

## Impact of Product Placement in Movies through Celebrity Endorsement and Product Prominence on Consumers' Purchase Intentions

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study the impact of product placement and its factors celebrity endorsement and product prominence in movies on consumer purchase intention. The study used survey methodology where questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. Further, using judgmental sampling method, a sample of 300 respondents between the ages of 18 to 35 was selected from different areas of Peshawar since more than 90% of the moviegoers belong to this age group being students (Barroso, 2011). For data analysis, Regression and ANOVA were used through SPSS. The findings of the study showed that product placement in movies through product prominence and celebrity endorsement play a significant positive role in consumers purchase intention. However, the level of impact of product prominence on consumer purchase intention is more than celebrity endorsement. Thus, this study will help practitioners in understanding the factors that need consideration while planning a product placement i.e. celebrity endorsement and product prominence, thereby enhancing consumer purchase intentions.

**Keywords:** Advertisement, Product Placement, Product Prominence, Celebrity Endorsement Consumer Purchase Intention

### Introduction

Advertising is all about selling and promoting products and services that influence the consumer mind by using certain effective techniques in order to persuade them make a purchase decision.

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Many conventional techniques of persuasive promotion have been used since ages. However, in this rapidly changing era, one of the contemporary ways of promoting products that has been enormously practiced by the marketers today is subliminal advertising (Frolova, 2008). It is a technique which has the ability to convince human mind and manipulate it easily (Deecke, 2012). Further, it has the power of influencing consumer behavior without letting the conscious part of the brain know about it. More precisely, one of the widely used subliminal techniques these days is product placement. This technique has the potential to hit the unconscious mind while passing along the conscious mind without touching it. That is why, the use of product placements in promotions is increasing immensely in the advertising world today (Kumar, 2014). Product placement is a kind of persuasion that arises when companies successfully embed their message in the mind of consumers about the product, change their beliefs and affect their purchase decision in certain ways (Sofi & Nika, 2012). According to human psychology, 5% of our brain depends on our conscious mind while our unconscious controls 95% of it and that is the reason advertising agencies today are taking advantage of this 95% to change our minds and buying patterns (Deecke, 2012).

According to Olsen & Samuelsen (2012), product placement is an unconventional and new medium of expressing messages in advertising. In a traditional manner, using a celebrity in advertising campaigns has been one of the successful formulas for product advertising and brand building. It holds a number of benefits when a celebrity endorses a brand both in the campaigns and in their daily routines (Kumar, 2014).

Further, Zipporah & Mberia (2014) also emphasized on the role of celebrities in promoting brands. The researchers in their study discussed that celebrities are famous among consumers because of their characters and personalities. Companies have been using names of these celebrities and their popularity for their brand promotion in movies since long. So, it has always been considered a two-edge sword if used appropriately and conveys a positive image as well (Mukherjee, 2009).

On the other hand, in the context of product placements, marketers today assume that they can feed knowledge related to their product more effectively in consumer mind by placing their products in movies which in turn motivates them towards a purchase decision (Pughazhendi & Ravindran, 2012). Furthermore, the concept of endorsing a product through celebrities in movies by companies is becoming popular and is thought to be successful formula for branding and marketing the product (Kaur & Grag, 2016).

Despite all these studies, a review of literature shows that very few studies have been conducted on the factors responsible for a product placement's success particularly endorsement by a celebrity (the lead character of the movie) and the prominence of the placement in a particular scene (Chan, Petrovici, & Lowe, 2016). Therefore, this research focuses on the impact of these two factors on consumer purchase intention in the context of Pakistan particularly the city of Peshawar as very few studies have been conducted in this market to examine the consumer behavior yet.

### **Aims and Objectives**

It is evident from all the discussion that very few studies have been conducted to examine the practical implication of the factors responsible for successful product placement and their influence on a consumer's purchase intention. As work done in this area is very limited, the objectives of the

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study are:

1. To study the impact of prominence of a product placement in movies on consumer purchase intention.
2. To study the impact of product placement through celebrity endorsement in movies on consumer purchase intention.

