



Product Placement in Anime: The Impact of Anime Character Associations on Audience Perceptions and Purchasing Intentions

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Abstract *Objective* This study delves into the analysis of product placement strategies, examining the impact of character variables on audience perceptions in selected anime works. The primary objective is to ascertain the influence of product placement on audience purchasing intentions, thereby contributing valuable insights to the realms of marketing and advertising literature. *Methodology* This research uses a quantitative approach with descriptive and causal research types. Primary data was collected by distributing questionnaires; then, the data was processed using Smart-PLS. The population of this study is 100 anime movie/video viewers. *Findings* The results showed that product placement and attitude toward anime characters positively and significantly affect propensity to acquire the showcased items in anime showing. *Novelty* This research offers a unique contribution by examining a specific genre (anime), focusing specifically on product placement in anime, and delving into the nuances of character variable and their influence on audience behavior.

Keywords: Propensity To Acquire, Product Placement, Brand Recall, Attitude Toward Anime

I. INTRODUCTION

Anime has become a global phenomenon, with fans of all ages and from all walks of life. It was projected that the size of the anime market value was USD 21.3 billion (Brzeski, 2022). With the ongoing expansion of the anime market, there is a growing significance for marketers to investigate and employ efficient techniques that may effectively engage viewers and advertise products within this particular medium.

Nowadays, the marketing approach that has garnered significant interest is known as product placement. Product placement refers to the deliberate incorporation of promotional material into non-commercial contexts, such as films, television programs, and various media platforms, with the aim of endorsing a specific brand or product (Williams et al., 2011). The utilization of product placement as a marketing strategy dates back to 1927, when it was first observed in the silent film “Wings,” where Hershey’s chocolate bars were extensively showcased (Choong, 2014). The marketing approach of product placement delivers a significant impact. Several research findings indicate that conspicuous product placements have a greater impact in terms of brand recall and attitude towards the brand (Gamage et al., 2023, Parengkuan et al., 2020).

The study will examine a selected group of anime series and films that contain product placement. The research will additionally examine product placement strategies and attitudes towards anime character variables that influence the audience’s interpretation of product placement within anime. The outcomes of this research endeavor will offer valuable perspectives on the efficiency of product placement within the realm of anime and its influence

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on the purchasing intention of the audience. The study will moreover make a valuable contribution to the current body of literature concerning product placement and its significance within the realm of marketing and advertising.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Product Placement

Product placement is a strategic marketing approach that entails the seamless integration of branded items or services within media content. The utilization of this technique by advertisers holds significant potential in effectively reaching their intended audience and enhancing brand recognition (Sharma & Bumb, 2020). Product placement has been a widely utilized means of financial support for film production companies, with certain entities largely depending on the cash generated from such placements to offset their production expenses.

Animated films and series have emerged as advantageous platforms for brand manifestations as a result of the animation industry's global economic parameters (Tetik, 2023). Cha (2016) finds that intrinsic cues are more significant than extrinsic cues in predicting product placements in 398 American movies, highlighting the importance of product placement in film finance and marketing, and revealing that genre, distributor type, and rating influence placements.

Product Placement and Purchase Intention

Product placement is a method that is used to improve the marketing of a product or service by showing it in a way that creates the idea that it already exists (Hashem et al., 2022). This may be done in a variety of settings, including television, movies, and print media. There is a correlation that may be described as both positive and substantial between product placement and brand recognition. If a customer sees an animated movie that has product placement, it will have a beneficial influence on the consumer's desire to acquire the product or brand (Kristanto & Brahmana, 2016). Similarly with Shan (2019), viewer's purchase intention is significantly correlated with product placement, with positive intentions towards placement (Shan, 2019). She discovered that participants who were subjected to product placements in the shows had substantially greater intent to purchase the advertised products than those who were not exposed. Overall, these studies indicate that product placement can positively affect consumer intent to purchase. The incorporation of products into media content can generate favorable perceptions of the advertised products, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase. Based on the discussion, hypothesis one of this study is:

H1: Product placement in anime has an impact towards on purchase intention.

Attitude toward Anime Characters and Product Placement

Anime characters have acquired significant popularity and have become influential in various forms of media, such as product placement. Understanding the connection between consumers' attitudes toward anime characters and their responses to product placement is essential for developing effective marketing strategies. The views of audiences towards different forms of product placements shown variability, indicating that the efficacy of product placement in anime might potentially be contingent upon the particular setting and the preferences of the audience (Cheng & Nagai, 2024). A systematic review of the literature on the psychological impact and influence of animation on viewers' visual attention and cognition revealed that audiences can feel the same level of empathy for computer-animated characters as they do for real-life actors (Praveen & Srinivasan, 2022). This finding implies that the impact of anime characters on consumer attitudes towards product placements might vary depending on the level of linkage between the brand and the character. Based on the discussion, hypothesis one of this study is:

H2: Attitude toward anime characters has an impact towards on product placement.

