveness (Russell, 2002). According to Chang, Newell and Solman (2009) there is an established typology of three categories in which different products are placed in the content. Firstly, the *serendipitous placement* which is short-lived placement mostly used to fill screen space and is not relevant to the script. This can be explained as two characters talking and roaming around and billboard is seen on the screen. Secondly, the *opportunistic placements* are usually initiated and suggested by marketing partners by reviewing scripts and incorporating the brand in it. These are the expensive placements due to exposure of film content. The product manufacturers and film producers negotiate and a contractual agreement is signed to place the brand according to the script. The last one is the *planned placement*. It is when a specific brand is excessively incorporated in the storyline. In this type of placement, the brand has special influence and right in the making of a film. Brand promotion is sometimes the most important thing in the script and it is merged in the overall storyline (Chang, Newell, & Solman, 2009).

There is another placement type in which placement is specifically related to the visual composition of the screen. There are different measures in which brands are visually incorporated to have a different impact which depends on the target audience of the film. Within the visual detail and screen placements, there are two types: one is central, and the other is peripheral placements (Devlin & Combs, 2015). The most important thing in placement is the quantification and formula of placement. After visual, another important element on which placement is heavily relied on is the emotional valence. Emotional valence can be explained in terms of any emotional context attached to the story. Again, it is important because of the impact on the audience regarding imparting a long-term impression. The emotional context of placing a brand in the content of the film also affects the effectiveness regarding viewer's memory and their subjective visualizations. For this context,

the scenes were divided into three categories i.e. positive, negative and neutral. Using the work of Schaefer, Nils, Sanchez, and Philipot (2010), placement can be identified with respect to integration with storyline according to the quantity of brand used in positive, negative, or neutral scenes. The brand placement in positive scenes or a protagonist using that brand has a different impact on viewers than the usage in negative scenes. Most brands want to place their brand in a positive scene rather than a negative scene (Schaefer, Nils, Sanchez, & Philipot, 2010).

The Pakistani Cinema and Brand Placement

The actual revival of Pakistani cinema, Lollywood, started through the 21st century when independent filmmakers put an effort in a new line of films. The Geo channel, with Shoaib Mansoor's '*Khuda K Liye*', was the bottle opener for the newly revived cinema. After that many filmmakers started to mark the renaissance of the Pakistani film industry (Aslam, 2015). The efforts of private filmmaking companies and the introduction of cineplex moved Pakistani cinema towards growth (Noor, 2010). However, the brand placement in Pakistani films is for the most part an ongoing wonder, owing to the most part to the fall and rise of this industry. The earlier placements can be seen in films where Pepsi can be obviously seen in various songs of Lollywood cinema. Yet, there were just a few recorded cases accessible where a solid corporate and big production houses nexus can be seen in the early decades.

Recently, there is an expanding pattern of brand placement in famous films. Mehreen Jabbar's directorial *Ramchand Pakistani* (2008) embraced English biscuits and Wateen telecom in its opening credits. However, there were no arrangements of these brands in any of the film scenes. *Main Hoon Shahid Afridi* (2013) had conspicuous brand positions including Habib bank, Pepsi and Nike. *The 3 Bahadur* (2015) and *Jawani Phir Nahi Aani* (2015) had obvious brand positions and brand references in different scenes (Aijaz, 2016). According to Jami, a Pakistani film director, after the cinema revival in Pakistan, there is a dire need to follow the streamline of product placement practices. No doubt Pakistani dramas are successful, but product placement can help in films to gather major finance to produce large scale film industry (Sammiuddin, 2015).

The importance of product placement is inevitable in Pakistan as films cannot be made without the advertisers. However, to sustain this rise of cinema, creativity should not be compromised (Kazi, 2015). There are certain films in Pakistan in which product placement was badly shown as there was no creativity in that insertion of brands. The placement of Sprite theme in the film, *Daikh Magar Pyar Se*, was very unproductive and not relevant to the storyline. The annoying entry of discussion of McDonald's menu and other products should be dealt with some creative way. Likewise, in film *Karachi se Lahore*, Wall's Cornetto's placement and Tutti Frutti song is another example of bad placement. In the animated movie, *3 Bahadur*, there was too much of a biscuit munching. Similarly, the suggestion of a bank or working there was not justified in the film *Shah* (The Haute Team, 2018). There is a critical need for data to understand the number of brands and brand placement types in Pakistani films. There is very limited research related to brand placement frequency, types, and trends in the past decades. The availability of such information would create an understanding about the experimentation of brand placement. It would subsequently help to boost the business of Pakistani cinema as well as the product manufacturers. The present research, therefore, provides a fundamental insight into how the brand placement was done in top-grossing Pakistani films of recent years, which is 2014 to 2018.

