

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS14/B01/14 <hr/> (please insert ref. above)

**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

<p><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within six months of the approved project completion date. 2. Completion report: within 12 months of the approved project completion date.
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Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. Project Title

Product placement in Hong Kong television programmes:

Brand persuasiveness and regulatory issues

2. Investigator(s) And Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Fanny Fong-ye CHAN/ Assistant Professor	Hang Seng Management College
Co-Investigator(s)	Ben LOWE/ Professor	University of Kent

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	01/01/2015		
Project Completion Date	31/08/2016	28/02/2017	26/07/2016
Duration (in month)	20 months	26 months	26/07/2016
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	31/08/2017	28/02/2018	26/07/2016

Part B: The Final Report

5. Project Objectives

5.1 Objectives as per original application

1. explore the prevalence of product placement across different program genres in Hong Kong;
2. examine the effects of prior notification on consumer perceptions and identify which type of prior notification is more effective in safeguarding audiences from this practice;
3. explore the effect of humor on the persuasiveness of products placed in television programs and its interaction effect with prior notification;
4. investigate the mediating role of psychological reactance on placement persuasiveness; and
5. contribute new knowledge to the field while providing guidance to marketers, educators and public policy makers through empirical evidence.

5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: _____

Reasons for the change: _____

- 1.
- 2.
3.

5.3 Realisation of the objectives

(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

The project was completed successfully and all the proposed objectives have been achieved. Please see below for a detailed analysis of how each objective was addressed. The relevant results and key findings were reported in section 6.1.

Objective 1 aims to explore the prevalence of product placement in television programs. A large-scale content analysis of 225 hours of prime-time television programming in Hong Kong in 2015 was conducted. The analysis not only mapped the relative prevalence of brands placed in television programs, it also revealed the practices of product placement in Hong Kong.

Objective 2 aims to examine the effectiveness of prior notification of product placements. A web-based experimental study of 1100 television viewers in Hong Kong was conducted and the effect of prior notifications with three levels of explicitness (i.e., low, moderate and high) was empirically tested. The results suggest that less explicit prior notification was more recommendable.

Objective 3 tries to explore the effect of placing brands in humorous scenes and its interaction effect with prior notification. A series of humorous placement scenes and their non-humorous counterparts were selected from the content analysis study. The selected video clips were further edited and shown to 1100 television viewers with a between-

subject experimental design. Humor has a significant effect on the recall of and attitudes toward the placed brand. However, the interaction effect between humor and prior notification was insignificant.

Objective 4 aims to investigate the mediating role of psychological reactance on placement persuasiveness. The levels of psychological trait reactance of 1100 television viewers were measured and incorporated in the analysis. Psychological trait reactance was found to act as a moderator instead of a mediator in the research model. In addition, the study also identified that program involvement was another significant moderator on the relationship between humor and brand persuasiveness.

Objective 5 aims to contribute new knowledge to the field and provide guidance to marketers and policy makers. Results on product placement practices in prime-time television programs in Hong Kong together with research propositions have been published in an international peer-reviewed journal. One more research paper based on the content analysis results was drafted and is currently under the review process. Theoretical frameworks about the role of humor and prior notification on placement processing were developed and empirically investigated. The results together with practical implications for marketers and policy makers were detailed in two research papers which are currently under the review process of top-tier journals. The new knowledge gained from the project was also disseminated verbally in classrooms and at reputed international conferences.