Product Placement, Attitude toward Anime Characters, and Purchase Intention

The realm of marketing and advertising communications. A study conducted in Japan has indicated that anime has frequently been characterized as unsuitable for product placements (Furlan, 2015). However, it is noteworthy that Japanese Animation has recently gained substantial market presence, both domestically and internationally. The inclusion of product placement within anime can potentially exert an indirect impact on customers' inclination to make purchases, with this effect being mediated by their attitudes towards the characters featured in the anime (Cheng & Nagai, 2024). The presence of a well-known brand in a viewer's preferred anime might facilitate their immersion into the narrative, as the brand becomes intricately linked to the storyline of the anime (Koska, 2024).

H3: Product placement in anime has an indirect relationship on purchase intention meditated by attitude toward anime characters.

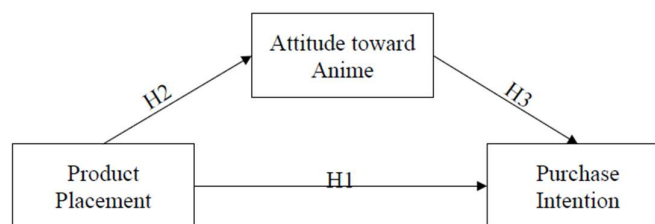


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model

The suggested direction of effect between the variables is shown by the arrows. According to the model in Figure 1, a viewer’s attitude toward anime acts as a mediator between the direct and indirect effects of product placement on purchase intention.

3. METHODOLOGY

Based on the total of 157 respondents’ demographic profiles throughout the population in Indonesia, indicates that Anime is particularly popular among young adults, with the majority of respondents falling into the 18-25 age group (78%). Males (54.7%) make up a slightly larger portion of the audience than females (45.3%). Most respondents are students or college students (66.7%), and a significant number watch anime casually, with once a month being the most common frequency (35.2%).

The original dataset had 157 participants. Nevertheless, certain participants were excluded from the analysis because their data was either missing or inaccurate. Participants who did not answer important questions or provided inconsistent or unrealistic responses were excluded from the analysis. Following the completion of data cleaning procedures, the resultant dataset had a total of 113 participants.

The assessment tool used in this study is a Likert scale, where statements are rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire also included an interval scale. Partial Least Square (PLS), a type of structural equation modelling (SEM) based on variance or component-based structural equation modelling, was used as the data analysis method for this investigation.

Table 1 Measurement Scale

Construct	Source	Original Items	Adapted Items
Product Placement	Abrahamsson & Lindblom (2023)	I have no problem with product placement in movies and TV shows in general.	I get amused by the product placement in the film anime.
		I try to avoid movies or TV-shows that contain product placement.	I avoid anime films that have product placement in them.
		The presence of a brand-named product in a movie makes it more realistic.	I feel that the appearance of a product or brand name in an anime film can make the story more alive.
		Product placement damage my view against a brand or a product.	I feel that product placement in anime can influence my view of the product or brand.

		I hate seeing brand name products in movies if they are placed for commercial use.	I feel happy if a product or brand appears in an anime film that I like.
Attitude	Anggeliana et al. (2021)	How positively do you feel towards a brand that is featured in a TV show or movie.	I think product placement in anime is a positive idea.
		How often do you notice product placements in TV shows or movies.	In my opinion, product placement in anime films is an interesting idea.
		How likely are you to remember a product that is placed in a TV show or movie.	I think that product placement in anime films encourages me to want to watch them again.
		How much does it change how you feel about the product	In my opinion, the existence of product placement in anime films could be the reason I recommend it to other people.
Purchase Intention	Anggeliana et al. (2021)	How much does the presence of a product in a TV show or movie influence your purchase decision.	In my opinion, the existence of products in anime films influences my decision in terms of purchasing.
		Do you think that the brand placement in a TV show or movie influences your perception of the product's quality.	I think product placement in anime films drives me to want to buy that product.
		Does the presence of a product in a TV show or movie make you more likely to buy the brand?	I considered purchasing the item after seeing the presence of the product in the anime film I watched.

In survey research, Likert's 5-point scale is widely recognized as an effective instrument for assessing attitudes, views, and perceptions. The measurement scale in Table 1 possesses versatility and effectiveness in a wide range of research purposes due to its simplicity, ease of comprehension, and capacity to encompass diverse replies.