Methodology

Brand Placement phenomenon was analyzed through quantitative content analysis. In the content analysis, the manifest form of text (content) in which brand appearance and their frequency was the major area of research (Rose, Spinks, & Canhoto, 2014) was considered. The quantitative content analysis was useful to organize the frequency, emotional valence, modalities, and types of placement.

The Sample

The sample included a total of 16 Pakistani top-grossing films of the past five years (2014-2018). The top three films from each year were analyzed (See, **Error! Reference source not found.**). Following table shows the top three Pakistani films with their total worldwide grossing.

Table 1: Top Grossing Pakistani Films of 2014-2018

<i>Film</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Grossing*</i>
<i>Jawani Phir Nahi Aani 2</i>	Romantic Comedy	2018	Rs 70 Crore
<i>Teefa in Trouble</i>	Romantic, Action, Comedy	2018	Rs 50 Crore
<i>Parwaaz Hai Junoon</i>	War, Romantic	2018	Rs 43 Crore
<i>Punjab Nahi Jaungi</i>	Romantic Comedy	2017	Rs 51.65 Crore
<i>Na Maloom Afraad 2</i>	Comedy Thriller	2017	Rs 21 Crore
<i>Yalghar</i>	Epic War	2017	Rs 20 Crore
<i>Actor in Law</i>	Socio Comedy	2016	Rs 30 Crore
<i>Janaan</i>	Romantic Comedy	2016	Rs 30 Crore
<i>Ho Mann Jahan</i>	Drama	2016	Rs 21 Crore
<i>Lahore se Aagey</i>	Romantic Comedy	2016	Rs 21 Crore
<i>Jawani Phir Nahi Aani</i>	Romantic Comedy	2015	Rs 49.44 Crore
<i>Bin Roye</i>	Romantic, Drama	2015	Rs 32 Crore
<i>Wrong No.</i>	Romantic Comedy	2015	Rs 32.25 Crore
<i>Na Maaloom Afraad</i>	Comedy Thriller	2014	Rs 14 Crore
<i>O 21</i>	Thriller	2014	Rs 5.92 Crore
<i>The System</i>	Action Drama	2014	Rs 4.06 Crore

*Data collected from different sources (Galaxy Lollywood, 2018; Lollywood Online, 2020; Qadir, 2019; Salman, 2017; Staff Report, 2019).

Each brand placement in the selected films was taken as the unit of analysis and was analyzed as a basis for brand placement.

Content Categories

The modified coding scheme (Gokhale, 2010) for brand placement model of Sapolsky and Kinney (1994) was used to explain brand placement and the frequency of products. Further, the coding scheme classified the types of placement with respect to the emotional context, character interaction, and placement rules. In the coding scheme, firstly, the categorization was of each product (For example, automobiles, clothes, electronics etc.) which was placed in the films. Secondly, the brand visibility was calculated through two categories; on-screen placement of product and brand name visibility. Thirdly, each product placed into the films was further categorized in three different types as follows:

- Seen: The product was visible on-screen.
- Mentioned: The product was mentioned by any character of the film.
- Used: The product was used by the actors in the film.

The basis of primary association with a character was based on usage of that product with a) star(s); b) non-star; or c) none of the characters. If the product was used by the stars in the film, like hero, heroine, or villain, it was coded as with a 'star'. If a product was used by the character other than hero, heroine, or villain it will be coded as with a 'non-star'. If the product was shown with none of the characters, and it just appeared on-screen, then it was put into the category of 'Not with characters'.

Fourthly, the context in which product was used in any scene was measured by the following variable:

- Positive: The product was used in a positive context by any character of the film. For example, a character drinking a cola drink and having fun.
- Negative: The product was used by the character in a negative context. For example, a villain using a car.
- Neutral: The product or its name is just visible in the background and there is no relation with the usage of the character in the film. For example, the banner of the clothing brand while a character is just passing by the road.