5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives <i>(as per 5.1/5.2 above)</i>	Addressed <i>(please tick)</i>	Percentage Achieved <i>(please estimate)</i>
1. explore the prevalence of product placement across different program genres in Hong Kong;	✓ ✓ ✓	100%
2. examine the effects of prior notification on consumer perceptions and identify which type of prior notification is more effective in safeguarding audiences from this practice;	✓ ✓ ✓	100%
3. explore the effect of humor on the persuasiveness of products placed in television programs and its interaction effect with prior notification;	✓ ✓ ✓	100%
4. investigate the mediating role of psychological reactance on placement persuasiveness; and	✓ ✓ ✓	100%
5. contribute new knowledge to the field while providing guidance to marketers, educators and public policy makers through empirical evidence.	✓ ✓ ✓	100%

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome

(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

The project has achieved what have been stated in the funding proposal and far exceeded it. In the first phase, a large-scale content analysis study was conducted to explore the prevalence of brand appearances in television programs in Hong Kong. It was found that integrating brands in television programs seems to be well supported by advertisers, with one brand appearing in every 11 minutes of programming. The content analysis study also systematically examines the practices of product placement in television programs which include characteristics of programs linked to brand appearances, features of placed brands and products, modality of brand appearances, character interaction with placed products and the placement context. It provides useful insights into the practice of product placement in this fast growth context and its (dis)connection with existing product placement literature. It also serves as a benchmark of product placement practices for future studies in Hong Kong and facilitates comparisons with overseas practices. Part of the results has been published in an international peer-reviewed journal and another research paper was drafted and is currently under the review process. In addition, the key findings have stimulated the PI to prepare a proposal on brand co-appearances in product placement which was successfully funded in the 2016/2017 funding exercise.

In the second phase, the effect of placement context (i.e., humor) and the regulatory issue of product placement (i.e., prior notification) were explored. Theoretical frameworks about the role of humor and prior notification on placement processing were developed and empirically investigated. A quasi-experimental study of 1100 television viewers in Hong Kong shows that humor does enhance recall of placed brands but its effect on attitudes toward placed brands is moderated by program involvement and psychological trait reactance. Specifically, humor has a positive effect on brand attitudes for participants with high program involvement. Individuals with high trait reactance are more positive toward brands placed in a humorous context while individuals with low trait reactance are more positive toward brands placed in a non-humorous context. The results also indicate that explicitly disclosing the source and intent of a placed brand enhanced its recall. In addition, the explicitness of disclosure has an indirect impact on attitudes toward a placed brand via the mediator program liking, while psychological trait reactance worked as a moderator. Participants were more positive toward programs with a more explicit disclosure of product placement which in turn led to more favorable attitudes toward the placed brand. The major findings together with practical implications for marketers and policy makers were elaborated in two research papers which are currently under the review process of top-tier journals.

The new knowledge gained from the project was also disseminated verbally in classrooms and at reputed international conferences. The project helps to cultivate a research atmosphere in the College and further enhance teaching and learning.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action

(Maximum half a page)

Part of the data from the experimental study may be further analyzed to prepare an extended abstract to be submitted for presentation at an international conference. The extended abstract will be further developed as a research paper to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal on international marketing and business.

As mentioned above, results from this study has led to another funded research project. The content analysis study reveals that brand co-appearance may be an emerging practice of product placement in television programs. This stimulates the PI to prepare a research proposal about information processing of brand co-appearance in product placement. It is believed to bring in impactful new knowledge to the field. Another possible extension of the existing project is to apply the theoretical models built in the current study to other promotion contexts or even test them in other countries/cultural contexts. This helps to further validate the conceptual frameworks and may contribute to the building of new theories.

7. Layman's Summary

(Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)

Product placement involves the integration of branded products into media content. The Hong Kong Broadcasting Authority (now the Communications Authority) relaxed the restrictions governing product placement in 2005. The excessive level of placements together with the lack of regulation has led to serious concerns from the government and the general public. Few studies have examined the role of prior notification of product placement deals, and the majority have been conducted in Western contexts where consumers are likely to exhibit different reactions than Hong Kong consumers (Chan 2012). Placement context is another area which needs more research attention. Humour has been shown to be an effective peripheral cue aiding persuasion in traditional advertising while its role in product placement has yet to be systematically examined. This study adopts a two-stage research design to address the research gaps. A content analysis of eight weeks of prime-time television programs broadcast in Hong Kong was first conducted to examine current product placement practices in local television. This is followed by a quasi-experimental study of 1100 television viewers to investigate the main and interaction effects of humour and prior notification on placement effectiveness. The findings have important implications for marketers, educators and policy makers.

