



Audience Perception of Product Placement in Nollywood Movies: A Study of The Wedding Party 2

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Abstract

Marketers have turned to product placement because advert avoidance is at an all-time high. This study examined audience perception of product placement in Nollywood movies: A study of The Wedding Party 2. The objectives of the study were to examine if product placed in Nollywood movies creates brand awareness among audience; if audience recall product placed in the movie; and whether audience perception of product placement affects their attitude towards communicated brand in the movie? A survey was carried out to examine the influence of product placement on product awareness, product recall, and audience attitude towards placed product among undergraduates of Adeleke University, Ede, Osun State. Using the Yamane formula, the sample size for this study was 350 respondents purposively selected for the study. Questionnaire served as the instrument of data collection. Findings showed that brand/product placement plays a major role in brand/product awareness as well as recognition and recall. It was also revealed that the usage of brands/products by an admired actor/actress tends to positively affect audience attitude towards the communicated brands/product. Product placement should be seen as a brand strategy used in conjunction with other integrated marketing communication processes or activities.

Keywords: Advertising, Audience Perception, Brand, Nollywood, Product Placement

Introduction

Advertising has become one of the leading practices in the present-day business world. One of advertising's vital strengths is the ability to reach a large heterogeneous audience, advertising transmits product/service information to connect buyers and sellers in the marketplace and also transforms a product/service by creating an image that secures the attention of potential consumers and gets patronage and loyalty, especially in a competitive business environment.

Advertising is used to attract public attention through a paid announcement for a product or business in the mass media. It can help persuade a consumer, create product, brand awareness, and communicate product benefits whether they are social, emotional, or functional (Richards & Curran, 2002). A challenge with advertising is that audiences are no longer open to this type of communication and often attempt to resist its persuasion (Fransen, Verlegh, Kirmani & Smith, 2015).

As technology advances and with the invention of products such as Digital Video Recorders (DVRs), audiences are no longer forced to sit through a seemingly endless amount of television commercials in their homes. Audiences previously had the option to change the channel or walk away from the television set when a commercial is on playing, but DVRs have made it very easy for an audience to skip the advertisement and get right back to their programme (Bellman, Schweda & Varan, 2010). According to research conducted by Bellman et al. (2010) on advertisement avoidance, fast-forwarded advertisements and 'eyes off-screen' exposure were found to be inferior to full attention exposures. 'Eyes off-screen' occurs when the viewer can still hear the advertisement, even though they are not watching it, or paying any particular attention to the advertisement at all; through this subconscious listening, the viewer will unintentionally pick up something from the advertisement. Advertising is not effective when it is avoided by viewers. This avoidance has put a strain on advertisers and led them to use product placement as a means of displaying products. Although DVRs may lead to advertisement avoidance, they will also lead to a measure of that advertisement avoidance. Since advertisers can no longer be sure that viewers are seeing their advert, they have turned to brand and product placement in other forms of media.

Hudson and Hudson (2006) submit that through product placement the viewers' belief in a product or their consumer behaviour can be influenced in a positive way (Kramolis & Kopeckova, 2013 cited in Sahid & Alao, 2018). According to the American Federal Trade Commission, product placement can be defined as a form of promotion in which branded products are placed into television programs by advertisers for a certain fee or other consideration (Powell, Hardy, Hawkin & Macrury, 2009). Product placement is a promotional tactic where a real commercial product or service is used in fictional or nonfictional media in order to increase consumer interest in the product. However, the dearth of research on product placement influence on consumers most especially in Nigeria begs for attention, as the audience is the sole target of all product placement efforts and they ultimately make the decision to either buy a brand/product or not. It is believed that product placement is affected by many factors ranging from deception to ethics.

Since product placement's ultimate goal is an increase in sales, it becomes very appropriate to establish the extent of audience perception on brand awareness and patronage. Therefore, it is important to know whether viewers only notice the placed brands (creating brand awareness) or if product placement is effective enough to cause or influence emotions and attitudes in the audience towards the brand or that could create an interest, conviction and adoption of the product (brand patronage).