Fifthly, the integration of product placement to the storyline was coded into two categories: a) The product used in a way that its use is an integral part of the storyline, and b) product appearance having no relation with the storyline of the film.

Lastly, the visual placement of the brand was analyzed with respect to the central and peripheral placement. Delvin and Combs (2015) coded visual placement types based on the rule of third. According to this rule among the nine quadrants of the screen the product placed in the central quadrant will be placed in central placement while the product placed outside the central quadrant will be placed in peripheral placement. The same coding is used in the present research.

Findings

The data revealed some interesting facts and figures. The total number of brand placement in the selected films was 78. Out of these, 70% of the brand placements were just for the year 2015 (N=26, 33.33%) and 2016 (N=32, 41.02%).

RQ1: How brand placement was classified and used in top-grossing Pakistani films?

To understand the classification of brand placement, the placement was firstly categorized into brand categories. Secondly, the types of brand placement in terms of seen, mentioned, and used categories were coded. The use of brand placement was measured through the context of brand placement with respect to positive, negative, and neutral context. It is important to point out that no brand placement was seen in the selected movies of the year 2014. Also, no brand placement was observed in the movies like *Bin Roye* (2015) *Pujnab Nahi Jaongi* (2017).

The placed brands are categorized as fast-food restaurants, banks, hotel/motel, drinks, clothing, music, travel, electronics, beauty, food items, and magazines (See Table 2). The overall dominant brand placement was of the food restaurants and the banking sector. The next two dominant brands were hotels and cold drinks. The high involvement brands, which include hotels, were in the third position in terms of placement.

Table 2. Brand Placement in the Selected Pakistani Films

<i>Brand Category</i>	<i>Brand Names</i>	<i>Brand Placements f (%)</i>
Fast-Food Restaurants	McDonalds, KFC	21 (26.25%)
Banks	HBL, Bank Al-Falah	12 (15%)
Hotel/Motel	Grand Port, Grand Heritage	11 (13.75%)
Drinks	Coca-Cola, Jam-e-Shirin	8 (10%)
Clothing	Levi's Pakistan, Maaz jee	7 (8.75%)
Music	Coke Studio	6 (7.5%)
Travel	Turkish Airline	4 (5%)
Electronics	Rivo Mobile, Voice Mobile, Samsung AC	3 (3.75%)
Beauty	Fair n Lovely	2 (2.5%)
Food Items	Meezan Oil	2 (2.5%)
Magazines	Hello	2 (2.5%)
Total		78 (100%)

The brand placement that was consistent across all years was of fast-food restaurants. The year-wise analysis of the brands showed that in the year 2015, top brand placements were of Fast Food Restaurants (N=8,30.77%), Hotel/Motel (N=8, 30.77%), Clothing (N=5,19.23%) and Electronics (N=3, 11.54%). In the year 2016, the focus of brand placements was on Fast Food Restaurants (N=17, 53.13%), Banks (N=7, 21.88%) and Music (N=6, 18.75%). In the year 2017, the top brand placements were of Fast Food Restaurants (N=6, 41.15%), Banks (N=4, 30.77%). In the year 2018 brand placement of Travel (N=4, 57.14%) dominated the Food Item (N=2, 28.57%) category.

The types of placements in terms of seen, mentioned and used categories also showed important figures across five years (See Table 3).

Table 3. Types of Brand Placement Across Years

<i>Variables</i>		<i>Year 2015 f (%)</i>	<i>Year 2015 f (%)</i>	<i>Year 2015 f (%)</i>	<i>Year 2015 f (%)</i>
Primary Association	Seen (Visual)	19 (73.07%)	23 (71.87%)	7 (53.84%)	7 (100%)
	Mentioned (Audio)	1 (3.85%)	7 (21.88%)	3 (23.08%)	0 (0%)
	Used	6 (23.08%)	2 (6.25%)	3 (23.08%)	0 (0%)
	Total	26 (100%)	32 (100%)	13 (100%)	7 (100%)
Context	Positive	11 (42.31%)	15 (46.87%)	4 (30.77%)	1 (14.29%)
	Negative	1 (3.85%)	1 (3.13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Neutral	14 (53.84%)	16 (50%)	9 (69.23%)	6 (85.71%)
	Total	26 (100%)	32 (100%)	13 (100%)	7 (100%)

Overall, the seen placements were more than 70% of each year, with an exception of the year 2015. The placements where the product was just mentioned or used were N=11 for each category. This shows that the mentioned brand and used brand ratio was equal as a whole in these five years. The brand placement was mostly done within the positive or neutral context. To determine integration of product placement with the storyline, the interaction of characters with brands was analyzed further.