Since the respondent is more than 100, this research is accepted to rules for sample size selection as described in Roscoe's (1975). According to Roscoe's recommendation, behavioural studies typically require a sample size ranging from greater than 30 to less than 500, as this range is considered appropriate. However, it is important to note that exceeding a sample size of 500 may increase the likelihood of committing a Type II error. It is generally recommended to use a sample size ranging from thirty to five hundred for the majority of behavioural studies. The present study employed a sample size above 100 participants, taking into account the study's scope and the availability of resources. The adequacy of the sample size was established to achieve statistical significance and effectively represent the population

of anime viewers in Indonesia. In the context of comparative analysis, Roscoe (1975) proposes that when decomposing a dataset into subgroups such as male/female, rural/urban, local/international, a minimum of 30 respondents per subgroup is required. This principle is founded upon the Central Limit Theorem (CLT), which posits that as the size of the sample increases, the means of the samples approach a normal distribution. Although a sample size of 30 is typically deemed adequate for the CLT, its implementation should be approached with caution.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Table 2, the indicator for each variable has shown that the loading factor had a value greater than 0.50. To ensure the validity of measuring a construct, the loading factor value must exceed 0.7. Nevertheless, a loading factor value over 0,5 remains appropriate in empirical research. Any loading factor value less than 0.5 should be excluded from the model (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). The SmartPLS output results for the composite reliability value can be found in Table 2, based on the table the Cronbach’s Alpha values less than 0.7 but the composite reliability exceeded the minimum 0.7.

Table 2 Result of the Measurement Model

Construct	Items	Loadings	Outer VIF	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach’s Alpha
Product Placement	PP1	0.595	1.143	0.485	0.735	0.505
	PP2	0.649	1.157			
	PP3	0.824	1.076			
Attitude	ATT1	0.712	1.776	0.525	0.815	0.703
	ATT2	0.671	1.662			
	ATT3	0.749	1.538			
	ATT4	0.765	1.536			
Purchase Intention	INT1	0.823	1.704	0.700	0.735	0.786
	INT2	0.854	1.842			
	INT3	0.833	1.508			

Table 2 shows all VIF values for all indicators that were used in this study, most of the indicators have the VIF value below 3. For the indicator that has value below 3, it means that there is no multicollinearity issue between the independent variables.

Table 3 R-square

Construct	R-square
Attitude	0.218
Purchase Intention	0.290

The findings shown in Table 3 provide useful insights into the correlation between the coefficient of determination and the associated comments for Attitudes Toward Anime and Purchase Intention. The table within the image presents the model summary outcomes of an investigation concerning the mediation effect of product placement on the relationship between attitude toward anime and purchase intention. The R-squared values for Purchase Intention and Attitude Towards Anime are 0.290 and 21.8%, respectively, and 29.0%, which indicate that the model explains the variance in those variables.

Subsequent to controlling for the number of independent variables, the adjusted R-squared values of 0.277 and 0.2211 suggest that the model adequately describes the data. Attitude towards anime and purchase intention has a coefficient of determination of 0.218 and 0.290, signifying a weak level of explanatory power (Chicco et al., 2021).

According to the data in Table 4, the first hypothesis (H1) was accepted at a significance level of 0.05, with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates strong evidence that product placement in anime may result in a higher desire to buy among viewers. The second hypothesis (H2) was likewise accepted at the 0.05 significance level, with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates significant evidence that product placement in anime may really result in a more favorable opinion towards anime among viewers. In addition, the third hypothesis (H3) accepted the significance level of 0.05 with a p-value of 0.001, indicating compelling evidence that those with a good attitude towards anime are more inclined to buy things shown in anime episodes. Product placement (PP) in anime has a clear and substantial impact on both attitude towards anime (AT) and purchase intention (PI) with statistical significance. Consequently, those who encounter commercial placement in anime series are inclined to have a favorable perception of the anime and exhibit a higher propensity to acquire the showcased items.

Table 4 Hypothesis Testing Result

Path	beta	T Statistics	P Value	Result
PP → INT	0.329	3.563	0.000	Accepted
PP → AT	0.467	3.700	0.000	Accepted
AT → INT	0.300	3.274	0.001	Accepted

5. CONCLUSION

The research conducted revealed that there exists a significant correlation between product placement within anime and the desire to make a purchase. Furthermore, it was observed that those who hold favorable opinions towards anime are more inclined to acquire things that are endorsed through anime promotion. Furthermore, the findings of the study

indicate that the inclusion of product placement inside anime content has a substantial impact on individuals' attitudes about anime as well as their desire to make purchases related to the depicted products. The aforementioned findings provide significant insights for marketers who aim to exploit the expanding worldwide anime business and take advantage of consumers' positive opinions of anime by implementing product placement techniques.