8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project

(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications			Author(s) (denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)	Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the institutional repository (Yes or No)	
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
2017 (published online)				Fanny Fong-ye CHAN * and Ben LOWE	"Product placement practices in prime-time television programs in Hong Kong" <i>International Journal of Advertising</i>	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02650487.2017.1353263?journalCode=rina20
		Article 1 (Details have been removed as it is currently under the blind peer review process)							
		Article 2 (Details have been removed as it is currently under the second round of revision)							
		Article 3 (Details have been removed as it is currently under the first round of revision)							
			Article 4 (Details have been removed as it will be under the blind peer review process)						

9. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered

(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC <i>(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)</i>	Attached to this Report <i>(Yes or No)</i>	Acknowledged the Support of RGC <i>(Yes or No)</i>	Accessible from the institutional repository <i>(Yes or No)</i>
June 2015/ Vienna, Austria	The effect of prior disclosure of product placement in movies on brand persuasiveness	Business & Management Conference 2015, The International Institute of Social and Economic Sciences	2015	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aug 2016/ Minneapolis, USA	Exploring the prevalence and execution of brand placements in Hong Kong prime time television programs	The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) 2016 International conference	2016	Yes	Yes	Yes http://www.aejmc.org/home/2016/06/adv-2016-abstracts/
Dec 2016/ Hong Kong	An exploratory analysis of the congruence between placement strategies and placed product attributes	1st PRSC&PRAD Conference, Hong Kong Baptist University	2016	Yes	Yes	Yes http://www.comm.hkbu.edu.hk/prsc_prad/files/proceeding.pdf
May 2017/ California, USA	The effect of placement context on brand persuasiveness	The Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) 2017 Annual conference	2016	Yes	Yes	Yes http://www.ams-web.org/resource/resmgr/2017_annual/2017_AMS_Program_Web.pdf
July 2017/ Tokyo, Japan	A content analysis of placement strategies employed by different product class	American Academy of Advertising Global Conference 2017	2016	Yes	Yes	Yes
May 2018/ Singapore	Product brands in television programs: Customers demand for greater transparency!	The Mystique of Luxury Brands Conference 2018, Curtin University and Singapore University of Social Sciences		Yes	Yes	Yes
June 2018/ Vancouver, Canada	The moderating role of psychological trait reactance in humorous product placements	Western Economics Association International (WEAI) annual conference		Yes	Yes	Yes

10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

(Please elaborate)

The PI has shared the research experience and findings to students in the College. Both the PI and the students have benefited from the new knowledge generated from the project. The PI is teaching the module “Advertising and Integrated Marketing Communications”, the research findings were shared to students in class when discussing the IMC component—product placement. Students are keen on learning how advertising research was conducted and the cutting-edge knowledge in the field. The research outputs were included as supplementary readings for the module.

11. Student(s) Trained

(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation

12. Other Impact

(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)

The research findings and research outputs derived directly from this project have enhanced teaching and learning in the College. The PI is teaching modules related to marketing communications. The research findings have been shared to students in class and as supplementary readings.

The project also helps to cultivate a research atmosphere in the College. Several research student helpers and two full-time research assistants were trained through the project. One of the full-time RAs is currently pursuing a master’s degree in Japan.

13. Public Access Of Completion Report

(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons
Details about the articles which are currently or will be under the blind peer review process have been removed.	To preserve the anonymity.

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COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
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FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report - Attachment

(for completed projects only)

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS14/B01/14

Principal Investigator: Fanny Fong-yee CHAN

Project Title: Product placement in Hong Kong television programmes: Brand persuasiveness and regulatory issues

Statistics on Research Outputs

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (Please specify)
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project [or conference]	1 (published); 3 (under review); 1 (under preparation)	5 abstracts/ extended abstracts; 2 conference papers	0	0	0