Perception theory as propounded by Berelson and Steiner in 1964, explore the process by which the individual makes any sense out of any experience (Folarin, 2006). Perception is a composite of four inter-linked factors: selective exposure, selective attention, selective perception, and selective retention. These four factors underline how the Nollywood audience perceive product placement in Nollywood movies (Ekwuazi, 2014). This theory deals with how an audience selects, perceives and retains product information in Nollywood films consciously/selectively. As long as it is difficult to monitor the marketers' advertising and the positioning of the advertising, it is necessary to point out that the public will sort out what they want to believe. Nevertheless, those things unknowingly build up in their sub-consciousness, influencing them in one way or another.

Statement of the Problem

Advertising professionals today are facing more challenges than ever before because of the dramatic manner in which the mass media have transformed over the years. The changing media landscape has led advertisers to seek alternative methods, such as product placement, to establish brand contacts that were once dominated by traditional advertising (Cheng & Wang, 2016).

The strongest criticism towards product placement is that it tends to entail subconscious and subliminal promotional effects. It is noted that placements can affect audience to a certain degree below

their level of conscious awareness, meaning it is difficult for consumers to control their acceptance or rejection of the product placement message.

It is relevant to understand the influence and importance of brand awareness on brand recognition and recall through product placement. Does it make sense for brands that are considered by the audience to have a low level of awareness, to adopt this strategy? Or is it a relevant strategy only for brands that are well reputed in the minds of the audience? The findings of this study are pertinent since brands must be able to optimise their investment in communication, even more at a time when the visibility of a brand is increasingly important. There is a need to understudy the perception the audience have towards product placement in movies, and its ability to achieve the set communication objective of creating awareness and ultimately affecting consumer behaviour.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of audience brand awareness of product placed in the Nollywood movie: “Wedding Party Two”?
2. What is the extent of audience recall of product placed in the movie: “Wedding Party Two”?
3. What is the effect of product placement on audience purchasing attitude towards brands in the Nollywood movie “Wedding Party Two”?