RQ2: How brand placement was the integrated with the storyline of the selected films?

The data pertaining to RQ2 was analyzed at two levels: a) the primary association of the product with characters; i.e. star, non-star and not with characters, b) the integration of the product with the storyline.

Table 4. Characters Association and Brand Integration with Storyline

Variables		Year 2015 <i>f</i> (%)	Year 2016 <i>f</i> (%)	Year 2017 <i>f</i> (%)	Year 2018 <i>f</i> (%)
Primary Association	Star	15 (57.7%)	15 (46.88%)	5 (33.3%)	0 (0%)
	Non-Star	1 (3.84%)	1 (3.12%)	1 (6.7%)	0 (0%)
	Not with Characters	10 (38.46%)	16 (50%)	9 (60%)	7 (100%)
	Total	26 (100%)	32 (100%)	15 (100%)	7 (100%)
Integration with Storyline	Integrated	1 (3.85%)	11 (34.37%)	6 (46.15%)	5 (71.43%)
	Non-Integrated	25 (96.15%)	21 (65.63%)	7 (53.85%)	2 (28.57%)
	Total	26 (100%)	32 (100%)	13 (100%)	7 (100%)

It is evident through the result derived, in Table 4, that primary association with the character was less than no association. It meant that the highest number of placements did not have any interaction with the character. The second most evident placement was with the star. The reason could be that brands were more inclined to place their brand with a star cast rather than non-star cast. The brand placement with the storyline is considered important. Therefore, the integration to the storyline was also calculated. The results showed that one-third of brand placement was relevant to the storyline (See Table 4). The placements which were not integrated with the storyline were more in numbers than the placement integrated to the storyline. Moreover, it varied between 4% to 71% over the years.

RQ3: What types of screen placement (central or peripheral) used in the selected films?

The pattern in placement was noticed (See Table 5).

Table 5. Screen Placement of the Brands

Variables	Year 2015 <i>f</i> (%)	Year 2016 <i>f</i> (%)	Year 2017 <i>f</i> (%)	Year 2018 <i>f</i> (%)
Central Placement	11 (42.31%)	9 (28.12%)	7 (53.85%)	5 (71.43%)
Peripheral Placement	15 (57.69%)	23 (71.88%)	6 (46.15%)	2 (28.57%)
Total	26 (100%)	32 (100%)	13 (100%)	7 (100%)

The trend across the years showed the overall brand placements were getting less in numbers with the passage of time. Also, the focus is getting more on the central placements than peripheral placements.

Discussion and Conclusion

Sequentially, the top four brands observed in the selected movies were: fast-food restaurants, banks, hotels, and drinks. The association of the brand placement with the character was on the decline across the time period. However, when this association was observed, it was mostly with the starred characters in both seen (visual) and mentioned (audio) placements. The primary placement type was seen placement. However, the trend of seen placement was temporally on the decrease. Moreover, there was a lack of mentioned and used placement. The association with characters was in positive scenes of the films. Yet, the increasing trend in neutral scene placements was observed. In terms of visual placements, the focus remained on peripheral placement in 2015 and 2016. Whereas in 2017 and 2018 more central placements were observed. Van Reijmersdal (2009) discussed that the prominence of brand placement has a positive impact on memory. Although, the attitude and behavior change were observed irrespective of the memory of the placement. Now, in the case of the selected movies, whether the focus on central placement was a conscious choice or not is yet to be known. However, in advertising, these decisions are not of an arbitrary nature. The brand placement requires planned placement based on what the advertiser wants to get out of that particular placement. The cost of placement is also decided based on the placement fact (Chang, Newell, & Solman, 2009). In the selected films, however, even in the peripheral placement, the manner through which the product was placed with the star was more of an advertisement than brand placement.