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses are derived from theoretical framework:

H1: Products placed prominently in movies has significant positive impact on consumer purchase intention

H2: Products endorsed by celebrities in movies has significant positive impact on consumer purchase intention.

Product placement has gained immense popularity over the past few decades attracting movie makers and marketers. The present study aims to examine the impact of product placement and its two factors product prominence and celebrity endorsement in movies on consumer purchase intention along with their role and impact on consumer purchase intention. For data collection, 300 respondents were selected as a sample from different areas of Peshawar and most of them were students from various institutions in Peshawar. The current study focuses only on youth ages 18– 35, since most of the moviegoers belong to this age group are students (Barroso, 2011).

## **Literature Review**

### **Advertisement**

Advertisement is a source of information shared by marketers by using different types of promotional tools in order to grab the attention of consumer towards their product or service (Frolova, 2008). Since ancient times, marketers and advertisers have been attracted by the phenomenon of subliminal messages where they argue that advertising hold messages some of which are obvious while others are hidden that work only with our unconscious mind having an indirect influence on our attitude towards a brand. Due to their hidden presence, they are not easy to understand. The attribute of subliminal messages is that these can affect the unconscious mind without the awareness of the conscious mind (Ahmad et al., 2014). There appears a difference in opinion among the researchers as some favour their effect on human brain while others oppose them (Hedgren & Person, 2015).

Michaelidies (2005) examined that marketers today face a challenge due to changing patterns of consumer life where they are continuously losing interest in traditional promotions due to their busy schedules. In coping up with this challenge, companies focus on making their advertisements as innovative and interesting as possible. In such a situation, subliminal messages can help companies easily motivate their target market towards their offerings and evoke particular action or behaviour. Takahashi (2008), in his study highlighted that subliminal messages have the power

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of replacing newer information with the older one more easily than any other evident cues. This ultimately affects the consumer psyche and brings the hidden consumer desires out without even knowing it. Advertising agencies today are working on creating subliminal messages as simple and impressive as possible where the primary aim is to make it easy for consumers to take decision on an emotional and unconscious level without the awareness of the conscious mind (Danciu, 2014). One of the widely used subliminal techniques these days is product placement in movies (Barroso, 2011).

Veltamp, Custer & Aarts (2010) studied that the importance of the unconscious mind cannot be ignored due to its key role in purchase decision as it has the ability to hit the consumers' unconscious when they are deprived and motivate them towards some action (Kirdar, 2012).

Furthermore, the messages hidden in product placements are received by both conscious mind and unconscious mind where the unconscious mind is more active to perceive it

(Hejase, Hamdar, Farha, Boudiab & Beyruti, 2013). However, the conscious part is more active to reject any harmful or unethical information. For this purpose, marketers today need to try new techniques to make their products more attractive and appealing to consumers without influencing conscious or unconscious negatively. This is the reason that the usage of product placements is considered one of the techniques marketers can use to positively deliver the hidden idea that can bring in a big change in consumer behaviour (Kobilsek, 2012).

### **Product Placement and Consumer Attitude**

Moreover, these placements have the capability to affect consumer attitude therefore companies cannot take it as a myth. However; they need to be careful about their practical implementation (Rosa & Mir, 2014). The researchers further added that marketers are always in search of the tricks to increase customers in numbers and sales and for that, they always try to control the consumers' mind. Therefore, they target it through some attractive and hidden messages instead of visualizing the information directly but companies should keep in mind that these placements despite producing a required response quickly can never have a long term impact (Atrass, 2014).

Hedgren & Person (2015) also added that brand name, image and other information shown by a company in a campaign in a subliminal manner has more power to generate positive responses. This argument was initially supported by a theory by Freud (1923) where the research concluded that by exploiting subconscious drive like fear and emotions; it becomes easy to persuade consumers to buy a product without even explaining the product's key specifications. Therefore, most of world famous brands today use the psychoanalytical model to manipulate consumer behaviour (Desmond & Cluley, 2015).