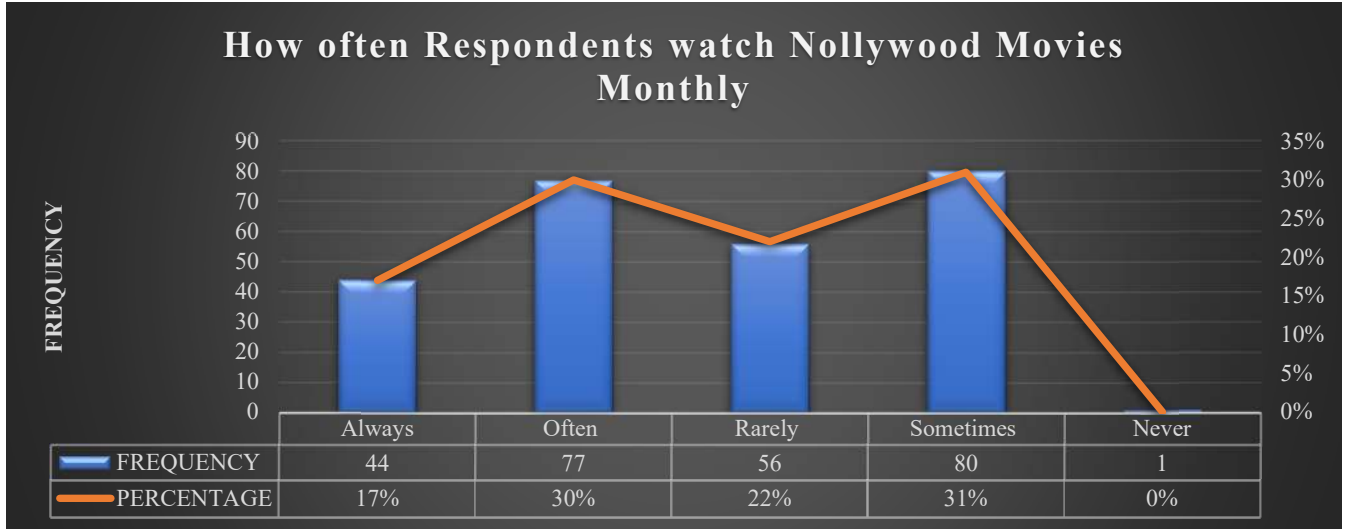
Methodology

A survey of 350 undergraduates were purposively sampled from a population of 2,800 students of Adeleke University, Ede, Osun State, using the Yamane (1967) formula to determine the sample size. To gather data for the study, copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents who have watched the movie entitled ‘The Wedding Party 2’. Out of the 350 copies of the questionnaire administered, 258 (74%) were returned useful and were descriptively analysed. A content validity was adopted for the instrument with an internal consistency of 0.839 reliability.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Study analysis revealed that majority (70.5%) of the respondents were females while 29.5% were males. Majority (53%) of the respondents belong to the age group 19-22. 24% of the respondents belong to the age group 23-26, 15% of the respondents are within the age group of 15-18 while 8% of the respondents are 27 years and above. Furthermore, most (34.9%) of the respondents were 400level students, 32.2% of them were in 300level, 16.7% were in 200level, 8.5% were 100level students, while only 7.8% are in 500level.

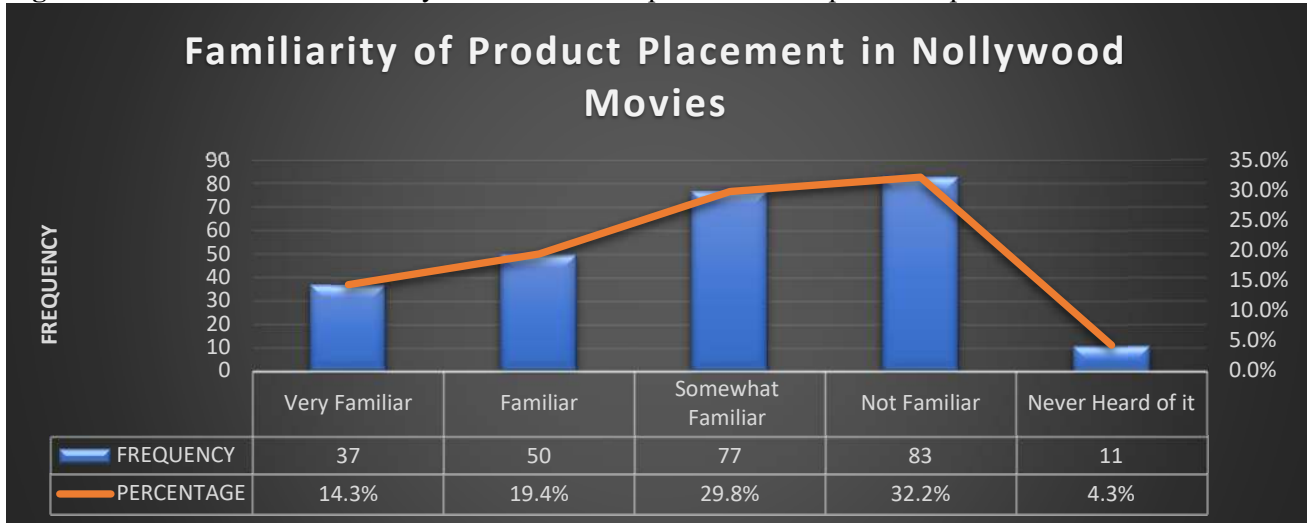
Fig. 1: How often do you watch Nollywood films in a month? (Either in cinemas, at home on DVD, Cable TV, Youtube, Netflix or Andriod TV – Irokotv)?