Theoretical Implications

The study's conclusions hold significant theoretical implications for the domain of marketing and advertising. The study makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature on product placement in anime by the provision of empirical information regarding its influence on consumers' propensity to purchase. This contributes to the expanding corpus of knowledge regarding the efficacy of product placement tactics in fostering audience engagement and impacting consumer behavior (Furlan, 2015). Additionally, the research emphasizes the significance of taking into account the audience's sentiments towards anime characters within the framework of commercial placement. The results indicate that how individuals perceive anime characters significantly influences the connection between product placement and the intention to make a purchase. This highlights the interrelatedness of these factors and underscores the necessity for a comprehensive comprehension of their impact on consumer conduct. Furthermore, the research's concentration on the anime genre yields significant observations regarding the distinctive intricacies of product placement in this particular media milieu. This study illuminates the potential influence of product placement within anime on consumer perceptions and purchasing patterns, thereby enhancing our comprehension of the function of anime as a marketing and advertising platform. In general, the study's findings emphasize the importance of product placement in anime and its impact on consumer behavior, as supported by its theoretical implications. The results of this study enhance the overall comprehension of product placement tactics and their efficacy in captivating audiences in the anime genre; consequently, they provide marketers and advertisers with valuable insights.

Managerial Implications

The findings of the study have numerous managerial ramifications for advertising and marketing professionals. To begin with, the study highlights the potential efficacy of product placement in anime as a means to captivate viewers and impact their purchasing decisions. Marketers can exploit the expanding worldwide market for anime by strategically integrating items into anime material, taking advantage of the positive impressions of anime to stimulate buying intentions (Aziz & Ong, 2023). The study emphasizes the significance of taking into

account the audience's opinions toward anime characters when developing product placement strategies. Marketers can customize product placements to match the preferences and perceptions of anime viewers. This can result in improved effectiveness of these placements and a higher likelihood of purchase. Moreover, the study highlights the interrelatedness of product placement, attitude toward anime, and purchase intention. Marketers can employ these observations to create comprehensive marketing strategies that exploit product placement in anime to not only directly impact purchase intents but also mold audience views towards anime content. The managerial implications of this study highlight the potential for marketers to utilize product placement in anime as an effective technique for stimulating consumer engagement and influencing purchasing behavior. Marketers can utilize the findings from this research to create customized product placement tactics specifically targeting the anime genre, to efficiently engage and influence anime audiences.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations inherent in this study that warrant careful consideration. The primary focus of the study was directed towards the Indonesian market, and it is important to acknowledge that the results may not possess complete generalizability to alternative cultural contexts. Subsequent research endeavors may delve into the ramifications of product placement within anime productions within a wide range of cultural contexts, to attain a more all-encompassing comprehension of its influence on consumer conduct. Furthermore, the research employed a Likert scale as a means of data collection, a method that may possess certain constraints in accurately capturing the intricate attitudes and views of the participants. Subsequent investigations may consider employing a blended approach of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to acquire a more profound comprehension of audience perspectives on anime and the impact of product placement (Tung et al., 2017). In addition, it should be noted that the study's sample size was restricted to a total of 113 individuals, thus affecting the extent to which the findings can be applied to a broader population. Further investigation utilizing larger and more diversified samples has the potential to yield a more comprehensive comprehension of the correlation between product placement in anime and the desire to make a purchase (Liang & Lin, 2018). In the context of future scholarly inquiry, it would be of considerable use to explore the efficacy of diverse product placement tactics employed within the realm of anime. This exploration would encompass an examination of the placement of various product categories as well as the integration of brands within distinct genres of anime. Moreover, investigating the influence of product placement on consumer

behavior within the realm of streaming platforms and digital media has the potential to provide significant knowledge for marketers and advertisers.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial for future research to explore the impact of social media and online communities on the formation of audience attitudes toward product placement in anime. Additionally, investigating the possible effects of fan involvement on consumers' intentions to purchase would be a valuable avenue for further study. The investigation of the changing dynamics of audience engagement with anime material and the integration of product placement in the digital era presents a promising avenue for future academic inquiry. Insights for marketers and advertisers looking to strategically use the anime genre for product placement can be gained by extending our understanding of product placement in anime and its influence on consumer behavior. These limits and future study areas present the potential for this.

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