### **Product Placement, Product Prominence and Consumer Perception**

According to several researchers, Chan and Lowe (2017), Mostaghel and Oghazi (2012) and Soydemir, (2012), product placement is a powerful marketing tool which is rapidly growing as it is an attractive way of reaching consumers and has the ability to be modified in different ways in movies, rock songs, different seminars, campaigns on radio, public service messages on TV and others (Mostaghel & Oghazi, 2012). Therefore, it is becoming a significant domain for companies to consider in their marketing communications to create a series of required actions from

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awareness to purchase of their respective brands (Soydemir, 2012).

Furthermore, it has been studied that marketers today consider product placement in movies as a great source of promoting their product (Subianti & Hudrasyah, 2013) and therefore companies have been increasing their expenditure on promoting their product through placement in movies and other media platforms (Chan & Lowe, 2017). Cholinski (2012) also emphasized that the usage of product placements particularly in movies is increasing day by day as the story of the movie also has a strong impact on how consumer perceive a product and therefore it is very important for companies to wisely choose a movie for their product to be placed.

Moreover, the element of the prominence of a brand in a scene also needs to be carefully determined (Han, Drèze, & Nunes, 2010) as it influences consumer favorability towards the brand producing a positive brand attitude (You, 2004). Accordingly, Rohit (2012) found that prominent placements are more recalled by consumer than any other placement in movies. He further suggested that marketers should focus on prominent placements which have the ability to blend themselves with the story of the movie as such prominent placement through actors can also increase a brand's recall (Reijmersdal, 2009).

### **Celebrity Endorsement and Consumer Purchase Intention**

In addition, Baniya (2017) and Zaheer (2018) studied that celebrities' physical attractiveness, trustworthiness and credibility, are all responsible for persuading consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions towards a brand. Chiosa (2013) also found that celebrity endorsement has a considerable impact on product purchase intention than a non-celebrity promotion campaign. Therefore, companies today need to consider celebrity endorsement in order to increase buying intention of a particular brand. Similarly, Adam & Hussain (2017) suggested that consumer purchase intentions are influenced by celebrity's credibility too as it enables a consumer to remember the brand easily and influence his/her purchase intention than any non-celebrity endorsement. In addition to this, consumers' positive attitudes towards celebrities who endorse a brand increase their intention to buy too (Amos, Holmes & Struton, 2008).

Thus, it has been highlighted by different studies that the use of placements and proper endorsements in present era is becoming an important part of promotions and marketing management of companies. For promotion through a celebrity, aside from traditional advertising, companies make these celebrities a part of their marketing activities too to use their fame and likeness to further expand their consumer base and to make their communication activities successful (Jain, 2011) as the use of this technique is presumed to be more powerful to influence consumer perception than any other in the present scenario (Pughazhendi & Ravindran, 2012).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Based on the review of literature, it can be seen that product placement in movies affect the perception of consumers and their purchase intention towards a brand. (Cho, 2014). In addition, product placement is taken to be more effective through celebrity endorsement as it can influence a customer's buying behaviour, and consumers find it more compelling and influential than non- celebrity endorsement (Guans, Kamat, Chang, 2017). Moreover, the product prominence affects the consumer's perception of the brand's quality and generates an emotional response that can potentially influence the purchase intention. (Butcher, Phau, Tech, 2016). Numerous researches have been conducted on subliminal

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messages, their presence, their connection with the unconscious part of the brain and its impact on the consumer decision-making process, but a very few of them studied the impact of subliminal messages, particularly in the domain of product placement in movies, its prominence and the endorsement by the celebrity in a particular scene.

The theoretical framework of the research is shown in Figure 1, where product prominence and celebrity endorsement are considered factors of product placement being the independent variable whereas, consumer's purchase intention functions as the dependent variable.