The advertisers and production companies had not set any placement strategy and the products were being used in abundant quantity in the selected movies of the year 2015. One of the worst examples of brand placement was seen in the film *Lahore Say Agay*. The storyline was badly conveyed due to product placement. More than a minute of placement was seen in the last 15 minutes of the film. The way these brand placements are affecting the narrative creativity of Pakistani films was also pointed out by Kazi (2015) in Pakistan's famous advertising magazine, *Aurora*. In the selected movies, the lack of brand integration with the story became a missed opportunity for the brands. The research (Segrave, 2004) already established the fact that the integration of brand with the storyline produces long last effect on the viewer's attitude change in terms of acceptance and admiration of the product. The believability of the placed brands in the storyline creates a subtle association of the brand in the real life of the viewers (Natharius, 2004). The character interaction with brand also highly affects the brand effectiveness (Russell, 2002).

In the selected movies, the brands are shown as a commercial as opposed to the brand placement rules. As opposed to on-set improvements, dependent on the measure of noticeably, products conspicuously contrasted with onset placement. If done in a proper manner, with respect to visual placement, the on-set placement of the brand is considered more effective than the creative visual placement (Brennen, Dubas, & Babin, 1999). A bigger number of fringe and inconspicuous arrangements would demonstrate that they were being utilized as set enrichments, which was not the case in the Pakistani films. Since the films offer the capacity to contact potential spectators and target different market sections, it appeared to be sensible that the advertisers would look for opportunities to get brands and their benefits across to the audience. However, there is a difference between brand placement and brand advertisement, a distinction that has not been observed in the selected Pakistani films. This lack of planned product placement is already criticized in Pakistan (The Haute Team, 2018).

But we have to be mindful that the Pakistani cinema is new to the brand placement concept. There is a critical need that future researches focus on exploring as to how brands and advertisers negotiate their brand placement strategies with the film-makers in Pakistan? Is the lack of investment opportunities forcing the filmmakers to make such choices in brand

placement or do they even not know what they are doing? Also, why the brands, especially the international ones, are not considering implications of such brand placement?. In general, the examination of all visual placement situations showed the development was in halfway. Overall brand placement pattern existed but it has been observed that placement took a boom in the start and it heavily existed in top-grossing films of Pakistan during the period of 2015 and 2016. Then it started to decrease in 2017 and 2018. The brands in Pakistani films showed some diversity but that was not very significant. The main focus of the placements remained on fast food restaurants and banks. The brand placement in Pakistani films showed the low involvement brand on top of the charts in contrast to Hollywood and Bollywood were the dominant brands were high involvement brands (Galician & Bourdeau, 2004). Pakistani cinema has to be evolved towards more high budget films to incorporate high involvement brands.

Considering Sapolsky and Kinney's (1994) attestations, in regard to industry evolution through the years, the present investigation affirms the same trend with the noticeable rise in quality of brand placement in the selected films. However, due to the small sample size, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to all the films during the said time-frame. Yet, for being top-grossing films, we do get an idea of where this trend may lead. For instance, the results demonstrated that most of the coded brand placements were seen placements. The seen placement and theatrically neutral scenes were prevalent. The integration to the storyline was as much less than in Hollywood and Bollywood. It may impact on the recall recognition as emotional valence is the key factor to measure recall and recognition (Davtyan, 2016). Sapolsky and Kinney (1994) anticipated that advertisers would build the utilization of brand position if a feasible exchange exists that discharged normal, legitimate research about the situation was set up towards brand recognition and recall.

Furthermore, there stays a chance to think about brand placement position in films longitudinally, by utilizing likelihood testing strategies. The use of a coding plan like the one in the present investigation, and by employing other multiple methods (Hang, 2014) for placement strategies, important discoveries can be made. The advertising supervisors depend vigorously on expected film industry income projections when considering position organizations and to some degree on the creator's decision to expand the discoveries of prior investigation that used a non-irregular choice of films (Karrh, 1998). In spite of the fact that this permitted correlations between the two gatherings, a solitary report that appropriately examined various years of data in Pakistani films would give fundamental understanding for the future researches. Along these lines, a straightforward irregular or even a stratified arbitrary example would help ease such issues present in Pakistani films.

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DISCOURSE