

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS14/H15/17 _____ (please insert ref. above)
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**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

Perceptions of brand co-appearance in product placement: An information-processing approach to examining brand and consumer factors

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

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Dr. CHAN Fong Yee/ Associate Professor	Department of Marketing, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, HKSAR
Co-Investigator(s)	Prof. Steve M. Edwards/ Distinguished Chair and Professor	Temerlin Advertising Institute, Southern Methodist University, USA

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	01/01/2018		
Project Completion Date	31/12/2019	31/12/2020	12/05/2020
Duration (in month)	24	36	12/05/2020
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	31/12/2020	31/12/2021	12/05/2020

Part B: The Final Report

5. Project Objectives

5.1 Objectives as per original application

1. To extend our understanding of the psychological mechanism underlying the processing of brand co-appearance in product placement.
2. To test the moderating effect of brand familiarity, product congruity and consumers' level of need for cognition on the effectiveness of branded products co-appearing in media content.
3. To develop and validate a theoretical framework to explain the processes involved in retrieving brand information and developing brand preferences in brand co-appearance on both educated consumers and the general public.
4. To provide practical guidance to advertisers and program producers seeking to implement effective placement strategies in an ever-changing competitive media environment.
5. To shed light on the incorporation of pro-social messages in media content and help policymakers to refine policies on product placement.

5.2 Revised objectives

N.A.

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)

A series of pre-tests, survey studies, focus group discussions and experimental studies were conducted to examine the short- and long-term effects of brand coappearances. We can confidently say that the project was successfully completed, and we have achieved all the five objectives set forth in the grant proposal. 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 extend our understanding of the psychological mechanism underlying the processing of brand co-appearance. This project represents the first to systematically examine the effectiveness of brand co-appearances. A series of focus group discussions, a short survey and two experimental studies were conducted to explore consumers' psychological responses toward joint promotions and brand co-appearances.

Objective 2 aims to test the moderating effects of brand co-appearance. Two web-based experimental studies of over 1000 television viewers in Hong Kong were conducted and the roles of brand familiarity, product congruity and need for cognition on the effectiveness

of brand co-appearance were empirically tested. The results showed significant moderating effects of product congruity and brand familiarity in brand co-appearance.

Objective 3 aims to develop and validate a theoretical framework for brand co-appearance on both educated consumers and the general public. We have conducted a total of six experimental studies to test the different scenarios of brand co-appearances across different program types on both college students and the general public to validate the theoretical framework and explicitly address this objective.

Objective 4 aims to provide practical guidance to practitioners. The hypotheses were testified in multiple studies and actionable insights were offered to practitioners in all the conference papers and journal manuscripts. One of our manuscripts was accepted and will be published in the *Journal of Advertising Research* which is a seminal journal in the industry. The journal is widely read by practitioners in the field of advertising and marketing research.

Objective 5 aims to shed light on the incorporation of pro-social messages in media content and help policymakers to refine policies on product placement. Although the project is focused on tangible products, the results could be extended to and are equally applicable to the placement of pro-social messages and ideas in media content. Simultaneous showing of products from the same brand in a show is banned in some European countries. Our findings suggest that such restriction may not be necessary as it does not lead to a more powerful effect than the other co-appearing combinations. Other policy implications were also discussed in the conference papers and journal manuscripts.

All the proposed key research activities and tasks have been successfully carried out. The project has yield five conference papers and at least five journal manuscripts. A manuscript has been published in an international peer-reviewed journal, the *Asia Pacific Business Review*. Another manuscript has been accepted for publication in a high-ranking international peer-reviewed journal, the *Journal of Advertising Research*. A manuscript is currently under the review process and another one has been drafted and is about to submit to a top-tier journal in the field. We expect to prepare one more research paper in the next few months. In addition, the project has indirectly led to the publication of a study on the interaction between placement characteristics and consumer emotional experiences in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*. The new knowledge gained in this project has been transferred and has contributed to teaching and learning at more than one institution. Therefore, we consider all the five objectives fulfilled.