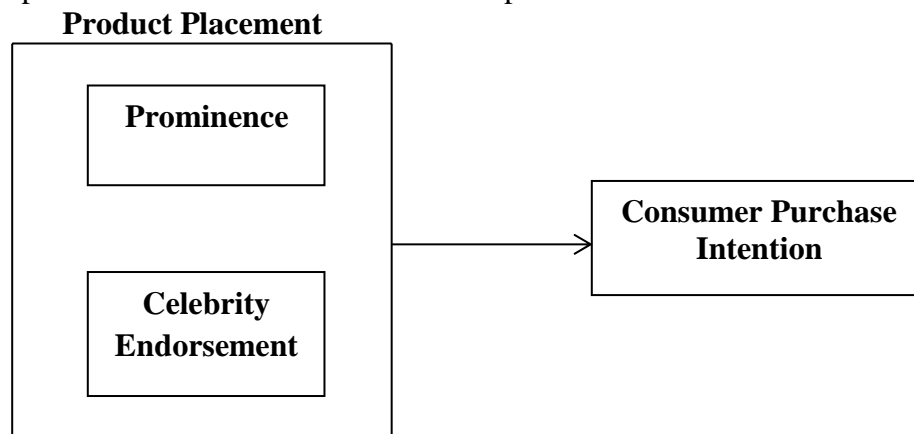


Figure 1

## Methodology

In order to study the impact of product placement and its factors, i.e. prominence and celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase intention, the study followed survey methodology where the questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection as according to Ponto (2015), survey methodology is a beneficial method to describe variables and valuable in their fabrication.

In order to test the hypotheses mentioned above, two movie clips were shown electronically in a row to the participants. These clips were selected from popular movies where there were placements of well-known brands through well-known celebrities. According to Zipporah & Mberia (2014), celebrities are famous people in society because of their characters and personalities. Due to this fact, the selection of celebrities was based on celebrity credibility. Moreover, the industry history was studied, and the most credible ones were selected as preceding studies also suggested that brand consideration and recall can increase with the help of celebrity's encouragement (Clark & Horstman, 2003). In addition to this, a study by Mansour & Diab (2016) also concluded that celebrity's popularity and effectiveness considerably influence consumer purchase behaviour. Therefore, celebrities in the following clips were selected because they are famous among youth and considered credible. Moreover, endorsements by such celebrities are proven to have a prominent impact on young consumers (Kaur & Garg, 2016). Further, the brand selection has been made based on the opinion of marketing experts.

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### **Clip A**

The first clip took from an Indian movie, "Chennai Express", where Deepika Padukone asks Shahrukh Khan for his mobile phone to call her friends. While giving her the phone, he tells her that it is not just a phone but Nokia Lumia 920 and starts mentioning its key features, quality standards, price and that he loves the phone.

### **Clip B**

The second clip has been taken from a Pakistani movie, "Jawani Phir Nahi Aani", where Humayun Saeed invites his friends' families to McDonald's for lunch to get permission from their wives for a trip with his friends. In this clip faces of the celebrities were blurred, and celebrities did not prominently endorse the product.

The respondents were not briefed about the purpose of the study because if respondents knew about the subject matter of the research, the empirical study could be compromised, and actual consumer reactions could not be determined, resulting in contamination of the findings.

The clips were shown at random to the participants to have their neutral responses. After watching these two clips, a questionnaire (ANNEXURE A) was distributed among the participants having a particular set of questions for both the clips shown to them.

### **Sampling and Sample size**

A sample of 300 general consumers was selected using the judgmental sampling method as it is a recommended size of respondents for the questionnaire to maintain validation issue of quality (Lenth, 2001). As the tool for data collection was a questionnaire, the larger the size of the sample, the more will it be able to address quality issues in the study (Saunders et al., 2009). Further, the data was collected through judgmental sampling method from different areas of Peshawar (KP), having a mix of males and females aged 18-35. Most of them were students from different institutions of Peshawar enrolled in different study programs since more than 90% of the moviegoers belong to this age group being students (Barroso, 2011).