Source: Field Survey, 2022.

All the respondents 100%, have seen the movie: *The Wedding Party 2*. This is expected as the respondents need to have seen the movie to be able to know the brands and products that were placed within the movie and for their responses to be valid. Thus, out of the 258 respondents, 44 (17%) of them claimed to always watch Nollywood films, 77 (30%) of the students submitted that they often watch Nollywood films, 56 (22%) claimed they rarely watch. Majority (31%) of the respondents said they sometimes watch Nollywood films in a month.

Fig. 2: How familiar are you with the practice of product placement in movies?



Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Fig. 2 reveals the level of respondents' familiarity with the concept and practice of product placements in Nollywood movies. Out of the 258 respondents, 164 (63.6%) affirmed to be familiar with the concept and practice of product placement in movies. However, 36.4% claimed they are unfamiliar.

Table 1: Brand/Product Awareness in the “Wedding Party 2” (n-258)

ITEMS	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%

Product Placement presentation can affect my opinion about brands/Products being presented in a movie?	38	15	115	44	79	31	23	9	3	1
The products/brands that appear in the wedding party two make me feel that it is another form of advertisement?	55	21.3	140	54.3	41	15.9	19	7.4	3	1.2
Brands/Products in the wedding party two are very noticeable	26	10.1	144	55.8	75	29.1	12	4.6	1	0.4

Source: Field Survey 2020. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

Table 1 showed that 59% affirmed that product placements can affect respondents' opinion about brands/products being presented in a movie. However, 10% disagreed. 195 (75.6%) submitted that products/brands that appeared in the *Wedding Party 2* made them assume it was a form of advertisement, though 8.6% had a contrary opinion. Furthermore, the respondents, when asked about their opinion on the visibility of brands and products placed in the Nollywood movie, majority (65.9%) agreed that brands and products in *The Wedding Party 2* are very noticeable; while only 5% of the respondents disagreed with the claim.

Table 2: Identified Brands/Products Recall Rate/Percentage

Brands/Products Identify	No. of Responses	Percentage	Type of Placement
Eko Hotel	2	1%	Visual (Prominent)
Ossiano Restaurant	1	1%	Audio (Prominent) Plot
Samsung	2	1%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
Dubai Tourism	20	14%	Audio (Prominent) Plot
Roi De Coeur	3	2%	Visual (Prominent) Plot
Sulah	0	0%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
First Bank	0	0%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
Antimal	0	0%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
Atlantis Hotel	3	2%	Audio (Prominent)Plot
Ciroc	34	24%	Visual (Prominent)
Johnnie Walker (Red& Black Label Whisky)	35	24%	Visual (Prominent)
Lily's Gate Hotel	3	2%	Audio-visual(Prominent)Plot
Muritala Muhammed Airport	0	0%	Visual (Prominent) Plot
Versace	27	19%	Visual (Prominent)

Dubai Medical Hospital	0	0%	Audio (Prominent) Plot
Club 360	0	0%	Audio (Prominent) Plot
Airtel	3	2%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
Armani Prive	3	2%	Visual (Prominent) Plot
Apple Macbook	0	0%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
Benz	4	3%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
Mont Blanc	0	0%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
The Node	0	0%	Visual (Prominent)
IPhone	1	1%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
Toyota	3	2%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
Victoria's Secret	0	0%	Visual (Non-Prominent)
TOTAL	144	100%	

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Table 2 revealed that out of the twenty-five (25) brands and products placed in the movie *The Wedding Party 2*, fifteen (15) brands/products were recognised and recalled with some respondents having more than one brand/product recall, while 10 of them were not recognised. These brands/products had different modes of placement, shot duration, and plot connection. Some of the brands/products appeared very early in the movie while some appeared much later. The table shows that both Johnnie Walker and Ciroc brands had the highest (24%) recall rate, while Versace had 19% and Dubai Tourism with 14% recall rate.