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. To extend our understanding of the psychological mechanism underlying the processing of brand co-appearance in product placement.	✓	100%
2. To test the moderating effect of brand	✓	100%

<p>familiarity, product congruity and consumers' level of need for cognition on the effectiveness of branded products co-appearing in media content.</p>		
<p>3. To develop and validate a theoretical framework to explain the processes involved in retrieving brand information and developing brand preferences in brand co-appearance on both educated consumers and the general public</p>	✓	100%
<p>4. To provide practical guidance to advertisers and program producers seeking to implement effective placement strategies in an ever-changing competitive media environment.</p>	✓	100%
<p>5. To shed light on the incorporation of pro-social messages in media content and help policymakers to refine policies on product placement.</p>	✓	100%

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome

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

To understand consumer perceptions of brand co-appearance, a preliminary study on joint promotion was first conducted. Brand co-appearance could be interpreted as a form of joint promotions which are particularly popular when targeting millennials, though little is known about their perceptions on joint promotions. A short survey of 221 participants and a qualitative study of 20 focus group discussions were conducted. Results indicated that participants were generally positive toward joint promotions, and they used three key guiding principles (a 3S model) in selecting joint promotion partners: similar, supplementary, and superior. This preliminary study provides information on an emerging trend in marketing communications and the results have been published in an international peer-reviewed journal.

Building on the study in joint promotion, four experimental studies were conducted to examine the phenomenon of brand co-appearance. It adopts an information-processing framework to explore the mental representations of branded products co-appearing on television programs. The experimental studies were conducted on college students and the general public to examine the short-term and long-term recall and recognition of branded products that co-appeared. Product congruity and brand familiarity were found to be two moderating variables that significantly affected brand memory. Results suggest that if the promotional objective is to enhance brand memory in the short term, marketers should consider placing their brands with brands from other product categories simultaneously. Marketers can then switch to co-appearing with brands of the same product category or products under the same brand to strengthen the long-term brand memory. In addition, it is suggested that owners of familiar brands to consider setting up product exclusivity arrangements with broadcasters to avoid co-appearance with another brand either deliberately or accidentally, which could be detrimental to their brand awareness. These results have been published in a top-tier journal which could reach a wide practitioner and academic audience.

The co-appearance of branded products in television programs may give undue prominence to the products. This has inspired the PI to conduct a study on product placement prominence and brand memory using a qualitative comparative analysis approach. Thirteen dimensions of placement prominence on the memory of placed brands were systematically examined to identify the optimal configurations that may lead to high brand memory. The results contribute to the theory and understanding of the effect of placement prominence on brand memory and provide useful guidance to practitioners. A research paper was drafted and will be published in an international peer-reviewed journal.

Two more experimental studies were conducted on television viewers in Hong Kong to examine the effect of brand co-appearance on brand perceptions. Theoretical framework about the roles of product and brand fit on short-term and long-term brand evaluations were developed and empirically investigated. It shows main and interaction effects of product and brand fit on the effectiveness of brand coappearance. The major findings together with practical implications for marketers and policy makers were discussed in a research paper which is about to submit to a top-tier journal in the field. Another research paper about the antecedents of brand coappearance perception is under preparation. The new knowledge gained in this project was shared at reputed international conferences and has contributed to teaching and learning.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action (*Maximum half a page*)

As mentioned above, we expect to develop one more research paper about the antecedents of brand coappearance perception in the next few months. The paper will be submitted for presentation at an international conference first. The feedback received could help to shape the manuscript to target at a high-ranking peer-reviewed journal on advertising and marketing.

Brand co-appearance is an emerging practice of product placement in television programs. The information processing of brand co-appearance in product placement could be extended to other research contexts. As discussed above, this project is focused on tangible products but the results are equally applicable to the placement of pro-social messages and ideas in media content. Therefore, a possible extension of the existing project is to apply the theoretical model to the co-appearance of messages and ideas or the coappearance of tangible products and intangible ideas. This project focused on the co-appearances of two brands due to pragmatic reasons. In reality, multiple brands may be placed in a scene and the impact may vary as complexity increases. Future research can explore whether the conceptual framework applies to the situation of multiple brand co-appearances. In addition, this project could also extend to consumers from other cultures. This may bring in impactful new knowledge and help advance the existing theories in the field.

7. Layman's Summary

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

Integrating brand information in media content has become increasingly popular. The proliferation of brand integrations has led to a phenomenon of brand co-appearance that is yet to be examined (Chan 2021). Brand co-appearance occurs when two branded products are paired simultaneously in media content either visually or verbally. Building on research in comparative advertising, co-branding and joint promotion, this project adopts an information-processing framework to explore the mental representations of branded products co-appearing on television programs. A series of pre-tests, survey studies, focus group discussions and experimental studies were conducted on college students and the general public in Hong Kong to examine the short-term and long-term effects of branded products that co-appeared. Specifically, we investigated the effects of product congruity, brand familiarity and other psychological constructs on the effectiveness of brand coappearance. The findings provide important theoretical and practical insights to the academia, advertisers, program producers, and policy makers.