### **Data Collection**

The questionnaire had two parts consisting of 26 questions in total. The first part included filler questions to gather data on respondents' demographics and their movie-watching habits as the frequency of watching movies provides vital evidence to decrypt their acceptance level towards product placements (Brennan *et al.*, 2004). For this purpose, the first part was developed, taking into account the questions developed by Guota and Gould (1997) and Brennan *et al.* (2004). Demographic questions contained information about the age, gender, education, occupation and some general information about the movie watching habits of participants and their favourite celebrities and if they notice any brand in a movie clip, they have seen. Demographic data were collected only for the sake of information.

The second part was further divided into three sections having questions related to the variables of interest for both the brands and celebrities where a 5 point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = "strongly agree" to 5= "strongly disagree"). The construct of prominence was constituted by a five-point Likert scale defined by Homer (2009), and Russell (2002), the construct of celebrity endorsement was constituted by a five-point Likert scale by Mortar and Friedman (2002), Argan et al.(2007) and

Dias (2007) whereas the construct of purchase intention was constituted by the scale defined by Mortar and Friedman (2002). Each section contained questions that gave insight into the participant's attitude towards product placement in movies, product promotion through celebrities, product prominence in movies, and purchase intention.

### Data Analysis

For testing the hypotheses, the responses rated against the five-point Likert scale were analyzed through SPSS by conducting Regression Analysis and ANOVA.

Regression Analysis is an efficacious statistical test used to study the relationship between variables and their impact as it predicts and keenly analyzes the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable (Sharma & Gupta, 2017). Furthermore, one way ANOVA is applied to study the variations in the responses because it is considered a robust statistical test used to discover differences between groups when there is one dependent variable and one or more than one independent variable (Sawyer, 2009).

### Analysis and Discussion

This chapter provides the analysis and results of the collected data by using regression analysis, ANOVA and T-test.

### Regression Analysis

**Table 1. Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(constant)	3.829	.957		3.999	.000
1 Product Prominence	.463	.073	.305	6.348	.000
Celebrity Endorsement	.922	.090	.492	10.225	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Intention

Table 1 shows the results of the regression analyses for the impact of product placement in movies through product prominence and celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase intention. The result shows that product placement in movies through product prominence has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention, with  $t = 6.348$  and significance value = 0.000, which is below 0.05. Furthermore, the product placement in movies through celebrity endorsement also has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention where  $t = 10.225$  and significance value is 0.000, which is below 0.05.



**ANOVA**

**Table 2. ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4252.796	2	2126.398	138.853	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	4532.943	296	15.314		
	Total	8785.739	298			

- a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Intention
  - 1. Predictors: (Constant), Product Prominence, Celebrity Endorsement

Table 2 shows the output of ANOVA analysis where the significance value is 0.000, which is below 0.05 and therefore, we can conclude that there is a significant difference between the responses for the two clips (one was having product prominence through celebrity endorsement, and the other without the two factors) shown to the respondents. The impact of the variables was studied further through a T-test.

**T-test**

**Table 3. Independent Samples Test**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
PP Equal variances assumed	9.706	.002	13.810	598	.000	3.70333	.26817

According to the T-test values in the above Table.3, the significance (2-tailed) value is 0.02, Which is less than 0.05, which shows a statistically significant difference between the responses for the two clips (one was having product prominence through celebrity endorsement, and the other without the two factors) shown to the respondents. Whereas the mean difference = 3.70333.

**Table 4. Group Statistics**

	G	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Product Placement	Product prominence	300	13.3333	3.61374	.20864
	Celebrity endorsement	300	9.6300	2.91802	.16847

Furthermore, according to the values in Table.4, the mean for the product prominence =13.3333 and the mean for the celebrity endorsement = 9.6300, which shows that the product placement in movies through product prominence has more impact than product placement in movies through celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase intention.

The overall results of all the above tables show that both the hypotheses are accepted. The results concluded that product placement in movies through product prominence and celebrity endorsement plays a significant positive role in consumers' purchase intention. According to the analysis, the impact of product prominence on consumers' purchase intention is more than a celebrity endorsement.