Table 3: Audience Recall of Product Placed in the Movie “Wedding Party Two”

ITEMS	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Brands/Products used in the wedding party two are easily remembered.	22	8.5	99	38.4	87	33.7	44	17.1	6	2.3
I am familiar with the brands/products in movie before.	23	8.9	95	36.8	92	35.7	39	15.1	9	3.5
The brands/products are connected to the movie plot.	23	8.9	131	50.8	78	30.2	23	8.9	3	1.2
When I see a brand/product at a supermarket that had appeared in the	31	12	122	47.3	64	24.8	34	13.2	7	2.7

movie, I would recall that placement scene in the movie.

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 3 showed respondents’ ease of remembering products placed in *The Wedding Party 2*. 46.9% affirmed that brands/products placed in the movie were easily remembered, however, 19.4% disagreed with the claim. Out of the total respondents, 45.7% were previously familiar with the brands/products in the movie. On the contrary, 18.6% were not previously familiar with the brands/products placed in the movie. Majority (59.7%) of the respondents observed that the brands/products were connected to the movie plot. Though only 10.1% disagreed to brand/product connection with movie plot. Furthermore, 59.3% majority noted that they recall placement scenes in the movie whenever they see a particular brand/product while shopping in a supermarket, while 15.9% had a contrary opinion. This implies that there exists audience recall of products placed in the Nollywood movie *The Wedding Party 2*.

Table 4: Effect of product placement on audience purchasing attitude towards communicated brands in the Nollywood movie.

ITEMS	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I look for the brands/products that appeared in the wedding party two after watching it.	12	4.7	73	28.3	69	26.7	83	32.2	21	8.1
I would like to buy the brands/products after seeing them in the Nollywood movies.	30	11.6	80	31	91	35.3	44	17.1	13	5
Brands/products used by an admired actor/actress in Nollywood movies encourages me to use the same product/brand	37	14.3	107	41.5	69	26.7	32	12.4	13	5
Well-known brands/products will be easily recognised when placed within a Nollywood movie.	67	26	136	52.7	45	17.4	5	1.9	5	1.9
Product placement is an effective form of advertising?	79	30.6	139	53.9	32	12.4	4	1.6	4	1.6

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 4 revealed that 33% of the respondents look for the brands/products that appeared in *The Wedding Party 2* after watching, however, 40.3% disagreed. Furthermore, 42.6% would like to buy the brands/products after seeing them in the Nollywood movie; although 22.1% of the respondents disagreed.

Majority (55.8%) of the respondents submitted that brands/products used by admired actor/actress in Nollywood movie encourages them to use the same product/brand, however, 17.4% differed. Furthermore, on the effectiveness of product placement as a form of advertising products and brands, 84.5% majority affirmed the position; however, only 3.2% disagreed. This implies that product placement affects audience purchasing attitude towards communicated brands in the Nollywood movie *The Wedding Party 2*.

Discussion of Findings

RQ 1: What is the extent of audience brand awareness of product placed in the Nollywood movie “wedding party two”?

Among the 258 respondents, findings showed that 75.6% respondents submitted that products/brands that appear in *The Wedding Party 2* are form of advertisement. Also, a large percentage (65.9%) of respondents affirmed that brands/products in the movie are easily noticeable and recognised, out of which 52.7% agreed that popular brands are easily recognised when placed within Nollywood films. These results indicate that most respondents were unfamiliar with the concept of product placement, however, this does not affect their level of brand/product awareness. This also further shows that most of the respondents are favourably disposed towards products/brands placed in the movie. These findings corroborate the perception theory that an audience pay selective attention to only the parts of the message that are agreeable. Also, the findings align with Ida and Lovisa (2017) assertion that product placement enhances viewers’ ability to recognise brands and products after watching a movie, while the placements can be congruent or incongruent. Furthermore, the findings also affirm Oshilaja (2015) that product placement has a positive influence on brand awareness, while brand awareness has a positive influence on the brand attitude and ultimately brand attitude influences purchase decisions.