Part C: Research Output**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)						
2021 (published online)				Fanny Fong-ye CHAN	Hong Kong millennials' perceptions and preferences on joint promotion partners. <i>Asia Pacific Business Review</i> , 2021, DOI: 10.1080/13602381.2021.1872914		Yes (Annex 1)	Yes	Yes https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13602381.2021.1872914
2021				Fanny Fong-ye CHAN	Brand co-appearances and brand memory: The moderating roles of product congruity and brand familiarity. <i>Journal of Advertising Research</i>		Yes (Annex 2)	Yes	No
	2022			Sigen SONG, Fanny Fong-ye CHAN & Yongfa LI	Configuring Product placement prominence on brand memory: What counts and what doesn't? <i>Journal of Product and Brand Management</i>		Yes (Annex 3)	Yes	No
		Article 4 (Details have been removed as it is currently under the blind peer review process)							
			Article 5 (Details have been removed as it is currently under preparation)						

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>
12/2018 Taichung, Taiwan	Product placement clutters in television programs	International Conference on Experiential Approach to Consumer Decision Making	2018	No	Yes	Yes https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201800322
07/2019 Athens, Greece	Exploring millennials' perceptions about co-branding in promotions	Annual International Colloquium on Branding	2020	No	Yes	Yes https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201900362
12/2019 Prague, Czech Republic	Brand coappearance in television programs: The short- and long-term brand recall and recognition	Multidisciplinary Academic Conference on Management, Marketing and Economics	2020	No	Yes	Yes https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201900363
12/2020 Hong Kong, China	Product placement prominence and brand memory: A qualitative comparative analysis	Academy of International Business Southeast Asia Regional Conference		Yes (Annex 5)	Yes	Yes https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/20200238
12/2020 Virtual conference	The Perceptions of Brand Co-appearance in Product Placement	Academy of Marketing Science 44 th Annual Conference		Yes (Annex 6)	Yes	Yes https://easychair.org/smart-program/AMS2020/2020-05-22.html#talk:141413

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

(Please elaborate)

The research findings and research outputs derived directly from this project have enhanced teaching and learning in the PI's institution and other institutions. The PI is teaching a module about integrated marketing communications, and she has shared the research experience and the latest findings with her students in class. The research outputs were included as supplementary readings for the module. The PI has also shared the research findings with her colleagues and former colleagues. A professor has adopted the research outputs as reference material for teaching advertising communications at an UGC-funded institution. It is therefore

reasonable to say our research has contributed to teaching and learning. Teachers and students in more than one institution have benefited from the new knowledge gained in this project.

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
N/A			

12. Other Impact

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

This project has enhanced teaching and learning in the University. The PI is teaching modules on marketing communications and the students were introduced to the interesting topics on co-branding, joint promotion and brand co-appearance. The preliminary research findings have been shared to students in class and as supplementary readings.

The project also helps cultivate a research atmosphere in the University. Several research student helpers and a full-time research assistant (RA) were trained with the design of research instruments, data analysis and drafting preliminary results. The relevant training has equipped the RA for applying a master's program in Business Statistics.

In addition, the project has inspired the PI and her collaborators to conduct a study to investigate the interaction effect of placement characteristics and emotional experiences on consumers' recognition of placed brands. A paper titled "The interaction effect of placement characteristics and emotional experiences on consumers' brand recognition" was published in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* (see Annex 7). Furthermore, the PI was invited to be the advisor of the Research Centre for Consumer Behaviour at Shanghai Institute of Technology, China in recognition of her profound research experience on product placement and consumer behaviour.

13. Statistics on Research Outputs

No. of outputs arising directly from this research project	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (please specify)	
					Type	No.
	1 (published); 2 (accepted); 1 (under review); 1 (under preparation)	5	0	0		

14. 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
<p>At the time being, it is suggested not to disclose information about the papers which are currently or will be under reviewed by different journals.</p>	<p>The papers highlighted are currently or will be under the double-blind peer review process. We are a bit concerned that releasing this completion report publicly at the time being may disclose the authors' identity. It may not be appropriate and certainly is not a good practice to the review process which aims to preserve complete anonymity. However, we are more than happy to release the information once the papers are accepted for publication at the peer-reviewed journals.</p>