The results support some of the previous researches that studied product placement and its different factors. The study results by Waldt, Toit and Redelinghuys (2007) show that prominent product placement in movies affects consumers as prominent placement in movies enables consumers to recognize the branded product. Accordingly, the more prominent the brand is, the more the consumer will notice it. Omer, Sedik, and Roslan (2017) study's result also show that product placement in movies significantly affect consumer perceptions and help them in making a positive brand decision. Moreover, the research conducted by Khan, Mahmood, Lodhi, and Aftab (2016) also confirmed this relationship and stated that marketers should use a product placement strategy in order to increase consumer purchase intentions.

Furthermore, Ahmed, Seedani, Ahuja, and Paryani (2015) found that celebrity attractiveness, credibility and relation with the endorsed product are all responsible for influencing the consumer perception about the product, and consumers are more likely to buy the product endorsed by them. However, only one of the previous studies conducted by Esangbedo (2011) found that most university students have not shown any interest in buying the product endorsed by their favourite celebrities. Some students revealed that if they want to buy the product, it does not matter whether their favourite celebrity endorses the product or not.

In addition, a study by Tangkuman and Saerang (2016) also found a positive impact of product placement in movies on consumer purchase intention. The authors stated that the high rated celebrities, movie involvement, product prominence, celebrity credibility, and celebrity attractiveness increase consumers s' favorability towards brands and their purchases.

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## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study's results show a significant positive impact of product placement in movies through celebrity endorsement and product prominence on consumer purchase intention, although the impact of both factors is different on consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, it is concluded that Product placement in movies is a cost-effective marketing tool for marketers and professionals to increase consumer purchasing intentions. In addition, if the product placement and its factors are cautiously planned, these positive buying intentions can be turned into purchases. Thus, the strategy of using celebrity endorsement can contribute to the positive financial returns of marketers and firms (Verma, Kishore & Gupta, 2015).

The present study recommends that marketers consider the negative impact of product placement and its factors in movies, on consumer purchase intention, in contrast to the present study that examined only the positive impact of product placement in movies on consumer purchase intention. Considering the negative aspect of product placement and its factors can help marketers better execute their marketing strategies and target their consumer market.

Furthermore, the academicians can include different age ranges in the sample when planning their research study, such as housewives, children and professionals from other fields. Moreover, while the current study focuses only on young people between 18-35 who are moviegoers, more market segments can be studied for further analysis. So this will help researchers understand the impact of product placement in movies on Pakistani consumers. Moreover, future researchers can examine the impact of product placement on consumer purchase intentions and celebrity endorsement and prominence in morning show because morning shows on TV have been an essential part of television programs for the past few years in Pakistan.

### **Recommendation for Future Research**

The results of this study have important theoretical implications. As described earlier, the results of this study have significantly contributed to the literature on product placement and its two factors, product prominence and celebrity endorsement in movies, on consumer purchase intention. Current research will help marketers understand product prominence and celebrity endorsement and provide additional insight into their knowledge of product placement in movies. In contrast to the previous studies, this research shows a significant role of product prominence and celebrity endorsement in Movies on consumer purchase intention, which will help future scholars and academicians while planning their research study in the same area.

### **Practical Implications**

Product placement in movies is becoming one of the beneficial marketing strategies for marketers and advertising agencies today. This research will help marketers better understand how to place their products in movies through celebrity endorsements to catch the viewer's eye. The result shows that product placement in movies through celebrity endorsements and product prominence play a significant positive role in consumer purchase intention; however, the impact of both factors is different on consumers' purchase intention. In addition, it is also revealed from the analysis that product prominence has more impact on consumer purchase intention than celebrity endorsement in movies. This encourages marketers to determine if product placement in a movie through celebrities

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and prominence is a valuable tool for their marketing strategy, then how they can do it properly to encourage customers to buy their product.

The study's findings show that product placement in movies through product prominence and celebrity endorsement significantly impact consumer purchase intentions; however, the impact level is different in both the scenarios. The results will encourage practitioners to place their brands wisely in movies as it has been studied that placing the brands prominently in movies and endorsing them through favorite celebrities ensures consumers' positive attitude toward the product, consequently affecting their perception of the product and increasing their purchase intention.

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