RQ 2: What is the extent of audience recall of product placed in the movie “wedding party two”?

Out of the twenty-five (25) brands and products placed in the movie *The Wedding Party 2*, 15 (60%) brands/products were recognised and recalled with some respondents having more than one brand/product recall. Both Johnnie Walker and Ciroc brands had the highest (24%) recall rate, while Versace had 19% and Dubai Tourism with 14% recall rate. Majority (59.7%) of the respondents observed that the brands/products were connected to the movie plot. Furthermore, 59.3% majority noted that they recall placement scenes in the movie whenever they see a particular brand/product while shopping in a supermarket. These findings indicate that familiarity with brands/products coupled with the connection of brands/products to the movie plot enhances brands/products recall in Nollywood movies. These findings agree with Okorie and Akhidenor (2011) that products placed in movies are easily noticeable which leads to product recall and recognition.

RQ 3: What is the effect of product placement on audience purchasing attitude towards the communicated brands in the Nollywood movie “wedding party two”?

Out of all the respondents, 42.6% would like to buy the brands/products after seeing them in the Nollywood movie; 55.8% of the respondents submitted that brands/products used by admired actor/actress in Nollywood movie encourages them to use the same product/brand. Notably, 84.5% affirmed that product placement is an effective form of advertising. This implies that the usage of brands/products by admired movie icon (actor/actress) tends to positively affect their attitude towards the communicated brands/products in Nollywood movies. These findings corroborate Oshilaja (2015); Kramolis and Kopeckova, (2013) cited in Sahid and Alao (2018) that product placement has a positive influence on brand awareness, while brand awareness has a positive influence on the brand attitude and ultimately brand attitude influences purchase decisions. Also, the findings agree with Ida and Lovisa (2017) that product placements that are congruent to the audience are accepted, while conflicting placements are unacceptable.

Conclusion

The audience has found ways to avoid traditional means of advertisements. Advertisers have had to find new ways to advertise products to consumers, hence, product placement is one of the new and effective advertising techniques. Although it has a positive impact on creating brand awareness and a positive attitude towards a product embedded in a movie, there is no definite link between product placement and increased sales of a brand/product.

Product placement should not be seen as a magic wand for new and old products seeking to increase their market share. It may be ineffective for a new product in the market because of less familiarity of audience with the brand/product. Familiarity with brand/product plays a major role in brand/product awareness as well as recognition and recall.

Marketers can place their products in movies to increase audience awareness and recognition, but recognition does not necessarily increase in proportion, whether the product is placed audibly, visually, or audio-visually. A product is more likely to be recognised if it is prominently shown through audio-visual means and interwoven with the movie plot. A product is more likely to be recalled when repeatedly shown than if it is only shown once. Findings provide perspective to the study of product placement among the audience and an insight into how marketers can make their budget count, since product placement is a solo marketing effort with little integration into the integrated marketing communication strategy of the organization. This study also concludes that product placement in Nollywood movies enhances audience purchasing attitude.

Recommendations

1. Marketers should engage more in product placement in movies because it gives marketers a strong opportunity to strengthen the awareness of their brands and products with a strong probability of creating favourable brand/product awareness as well as attitudes in the audience.
2. For product placement to be more effective, marketers and brand managers should consider making use of repetitive audio-visual type of product placement, coupled with a strong connection to the storyline. By so doing, the product/brand will be able to get more attention of the audience.
3. Marketers and brand managers seeking to use product placement as a vehicle to promote their brands and product should consider using likable characters (actors/actresses) as these characters endorse the product/brand and in turn, influences the viewers' perceptions and purchasing behaviour towards the brands and products.
4. Product placement strategy should be used in conjunction with other integrated marketing communication processes or activities.

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